FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, 15 CENTAVOS,
20-STAMP PANES PRINTED ON THE FRONT AND BACK (JULY 1911)

The 15c postal setting was accidentally printed on the fronts of the red 1st class railway ticket-based F-I fiscal provisional panes shown below and subsequently the same 15c postal setting was applied to the backs of the stamps to correct this error (all done with black ink). The F-I fiscal overprint on the 20-stamp pane on the left had initially been printed in the "normal" manner, i.e. reading down while the same fiscal setting on the 20-stamp pane on the right was overprinted in the less common orientation, reading up.

The original postal decree had authorized printing on the backs for all four values of the 1st provisional issue, even though the additional overprint on the fronts of the red stamps could be easily read. Thus, overprints on the front were not trial printings except for the various colors tried on the 2c value (shown previously).
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, 15 CENTAVOS,
MULTIPLES PRINTED ON THE FRONT AND BACK (JULY 1911)

The red 1st class railway ticket-based fiscals were in relatively short supply so 20-stamp panes with fiscal and/or postal printing errors were saved, issued and likely used.

No intact 20-stamp panes are known that show the errors below, but at least one of each must have existed.

Double postal on the front and at an angle on the back (photocopy below).

Postal overprint inverted on both the front and the back (photocopy below).

Postal on the front and at an angle on the back (photocopy below).

Fiscal and postal overprints on both the front and back (postal on the back at an angle; photocopy below).
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, 15 CENTAVOS POSTAL
WITH FISCAL OVERPRINTS ON THE FRONT & BACK (JULY 1911)

The 15c postal setting was correctly printed on the backs of the red 1st class railway ticket-based F-I fiscal provisionals shown below. The 20-stamp panes of provisional stamps used already had fiscal overprints applied on both the fronts and on the backs.

The fiscal overprint on the back of the pane on the left below was printed in the “normal” manner (reading down) while the same fiscal overprint on the pane on the right below was printed reading up. The upper right stamp in the pane on the left has been folded in to the left to show that an additional postal overprint on the front was printed at an angle.

Block of four with additional fiscal overprint on the back, reading down. The fiscal overprint on the front reads up (photocopy on right).
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, 15 CENTAVOS DOUBLE POSTAL OVERPRINTS.
20-STAMP PANE WITH FISCAL OVERPRINTS ON THE FRONT & BACK
(JULY 1911)

The 15c postal setting was overprinted twice on the backs of the red 1st class railway ticket-based F-I fiscal provisionals shown below. The 20-stamp pane of provisional stamps used already had the F-I overprints applied on both the fronts and on the backs. The fiscal overprint on the back of the 20-stamp pane on the left below was printed reading up; the double postal overprint is most easily visualized on the “CORREO” and “DE 1911”.

The 15 centavos postal setting was applied twice on the back of the block of four stamps above during the printing process. What appears to be an earlier F-I fiscal overprint is really just the transfer of wet ink from a different fiscal pane.

There is a “normal” fiscal overprint on the front (photocopy below).
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, IMPERFORATE PAIRS (JULY 1911)

Horizontal pairs, imperforate vertically of the 5 and 10 centavos values are shown below. The major philatelic catalogs do not mention imperforate stamps for any of the railway ticket-based provisional issues. John Stroub included just two instances in his highly detailed publications about these postal provisional issues, and Maxwell listed just one example in his Handbook. The positions of all of these stamps in the 20-stamp settings can be readily determined.

The stamps in this strip of three are in position #s 2, 3 & 4. This is the only place in the setting where three stamps in a row with lower case, italicized “v” in “vale” and small italicized “s cts.” with normal periods occurs.

The stamps in this used (November 21, 1911 cancel) pair are in position #s 1 & 2. The small raised period in “cts.” (left stamp) occurs only at position # 1.

The stamps in this used (December 30, 1911) pair are in position #s 11 & 12. The small first “R” in “CORREO” (right stamp) occurs only at position # 12.

Imperforate pairs are very rare for this issue and for all railway ticket-based provisionals.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. PRINTING VARIETIES (JULY 1911)

Once the decision had been made to place the postal overprints on the backs of the fiscal stamps, many kinds of printing errors on the fiscal settings already on the fronts were tolerated, especially on the blue 2nd class ticket-derived fiscais. Poor quality type was used out of necessity for the postal overprints, and although there was good visibility on the backs of postal errors like multiple settings, shortages necessitated that errors be issued and used. Postal type style varieties in combination with the fiscal printing errors and varieties on the fronts resulted in a very large number variety of individual stamp varieties being produced.

Twelve-stamp pane with a red brown F-II fiscal overprint, reading down and an additional copy of the same setting at a ninety degree angle on only the four stamps in the right hand column. A trial printing in yellow of the 2c postal overprint, 2nd setting is also on the front. There is a correct 2c postal overprint and smeared red brown ink on the back (photocopy below).
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. PRINTING VARIETIES (JULY 1911)

Block of four stamps with a double overprint of the red brown F-I fiscal setting, both reading down. The stamp on the lower right has two copies of the inverted “cts.” so it is in position # 20. (10c postal overprint on the backs; photocopy on right, top)

Block of four stamps with a double overprint of the red brown F-II fiscal setting, both reading down. (5c postal overprint on the backs; photocopy on left, bottom)

Additional F-I fiscal setting in bright red ink on the back, reading up, with the correct 5c postal overprint. The same bright red fiscal overprint is on the front, reading down

2c postal overprint double, black and yellow (red brown F-I fiscal overprint on the front)

Double 10c postal overprint (position # 7; left bottom damaged on “c” of “cts.”). Black F-II fiscal overprint on the front

Two pairs with double 10c postal overprints, one setting at an angle (red brown fiscal overprints on the fronts [F-I, above; F-II, below])
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE, 5 & 10 CENTAVOS
CANCELLED TO ORDER 20-STAMP PANES & A FORGERY

The difficulties experienced with use of the first postal provisionals led to a decision to produce other postal
provisional issues with all overprints on the front. Many of the remaining 20-stamp panes of all four values of
the first postal provisional issue were sold to dealers but they were not demonetized. Cancelled to order (CTO)
panes with cancels applied on the fronts and backs of each pane were produced in Managua on July 31, 1911
and in Chinandega on November 7 and December 11, 1911. Only the 5 & 10c values are known CTO.

Stamp (from the reference collection of the late Varro Tyler) has a dark
genuine overprint and two lighter,
fordged postal settings on the back.

Multiple postal overprints on the
backs of 1st postal provisional stamps
are rare enough to encourage forgers,
in this case Raoul de Thuin, to create
anomalies.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 2 CENTAVOS USE

The 2c stamps were printed in the lowest quantity since their use was intended for only domestic postcards (4c rate) and printed papers uses (domestic and adjacent republics rate of 2c). On December 17, 1911 the domestic postcard rate was raised to 10c so the 2c stamps became even less useful.

January 22, 1912 mourning cover from Leon to Managua. The solo 2c stamp correctly pays the domestic printed papers rate. Below is a copy of the back of the envelope with the flap opened which demonstrates the “no gum” design.
October 8, 1911 from Managua to Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. 2c adjacent republic printed papers rate. The Buzón handstamp signifies mail offloaded from the train’s mobile mail box in Corinto (mail posted in towns was sometimes placed in the mobile mail box on the trains). Yellow 2 cts. / CORREO overprint on the front of stamp; same overprint in black on the back of stamp (visible by holding the cover up to bright light). October 29 San Jose, Costa Rica transit mark on the front; October 8 Corinto transit and October 30 Limon, Costa Rica receiving marks on the back.

This is the only cover known with a black F-II fiscal overprint on the stamp.

An enlarged photocopy of the stamp on the cover above, enhanced using software available at www.retrorevea.org shows the error “Vale” for “Vale” (known to appear only at position # 13 in trial printings on the fronts).

This is the only cover known with the “Vale” overprint error visible on the stamp.
October 18, 1911 from Managua to Granada (October 18 receiving mark also on stamp). 2c domestic printed papers rate. Yellow 2 cts. / CORREO overprint on front of stamp; same overprint in black on back of stamp (visible by holding the cover up to bright light). The cover front (copy shown below) has a large manuscript "2" (= rate in centavos)
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 2 CENTAVOS USE

The 2¢ stamp on the back of the cover below may reflect confusion about the correct foreign letter rate (35¢) or, more likely, it may simply have been added to provide a used example of this unusual stamp for philatelic purposes.

November 22, 1911 Managua to Dresden, Germany. November via Corinto (November 23 transit mark on the back). The three 10¢ and one 5¢ provisional stamps used (copy of front shown below) show that other fiscal stamps had also been overprinted for postal use during this period.
October 11, 1911 from Managua to New York City. An entire 20-stamp pane of 2c stamps was applied onto the back of the cover (two stamps were folded to the left by the exhibitor to show that the fronts have additional olive yellow 2 cts. / CORREO overprints). The letter rate to foreign destinations had been 35c since October 14, 1905 but there was some confusion locally during September-December of 1911. The foreign letter rate was raised to 50c on December 17, 1911. Copy of cover front shown below.

This is the only intact 20-stamp pane of a railway ticket-based provisional known on cover.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 2 CENTAVOS USE

August 16, 1911 from Managua to San Salvador, El Salvador, forwarded to Guatemala (City). The 3rd “1” of “1911” in the Managua postmark is a broken “6” identical to the example on the title page. Five 2c stamps pay the 10c adjacent republics letter rate. The second stamp from the right has the small 1st “R” of CORREO visible, so the strip of 4 stamps is postal position #’s 8, 12, 16 & 20. There is a September 12 Guatemala City receiving mark on the front and Corinto (August 17) and Salvador (August 27) transit marks on the back. Shown below is a copy of the front with the stamps folded down.

One of only 3 examples known with the 1st postal provisional stamps applied folded.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 5 CENTAVOS USE

The 5c stamps of the 1st postal provisional issue were useful to pay the 10c domestic letter rate and to help pay the 35c foreign letter rate and the registration fee before December 17, 1911. On that date the domestic letter rate was increased from 10c to 15c so fortuitously the 5c stamps remained appropriate for this new rate as well.

December 8, 1911 mourning cover from Granada to Managua. 5c domestic printed papers rate.

December 23, 1911 Managua local (Managua Cartero No. 1 delivery mark). Two 5c stamps on this cover front pay the 10c drop letter rate.
October 26, 1911 Corinto to Saginaw, Michigan. The seven 5c stamps used to pay the 35c foreign rate are position #s 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17 & 18. The most obvious type variety is the small italicized middle “1” in “1911” visible between the two cancels. Copy of cover front shown below.
October 18, 1911 Managua to the Philippines, forwarded to San Fernando. 20c paid with four 5c postal stamps (postal overprints verified by holding cover up to a bright light). The correct 35c foreign letter rate was not enforced, possibly because the postal authorities assumed that the stamps were overprinted 10 cts. / CORREO on the backs. Since the left hand stamp has the inverted “ctvs.” in the bright red F-I fiscal overprint (position # 20), the four stamps are from fiscal position #s 8, 12, 16, and 20 and inferentially the postal positions must be #s 5, 8, 13 & 17. Buzón handstamp added in Corinto. Copy of back shown below has October 18 Corinto transit, January 5, 1912 Manila “RECEIVED”, January 15 Aparrio Cugayan Luzon and January 20 San Fernando receiving marks.

This is the only documented use of bright red F-I fiscal overprint-based stamps on cover.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 5 CENTAVOS USE “PORTE INSUFICIENTE” and “T” (TAXE) INDICATING POSTAGE DUE

December 11, 1911 La Libertad via Juigalpa and Boaco (December 14 and December 21 transit marks on the reverse) to Matagalpa (December 24 date stamp in lower right quadrant). The 15c definitive stamp was insufficient to pay the correct 20c rate for 16-30 grams; the postage due was paid in Matagalpa with the 5c provisional stamp added there and canceled December 26.

Chinandega (undated “CORREOS DE CHINANDEGA” grill cancel) and December 18, 1911 circular date stamp to Managua (December 19 receiving mark on reverse). The domestic rate had been increased to 15c for up to 20 grams on December 17 so the cover must have been overweight.
November 21, 1911 Managua via Corinto (November 21 transit) to Hamburg, Germany. The 10c foreign postal card rate was paid with a 5c railway ticket-based and a 5c fiscal stamp-based postal provisional.

October 26, 1911 Corinto to San Gallen, Switzerland (November 18 receiving mark on reverse). Eight 5c stamps used for the 35c foreign rate may reflect uncertainty about the correct rate during this period. The block of stamps includes position #'s 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15 & 16 (note especially the small first "R" in "CORREO" on the 3rd stamp in the top row (= postal position # 12).
September 15, 1911 Masaya via Corinto (September 15 transit) to Paris, France. The 5c railway ticket-based provisional plus three 10c fiscal-based provisional stamps correctly pay the 35c foreign rate. The 5c 1st provisional stamp is overprinted on the back of a bright red F-II fiscal stamp (2x copy of the front shown below) that was attached to the letter on only one part of a corner (originally for inspection according to the relevant postal decree) was easily detached for illustrative purposes.

This is the only example known of this fiscal stamp overprinted and used to pay postage.
November 24, 1911 Managua to New York City (November 24 Corinto transit on a 5c fiscal-based provisional on the back). Buzón handstamp added in Corinto. The 5c railway ticket-based and three definitive-based 10c provisionals and the 5c stamp (on the back) overpay the 35c foreign rate.

January 6, 1912 Masaya via Corinto (January 6 transit on reverse) to Berlin, Germany. One 5c railway ticket-based, a 10c fiscal-based provisional, and 4 definitive stamps pay the correct 50c foreign rate.
FIRST POSTAL PROVISIONAL ISSUE. 10 CENTAVOS USE

The 10c stamps were the most heavily used value of this issue. The domestic letter and foreign postcard rates were 10c until December 17, 1911; after this date the domestic postcard rate was raised to 10c. The foreign letter rate was 35c until December 17 when it was increased to 50c. All of these rates often used the 10c stamps. And four 10c stamps were used to overpay the 35c foreign rate when no smaller denominations were available.

October 14, 1911 Nandaime to Granada (October 14 receiving mark on the back). 10c domestic letter rate.

December 15, 1911 Jinotepe to Managua (December 15 receiving mark on the back). 10c domestic letter rate.
November 21, 1911 Managua via Corinto (November 21 transit mark) to Hamburg, Germany. 10c foreign postcard rate.

November 18, 1911 Managua via Corinto (November 18 transit mark), via Rio de Janeiro (November 27 transit mark) to Curityba, Brazil. The manuscript via “New York” routing request has been crossed out, and it appears that the postcard went directly south. Buzón handstamp added in Corinto. 10c foreign postcard rate.