

Two Unusual Cuban Perfin Covers

by Robert Littrell (#3992)

I have recently acquired two unusual Cuban perfin covers. With the first one (shown at right), you would expect that on an envelope FROM Remington Rand TO Remington Rand you would find a Remington Rand perfin. Except in this case you'd be wrong! Sent from Cuba, it has a 10 centavos Cuban stamp of 1942 "Democracy in America" series, and the perfin RV&Co. This pattern belonged to Ricardo Veloso y Cía, d/b/a Cultural, S.A. which was the producer of many perfined stamps from 1917 to 1949. Veloso edited and published books and ran a large bookstore.

I bought this particular cover from a friend, Jose Gonzales. Jose speculated that the stamp had been stolen or it was otherwise illegally used.

However, you do not see most illegal uses on the letterhead of a reputable company.

I have a more benign explanation. I think that since it was mailed from Cuba, a Remington Rand salesman merely asked for a Cuban stamp so he could write back to his company. A salesman from an American typewriter company would have plenty of reason to pay a business call on this prosperous Cuban firm.

My next cover (shown below) that I share with you was originally a legal use. It is what happened next



that makes it a FRAUD. May 2, 1935 was the opening of the Zona Franca (Free Port) of Matanzas, Cuba. To publicize this event, the port authority issued many first day covers on that day in Asunto Oficial (Official Mail) envelopes, some with nice labels like you see here. It also has a nice machine cancel in heavy thick san-serif lettering that was only used in 1935. Enrique Marcet was an engineer in Matanzas and a prominent stamp collector to whom this envelope was addressed.

But then it took a turn for the worse. It wasn't until a year later on May 11, 1936 that the Matanzas series of stamps were issued. A 1936 two centavos Matanzas stamp, perforated "Z.F." presumably for Zona Franca, now appears despite a 1935 postmark! The perpetrator of this fraud even used two colors of

ink to try to make it appear as if it were on the envelope at the time of the postmark and seal. Unfortunately, the second giveaway is that the purple ink bled on the stamp. The third clue to this fraud was that when the stamp came out in 1936, a much thinner, partial serif, machine cancel was in use in Matanzas. So, no, there was never any official or legitimate Z.F. perfin. Only in the mind of the creator of this fraud.



Above—Remington Rand Cover

Left—Zona Franca Cover

(Both covers approx. 50%)