

Fall 2013

Araña

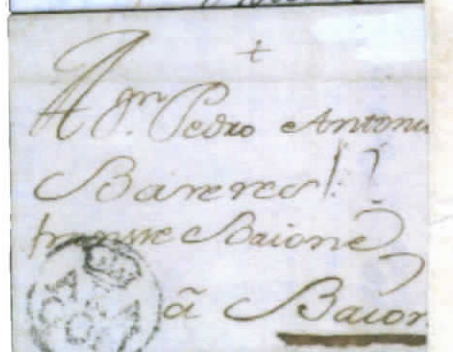
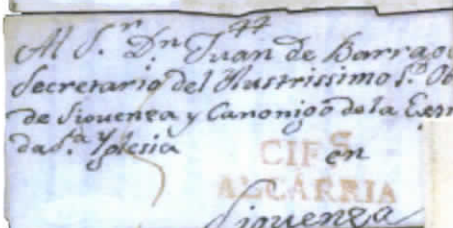
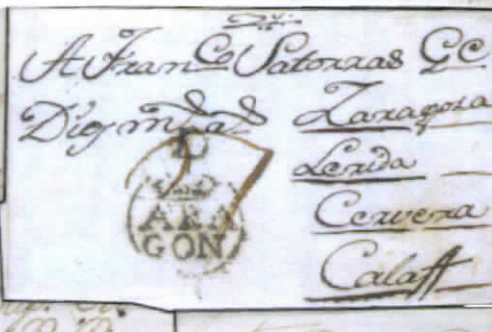
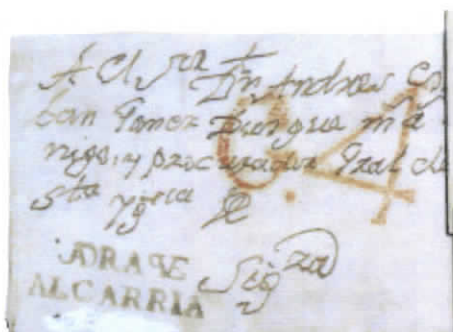
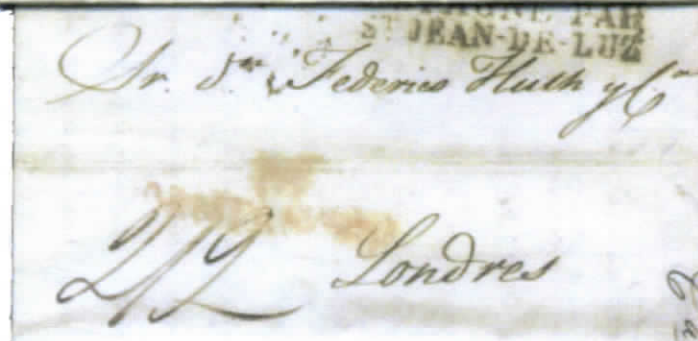
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THE HAND STRUCK POSTAL MARKINGS *of Spain*

BY OSWALD BOURNE

(From Spain, Vol. II - #4, 1979) (Revised)



EARLY POSTAL SERVICES

The progress of letter writing and letter delivery in Spain developed along the lines in vogue in Italy. In the 13th century the local Prince or Feudal Lord maintained professional letter carriers. Such messengers, as the years went on, banded themselves into local societies, particularly those connected with an overlord from a Monastic House. One of the earliest of such societies was at Valencia.

By the 15th century these guilds of messengers had their own receiving houses and were becoming practically controllers of the posts, and by the end of the century were sufficiently powerful to fix the rates of postage.

In the 16th century the office of Postmaster-General of Spain

and the Spanish Netherlands (Correo Mayor) was held by Franz von Taxis, a member of a family prominent for many years in the affairs of European posts. Wherever they governed, they installed 'running posts' and in Spain the family maintained its postal jurisdiction until 1622. As in England, these pioneers of the post office suffered from time to time from outside competition, but it was not until 1716 that the State definitely took over the postal arrangements.

THE FIRST HAND STRUCK MARKS OF SPAIN

In this same year Spain introduced its first hand struck marks. In these the name of the Province appeared (Fig. 1) – 'Upper Andalusia'.

Andalucia
la Alta

(Fig. 1).



(Fig. 2).



(Fig. 3).

CORREO
GRAL DE
MADRID

(Fig. 4).

Dated marks with indications of the month were introduced circa 1744. They were in straight-line lower case type. Another type of the same period showed the year and an initial or abbreviated word usually in a square frame (Fig. 2).

Tax or charge marks also appeared circa 1745, and were used with little change of design up till the 1820's (Fig. 3). These tax marks were struck first in black, later, in 1760, in red.

The Spanish Post Office seems to have cared little in those early days as to the identification of town of origin from which the correspondence came. In 1770, Madrid appears to be the only city to show the place of origin (Fig. 4).

A year later other towns began to identify themselves, but only by the modest use of the initial of the town above the name of the Province (Fig. 5). This type of varieties, framed and unframed, was in use for some fifty years.

B.
CATALUÑA

(Fig. 5).
(The "B" stands for Barcelona).

M
J N I 7

(Fig. 6).

GIJON
ASTURIAS

(Fig. 7).

90
BARCELONE

(Fig. 8).

132
GIRONNE

(Fig. 9).

133
PUYCERDA

(Fig. 10).

By 1744, the need for a means of checking delays in delivery brought forth the earliest recorded type of completely dated Spanish hand struck stamp to show the day and the month (Fig. 6).

MARKINGS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By the end of the eighteenth century there was a generally individualistic and sometimes archaic stamp in use by most of the larger towns; some were modified and became less ornate as the years went on, others were in use without change for forty or fifty years. (Fig. 7) in black, is a typical example from Gijón. In 1780, Cadiz had a plain straight-line stamp of very modern design.

The political events in Spain during the first half of the nineteenth century have a direct bearing upon the scarcity of these covers. In 1808, Napoleon had already reached the frontiers of Spain at Bayonne in pursuance of his plans for the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Portugal had refused to comply with Bonaparte's order to blockade Britain. The Spanish themselves resisted strongly and the active aid of the Portuguese and British under Wellington developed into the Peninsular War, which lingered from 1808 until 1814.

In 1828, a civil revolt organized by the Spanish Monarchist Party was in progress. In 1833, came the accession of the child-queen, Isabella II, an event so distressing to pride, prejudice and the working of the Salic law, that a state of anarchy became widespread throughout the whole of Spain.

In 1835, a violent outbreak against the Monastic Orders was in progress. In 1836, there was a military revolt, while during all this time since the accession of Isabella until 1840, the Carlist War was being waged with varying phases of intensity. In 1841 there was another military uprising, and in 1843 yet another. One can say without doubt that at no time during the period 1800-1850 was Spain really free from trouble and strife.

Kumpf-Mikuli in 'Die Poststempel' (Vienna 1931), states that 'at the end of 1812, Catalonia was taken over by France, and Napoleon made it postally Dept. 90 (Montserrat), a number that was originally used for the Dept. of Liamone in Corsica. Further, he created the Postal Departments 132 (Ter), 133 (Segre) and 134 (Bouches de l'Ebre)'. The marks used for the capital towns of three of these departments are shown in Figs. 8, 9 and 10.

Soon after 1814 and the Peace Treaty of Paris, these Catalanian 'French-Spanish' marks ceased to be used.

PAGO EL PORTE
EN MIRANDA

(Fig. 11).

PAGO EN
AND. BAJA

(Fig. 12).



(Fig. 13).



(Fig. 14).



(Fig. 15).



(Fig. 16).

PAMP.
NAVARRA

(Fig. 17).



(Fig. 18).



(Fig. 19).



(Fig. 20).

ESPAGNE
PAR BAYONNE:-

(Fig. 21).

ESPAGNE PAR
PERPIGNAN

(Fig. 22).

INSTRUCTIONAL MARKINGS

Spanish people are fond of abbreviations, 'Franca' or 'Franqueada' mean 'posted' or 'franked'; 'Pte Pagado' or 'Porte Pagado' or 'Pago el Porte' all mean 'Postage Paid'. They are equivalent to the French 'PP' etc. on foreign letters.

Fig. 11 means 'Postage paid in Miranda'; Fig. 12 means 'Postage paid in Lower Andalucia'.

ELABORATE AND STRIKING DESIGNS

As in Ireland at the period we are discussing, the percentage of illiterates among the population was very much higher than that of some other European countries. A plain fact, accounting

for the coincidence that the hand struck stamps of these two countries are in numerous cases sufficiently striking to be classed as 'picture writing'. Here are a few examples: (Fig. 13) Bilbao, Basque Provinces, 1841-2: (Figs. 14 and 15), two very pleasing rococo designs, in blue, from towns in Galicia: (Figs. 16 and 17), Pamplona, Navarre: a splendid circular type, 1826, and a slightly earlier type in black showing a reversed 'N' in the name of the Province; (Fig. 18), the proud 'Crowned Castle' motif of Burgos in Old Castile; (Fig. 19) shows the florid design used by the town of Alcira in Valencia, a Province which seems to excel in the striking effects of its hand struck stamps. These are but a few, but there are many other Spanish town marks of the period, equally artistic.



(Fig. 23).



(Fig. 24).



(Fig. 25).



(Fig. 26).



(Fig. 27).

REORGANIZATION OF PROVINCES

Until 1823, the thirteen Provinces of Spain took their names from the ancient Kingdoms and Principalities. These were Andalucia, Aragon, Asturias, Biscay (Viscaya), Catalonia, Estremadura, Galicia, Leon, Murcia, Navarre, New Castile, Old Castile, and Valencia. After 1833, a re-organization took place and the country was divided up into 47 Mainland Provinces or Counties.

These old Provincial marks are strongly individualistic, reflecting in a far-off manner the spirit of a people that Goya caught in his masterly sketches and George Borrow captured in the inimitable pages of 'The Bible in Spain'.

Between 1833 and 1843 the double ring circular type of town mark (Fig. 20) was introduced, and by 1850 its use was practically universal. The 'Baeza' was introduced in 1842 and became the standard mark by post office order. These circular markings can

be found in general use in such rich tints as blue, green, pink, deep crimson, brown, bright orange and lemon (depending on the post route).

DISTRIBUTION OF THE COVERS

Spain had a population of under 20,000,000 – a sparse one. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was between 13 and 15 million. The density of the population was greatest in Galicia, in the northeast corner of the Peninsula, in the Basque Provinces adjoin France at the south of the Bay of Biscay, Catalonia (which includes the City of Barcelona) in the west, and Valencia in the southwest. Covers from other than these four districts are consequently more rare. Old Spanish covers such as those herein described and their like, are eminently collectable and probably the most elusive of any Western European correspondence of the period. It has been stated that at the time of the Peninsular War there was but one London export and import firm doing business with the whole of Spain.

FRANCO-SPANISH FRONTIER MARKINGS

Spain is isolated from the rest of Europe by the great barrier of the Pyrenees Range with peaks exceeding 10,000 feet. The land approaches are few and circumscribed. There were in fact four post routes in use: Bayonne, St. Jean de Luz, Oleron and Perpignan, the last on the Mediterranean side. Hence the impression on foreign letters sent overland from Spain of such markings as Figs. 21 and 22. These occur framed (?) and unframed, and in circular format. Those of Bayonne are the most, and those of Perpignan (and Oleron), the least common.

BRITISH POSTAL ACTIVITIES IN SPAIN

Records indicate a British circular hand struck date-stamp, inscribed 'Corunna' was dispatched from the London GPO on February 28th 1842, but such a mark does not appear to have been in use until April 1845; used on one day in black. It was used until 1847 in red (Fig. 23). There was a similar mark for Vigo, but impressed in black. This was in use circa 1848-1854 (Fig. 24).

But so early as 1837, an entirely different type of British hand struck stamp was in use at this historic Spanish port (Vigo) (Fig. 25) and the conviction that 'B.V.C.' stands for 'British Vice Consul' is yet to be disproved. It is a rare mark and appears in blue. It has a mate in the even earlier stamp of Cadiz, which dated from 1830 (Fig. 26), used on outgoing letters from that port. Here again for want of a reasonable alternative the letters 'B.C.' must obviously stand for 'British Consul'. It appears always in black and is rare. With the fleuron under the word 'Cadiz' it is less rare.

Lastly, there is the special hand stamp shown in (Fig. 27) used by the Cadiz agents for the infant line of steamers known as 'The Peninsular Steam Navigation Co.', which developed into the famous 'P & O' line. This intriguing private postage mark was struck in black from March to April 1837, and in blue from April to August of the same year.

At the exact turn of the half-century, on the 1st January 1850, Spain issued her first adhesive stamp. The use of many of the markings described continued for many years into the stamp period.



Dear SPS Members and Friends,

SPS auction #50 catalogue will be posted on the Club web site www.spsforum.net about Thursday, September 12th with a bid closing date of Saturday, October 12th. I will send a short email when the posting occurs.

You will find interesting and all new items including a wide range of regular issues, locals and postage history, plus more books and articles about Spain, its civil war and Spanish philately all part of a larger literature collection donated to the club by Jerry Wells--thanks Jerry. All should find something of interest.

In early December, we will have a fourth auction as we did last year--a fundraiser. Club members wishing to donate material please have it to me October 15th. All donations to SPS are tax deductible if you itemize your deductions.

Best regards,

Hal





THE POSTAL HISTORY OF ANDORRA

BY D. W. TANNER

Little has been written in detail concerning the postal history of Andorra, perhaps because the sparse correspondence originating from the four to five thousand inhabitants of former times has left virtually no material to stimulate interest and upon which a study of the subject could be based. In the absence of such material one can only trace the development of the posts by seeking out and examining the scattered, and sometimes contradictory, references to the postal service which have appeared in history and travel books and combining those with the literature to be found in the philatelic press of years gone by. This it is proposed to do in the present series of articles, and references will be given to all the sources of information used in the compilation of the notes. There undoubtedly exist other references to the subject which are unknown to the writer, for example in articles and books written by early travellers in the Pyrenees, and it is hoped that any reader who is in possession of such articles or any additional information will kindly inform the Secretary so that these notes may be revised at a later date. These present notes are themselves a revision of a series of articles, which began to appear in "Andorra Philatelist" of Mexico City in 1971, and contain several corrections and additions arising out of other articles in that publication.

THE EARLIEST REFERENCES

The earliest official reference we have been able to find to any organized postal service to Andorra is contained in a lengthy report compiled by a Spanish Infantry Colonel, Bonifacio Ulrich, who spent seven years in Andorra, from 1841-1848, as a Special Commissioner of the Spanish Government, and who states:-

"Posts. Formerly the Andorrans used to collect their mail individually from the post offices of the City of Urgel and of the town of Ax, in France, but in view of the large number of emigrés who were in their Valleys during the last civil war, a post was established which conveys the Andorran mail from the said post offices to the town of Sant Julia, from which it is distributed." (1)

The civil war here mentioned was the Carlist War in Northern Spain of 1831-39, and that the postal service was established during this period is confirmed by another writer, Don Francisco Carreras y Candi (2) quoting a history book of 1874 (3) which gives the year of its establishment as 1837.

"when it was agreed that a Spanish courier should take the correspondence from the City of Urgel to Andorra, and that an Andorran should receive it there and convey it to Ax (France), and vice versa: although letters from this nation, though addressed to Andorra, are passed to Urgel, from which point they are sent to the postmaster of the Republic for him to distribute."

There is a seeming contradiction here, i.e. that while mail to and from France was conveyed by the Andorran courier; mail from France was sent to Urgel. A likely explanation is that while in the normal course of events a letter from France addressed to Andorra would be sent into Spain to reach its destination via Seo de Urgel, those Andorrans with friends and relatives in France would sometimes make use of the office at Ax and have correspondence addressed to them at that office for collection by the Andorran courier. Due to the difficulties in direct communication between Andorra and France, the mountain passes being frequently snowbound in the months from autumn until late spring, the

Andorrans always depended on Seo de Urgel to conduct the bulk of their business, postal or otherwise and that city was their principal point of communication with the outside world, including with their northern neighbor.

From these two early references it is evident that Spain merely undertook the conveyance of the mail from Urgel to Sant Julia de Loria, while the distribution inside Andorra and the direct service between Andorra and France were matters for the Andorrans themselves. Whether the Spanish service continued after the war ended, or whether it was then discontinued and the Andorrans were again left to make their own arrangements for the collection and dispatch of their mail from Urgel is not definitely known as we have been unable to trace any other references to the postal services existing in the first half of the 19th century. France first issued postage stamps in 1849, followed by Spain in 1850, and while it might be supposed that the development of the postal services in these two countries would have had some effect on the position in Andorra we have been unable to find any record of postage stamps being available in the principality until some twenty-five years later, following a further Carlist war in Northern Spain, that of 1873-76. During this war all the Spanish territory bordering Andorra was occupied by the Carlists, and any postal service between Andorra and Spain during this period must therefore have been carried on by arrangement with the Carlist authorities. Mail for Carlist controlled areas could presumably have been dispatched from Seo de Urgel in the usual way as the Carlists organized their own postal services in the territory under their control, and communication with other areas could have been effected via l'Hospitalet which, by about 1870, had replaced Ax as the outlet on the French side of the Pyrenees.

A RUDIMENTARY POSTAL ORGANIZATION

After the Carlist War of 1873-76 a reorganization of the postal arrangements took place, and according to Sr. Francisco Carreras y Candi it was in the year 1877 that the rudimentary postal organization came into being, with the appointment of an Andorran subject, Tomàs Rossell y Moles, as postmaster. He sold postage stamps of both France and Spain, which had to be affixed to the mail depending on its destination. In the case of Spain the letters were postmarked at Seo de Urgel as if they had originated in that city, while the mail bearing French stamps was postmarked at Porté, which had now taken over from the l'Hospitalet office the handling of the mail for France. In the interior of Andorra the mail was always conveyed free of charge, requiring no stamps of any kind. (2)

ANDORRA AND THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

One year later, at the Universal Postal Union Congress held in Paris in 1878, Andorra was officially allocated to Spain for postal purposes, article XXXII of the Detailed Regulations for the execution of the Convention reading as follows:

"The following are considered as belonging to the Universal Postal Union:

4..... the Republic of the Valley of Andorra ... as subordinate to the Postal Administration of Spain." (4)

In pursuance of these provisions Spain alone was entrusted with the postal Organization of Andorra, but another half a century was to elapse before the Spanish Postal Service finally came into being.

THE FIRST RECORDED POSTMARK

The early 1880s brought a strong increase in French interest

in Andorra, culminating in a bid by France to gain control of the country by offering to install postal and telegraph services, and to provide money for the construction of roads, provided Andorra became a French "département". By July 1881 these preparations for a take-over were in an advanced stage and telegraph poles had been erected by the French on Andorran territory. (5). This attempt to seize their country was strongly opposed by the majority of the Andorrans and eventually failed following rioting and the intervention of the Bishop of Urgel.

It is to this period that the earliest recorded postmark for Andorra belongs, this being of the same type as those at the time in use in France and consisting of two circles or rings, with the inscription "ANDORRE-VAL D'ANDORRE" between the rings. Examples dated 15th October 1882 have been found on contemporary stamps of both France and Spain, and the existence of the mark has led several writers to assume that France opened a post-office in Andorra circa 1882. While this was not the case, it is more than likely that the date-stamp was made during the French take-over preparations referred to above, and sent to some French agent in Andorra for use when the proposed postal and telegraph service came into operation.

A FRENCH COURIER SERVICE

Even though the attempt to absorb Andorra had failed, France made renewed efforts in the succeeding years to increase her influence in the small state, and was later able to install a telegraph service and establish a postal service between Porté and the Andorran capital. Some official information concerning this service is contained in an article submitted by the French Ministry of Posts to the Universal Postal Union's magazine "Union Postale", from the July 1945 number of which we take the following:

"Notwithstanding the stipulations of the Convention (which had allocated Andorra to Spain) France organized in 1887 a rudimentary postal service consisting of two postmen who went on foot direct from Porté (France) to Andorra la Vella, delivering the letters which they carried in the different localities on their route. In this manner, that part of Andorra situated between the French frontier and Andorra la Vella, also the capital itself was worked by these French postmen, while that part between the Spanish frontier and Andorra la Vella was served by Spanish postmen." (This reference to Spanish postmen appears to be incorrect in view of a later sentence in this same article and an account given by a visitor to Andorra in 1888 which will be recorded here later.) "The service was subsequently modified and improved and the correspondence was carried from Porté to Soldeu by two postmen who lived at Soldeu, and from Soldeu to Andorra la Vella by two other postmen living in the latter locality."

The modification and improvement in this service was an important step forward in the French attempts to gain control of Andorra's posts, as for the first time the employment by France of personnel actually resident in Andorra, and the use of local premises became necessary. While the date is not given in this article, it was undoubtedly in the year 1892 when, despite fresh opposition and strong protests from the Spanish Co-Prince, France constructed a telegraph line into Andorra, opening telegraph offices at Encamp and Andorra la Vella on the 1st November 1892, and additional offices at Soldeu and Sant Julia de Loria a short time later. (6) It is on record also, that in 1892 some correspondence took place between the French Ministry of Posts and other government

departments concerning the wording of a poster regarding the postal services which was to be displayed in Andorra. This poster was headed "REPUBLIQUE D'ANDORRE" and the French Prefect of Pyrenees Orientales returned it to Paris with the request that the word "republique" be substituted by "VALLEES" seeing that Andorra was not a republic and that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs would recognize only the designation "VALLEES D'ANDORRE". (7) This poster almost certainly referred to the new (or "improved") postal service mentioned in the article quoted, which continues:

"At Andorra la Vella an agent appointed by the French Postal Administration sorted out the mail brought by the postmen from France. He himself delivered that for the capital and sent the rest to the distributors in the other localities. He sold both French and Spanish stamps. The delivery of mail in the different localities was made by municipal agents appointed and paid by the mayors. Private persons who had correspondence to send, or other postal transactions to perform, entrusted it, according to its destination either to the drivers of vehicles going to Seo de Urgel in Spain or to the postmen who in fine weather went to France every day."

The agent appointed at Andorra la Vella was a French shoemaker who was established in Andorra, a Monsieur Bridé of whom more later. Seemingly his duties were mainly of an administrative nature, the actual postal work in the capital being delegated to the already mentioned Tomàs Rossell y Moles, who remained in charge until his death in 1897 when he was succeeded by his son, Tomàs Rossell y Duran. (2) The statement that mail was entrusted to the drivers of "vehicles" (?mules?) going to Seo de Urgel conflicts with the earlier statement that Spanish postmen worked to the Andorran capital, hence our remark on this point. That there was no Spanish service to Andorra la Vella appears confirmed by a visitor, Pedro Vidal, who "describing his trip to Andorra in 1888 explained that the post was installed in a small store, in the window of which there was always to be seen a number of letters waiting to be claimed. Mail arrived via Sant Julia de Loria and Seo de Urgel. A girl of 12 worked the route between Sant Julia and Andorra la Vella; she carried a leather letter-case, and knitted socks while walking along." (2)

While Spain possibly conveyed the mail as far as Sant Julia de Loria, this industrious twelve-year-old would seem to have been one of the local distributors who were paid from Andorran funds.

Another brief reference to the postal service of this period occurs in an article written in 1893 by a Señor José Aladern:

"It consisted of two foot-postmen, one for the route from Seo de Urgel to Llorts by way of Andorra la Vella, the other leaving the capital and going in the direction of France. The cost was paid by the parishes or by the Andorran State which recovered the small amounts from the parishes". (2)

The postmen here described as going in the direction of France from Andorra la Vella would, in fact, have been one of the couriers employed by the French Postal Administration, so this writer confuses the internal services (paid for by the Andorran State) with the service to Porté (paid for by France). It is also extremely unlikely that one person would ever have worked the entire route from Seo de Urgel to Llorts, this being a journey of some eight hours march according to Colonel Ulrich.

While the position with regard to Spain's part in the postal service remains none too clear at this time, it is well established from later accounts left by travellers and visitors that the French courier service inaugurated in 1892 continued to operate, virtually unaltered until 1931 when the present postal service came into being. Andorra being separated from France by a range of mountains the passes through which are at an altitude of over 2000 metres and frequently snowbound, the mail-carriers operating between Soldeu and Porté had a dangerous and difficult task to perform. They were frequently unable to make the journey during the winter months, accidents occurred, and it has been stated that more than one of these postmen lost his life while making the perilous passage over the mountains. In addition to carrying mail these couriers also transacted other postal business on behalf of residents in Andorra, such as the sending from Porté of money orders, or the collection at that office of the money payable on incoming orders. In the latter case long delays sometimes occurred before the payee received his money, as the form had first to be sent from Porté to Andorra to obtain the necessary signature and then taken back by the courier for payment. The postmen did not always give receipts for the money entrusted to them and if an accident occurred it was sometimes difficult to find out to whom the money belonged. It is understandable therefore, that the inadequate service gave rise to criticism but France could not officially reorganize the service while the U.P.U. Convention allocating Andorra to Spain remained unaltered. (4)

THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Some interesting details of the postal arrangements as they existed in August 1898 are on record thanks to an account given by a visitor and published in the French journal "Le Collectionneur de Timbres-poste" No. 219 of January 1899:

"It will perhaps be surprising to learn that there exists in the Valley of Andorra a postal and telegraph service although there are no roads suitable for a vehicle.

I. International Franco-Andorran service. The letters from Andorra for France are all brought to the capital up to 10p.m. The next morning at 5 o'clock a courier takes the assembled mail and carries it to Soldeu, the last Andorran village, where he meets at about 11a.m. the courier from France, who has come from l'Hospitalet or Porté, the nearest French post offices. Mails are exchanged and each courier returns to his starting point. At Andorra la Vella the letters from France are delivered about 3 or 4pm. At Porté the letters from Andorra are forwarded by post-van to Ax-les-Thermes, on the railway to Toulouse, where they can be delivered the same night. In the service with France French stamps of 15 centimes are used, for there are neither stamps nor postmarks of Andorra. A letter sent to me from Lille on August 13th 1898 passed Ax (second collection) on August 15th to Porté (fourth collection) on August 15th and was delivered to me at the inn at Andorra la Vella at 4p.m. on August 16th. One of my letters posted at Andorra at 9.30p.m. on August 15th passed Ax on the 17th and was delivered at Acheux (Somme) on August 19th.

II. International Spanish-Andorran Service. This is also carried on by couriers. The Andorran courier goes to Seo de Urgel (Spain) and brings back incoming mail. Spanish stamps are used, the present war tax (on letters during the Spanish-American War of 1898) is not obligatory.

III. National Andorra Service. Between Andorran villages and small communities the service is free of charge. A piece of paper of any kind posted in a village will be delivered to the addressee the same night or the next day. This very primitive service is carried on by peasant boys taking the mountain paths.

IV. Telegraph Service. This exists between Andorra and the French office at Porté. There is no line from Andorra to Seo de Urgell; to telegraph there the message has to be sent via Toulouse - Perpignan - Barcelona. The French line goes from Andorra via Soldeu and Porté. A wire which I sent at 10.45a.m. from Soldeu arrived at Pas de Calais at 2.30p.m. the same day; ordinary French tariff of 50 centimes."

One slight misunderstanding appears to have arisen in this account, this being in regard to the service between Soldeu and France. The courier stated "to have come from l'Hospitalet or Porté" was not a mail-carrier based on one of these offices as might be inferred, but the courier resident at Soldeu who had been to Porté and back by 11 o'clock, (while the courier resident at Andorra la Vella was making his way to Soldeu). With regard to l'Hospitalet, the Andorran mail may still have occasionally been taken to this office for despatch in some exceptional circumstance, but Porté was the normal outlet.

The information provided by this French visitor has recently been considerably augmented by Mr. Manuel Barò of Andorra, who in that very year of 1898 was closely connected with the postal service and may quite conceivably have handled some of the letters mentioned by the French visitor. Mr. Barò's reminiscences, supplied in 1970 during an interview with the noted Mexican philatelist Mr Ernesto Fink, were recorded in full in "Andorra Philatelist" No. 2, a bulletin circulated by Mr. Fink in February 1971, and are now summarized here as they provide at first hand some more interesting details of the postal organization towards the close of the century.

Mr. Barò who was born in 1877, was apprenticed in the 1890s to Monsieur Bridé, the shoemaker in Andorra la Vella who was also the French postal agent and was paid a monthly salary of 33 francs by the French government for his services. Tomàs Rossell y Moles, who also worked for Mr. Bridé, normally attended to the postal business but Mr. Barò himself also assisted with this at times, and distributed the mail in Andorra la Vella in 1897 and 1898 no doubt because of the death of Tomàs Rossell in 1897, as already recorded.

In those days Andorra la Vella itself consisted of only some 40 houses, and there was only the one office - presumably on Mr Bridé's premises - which handled mail for both France and Spain, and sorted the letters received from the different localities. There were no roads of any kind, and the journey from Andorra la Vella to Soldeu took five hours on foot. This journey was undertaken daily by a Mr Samion, usually on foot but sometimes with a mule, although the outgoing mail to France at times consisted of only two letters, and the incoming mail averaged from two to five letters and two newspapers a day. From Soldeu a Mr Canaro carried the mail over the difficult route to Porté, again daily when the weather permitted. There were no refuges or dwellings up in the mountains, the only shelter being a primitive little shepherd's hut near Pas de la Casa. The route via the Port Dret pass was usually taken in

preference to that via the Port d'Envalira, as although the climb was more difficult it avoided the heavier snowdrifts of the latter. For their combined efforts - totaling some seventeen hours walking in this difficult terrain, often in extreme weather conditions - these two stalwarts received a total daily payment of 5 pesetas, which they split between them.

Mail for the localities between Soldeu and the capital - Canillo, Encamp, Les Escaldes was left with the local distributors by Mr Samion as he passed through, and the outgoing mail collected also.

The cost of delivering mail to other parts of Andorra was met from funds provided the General Council of Andorra, the carriers receiving 25 centimos for the journey from capital to La Massana, and 50 centimos to Ordino. These two parishes were faithfully served by a Mrs Olivett who made the trip - a walk of some four hours duration - all the year round, regardless of the weather.

In the south of the country the mail from Spain for Andorra was delivered to Sant Julia de Loria, its conveyance as far as that town being paid for by Spain. At Sant Julia it was taken over by a young woman popularly known as "La Polleta" ("Chick", or "Our Chick" - Mr Barò did not remember her real name; perhaps this was the same person as the industrious young lady of 1888). As Spain did not pay her anything for distributing the mail she charged a delivery fee of 5 centimos on the letters, which came from Spain for her part of Andorra. Sometimes people could not pay the 5 centimos, but "La Polleta" was willing to extend credit and delivered the letters anyway. The mail for the other parts of Andorra she took daily to the office at Andorra la Vella, a round trip of some three hours, for which she received 50 centimos.

From this information supplied by Mr Barò it can be seen that all the main villages of Andorra were covered by the courier services paid for by France and the General Council of Andorra, and controlled by Mr. Bridé.

One other point mentioned by Mr Barò was that no cancelling device was available which confirms the statement by the French writer of 1898. However, the four telegraph offices possessed circular date-stamps for use on the telegraph forms, and a few rare examples have been found on covers, in one or two cases struck on the stamps. These were applied contrary to the regulations, usually to oblige a philatelic request. It is hoped to deal fully with these early cancellations in a separate article covering the postmarks of Andorra.

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- (6) "Schweizer Briefmarken-Zeitung", December 1943, p.338.
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POSTAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN *Andorra and Spain* DURING THE CIVIL WAR 1936-1939

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TRANSLATED BY A. BAILLIE
(From *Cruzada* Vol. 16 - #2, 1978)

BACKGROUND

The Principality of Andorra is situated between France and Spain, bordered by the Spanish Province of Lerida, and the French Department of Ariège.

Andorra has no post officer of her own. Andorra has two completely independent postal services financed by France on one hand and Spain on the other. Thus, in Andorra la Vella for instance, there is both a French Post Office and its Spanish counterpart, and this curious state of affairs also exists in the villages of Canillo, Encamp, La Massana, Ordino and San Julio de Loria. In Les Escaldes, and Sanata Coloma there are only Spanish Post Offices, and only French Post Offices.

The term "Post Office" is somewhat inappropriate in many cases and "Agency" is much more correct and realistic. For instance, the French Agency at Pas de la Casa is situated in the rear of the souvenir shop and the Spanish Agency in La Massana is in a tailor's.

However, not only is the country well supplied with Post Offices and Agencies at no cost to herself, she also enjoys a unique concession not to be found in any other country in the world. The privilege is the free carriage of all its internal mail irrespectively of who posts the mail, be he Andorran or otherwise. This concession only applies to mail posted in Andorra and addressed to an Andorran destination. However, registration is extra inside Andorra and external mail going out of Andorra is franked at French or Spanish rates depending on which Post Office is used.

THE CIVIL WAR BEGINS

On the eve of the Civil War, Seo de Urgel was the junction of the Spanish postal network and that of the Principality of Andorra, via the following "conducciones" (see Note at the end):

1. Seo de Urgel – Andorra La Vella, via Anserall in Lerida; and Fraga del Moles, San Julia de Loria and Santa Coloma, in Andorra. 21 km.
2. Seo de Urgel – Puigcerda, via Baños de San Vicente, Pont de Bar Arenys, Martinet, Prullans, and Bellver in Lerida; and Isobol Alp, Ger and Bollvir, in Gerona. 51 km.
3. Seo de Urgel – Calaf, via Castellciutat, Adrall, Pla de San Tirs, Noves, Organa, Coll de Nargo, Oliana, Basella, Tiurana, Pons, Ribelles, Sanahuja, Biosca and Tora in Lerida; and Castellfullit de

Ruibregos in Barcelona. 104 km.

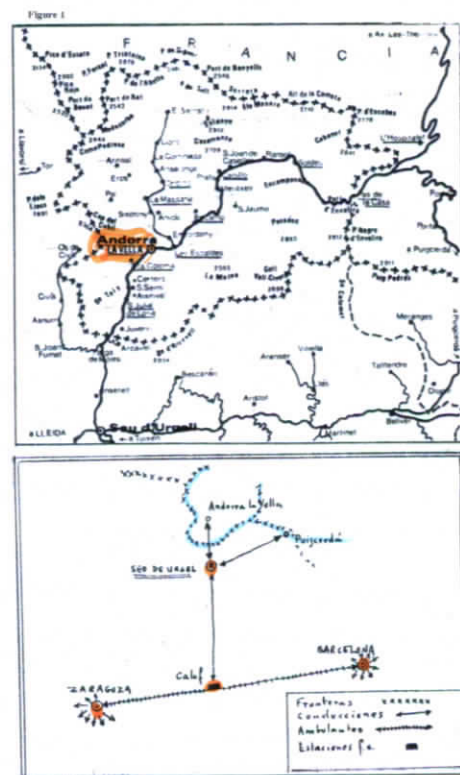
As a consequence of the foregoing, all the correspondence coming from Andorra and with destination Spain, was concentrated in Seo de Urgel for its subsequent distribution via the "conducciones" – "Seo de Urgel – Puigcerda" and "Seo de Urgel – Calaf" at which station mail for the travelling post office "Zaragoza – Barcelona" (also known as the Catalanian TPO) was received and dispatched. Reciprocally, all mail proceeding from Spain and destined for Andorra was concentrated at Seo de Urgel for its subsequent forwarding to the Principality through the "conducciones" "Seo de Urgel – Andorra la Vella" (See Figures 1 & 2 Route Maps).

In July of 1936, the Spanish Agencies in Andorra were:

- Canillo
- Encamp
- La Massana
- Les Escaldes
- Ordino
- San Julia de Loria
- Santa Coloma

All of which were dependent on the Andorra La Vella Office in the charge of the Spanish Post Office civil servant, D. Filomon Lopez y Lopez. At that time the volume of mail related to Andorra was possibly small, since the population was around 15,000 inhabitants and the economic and cultural levels of the Principality were notoriously inferior to those of today.

Upon the military uprising, the Head of the Andorran Office, D.



Filomon Lopez, and all the Spanish agencies with the exception of San Julia de Loria and Les Escaldes, declared themselves for the Nationalists and suspended all postal service with Seo de Urgel since this locality was enclaved in the Republican zone and Franco's troops did not reach the Andorran frontier until the last days of March 1939, that is, at the end of the Civil War.

The pro-Republican offices at San Julia de Loria and Les Escaldes continued lending their services as usual, both in the interior of the Principality and in external services related to Seo de Urgel and the Republican zone.

At the beginning of 1938, the Republican postal authorities dismissed D. Filomon Lopez and transferred his duties to Sr Espel (a Republican man), the Agent for Les Escaldes, who in this way was officially made Head of the Spanish Agencies and Offices in Andorra. It was then that the pro-France offices left off the regularity of their services, although some did still stay open. These services upon closer study, were simply the receipt and distribution of mail inside the limits of the Principality. Sr Lopez, who never respected the Government's order, no handed over his office to Sr Espel, closed the office in the Andorran capital and left for Burgos where he stayed until March 1939, when he returned to Andorra to take up his old post.

The French post offices functioned normally during the whole period of the civil war, playing a very important part since communications between Andorra and Nationalist Spain were impossible through the Spanish Post. I have in my collection some samples of correspondence between Andorra and France's Spain, for example the cover in Fig. 3, proceeding from the French Office of San Julia de Loria, and with destination a small town in Navarra. It should be noted that this letter of the 26th June 1937 came in through Irun and was censored in Pamplona. I also know of several examples of Nationalist mail sent to Andorra via Toulouse or via Hendaye, and distributed in the Principality by the French Offices.

Mail coming from the Republican zone with destination Andorra, was first concentrated in Seo de Urgel and from this locality went to Les Escaldes through the "conduccion" – "Seo de Urgel – Les Escaldes", which at the outbreak of the Civil War, substituted that of "Seo de Urgel – Andorra la Vella", that is the "conduccion" extended its itinerary some three kilometres, this being the distance which separated the capital of Andorra from the then small town of Les Escaldes. (Today, Les Escaldes has experienced a surprising development and it is now practically joined to Andorra la Vella). Two covers are known to us, addressed to Canillo and sent by a soldier of the Republican zone. Both bear cancelling stamps showing their arrival at Les Escaldes on the 15th and 22nd November 1938 respectively. There is also another of the same characteristics, but addressed to Andorra la Vella. As regards the mail from the Principality and with destination – governmental Spain, the process was the reverse: the correspondence was concentrated in Les Escaldes and San Julia de Loria for its onward forwarding to Seo de Urgel, and subsequent distribution through the "conducciones" of Seo de Urgel – Pucgerda and "Seo de Urgel – Calaf".

As far as the "censorship" was concerned, all correspondence I

know of between Andorra and the Republican zone was censored in Barcelona or in Seo de Urgel, the censors using on the covers those rubber cancelling stamps and precincts who marks and characteristics have already been studied in other chapters of CRUZADA to which I refer.

With regard to the Nationalist zone – Andorran correspondence, the censor marks correspond to the point of destination or transit.

FRENCH GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

A very interesting question relating to Andorra during the period 1936-39, is the type of control organized by the French government prior to that established by the "Committee of Non-Intervention" with the object of vigilating the transit of voluntries with Spain as their destination and provisions of all types, as well as the object of avoiding any kind of incident under those delicate circumstances. For this end the French Government stationed a detachment of the Mobile Guards in a building situated in the Col del Hospitalet which overlooks the valleys, under Colonel Baulard and dependent on the 5th Legion of Mobile Republican Guards of Nantes, according to what I can deduce from a rather confused article by Jean Savines published in the ECO FILATELICO of, I think, 5/11/75.

In my collection I have a cover stamped with examples of the Andorra Yvert No. 24, 32, 48 (2) and 52, cancelled with the cancelling stamp of Encamp – 10/3/37 and addressed to Madame Lermite, 5 Legion of the G.R.M. (Mobile Republican Guards), Nantes. On the front of the cover there is a beautiful oval mark in blue ink with the Principality of Andorra's coat of arms in

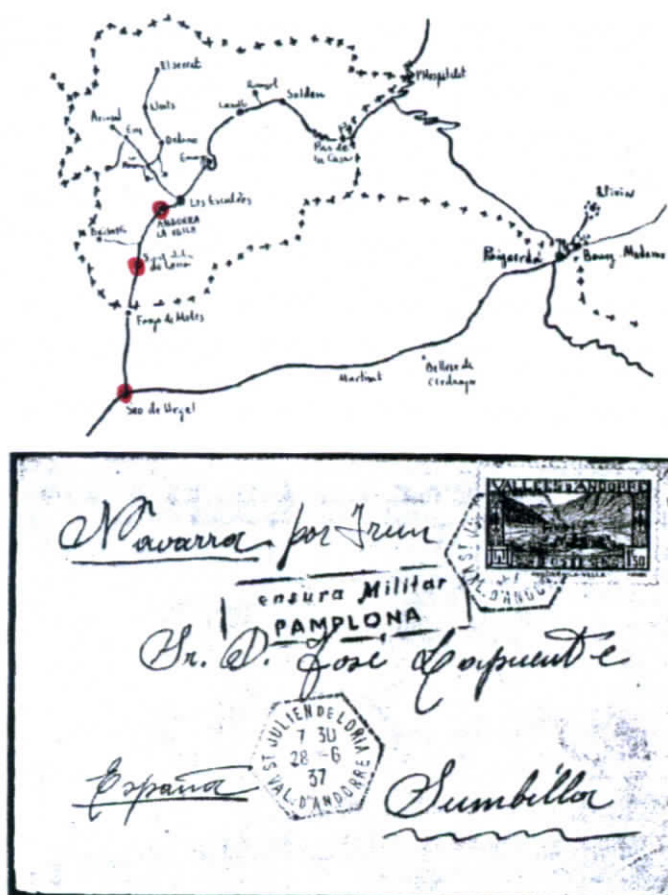


Figure 3

Figure 4



the center and the inscription: “VALLEES D’ANDORRE/Le Colonel Commissaire Extraordinaire”. This cover of dubious philatelic characteristics, but circulated, gives me the idea that it was prepared by a philatelic member of the detachment at Col de l’Hospitalet, whose wife, in Nantes, was possible the recipient of the letter which today is one of my favorite pieces (Fig. 4).

TERMS

In the Spanish postal terminology, “Conduccion” or “Conducciones” are those names given to the transport services linking two or more stationery or ambulant offices. In these the correspondence is in the charge of an under the responsibility of the contractors or concessionaries of sole agent transport.

“Conducciones” by the land are of two classes, those which I have mentioned and those which left the Stations by trains whose services were limited regularly to transport the mail and an office worker who had to check the exchange with an ambulant.

The Ambulant Offices (TPO) are those in charge of transporting the mail from one point to another using the railway lines and having one or more office workers in charge, according to importance. During the journey the employees of these “mobile” offices checked the classification and addresses of the mail, used the checking stamps and exchanged mail at each station with the employees, contractors or postmen in charge of this service.

Figure 5



ANDORRA ESPAÑOLA

The Spanish Postal Authorities censored mail coming from Andorra. Figure 5 is a cover from Andorra to France. Note censor tape on the right.

EARLY MOROCCO MAIL THROUGH

Spain

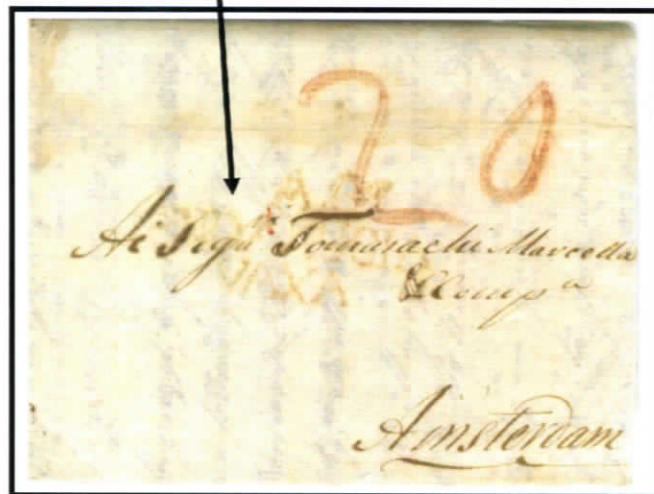
BY LARRY GARDNER



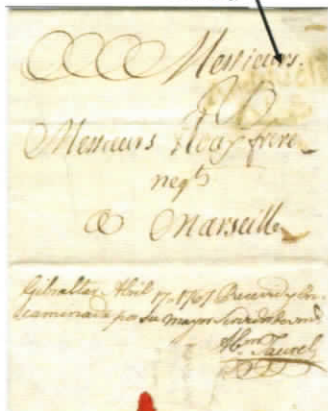
Morocco occupies the Northwest corner of Africa. Bordered on the West by the Atlantic, the Mediterranean to the North, and the Western Sahara to the south and Algeria to the east. Across the Straits of Gibraltar lie Spain and Gibraltar where much of the early postal history is linked. A second article will be written covering the mail originating in the Spanish posts of Ceuta and Melilla. The Spanish overland route from Morocco to European destinations is the subject of this article. The basic means of conveying a letter at this time was to make use of the Forwarding Agent. The following 1767 letter Larache to Marseille was forwarded by the commercial agent Abraham Taurel in Gibraltar. Most of the mail at this time was collected by and forwarded in the diplomatic pouch by the British vice-consul in Tangier to the British Civil Secretary's office in Gibraltar. The consuls at Tetuan and Tangier were used primarily as forwarding agents. Prior to the inauguration of the British Postal Agency proper in Tangier, there was no way of prepaying letters to the border other than through the services of a forwarding agent in Gibraltar (or elsewhere), because Tangier did not have any accounts with foreign post offices to account for postages collected on behalf of other postal services. Patrons or (masters) of small vessels harbored in Gibraltar sailed between the cities and were paid a transit fee from the Gibraltar funds and the postage was paid separately for onward transmission.

entry mark into Spain. Tizon and Guinovart list this marking as San Roque #1 in their definitive book on PREFILATELIA ESPAÑOLA. In use 1765-1769 the marking is only known in black. The 20 decimes rating in M/S was payable in France. In addition, this is only one of three known covers originating in Morocco handled by a commercial forwarding Agent in the 18th century.

A.G.
ANDALUCIA
VAXA



Andalucia
Alta



1767 Larache to
Marseille forwarded by
Abraham Taurel in
Gibraltar. Overland to
San Roque where the
Andalucia Alta mark
was applied. San Roque
overland to Madrid and
on to the French border
station Irun and on to
Marseille.

The above cover bears the Andalucia Alta entry marking at San Roque and is only one of three known Morocco covers bearing this

The entry stations in Spain handling the overland mail from Gibraltar changed from time to time based on weather conditions and relationships with the Spanish which were at best strained most of the time. This cover originated in Mogador and was routed the usual way Tangier to Gibraltar and on to Algeciras where the Andalucia Vaxa entry mark was applied. These marks are related to the Spanish Postal demarcation numbers of postal district no. 25 called Andalucia Baja and Algeciras being a subdistrict. The mark is designated Algeciras #3 by Tizon & Guinovart. It was struck in various colors of maroon and in use 1800-1814. 16 quartos was the prepaid rate border to border to the French transit station at Irun. The 20 Stuivers you see in red was the amount applied in Holland

payable to the Dutch by the recipient.

CENSORED MAIL VIA SAN ROQUE



S. ROQUE.
ANDALUCIA
BAXA

As a result of war with Spain, in Oct. 1807 the Assistant Civil Secretary of Gibraltar re-quired letters from Gibraltar to Spain either by land or water to be brought to the Secretary's office for examination and all letters intended for Tetuan and Tangier or brought from there to also be brought to the Secretary's office. There is no indication of how long this state of alert lasted and how long letters were censored. This 1808 letter from Tangier to Xeres met the criterion and was subject to censorship before being sent to the estafetta at San Roque. This cross post cleared most mail routed to and through Spain from Gibraltar. Its rated 6 quartos the overland rate to Cadiz and Xeres. The use of this 3 lined transit, was in use only from 1806-1808 as the border closed to hostilities on the peninsula and was replaced with a new transit mark without a full stop after Roque. Tizon & Guinovart San Roque cancel #4.

VIA TARIFA



T
ANDALUCIA
VAXA

This 1807 cover again from Mogador to Amsterdam bypassed Gibraltar and was delivered directly to Tarifa where the T Andalucia Vaxa entry mark was applied. The cover was routed overland to Cadiz then on to Madrid where it continued on postal route 3 to Bayonne where the Espagne par Bayonne transit was applied. Tizon & Guinovart Tarifa #1 in shades of maroon used 1807-1854.

BORDER CLOSED-SEA ROUTE TO CADIZ

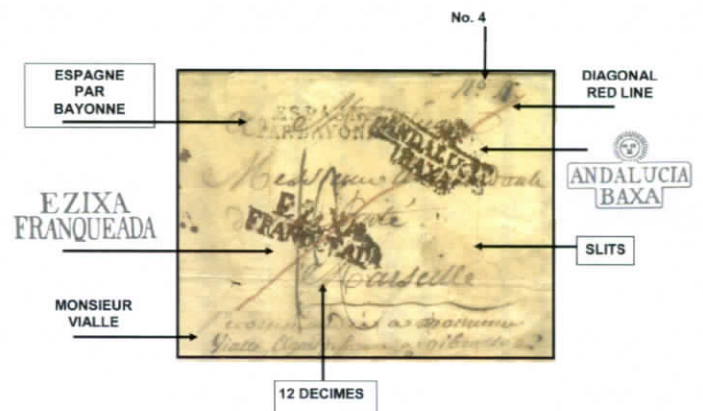
Early in 1810 the Gib/Cadiz overland route was closed due to Napoleon's armies activities at San Roque. The French occupied all of Andalusia except Gibraltar, Tarifa, and Cadiz. Thus the commander in chief at Gibraltar, in order to convey the mail hired a vessel to utilize the sea route to Cadiz. The charge levied and

prepaid was 3 reales for the single letter rate. This offset the extra cost of the vessels. The M/S notation O.H.M.S. carried this letter free to Cadiz. The E marking meant Etrangers or foreign mark Spanish origin. The Portuguese 90 Reis charge was paid by the recipient for the 1st weight band charge on mail from Europe. T & G's Cadiz #12 in use 1806-1811.



CADIZ.

EZIXA FRANQUEADA-ECIJA POSTAGE PAID



That mail which was handled by the foreign consuls is evidenced by this letter to Marseille. However, it was the British consul in Gibraltar who provided the means of forwarding mail prior to the establishment of the post office. During the fever epidemic of 1819, overland mail from Gibraltar was sent via Ecija, the central clearing point for all the Andalusia mails in Spain. Mail was disinfected in Ecija as evidenced by the slits and vinegar marks. This letter is Tangier to Marseille Via Ecija where the Andalucia Baxa boxed handstamp in Maroon now an (oxidized color) was applied. It was Forwarded by Monsieur Vialle French Agent at Gibraltar written in M/S at bottom. Espagne/Par Bayonne handstamp was applied at the border and rated 12 decimes for delivery in France. France in 1795 decimalized their currency to 1 franc=10 decimes=100 centimes. In addition, decimes were to be marked in black and centimes in red. Thus, the amount due in black is 12 decimes. The Ezixa Franqueada handstamp was applied in red and oxidation has also changed its color perception to show the cover had been postage paid. The diagonal red line on the front indicates postage paid part way as 15 cuartos was marked in M/S on reverse. The No. 4 at the top of the envelope is assumed to signify No. 4 in a continuing series of letters being addressed. The Andalucia Baxa was in use 1799-1837 and is T & G's Ecija mark #2 and this is the only known use of this mark.

ESPAGNE PAR OLERON OVERLAND ROUTE



Tangier to Saluces Piedmont Oct. 12, 1835 traveling through Gibraltar, entering Spain through San Roque handstamped with the 3 lined DeGibr red transit and prepaid M/S 15 reales au verso to Italy. Because of the Carlist Civil War, mail was rerouted through the Oleron Pass into France instead of the usual Irun-St Jean de Luz entry point. Handstamped with ESPAGNE PAR OLERON in black and 2 cent. border charge. CDS transit Oleron Nov. 28 and on to Pau the department capital before moving to Nice as indicated by the NIZZA DI MARE handstamp. Rated 28 centesimi for Italian charges and received Dec. 8. DeGib San Roque handstamp T & G #10 in red used 1824-1854.

MANDATORY PREPAYMENT TO FRENCH BORDER



1841 Tangier to Sardinia. Mail through Spain required prepayment to the Franco-Spanish border. 5 Adarmes in weight paid 15 quartos as charged on the backside. The three lined De.Gibr. S. Roque Anda. Baxa transit is The only handstamp ever used by the Spanish which acknowledged their post office regularly handled Gibraltar mail. The red 2 deci- mes was applied at St. Jean de Luz 20th May but was unnecessary as the letter was continuing on to Sardinia. Transits included 1 June Montpellier, 2 June Aix-en-Provence, 5 June Saluces straight line (5 Giu) and straight line "Via Di Nizza" applied at Nice. 26 sol- di charged in M/S as 18 soldi (single rate letter) Franco-Spanish border to Franco- Sardinian border and 8 soldi for Nice to Saluces (1.6.1836 Sardinian internal rate 102- 122km).

RETALIATORY SANITARY CORDON



18/1/54 Tangier to Cadiz. Because of disregard for Spanish quarantine regulations by the then Military Governor of Gibraltar, the Spanish retaliated by closing the border and placing a Sanitary Cordon across the neutral ground. Disinfected by two 18mm chisel slits on front. 1R local delivery charge in Spain. San Roque cds 24th Jan. and received Cadiz 27th Jan. This article does not dwell on the importance of quarantine and disinfection in the mails from Morocco as the subject deserves an article unto itself. The plague and the fear of contagion existed from 1787 on and off up to the evidence presented with the chisel slits on the above cover and the closing of the border.

The last cover in this article is an 1855 Mazagan to Oporto Portugal cover with the DeGib S. Roque transit in Blue. The blue 3-lined Gibraltar transit was in use two years only 1854-1856. Vinegar stains and chisel slits are prevalent for disinfection as noted in the previous paragraph. The black 45 handstamp is for 45 Reis the Portuguese overland charge on 1st step mail from Spain.

The markings shown in this article indicated transit markings through Spain The next article will show marks indicating place of origin in Africa (Ceuta and Melilla), along with interpretations of rates and routes.

