



# The British and French Post Offices in Cuba



## The British Post Offices

The First British Post Office opened in Havana on February 14, 1842. A regularly scheduled service was then initiated. The first steamer that entered Havana harbour was the "Thames" on its way to Veracruz on the "Mexican Packet Line." A few months later in June of 1842, the Second British Post Office at Santiago de Cuba started its service. This was on the "Jamaica Packet Line" with connections from Panama and Colombia.

## The French Post Offices

In April of 1862 the French opened their First Post Office in Santiago de Cuba: The "Mexican Ligne" with service between Veracruz and St. Nazaire inaugurated this service. About three years later in 1865, the French Post Office in Havana was opened. This was part of the "Ligne B" with service between Veracruz and St. Nazaire which altered and changed the service to "Ligne D" for Santiago de Cuba.

**Collection Overview:** showing the consular and ship marks used, the rates, and destinations. Out of a possible 5 First-Day dates, four are present here, as well as some first time reported usages of certain post marks previously not known. Extremely scarce combination covers are also shown for both post offices.

All foreign post offices were closed on June 15th., 1877, when Cuba, as a Spanish Colony, joined the Universal Postal Union. But, in the case of the French Lines, they continued their service, and in some rare cases the usage of the original French postmarks on the Cuban stamps was continued under the UPU.

### EXHIBIT PLAN LAYOUT:

**SECTION 1:** Frame 1: Havana British P.O. Double Ring CDS's

Frame 2: Havana British P.O. Crown Circles types I, II, III

Frame 3: Havana British P.O. Newly Discovered Crowned Circles types IV and V,  
Frame 3 (continued) **SECTION 2:** British stamps introduced: the C58 Barred Cancellers.

Frame 4: Havana British P.O. Small 'PAID' and CDS Cancellers types A, C, and without letters.  
and **SECTION 3:** Santiago de Cuba B.P.O. markings.

**SECTION 4:** Frame 5: Start of the French P.O. in Santiago: the Mexico Line Steamers.

Frame 6: French P.O. in Santiago continued and **SECTION 5:** French P.O. in Havana starts.

Frame 7: French P.O. in Havana continues

Frame 8: French P.O. Line "M" to New Orleans, **SECTION 6:** French Octagonal date stamps usages post UPU for both Havana and Santiago de Cuba, French Lines "E" and "F" and the Paris special Cuba receiving mark.