

1890 – 1897

MANILA – DAGUPAN RAILWAY POST OFFICE CANCELS

On June 25, 1875, under a royal decree, King Alfonso XII of Spain ordered the Office of the Inspector of Public Works in the Philippines to submit a general railway plan for the establishment of a railroad line on the island of Luzon. After several years of planning and research, the Public Works Office came up with a study called 'Memoria Sobre el Plan General de Ferrocarriles en la Isla de Luzon'. The plan was subsequently granted for its implementation on June 1, 1887. A concession for the construction of a railway line from Manila to Dagupan, Pangasinan was awarded to Don Edmundo Sykes of the Ferrocarril de Manila - Dagupan (Manila - Dagupan Railway), later to become the Manila Railway Company, Ltd. of London.

The Railway construction commenced on July 31, 1887 with the laying of the cornerstone at the site of its main terminal building at Tutuban (Tondo District of Manila). The official opening of the 195 km line took place on November 24, 1892 and it became the single most important infrastructure built in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial period. Expansion of the Philippine railway network took place during the American colonial period, expanding the track from Dagupan to Legaspi which was connected on May 8, 1938.

To conform with regulations set out in a Royal Order issued in Spain dated July 27, 1855 based on the creation of 'Estafetas Ambulantes' (Traveling Post Offices), the Philippines appears to have adopted the rules and regulations used to govern the development and working of a railway mail system. It included a provision requiring that all mail from Estafetas Ambulantes would be postally cancelled to designate usage as follows: Ambulante Linea Ascendente (amb. l. asc.) for northbound railway travel or Ambulante Linea Descendente (AMB. L. DESC.) for southbound railway travel. Earliest known postal usage occurred on March 10, 1892 (eight months prior to the official opening of the railway line).

AMBULANTE LINEA ASCENDENTE (amb. l. asc.)



2c Dark Claret (1890)
Cliché I – Unlisted
Usage: 10 MAR 92



2c Dark Claret (1890)
Cliché I – Unlisted
Usage: 7 DIC 9?



AMBULANTE LINEA DESCENDENTE (AMB. L. DESC.)



2c Dark Claret (1890)
Cliché I – Unlisted
Usage: 23 JUL 94



2c Ultramarine (1896)
Cliché III – Scott #147
Usage: 25 FEB 97

