

Philippine Local Postage Stamps of 1898

*Issued by the Municipal Government of San Fernando.
La Union Province*

ARNOLD H. WARREN

Among the rarest and least known Philippine postage stamps are the provisional local postage stamps issued in 1898 by the Municipal Government of San Fernando, Capital of the Province of La Union.

The existence of these stamps was brought to the attention of philatelists by an article published in the August 1902 issue of the American Journal of Philately. The author of this article considered the stamps to be spurious. On page 54 of *The Postal Issues of the Philippines*, by Major F. L. Palmer, which was published in 1912. The following statement is made: "In the American Journal of Philately for August, 1912, is an expose of quite a series of "provisional" surcharges alleged to have been made in June, 1898, at San Fernando, Province of La Union, Luzon. As these seem never to have been taken seriously by philatelists or the philatelic press, no further details regarding them need be given."

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Philatelists in the Philippines appear to have been unaware of the circumstances which brought about the issue and use of these local stamps until the famous stamp collection of Count Ferrari was sold at public auction in Paris after the end of the first World War. Don Enrique Zobel of Manila purchased and brought to Manila the Ferrari collection of the San Fernando La Union, local postage stamps. This collection consisted of the original copy of the resolution of the Municipal Council of San Fernando authorizing the issue of the stamps, 132 loose stamps and four covers bearing 15 stamps.

After he returned to Manila Don Enrique Zobel sold a portion of the loose stamps to Mr. Carlos Young and to Don Jesus Cacho. The covers and the original copy of the resolution authorizing the issue of the stamps Senor Zobel retained for his own collection. When Don Enrique Zobel died, his collection passed to his son, Don Jacobo Zobel. During the burning of Manila in 1945 the collections of both Mr. Carlos Young and Don Jacobo Zobel were destroyed. As a result, the only specimens of these rare stamps now in Manila are the 36 loose stamps in the collection of Don Jesus Cacho. However, Senor Cacho has preserved photographs of the four covers, of the resolution authorizing the issue of the stamps, and of the entire Ferrari collection of 132 loose stamps which was purchased by Don Enrique Zobel.

The resolution authorizing the issue of the San Fernando, La Union, local postage stamps was dated June 1, 1898, and was written in Spanish upon a sheet of Papel Sellado (Documentary Stamped Paper) of the 5c de peso denomination of the regular Spanish-Philippine issue of 1898-99. Translated into English from the photograph in the possession of Senor Cacho, the resolution reads as follows:

Province of
La Union

Philippine Islands

Town of
San Fernando

Don Blas Tadiar y Salvatores, Municipal Captain of the town of San Fernando, Capitol of the Province of La Union.

"I certify that it is now more than two months since the date on which the postage stamps were placed on sale; and now, supposing that no further remittance is received from the Government of Manila due to these current events, and since those who came to complain, asking to

purchase said stamps for franking their letters were innumerable, for this reason I was obliged to convoke the Council concerning said complaint; and the members of the Council were persuaded to order postage stamps to be made for sale to the public, subject to the prior approval of the Government of this Province; and the cost of producing them shall be charged to the Treasury of the Municipality, for the attention of the same. The stamps remaining in the Post Office shall be surcharged, or made valid, with the values or prices of 2 cent., 3 cent., 4 cent., 5 cent., 6 cent., 8 cent., 10 cent., and 25 cent., in colors black, violet and red, and since the remaining old stamps to be surcharged are very few, they, (the members of the Council) are convinced that they should order various blank pieces of paper to be surcharged or validated in said same values and colors. With respect to this decision which we have agreed upon, we will be responsible if we do not have authority for it.

"And in order that the present (document) may be valid, I sign it with the members of the Council and the Secretary, so that it may forwarded to the Government of this Province for approval.

"Done in the Municial Court of San Fernando, Capital of the Province of La Union, the 1st day of June of 1898."

The photostat shows the first page of this resolution. The second page bears the continuation of the date, "nio de 1898," and the signatures of the seventeen municipal officials who constituted the Municipal Council.

Although Admiral Dewey destroyed the small Spanish fleet in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, the American Naval force at his command was too small to do more than occupy the naval base at Cavite. Manila was not occupied by the American forces until August 13, 1898. General Emilio Aguinaldo reached Cavite on May 24, 1898, but he did not complete the organization of the Revolutionary Government until September, 1898. But between May 1 and September, 1898, local Filipino revolutionary forces siezed control of the municipal and provincial governments in many parts of the Islands. As a result of these disturbed conditions San Fernando, La Union, was cut off from communication with Manila before the end of May. Hence it was not possible to obtain from Manila postage stamps to replenish the dwindling supply in the post office at San Fernando, La Union.

In the writer's collection of Philippine Documentary Stamped Paper are several documents which establish the date on which the Spanish Governor of La Union Province fled from San Fernando. La Union, to Vigan, Ilocos Sur, in order to escape the advancing Filipino revolutionary force which occupied San Fernando after the departure of the Spanish Governor. These documents, unfortunately, are in the United States where they are not at present accessible to the writer. But he believes that these documents state that the Spanish Governor fled from San Fernando during the month of June, 1898. If this is true the resolution authorizing the issue of the San Fernando local postage stamps was approved by the Municipal Council when the Spanish Government was still in control of the Provincial Government of La Union Province. And if such is the case, the San Fernando, La Union, local postage stamps were issued by the Spanish-Philippine Government rather than by the Filipino Revolutionary Government

But regardless of the authority by which these stamps were issued, they remained in use in San Fernando. La Union, until at least as late as December, 1898. Hence, even if the Filipino Revolutionary Government did not authorize the issue of these stamps, it continued to permit their sale and use after the Revolutionary Government took control of La Union Province.

Covers showing postal use of these stamps are exceedingly rare. The four covers which were brought to Manila with the Ferrari Collection of these stamps were destroyed during the burning of Manila in 1945. But from the photographs of these covers in the possession Don Jesus Cacho the following description is obtained.

1. The envelope bears the letter head of Felix Ullmann, a merchant of Manila, who was also a philatelist specializing in Philippine stamps. The envelope is addressed to Madame Felix Ullmann, 69 Baulemart Magenta 69, Paris. The stamps are cancelled by a "CORREOS - UNION" postmark dated 18 Sep 98". In the upper right hand corner is the circular postmark of MIL. STA. NO.1 MANILA- PHIL ISL'DS," dated "OCT 5 - 4PM - '99" Also on the face of this cover is the postmark of the French Paquet boat dated "14 Oct 99". On the back of the envelope is a postmark which is partly illegible but indicates that the envelope was received in Paris in 1899. On the face of the cover is written "Por S.S. Union (By Steamship Union)" presumably indicating the ship by which the letter was dispatched from San Fernando, La Union

to Manila. It is to be noted that the postmark is dated more than a year after the date of the San Fernando, La Union, cancellation. It is possible that, due to lack of a safe means of communication between San Fernando and Manila, the letter remained in the post office at San Fernando for a year before it was actually dispatched to Manila.

2. The second cover bears the same letterhead and the same Paris address as the cover described above. The date of the San Fernando postmark cannot be deciphered. The date of the Manila postmark is Nov. 2 - 99 and the date of the French Paquet boat post mark is Nov. 11 - 99. On the back of the cover is a postmark indicating that the letter was received in Paris, but the date cannot be deciphered.

3. The third cover is addressed to Madame Emmanuel Ullmann, 10 Chateau d' Eau, Paris. The sender is not indicated. The stamps: "CORREOS - UNION" bear a cancellation dated "5 Nov 98." The date of the French Paquet boat postmark is very faint but appears to be "NOV 98." On the back of the cover is "CORREOS - MANILA" postmark dated "10 Nov 98." This is a circular postmark of the same size and type as the "CORREOS - UNION" postmark. This Manila postmark was not used by the U. S. Military post office in Manila. It could indicate, however, that the letter was handled in Manila by an underground agency of the Filipino Revolutionary Government. Also on the back of the cover is a postmark indicating that the letter was received in Paris in "Dec 98."

4. The fourth cover is addressed to "Senor Don Marcos Flores, Plaza de (illegible) No. 5, En (in) Manila, Intramuros, EI 30 de Julio de 1898 (the 30th of July 1898)." It bears a "CORREOS - UNION" postmark dated (very faintly) "30 Jul 98." It also bears a circular "CORREOS - MANILA" postmark dated "8 AGO 98." (8 AUG 98)." The postmark on the back of the cover cannot be deciphered. The Manila post office was still controlled by the Spanish Government on Aug. 8, 1898, and the Manila postmark is of a type which was in use at that time.

Only two covers in addition to the four described above have come to the attention of the writer.

In the April, 1938, issue of the American Philatelist, Walter N. Emerson of Chicago reported the discovery of a cover which bears four of the San Fernando local postage stamps _ one 2 CENT., one 3 CENT., and two 5 CENT., stamps all on white paper. The report in the American Philatelist states:

"The cover is obviously genuine and just as obviously it served actual postal duty. The stamps are of poor grade white paper, with amateur sewing machine perforation. very evidently serving an emergency use. The actual size of the cover 5 3/4 x 4 3/8 inches.

This cover, as evidenced by the markings and inscriptions on back and front, was mailed at the town San Fernando, province of La Union in the Philippines, Nov. 14, 1898. A manuscript cypher of the initials "GM" on the reverse of the cover surrounded by four double crosses forming a square. indicates the sender, probably of some religious order. It was directed to a Mission in Papeete, Tahiti. Postmarks, while faint, are decipherable and prove origin, method of transit and receipt. The stamps are all tied by postmarks. The Papeete Tahiti, postmark is dated "30 Dec. 98".

Publication of the report concerning this cover resulted in the publication in a subsequent issue of the American Philatelist of further information concerning these stamps. The subsequent report is as follows: "In the April, 1938, issue of the American Philatelist we gave a brief account and an illustration of what appeared to be the first reported legitimately used copy of a certain Philippine provisional adhesive postage stamp. This cover was mailed at the town of San Fernando, province of La Union. on Nov. 14, 1898.

This little story attracted attention abroad, for in Victor James' *Philatelic Notes and Offers*, published in London, we find the following supplementary information detailed by Mr. James, himself. The date of his publication containing this information is April 30, 1938.

'I am pleased to report that I have a collection of 42 different varieties of these provisionals which long ago were acquired in an accumulation of locals and cut-outs. They are mounted on a couple of pages from an old Maury album and the used copies bear a postmark which reads "CORREOS UNION" with various dates from August to December

This collection includes some of the early Philippine stamps with their top and/or bottom labels cut off and according to the write-up accompanying these it appears that these were Cuba stamps. There are four stamps of Cuba and Porto Rico 1857 1 real bright green surcharged with the same type as appears on the recently found cover, "CORREOS 2 CENT," "3 CENT" and "5 CENT" respectively in purple and "5 CENT" in red. Of the stamps printed on plain paper, the following is a complete list:

With "98" in top left corner. "CORREOS" diagonally, and value at foot.

On rough greyish paper: 2c black, 2c violet, 3c black, 3c violet, 3c red, 5c violet, 5c black, 10c red, 10c black.

On white paper, perforated, which looks like stamp margins of the regular stamps: 2c red, 6c black, 6c violet, 6c red.

On very rough yellowish paper, with pencil lines ruled between stamps: 2c red, 3c red, 5c red, 10c red, 2c black. 5c black.

With "CORREOS" at top and "98" in center: 3c, 5c, 10c, all black. On very thick paper (laid), perforated: 2c, 3c, black. 3c purple.

Pending further information I am keeping this collection intact and on the original leaves, which have spaces ruled for others of these issues. My first impression about these stamps was that they were *phony*, to use an Americanism, but on further examination I feel that most of them have done postal service and have been soaked off envelopes, causing their colors to run. Furthermore the variation in dates of the postmarks seems to indicate that they had some kind of genuine usage.

It is probable that the "Cuba and Porto Rico 1857 1 real bright green" stamp mentioned by Mr. James is in reality a Philippine 1 real green stamp of 1863 (Scott's No. 20 or Scott's No. 18j which is very similar to the Cuban stamp of 1857. The Ferrari collection included specimens of Scott's No. 18, 1 real green stamp of 1863, with labels cut off and bearing the San Fernando surcharge. The complete Ferrari collection of 132 loose stamps is shown in the photostats accompanying this article.

The Ferrars H. Tows collection of Philippine stamps, which was sold at

public auction in New York during November, 1948, contained one cover which bears four specimens of the San Fernando, La Union, local postage stamps. The postmarks indicate that it was mailed on Aug. 2, 1898. The French cancellation date "5 Nov. 98". The date of the French Paquet boat postmark "18 (illegible) 98". The final letter of the month is "T" which could be either Sept. or Oct. It bears the following stamps:

1. Philippine 125m blue postage stamp of 1878-79 (Scott's No. 68) with top and bottom labels cut off and surcharged vertically, reading up, in three lines "CORREOS - 98 - 2 CENT."
2. Philippine 1 m rose newspaper stamp of 1886-89 (Scott No. P2) surcharged "98" in upper left corner, "CORREOS" diagonally at center and "10 CENT." horizontally at bottom.
3. Philippine 12 4/8c yellow green postage stamp of 1890-97 (Scott's No. 167) surcharged "98" in upper left corner, "CORREOS" diagonally at center and 3 CENT." horizontally at bottom.
4. White paper handstamped "98" in upper left corner "CORREOS" diagonally at center and "5 CENT." horizontally at bottom.

All of the above stamps are tied to the cover by the circular: 'CORREOS-UNION' mark with the date in the center.

The 36 loose stamps which still exist in the collection of Don Jesus Cacho bear three types of surcharge. Examination of the photographs of the complete Ferrari collection of these stamps reveal two additional types of surcharge. Furthermore it is evident that several different handstamps were used to affix the surcharges to the stamps. The same handstamps were used to produce all of the five types of surcharge. The five types of surcharge are described as follows:

Type A. The surcharge consists of "98" in upper left corner, "CORREOS" diagonally at center and value horizontally at bottom. The overall height is 20 to 21 mm. CORREOS is 15 mm long. Considerable variation in the relative positions of "98" "CORREOS" the value, indicate very clearly that three separate handstamps were used to affix this surcharge—one handstamp for "98", a second handstamp for "CORREOS" and a third handstamp for the value.

Type B. The surcharge consists of three parallel lines, 'CORREOS' top, "98" at center and value at bottom. The overall height is 17mm. "CORREOS" is 15 mm long.

Type C. The surcharge consists the circular "CORREOS -UNION" postmark. With "98" and value in two lines replacing the date at the center of the postmark. The surcharge is 24 to 24.5 mm in diameter.

Type D. The surcharge consists the value at the top and "CORREOS" at the center reading diagonally downward. (Shown on the stamp at the extreme left of the fifth horizontal row of photostat)

Type E. The surcharge consists of the value only. (Shown on the two left hand stamps of the bottom row of the photostat.

The 36 loose stamps in the collection of Senor Cacho are listed as follows:

Type A Surcharge , on White Paper; Sewing Machine Perforation .
The stamps vary in overall width from 19 to 2.9 mm. and in overall height from 2.3 to 2.7mm.

Violet Handstamp: 2c, 3c, 5c (2 specimens), 6c, 8c and 10c.

Black Handstamp: 2c, 3c, 5c and 10c.

Red Handstamp: 2c, 3c, 5c, 6c, 8c, and 10c.

On Postage Stamp of 1890-97 Issue

BLACK SURCHARGE :

"10 CENT" on 1c violet (Scott's No. 140).

Type B Surcharge On White Paper; Sewing Machine Perforation . The stamps vary in overall width from 19 to 2.9mm. and in overall height from 2.3 to 2.7mm.

Violet Handstamp: 4c and 25c.

Black Handstamp: 4c and 25c.

Red Handstamp: 4c and 25c

On Postage Stamp of the 1890-97 issue

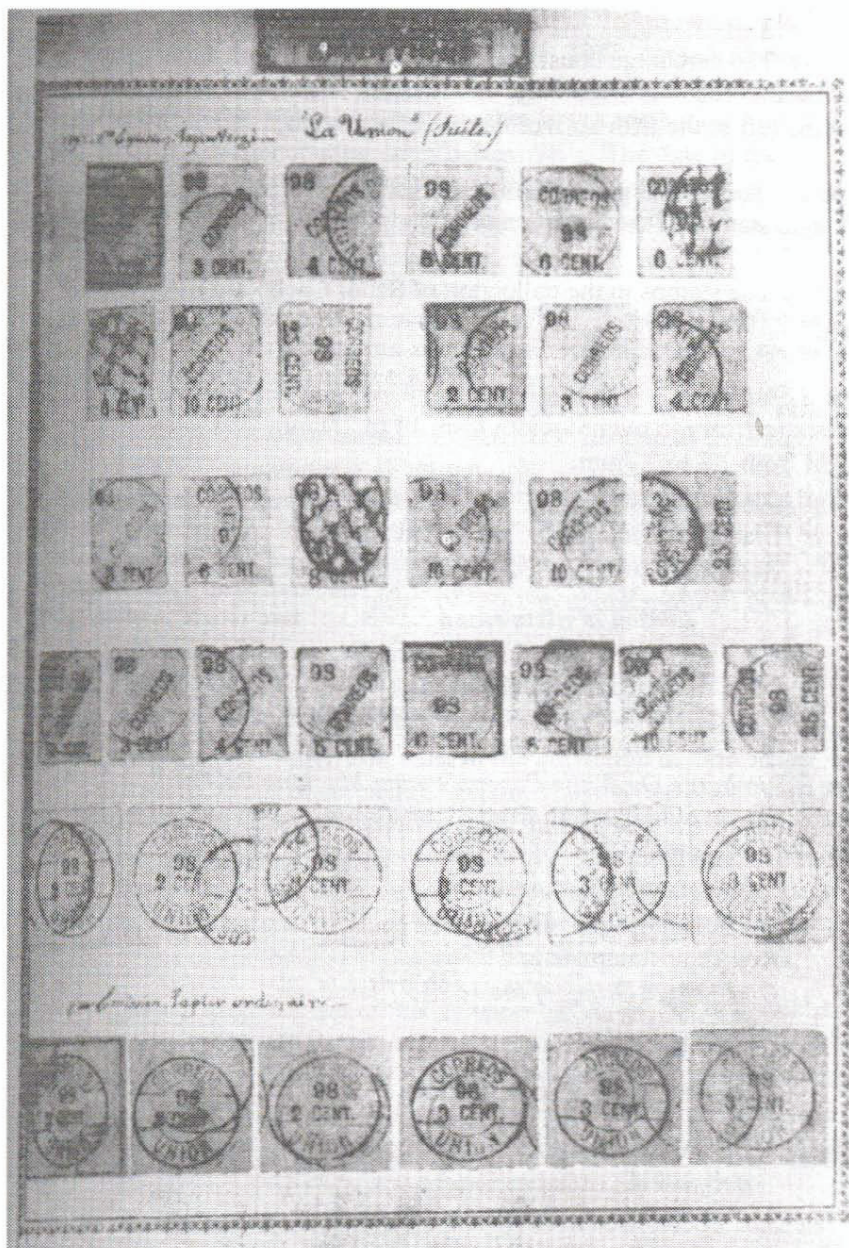
RED SURCHARGE

3 cent on 2c ultramarine (Scott's No. 147).

On Newspaper Stamps of the 1890-98 Issue

RED SURCHARGE

3 cent on 1/8c red brown (Scott's No P7).



A part of the Ferrari collection of 132 loose stamps.

