

SPANISH - PHILIPPINES

1854 - 1898

THIS exhibit shows a study of Philippine postage stamps issued during the Spanish Regime, starting from its first issue of 1854 to its latest issue of 1898. The stamp usage on covers are shown to emphasize each issue with regards to postal rates and routings taken.

ALTHOUGH a postal system was already enforced as early as 1783, it was not until 1854 that the actual rules and regulations concerning the manufacture and sale of stamps for INTERIOR use was adopted. This was through an order of the "Capitan-General" dated December 7, 1853.

STAMPS for OVERSEAS use were printed in Spain and were made available in the Philippines by 1856. Yet, these stamps were valid only for mails to Spain and its colonies, and countries which had postal treaties with Spain.

BY 1876, Spain became a member of the General Postal Union (GPU) which was renamed Universal Postal Union (UPU) three years later. The Philippines, being a Spanish colony, automatically fell under the jurisdiction of the GPU. Thus, it joined the GPU on May 1, 1877.

DUE to the high rate of illiteracy among the Filipinos during the Spanish period, letters were very few and mostly written by government authorities and the clergy residing in the Philippines. Most of these letters did not survive except for the ones kept by certain individuals and business establishments.

BEGINNING in the 1870's, more and more foreigners were doing business in the Philippines due to the increased flow of trade and commerce, and the establishment of cable lines between Hongkong and the Philippines. Progress for the Spaniards was at its height. This, however, only contributed to the mounting uneasiness and unhappiness of the Filipinos who felt suppressed by the Spaniards. Thus, a militant force was slowly building up to fight the colonizers.

THE 1890's was a troubled period for the Philippines. Little by little, the Filipino revolution was gaining an upper hand. The Americans were also at war with Spain in 1898. After the Treaty of Paris was signed between the two foreign powers, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. The Spanish forces were evacuated and the Americans took over, thus marking the beginning of a new era of postal history, and ending some forty-four years of Stamp Issuing period in the Philippines under the three hundred years of Spanish Rule.