

# REPRINTS OF THE 1897 SURCHARGED ISSUE

by *Don Peterson*

In the current Scott catalogue, there are nine 1897 postal issues with surcharged values in blue, red, black, and violet. They are Scott #'s 181-183, 185, and 187-191. A footnote to these issues indicates that there are also six reprints with the surcharge in violet-black. This article further describes these reprints.

Bartels et al. (1904) was the first cataloguer to mention the existence of the reprints. According to Bartels, a private reprinting (printing) occurred, using the original die (handstamp), to create six reprints with violet-black surcharges. Bartels describes the reprints as follows:

- 5c violet-black on 5c blue-green (Bartels #252)
- 15c violet-black on 15c bright rose-pink (Bartels #233)
- 15c violet-black on 15c reddish-brown (Bartels #217)
- 20c violet-black on 20c dull grayish-brown (Bartels #219)
- 20c violet-black on 20c violet-black (Bartels #234)
- 20c violet-black on 25c light sepia (Bartels #191)

Based on a review of the philatelic literature and on my first-hand inspection of the stamps, several observations can be made about the reprints.

## Table of Contents

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Reprints of the 1897 Surcharged Issue (Don Peterson).....	Page 1
Time For A New Perspective 1926 Palace of the Legislative Issue (Bill Grimaud).....	Page 5
Perplexing Perforations Prove Phoney (Douglas K. Lehmann).....	Page 12
Will The Real Rarity Line Up? (Douglas K. Lehmann).....	Page 19

First, careful inspection is needed to distinguish the reprints from forgeries of this issue, which are numerous. Bartels lists many, but not all of the known forgeries. Since Bartels is the key reference for the reprints and the forgeries of the 1897 surcharged issue, I am obliged to rely on that reference. Without going into any detail on these differences, the two key differences between the reprints and forgeries are that the reprints were surcharged with the original die. Further, the host stamps of the reprints occur only on certain printings of the stamp issue, as described by Bartels.

Second, since the original surcharge die was located in Manila and the original surcharged issues were produced in Manila, it is assumed that the reprints were also produced in Manila. Evidence of a Manila origin for the reprints rather than Spain or elsewhere is further supported by the presence of a reprint in my collection which shows a business handstamp of Ker and Company of Manila.

Third, the reprint surcharges are usually very clean and well struck, compared to the sloppily applied and irregularly-inked original surcharges. It is also common on the reprints for the surcharges to be well-centered and occasionally inverted, particularly on one or more stamps in a strip or block. The fine appearance of the reprints clearly suggests that they were produced with special care, perhaps as "favors" (Figure 1).

Fourth, the lack of any cancels on the reprints, including any from the Spanish period, confirm that they were not available for postal use during the Spanish period. The reprint with the business handstamp of Ker and Company of Manila on it is inconclusive, as it could have been applied by this firm during the U.S. occupation period.

Further information as to when the reprints first appeared comes from the works of Manuel Galvez. Prior to 1900, Galvez, who closely followed the production and release of Philippine stamps, made no mention of these reprints in his catalogue. In the 1900 Galvez catalogue, however, he lists for the first time a 20c black on 20c brown issue (Galvez #253). Although he was not aware of it at the time, this stamp was a reprint. Scott, in 1900, also first listed this stamp (Scott #200); deleted in in 1901; but relisted it in its 1902 through 1904 catalogues as Scott #199a, a variety of the 20c black on 20c dark violet issue.

Beginning with the Bartels catalogue in 1904, and subsequently in the Scott and Galvez catalogues in 1905, all six of the known

reprints were described. The Scott and Galvez catalogues have referenced them ever since.



20c Dark Violet on Brown (on # 177)



15c Black on 15c Red-Brown (on # 169)

**Fig.1. Examples of Reprints of the 1897 Surcharged Issue.**

Based on the above information, it is concluded that the reprints were privately produced in Manila in 1899, using former Spanish Philippine stamps and the original surcharge die. The fine appearance of the reprints suggests they were produced as "favors." Based on their wide distribution in European and North American collections and paucity of occurrence in the Philippines, it is assumed that most of the reprints were removed from the Philippines shortly after their production.

No catalogue since Bartels has provided any additional information on the reprints. My examination of the reprints indicates that the surcharge color is not violet-black for all six reprints, as Bartels indicated. Further, the relative scarcity of the reprints varies, from what I refer to, as scarce to rare. All of the reprints, except for one, have been examined by this author. One reprint, the 20c violet-black on 20c dark violet issue, has never been seen by this author and is considered the rarest of the six. Finally, all of the reprints occur with

**UP-TO-DATE DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
REPRINTS OF THE 1897 SURCHARGED ISSUE**

Description	Scott # of Host Stamp	Relative Scarcity	Remarks
1. 5c dark violet on 5c blue-green	156	Scarce	
2. 15c black on 15c red-brown	169	Very Scarce	
3. 15c violet-black on 15c rose	170	Scarce	Distinguished from Scott #'s 188 & 191 by having upper 2/3's of surcharge violet and lower 1/3 black.
4. 20c black on 20c gray-brown	174	Very Scarce	
5. 20c violet-black on 20c dark violet	175	Rare	No copies have been seen by this author.
6. 20c dark violet on 25c brown	177	Scarce	

**REFERENCES**

Scott Publishing Company. Scott Postage Stamp Catalogue, 1900 through 1905, and 1988. New York.

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