

# Puerto Rico Postal History

By: Ronald H. González, MD

Member APS, AFDCS, UPSS, USPPS, SFPR, HTPS

May 19, 2009

# Puerto Rico

- Discovered by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage in 1493.
- Located in the north east Caribbean Sea.
- It is 3435 square miles.
- Became a US Possession in 1898.
- It is a US Commonwealth.
- Uses US postage.

# Caribbean

Eleuthera, Bahamas



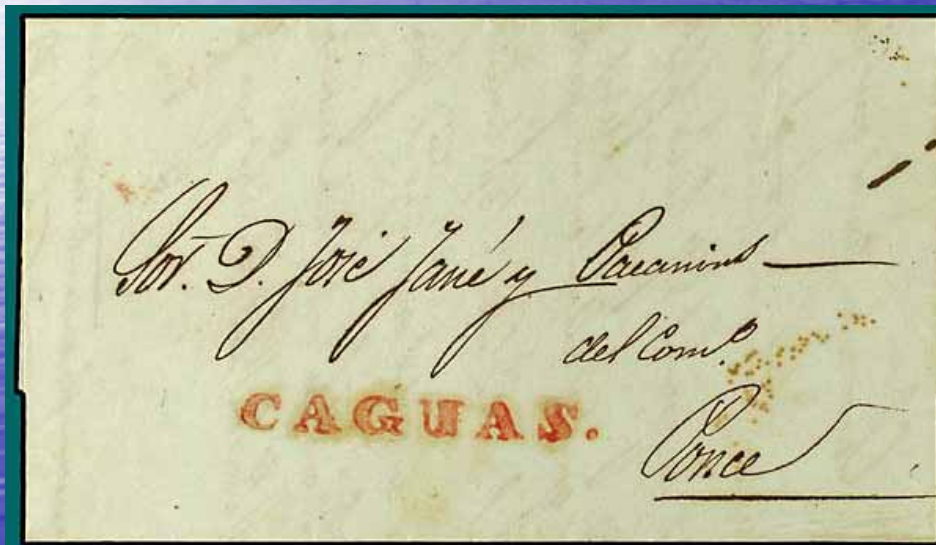
# Yslas de Barlovento 1841



# Yndias 1843



# Pre Philatelic Period



N. 1326768

1846



N. 0064132

1850

# Pre Philatelic 1841



N. 1385570

# Antillas Period 1855-1873

## Stamps for Cuba and Puerto Rico

1855- ISABEL II - Papel Azulado. Filigrana Lazos. Imperforados.



# 1864-1868

1864- ISABEL II - Sin Filigrana . Imperforados .



1868- ISABEL II - ULTRAMAR - Sin Filigrana . Perforación 14.



# 1870-1871

1870- EFIGIE ALEGORICA DE ESPAÑA.



1871- ALEGORIA DE LA REPUBLICA.



# 1873

1873- REY AMADEO I.



King Amadeo- Reign 1870-1873

Abdicated and went back to Italy

# Bisected

Bisecto



# Cancelled in Puerto Rico



# Clara Rothe Steamship Company

- Stamps printed by M. Stern in Paris, France in 1869.
- Unwatermarked, Perforated 10½.
- The Clara Rothe Steamer was owned by George Nunes & Co.
- Traveling between St. Thomas and ports in Puerto Rico.
- Never seen on cover.
- Questionable authenticity.
- The ship was later sold to Haiti.



# Forgeries



# British Agencies 1842-1877

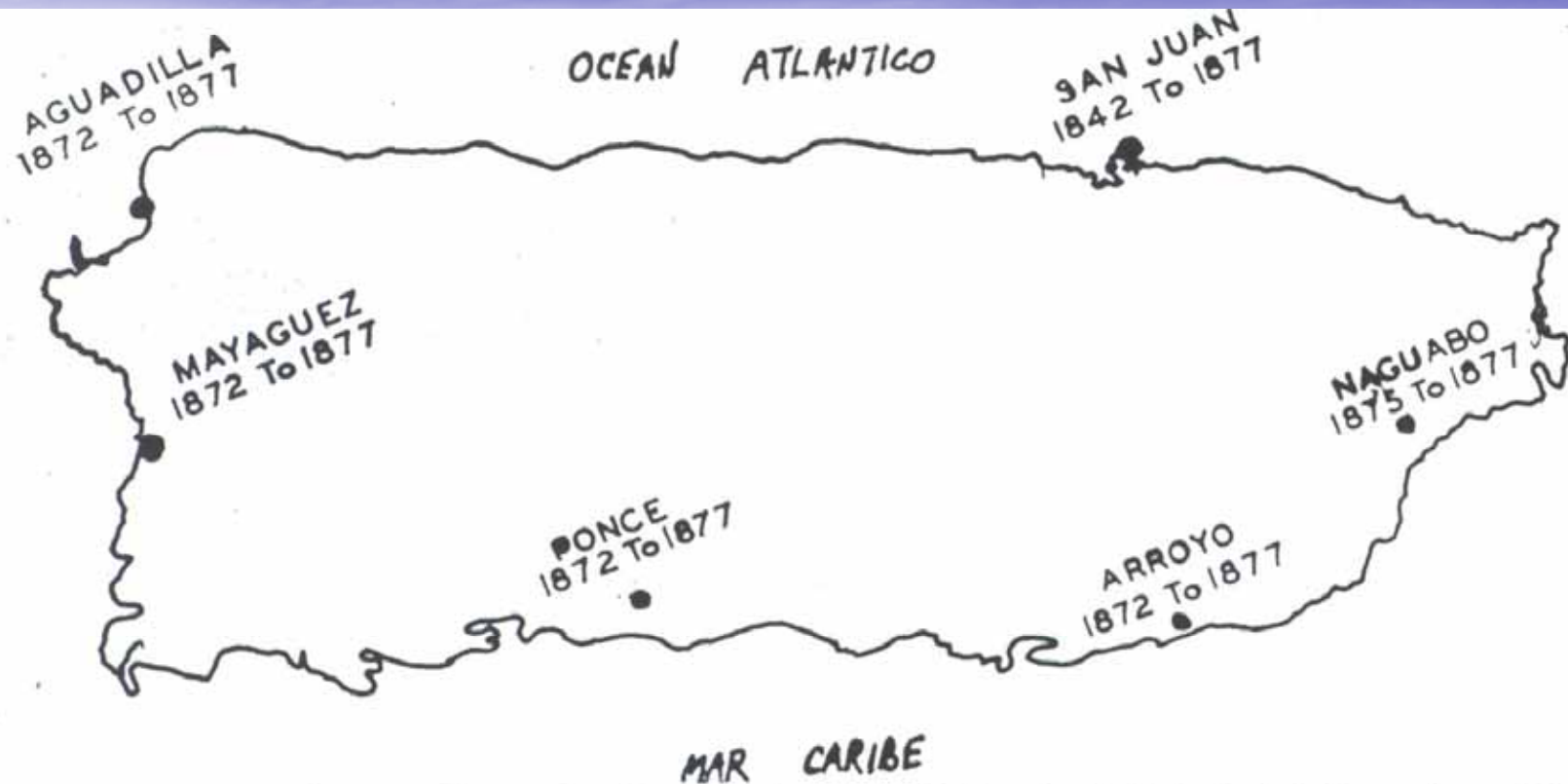


Fig. 4—Map of Puerto Rico, showing the location of the six British Postal Agencies, with date of opening and date discontinued.

# San Juan "C61" 1842-1877



San Juan



1842-77



San Juan



1842-77



San Juan



1842-77

# Ponce "F88" 1872-1877



Ponce



1872-77

# Arroyo "F83" 1872-1877



# Aguadilla "F84" 1872-1877



Aguadilla



1872-77

# Mayagüez "F85" 1872-1877



Mayaguez



1872-77

# Naguabo "582" 1875-1877



Naguabo



1875-77

Also used in Worstead, England before 1874.

# French Mail



- Cover from Aguadilla to Hamburg, Germany, by French steamer, through Paris, 1894.

# French PO- Mayaguez, PR



N. 466

# Puerto Rico Issues 1873

1873- REY AMADEO I.



1874- ALEGORIA  
DE LA REPUBLICA.



1875- ESCUDO DE ESPAÑA.



1876- REY ALFONSO XII.



# Errors



doble



Sobrecarga invertida.

# Puerto Rico proper issues

- Starting 1877
- Followed by series in 1878 & 1879

1877- REY ALFONSO XII - PTO RICO 1877.



# 1881 Series

1881- REY ALFONSO XII - PUERTO RICO 1881.



1/2 mil - 20 c

# 1882 Series

1882- REY ALFONSO XII - PUERTO RICO.



- 1/2 mil - 80c
- No year date

# 1890-91-92-94-96-97 Series

1890- REY ALFONSO XIII - PUERTO RICO.



- 1/2 mil – 80 c
- 1890 fire in warehouse destroyed many stamps. Rare 4 mil, 40 c and 80 c.

# Error Filipinas on header



# 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue 1893



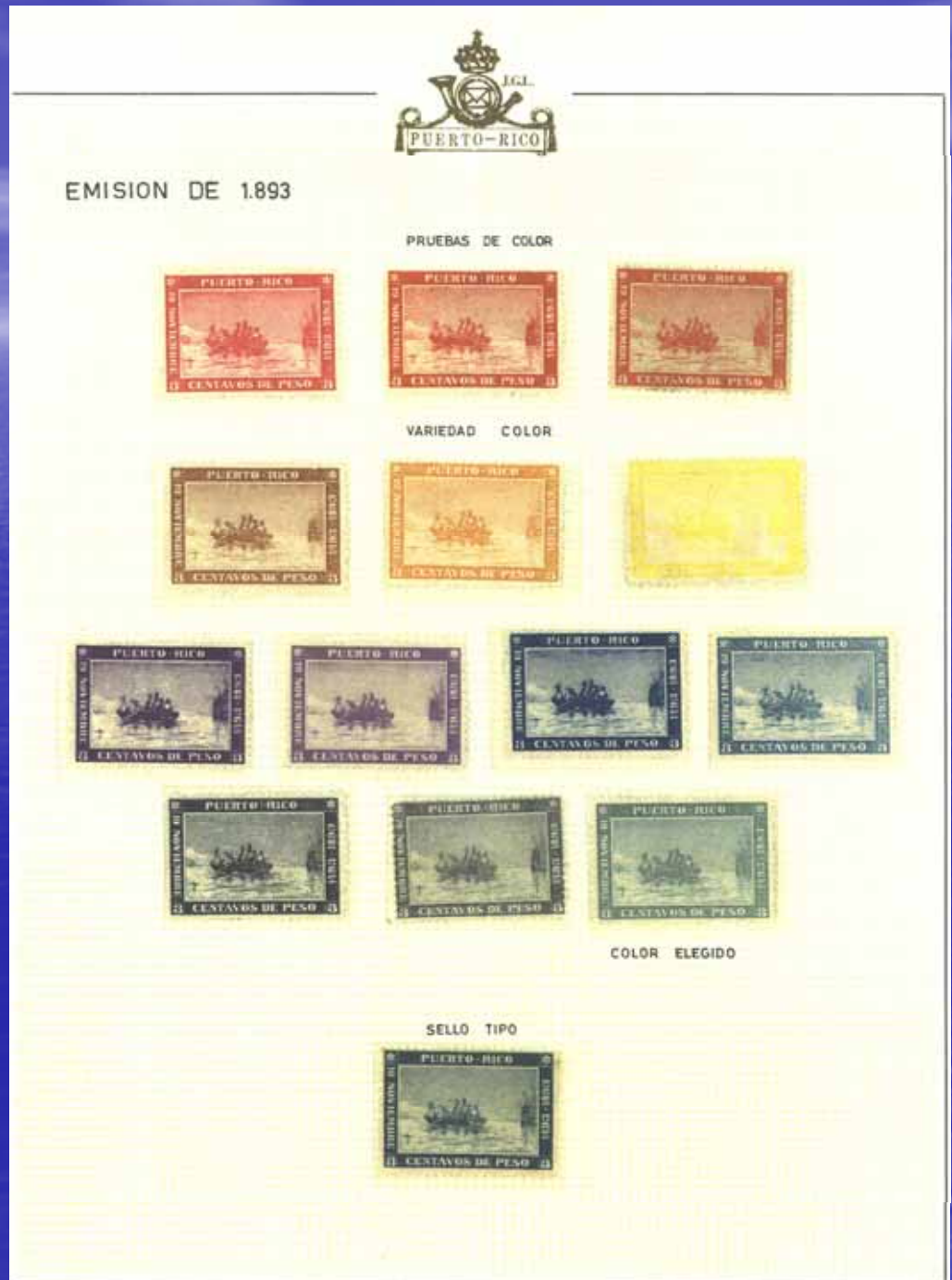
- First and only Puerto Rican Commemorative Stamp.
- Used only one day, November 19, 1893.
- Only used in local correspondence.
- Production financed by local funds.
- Third commemorative stamp in the world.

12 color proofs.

Only 20 sets  
made.

20 stamps per  
pane.

Original album  
page from Jose  
Ignacio Garcia  
Lomas.



# Original and Counterfeit



# On Cover



- From Paya de Mayagüez

# Pelon Issues

1898- REY ALFONSO XIII - PTO RICO 1898 y 1899.



- 1898-99
- ½ mil – 80 c
- Never used in 1899

# Errors



N. 3128

- Filipinas
- Tete-Beche



N. 1796

# “Habilitados” Overprint Issues 1898 & 99



- Limited use due to the US blockade.
- Overprint done by the prisoners in jail.
- Many inverted, double, missing, colors, etc.

# War Tax Stamps 1898



Sobrecarga púrpura y nuevo valor.



- Limited use.
- Rare on cover.

# Bogus issues ?



"Provisional 1898-1899", diagonal



"Habilitado Octubre 17, 1898"

# Spanish Postal Cards

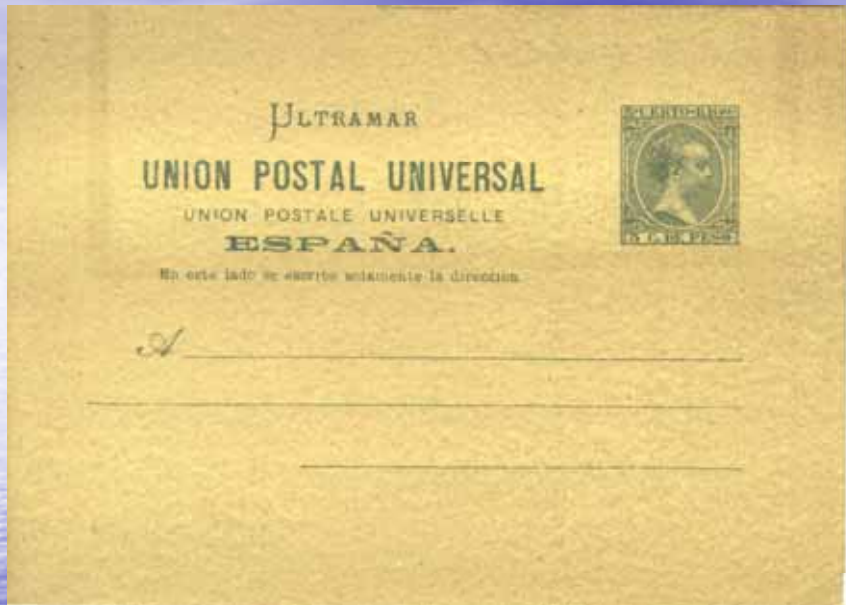


1873

1885-86



# Spanish Postal Cards

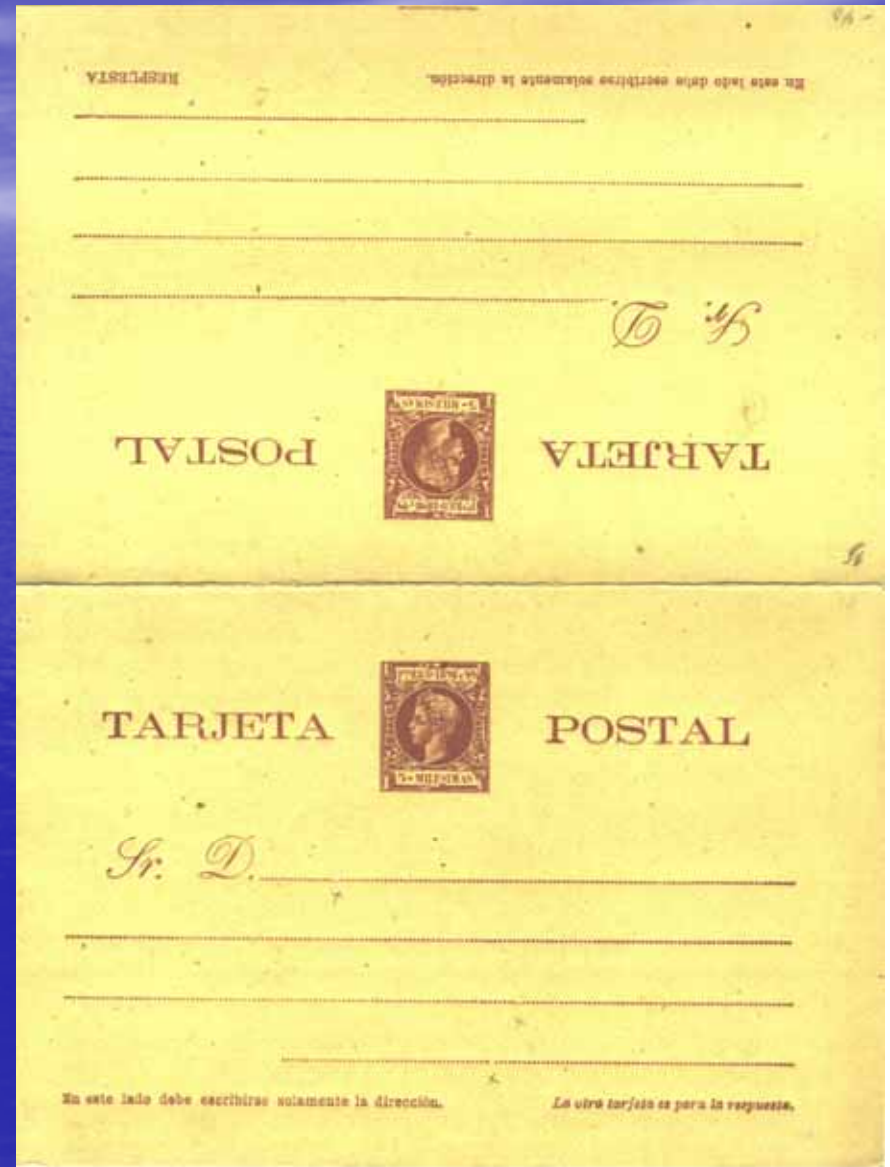
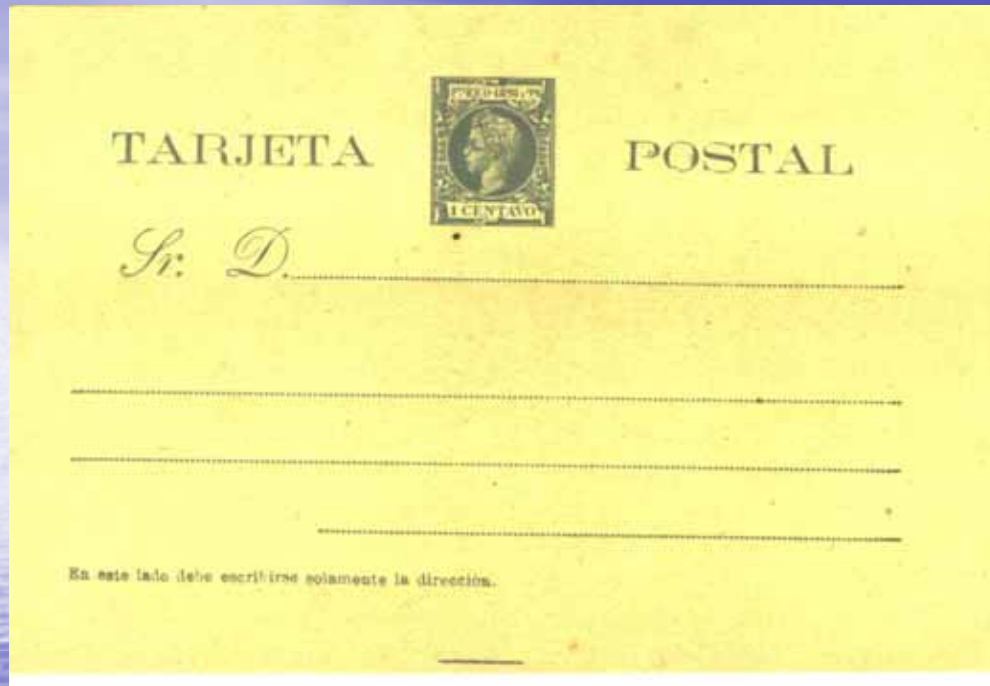


1890

1892-94-96



# Spanish Postal Cards



1898-99

Values of

5m, 1c, 2c & 3c

# 1898 Spanish American War

- February 15, 1898 Maine explosion in Habana Cuba
- US declares war with Spain April 25, 1898
- Puerto Rico invasion July 25, 1898
- South west town of Guánica
- General Nelson Miles in charge
- War in Puerto Rico lasted until August 13
- Transfer of power in October 18, 1898
- Treaty of peace signed in Paris Dec 10, 1898

# PUERTO RICO

## SPANISH AMERICAN WAR MAP

1898 TO 1900



# 1898 Spanish American War



# Ponce Provisional 1898



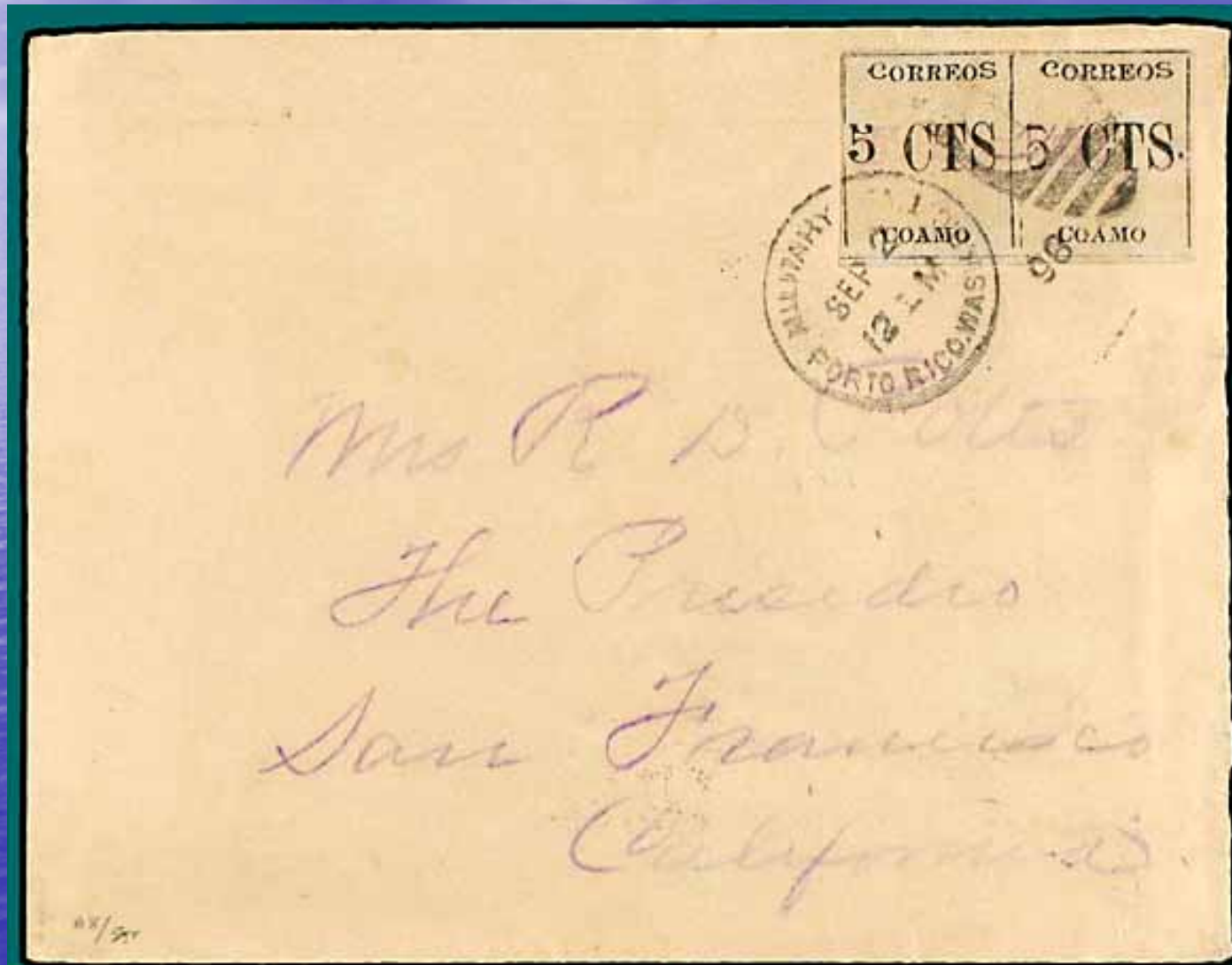
- August 8 – Sept 14
- Requested by Ponce Major Ulpiano Colom
- For local civilian use only
- None used on cover
- Also as hand stamp cancellation on cover?
- On US stamps

# Coamo Provisional 1898



- Sheet of ten, 50 sheets printed
- Each one is different
- F. Santiago
- In use from August 13 – September 4, 1898

# Coamo on cover, Philatelic?



N. 0135

9 Military stations  
with numbers.

Later on 12 more  
without numbers

**PUERTO RICO**  
**POSTAL MILITARY STATIONS**  
**NUMBERED**

<b><u>NO.</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>	<b><u>OCCUPATION</u></b>	<b><u>OPENING</u></b>
1	PLAYA DE PONCE	JULY 28, 98	AUG. 3, 1898
1	*CITY OF PONCE	JULY 28, 98	SEPT. 17, 98
2	GUAYAMA	AUG. 12, 98	AUG. 23, 98
3	MAYAGÜEZ	AUG 16, 98	AUG. 23, 98
4	SAN JUAN	OCT. 18, 98 (T. DAY)	OCT. 18, 98
5	COAMO	AUG. 9, 98	SEPT. 9, 98
6	UTUADO	AUG. 13, 98	SEPT. 9, 98
7	YAUCO	JULY 29, 98	SEPT. 9, 98
8	JUANA DIAZ	AUG. 6-7, 98	SEPT. 9 98

PLAYA DE PONCE STA. WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE CITY OF PONCE ON  
SEPT. 17, 1898

# Military Stations

## SPANISH AMERICAN WAR PERIOD (1898 TO 1900)

The first Military Postal Station began operations at 1PM on August 3, 1898 at "Playa de Ponce" using the Spanish Customs House as it's base. The station remained in this facility until September 17, 1898 when it was transferred to the Main city of "Ponce", establishing it's facilities at "Marina Street". This transfer was necessary due to the fact that the main city was where the major part of the social, commercial and military activity was found and it lacked postal facilities. It was known that the city had functioned for a short while with a Municipal Postal Service which was very limited and did not have the capacity to handle the numerous commercial and military correspondence. Below you will find a "First Day Soldiers Letter" using the provisional "Railway Mail Service" handstamp (Skeleton Ring) with the Military Station 1 mark.



**PLAYA de PONCE MILITARY STATION No. 1  
Opening Day of Military Post Office**

1898: Playa de Ponce "FIRST DAY COVER " sent to " Marlboro, Mass" on the first day of the station's operation with a "MILITARY STATION No.1 PORTO RICO - AUG. 3/98" Railway Handstamp. Showing a S/L mark "Soldiers Letter Collect Postage from Addressee" and signed by an Officer, which authorized free franking for soldiers. Letter was then franked with a 2 cents postage due stamp upon arrival as required by law.

*"This provisional Railway Postmark was used for just ten days"*

# PORTO RICO Issues 1899



01/01/2009

# PORTO RICO Issues 1899



# PUERTO RICO 1900



# US Stationery

- Envelopes
  - Regular issues
  - Special request corner card
- Postal Cards
- Wrapper

# United States Administration

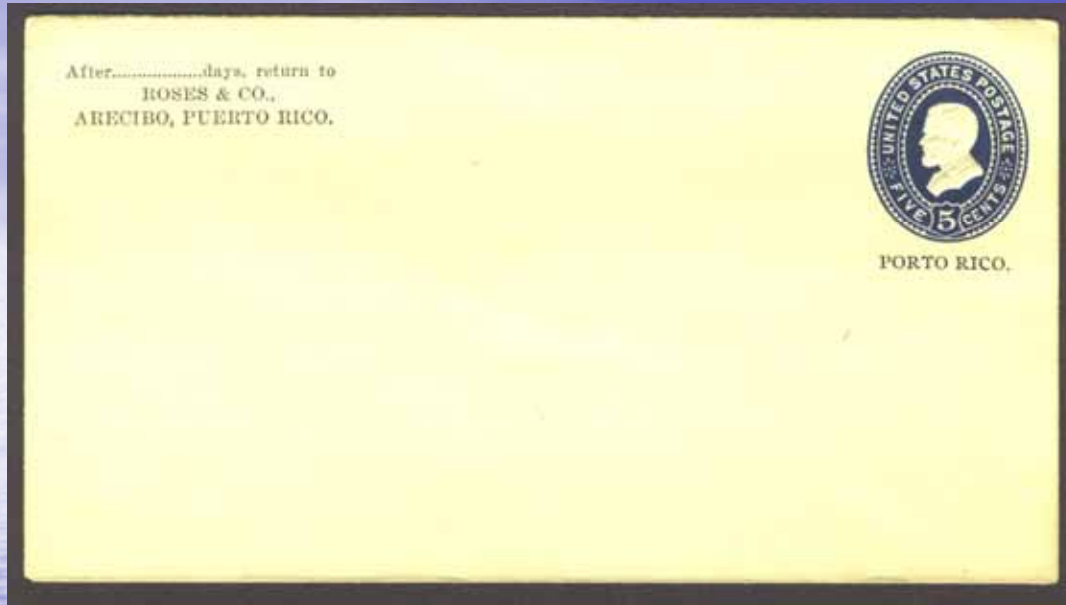


PORTO RICO 1899

PUERTO RICO 1900



# United States Administration



Special Request Corner  
Card

Roses & Co. 1899

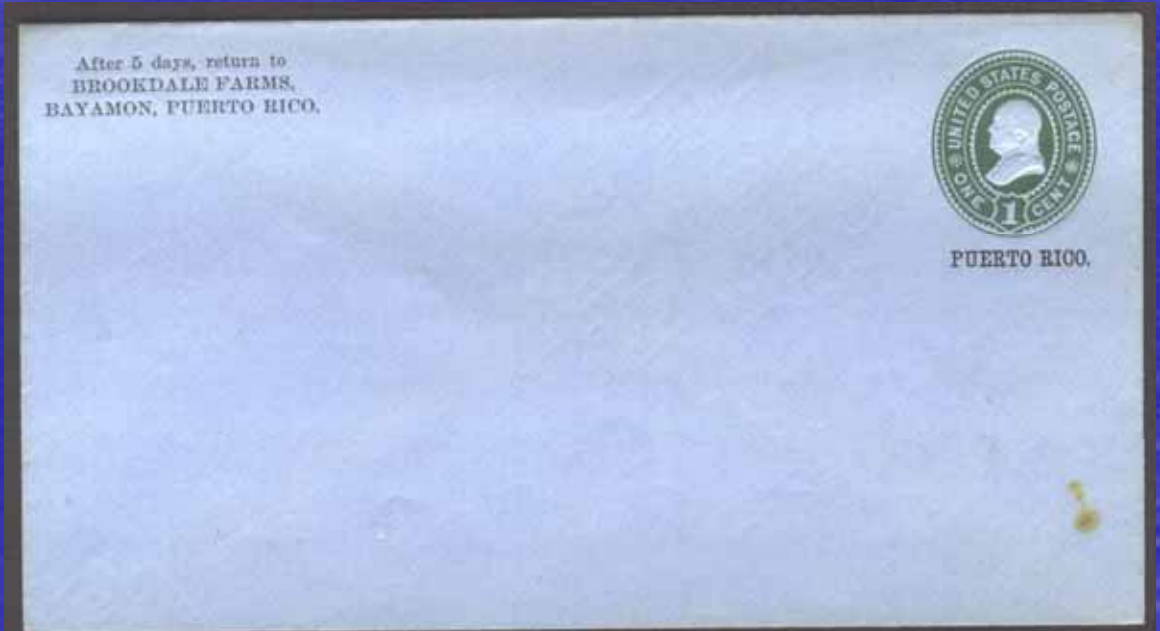


# United States Administration

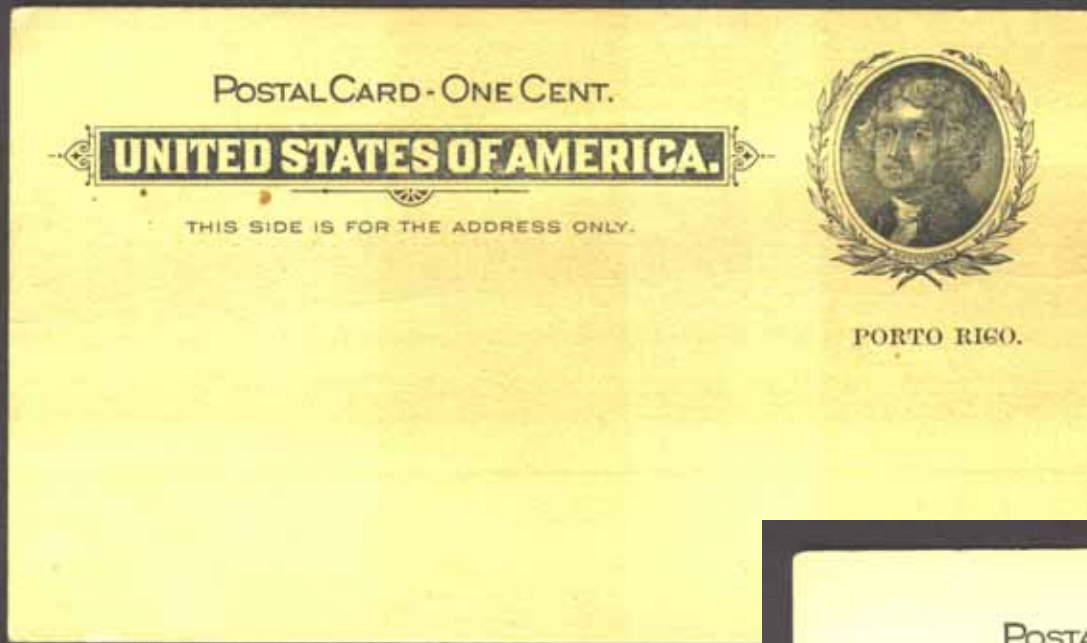


Brookdale Farms

JT Silva CC

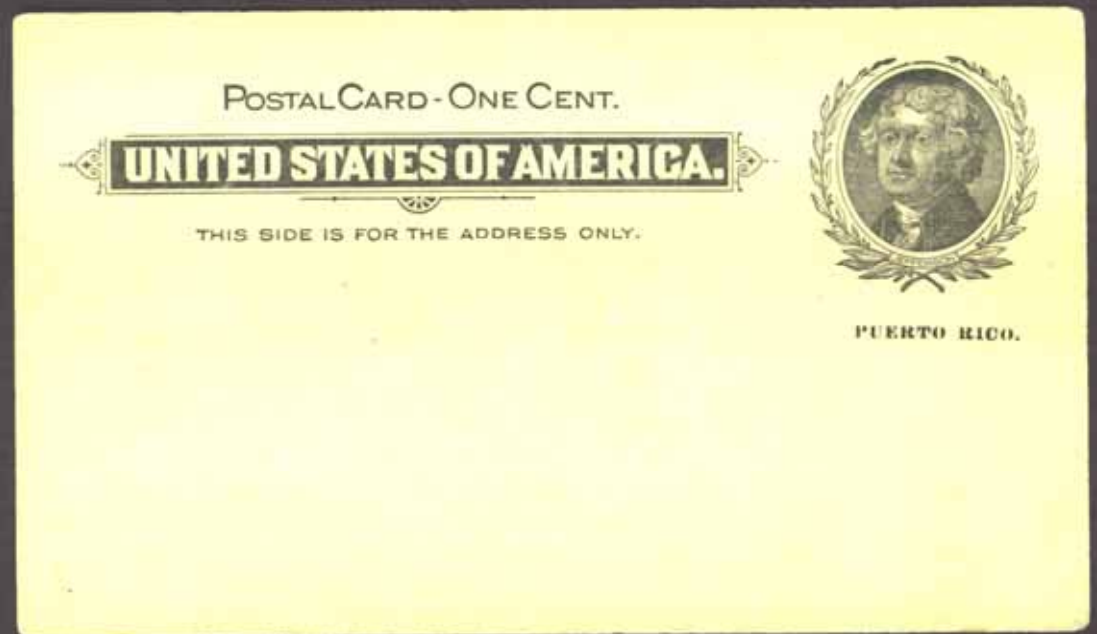


# United States Administration

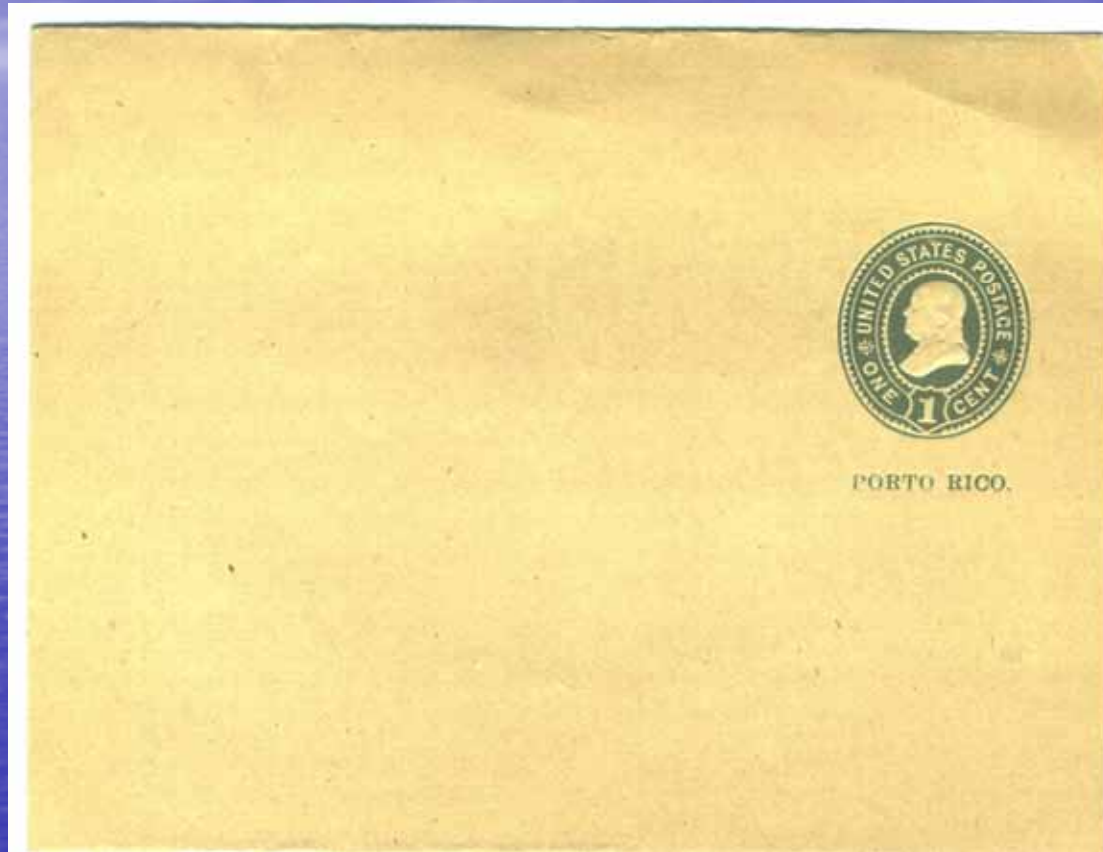


PORTO RICO 1899

PUERTO RICO 1900

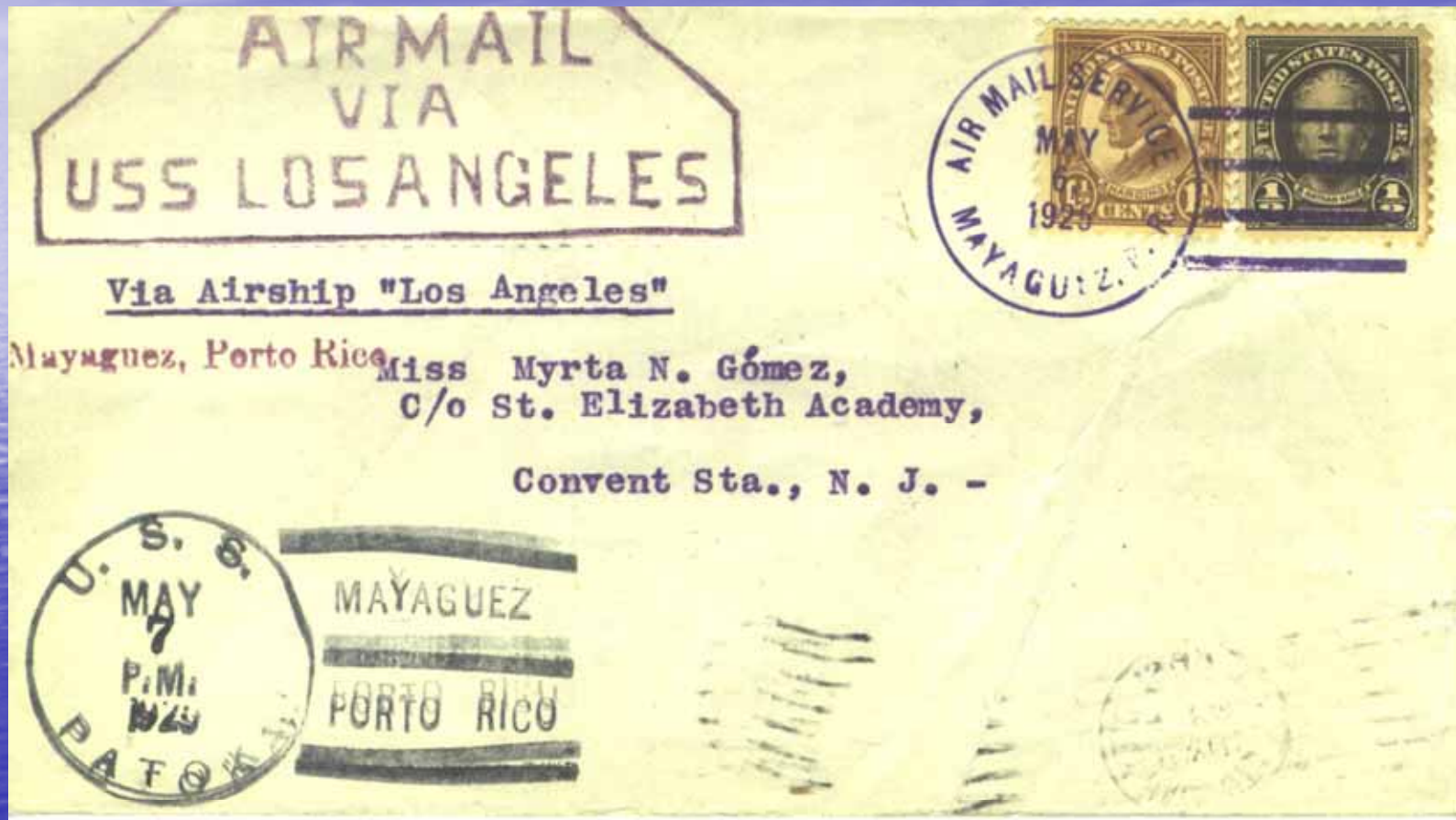


# United States Administration



Wrapper 1899

# Los Angeles Airship



# Aerovias Issues 1938



- Mail from Virgin Islands to Puerto Rico
- Private air mail service
- Flown by Hydroplane "Cofresi"



# Aerovias 1941



# Ship Cancel



Mona Island

ARG-9

# First Day Covers



Fortaleza Issue

November 25, 1937

Part of the Possessions series

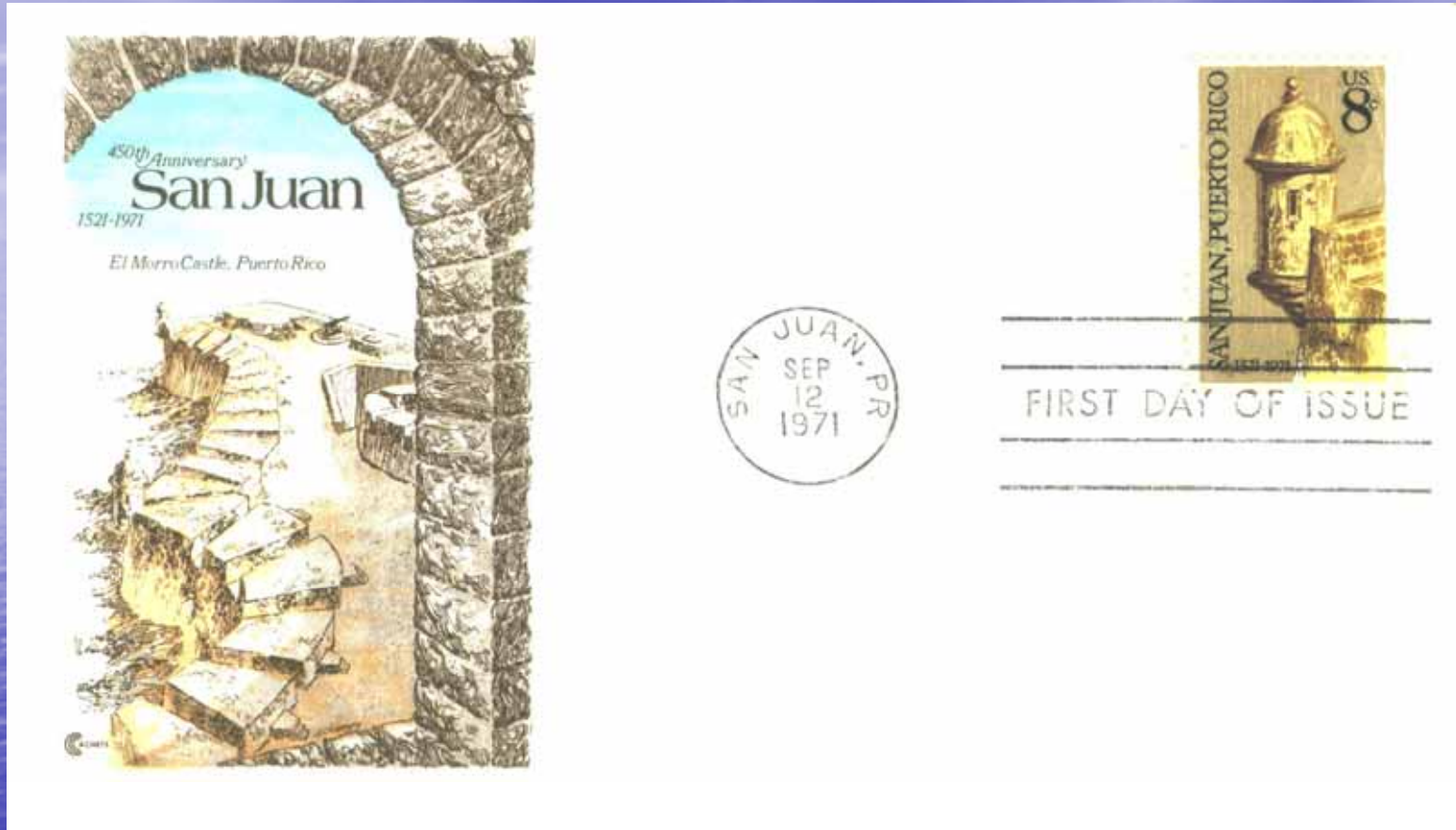
# First Day Covers



First Gubernatorial Election

April 27, 1949

# First Day Covers



450 Anniversary of the city of San Juan  
September 12, 1971

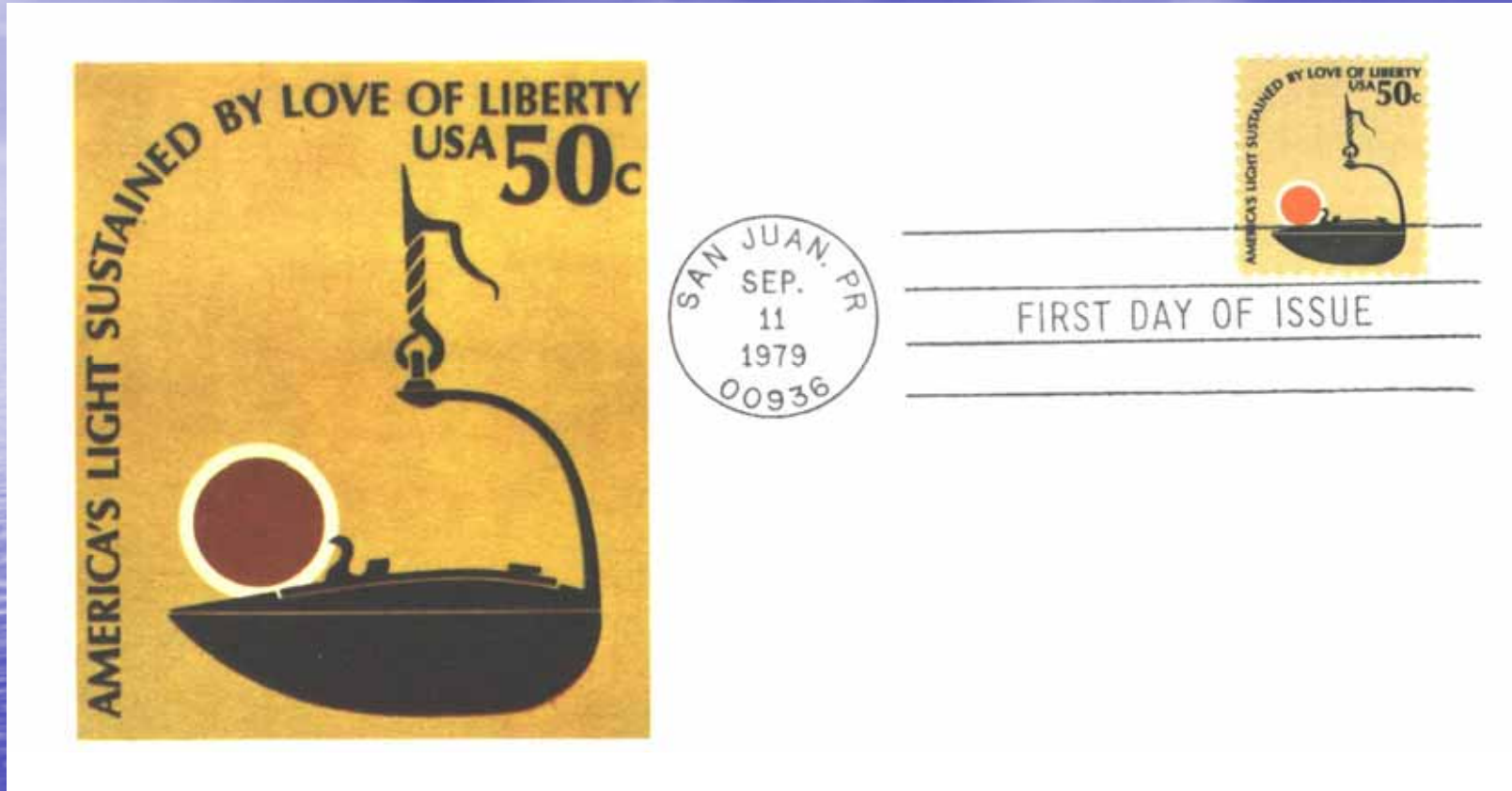
# First Day Covers



Hispanidad issues, Spain

October 12, 1972

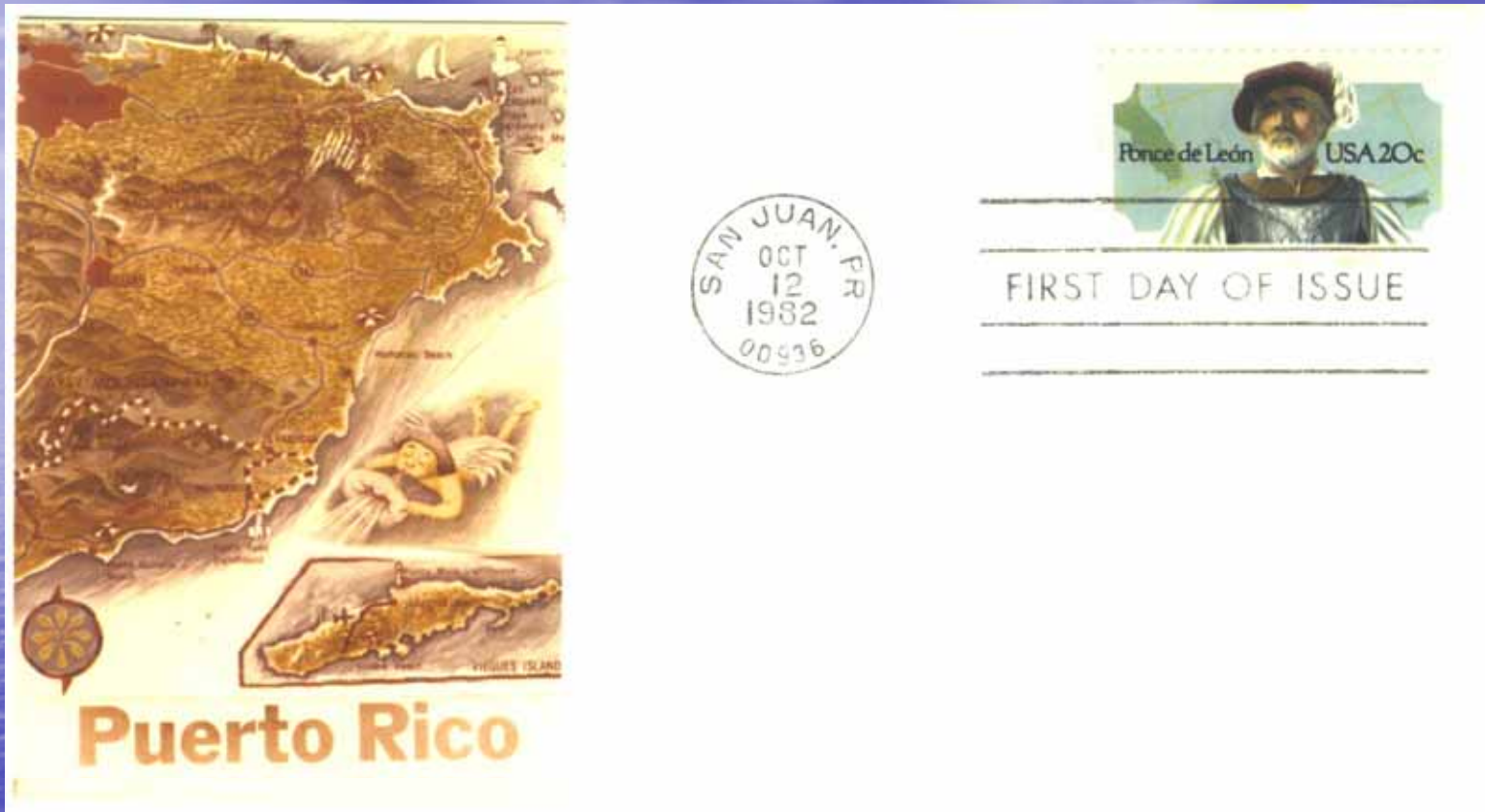
# First Day Covers



Oil Lamp

September 11, 1979

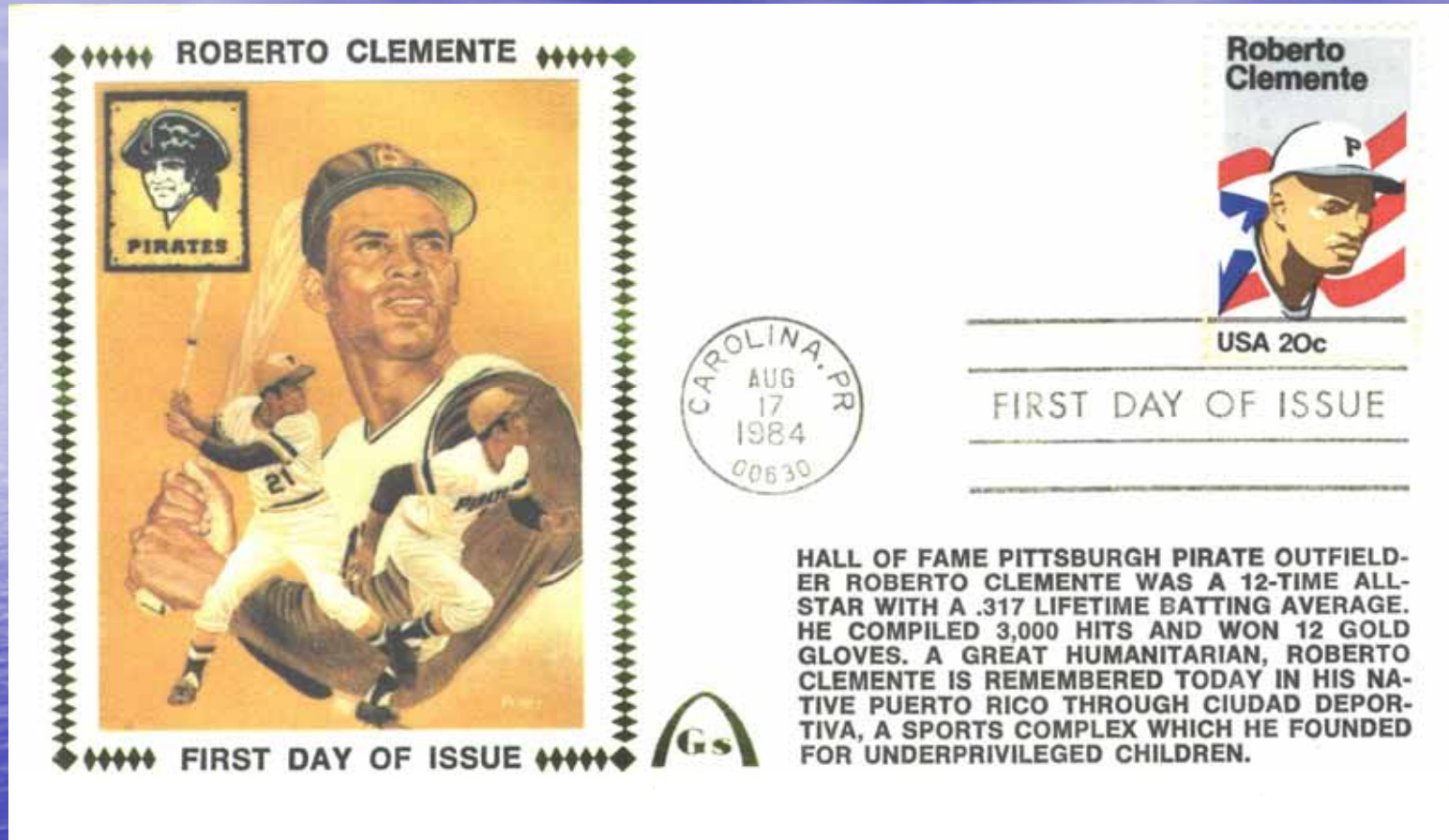
# First Day Covers



Ponce de Leon

October 12, 1982

# First Day Covers



Roberto Clemente

August 17, 1984

# First Day Covers



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Clarence E. Reid  
8241  
Pembro



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Americas Issues  
October 12, 1989

Plus AMERICA ISSUES  
PRE-COLUMBIAN CUSTOMS STAMPS

# First Day Covers



Luis Muñoz Marín  
February 18, 1990

# First Day Covers



Columbus Landing

November 19, 1993

# First Day Covers



Tropical Birds

July 29, 1998

# First Day Covers



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

**ARECIBO OBSERVATORY** RHG  
World's largest radar/radio telescope

Probing the Vastness of Space

Arecibo Observatory

July 10, 2000

# 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cover



Cover commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first gubernatorial election stamp 1949-2009.

# The End

