

# PHILIPPINES

THE SURCHARGE ERA, 1881-1889



Manila to **Port Louis, Mauritius**, July 21, 1889.

Marseille transit, Aug. 18<sup>th</sup>. Rec. Mauritius, Sep. 22, 1889

16c double weight rate to overseas destinations, ½-1 oz. (overpaid 4c)

Type 16 surcharge, 2 4/8 Magenta on Six Different Postal Issues

***Only Recorded Surcharge Cover to Destination***

At the Beginning of the 1880's, the Philippine Islands were plagued by a shortage of postage stamps resulting from delayed shipments from Spain, and greatly increased usage of stamps for both postage and prepayment of the newly established telegraph services between the Philippines and Hong Kong, Singapore and Europe. With the advent of overseas telegraph services, commercial business communications blossomed. The stamp shortage created chaos in the islands and threatened to shut down the flow of commerce. The problem was remedied by surcharging whatever existing stamp stock was available. This involved surcharging not only postal issues, but also telegraph and revenue stamps, which validated those surcharged stamps for either postal use, or for prepayment of cables.

With the exception of the first overprint, all of the surcharges were applied by hand. With a large number of surcharges being applied to numerous stamps and often in more than one color, the beleaguered postal employees sometimes misapplied the surcharge. This resulted in surcharges being placed on stamps not authorized by postal authorities to receive the surcharge, or the wrong surcharge placed on an authorized stamp. Additionally, the surcharge can be found applied to the stamp, inverted, doubled, tripled or sometimes even completely omitted.

This exhibit offers a tour through the most comprehensive assemblage of this material known, which includes dozens of unique and rare varieties and 124 different covers from the estimated 350-400 recorded covers franked with surcharged stamps.