

Spanish Mariana Islands

A single issue of six overprinted stamps comprise the entire philatelic output of the Spanish Mariana Islands. Under Spanish control and administration the stamps of the Philippine Islands were utilized prior to 1899 when the islands, with the exception of Guam, were sold to Germany. Guam, one of the islands in the group of fourteen islands, had already been captured by the United States on June 20, 1898.

In September, 1899 six different denominations of the then current Philippine Islands issue of 1898 were overprinted locally. The overprint consisted of a boxed handstamp that included the words "Marianas Espanolas" in the center. Each stamp was individually struck with the overprint in a vertical position. The normal overprint placement has the words reading down. The inverted placement resulted in the words reading up.

These stamps were available for usage on only a single mail that was transported off the islands before the sale of the islands to Germany. That single mail left the island of Saipan at the beginning of December, 1899 and arrived in Manila, Philippines on December 11, 1899. Mail processed from that sailing received the datestamp of the United States Military Station Number 1, Manila, Philippine Islands, Received, dated December 11, 1899 upon arrival.

This exhibit begins with a few representative examples of Philippine Island stamps used from the Marianas including one of the four reported certified covers. The balance of the exhibit is devoted to a study of the 1899 overprints. Included are mint singles, mint blocks and usages on cover. The highlight is a block of the six centavos of which only three remain intact from a total issuance of only fifty stamps. Eight covers handled on the single sailing off the island are shown. All of the material shown is scarce to rare. It is estimated that there are fewer than twenty covers reported bearing the overprint issue.

Philippine Islands Used in the Mariana Islands

Earliest Reported Franked Cover Used From The Marianas



September 1877 Marianas certified to Manila, manuscript "Marianas" origin
2r Spanish Dependencies plus pair Philippines 2c, "CERTIF" boxed cancel