

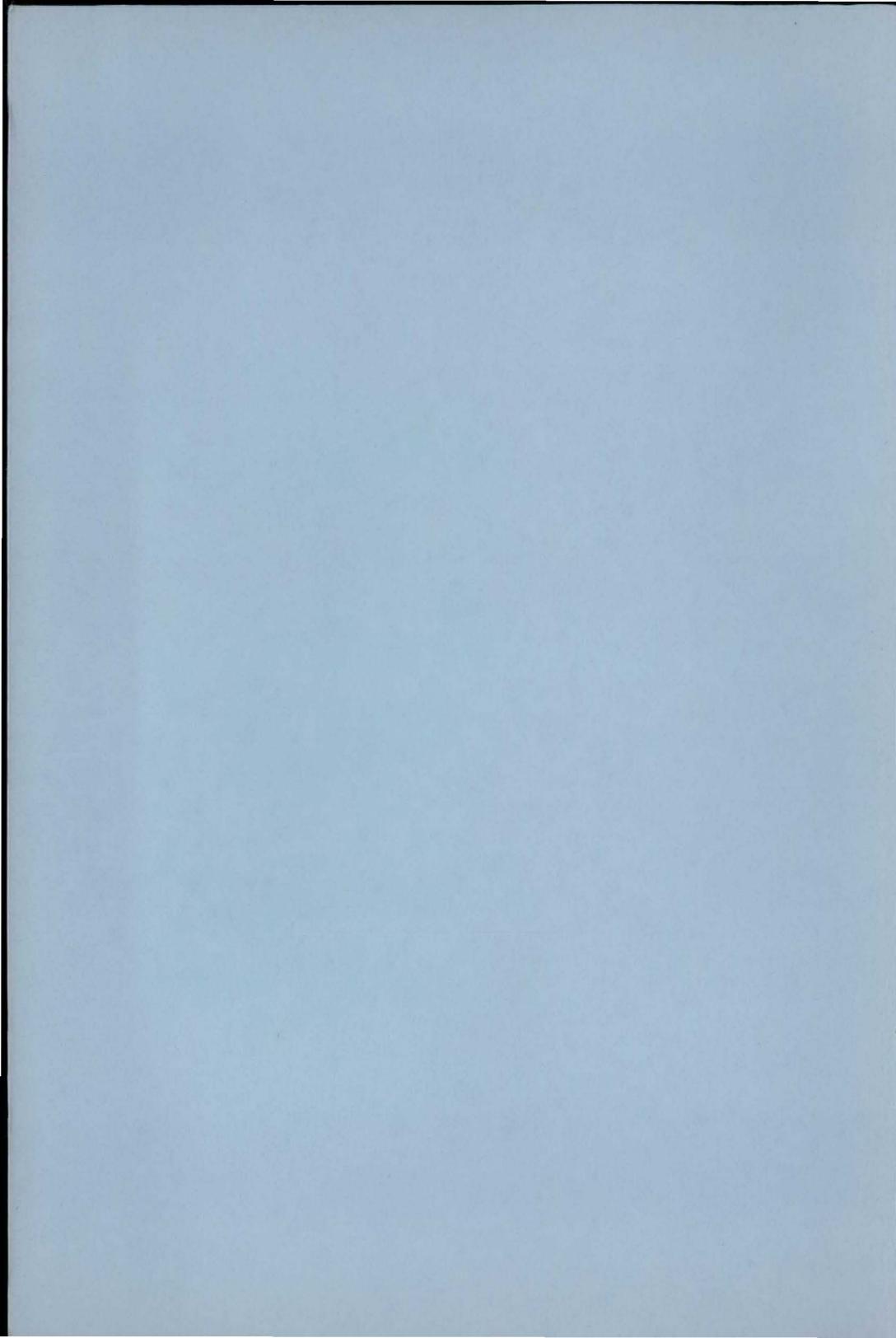
**THE POSTAL HISTORY OF  
THE COMMUNE  
REVOLUTION,  
PARIS 1871**

**BY  
GARDNER L. BROWN**

**Vaurie Memorial Fund Publication No. 9**

**The France & Colonies Philatelic Society, Inc.  
New York, N.Y. 1992**

For sale by the Corresponding Secretary of the  
France & Colonies Philatelic Society,  
103 Spruce St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003



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The late Dr. Charles J. Vaurie was a charter member of the Society and first editor of its *Philatelist*, 1941-1944. He was a donor of philatelic literature to the Society while he was living. Upon receipt of a further donation of material by his widow, Patricia Vaurie, the Board of FCPS thought it appropriate that his appreciation of the usefulness of philatelic literature be memorialized by creating a fund in his name.

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**Edited by Robert G. Stone**

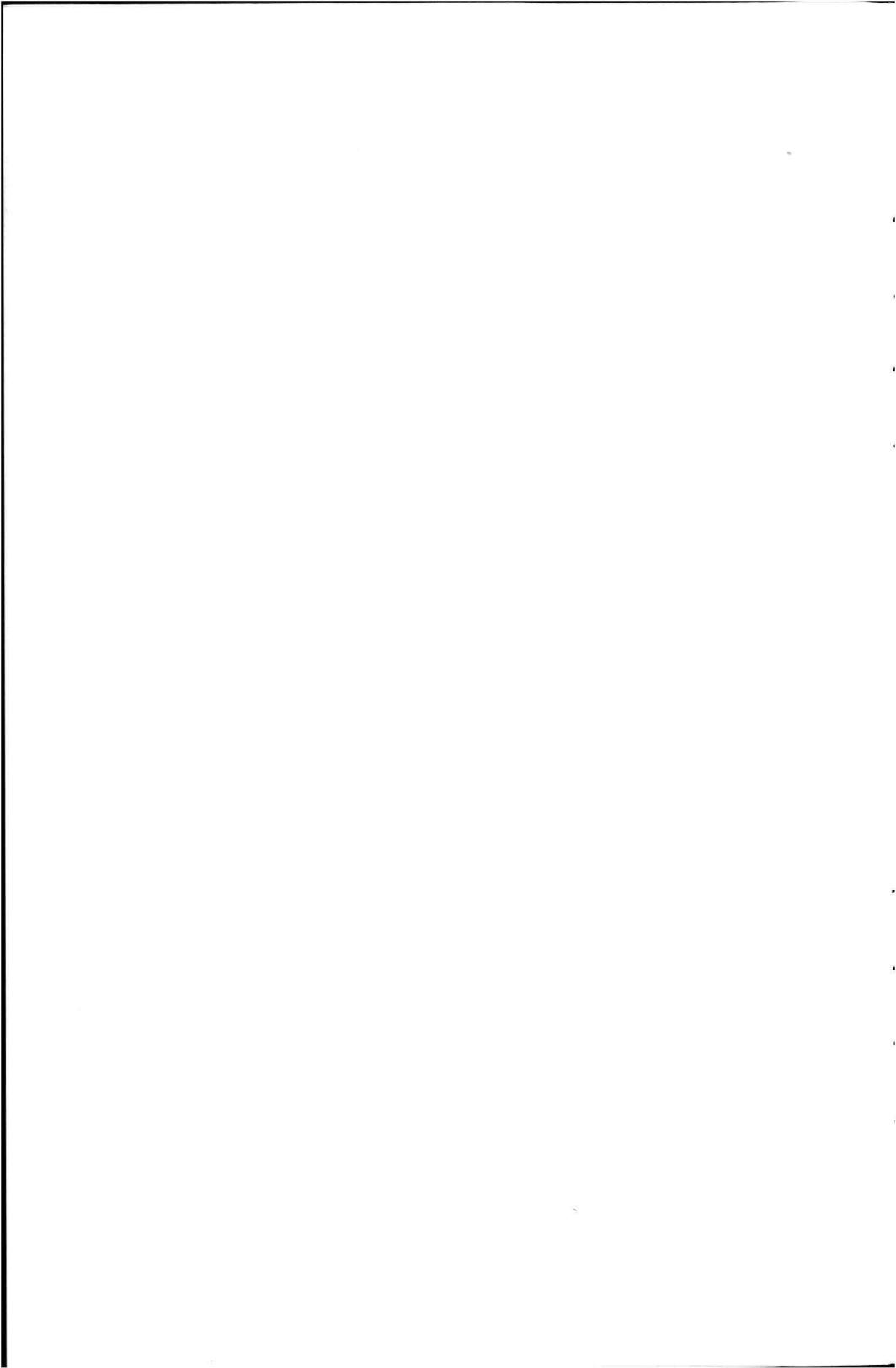
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**Gardner L. Brown**  
August 15, 1921 - September 29, 1991

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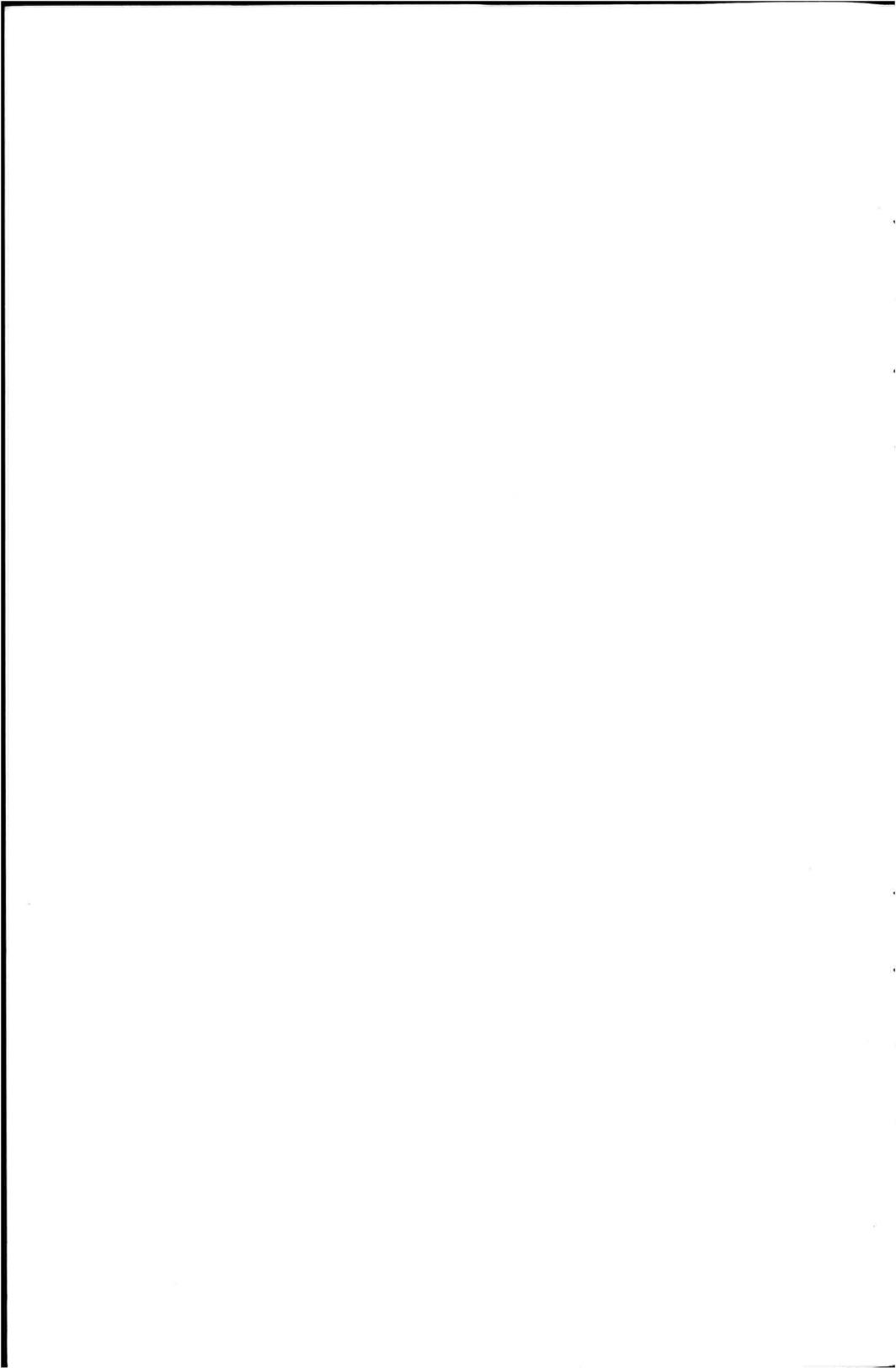
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# THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COMMUNE REVOLUTION, PARIS 1871

By Gardner L. Brown

## Avant-propos

Collectionner mais surtout faire des recherches historiques sur la guerre franco-prussienne de 1870-1871, reconstituer l'histoire de la Commune de Paris quand on réside si loin de l'Europe relève de l'exploit.

Gardner L. Brown a su réussir cet exploit, il a su entrer dans l'histoire de la Commune de Paris, comprendre les difficultés rencontrées par la Poste pour acheminer le courrier et, en général, les difficultés rencontrées par les français pour communiquer.

A partir de pièces rares, exceptionnelles, souvent uniques et toujours bien décrites, Gardner a su reconstituer la situation dramatique que vivait Paris et la France déchirée entre l'occupation ennemie et ses luttes fratricides.

Voici un travail de qualité, exhaustif et didactique qui servira les collectionneurs et les historiens à mieux comprendre l'histoire de la Poste et de la Commune de Paris en 1870-1871.

**Hubert C. Cappart**  
de l'académie de philatélie  
Président des Amis  
du Musée de la Poste

16 January 1991

## Preface

### An Appreciation

A quarter century ago I received a letter from one Gardner L. Brown, stating that a mutual friend of ours had suggested he write to me, because we had at least two interests in common - research on electrochemical power sources and collecting mail from the 1870-1871 Franco-German War. Since then, we have had an almost constant exchange of information, mostly about those far off events in Western Europe.

Our specialties have been diverging gradually, and Gardner concentrated more and more on the Commune period, which lasted for little more than two months. He found out all sorts of interesting things about it, which he put together in a series of chapters that have been appearing in the *France & Colonies Philatelist*. Here they are collected in one convenient reference source, the first complete survey of this kind (in any language) of which I am aware.

I hope this book will not only be useful to those who have already developed a taste for Commune postal history, but that it will also stir the interest of postal historians who are goaded on by the rare, the historically unusual, and the far from fully explored or understood. "Philately begins where the catalogue leaves off," which is particularly true for much of philatelic postal history. This excellent, readable introduction to the bizarre aftermath of the Siege of Paris is worthy of a wide readership, and not merely of postal historians.

**Ernst M. Cohn**

### Editor's Note

This work of Gardner Brown, like his previous opus on the Bordeaux Issue, is prolix and somewhat incompletely organized reflecting his incremental style of study and writing. Always making new discoveries and never finished, with an easy-going enthusiasm which a colleague once described as "bucolic," he was still sending us extensive revisions and additions up to the last weeks before his death on 29 September 1991. We regret there is no index—he never thought of anything so final as that. A detailed analytic table of contents might help, but as the reader can readily see, that would only emphasize the progressive nature of the manuscript and primitive organization better suited to his collecting and exhibiting.

His attention to historic and dramatic situations and details is more impressive than any formal academic aspect, and offers some enjoyable reading. Gardner had an intense curiosity to find an explanation for all the marks and usages he found on the covers, which occupies the most part of this work, and the illustrations were chosen to show their individuality (rarity) as well as typicality. He offers generalizations of various categories of use based on censuses of covers he studied (from all sources) a method that is being used more and more by postal historians.

Robert G. Stone

### Author's Introduction

Very little has been written in English on the philatelic aspects of the Commune Revolution. The purpose of this effort is to correct this situation and to combine a study of the literature with a survey of philatelic material which has been illustrated or described in auction catalogs over the years.

The method used was the same as in 1975 when we reported (1) on our "Pretend Collection of Balloon Mail." At this time, we were able to report on the description of 3,263 balloon covers and were then able to know what was rare and what was common.

Using the same catalogs, plus those issued since that time, we were able to find only about 380 Commune covers. This was from over 350 catalogs. This told us what we already knew; a collector of the Commune must be patient. Commune material is hard to find!

The survey also produced "philatelic evidence" which is interesting to compare with the poorly-documented laws and regulations of the times.

As always, just about the time you describe a cover as "unique," a similar one appears in the exhibition frame next to yours. In the same fashion, what we have described as unique or unusual may not be so. It is hoped this effort will result in correspondence from many collectors describing their "gems." After all, one of the covers we illustrated was found, only a few years ago, in a dealer's box of "cheap" covers.

(With but a few exceptions, the illustrations are from Gardner's own collection.)

(1) Brown, G. and R.; *F&C Philatelist*, #161, Vol. 31, No. 3, July 1975.

## CHAPTER I - A BRIEF HISTORY

To understand the postal history of the Commune Revolution, it is helpful to know a little about the causes and major events of the time. The Revolution followed the end of the Franco-Prussian War by only seven weeks. Besides being beaten by the newly formed German nation, a lot had happened to change the course of the history of France forever.

The French Emperor, Napoleon III, was captured at Sedan early in the war. This finished the period of the Empire and a provisional republican government was formed outside of besieged Paris.

Many Parisians felt they were not properly represented in the negotiations which resulted in the Armistice declared on January 28, 1871. They were convinced they could have broken out of Paris, dispersed the Germans and won the war. One aspect of the armistice agreement was particularly onerous to the proud Parisians. All of Alsace and a large part of Lorraine was to be annexed by Germany as part of the "spoils of war." However, the Alsatian territory of Belfort was still under siege and they refused to surrender. As a compromise, Belfort would be allowed to remain as a part of France if Paris allowed the Germans to have a victory parade down the Champs Elysées. That was bitter medicine and Figure I-1 captures the reactions of the Parisians to this event of early March.

Before the parade, the National Guard moved 200 of them to the Place du Tertre, on the hill of Montmartre, to keep them from the hands of the Germans (Figure I-2). Now General Vinoy recognized the National Guard as a threat to the stability of France as the size of the regular army had been sharply reduced as a result of the armistice agreement. Under his orders, a detachment of the regular army was sent to recover the guns early on the morning of March 18. They made the mistake of not bringing with them any teams of horses to transport the cannon. The extra time required allowed the sleeping Parisians to awake. They regarded the cannons to be their own as they had been paid for by public subscription. The riots which followed allowed the revolutionaries to take over control of Paris that day, March 18.

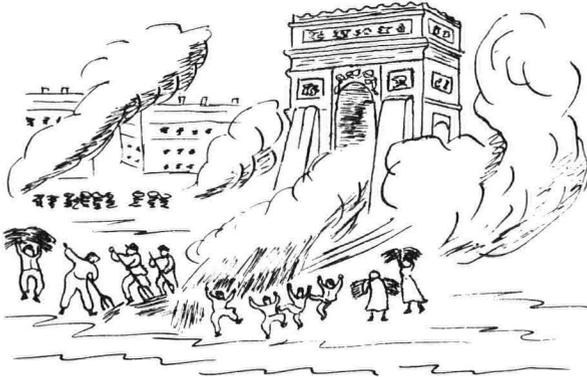


Figure I-1

Figure I-1. Purification of the Arc de Triomphe by smoke after the departure of the Germans.

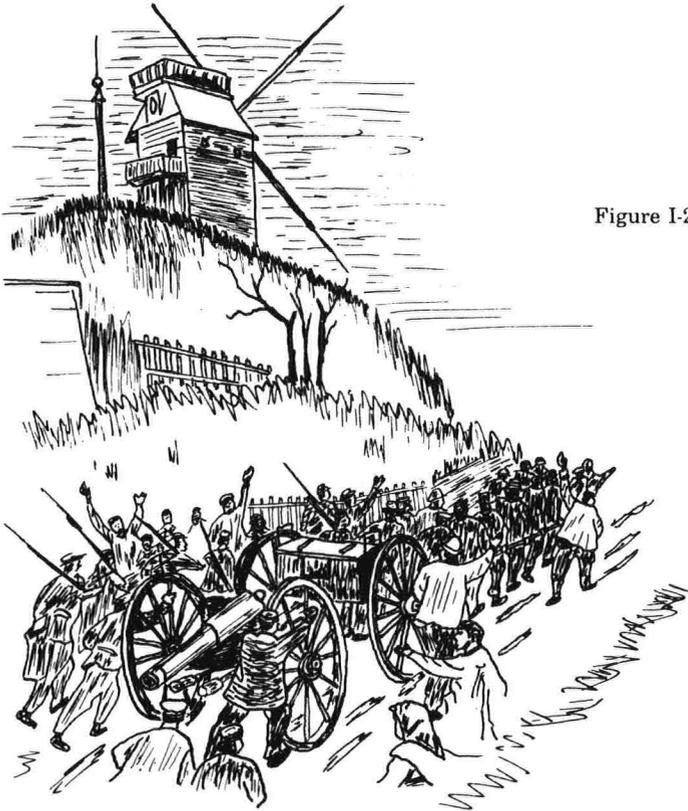


Figure I-2

Figure I-2. National Guards pulling THEIR cannon up the Montmartre hill to the Place du Tertre.

During the Siege of Paris, many soldiers from the provinces were within the city to defend it. They went home after the Armistice leaving the demoralized National Guard in the hands of the more radical Parisians. National elections were held in February and, of the 768 deputies elected to the National Assembly, only 200 were Republicans. When this new body decided to hold their meetings in the Palace at Versailles instead of Paris, the general population feared a return to a monarchy (Figure I-3) which the Palace symbolized.



Figure I-3

Figure I-3. Destined to become the leader of the Third Republic, many feared he might be crowned King instead.

To add to this unrest, it was proclaimed that all debts which had been deferred during the Siege were now due in full.

Figure I-4 is adapted from a contemporary cartoon. Its use here is to make the point that no one was sure of what the Commune meant; everyone had his own idea and, on the whole, felt it a good idea--whatever it was. The Communards have taken credit for the Revolution and, indeed with some justification. In truth, the cause was a complex melange of injured pride, city vs. rural interests and the haves vs. the have-nots.

While March 18, 1871 is the accepted historical date for the beginning of the Commune Revolution, postal historians prefer to use the date of March 30, 1871, for it was on that evening the leaders of the post office moved to Versailles taking with them, many supplies as well as the outgoing mail.

Thus began what many have called the "Second Siege of Paris." The Chapter on the "Beginning and the End" will show it is difficult to assign a precise date for the end of the Revolution. For the purpose here, we will just say it was at the end of May, so the interest of postal historians is confined to a two-month period: April and May of 1871.

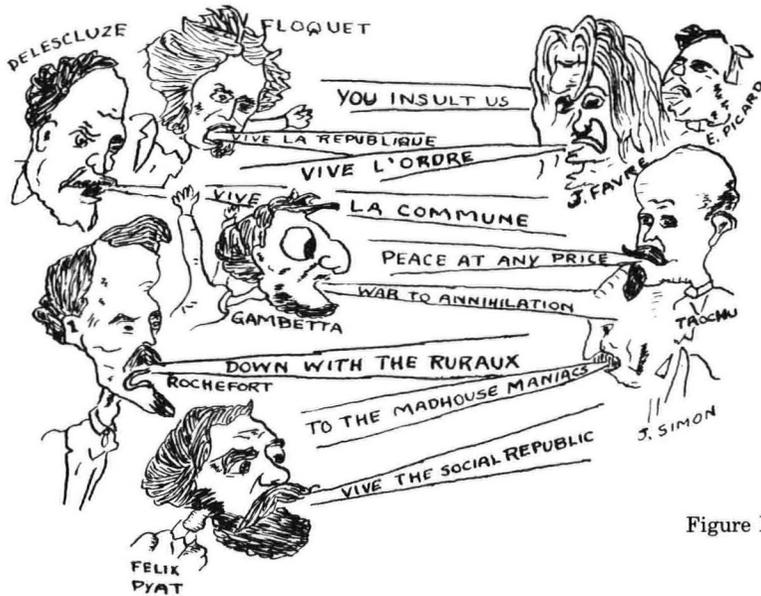


Figure I-4

Figure I-4. Republicans on the left, Monarchists on the right, each with a different slogan.

## CHAPTER II – THE BEGINNING AND THE END

The postal blockade of Paris was initiated by the government in Versailles by withdrawing the Paris postal officials to Versailles the evening of Thursday, March 30, 1871. Parisians were first aware of the new situation when they stopped getting mail from the outside. They kept posting their letters for the provinces as usual until the truth was known.

### The Beginning--Mail from Paris

What was left of the Paris postal system tried valiantly to overcome the blockade by sending couriers outside of Paris to various train lines such as the ones to Amiens, Soissons, Tours, Nancy, Troyes, Mulhouse and Dijon. They stopped this on April 14 as some of their employees had been arrested trying to post the mail. The same day, a traveler was stopped at Boulogne-sur-Mer as he was carrying 300 letters to mail in Paris.

On April 15, they began sending the postal couriers only to nearby towns such as St. Denis, Vincennes, Charenton, Maisons-Alfort and Meaux. All but the last named were barely outside the Paris walls where there was a strong German Army presence.

Figure II-1 shows a letter with a Paris postmark of April 2 and an arrival in Rouen on the 6th. The cover shown in Figure II-2 is very similar, having been written in Paris on the 2nd with an arrival in Rouen also on the 6th. However, it was taken to Sarcelles, a suburb of St. Denis, where it was posted on April 2. It is tempting to think both letters were given to a post office in Paris where one was cancelled and one was not, and then, both were taken to Sarcelles by a postal employee.

The survey shows three other examples which were handled by postal couriers, i.e., they were cancelled in Paris, yet were delivered outside of Paris. One has a Paris blue star and a Paris Etranger date stamp of April 1. That letter was delivered in Amsterdam on the 7th, and the other two examples known, received fairly prompt delivery also.

The newspapers kept quoting Paris postal officials who advised everything was all right, but this was not the case. People soon found suburban post offices would not accept mail with Paris postmarks. After all, if the Communards sold the stamps for mail which was obviously from Paris, why should the Versailles Government incur the cost of transport-

Figure II-1

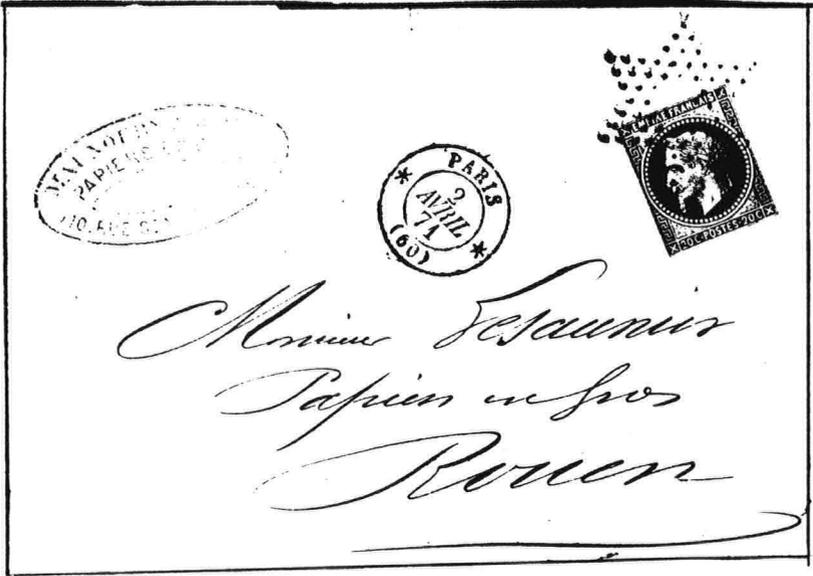


Figure II-1. Mailed in Paris and carried by a post office courier to meet the train outside of Paris. Arrived Rouen April 6.

Figure II-2

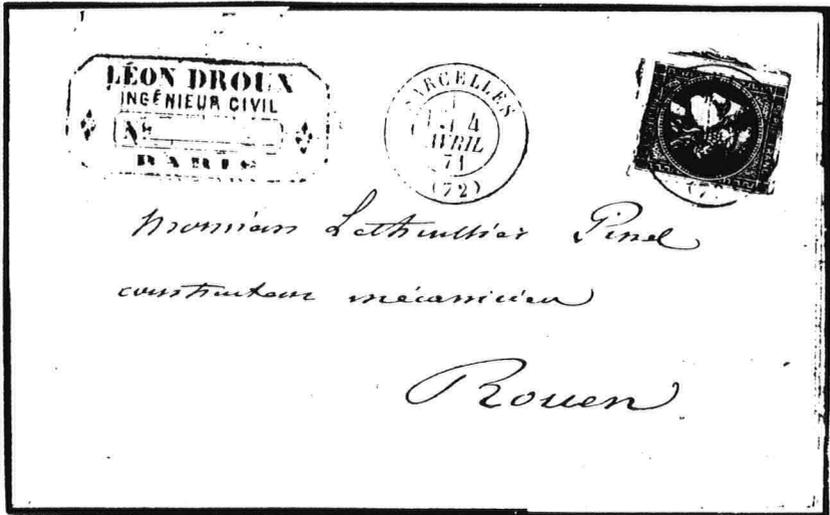


Figure II-2. Written in Paris April 2 and posted (by postal courier?) in nearby Sarcelles April 4. Arrived Rouen April 6.

ing and delivering such mail? Theiz, the Communard postmaster, later reported (1) "We later had to change the dotting on our cancellations." Even in the original French, the exact meaning of the word "dotting" is unclear, but obviously it has to refer to the dots making up the distinctive Paris star cancellations.

Figure II-3 illustrates one of the two recorded examples of Paris mail with a pen cancel. Rather than being an ugly X, it spells out the French word for cancelled. The ruse worked as it was delivered in Brussels April 5. Lacking its contents, we do not know the precise Paris date.

The survey records four letters with Paris cancellations as late as April 7, which were not delivered in the provinces until late in May. Oddly enough, two of these have delivery dates which do not coincide with the end of the Revolution, implying they were not stored in Paris until the hostilities were over. One was to go to St. Brieuc (Côte du Nord), the other to Italy. Both arrived on May 21, the day the Versailles troops entered Paris from the west. Perhaps these were letters impounded (and finally released) when the Communard mail couriers were arrested? The one to Italy was cancelled with a Paris blue star as was the case with the previously mentioned letter to Holland.

The other two examples of mail, with early Paris cancels but late delivery dates, may well have been held in Paris as the dates are May 29 and 30.

### The Beginning-Mail into Paris

Collectors always worry about whether or not a letter addressed to Paris during the Commune actually got there. It is most unusual to find a Paris arrival postmark on such mail unless it has an added 10 centime stamp for local delivery. The collector is lucky if the contents of the letter simply give some indication the letter was received, as in Figure II-4. We know of only one example with a Paris arrival cachet during the Commune, Figure II-5, and it is suspect. Although there is absolutely no trace of a second numeral in the date, the 2 does seem to be too far to the left for a single-digit number. Perhaps it was delivered after the Revolution and the second numeral is missing from the date stamp?

Figure II-3

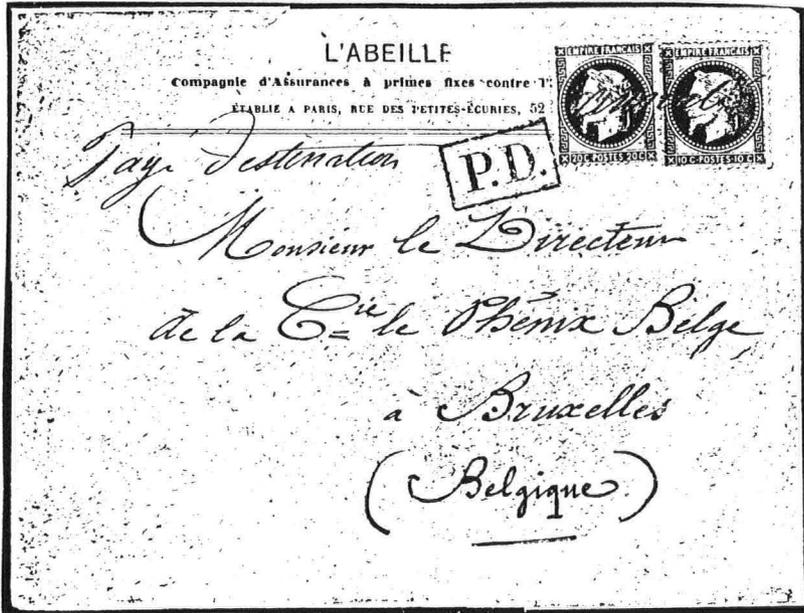


Figure II-3. Pen cancelled in Paris to deceive Versailles controlled post offices who would not handle mail with Paris cancellations. Arrive Brussels April 5.

(1) Lissagary, *History of the Commune of 1871*, Reeves and Taylor, London, 1876. Translated by Eleanor Marx Aveling, page 473.

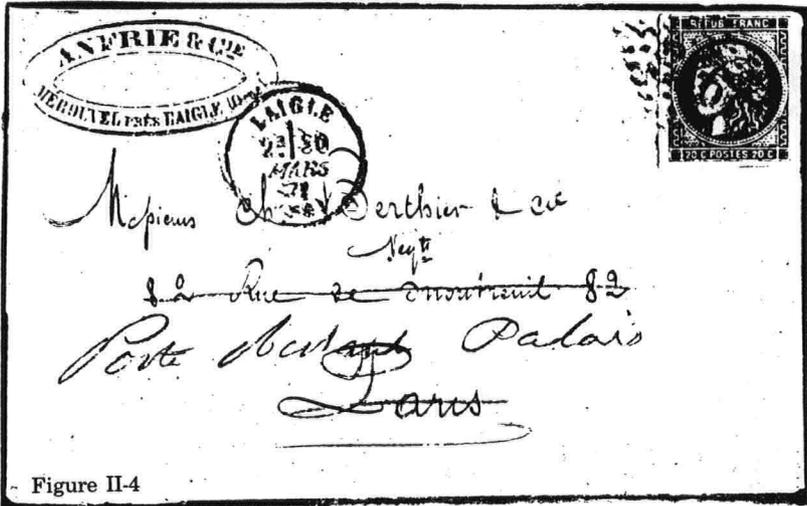


Figure II-4

Figure II-4. Posted Laigle March 30. Detoured to Poste Restante, Palais (Versailles).

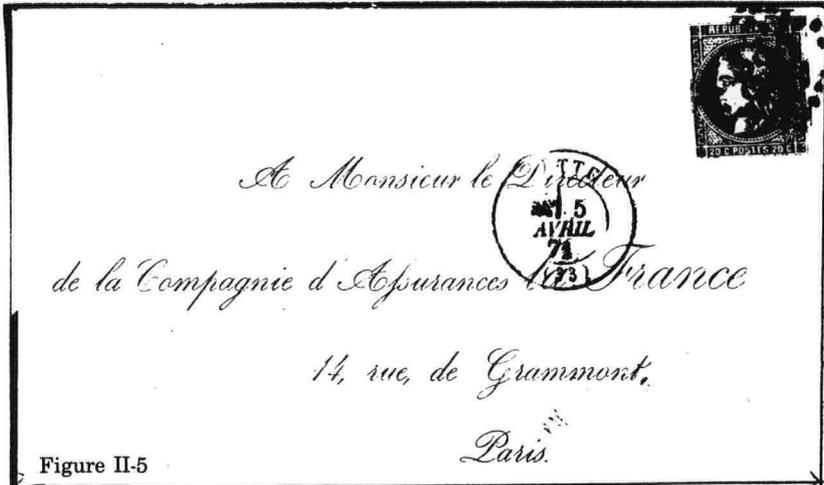


Figure II-5

Figure II-5. Posted Cette April 5. Paris arrival appears to be May 2. Could be May 2? (Unfortunately the arrival mark is not legible on the illustration.)

**The End—Mail From Paris**

While the effects of the postal blockade were very sharply defined at the beginning of the Revolution, they were very diffuse at the end. In essence, the date depends on which direction the mail was going.

Figure II-6 is a map made from a combination of one by Le Pileur (2) which shows the locations of the post offices within the walls of Paris, and a map from an unknown source which shows the daily progress of the Versailles troops during that period called the "Bloody Week." The second map is due to the courtesy of Ernst Cohn.

(2) Le Pileur, J. *Les Aerostats Post 1870-1871*. Au Comptoir des Timbres. 1935.



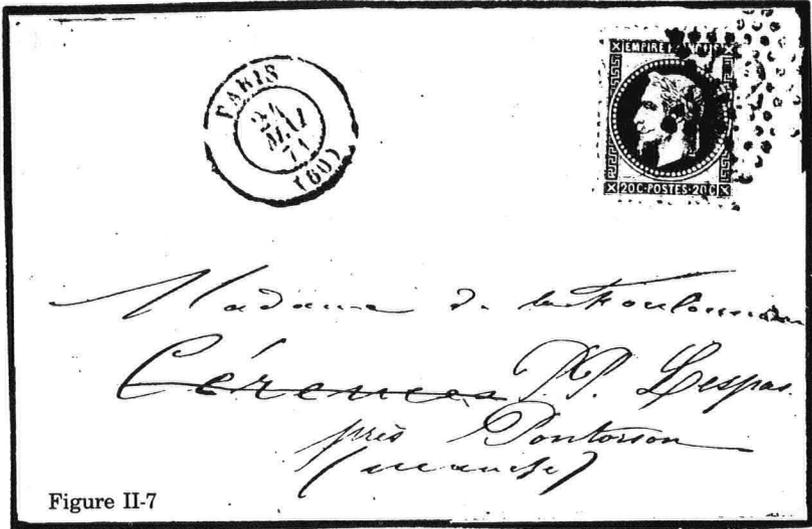


Figure II-7

Figure II-7. Mailed at the main post office the day it was recaptured. See also Figure II-8.

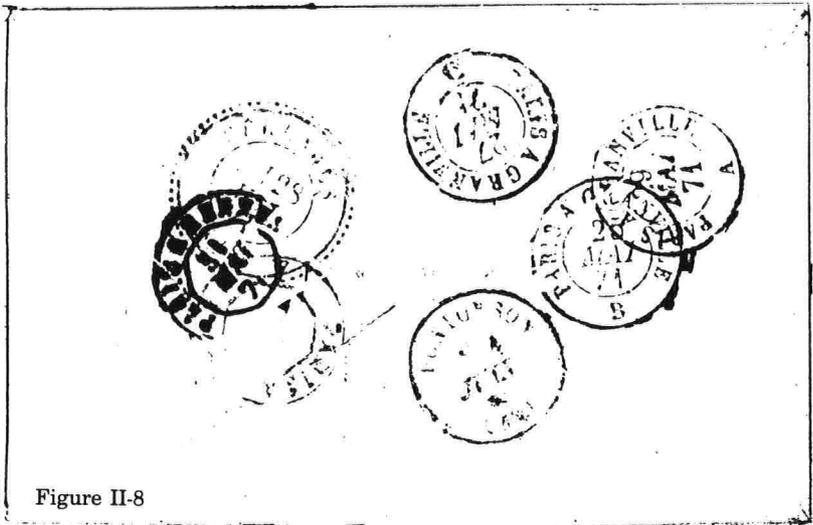


Figure II-8

Figure II-8. Back of Figure II-7. Paris to Granville ambulants; May 25 night; illeg. day; May 27 night; May 29 night; May 31 day. Arrivals Cerences May 28; Pontorson June 1.

on the back dated May 31. The normal route into Paris would have been via the Lyon to Paris railroad, entering Paris via the southeastern corner.

The second, Figure II-10, was written by a Communard National Guard soldier who had been sent out to buy cattle for the troops in Paris. While there, he committed a civil offense and was put in jail. He wrote his commanding officer in Paris asking for help, mailing his letter from Provins on May 25. The envelope has no Paris arrival cachet but, when it got there, it was forwarded to Versailles and became part of the evidence that M. Pascal



Figure II-9

Figure II-9. Posted Bourg-en-Bresse May 26 and held there until May 31 (2nd strike on back). Paris arrival June 2.

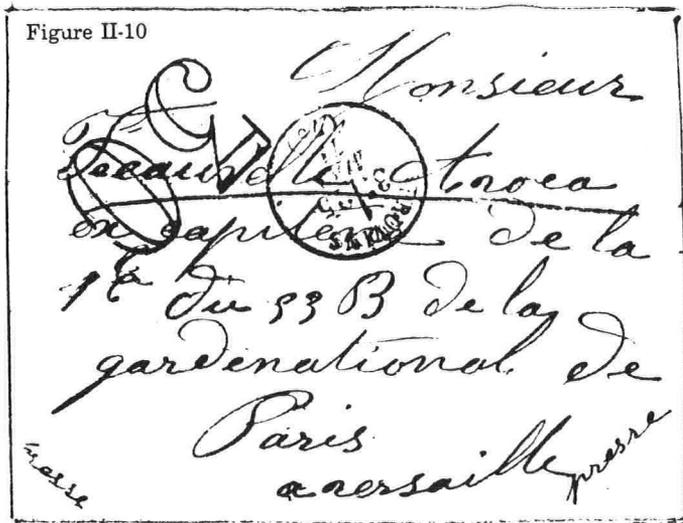


Figure II-10

Figure II-10. Provins to Paris May 25. To a Communard soldier in Paris. Forwarded (a Versailles in manuscript) to become part of a police file.

Chataigneau was a Communard and should be punished. The normal route into Paris would have been via the Belfort to Paris line, entering Paris via the northeast corner. Figure II-11 shows the letter itself. The red crayon handwriting is typical of mail falling into the hands of the military police.

After the Siege of Paris, there was a great influx of mail addressed to Paris which had been held up until it could be delivered after the war. These were called "Tentatives des Entrées," and it is said nine million of them were brought into Paris after the Siege. Most examples we have seen do not have a Paris arrival cachet, probably because of the volume of the mail handled.

The mail embargo caused by the Commune lasted for only two months instead of the four & one-half months of the Siege. Even so, we have not been able to find an equivalent influx of mail after the Commune. The cover shown in Figure II-5 might be an example and, we have already described the other two we know.

Perhaps the reason for this lies in our observation that most of the Tentatives from the Siege are personal in nature and much of the mail from the Commune period was commercial. Personal mail is much more likely to be saved as a "souvenir" of the war. Another possibility is that Tentatives from the Commune period have not yet achieved sufficient popularity with collectors to warrant auction catalog listings. Then too, we have not been able to examine all of the letters into Paris without an obvious Paris arrival. So, maybe some of them did not actually arrive until after the Commune but, we don't think so.

Figure II-11

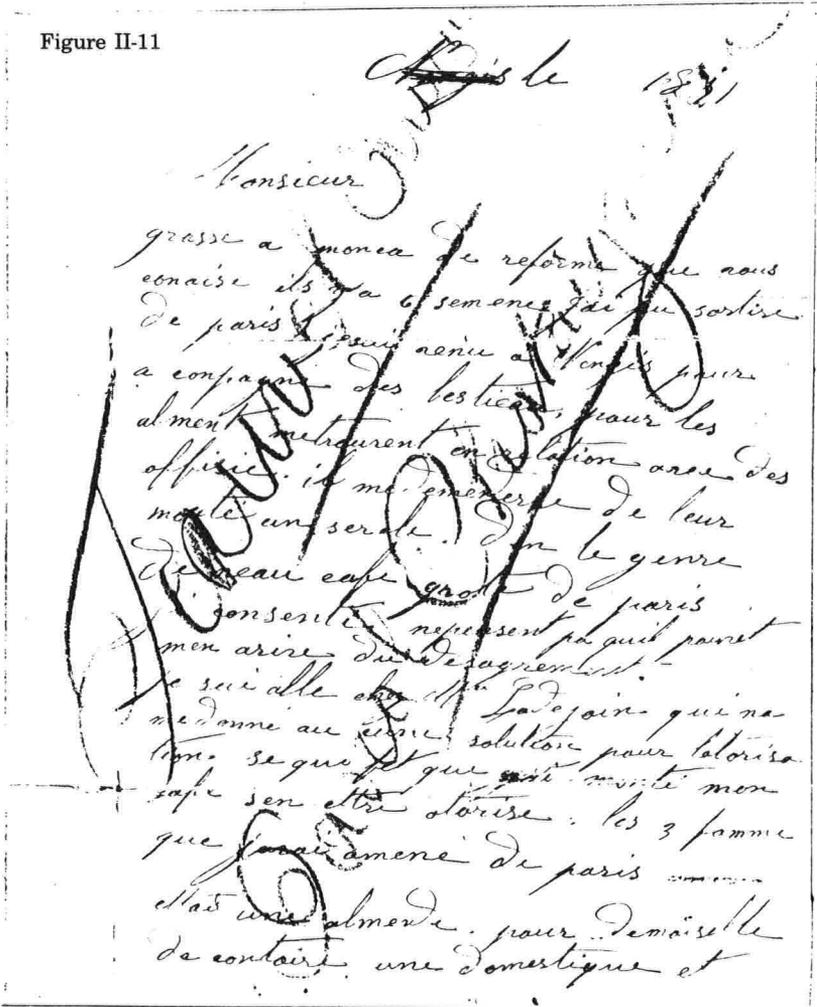


Figure II-11. Letter from Figure II-10. Red crayon marking typical of treatment by Versailles military police.

### CHAPTER III - DETOURED MAIL

This chapter deals with cross-country mail which normally would come into Paris on one train and then change to another. Paris had six major train stations, each serving a different direction of the compass. A hypothetical letter from Marseille to London would arrive at the Gare de Lyon after having been sorted on the train and put in a bag directed to the Gare du Nord, about two & one-half miles away by city streets. Under normal conditions, a letter posted in Marseille would be on the Paris to Calais train the next day having made the journey through Paris.

Thus, it is unusual to find a cover of that kind with a Paris transit marking. Figure III-1 shows a letter from St. Quentin to Poitiers. St. Quentin is only about 90 miles NNE of Paris on the line to Brussels. It was not sorted on the train from St. Quentin to Paris and therefore, got a Paris transit marking when it was sorted in Paris and redirected to the line towards Bordeaux, leaving from the Gare d'Austerlitz, then known as the Gare d'Orleans. The date of the transit cachet is March 30, 1871, so this is a "last day THROUGH Paris" cover.



Figure III-1. Last day THROUGH Paris, folded to show Paris transit March 30.

Figure III-2 shows a "last day OUT of Paris" cover. It was postmarked at the Rue de Bondy office between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. (6th collection) on March 30. Judging from the next dated cachet, it was not routed to London and Mexico via the Gare du Nord, as was normal, but was taken with those postal employees who left for Versailles that evening. Eventually it got on the Paris to Calais train on April 5, six days later. It arrived in London the following day.

Figure III-3 is an adaptation of a contemporary sketch showing the emergency post office set up in the Hall of Battles in the Palace of Versailles. Our theoretical letter from Marseille to London could not come into Paris as the train from Marseille was stopped at Juvisy just south of the present-day Orly airport. All of the mail was taken by horse and wagon to the emergency post office at Versailles to be impounded (Paris mail) or rerouted. Figure III-4 shows the railroads leading to Paris and the roads which had to be used to get the mail to Versailles.

It is 14 miles from where the Marseille train had to off-load to Versailles and another 20 to St. Denis to join the north-bound train used for the English mail. *The Times* (London) confirms the last 20 miles of this detour in an item dated Versailles, April 5: "... letters (Versailles to London) are sent about 20 miles from here by diligence (stagecoach) before they meet the direct mail to the north."

A previous study of the early stagecoach lines in France, before mail was carried by rail, shows average speeds of between five and eight miles an hour, varying with the terrain and the distance. This means a minimum of four hours for our 34-mile detour, not counting the time to get through the confusion shown in Figure III-3.



Figure III-2. Posted in Paris and taken to Versailles by postal employees who moved there late on March 30.



*THE EMERGENCY POST OFFICE  
IN THE HALL OF BATTLES AT VERSAILLES*

Figure III-3. This is a drawing of the emergency post office.

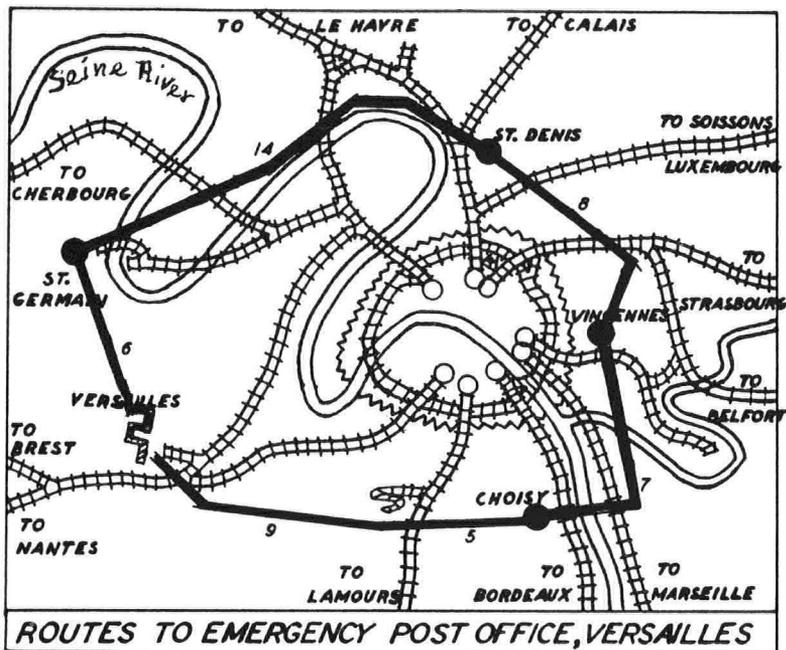


Figure III-4. Roads and train lines in the immediate Paris area.

Figure III-5 shows a letter posted in Marseille on March 30 and directed to Amiens which is on the same line as that towards London. It was from the seventh (last) collection in Marseille which means it was not processed until the next day. On the 31st, it was on the Marseille-to-Paris train and should have reached Amiens on April 1 had it been able to travel into Paris and make the two & one-half mile transfer to the Gare du Nord. Instead, the 34-mile detour of the mail through Versailles caused a three-day delay in the delivery of the mail to Amiens.

Other examples of detoured mail have been described (1) but things seemed to have returned to normal by April 16th. This must mean that, by this time, the emergency post office at Versailles was so well organized that, in essence, normal cross-country service had been restored.

It should be remembered that France had just emerged from the Franco-Prussian War when much more complex detours had been used because the invading armies had bisected the country from east to west (2). Covers are known from the wartime when Swiss forwarding agents were used to avoid besieged Paris. Only one was found in our survey for the Commune period. It was a letter from Strasbourg, forwarded via Switzerland, destined for Valence. The stamps on the letter were Swiss and the forwarding agent's handstamp read STAHLINGS FILS ET CIE/BALE.

We can learn from an unusual auction offering described as follows. The letter was posted in Rennes May 10 and has a Brest to Paris ambulant the same day. It was addressed to Melun, just a little SE of Paris on the line to Lyon and Marseille. The surprising thing is that it carries a Paris/Gare de Lyon transit of May 11. Of course, the real Gare de Lyon was within Paris. However, it is believed this cachet was carried on the train to cancel mail picked up at the Gare de Lyon. Since the head of the line was now at Juvisy, the effective Gare de Lyon was outside of Paris.

(1) Brown, R. and G.; *F&C Philatelist*, #148, Vol. 28, No. 2, April 1972.

(2) Brown, R and G.; *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol 54, No. 6, November 1975.



Figure III-5. First days of detour around Paris. Marseille to Paris ambulant March 31 (day). Arrival Amiens April 4. Three days delay compared to normal.

Figure III-6 is believed to be an example of mail which may very well have been among the first to return to the normal method of transferring to trains within Paris instead of going via Versailles. It was posted at Flers de l'Orne (west of Paris) on May 27 and has a Granville to Paris ambulant of the same day. It arrived at Cette (Mediterranean coast) on May 29. The main Paris post office was recaptured on the 24th and we know the Granville line was operating the next day. The last shots were fired in Paris on May 28 at a location well away from the Gare de Lyon where this letter was to start its southerly journey.

This analysis assumes all mail which would normally have gone through Paris now went via Versailles instead. This is not necessarily true. During the invasion of France, the French became very clever in rerouting mail around the war zone via little-used rail lines. Two examples are known to us which, because of their very rapid delivery, may be examples of mail which did not detour via Versailles.

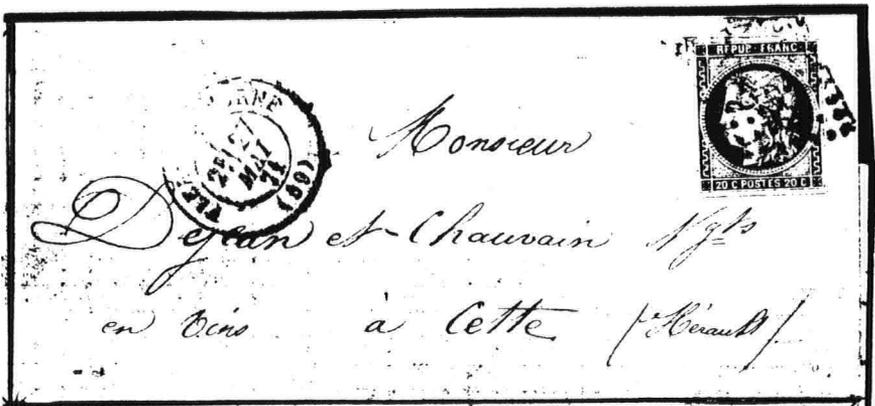


Figure III-6. End of Versailles detour for mail from the west. Granville to Paris ambulant May 27. Arrival Mediterranean coast May 29.

One was posted to the east of Paris (Besancon) April 11 and was on a train west of Paris on the 12th. If it had followed a previous wartime route it could have gone almost due west from Dijon to Tours and then north via Le Mans.

The second was sent from Chartres to Rochefort on the Atlantic coast. From there it was forwarded to Brussels. The Brussels arrival postmark was the same date as the Rochefort date! This seems too swift for even a detour to Brussels via Angers, Le Mans, Rouen and Amiens, especially when the letter carries a manuscript notation that it was received July 16!!!

## CHAPTER IV - MAIL INTO PARIS

Our survey identified only 84 examples of mail brought INTO Paris compared to 113 letters going in the opposite direction. Part of the reason for this difference is that out-bound mail is much easier to identify because most of it was commercial in nature and has a merchant's cachet in the upper left corner acting as a return address.

All mail addressed directly to Paris was impounded in Versailles (see Figure II-4). Anyone acting as an agent to bring mail into Paris had two problems. First, how did he get the mail out of the special post office at Versailles, and (2), how did he get paid for his services? The word "smuggled" has been widely used in connection with the service provided by the agents, but it is really an overstatement of the actual risk. The danger within Paris was in trying to leave the city if you were of military age. The only risk outside the city walls was in areas where there was no strong German Army presence serving as occupation forces. There are a few recorded instances where travelers were searched and Paris mail was confiscated, but they were not close to Paris.

To evaluate the severity of the problem in getting mail out of the Versailles post office, we made the following breakdown. The total for this analysis is only 76 items because in eight cases, there was insufficient information.

1. Letters addressed directly to Paris—these are the ones that had to be rescued from Versailles. They have postage cancelled at the town of origin, and sometimes have an added 10c stamp cancelled in Paris. (28 examples.)
2. Mail addressed to someone just outside the city walls—these also have stamps from the town of origin and usually carry forwarding instructions. Sometimes they have an added 10c stamp with a Paris cancel. (28 examples.)
3. Mail that appears to be simple Paris for Paris mail—these are letters which had been sent to a Paris suburb in a separate envelope and brought into Paris to mail. (20 examples.)

Since collectors value much more highly letters with an added 10c stamp cancelled in Paris, a different breakdown is useful in evaluating the rarity of such mail.

1. Letters with no Paris postal markings addressed either to Paris or to the suburbs usually with forwarding instructions. (20 examples.)
2. Letters with an added 10c stamp and cancelled by a Paris post office. (36 examples.)
3. Letters with an added 10c stamp which was cancelled by an agent. (24 examples.)

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. The Agents (Who were they?)
2. The Bac Correspondence
3. The Huillard-Marquet Correspondence
4. Bruner: Bechet Agents
5. Paris Cancels on Added 10c Stamp
6. Agency Cancellations
7. Stamps, Cancellations and "Origins"

### The Agents

The purpose of this section is to bring together the published information and to discuss what is known about how they each functioned. We will describe:

1. Their names
2. Their addresses
3. Printed envelopes
4. Advertisements
5. Newly discovered agents

Yvert (1) lists 29 agents and also notes the Agence Havas took out their own mail and may have taken out other letters as well. The 29 are as follows:

Agence Générale des Courses	Agence Gosselin
Agence de la Place de la Bourse (Ros et Cie)	Agence Gonza
Agence de la rue de Montyon	Agence Grant
Agence Barbier	Agence Havard
Agence Beaucaire	Agence Lagarde et Cie
Agence Béchet (Victor)	Librairie du Petit Journal
Bowles Brother and Co.	Agence Lorin-Maury
Agence Bruner et Cie	Messageries Meuret et Cie
Bureau de Messagerie	Agence Monteil Frères
Agence Choudens	Agence Moreau (Ed)
Agence Denoles	Agence Moreau et Osmont
Agence Dubief et Cie	Agence Prévost
Agence Dujat (Mon Smal)	Agence Roucol (correspondant)
Agence Finzi	Agence Segond (Paul)
Agence Gaudin	

The Paris addresses of most of the agencies are within a few blocks of the Place de la Bourse. Although the locations of all of the agents have not appeared in the literature, (2) (3) we list below the ones we know. The Paris address is useful in determining how far the agent would have to travel to deliver a letter with a stamp which he had cancelled himself. An address outside of the walls of Paris is helpful in determining how the agent got the mail to bring into the city.

In his book, *My Days of Adventure* (London, 1914), Ernest Vizetelly describes the Poste Restante office in St. Denis during the Commune:

"At that time, the Poste Restante office at St. Denis was established in the local theatre. You entered the auditorium, handed a card to one of the post office clerks on the stage, and then sat down in one of the stalls until your name was called and you received your correspondence."

Agence Générale: Blvd. Montmartre, Paris.

Agence de la Place de la Bourse: Also known as the Bureau de Correspondance. 31 Place de la Bourse, Paris. Incoming mail sent care of Bureau Restante, St. Denis.

Agence de la rue Montyon: 16 rue de Montyon, Paris.

Agence Barbier: 62 rue de Paris, St. Denis.

Bowles Brothers: 12 rue de la Paix and rue Neuve-St-Augustin, Paris.

Agence Bruner: 9 rue de Conservatoire, Paris.

Bureau Messagerie: rue de l'Ecole Medecine, Paris.

Agence Choudens: 265 rue St. Honore, Paris and to Choudens at Montlignon, S&O.

Daverveld (Danerveld?): 87 rue St. Sauveur, Paris. Also known as Messageries Hollandaises.

Agence Denoles: Care of Poste Restante, St. Denis.

Agence Dujat: Palais-Royal, 7 et 8 Galerie Montpensier, Paris.

Agence Gaudin: 40 rue des Ecoles, Paris.

Agence Gosselin: Brussels and Paris addresses illustrated in SAMP #9, 1965 and SAMP Special 1971 but are illegible.

Agence Grant: 11, faubourg Poissonnière, Paris. Believed to have had an address in England also.

Agence Havard: 47 rue Vivienne, Paris.

Agence Lorin-Maury: 80 rue St. Lazare, or 8 rue de la Nation, Paris. (see text for source of confusion). Inbound mail sent to E. Lorin, St. Denis.

Marcuard, André et Cie: 31 rue Lafayette, Paris.

Agence Monteil Frères (Montel?): 34 rue des Halles, Paris.

Agence Moreau (Ed): 10 rue Geoffrey-Marie, Paris. Not the same as in Moreau & Osmont.

Agence Moreau & Osmont: 112 rue de Richelieu, Paris, 112 rue de Paris, Vincennes.

(1) Yvert Specialized Catalog. Tome I. Yvert & Tellier, Amiens, 1975.

(2) Maincent, Paul: *l'Echo de la timbrologie*, No. 1299, March 1972.

(3) Laurent, Benoit, *Commune de 1871, les Postes, les Ballons, le Télégraphe*, Paris, 1934.

Munroe et Cie: 7 rue Scribe, Paris.

Raimon, Rappe et Cie: 22 rue Vivienne, Paris.

Agence Segond: rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, Paris.

Two types of preprinted envelopes are known, one for getting mail out of Paris and the other for getting mail back into Paris. Figures IV-1, IV-2 illustrate the ones sold by Ed. Moreau and also by the post office and the tobacco shops which normally sold stamps. The more expensive one was for overweight letters. You were supposed to put your prestamped letter for the provinces into one of these purchased envelopes and mail it to Moreau in Paris. He would remove your letter and take it to Vincennes to post. He also added a little sticker to the back of the envelope he mailed in Vincennes telling the recipient how to get mail into Paris by using his services. This scheme made a lot of sense because it meant you did not have to travel to 10 rue Geoffroy-Marie to pay the commission. Since the normal commission was 10 centimes, one would guess the 15c charge for the envelope allowed for a 5c commission for the post office or tobacco store for selling the envelope. It is surprising there are no known imitators.

The envelopes from the Bureau de Correspondance and the Lorin-Maury agency were concerned with getting mail into Paris and allowed for the sender to prepay the commission for the expected response. They (Figures IV-3, IV-4) were designed to be enclosed with the letter you sent outside Paris via an agency.

Laurent states the Bureau de Correspondance envelope cost 50c for which the agent mailed the letter for you in St. Denis and the recipient could use the enclosed envelope for his response for which there would be no additional commission to be paid for bringing the letter into Paris.

This scheme did not last very long as competition soon drove down the one-way commission to 25c and then it stabilized at 10c. An undated poster of the Bureau de Correspondance makes no mention of the envelopes they once had for sale for 50c and lists their commission as 10c. Only two examples of used Bureau envelopes have been illustrated in the literature. Neither has any Paris postal markings, but each has an added 10c stamp cancelled with an undated cachet of the agency. They also had stamps from the town or origin.

The printed envelopes produced for the Lorin-Maury agency were designed to serve a similar purpose, but the history of their use is much more complex. The first version had a red embossed seal of Paris in the upper left corner with a value of 10c. (Figure IV-5)



Figure IV-1. This resident of Montmartre was able to prepay Moreau's commission by buying this envelope in his own neighborhood. (From Chamboissier.)

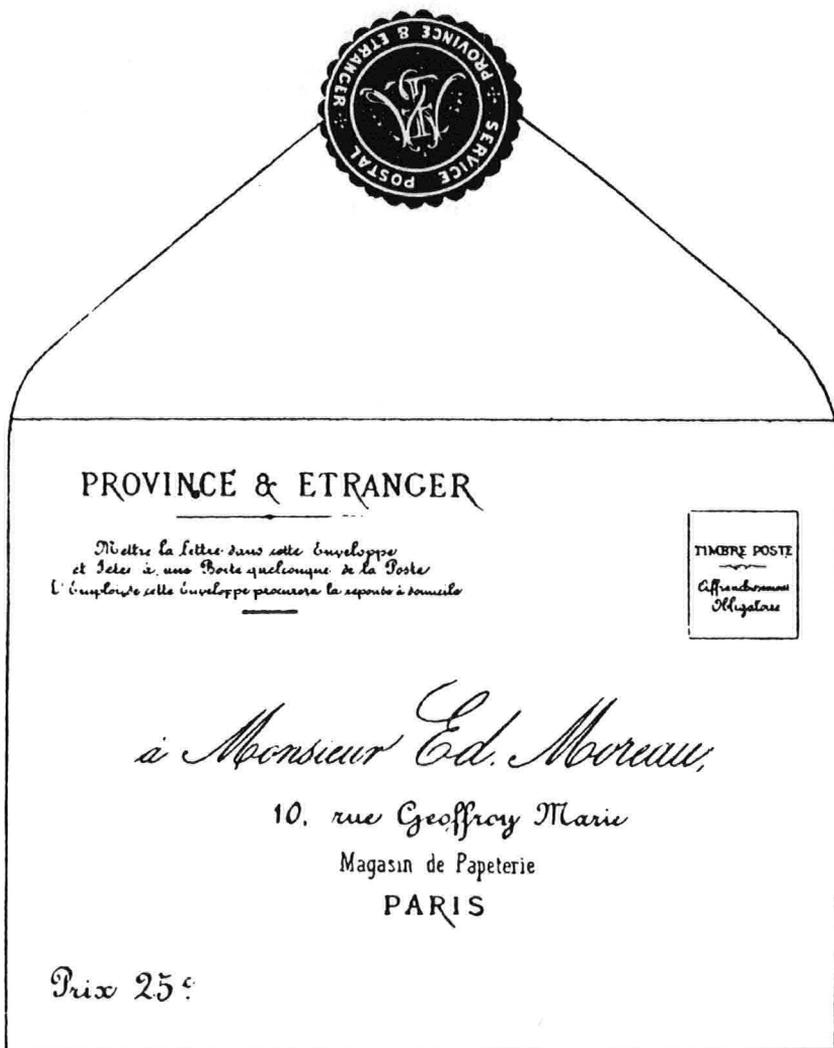


Figure IV-2. The more expensive version was for overweight mail. (From Chamboissier.)

Maury wrote (4) they sold many of these envelopes, but none came back to St. Denis for Lorin to bring into Paris. He assumed they had been confiscated by the authorities of the Versailles administration and, consequently, changed the design. The 10c value was eliminated as well as most of the wording of the motto and the color was changed to black. He reports these envelopes circulated without problems.

This method of prepayment came to halt on April 26 when the Commune Government ruled a 10c stamp must be added to all mail brought in from the outside. One would imagine this was because the Versailles administration had received the revenues from the stamp sold outside of Paris, so why should the Communards have to pay to have the letter delivered in Paris?

(4) Maury, Arthur: *Histoire des Timbres-Poste Français*, Paris 1907.

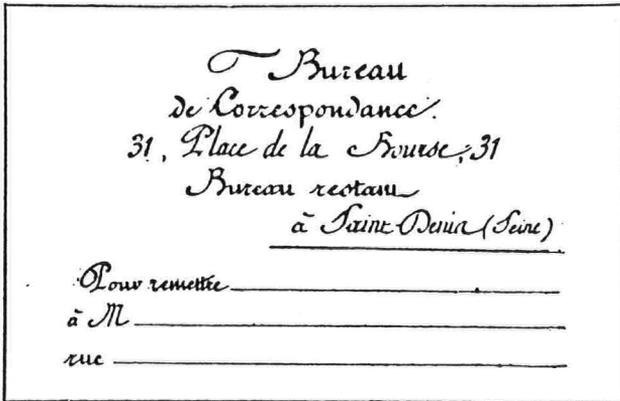


Figure IV-3. For 50c you could buy this envelope from the Bureau de Correspondance; include it in your outgoing letter and prepay the commission both ways when the recipient responded. (From Chamboissier.)

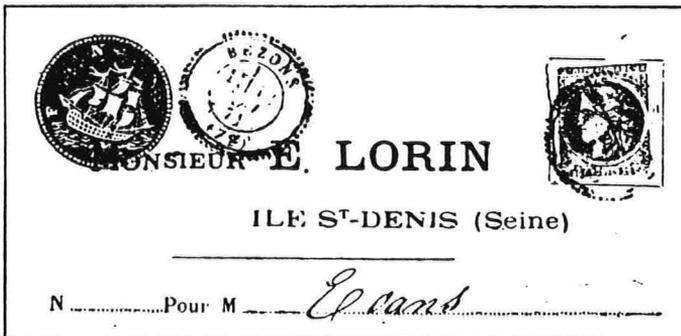


Figure IV-4. This was the Lorin-Maury version of Figure IV-3. (From Chamboissier.)



Figure IV-5. The original embossed Lorin-Maury seal of Paris. Later, the 10c was removed and all of the letters except F and N. (From Chamboissier.)

Some of the agents delivered their own mail without using the Paris postal system, yet most of them added a 10c stamp to comply with the new law. Out of the 86 examples from the survey, only 22 lacked the added 10c stamp and, of the 22, only three were delivered before April 26.

Apart from the one shown in Figure IV-4, which has no added 10c stamp, two other used envelopes are known. Both had an added 10c stamp and one of the agency's vignettes (Figure IV-6) indicating, in manuscript, how much money was to be collected on delivery. The amounts to be collected show they were charging twice for the delivery. Once when they sold the envelope in Paris, and again when they delivered the envelope in Paris. Since



Figure IV-6 Vignettes (stamps) used by Lorin-Maury on incoming mail to act as a bill for their fees. See also IV-26. (From Chamboissier.)

they delivered the letter themselves instead of using the postal system, one wonders why they did not cheat by not applying the extra stamp. However, supposedly, they were well-known agents, and it would be difficult to keep their fraud a secret and prison might result.

Maradan (5) has pointed out this double charging and suggests the printed Lorin-Maury envelopes never really saw use during the Commune, but were produced as souvenirs after the revolution.

Cohn has identified five examples of letters hand addressed to Lorin in St. Denis with forwarding instructions. Since the handwriting on all of the envelopes is very similar, he suggests (6) these were also products of Maury's efforts to manufacture postal history for the collectors of his time. But then again, perhaps they were simply precursors of the printed envelope.

Certainly, Maury was a well-known stamp dealer whose name has been linked with a variety of questionable material from balloon mail to an admitted reproduction of his Commune vignettes.

The agents advertised their services in several different ways. At least three of them created posters meant to be placed inside Paris where they would be noticed. Figure IV-7 shows the one from Ed. Moreau who was promoting his envelopes.

# SERVICE POSTAL

## Pour la PROVINCE et L'ÉTRANGER

RÉPONSE à DOMICILE avec l'EMPLOI de

# L'ENVELOPPE-RÉPONSE

**MODÈLE DE L'ENVELOPPE-RÉPONSE**

**PROVINCE ET ÉTRANGER**

Mettez la Lettre dans cette Enveloppe et la jointe à son autre extrémité et le Plier.

L'usage de cette Enveloppe procure le Réponse à DOMICILE.

**M. Ed. MOREAU,**  
10, Rue Geoffroy-Maury, Paris.  
(MAGASIN DE PAPETERIE.)

**Délivrée aux Prix suivants:**

Enveloppe, format ordinaire . . . **0,15 c.**

Enveloppe, grand format . . . . . **0,25 c.**

**MODÈLE DE L'ENVELOPPE-RÉPONSE**

**PROVINCE ET ÉTRANGER.**

Mettez la Lettre dans cette Enveloppe et la jointe à son autre extrémité et le Plier.

L'usage de cette Enveloppe procure le Réponse à DOMICILE.

**M. Ed. MOREAU,**  
10, Rue Geoffroy-Maury, Paris.  
(MAGASIN DE PAPETERIE.)

**SE TROUVE:**

**AUX**

**AUX**

# BUREAUX DE POSTE | BUREAUX DE TABAC

Paris — Imprimerie de E. Bréte, 231, Rue Saint-Sauveur

Figure IV-7. Poster of the Ed. Moreau agency advertising his envelopes. "Use this envelope in the comfort of your home." (From Chamboissier.)

(5) Maradan, Jean: *Schweizer Briefmarken Zeitung*, Jan. 1977, p. 10.  
 (6) Cohn, Ernst M.: "Ex So-and-So Is Not Enough" in *Opinions IV, The Philatelic Foundation*. E. Pope Ed., 1987.

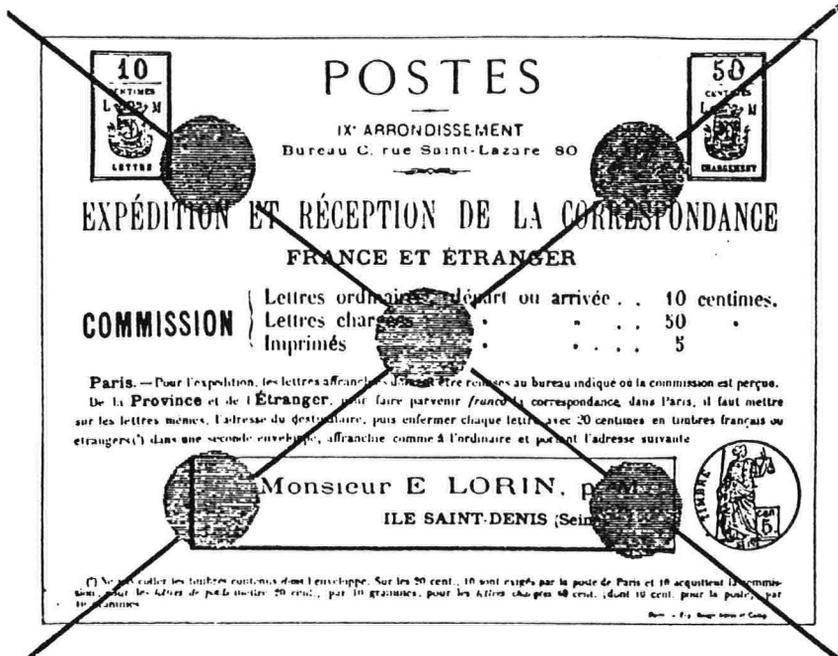


Figure IV-8. Bureau C version of the Lorin-Maury poster giving the address of Maury's stamp store. (From Chamboissier.)

Figures IV-8 and IV-9 show the much more colorful ones created by Lorin-Maury. Interestingly enough, they say nothing about the envelopes just discussed but, recommend the double envelope method for incoming mail. Figure IV-8 is the only style found in the literature and gives the Paris address as 80 rue St. Lazare, Bureau C, IX arrondissement. The five round dots are in eye-catching red. The one shown in Figure IV-9 is the one we happen to own and gives a different address; 8 rue de la Nation (now rue de Sofia), Bureau F, XVIII arrondissement. Maury explains this by saying they had planned Bureau F as a branch office and printed posters at the same time as Bureau C. The St. Lazare address was the location of Maury's stamp store.

Other less spectacular advertisements are known. The ones shown in Figure IV-10 look as though they were meant to be placed in Paris newspapers. Figure IV-11, from Agence de la rue Montyon is said to have been handed out on the streets of Paris as a "flyer."

Four agencies are known to have created stickers to be placed on the backs of letters so the recipients would know how to respond. The French call them "etiquettes" or "papillons," we call them stickers for this is how they were applied. Figure IV-12 shows the one created by Denole and Figure IV-13, the one from Lorin Maury.

The Ed. Moreau agency used two different types of stickers. One was more eye-catching than informative. It is the bright red seal shown in Figure IV-14. More helpful is the one shown in Figure IV-15, obviously designed to be placed on the back of mail coming into Paris so the recipient would know how his mail got into Paris.

In the section on "Paris Cancels on Added 10c Stamp," you will note that Raimon, Rappe, Gaudin, Gosselin and Daverveld used handstamp cachets on the mail they handled and Choudens and Moreau and Osmont used stickers applied to the backs of letters.

On occasion the literature records other agents not listed by Yvert, and this survey has identified a few more.

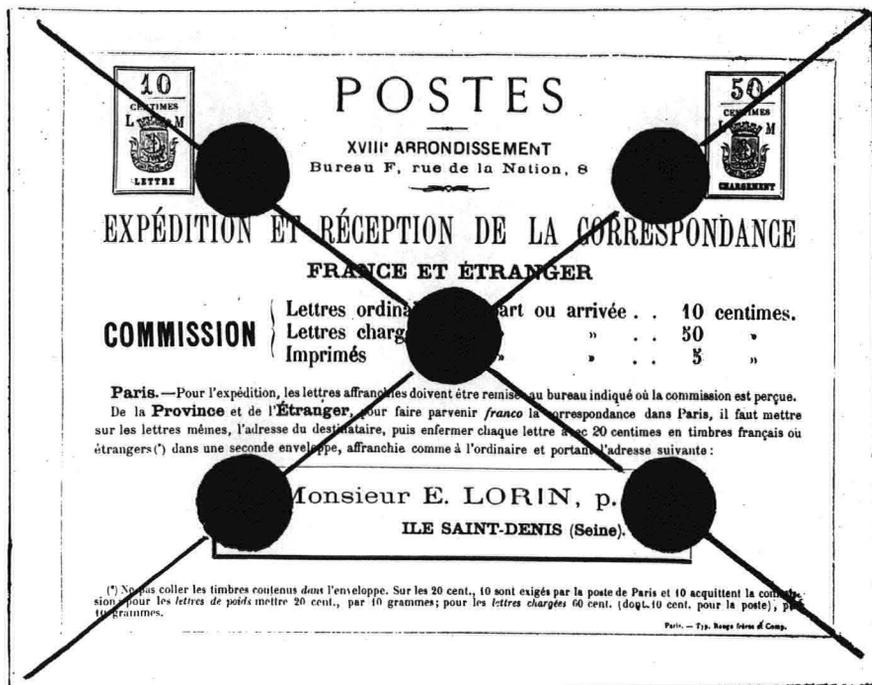


Figure IV-9. The Bureau F poster was created with the thought of opening a branch office of Lorin-Maury closer to the Gare du Nord where Lorin came in with the mail from St. Denis.

Boussac (7) mentions Agence Beaucaire.

Cappart (8) cites an advertisement in the Versailles edition of the newspaper *Le Gaulois* by the agent Mayoux et Honore of 23 rue Michel-Lecompte, Paris. He also mentions Loyer, rue Petit, St. Denis and suggests he was the outside contact for Mayoux et Honore.

Blanc (9) illustrates a cover sent to Agence Carel in St. Germain en Laye.

Dr. Bretonnière (10) was the first we know of to identify Grelly of Montreuil-s-Bois (near Vincennes) as an agent. One of these covers is illustrated in the section on the Huillard-Marquet correspondence.

Rouchy (11) gives the text of a letter which indicates Mon. Calidhon was an agent and got his mail via Poste Restante, Charenton.

Cohn (12) has described how a book dealers' association (Cercle de la Librairie) sent the secretary of the association to Versailles where he made his temporary home. He called for mail at the emergency post office every day for the book dealers who had given him their power of attorney. Then he went to St. Denis to give the mail to another employee to take into Paris. No names are given, but it is an excellent description of how the system worked. In addition, this survey has identified the following as agents:

Daverveld

Marcuard, André (Bankers)

(7) Boussac, Robert: *SAMP* #9, 1965.

(8) Cappart, Hubert: *SAMP* #15, 1966.

(9) Blanc, Jack: *Documents Philatéliques*, No. 116, 1988.

(10) Bretonnière, Dr. Louis: *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, No. 200, June 1975.

(11) Rouchy, J.L.: *Coll. Phil. et Marcophile*, No. 66

(12) Cohn, Ernst M.: *France & Colonies Philatelist*, 205 (42, No. 3) July 1986, pp 81-83.

## CORRESPONDANCES.

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### Lettres pour Paris.

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Nous rappelons au public que MM. Ed. MOREAU et OSMONT se chargent de transmettre dans Paris toutes les lettres de la Province et de l'Étranger qui leur sont adressées à Vincennes, rue de Paris, 112.

Les expéditeurs doivent mettre leurs lettres sous enveloppe **affranchie** à l'adresse sus-indiquée, avec une commission de 10 centimes par lettre. (Cette commission ne s'applique pas aux expéditeurs de l'Étranger; avis est donné au destinataire).

Les lettres *chargées* qui seront adressées à MM. Ed. MOREAU et OSMONT paieront chacune une commission de 50 centimes, et ne seront délivrées aux destinataires que contre décharge régulière.

Les expéditeurs ou destinataires de lettres restées en souffrance à Versailles, peuvent écrire à M. le Directeur général des postes de les *faire suivre chez MM. Ed. Moreau et Osmont, 112, rue de Paris, à Vincennes*, qui les feront parvenir.

Paris. — Typogr. de E. Brière, rue Saint-Honoré, 257.

Fig. 46. — Prospectus Ed. Moreau et Osmont pour la correspondance avec Paris.

## CORRESPONDANCES.

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### Lettres de Paris

#### POUR LA PROVINCE ET L'ÉTRANGER.

Moyennant 10 centimes par lettre, MM. Ed. MOREAU et OSMONT feront mettre chaque jour à la Poste, **hors Paris**, les lettres **affranchies** qui auront été remises ou envoyées à leur bureau, Maison Gambogi, 112, rue de Richelieu (près le boulevard), à Paris, avant 5 h. du soir.

Après 5 heures, les lettres partiront le lendemain matin.

Aucun retard ne sera apporté dans la remise des correspondances; mais, sous aucun prétexte, toute lettre qui aura été déposée ne pourra être retirée par l'Expéditeur.

#### LETTRES À CHARGER.

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MM. Ed. MOREAU et OSMONT feront CHARGER chaque jour, *hors Paris*, les lettres qui auront été remises à leur bureau, revêtues des conditions réglementaires.

Elles seront inscrites par numéro d'ordre, sur un registre spécial, signé du déposant.

Le lendemain du dépôt, l'Expéditeur pourra faire retirer du bureau de MM. Ed. MOREAU et OSMONT le récépissé de la poste.

La commission sera de **50 centimes** par lettre.

Paris. — Imprimerie de E. Brière, 257, rue Saint-Honoré.

Fig. 47. — Prospectus Ed. Moreau et Osmont pour la correspondance de Paris avec la Province et l'Étranger.

Figure IV-10 Advertisements of the Moreau & Osmont agency. (From Chamboissier.)

*correspondance avec la Province.*

*Moyennant 10 C<sup>es</sup> de supplément, les lettres sont mises à la poste hors de Paris et les réponses parviennent aux destinataires dans Paris, sans arrêt à Versailles.*

*Renseignements: 16, rue de Montyon.*

---

*Retirées en les bureaux  
à 30 Mars 1871.*

*?? curé ?!*

Figure IV-11. Designed to be handed out on the streets by the agency at 16 rue de Montyon. (From Chamboissier.)

**Pour ÉCRIRE À PARIS**  
Mettez vos Lettres sous enveloppe  
affranchie, adressée  
**A M. Ed. DENOLE**  
POSTE RESTANTE  
**A VINCENNES (Seine).**  
Joindre 20 c par lettre pour commission.

Figure IV-12. Denole placed this sticker on the backs of outgoing mail so the recipient would use his services for their response. (from Chamboissier.)

Chaque lettre à destination de Paris doit être enfermée, avec 20 centimes en timbres *non collés* (\*), dans une enveloppe affranchie à l'adresse de :

**Monsieur E. LORIN p. M.**  
ILE SAINT-DENIS (SEINE)

(\* ) 10 c. pour la poste de Paris, 10 c. pour commission.

Figure IV-13. Lorin-Maury sticker to be applied to outgoing mail. (From Chamboissier.)



Figure IV-14. Bright red sticker of Ed. Moreau used on the back of incoming mail. (From Chamboissier.)

Figure IV-15. Another, more informative Moreau sticker. (From Chamboissier.)



Raimon, Rappe

Washburne, Elihu; his U.S. diplomatic pouch

Jucatey; a laundryman from Gennevilliers whose Paris contact was M. Connaille, 40 rue Turbigou

Sanson & Prunier, St. Denis; mail for G. Bac

Note: The Commune covers listed in the Soluphil auction 39 (June 1989) have not been included in our survey. However, lots 881 and 882 mention unlisted agents. Lot 881 cites Mr. Etienne, 22 bis rue du Port, St. Denis and lot 882 refers to Mr. Weiss, Bureau restante, Aubervilliers, near Paris.

The philatelic evidence suggests that all mail addressed to Paris, to suburban poste restantes, or to third parties outside the city wall with forwarding instructions actually did arrive in Paris during the revolution, whether or not we have positive information proving this. Hence, it is worthwhile to take note of the examples known of this type as a method of identifying other unknown forwarding agents.

Addressed to:	Location:	For:
Mrs. Chivot	St. Denis	Ml. de Fossa
A. Morel	Enghien les Bains	7 rue Turbigou, Paris
M. Augor	St. Denis	M Willemin
M. St. Pierre	Versailles	M. St. Pierre?

This appears to be an excellent area for collectors to compare notes.

We have already listed the Paris addresses of Bowles and Munroe. Both were branches of U.S. banks, and although no examples are known of mail which they handled during the Commune, it is believed they did so.

Ernst Cohn has discovered that Washburne (U.S.) and Lord Lyons (UK) had requested permission to send and receive private mail during the Commune in their diplomatic pouches. On March 24, Washburne opened a legation office in Versailles at 7 rue Mademoiselle and he and Hoffman appear to have taken turns manning that office. For an example of the English diplomatic mail see Figure IX-4 in a later Chapter.

### The Bac Correspondence

When the facts are few in number, it is well to turn to what we call the "philatelic evidence," i.e., what do the covers now in collectors' hands enable us to deduce about what must have happened? Our survey found 18 letters from outside Paris addressed to G. Bac who had a factory engaged in the manufacture of metal eyelets. The letters we have seen

refer to their use in corsets. His Paris address was 12 rue Portefoin, a small street near the Mairie of the 3rd Arrondissement. All were folded letter sheets, without envelopes and thus, these letters contain a great deal of "philatelic evidence" as the postal history was not thrown away with the envelope.

In his book on the postal history of the Commune, Laurent quotes from the 1st and 2nd notices of the Commune Delegation of Commerce and Industry about the agreements the Communards were able to make with Rampont, the Versailles official in charge of the posts, including those letters for Paris impounded at Versailles. In the first, Rampont is quoted as saying the search for letters addressed to Paris had been very long due to the accumulations of mail; those interested in retrieving such mail should limit their requests to five or ten names only, living, as much as possible, on the same street or quarter. He also requested that the names be certified by the industry to which they belong (as being important enough to be worthy of the effort.) The second notice reiterates this and adds that a 10c stamp must be added to the letter for each one delivered. This was posted on April 26.

This suggests the Emergency Post Office at Versailles was not as chaotic as the contemporary illustration (Figure III-3) would suggest. Instead, it appears they sorted the daily mail addressed to Paris just as if they were going to deliver it the next day, i.e., street by street and #10 placed ahead of #12. Certainly, this would simplify the searching of the mail for a specific name.

We have arranged the details of the 18 letters in table form to demonstrate the various methods used to get the Bac letters into Paris, and will illustrate five of them. A close examination of the table is useful in understanding how other mail got into Paris.

#### Letters Retrieved From Versailles Emergency Post Office

The first letter (from Geneva) was posted on April 9, just a few days after the embargo of Paris mail was begun by the Versailles Government. We know from other correspondence (example illustrated in Figure II-4) mail addressed to Paris was forwarded to the Emergency Post Office in Versailles. Later, as with the Geneva letter, (Figure IV-16) this procedure became automatic without any written forwarding instructions. We have examined six of the 18 Bac letters and they all show various markings to indicate they were actually received in Paris. Figure IV-17 shows the text of the Geneva letter with the arrival notation of "April 19" in crayon.

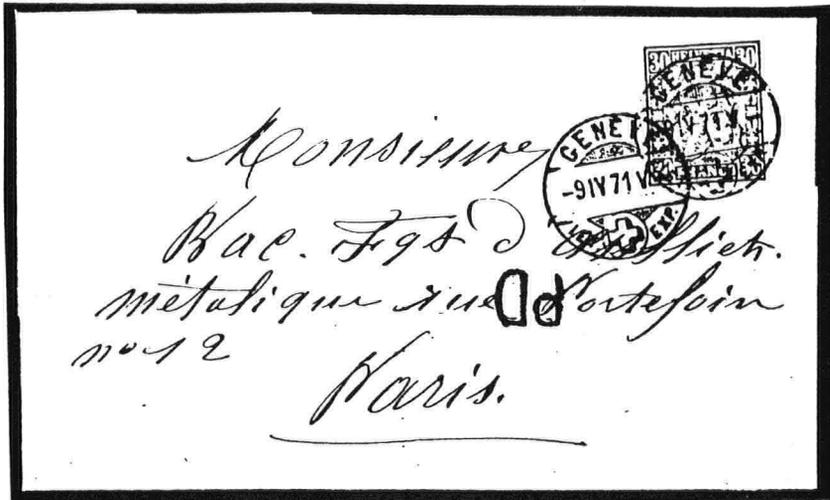


Figure IV-16. Bac letter retrieved from the Versailles post office by an unknown agent and delivered in Paris before the April 26 law requiring an added 10c stamp on all mail brought in from the outside.

19 Avril

Geneve le 8 Avril 1871.

Monsieur Bac. 179 a Paris.

Monsieur j'ai vu le gendarme de la garde  
de Montreuil (ain) qui vous prie de  
vouloir remettre ce qui est en votre  
cave à Monsieur Desdaffli n'ayant pas  
sûr. un de vos lettres qui n'est point  
à son commission que je lui ai donné.  
Vous m'obligerait en le faisant le plus  
promptement possible

Recevez Monsieur mes salutations  
Empire  
Gaston  
Simon

Figure IV-17. Text of the Geneva letter showing a manuscript arrival of 19 Avril.

The fairly prompt (for this early period of the Revolution) delivery of this letter indicates M. Bac had sufficient influence to have someone go to Versailles to retrieve his mail. Its arrival was before the mandatory addition of a 10c stamp for all letters brought into Paris. In fact, covers of this sort are really quite rare. The survey showed only two others, one of which is illustrated in Figure II-4.

#### Letters Sent Under Separate Cover To Addresses Outside Paris

Next on the list we find a group of seven letters with only the message to prove they came from outside Paris. Each was addressed directly to Paris, but as they have no stamps cancelled outside of Paris, obviously they had been sent in separate envelopes to an unknown suburban address. The contents of each envelope was taken into Paris and posted with a 10c stamp which may have been put on by the sender or, by the agent. If it were not for the contents, these letters would be classified as simple Paris-for-Paris mail.

One of the most interesting ones from this group (#3) was written in New York City on April 15. No doubt the sender knew of the situation in Paris from the transatlantic cable, for he sent it in a separate envelope to someone in Le Havre who arranged to have it taken into Paris. In the return address section of the folded letter is a merchant's handstamp (??SESHARD LALLEMAND—HAVRE). They must have been the ones (rather than the agent) who mistakenly put on two 10c stamps instead of the one required (Figure IV-18).

Another interesting cover of this type is #8 from Luxembourg (Figure IV-19). Not only does it have the anchor cancel (one of ten found in the survey from the Commune period), but it has a date cancel from Paris-Montmartre of May 21/5E which is about the time of day the Versailles troops entered Paris from the west to begin what is called "The Bloody Week." Interestingly enough, the manuscript arrival notation was June 1. It took a long while to get from northern Paris to the downtown location because of the street fighting.



Figure IV-18. Sent from the U.S.A. in a separate envelope to a merchant in Le Havre who added French stamps and arranged delivery in Paris.

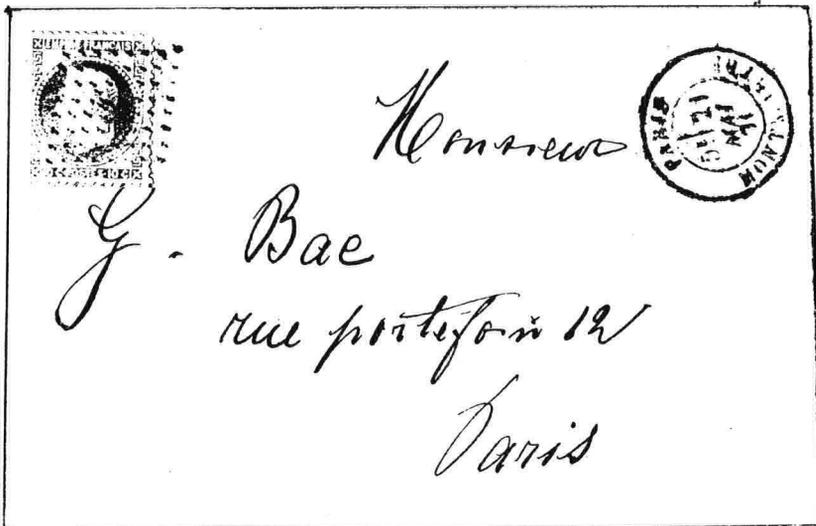


Figure IV-19. Sent from Luxembourg in a separate envelope to an unknown agent who applied a 10c stamp and posted the letter in Montmartre. Anchor cancel. Arrived at the beginning of "The Bloody Week" and Bac did not get the letter until June 1.

### Forwarded By Versailles To St. Mandé Post Office

Next we come to a series of eight covers addressed to Paris, but which were forwarded to St. Mandé. Each had Paris crossed out and "St. Mandé Poste Restante" added. Obviously, this had to have been done by the Emergency Post Office at Versailles. It was as though Bac had left Paris for a vacation in St. Mandé and had asked for his mail to be forwarded there. Corsets must have been an important industry then, to warrant such service!

Figure IV-20 (cover #9) illustrates an example of this method. It was posted in Niort on April 19 and has a manuscript Paris arrival notation in Paris on April 25. While the letter still had to go through Versailles, it was sent on to St. Mandé almost automatically.



Figure IV-20. Letter for Bac forwarded to St. Mandé by the Emergency Post Office at Versailles. Manuscript Paris arrival April 25. Before the April 26 rule calling for an extra 10c stamp.

### Addressed To Specific Agent Outside Paris

Finally, we have two letters for Bac addressed to people outside Paris. One (#17) is addressed to St. Mandé. While the name of Bac is not in the address, the message was obviously for him. The name of "that person" was not identified by the auction listing, but it would be helpful in learning who carried the Bac mail into Paris from St. Mandé if its present owner would please write us.

A similar letter (Figure IV-21) was addressed to Sanson and Prunier, Poste Restante, St. Denis with instructions to forward the mail to G. Bac. Since the names of these men were mentioned in the text of the letter, we assume they were agents chosen by the sender instead of by Bac.

The details of these 18 covers are in the following table.

## Letters To Mon. G. Bac

From	Address	Forwarded	Arrival	Remarks
1 Geneva cancel Apr. 9	Paris	—	Bac MS Apr. 19	Before 10c rule
2 Rouen MS Apr. 17	Paris	—	Paris 60 Apr. 19	10c lauré
3 New York MS Apr. 15	Paris	—	Paris 60 May 1 Havre merchant cachet on envelope	2x10c lauré
4 Dijon MS Apr. 28	Paris	—	Paris 60 May 1	10c lauré
5 Vitry le Francois MS May 4	Paris	—	Paris 60 May 8	10c lauré
6 Pau MS May 5	Paris	—	Paris-Montrouge May 12	10c Bordeaux ob. PC 2523
7 Laon MS May 11	Paris	—	R des Ecluses—May 16	10c lauré obl. Star 39
8 Luxembourg Ms May 19	Paris	—	Paris Monmartre May 21	10c lauré obl. anchor, Bac Ms June 1
9 Niort Cancel Apr. 19	Paris	St. Mandé	Bac Apr. 25	
10 Oran Cancel Apr. 26	Paris	St. Mandé	Not given	
11 Vesoul Cancel Apr. 29	Paris	St. Mandé	Not given	
12 St. Loupe-s-Semeouse Cancel May 2	Paris	St. Mandé	Not given	
13 Ch-Renaud Provence cancel May 16	Paris	St. Mandé	St. Mande CA May 21	
14 Briey cancel May 18	Paris	St. Mandé	St. Mandé CA May 21	
15 Marseille Cancel May 18	Paris	St. Mandé	Not given	
16 Lyon cancel May 24	Paris	St. Mandé	Not given	
17 London cancel May 11	St. Mandé		To another person than Bac, but message obviously for Bac	
18 Marseille cancel May 16	St. Denis		To Sanson et Prunier to remit to Bac	

NOTE: Covers 2 through 8 were sent to an outside agent in a separate envelope so have no outside cancellations.

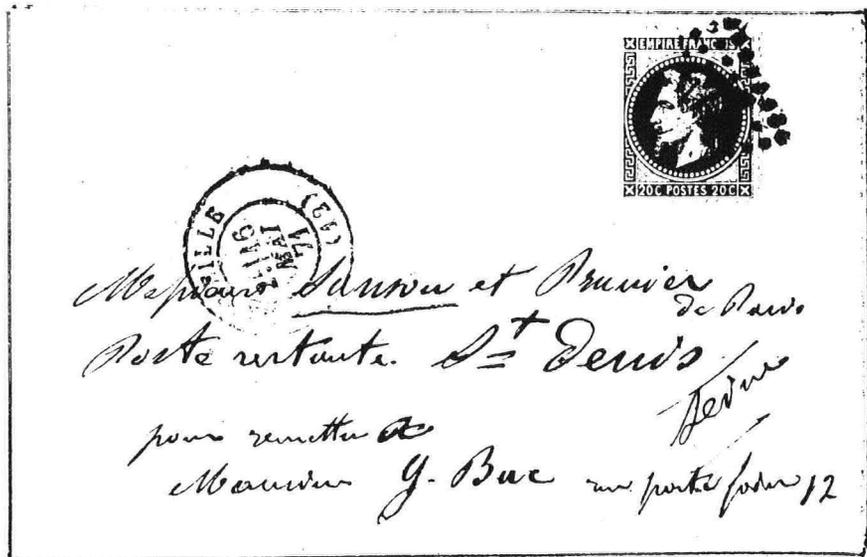


Figure IV-21 Letter for Bac sent to unrecorded agents Sanson and Prunier in St. Denis to forward to Bac. Text shows notations made by Bac, but no arrival date.

### The Huillard-Marquet Correspondence

Our survey found seven letters destined for the Paris bankers, A. Huillard and Marquet. While not as great in number as the Bac correspondence, they are important because they identify the name of the agents handling their mail.

Five of the seven were addressed to M. Grelly, Poste Restante, Montreuil-s-Bois, near Vincennes, with instructions to forward the letter to Huillard and Marquet with no mention of Paris. The letters were posted from Rouen, Caen, Lille and Reims (2). The one shown in Figure IV-22 is typical with an arrival postmark in Vincennes. We have been able to examine all but the Rouen cover and all show definite indications they actually arrived in Paris about two days after their arrival in Vincennes. Each was delivered personally instead of letting the post office do the work. Therefore, there are no Paris postal markings. The mandatory 10c postal tax was due even if delivered personally, but this law was ignored.

On the inside of each letter is a rather elaborate letter "A" (Figure IV-23) in blue crayon. We assume this stands for the first name of Huillard. The date of the Paris arrival is also noted either in crayon or ink.

Collectors should be on the alert to see if Grelly handled mail for people other than Huillard-Marquet.

Two other letters are known, both brought into Paris from Tilbourg, Holland, by the C.J. Daverveld messenger service. They were delivered by the Paris post office.

### Bruner-Bechet Agents

Bruner and Bechet are considered by Laurent to be two of the three agents regarded as "semi-official" (The third is E. Moreau.) In fact, Bechet was one of the three representatives of the Commune Government who met with officials in Versailles on April 1, 2 and 7 to discuss the problem of mail for the industries of Paris. He later became a member of the Delegation of Commerce and Industry for the Postal Service of the Commune.

We group Bruner and Bechet together here simply because covers exist for each with their name written on the envelope as in Figure IV-24. All were on letters addressed directly to Paris, and therefore, were impounded in Versailles.

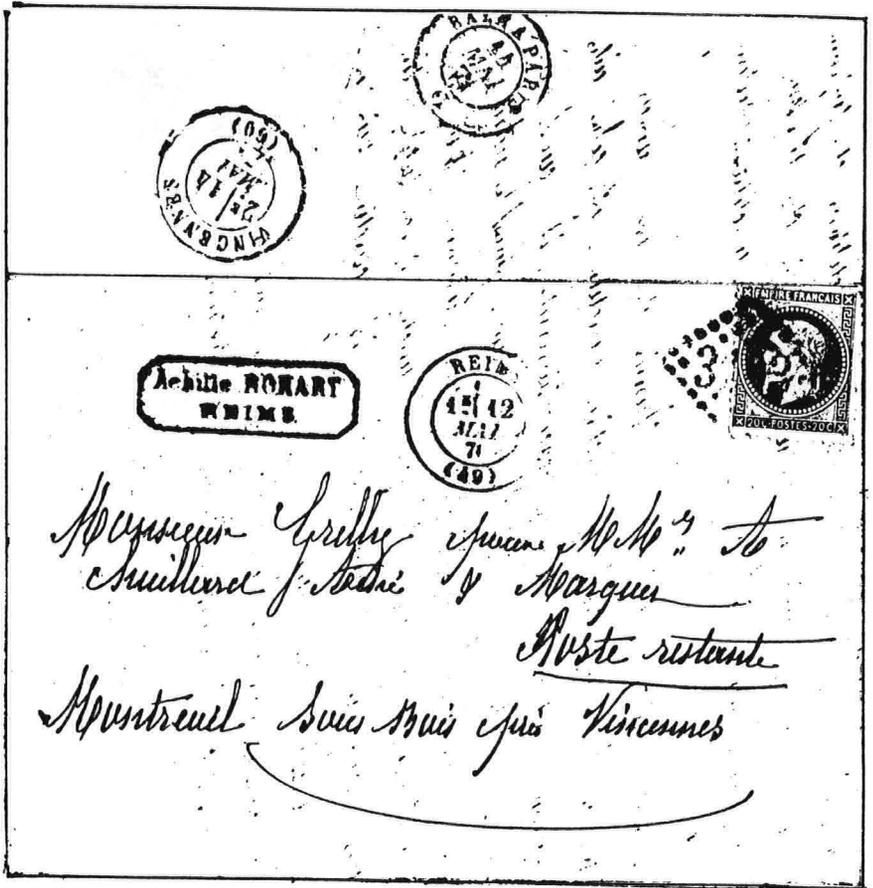


Figure IV-22. To Huillard, Marquet via agent agent Grelly.

The *Journal Officiel* of Paris, issue of April 14, noted that Bruner had brought in 2,000 letters from Versailles on the 13th, bringing the total to 6,000 letters since the beginning of the mail embargo.

Since only six Bruner letters were found in our survey, and but one Bechet cover, it must be assumed the name was written only on the top letter of the packet set aside for the agent involved. This assumption means that most of the letters brought in by these agents would show no external evidence of how they arrived. Not even the text of the letter would be likely to help as the initiative for the Bruner and Bechet deliveries came from inside Paris by the firms worried about receiving their mail.

We have tabulated the Bruner and Bechet covers, and they show the letters posted in the month of May reached Paris very quickly through their services. The Bruner cover from Algeria would have been among the first mail to be impounded at Versailles which could explain the longer arrival time due to a lack of organization. The one Bechet cover was cancelled with his own device and therefore shows no Paris arrival date.



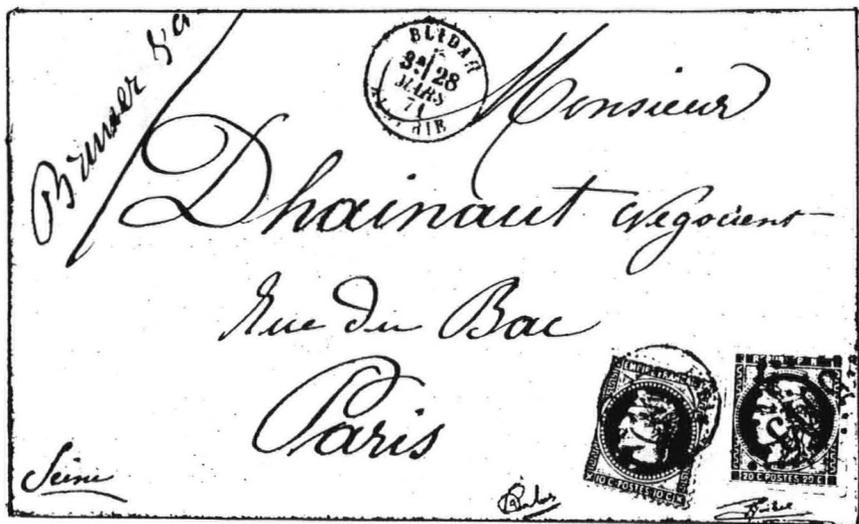


Figure IV-24 Posted Algeria March 28. Bruner name added at Emergency Post Office in Versailles. Required extra stamp added and reposted in Paris May 1.

Besides having "privileges" in retrieving mail from Versailles, Bruner also picked up mail addressed to him at Poste Restante, St. Denis. The information on the Amsterdam cover may be incorrect. It was sold by Roumet (13) who described it as having been addressed to Bruner. The catalog listing included a photo, but, unfortunately, it was not available to us.

From the conditions imposed by Versailles to keep the number of clients small, it seems likely Bruner had a very restricted customer list. This would simplify the probable method of reimbursement which was to keep a record and send bills. However, there is one used post card in which Bruner informs M. Desprez that he has letters for him which he can collect by coming to his office at 9 rue de Conservatoire. Possibly this was a method of both collecting his commission and getting around the rule calling for an added 10c stamp, for in truth, Bruner did not deliver the letter himself.

The single Bechet letter was addressed to Paris and the Bechet name was added at Versailles in the manner of the Bruner letters. His blue, oval cachet reads, L'AGENCE VICTOR BECHET/PARIS. Using this to cancel the 10c stamp meant he had to deliver the letter himself which also gave him the chance to collect his fee. In this case, it was not difficult to do as his Paris office was 8 rue Sentier and M. Bourdon was at 74 rue du Faubourg du Temple, only a 15 minute walk away.

It makes one wonder why the agents who delivered their own mail did not cheat, but Bechet was "semi-official."

Laurent reports, with a question mark at the end of the statement, that it was said Bruner made commissions of 110,000F. At 10c per letter, that means he brought in 1,100,000 letters in two months. If he had a "restricted" customer list, they must each have gotten a lot of mail!

#### Paris Cancels On Added 10c Stamp

Our survey identified 36 letters from outside of Paris which were delivered in Paris by the Communard post office with an added 10c stamp. We have divided them into two categories. First are those which were brought into Paris either by a special messenger or by an agent from the suburbs who was sent the letter in a separate envelope. (The survey

showed five empty envelopes addressed to Moreau and Osmont in Vincennes during the Commune—presumably these contained letters for Paris, but who knows?) Secondly, there are letters which show stamps with cancellations or due markings, which proves they came from outside of Paris.

The following will detail the covers which have not already been described. The first group numbers 26. The stamp is missing on the cover shown in Figure IV-25, but there is a trace of a star cancellation. The text of the letter (Figure IV-26) confirms it was brought in by Moreau & Osmont. Seven of the Bac letters fit this description and they have already been listed.

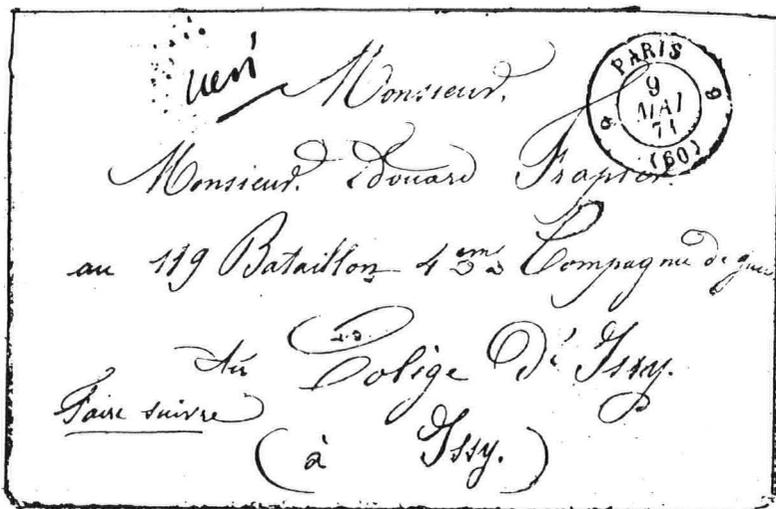


Figure IV-25. Stamp missing. Trace of star cancel at upper left. Would appear to be normal Paris mail. See Figure IV-26.

### Covers With Bruner Name Added At Versailles

(All Addressed To Paris)

Origin	Postal Markings	Remarks
Algeria	20c Bordeaux obl. 3/28 10c lauré Paris 60 5/1	To Dhainant
Brazil	No stamps of origin. Ms 4/12. Transit London 5/5 Angl/Calais 5/5. GB and French tax. 10c lauré obl. Paris 60 5/6.	
Italy	Stamps obl. 5J/12. 10c lauré obl. Paris 60 5/17	To Bammes
Lyon	20c lauré obl. GC CAD 5/18. 10c lauré Paris 60 5/19	To Paul Gage
Rouen	2x10c lauré obl. GC CAD 5/18. 10c lauré Paris 60 5/20	To Fauré and Durasse
Bordeaux	No stamp of origin. Ms 5/18 Ms 3 tax. 10c lauré obl. Paris 60 5/22	To Paul Gage

### Covers Addressed To Bruner At St. Denis—To Forward

Amsterdam	4x#8 obl. 3/28. 10c lauré Paris 60 5/16	To Saillard
London	3p rose obl. 4/28. 10c lauré obl. Paris 60 5/2	



## Paris Cancels On Added 10c Stamp

compiled by Gardner Brown

AGENT	FROM	DATE	STAMP <sup>1</sup>	CANCEL
Raimon, Rappe	Niort	MS May 6	none	none
Gaudin	Bordeaux	MS Apr. 25	none	none
Choudens	Unknown	no date	none	none
Gosselin	Brussels	no date	none	none
Daverveld	Tilbourg, Holland	no date	none	none
Daverveld	Tilbourg, Holland	Apr. 20	none	none
Moreau & Osmont	Unknown	no date	none	none
Moreau & Osmont	Chatellerault	MS May 5	none	none
Laundryman from Gennevillers	Sens	MS Apr. 29	none	none
Unknown	Senlis	MS Apr. 26	none	none
Unknown	Chartre (?)	none	none	none
Unknown	Aix les Bains	none	none	none
Unknown	Troyes	MS May 8	none	none
Unknown	Brussels	MS Mar. 27	none	none
Unknown	Brussels	MS Apr. 5	none	none
Unknown	St. Servans	no date	none	none
Unknown	Chalons sur Saône	no date	none	none
Carel	Bessons	Apr. 7	20c Bord., GC	
Saint Pierre	Zabern (AL)	Apr. 17	20c Occup.	Zabern CAD
Unknown	Italy	No date	2 Italian stamps	189
Unknown	Villefrance s Saône	Apr. 1	20c Bord.	GC

<sup>1</sup>Refers to stamp and cancellation from place of origin.  
(9) Blanc, Jack: *Documents Philatéliques*, No. 116, 1988.

10c STAMP 15c DL Tax	PARIS PMK Bourse May 8	TO Bourneil	REMARKS Blue oval cachet on back
10c Laur.	Star 25 Apr. 29	?	Straight line cachet on back
10c Bord.	Star 26	?	sticker on back
10c Bord.	Star	?	Straight line cachet on front
10c Laur.	Star Paris (60) Apr. 24	? ?	MS on front, Black oval cachet on back
10c Laur.	Bourse Apr. 26	Huillard	Text confirms agent
10c Bord.	Anchor Bourse May 19	Mirabound	Sticker on back
missing	Star 6 Paris 6 May 9	Soldier at Ft. Issy	Text confirms agent
10c Laur.	Star Paris (60) May 2	Robin	Text says reply via Jucatey 40, rue Turbigo
10c Bord.	Batignolles	Cartier	—
10c Laur.	7 Paris 7 May 3	?	—
20c Bord.	Star 4 7 Paris 7 May 5	?	—
10c Bord.	Mute star Paris (60) May 10	?	—
10c Laur.	Paris RC Apr. 1	?	—
20c Laur.	Mute star Paris (60) Apr. 12	?	—
20c Bord.	7 Paris 7 Apr. 28	Delabaye	—
10c Laur.	Paris route cancel May 5	Director 1 "Aigle	—
15DL Tax	5 Paris 5 Apr. 11	?	See Reference (9)
10c Laur.	CAD Paris (60) May 17	To St. Pierre, Poste Restante, Versailles 2 D tax	
10c Laur.	CAD Paris May 17	?	Large fragment
10c Laur.	Paris (60) May 8	Delannay	—

### Agency Cancellations

Nine different agents are known to have used their own cancelling device on the mandatory 10c stamp they applied after having brought mail into Paris. It also means the agent had to deliver the mail himself instead of having the Paris postmen do it. In addition, this gave the agent a good opportunity to collect his fee. Interestingly, the Bureau de Correspondance poster illustrated in Maury mentions, in fine print, that if you live in the 2nd arrondissement, they will bring your letter right to your door.

Our survey identified 24 different examples. There were 16 covers including one fragment large enough to show the address. There were two fragments large enough to show the complete cancellations and six single stamps which show only part of the cancel.

The Lorin-Maury covers are the greatest in number (seven), the most spectacular in appearance, and the most controversial. Three examples are known from the Dujat agency, and two each from the Bureau de Correspondance and Montel Frères.

With the exception of the Lorin-Maury agency, the agency cancellations seem to have been made by the handstamps frequently seen on the return address portion of business mail. Figure IV-26 shows one of the controversial Lorin-Maury covers with the large C.IX agency cancel. The Lorin-Maury poster (see Figure IV-7) mentions Bureau C and IX arrondissement as part of their Paris address. Thus, it is reasonable to assume C.IX refers to this fact.

We have already mentioned the fact that two authors have written to voice their doubts about the authenticity of the Lorin-Maury C.IX covers. Others have verbally questioned the validity of all of the covers with agency cancels on the basis: (1) it didn't make sense to comply with the Commune order about adding a 10c stamp if you were going to deliver the letter yourself—why not cheat and split the cost of the non-affixed stamp with your customer, and (2) if you were going to comply with the order, why not drop the letter in a mail box and let the post office make the effort?

In answer to the first question, one has to consider the fact that apart from the Huillard-Marquet and Bac letters, there are very very few letters known in Paris without a 10c stamp added. Perhaps Grely was someone who worked for Huillard-Marquet and maybe Bac had a similar connection. The contemporary histories indicate the Communards were an emotional group and tended to "shoot first and ask questions later," which is reason enough to obey the rules.

As for the second question, we have evidence that the Bureau de Correspondance did hand deliver in the 2nd arrondissement, and it did allow an easy way to collect your money.

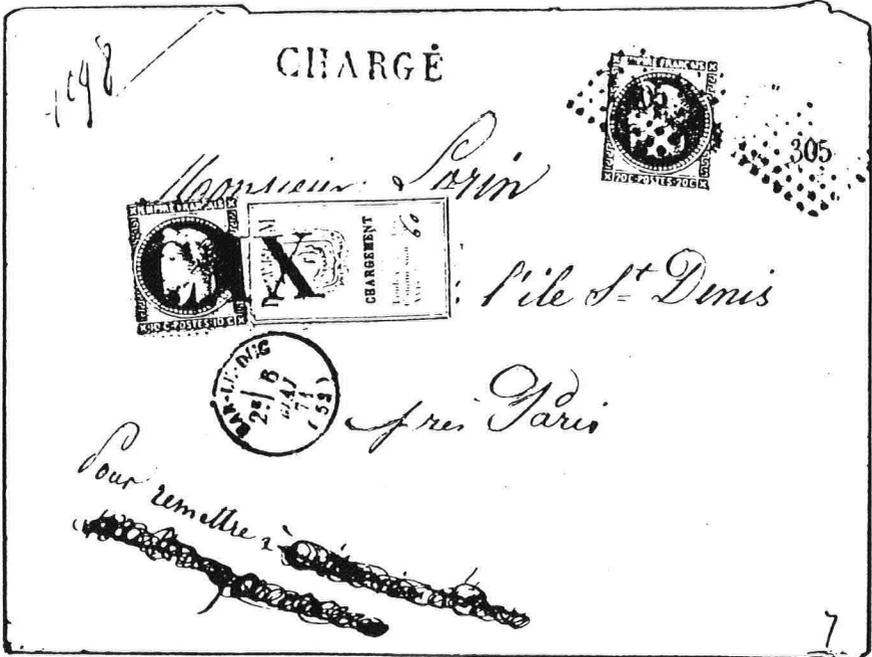


Figure IV-27. 80c + 20c cancelled Bar-le-Duc. The extra 10c stamp and a Lorin-Maury vignette were applied in St. Denis and cancelled by the agency. Only known registered letter from the Commune period. Total fee collected 10c for the stamp and 50c commission for registered mail. From reference [6].

To our mind, the most powerful argument in favor of the legitimacy of the "agency-cancelled" covers is the philatelic evidence. Only a very few examples have survived and a large number (nine) of agencies are known to have used this method. If Maury was going to create souvenirs, why didn't he make more of them, and why did he make so many different kinds? The best known souvenirs of the balloon mail period were made by the Letts Diary Company in England and are obvious fakes as even the stamps are the wrong color. They are not rare. The C.IX covers are.

A list of known examples of agency cancellations follows:

#### AGENCE GENERALE

1. Letter addressed to Agence Générale des Courses (St. Denis?). 10c lauré obl. blue oval cachet. Illustration of stamp only.

#### BECHET

1. Letter from Commentry. 20c Bordeaux obl. GC and CAD May 8. 10c lauré obl. l'Agence Victor Bechet Paris. Manuscript Bechet on the envelope in the manner of the Brunner covers. Addressed to M. Bourdon (see also agent Gosselin), 74 rue du Faubourg du Temple, Paris.

2. Stamp only, 10c (def) obl. blue cachet.

#### BUREAU DE CORRESPONDANCE

1. Printed envelope addressed to Bureau Restante, St. Denis. From St. Jean de Losne. 20c lauré obl. GC and CAD May 9. 10c lauré cancelled with a small rectangular cachet about the size of a small boxed PD. To be forwarded to M. Essig, quai de la Tournelle.
2. The same as above except from Epernay May 16.

#### DUBIEF

1. Stamp only. 10c lauré obl. straight line UBIEF. Top line is possibly AGENCE. Bottom line is illegible.

#### DUJAT:

1. Letter to Dujat, Poste Restante, Versailles with instructions to forward to Emile Varney, 22 rue Beccaria, Paris. 20c lauré obl. GC 155, CAD Argenteuil May 14. 10c lauré obl. blue, oval cachet Ancienne Maison/Dujat Successeur/Palais Royal-Galerie Montpensier.
2. Letter from Germany #3 plus 2x#5 obl. Hanover April 28. 10c lauré obl. blue oval as above.
3. Letter from Alsace-Lorraine. 20c occupation stamp obl. CAD. 10c lauré obl. blue oval as above. Only stamps pictured.
4. Stamp 10c obl. blue oval.
5. Same as No. 4

#### HAVARD:

1. Fragment. 10c lauré obl. blue rectangular Courrier de Versailles/Agence Havard/47 rue Vivienne, Paris. Piece shows whole cancellation lengthwise.
2. Fragment. 10c lauré shows whole cancel crosswise.
3. Stamp only (defective) shows part of cancellation.

#### LORIN/MAURY

All of the following five covers are hand addressed to M. Lorin at St. Denis with forwarding instructions. Each has stamps from the letter's origin and a 10c stamp for local delivery plus a Lorin/Maury adhesive both cancelled with a large C.IX.:

1. From Nancy May 5. Name of recipient crossed out.
2. From Bar-le-Duc May 6. Name of recipient crossed out. (Fig. IV-26)
3. From Dax May 15. For P. Mas.
4. From Amsterdam May 18. For M. Freem.
5. From Amsterdam May 23. For M. Freem.

#### LORIN/MAURY

Two covers are known with the same stamps and cancels as above, but the envelope is printed with the address of E. Lorin.

1. From Bezons May 18.
2. From Villers-s-Marne M--?

In addition, one printed envelope is known with the Lorin address crossed out. It is franked with two 5c non-lauré cancelled with stars. CAD Paris R, d'Enghien May 15. Name of recipient also crossed out. Apparently this was used to mail a letter which had come to them in St. Denis, but without a second envelope.

**MONTEL FRERES**

1. From Russia. Large fragment with four Russian stamps obl. St. Petersburg April 27. Transit Prussia May 12. 10c lauré obl. blue oval cachet Montel Frères/Escompte et Recouvrements/34 des Halles, Paris. Addressed to Delangrenier in Paris. Paris crossed out, so had to have been recovered from Versailles.

2. From Espalion. 20c Bordeaux obl. GC, CAD May 13. 10c lauré obl. as above. To Delangrenier. Paris not crossed out.

**PREVOST**

1. Stamp only. 10c Siege obl. oval l'Agence Prevost.

**Stamps, Cancellations and "Origins"**

This section will describe the stamps used and cancelled inside Paris on mail coming INTO Paris. The same subject will be covered in following chapters which concern mail LEAVING Paris and Paris-for-Paris mail. It will not mention the stamps (if any) which were cancelled at the point where the letters were originally posted.

We have divided our census into two sections. First are the letters with no stamps other than the ones cancelled in Paris. This will include the letters which had been sent to an agent in a separate envelope or, which had been brought directly into Paris by a messenger. Since we are dealing with a period in history only two months after the end of the War, we assume the Siege Issue, which had been printed in Paris during the War, was not common in all locations outside of Paris. Conversely, the Bordeaux Issue, which had been printed in Bordeaux during the War, was not common in Paris and probably not very available in the parts of France which had been occupied.

The instructions of many agents were to use a double envelope with the inclusion of 20c in stamps, half of which was to be retained as a commission. It would seem, therefore, the "normal" thing to do would be for the sender to enclose two 10c stamps. One would, therefore, expect to find a fair percentage of the Bordeaux Issue, but not many of the Siege Issue.

The second grouping is for mail which does have stamps cancelled outside Paris. Since no double envelope was involved, the sender could not enclose any stamps, and the agent himself had to put the stamp on from whatever supply he might have. Therefore, the Bordeaux Issue on these covers would be very unlikely, but we could expect to see the Siege Issue.

**FROM OUTSIDE PARIS, INCLUDING CANCELS ON PARIS STAMP****Covers With No Stamps Or Canceles From Outside Paris:**

10c lauré	14 examples
2 x 5c Won lauré	1
2 x 10c lauré	1
20c lauré	1
10c Bordeaux	6
20c Bordeaux	2
15 DL Tax	1

**Letters With Stamps Cancelled Outside Of Paris:**

10c lauré	31 examples
10c Siege	4
15 DL Tax	2

**Cancellations, Not Including Agency Cancels:**

Cancels on the stamp		Cancels at the side	
Paris (60)	15	Paris (60)	5
Star?	4	Pl de la Bourse	4
Mute Star	3	5 Paris 5	2
Bourse	2	6 Paris 6	1
7 Paris 7	2	7 Paris 7	1
Anchor	2	P-Montrouge	1
Star 4	1	P-Montmartre	1
Star 25	1	R Ecluses St Martin	1
Star 26	1	R Serpente	1
Star 39	1	Gare du Nord	1
PC 2523	1	R. D'Enghien	1
Paris RC	1		
Paris route	1		
P-Batignolles	1		

**Origins:**

Collectors of balloon mail prize what are called "destinations." A Ballon Monté addressed to Russia claims a many-fold premium even though it was generally delivered in a perfectly normal fashion once the balloon landed. In the same spirit, we use the word "ORIGINS" to denote where the mail came from. Philatelists also look for covers bearing stamps from two different postal administrations. These are also listed below:

FROM	STAMPS FROM TWO COUNTRIES	ONLY FRENCH STAMP	TOTAL COVERS (TWO)
Belgium	0	3	3
England	1	2	3
Holland	3	2	5
Alsace	2	1	3
Italy	2	0	2
Luxembourg	0	1	1
United States	0	1	1
Brazil	0	1	1
Greece	0	1	1
Egypt	0	1	1
Switzerland	0	1	1
Germany	1	0	1
Russia	1	0	1

(plus two covers from Algeria)

(1) From country of origin plus added 10c French stamp

(2) Difference (2-1) equals covers with only the added French stamp.

## CHAPTER V - MAIL FROM PARIS

In Chapter IV we reported our survey identified 113 examples of mail from Paris addressed to locations outside the city walls. Since that was written the total has grown to 127 items. All but 16 were posted outside of Paris but were easily identified as Paris mail either by the message in the letter or by the merchant's handstamp applied in the return address portion of the cover.

The survey showed 14 letters which had been cancelled in Paris at the very beginning of the postal blockade and two of these were illustrated in Chapter II (Figures II-1 and 3). Two more letters are known from the very end of the Revolution (Figure II-7).

Most of this mail is business correspondence and does not make very interesting reading. However we shall quote from two personal letters.

The first is not really a "commune letter" by our definition. It was written in English, March 19, 1871, the day after the Revolution began but well before the beginning of the postal blockade. It was delivered the next day in London:

"Paris is in a complete state of anarchy. The Red Republicans have taken over all the public offices and have murdered several generals."

The second was written in German and addressed to New York, the only example of mail in the survey sent to the U.S.A. It is illustrated in Figure V-1. We quote the entire letter because it describes not only the conditions in Paris but also tells how the letter was to be taken outside of Paris. It was posted in Maisons-Alfort just outside the southeastern wall of Paris. We have the translation thanks to the kindness of Ernst Cohn:

276 rue St. Honoré

Paris, the 18th May, 1871 (1)

My beloved, dear Mrs. Hartung

Who would have thought that I would write to you to New York in May, since I had hoped confidently to see you at this time in Paris, perhaps you are already in Germany and your letters are in Versailles, but until this cursed civil war is over we shall not receive our letters. It is nearing the end, the Versailles people broke into the fortress walls last night (2) and one hopes that the city will be taken today and order will be restored. Today it is exactly two months since they started to fight and no day has passed on which not at least 500 were killed on each side, last evening there was a terrible explosion and a powder magazine was blown up and killed several hundred people, it was at 6 o'clock in the evening and the ground shook just like in an earthquake. Bombs have been dropping into the city for several days already, in brief, one can almost not go out anymore, it is very lucky that still a few gates are occupied by the Prussians and we can commit ourselves to their protection if things can't be borne anymore.

The old Deloison is still alone with the maid and his niece who comes every day from the country. I helped him for two days to get a mailing ready for you because one can now mail merchandise again with confidence because the Prussians protect the railways. Worino (not sure of spelling) is in the country with his wife and child with the workers, they work there, the women come in to bring in the merchandise and take it out. Women can always come and go on the sides where the Versailles people are not, only men between 19 and 45 years old are not safe in the city, because if the mob catches one, regardless of nationality, he is put into uniform and must fight. If he is lucky he can surrender to the Versaillais and become a prisoner, but that is not always possible. All shops which are not the most necessary are closed, almost no carriages come into town anymore, one sees only cannon and that mob of Garde Nationale, which to our great good fortune becomes less day by day. There are many women who go to fight with rifles on their shoulders but since many of them have been shot dead already they are starting to get tired of that.

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(1) The letter actually is dated March 18 but this is an obvious mistake.

(2) The Versailles troops actually entered Paris a few days later, during the evening of May 21.

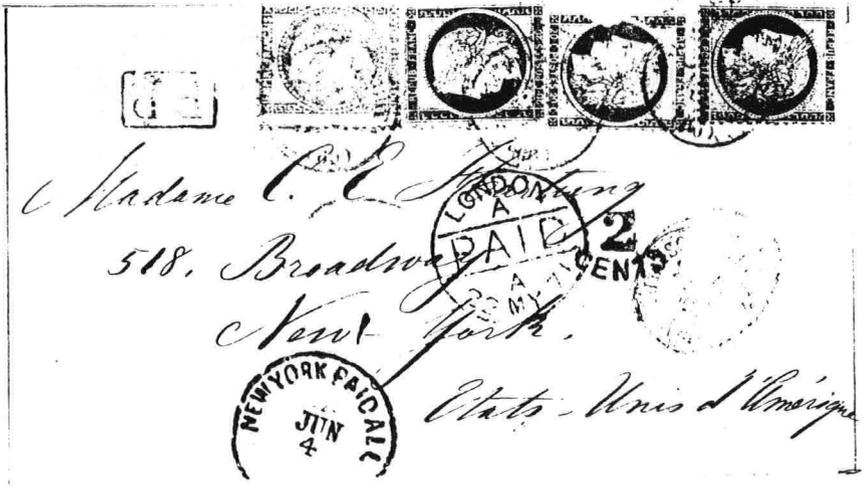


Figure V-1 Letter for New York posted in nearby Maisons-Alfort by a friend visiting Paris.

My Jeanne is safe in the country and I shall flee as soon as there is real danger in the streets. One hopes that either the old emperor will be reinstated or a king and then it will be quiet again and business will revive. I am very anxious for that and also convinced that things will be much more quiet than before because there is at least 20,000 less of the mob that started upheavals, and one could be very quiet even everywhere if the bombs were not falling and if there weren't barricades everywhere with powder mines below them, one could be very quiet as long as one doesn't speak to anyone on the streets and goes his own way quietly. The Prussians will stay in Paris (at the gates we presume - G.L.B.) until December in order to help the government to keep order and everyone in the surroundings now are friendly with the Prussians and very happy to keep them.

I must close because Deloison wants to take my letter in order to mail it in the country, for we cannot confide any mail to the post office in Paris until order is restored.

I will write to you again as soon as we are liberated, meanwhile receive the heartiest kisses from the one who loves you dearly.

Yours,  
 Mavin Meslin (not sure of spelling)  
 Many kind regards to your dear family.

Since rue St. Honoré is very close to the Vendome Column, it is surprising the letter does not tell of its destruction by the Communards just two days before the letter was written. One is left to wonder about the fate of the letter's author as "The Bloody Week" began just three days later with the entry of the Versailles troops into the southwestern corner of Paris. The records (3) show one building on rue St. Honoré (No. 422) was destroyed by fire that week and another (No. 132) was damaged.

---

(3) Lorin, F. Herve du: Paris, before and during and after the war and its insurrection. Paris 1873. In English for tourists.

**Agency Markings:**

In sharp contrast to the results found in our survey of Mail INTO Paris, only four letters were found showing external evidence which identified the agent who took the letter out of Paris, and one is really a bit late for the postal blockade during the Commune.

Figure V-2 shows a letter brought out by the bankers, Marcuard Andre. The stamp was cancelled by the ambulant of the Paris to Calais train and was addressed to Switzerland.

Figure 3 shows the vignettes produced by the Lorin-Maury agency for use on outgoing Paris mail. Like the ones created for incoming mail, their authenticity is very much in question.

Figure 4 shows the only example published in the literature of the use of their vignette. Only the little tab from the top of the adhesive was affixed to the letter. It wouldn't take much effort to attach such a label to a more common example of mail for the provinces.

One cover is known with the Moreau & Osmont sticker on the back. It was posted in Vincennes May 15 and arrived in Le Havre on the 17th.

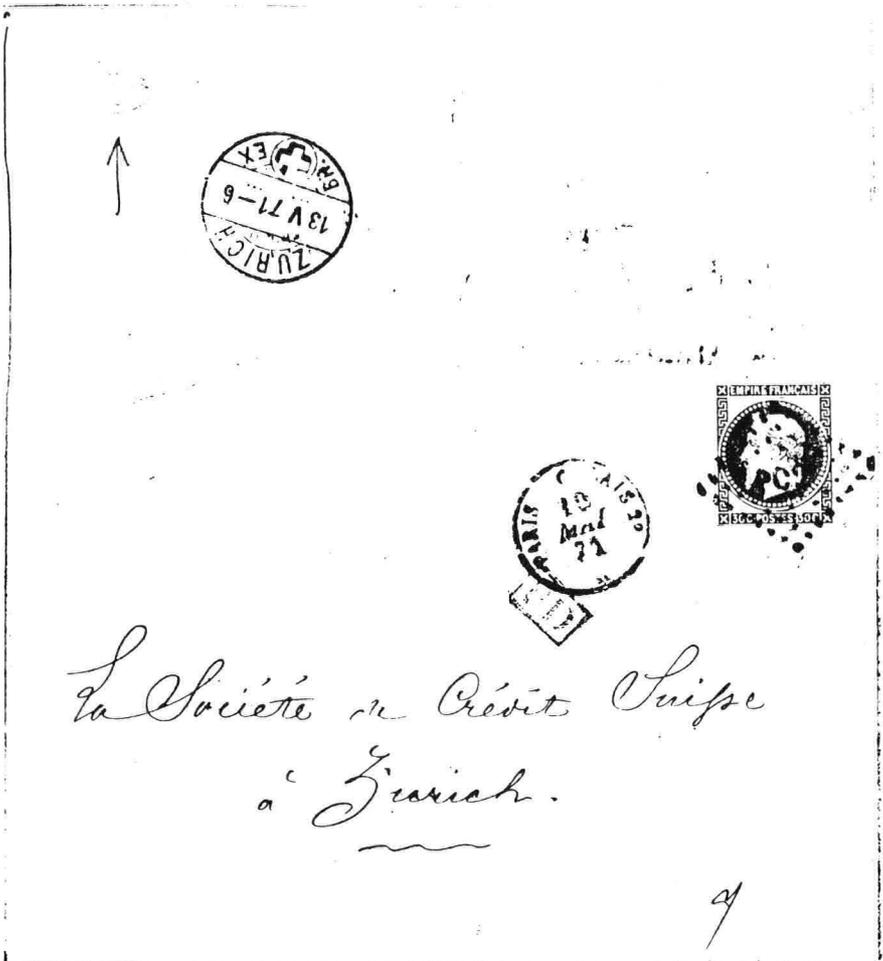


Figure V-2 Letter from Paris Bank, Marcuard Andre, posted by their own messenger on the Paris to Calais train May 10. Zurich May 13.



Figure V-3 Vignettes sold by Lorin-Maury for use on outgoing Paris mail. Only the top part was affixed to the letter indicating the fee paid. (From Chamboissier)

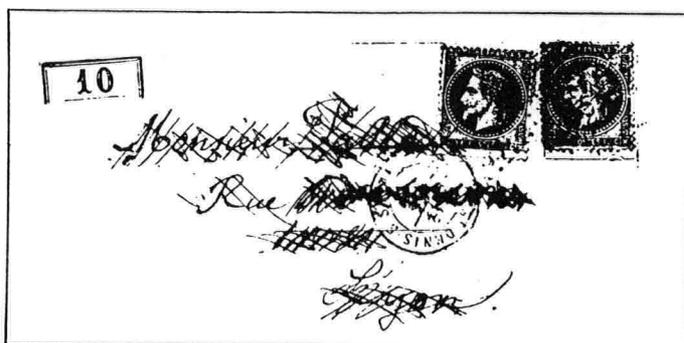


Figure V-4 The only illustrated example of mail taken out of Paris by Lorin-Maury. (From Chamboissier)

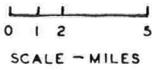
The last cover of the series carries a large red oval cachet of the Bowles Brothers Bankers. They did not actually carry the letter out of Paris as it was posted in Paris May 27. Lacking adhesives, it has a 30c double line tax cancelled by a star. It arrived in London on May 30 but the English did not treat it as properly franked mail and taxed the letter six pence.

#### Posting Locations:

The following table lists the places outside of the Paris walls where Paris mail was posted together with a number of covers found in the survey: (See Map Figure 5a).

St. Denis	50 examples
Versailles	25
Vincennes	5
Montmorency	5 (straight line)
Pantin	4
Pontoise	4
Charenton le Pont	4
Enghien les Bains	3
St. Mandé	2
Maisons-Alfort	2
Beaumont s/Oise	2
St. Maur les Fosses	2
Sarcelles	2
Paris/Calais ambulant	2

Elbeuf	1
Gare de Melun	1
Bougival	1
Chastellux s/Cure	1
Bry s/Seine	1 (Obl. Small "PD")
Choisy le Roi	1 (GC & cad in blue)
Criel	1 (Obl. LIL-P ambulant, Gare de CRIEL cad)
Levallois-Perret	1
Lyon	1
L'Isle-Adam	1
Fontenay s.s. Bois	1
Charing Cross (London)	1



● BEAUMONT

● L'ISLE - ADAM

● PONTOISE

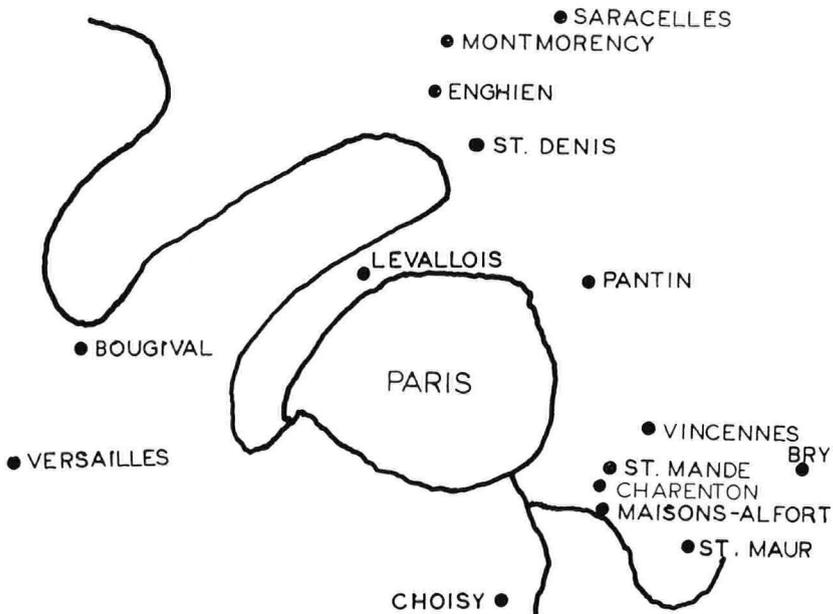


Figure V-5a Map of posting locations outside Paris.

In addition we have prepared a map showing the locations of the towns nearest Paris known to have handled mail from Paris.

An examination of the list brings several questions to mind. First, we think the number of letters posted in Versailles is surprising. You couldn't travel directly from Paris to Versailles but had to go to St. Denis and hire a horse and wagon to travel the 20 miles to Versailles. That doesn't sound reasonable unless you had to go to Versailles for some other reason such as picking up your mail which had been impounded there.

Among the 127 letters posted outside of Paris there were 14 envelopes used by the Havas agency to mail their dispatches (Figure V-5). Half of them were mailed in Versailles on April 5 (2 examples), 7 and 10 and May 2, 14 and 20. The other half were posted in St. Denis on April 10, 16, 17, 19 and 28 and May 4 and 15. Oddly enough both post offices were used on April 10.

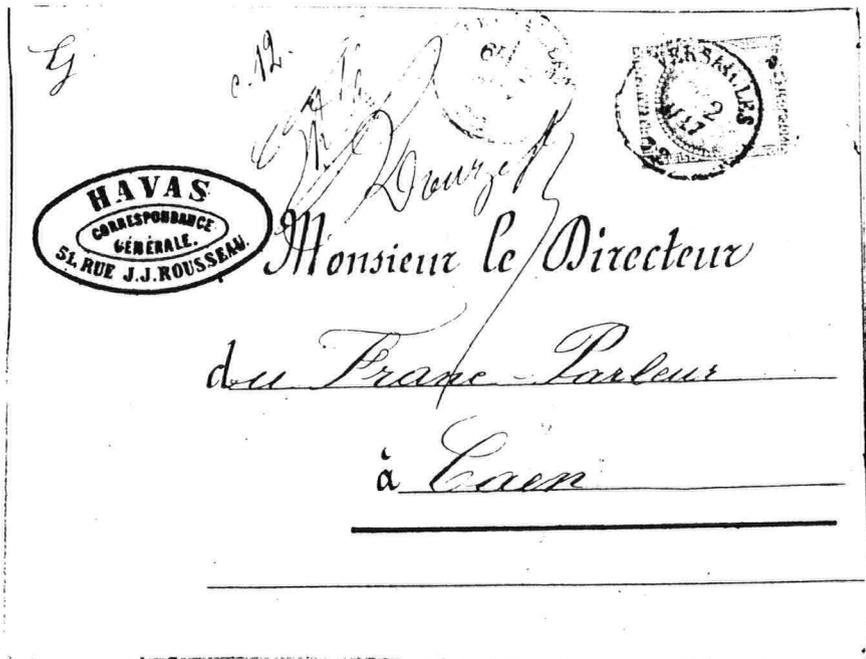


Figure V-5 Envelope used by Havas for mailing their newsletter. Posted in Versailles May 2.

Secondly, the number of letters posted at Vincennes seems too low since at least two of the agencies used this town to mail their letters from Paris.

For many years covers with a straight-line MONTMORENCY cancellation (Figure V-6) have been collected as Commune Revolution material, but in more recent years they have been classified as "cachets de fortune." However, five of these covers have been identified as Paris mail having been brought to Montmorency to post.

**Stamps Used:**

20c Empire non perf	1	
4x5c non-lauré	4	
2x1c lauré	1	Paris circular giving agent's address
2x10c lauré	23	
20c lauré	36	
3x10c lauré	2	

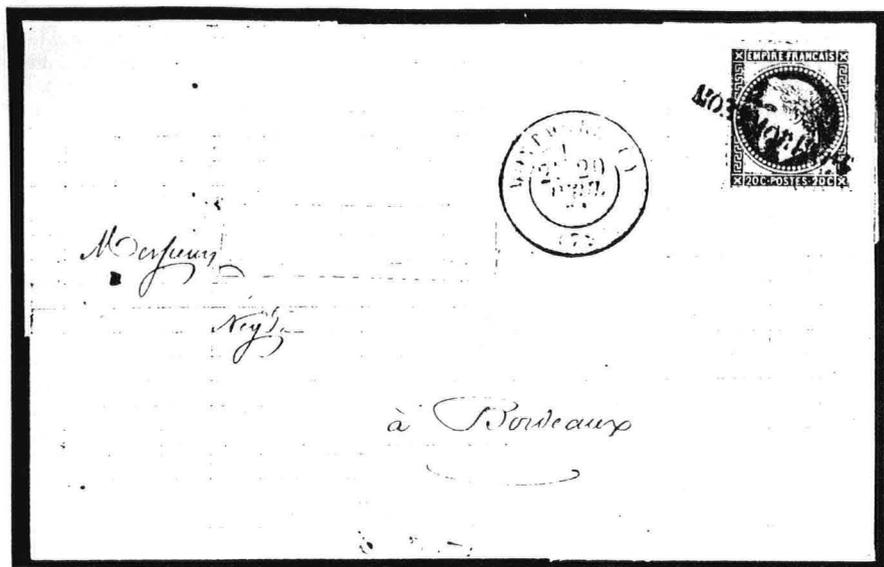


Figure V-6 Montmorency straight-line cancel. Used mostly during the Commune. Postmarked April 10, 1871.

10+20c lauré	6	
30c lauré	3	
4x10c lauré	1	
2x20c lauré	3	
40c lauré	8	
2x20+10c lauré	1	
2x30c lauré	1	
80c lauré	3	2 are domestic mail
80+20c lauré	1	to Peru
2x80c lauré	1	double rate to Uruguay
20c Siege	17	
3x20c Siege + 10c lauré	1	to U.S.A.
40c Siege	2	
10c Bordeaux + 2x5c non lauré	1	
20c Bordeaux	5	
20c Bordeaux + 10c lauré	1	
2x20c Bordeaux	1	
4x20c Bordeaux	1	to Mexico
Unfranked	3	

The results of this part of the survey are simply amazing to us. The use of the Bordeaux issue on outgoing mail was nine to 20 of the Siege issue!

Apart from having stamps around the house, there were three sources of stamps for these letters; a Paris post office; a suburban post office; or, stamps sent into an agent's office to pay for his services of taking mail to Paris. The Siege issue was common within Paris, St. Denis and Vincennes, all three being part of the Siege, and the Siege issue was printed in Paris and their use was common on balloon mail. The other suburban towns shown on our map were all under German occupation during the Siege, and until March 24, 1871 when the control of the post offices in non-annexed territory was returned to the French. During this time, only German occupation stamps were available at these post offices. Despite this, the 1972 Schott Catalog of cancellations on the Occupation stamps lists examples known only from Versailles, Maisons-Alfort and Melun of the towns known to have handled Paris mail during the Commune.

Figure 7 shows the most outstanding of the covers franked with the Bordeaux issue. It is generally agreed none of these suburban towns ever had the Bordeaux issue for sale. One can understand how people who had fled to the provinces before the Siege might bring back isolated copies of the Bordeaux, but here is a beautiful strip of four.

The survey showed 16 double-rate covers, one of them being to Uruguay. Only two triple-rate covers were found (Figure V-8).

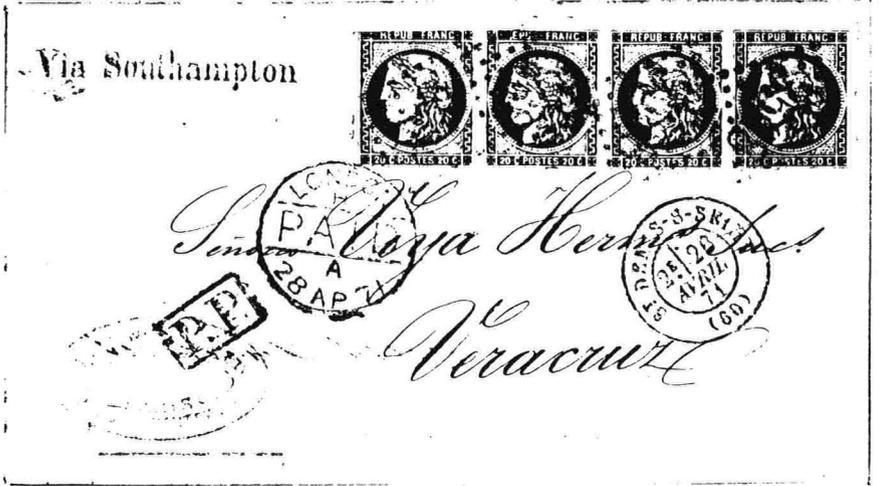


Figure V-7 Strip of four 20c Bordeaux issue for rate to Mexico. Stamps are Type 3, report 2, plate positions 6, 7, 8, 9. Posted St. Denis, April 26.

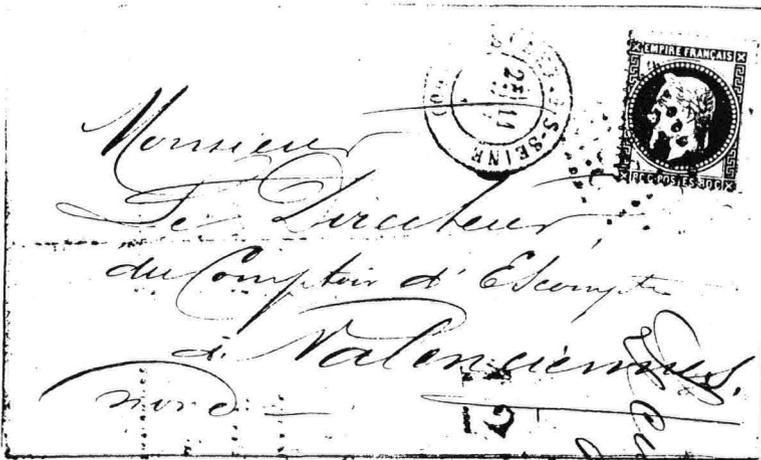


Figure V-8 Triple rate (80c) on a domestic letter. Posted St. Denis, May 11. The 12 (bottom) is part of a merchant's receiving handstamp. Dated Paris, May 10.

**Cancellations:**

Since most of this mail was cancelled outside of Paris, the bulk of the cancellations used were perfectly ordinary. The exceptions were the five Montmorency straight line covers; a blue GC and cad from Choisy le Roi; a small boxed PD from Bry s/Marne and Qeé Notre Dame from Versailles.

The most unusual cover by far is the one shown in Figure V-9. It is believed to have been carried out of Paris in the diplomatic pouch of the United States Minister to Paris, Elihu Washburne. Thanks to Ernst Cohn's careful research in the libraries of the world, we know Washburne had asked permission to continue to take out private letters in his pouch due to the unsettled conditions between the end of the Siege and the beginning of the Commune. Although the letter was written in Paris, it gives no indication of how it got out of Paris. Figure V-10 is owned by Yvonne Newbury and is a twin of V-9. It is from the Siege period and contains a copy of the Gazette des Absents No. 7 with a letter written by Albert Lee Ward, the private secretary to Mr. Washburne. We KNOW that Yvonne's letter went out in pouch No. 5 on November 15, 1870 and BELIEVE our letter went out in a similar manner during the Commune.

As for the letters posted in Paris, we have already shown (Figure II-3) one of the two known covers which were pen-cancelled. In addition two others are known cancelled with a Paris blue star with a Paris-Etranger cad. Stars 15, 24 and 26 have been identified as well as route cad's 3 and 5 as well as the \*. Only one lozenge cancel is known, PC 2523, Paris-Montrouge.

**Destinations:**

Belgium	5	Switzerland	3
Holland	2	Jersey	1
U.S.A.	1	Spain	2
Mexico	3	Uruguay	1
Italy	5	Peru	1
England	7	Argentina	1
Turkey	1	Alsace-Lorraine	6

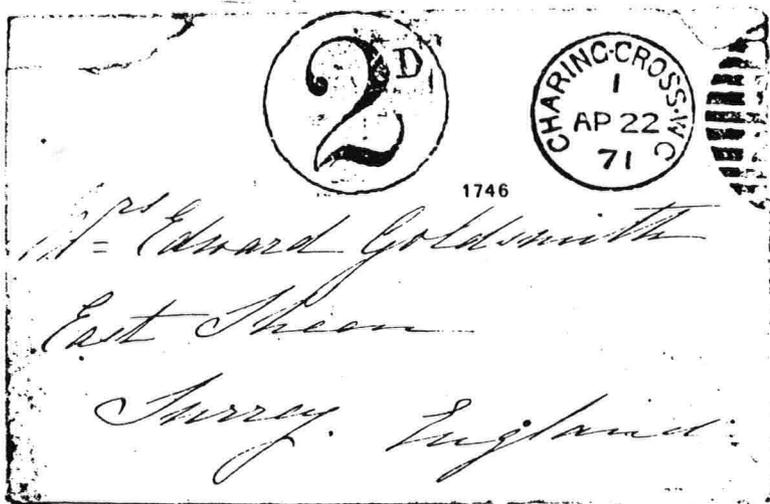


Figure V-9 Paris letter dated April 16. Believed to be the only known example of mail taken out in the diplomatic pouch of Elihu Washburne. Note the similarity to Figure V-10.

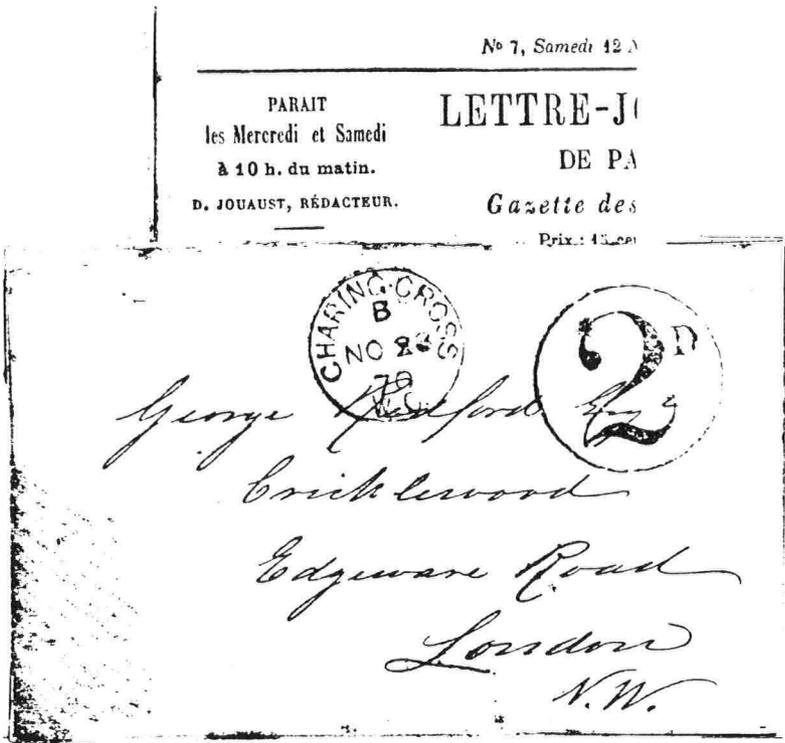


Figure V-10 Known to have been carried out of Paris during the Siege in Bag No. 5 on Nov. 15, 1870 in Washburne's diplomatic pouch. Contained Gazette des Absents No. 7. Sent by Washburne's private secretary. (Courtesy of Yvonne Newbury)

**Balloon Mail**

In the early days of the second blockade of the mail there were great plans to resume the transport of mail from Paris by balloon. With the development of the system of agents, it was soon obvious this scheme was not needed. As for ballooning mail into Paris, this had been shown to be impractical during the Siege.

The late Paul Maincent has documented (4) this effort very well and we do not choose to comment further since nothing happened of a philatelic nature.

(4) Maincent, Paul, L'Exchangiste Universel #882, 883, 885, 890, 894, 1973, 1974, and Icare #77, Vol. 2, Summer 1976 and in English, the Aerofield Sept. 1974, Vol. 38 has an article by Michel Girard translated by Reginald Auckland.

## CHAPTER VI - PARIS-FOR-PARIS

Our survey identified 91 "Paris-for-Paris" covers from which the following conclusions can be drawn:—

1. The subject of free-franking within Paris is not only very interesting but is also very confusing.
2. Every cover which looks like a Paris-for-Paris letter must be examined very closely to make sure it wasn't brought into Paris from the outside.
3. Unaccountably, the use of the Siege Issue on Paris-for-Paris mail is rare.

Our discussion of the subject will follow as below:—

1. General remarks.
2. Stampless covers.
  - A. Free-Franking privilege
  - B. Initials (paraphe manuscrit)
  - C. Cancelled due markings
  - D. Boxed PP
  - E. Contre-Seings date stamp
  - F. Miscellaneous
3. Covers with stamps.
  - A. General
  - B. Free-Franking
  - C. Stamps used and rates
  - D. Agents
4. Cancellations.

### General

The subject of prisoner's mail is sufficiently important to require a separate chapter. However two prisoner's covers will be included in this discussion as they bear on the free-franking question.

We do not include covers without postal markings in this treatise. These are envelopes bearing one of the many Commune official cachets and were delivered by couriers outside of the postal system. They appear to be much more plentiful than "postally used" material and are generally sold as a group of several items with very sparse descriptions. We do not collect them unless they have some historical significance.

It is always interesting to speculate how 100+ year old letters have survived to reach the philatelic market. A special case exists for the Commune Revolution postal history. Thirteen of the 91 letters identified show signs they were once in the files of the military police in Versailles. They were to be used as evidence in the prosecution of individuals charged with being part of the revolutionary forces. This mail can be identified by one or more of three telltale characteristics:

1. A manuscript notation (Figure VI-1) on the envelope which is an abbreviation for Versailles. This means the letter was to be forwarded there to be examined by the military police.
2. Pin holes in the envelope. Pins predate paper clips and staples.
3. Red or blue crayon markings used particularly to write or underline the name of the suspect. See Figures VI-11 and II-11.

Eight examples are known of the Versailles abbreviation, all on letters addressed to soldiers. All but one was to be sent to one of the forts south of the walls of Paris. The total is probably greater than we have listed as the abbreviation is never mentioned in the auction catalogs.

We have been told these police files were to have been destroyed some years ago, which certainly sounds reasonable. Obviously some of the material has reached the philatelic market which makes collecting much more interesting.

### Stampless Covers

Of the 91 Paris-for-Paris covers, 34 were stampless. Of these, 29 appear to have enjoyed the free-franking privilege and only five were taxed for lack of postage stamps.

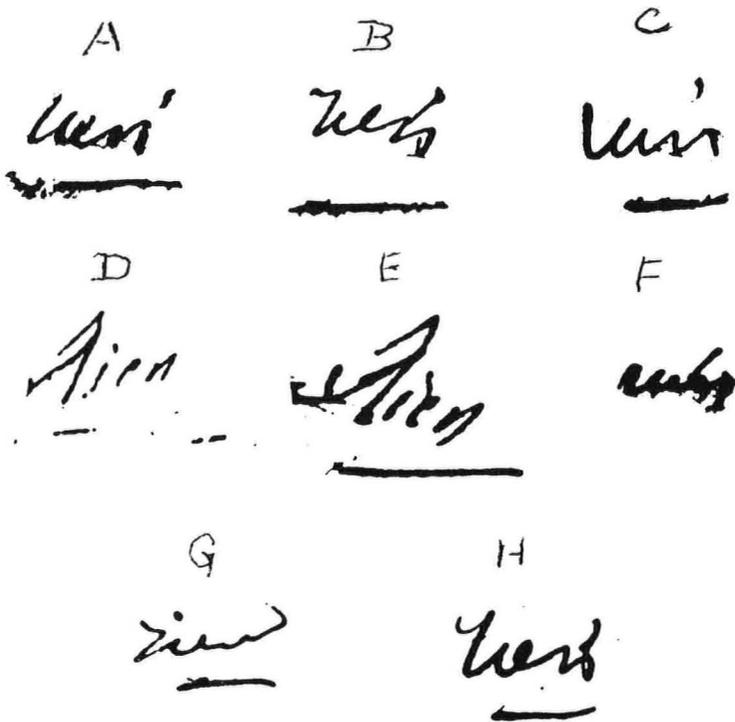


Figure VI-1. Examples of abbreviations for Versailles.  
 Example A: To soldier at Fort Issy. See Figure IV-25.  
 Example B: To soldier at Fort Issy. See Figure VI-13.  
 Example C: To soldier at Fort Issy. See Figure VI-11.  
 Example D: To soldier at Passy. See Figure VI-15. (Collection L.)  
 Example E: To soldier at Fort Issy. Relais #8.  
 Example F: To soldier at Ford Issy. Relais #8.  
 Example G: To soldier at Ford Vanves. Relais #7.  
 Example H: To soldier at Fort Ivry. See Figure VI-4.

### Free-Franking Privilege

Laurent (1), Chamboissier (2) and Maincent (3) have listed the various departments of the Commune Government which were granted free-franking. The Maincent list is longer than the others, but Boussac (4) also includes examples of the signatures which were supposed to accompany the official handstamp on the cover. We have not seen any signatures which correspond to the Boussac list, but we do know of only two covers which meet the handstamp/signature requirement.

Figure VI-2 contains a letter from the Ministry of Public Works. The official cachet (poor strike) is also signed, at the top left, by the secretary of this agency, "Chief of Service,

- 
- (1) Laurent, Benoit: "Commune de 1871, les Postes, les Ballons, le Télégraphe," Paris 1934. Pg. 68.  
 (2) Chamboissier, Léon: "La Poste à Paris, 1870-1871," Paris 1914.  
 (3) Maincent, Paul: l'Echo de la Timbrologie No. 1302, 1303, June, July-August, 1962.  
 (4) Boussac, Robert: Relais #7, 1984.

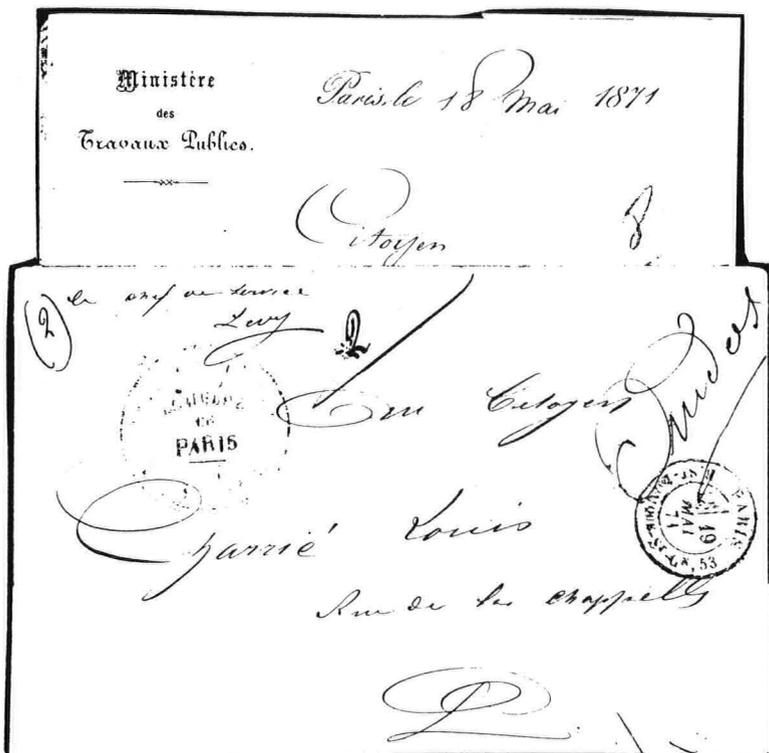


Figure VI-2. Signed by the Chief of Service (Department of Public Works). Red Contre-Seings on the reverse. Van Dos (upper right) refers to notations on the back that the addressee was unknown; perhaps because this was posted May 19, just 2 days before the Versailles troops entered the city.

Levy." The envelope contains pin holes and the letter, crayon marks, both indications the Versailles officials used this document as evidence in a dossier.

Figure VI-3 contained a printed form which was filled out to give the bed count of a 45-bed hospital. The envelope had also been printed to include the word "Ambulances" which was then countersigned underneath with a signature which does not match that of either Dr. Pinel who filled out the form, nor Dr. Grenier who signed the document. None of these signatures appear in the list given by Boussac.

### Initials

The requirement of a full signature soon changed and initials were enough to request free-franking. Only two types are known, one being the "S.M." shown in Figure VI-3. It stands for Service Militaire. One cover is also known where the expression is written out in full, Figure VI-4. One more is known where the abbreviation was "Sec. Mil." instead of "S.M."

Obviously, the cover illustrated in Figure VI-4 was written TO a soldier in the revolutionary forces, but lacking any contents, we do not know if it was written BY a soldier. During the Franco-Prussian War which preceded the revolution, soldiers had the free-franking privilege except for balloon mail. Such mail carried a notation of the soldier's unit on the front, and perhaps the Service Militaire (Figure VI-4) substituted for this practice. The pen-cancelled tax marking shows it was carried postage free.

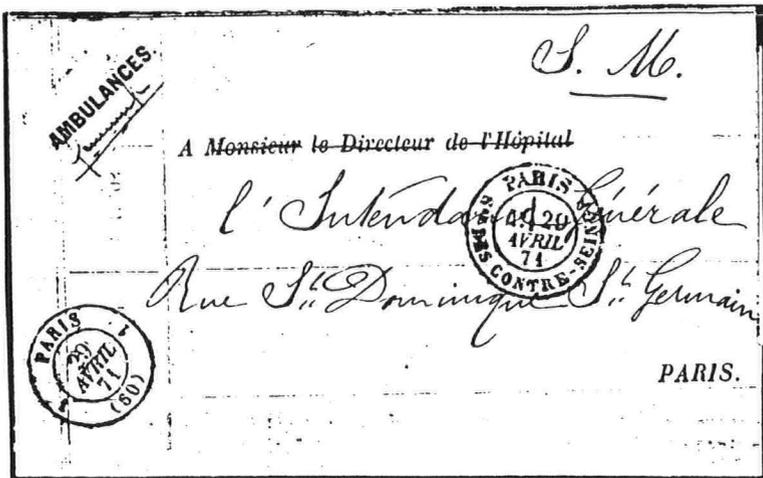


Figure VI-3. Besides the signature at the upper left, the "S.M." stands for "Service Militaire" asking for free-franking. This was allowed and verified by the red Contre-Seings date mark.

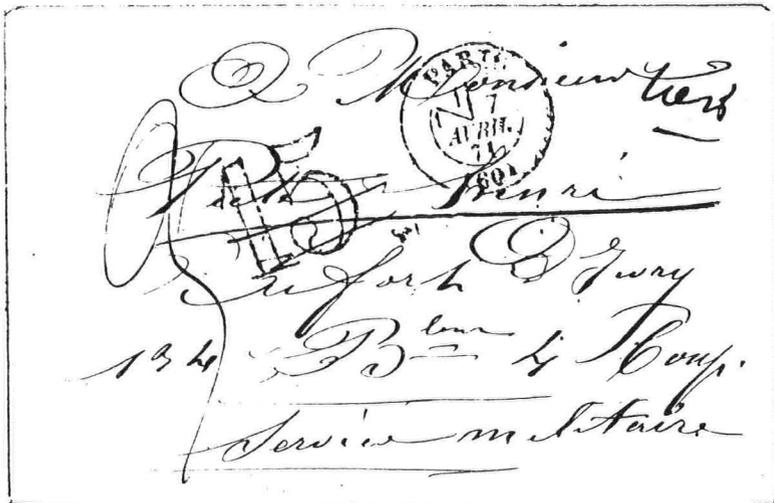


Figure VI-4. Manuscript "Service Militaire" at bottom was asking for the free-franking privilege. This was verified by the "paraphe manuscrit" initial at the left (see examples in Figure VI-5) and further demonstrated by the pen-cancelled "15" postage-due marking.

Unlike the Franco-Prussian War, mail TO soldiers of the Commune could be sent without postage within Paris.

The second initial (Figure VI-5) is much more complex than the "S.M." Boussac (5) was the first to identify this scribble as a "paraphe manuscrit" which means a signature with

(5) Boussac, Robert: Relais #8, 1984.

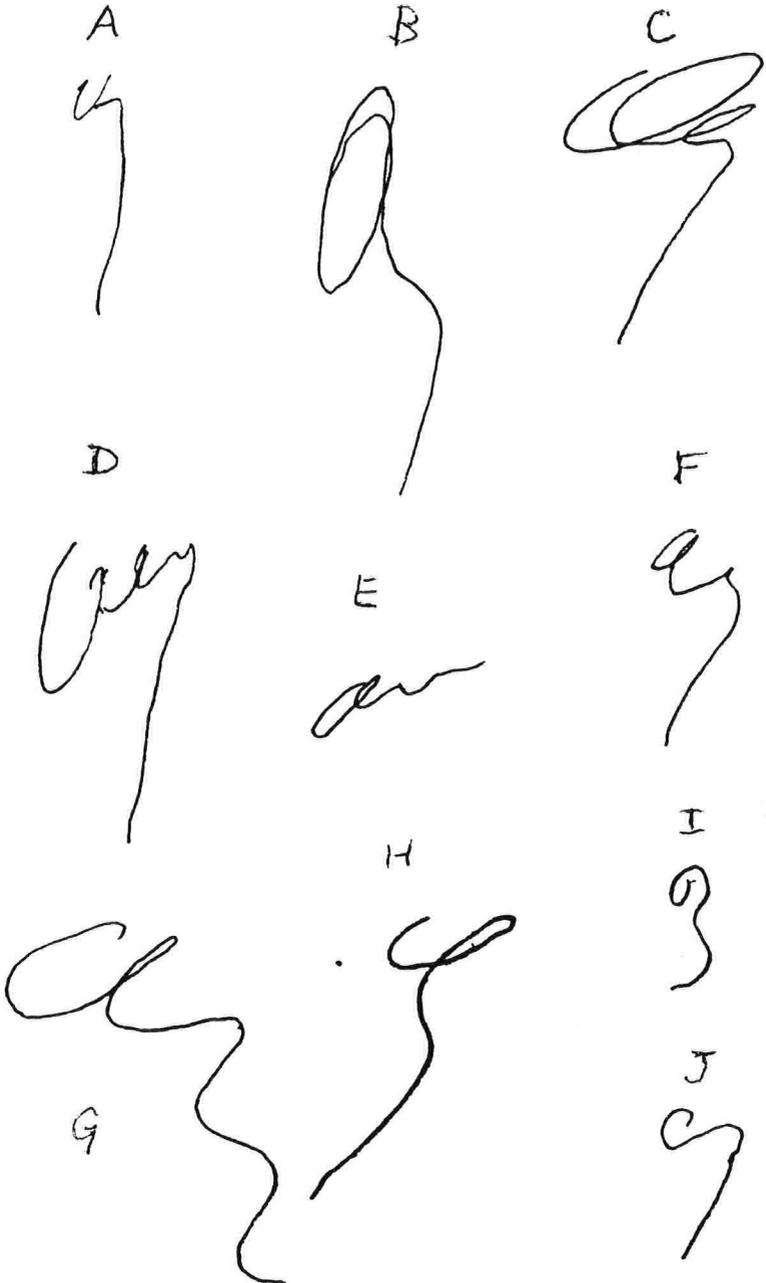


Figure VI-5. Initials ("paraphe manuscrit") found on certain examples of official mail as authorization for free-franking privilege. French-style postal numerals "3" and "9" included for comparison.

- Figure VI-5. Example A: Cover has blue cachet of 15th Battalion, Federation Artistique and contains an Ordre de Service from the Garde Nationale de Seine.
- Example B: See Figure VI-4 with manuscript Service Militaire.
- Example C: See Relais #5, red manuscript handstamp Le Receveur principal des Postes du Department de la Seine. Date cachet Recette Principale April 2.
- Example D: See Relais #7. Cachet of Commune de Paris/Secrétariat.
- Example E: See Relais #8. No Commune cachet but addressed to a Major of the Garde Nationale. Identified as a "paraphe manuscrit."
- Example F: See Relais #8. Commune cachet Federation de la Garde Nationale/Comité Central/Etat-Major.
- Example G: (From Chamboissier.) Envelope has a Commune cachet.
- Example H: See Figure VI-8. No cachet but manuscript Ecole Militaire on back.
- Examples I and J: French post numerals 3 and 5 (from Catalogue des Estampilles).

a flourish, not unlike the famous John Hancock signature on our Declaration of Independence. However, Boussac did not indicate what the initial meant and we have been unable to find anyone who has even a guess. One is shown on the cover in Figure VI-4. For a long time we thought this stood for three décimes tax as Fort Ivry was outside the Paris walls which would call for the 20c rate instead of 10c. In Figure VI-5 we have also illustrated the usual French postal manuscript "3," and clearly this is not what is on the cover.

Of the eight examples known, all but three were used in conjunction with some sort of a Commundard official cachet.

### Cancelled Dues Markings

Yet another way to indicate free-franking was to add a tax handstamp to the envelope, and then cancel it. Seven examples are known, five pen-cancelled (Figure VI-6) and two cancelled with a Paris star (Figure VI-8). This cover was written from the office of the Inspector General of the Ambulances. The use of the red star for this purpose seems to be unique. The S-like figure near the date stamp is a "paraphe manuscrit" requesting free-franking and the back has "Ecole Militaire" in manuscrit.

There is one warning about assuming that a pen-cancelled dues marking means that the sender received the free-franking privilege. In the next chapter (Prisoner's Mail) we will refer extensively to the Michel Parlange article in *La Revue Maritime*. He cites a letter found in the archives of the Navy, written by a prisoner at Ford d'Issy to the Minister of the Navy in Paris. It was postmarked at Issy-sur-Seine, November 24, 1871. It was sent unfranked and was stamped 40c due. It arrived in Paris the next day and the due marking was cancelled with 6 horizontal pen lines. This was because the Navy did not have to pay postage due in order to receive mail.

None of the examples of pen-cancelled dues marking found in the Paris-for-Paris section seem to fit this classification, but it is something to remember.

A later chapter will deal with prisoner's mail but the covers shown in Figures VI-6 and VI-7 are two of the four found in the survey written by prisoners of the Commundards instead of the Versaillaises. Each had been jailed for various military infractions. Oddly enough, one appears to have been given free-franking, although it is possible he paid 10c in cash. The other (VI-7) applied a postage stamp. One would assume a soldier in jail would lose his postal privileges, and this was certainly true for the Commundards jailed by the Versailles government.



Figure VI-6. Cancelled due mark and the boxed "PP" show this Communard soldier asked for, and got, free-franking even though he was a prisoner of the Communards in the prison of the Ecole Militaire.

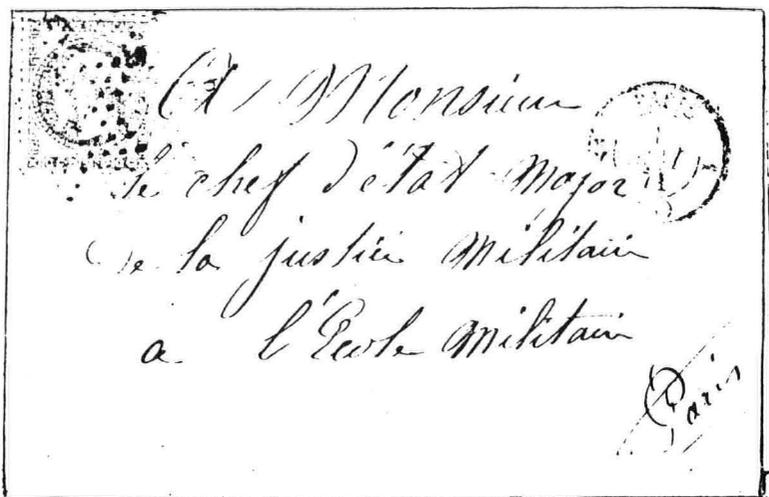


Figure VI-7. Jailed at the military prison at Cherche-Midi, this Communard soldier prepaid his letter to his military superior with a stamp.

#### Boxed "PP" (Port Payé)

Six covers were found with only the boxed "PP" to indicate the postage had been paid to the border. The use of this handstamp is sort of a "certificate of approval" telling other postal clerks who might handle the letter that someone had already checked it for proper postage and destination.

This custom has a prior history used by the regular French Government. Figure VI-9 shows a soldier's letter during the Franco-Prussian War. He correctly identifies his unit as being the Armée de Lyon. The postmaster added the boxed "PP" to indicate no stamps were required since the sender was a soldier. While the following comments have nothing to do with the Commune, this cover is also a most interesting example of a Tentative

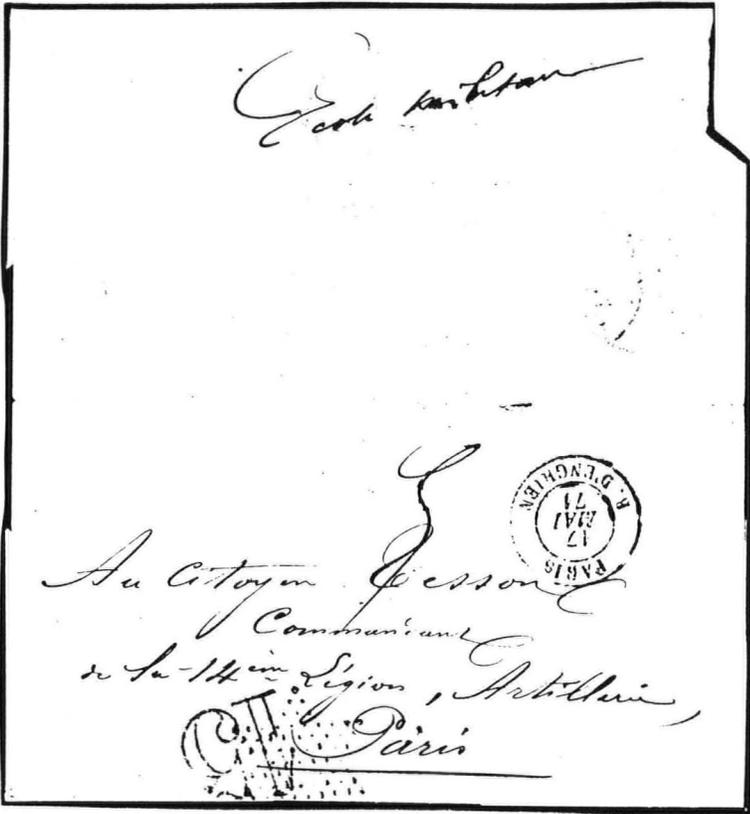


Figure VI-8. Official letter from the Inspector General of the Ambulances. The "15" due mark is cancelled with a red Paris star. The S-like inscription at the top is shown in Figure VI-5, Example H.

d'Entrée (mail addressed to Paris during the Siege). In the bottom right corner are instructions to forward this letter to A. Feillet in Tours. He worked for the post office and was directed to find a way to get such mail into Paris. He never did until the Siege was over.

The boxed "PP" was also used to indicate that the proper postage had been paid in cash, but the post office had no stamps. We apologize for the quality of the boxed "PP" in Figure VI-10, but it is one of 25 letters we own from the town of Cozes (near Bordeaux) to Paris during the Siege. All of the other 24 were stamped. This one is not, indicating the post office had run out of stamps. This was in November, before the Bordeaux Issue was available.

Figure VI-11 illustrates a letter from the Commune period, but lacks any indication of the unit involved. While it is addressed TO a soldier, the letter inside was not written BY a soldier. The postal employees during the Commune were often rather confused. The results of this survey suggests that new postal employees did not seem to know about previous regulations. Boussac (5) notes that the free-franking privilege was extended to include mail TO soldiers as well as FROM. The cover in VI-11 is an example of this unusual custom.

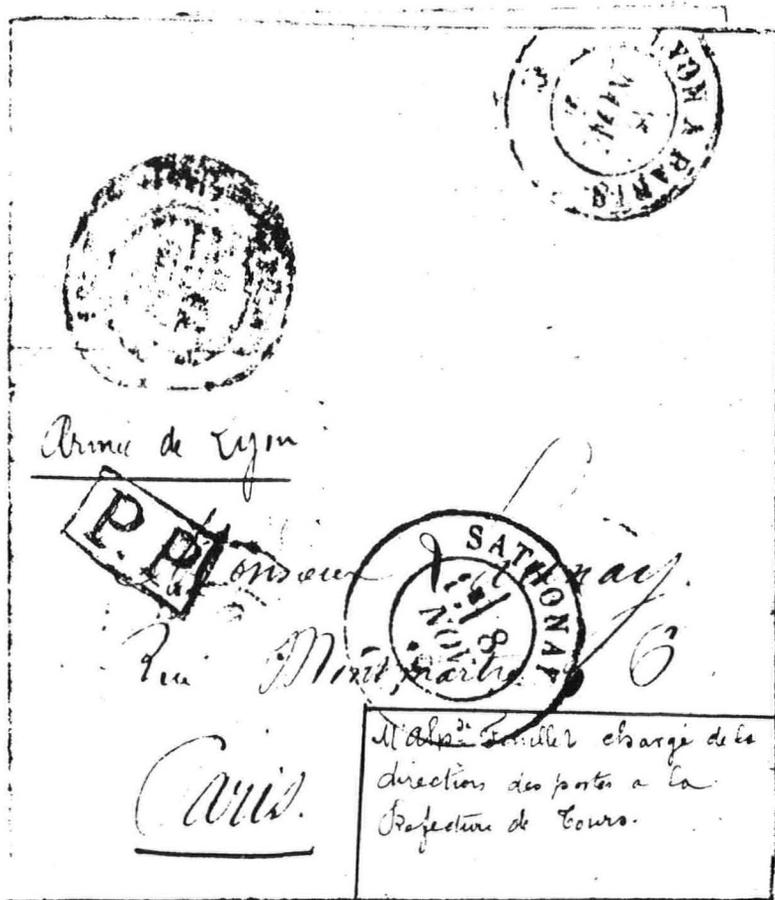


Figure VI-9. Soldier's free-frank (boxed "PP") during the Franco-Prussian War. A Tentative d'Entrée for besieged Paris directed to A. Feillet in Tours who was supposed to get the mail into Paris.

### Initials

Four of the six letters from the survey carrying only the boxed "PP" were addressed to soldiers and, we believe are examples of free-franking. They were mailed in May, but the other two are postmarked April 1 and 4. We think on the two April letters the "PP" was used to indicate the postage had been paid in cash because no stamps were available. Such was the early complaint within Paris that one could not buy stamps at the local tobacco stores because they didn't have any.

### Contre-Seings Date Stamp

A clear strike of this red, date stamp is shown in Figure VI-3. Literally, it means counter-signed and was used to say, in essence, "Yes, this letter has no stamps but that is OK and it should be treated by other postal clerks as fully franked mail." Only eight examples were found in this survey although 29 letters were delivered as if they had this mark of approval. Two of the contre-seings date stamps were on printed Ambulances forms and the balance were on envelopes with a red or blue, round Commune cachet. The contre-seings marking is of sufficient importance to be included in most auction catalog descrip-

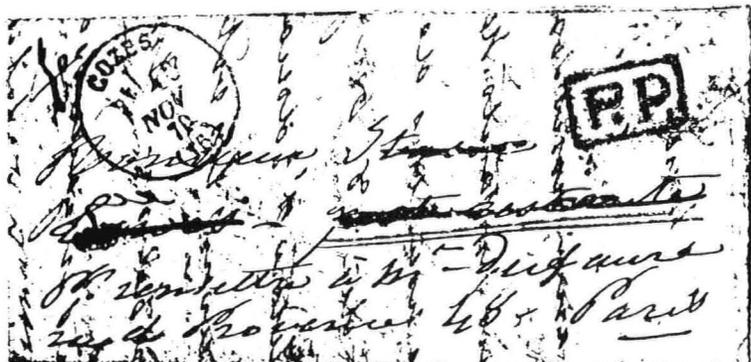


Figure VI-10. One of a series of 25 Tentative des Entrées for Paris from the town of Cozes showing that post office had run out of stamps in early November, before the Bordeaux Issue was available. Boxed "PP" to show prepaid postage.

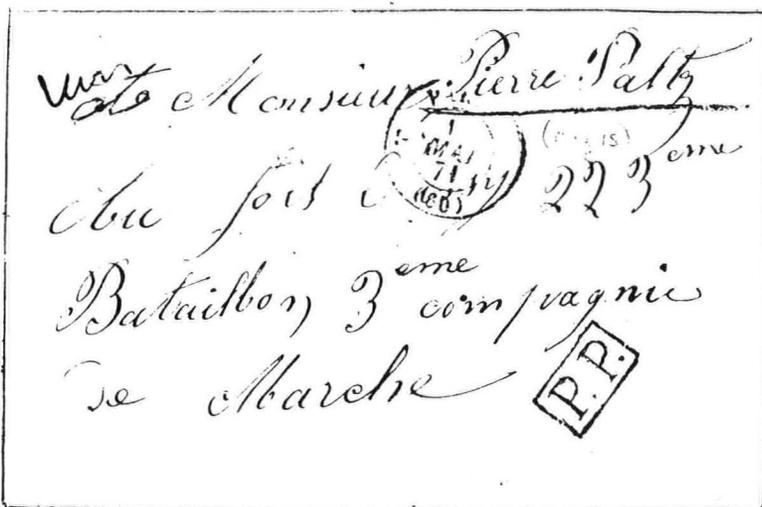


Figure VI-11. Normally the boxed "PP" would indicate a prepaid letter, but here it is believed to be an indication of free-franking as the letter was written TO a soldier.

tions, so it is pretty safe to say that only 27% of the Paris-for-Paris mail carried free by the Commune post office had this date stamp.

(More will be said about free franking in the section on mail with postage stamps even though free-franking, in some cases, might have been used.)

### Covers With Stamps

#### General

Of the 91 Paris-for-Paris covers identified in this survey, 57 had stamps on them. Our discussion of these 57 covers will include:

- 1.) Letters which could have been sent without stamps; i.e. free-franked.
- 2.) The stamps used and rates.
- 3.) Agents.

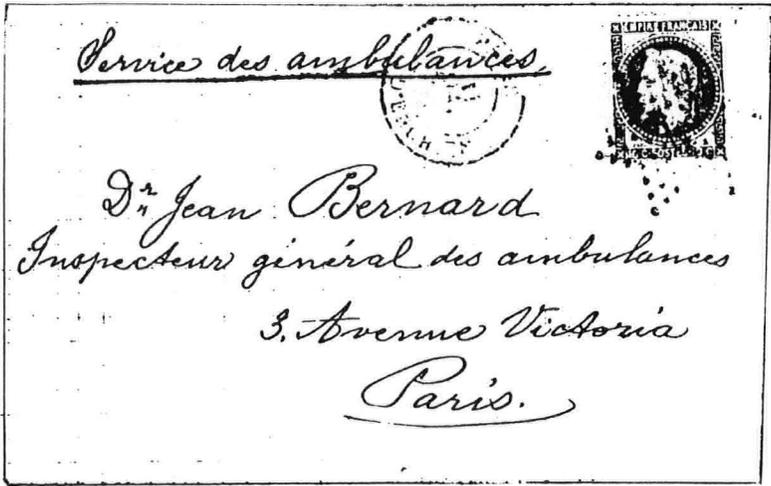


Figure VI-12. Most letters from ambulances were sent free. This one has a stamp despite the Services des Ambulances inscription. Why?

### Free-Frinking

In the preceding section on stampless mail, examples were shown of letters with official cachets or notations; and of mail both to and from soldiers. All of these were handled at no cost to the sender or the recipient. In addition, the survey identified 15 covers which had stamps on them, but it would seem that they could have been sent without stamps.

The most obvious examples are those having to do with "Ambulances." As used in 1871, the word did not refer to a four wheeled vehicle but a small MASH-like\* hospital; something like the Hotel Dieu preserved as a tourist attraction in Beaune, France. Printed forms were available for their use to indicate the number of deceased and empty beds. Only three examples were found using the printed form, and they were all sent without stamps as in Figure VI-3. Four more are known with various manuscript notations and they were not stamped either.

However, the survey identified an additional five covers from various ambulance units, and they have stamps. Figure VI-12 illustrates one of them and brings up the question, "Why did someone put a stamp on it?" The dates of these covers do not suggest a change of the rules as a function of time.

In addition, Figure VI-13 shows a letter addressed to a soldier at Fort Issy. Again, why a stamp?

Other examples are known which could have been sent without stamps such as the one to a soldier at Fort Issy as in Figure VI-13. To summarize the problem, all of the covers listed below were eligible for free-franking:

	<u>Stampless</u>	<u>Had Stamps</u>
To and from soldiers	9	6
Ambulances	7	4
Official cachets	13	3

For the covers that had official cachets, yet used stamps, it should be noted that the cachets were on the inside of the letters, but there was no reason why they could not have put the handstamp on the outside of the envelope to say, "This is official mail." Figure VI-17 may explain this.

\* For those who may translate this article, MASH is the name of a very popular American TV program concerning the antics of those in a front-line hospital (movable tents) in the Korean War. MASH is an acronym for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

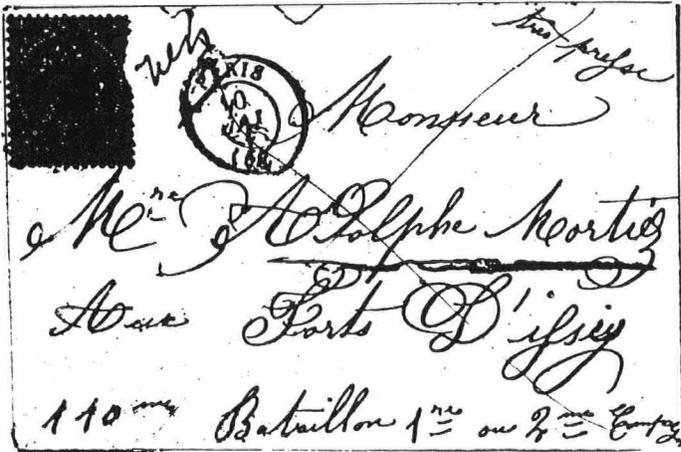
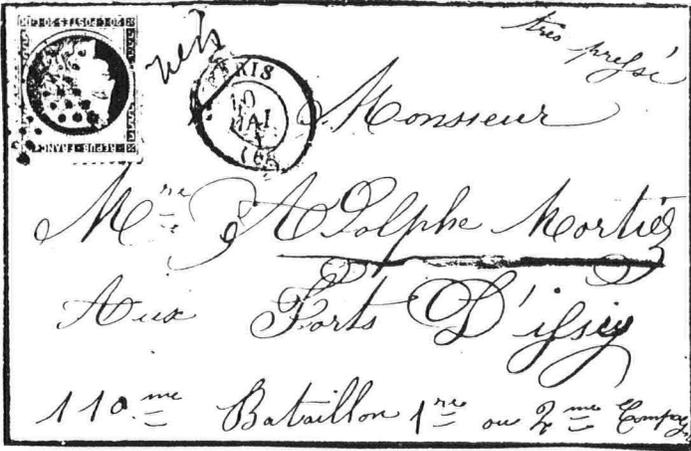


Figure VI-13. Letter to a soldier with a stamp. Most mail TO and FROM soldiers was sent free. Why a stamp?

Boussac (5) noticed the same phenomenon and theorized that perhaps the senders did not really trust the Commune postal system. It is possible they felt more secure that letters would reach their destination if properly (unnecessarily?) stamped. We agree with his suggestion and assume the post office, as operated by the revolutionaries, must have been as ineffectual as the National Guard which had revolted earlier. Why take a chance your letter would not be delivered if it fell into the hands of a new postal clerk who might not know the rules, some of which were also new? Better to add a stamp and be relatively sure.

**Stamps Used And Rates**

	Examples Found
1c Rate	
1c Empire perf. Figure VI-14	1
5c Rate	
5c Empire perf.	2
5 x 1c Empire perf.	1
10c Rate	
2 x 5c Empire perf.	2
2c + 2 x 4c Empire perf.	1
10c Empire perf.	1
10c Napoleon laureated	39
10c Bordeaux	3
10c Siege	3
20c Rate	
10c was the rate for anywhere within the Paris walls. Two of the three covers found with 20c franking were addressed to forts, controlled by the Communards, just outside the Paris walls, see Figure VI-13. The destination of the 3rd is not known to us. Several examples of stampless (and taxed) mail were found, and they confirm the 20c rate was in effect for the forts, as unreasonable as that might seem.	
2 x 10c Napoleon laureated	1
20c Napoleon laureated	1
20c Seige	1
Miscellaneous	
Imprimés/Paris "PP1" (from Bruner)	1

**Discussion**

Our experience has been that covers with the 5c rate are hard to find, yet three of them appear here in our survey of just a few letters. One was a mourning cover, another a printed announcement, and the 3rd was addressed to a library.

The real surprise was to find a very low use of the Siege issue, and the relatively high use of the Bordeaux issue. The latter must be suspected as being enclosed in mail coming from outside Paris, under separate cover, to be posted there.

We are simply confounded to explain the lack of covers franked with the Siege issue.

**Agents**

Perhaps some, but not all, of the following covers should have been discussed under the heading of "Mail Into Paris."

**Moreau and Osmont**

We know of five envelopes from outside Paris and hand addressed to the office of this agency in Vincennes. It is reasonable to assume each one once contained a letter to be carried into Paris to mail. Since the contents are missing, one can never be sure, a real "Catch-22."\*

Only one letter is known which was definitely brought in by this agency, previously illustrated in Figure IV-25. It appears to be a simple stampless letter written to a soldier. There are no cancelled dues markings to indicate free-franking, but the partial Paris star in the upper left corner indicates a stamp was once there.

The text of the letter inside the envelope (Figure IV-26) confirms this letter was brought in by Moraud (misspelled) and Osmont. This is a prime example of the need to examine "Paris-For-Paris" mail very closely.

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\* An idiom meaning "You can't win, whatever you do."

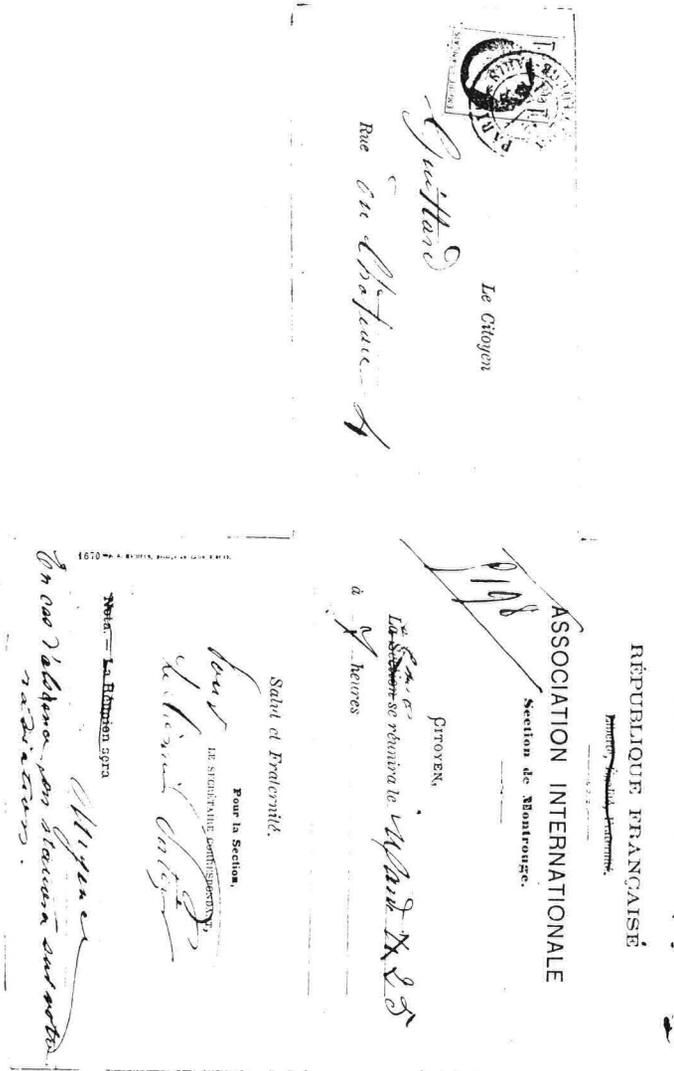


Figure VI-14. 1c local rate for printed meeting notice of the Association Internationale, an early Communist cell. Posted Paris-Montrouge, April 22, 1871.

**Ed Moreau**

For mail leaving Paris one could buy envelopes for 15 or 25c with Moreau's printed Paris address. From your nearest mailbox in Paris you could send your letter for the provinces to him, in one of his envelopes, to take to Vincennes to post. This created Paris-For-Paris mail, but only one example is known (6). It carries a 10c Siege issue cancelled with an anchor lozenge and has a date stamp of Paris-Montmartre May 21, the day the Versailles troops first entered Paris.

(6) Boussac, Robert: Relais No. 2, 1983.

### Choudens

Our survey identified only one example of a cover with his printed sticker, describing his services, on the back of a Paris-For-Paris letter (6). A 10c Siege issue was used to mail it to a Paris customer. Since then we have seen two more, one at auction and one at Philex-France 89.

### Bruner

Bruner devised a method which allowed him to avoid putting a stamp on each letter he brought in from Versailles, and yet not having to deliver each letter himself. He had a printed postcard made up which he could mail to his customers advising them that there was mail for them at his office. Only one used example is known. In place of a stamp, there is a handstamp, IMPRIMES/Paris P.P. 1, May 10. This system had the added advantage that he was able to collect his fee in a simple manner when they came to collect their mail.

### Lorin & Maury

In sale No. 292 (March 1969) Roumet listed an envelope of this agency franked with a 2 x 5c Empire, addressed to their Paris office May 15. No further information is available to us.

### Cancellations

When the postal officials left Paris for Versailles the evening of March 30, 1871, they took with them whatever material they could carry. It is easy to understand how this must have affected the central post office, but according to the evidence provided by this survey, the branch offices lost many of their cancelling devices also.

The normal treatment for a Paris letter in 1871 was to cancel the stamp with a Paris star, or a large numeral lozenge in the case of the outlying offices. At the side would be a circular date stamp showing the name of the post office involved.

During the Commune many of the date stamps were of the obsolete type used by the Bureau Central from 1848 to 1863. They are generally called route date stamps and the number refers to which train line should be used. There is no indication of which office was involved. See Figure VI-3 for an example. During the Commune their use was not confined to the main post office.

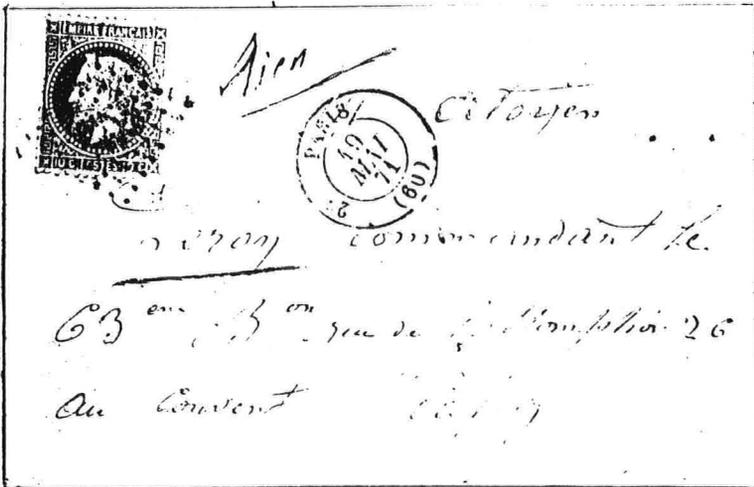


Figure VI-15. Anchor lozenge of the maritime service used at Paris to cancel a letter addressed to a soldier at Passy. Route date stamp May 19. The anchor in the lozenge usually is not very clear. (The anchor lozenges were no longer used on ships after May, 1876, but used at Paris in emergencies.) Collection L.

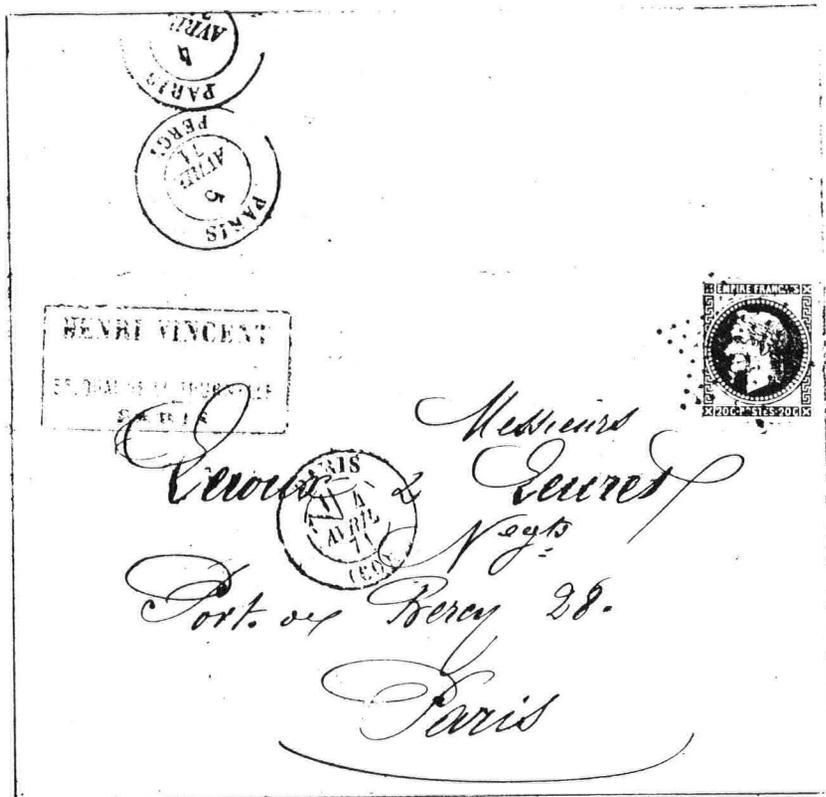


Figure VI-16. Deformed Paris-Bercy date stamps used as arrival markings, seen at upper left.

The same is true for the very scarce maritime anchor lozenge (Figures VI-15 and IV-19). We have listed separately the details on the 13 examples found. The anchor cancels are listed in the specialized catalogs which also refer to "GC 892, griffe linéaire au lieu de cachet à date." We have not seen these illustrated in the literature and the only example found was the normal GC 892 with a Paris route date stamp on the side. See Fig. IX-2 and IX-3 for recent information.

In addition, Boussac (6) lists three examples of small numeral lozenges; 892, 1715 and 2523. This survey did not find any of these.

Boussac (6) also illustrated the deformed Paris-Bercy datestamp. Three examples are known, one being used as a departure cachet on April 6. The other two were used as arrival date stamps. Figure VI-16 shows the dates of April 4 and 5. The other known cover has the date of May 10, 1871. All have the tipped numeral for the day of the month and a break in the outer circle at the position of 8 o'clock.

Figure VI-17 shows a recently-discovered cover with a "2 Paris 2" date stamp with the date completely missing. The letter in the envelope is dated April 17, and there is a very faint arrival date stamp on the back with a readable date of the 18th. The letter is from the Garde Nationale telling the recipient to report with the birth certificates of his two sons. Since it was addressed to a civilian, it was taxed 15c. The extra handwriting on the envelope is a progress report on this case. The addressee had stated his older son was out of the city, but the authorities seem to have located him within Paris. We have no mention of this postmark in the literature.



Figure VI-17. "2 Paris 2" route date stamp with the date missing. Letter inside was from the Garde Nationale dated April 17. Although it carried a Commune cachet on the letter, it was taxed 15c as it was addressed to a civilian.

We have listed the cancellations found on the Paris-For-Paris covers. A little more information about Paris cancellations is given in the chapter on Mail-Into-Paris. Special cancellations from outside of Paris, which are often called Commune Cancellations, will be covered in the chapter on "Cachets de Fortune."

**Star Cancellations on Stamps**

Star	Remarks or Date Stamps	Examples Known
?	number, if any, is illegible	10
2	1 with route date stamp. no info on other	2
3	route date stamp	1
4	1 with normal, 1 with route date stamp	2
15	both normal date stamp	2
23	not enough information	1
26	normal date stamp	1
28	route date stamp	1
35	route date stamp	1
39	both normal date stamp	2

**Normal Date Stamp Used To Cancel Stamps**

Paris 60	1
Place de la Bourse	2
Rue de Clery	1
Paris les Batignolles	2
Paris RC	1

**Route Date Stamp Used To Cancel Stamps**

1 Paris 1	3
3 Paris 3	3
5 Paris 5	2
6 Paris 6	1
7 Paris 7	2

GC 892  
GC 1715  
GC 4277

**GC Lozenges Used To Cancel Stamps**  
(Not including anchors, see following table)

4 Paris 4 route date stamp  
normal Paris/Grenelle date stamp  
normal Paris/La Villette date stamp

1  
1  
1

<b>Anchor Cancellations</b>				
No.	Source	Stamp	Date Stamp	Remarks
<u>DURING THE COMMUNE</u>				
1.	Jamet 123 lot 1765	10c lauré	Paris Montmartre May 16	To a soldier
2.	Demarest advt. part of logo. L/Echo 11/87 pg. 23	10c lauré	Paris 60 May 17	
3.	Jamet 6/76 lot 1527 Part 1 Special Coll.	10c Bord.	7 Paris 7 May 19	Large fragment
4.	Collection L. Fig. VI-15	10c lauré	Paris 60 May 19	To Passy
5.	SAMP 40, pg. 100	10c Bord	Place de la Bourse	To M. Mirabourd
6.	PhilexFrance 89	10c lauré	Rue Aligre May 20	To a soldier at Montrouge
7.	Relais No. 2	10c Siege	Paris Montmartre May 21	Printed form to Agent Moreau
8.	See Fig. IV-19 from Luxembourg	10c lauré	Paris Montmartre May 21	To M. Bac, Ms arrival June 1
9.	Schatzke sale 4/76 lot 312	10c lauré	Paris les Batignolles May 22	To a soldier
10.	PhilexFrance 89	10c lauré + 2x5c Emp.	Blue Paris 60 May 27	To Vernouillet
<u>AFTER THE COMMUNE</u>				
11.	Robineau 65 lot 164	20c Siege	3 Paris 3 Bau Central June 3	UK tax 4d CA London June 5
12.	Jamet 104 lot 3685	2x10c Siege	Paris les Batignolles June 6	To Oise
13.	Jamet* June 76 lot 1530 Part 1 Special Co.	20c Siege	Nearly illeg. Paris les Batignolles June 4	Destination not given

\* Jamet states, "This bureau used the anchor during June."

## CHAPTER VII – PRISONER'S MAIL

### General

Our survey documented 72 covers written to, or by, prisoners of the Versaillaise. Nearly one half of these were found in the magnificent article by Michael Parlange in *La Revue Maritime* (1). Since none of the *Révue* examples were duplicated in the auction catalogs used for the survey, it must be said the ready availability of prisoner's mail to collectors is much less than the number of 72 examples would indicate.

We have divided the material into 4 categories:

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| A. Prisons in the Paris region.  | 20 examples |
| This covers the time span immediately after the revolution.  |             |
| B. Coastal prisons and hulks.  | 32 examples |
| This covers a much longer period of time while military tribunals made their decisions.  |             |
| C. Military tribunals.   | 4 examples  |
| Documents relating to individual trials.   |             |
| D. New Caledonia   | 16 examples |
| Our survey shows only 3 covers relating to this period. The others are from Parlange and many are in the Archives and unavailable to collectors. |             |

In a "normal" war (revolution) one would expect to find mail generated by prisoners taken during the conflict. There is no philatelic evidence of this during the Commune and all of the letters in this chapter concern only the more than 40,000 prisoners taken by the Versaillaise during the "Bloody Week" (May 21-28) when Paris was recaptured. We have already mentioned in Chapter VI the 4 letters known to have been written by Commard soldiers who were jailed by their own forces in Paris during the revolution. They are not included here.

### Prisons in the Paris Region from which Prisoner's Mail is Known

Roquette (Paris)	5 examples
Versailles (Satory)	3 examples
Versailles (Orangerie)	2 examples
Versailles (Rue de Noilles)	1 example
Versailles (specifics unknown)	5 examples
St. Cyr	3 examples
Ford d'Issy	1 example

### **Roquette**, 5 covers known

All are very much alike being addressed in pencil and, lacking stamps, struck with a crude 15 handstamp for the local postage due. (Figure VII-1) It appears to have been carved from cork or wood and is the only provisional cancellation from this period. All were postmarked 1 Paris on June 1, 1871. Boussac (2) notes the normal date cancel for this prison was that of Bureau No. 36 (Bd. Voltaire) and suggests that perhaps a special clerk was sent from the main post office to handle the mail from this prison. All messages have a common theme, written to relatives, "I am in prison, I am innocent, please come get me out."

(1) Parlange, Michael: Des Pontons de France à la Nouvelle-Calédonie avec les Insurgés de la Commune et Missions Particularités de la Maritime. *La Revue Maritime*, No. 140, Jan. 1958.

NOTE: If it were not for the sharp eye and good memory of our Editor, Bob Stone, we would not have known of this reference. Even so, it was difficult to find. Our local library got photocopies from the University of Alabama. An easier to find synopsis of the Parlange article is by Dr. P. Lejune, *Les Feuilles Marcophiles* Nos. 17 and 18, Feb. and March, 1978.

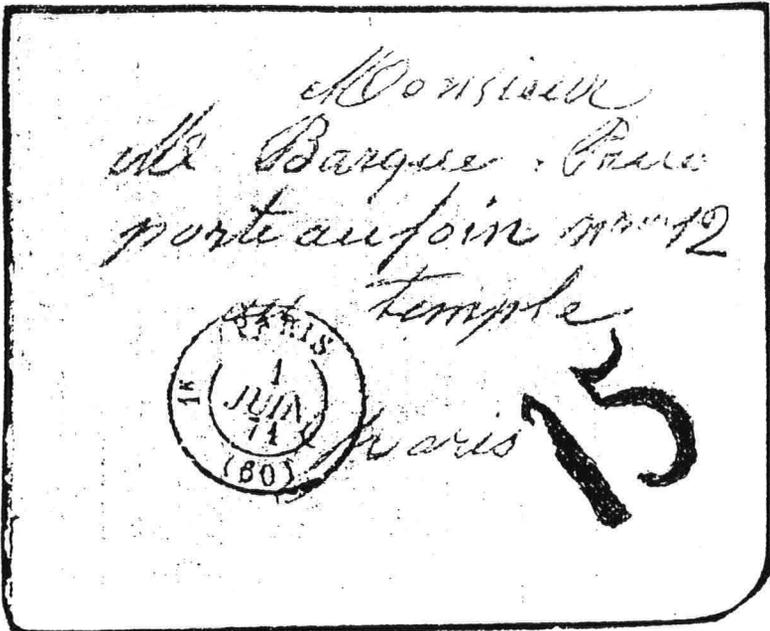


Figure VII-1 Only provisional postal marking of the Communards. Used only on mail from the La Roquette prison. (Photo courtesy of the F&CPS member who once owned this cover.)

The Roquette prison had two sections; Grande Roquette for men and Petite Roquette for women and children. The five were identified as follows:

Grande Roquette	2 examples
Petite Roquette	2 examples
Simply La Roquette	1 example

**Satory at Versailles, 3 covers known**

Two were written at the very end of May to Versailles addresses. Lacking stamps, each has a 15c typographed due stamp. The third was postmarked July 29, 1871, a rather late date as, by then, most prisoners had been moved to coastal locations. It was franked by a 20c stamp and, at the upper left, carries the manuscript notation VU followed by a signature. Several examples of the VU ("I have seen") are known on prisoner's mail from Cherbourg and this is the only example we have seen of a censor marking from another area except on Military Tribunal Mail.

**Orangerie at Versailles, 2 known**

Both known covers carry a 15c typographed due stamp cancelled by a Versailles date stamp. The one shown in Figure VII-2 has a cancellation of May 29 and was addressed to Versailles. It was redirected to Paris and the correct 3 décimes due was added in manuscript. Figure VII-3 is the other side of this cover and gives the information that the writer is in the Orangerie.

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(2) Bousac, Robert: "Un Cachet-Taxe Provisoire (Paris 1871)," Bulletin SAMP No. 5, 1964.

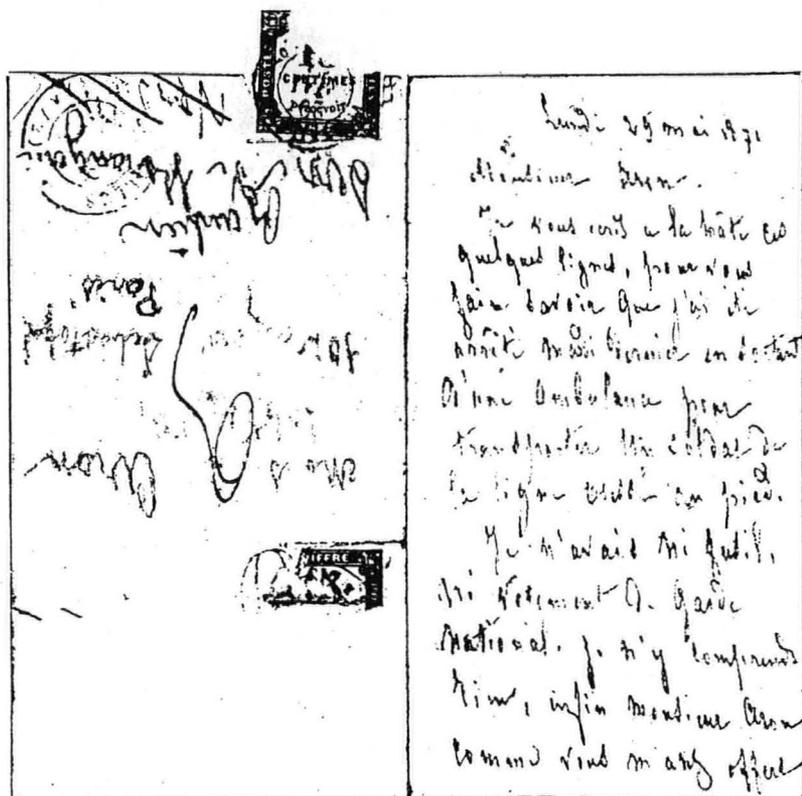


Figure VII-2 From prisoner at Versailles. Addressed to Paris and 15c due stamp applied by mistake to seal the letter. Correct 3 décimes due added later.

Figure VII-3. This prisoner had to use his Garde Civique orders to write for help as this was the only paper he had. We have not been able to find this organization mentioned in the history books.

The second cover (again paper was in short supply) was addressed to Paris and was sealed, mistakenly, with a 15c due stamp (Figure VII-4). The word "banlieue" (suburbs) was added and the other side (not illustrated) shows the Paris address and the correct 3 décimes due.

#### Versailles, rue de Noilles, 1 example known

This cover was illustrated in reference (3) and carries a normal Versailles date stamp of August 16. It was addressed to Passy-s-Eure and, lacking stamps, has the standard 30 double-line tax.

#### Versailles, specifics unknown, 5 examples known

Two of the letters were written in Versailles but were carried into Paris by someone unknown. Both were franked with a 20c stamp and have Paris star cancels.

The other three were cancelled in Versailles, one with a date stamp in blue. The 30c tax was also in blue which may explain the date stamp color.

The most interesting letter, by far, has its philatelic side illustrated in Figure VII-4. The typographed 15c due stamp was cancelled May 29 with the Versailles distribution type date stamp. Figure VII-5 shows the reverse side and emphasizes the shortage of paper

De Mr Andre Duvigneau, g.  
 d'indes de France, au commandant  
 que vous, d'aller dire à  
 la mairie pour au commandant  
 pour s'adresser de moi. et  
 Mr. Jean Bellier, j. Crois  
 qu'il faut deux terriers  
 patentes, vous pourriez  
 rendre Mr. Miompey. j. Crois  
 de bon commandant.  
 j. Sais bien Monsieur  
 que vous me rendez  
 le service, mais, je  
 vous en supplie. J'attends  
 vite autant pour moi. que  
 pour moi. j'attends pour  
 que compte de moi. pour  
 finir de affaire -  
 il faut que ce soit un  
 journal, par l'air de  
 dire à moi. qui me rend  
 le service.  
 Beauj. Rodion. H. H. H.  
 Bureau d'ordon. Disting. H.  
 Verber.  
 J. Crois de l'orangeie Verber.

Figure VII-3 Reverse side of Figure 2, giving his new address as being l'Orangérie.

on which to write letters. He writes to his sister in Versailles asking for help using his Garde Civique papers. We have never been able to find any record of this particular organization which we assume to have been a sort of "Home Guard" in contrast to the Garde Nationale and Garde Mobile.

**St. Cyr, 3 examples known**

St. Cyr is the French equivalent of our West Point and the school is only about 2½ miles west of the Palace at Versailles. Two of the three covers are shown in Figures VII-6 and 7. Both were written by foreign nationals (Swiss and Italian) on May 31 to their consulates in Versailles claiming their innocence. Both were taxed at 30c despite the short distance involved.

The third cover was addressed to Paris and again taxed at the 30c rate.

**Fort d'Issy, 1 example known**

This is a strange cover found by Parlange in the Naval Archives. It was written by a prisoner on November 24 to be sent to another prisoner on board the prison hulk Le Tage (?). However, it was supposed to go by the way of the good offices of the Minister of the Navy in Paris. Lacking stamps, a double line 40c tax was applied (the rate had changed Sept. 1). The tax was crossed out by 6 pen lines which Parlange thinks was not a mark of free-franking but simply indicates the Navy did not have to pay postage due.

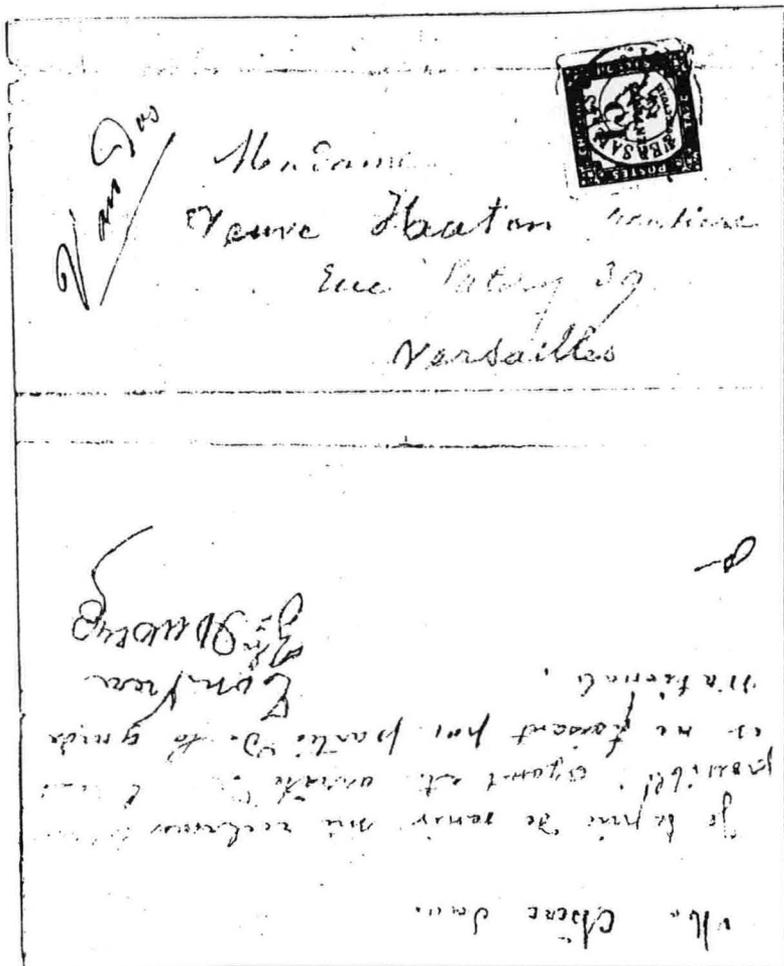


Figure VII-4 Written by a prisoner in Versailles to his sister also in Versailles. 15c due stamp is correct.

### Coastal Prisons and Hulks

About half of the more than 40,000 prisoners taken by the Versailles troops soon found themselves in various forts and ancient ships (hulks) in the Atlantic ports of Cherbourg, Brest, Rochefort and Lorient. The first prison ship bound for New Caledonia did not leave until April 9, 1872. While the Paris region mail was all FROM prisoners, the expanded time frame for the Coastal Period allowed the establishment of communication both TO and FROM prisoners.

The Cherbourg area was the most important as will be seen from the following table:

Cherbourg	22 examples
Rochefort/La Rochelle	5 examples
Brest	2 examples
Lorient	3 examples

4<sup>e</sup> ARRONDISSEMENT  
Quartier Saint-Gervais.

• Compagnie

Le présent billet ne certifiera le service fait qu'autant qu'il aura été signé par le chef du poste.

M *Michel*

M *Clubry*

deurant rue *Gauffroy-Lemaire* No 10  
se rendra le *Dimanche 3<sup>e</sup> Février 1871*

Vu: LE CHEF DU POSTE

à 9 heures précises du *matin*, à *post-rue François Miron*  
*N<sup>o</sup> 80*

pour faire le service qui lui sera commandé.

Paris, ce *3<sup>e</sup> Février* 1871

Pour le Commandant-Chef de Quartier.  
Le Sergent-Major de la Compagnie.

*Michel*

Adresse:

NOTA. — Tout Garde Civique dûment convoqué et non régulièrement dispensé, qui ne répondra pas à l'appel, serait passible de peines disciplinaires.

Figure VII-5: Reverse side of Figure 4. A shortage of paper caused this prisoner to use his orders from the Garde Civique.

**Cherbourg**

Several of the Cherbourg area letters gave more specific information as to their origin:

- |        |                        |
|--------|------------------------|
| Hulks: | Le Tage                |
|        | Le Bayard              |
|        | La Ville de Nantes (3) |
|        | L'Arcole               |
|        | Le Tourville (2)       |
| Land:  | L'île Pelée (4)        |

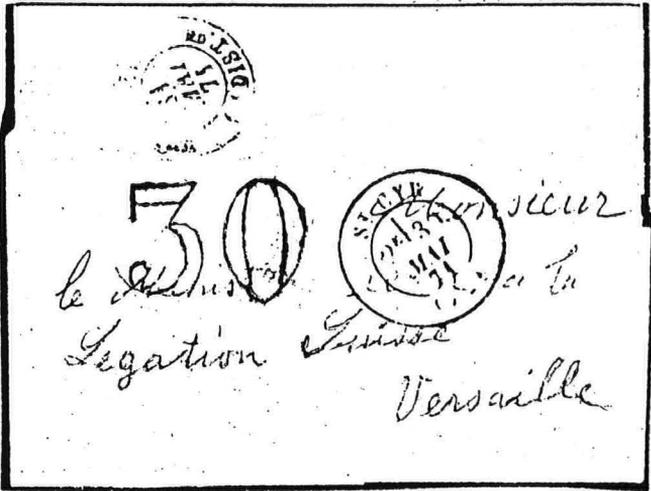


Figure VII-6: Written by a Swiss national from the prison at St. Cyr enlisting the help of his consul in Versailles.

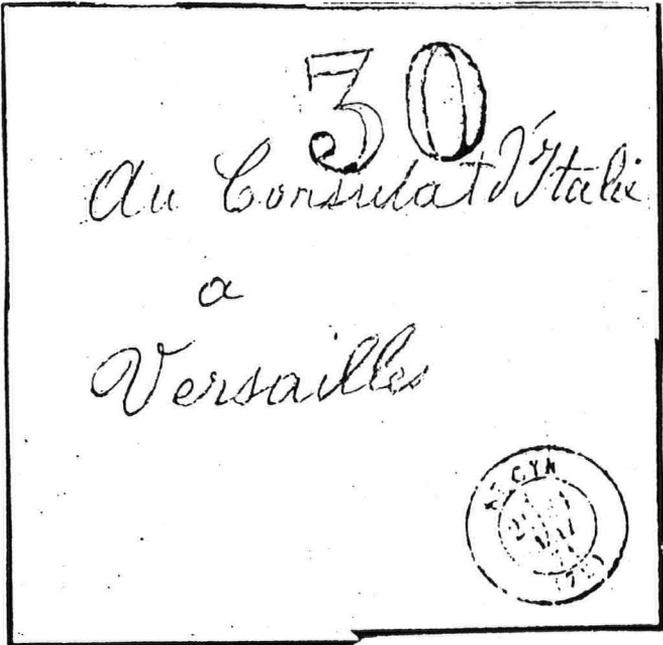


Figure VII-7 Same as Figure 6, but written by an Italian to his consulate.

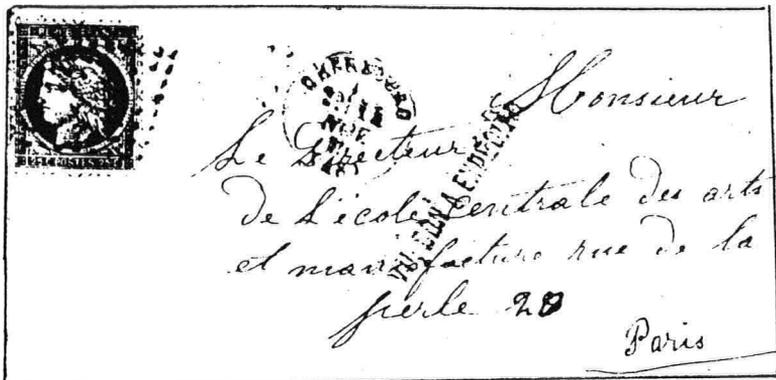


Figure VII-8 From a prisoner in the Cherbourg area (Nov. 14, 1871) with the "VU: BON A EXPEDIER" censor marking in black.

The following table lists franking and censorship markings of both franking and censorship markings of mail both to and from the Cherbourg area.

	Total covers	Properly franked	Censor markings
From prisoners	17	2	15
To prisoners	5	5	4

The most common censorship marking (12 examples) is shown in Figure VII-8. Very loosely translated the VU: BON A EXPEDIER means "I have seen this letter and it is okay to deliver." The earliest use of this cachet that we have seen is June 24 and the latest November 21, 1871. Oddly enough, the two covers known without the cachet are the rare ones (Figure VII-9) and are dated June 14 and 16, before the earliest known use of the censor marking.

Parlange (1) lists one other cachet known on 3 examples of mail from the Cherbourg region, all from Fort Pelée. It is illustrated in Figure VII-10. It is not clear to us whether or not it should be classified as a censor marking.

The following tabulates the censorship markings on mail addressed TO prisoners in the Cherbourg area, all on hulks:

**Mail TO Prisoners**

VERIFIE (Figure VII-11)	3 examples
M. Billard, pour examen (in manuscript)	1 example
No markings	1 example

We assume the M. Billard letter contained something the censor thought ought to be called to the attention of his superior.

**Rochefort/La Rochelle**

Five covers are known concerning this area, three of them being very exceptional ones described by Parlange (1). First is an example of a Registered (Chargée) letter the only one known on Commune correspondence. It was sent from Paris to Lile d'Aix on Sept. 20, 1871 with 75c postage.

Second is a triple-rate domestic letter. Only one other is known and it is described in the chapter on Mail From Paris. Sent from Paris June 20, 1871 to a prisoner in the Citadelle d'Oleron.

The third carries an unusual cachet. It is postmarked St. Martin-de-Ré (on the island of Ré) August 7, 1872. It was sent by a prisoner to the Minister of Interior at Versailles. It is stamped VU in a different design than others seen and carries a blue Dépôt des Déportés cachet which is illustrated by Parlange.

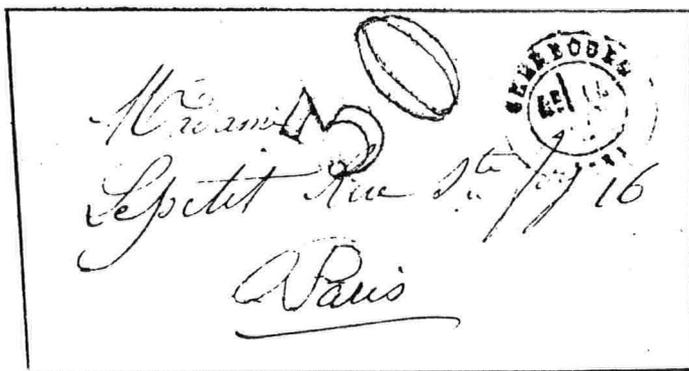


Figure VII-9 From the prison ship Le Tourville in the Cherbourg area. Posted June 14, 1871, 10 days before the earliest known use of the "VU" censor marking. No censor handstamp.



Figure VII-10 Blue cachet (37/33mm diameter) found on 3 letters from Fort Pelée in the Cherbourg region. (Illustration from Parlange.)

Figure VII-11 Cachet found on some mail TO prisoners in the Cherbourg area (20/13mm diameter). Thought by Parlange to have been applied on board ship rather than land. (Illustration from Parlange.)



### Brest

Two covers are known, both addressed to prisoners. One is illustrated in Figure VII-12 and was sent July 13, 1871 from Paris to the hulk Austerlitz which was not a transport ship. Over-franked by 10c, it is theorized the extra postage was in case the prisoner had already been sent to New Caledonia.

### Lorient

Three covers are known from this port, all from a prisoner on L'Eumenide and dated June 12, July 12 and August 5.

### Military Tribunals

Military courts were established in several locations to decide the fate of the more than 40,000 prisoners which had been captured at the end of the revolution. We know of 4 covers relating to these military tribunals.

In Figure VII-13 we show the insides of one of these letters. Basically, the court was writing to the area in which the prisoner had lived to ask about his record and reputation. In this case, the man was in trouble as his record was poor. The red crayon marks indicate it got back to the court involved, but the mechanism is not clear. The philatelic side of the cover shows it was sent from Paris/Vaugirard (date stamp) Oct. 12, 1871 to the Police Commissioner at Montrouge. The 25c double-line due marking has been pen cancelled.

A similar document (Figure VII-14) was addressed to the public prosecutor at St. Denis

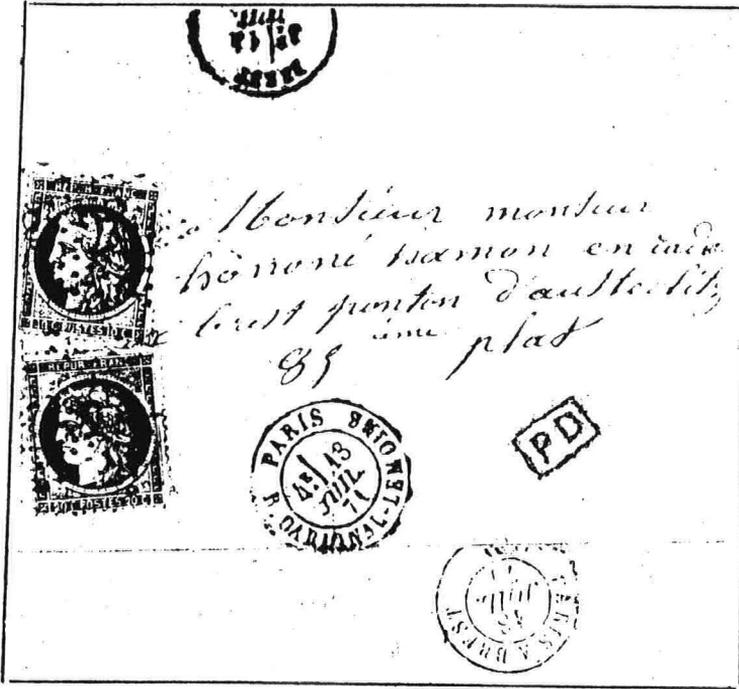


Figure VII-12 To a prisoner on the hulk Austerlitz at Brest. It has been suggested the 10c over-franking was to forward the letter in case the prisoner had already been sent to New Caledonia. However, the rate at the time was 70c.

asking for the police record of a specific prisoner. It was struck with a three-line blue cachet:  
 1re Division Militaire (abbreviated)  
 Service  
 de la Justice.

Posted in Versailles Nov. 23, it received a red Contre-seings the same day.

Another (Figure VII-15) is distinctive for the "VU" in a circle indicating the document has been seen when used as a censor marking, but here it is an obsolete form of Contre-seings. Figure VII-16 is the same but with a simple "V."

**New Caledonia Mail**

During the six-year period of 1872-1878, 3,929 prisoners of the Commune Revolution were deported to New Caledonia. They were spared the climate of Devil's Island as it was thought to be too severe for political prisoners. Parlange (1) lists the details of each voyage made by the French Navy even to the point of listing how many died on the long trip.

We list 16 covers as belonging to this period, six of them to be found only in the Archives of the French Navy. We have categorized them as follows:

- Mailed to French ports in anticipation of sailing 2 examples
- Mailed from the transport ships during their passage 2 examples
- The Emile Fortin Correspondence 5 examples
- Other mail to New Caledonia 2 examples
- Mailed to the Minister of the Navy for transmission to New Caledonia 5 examples

1148

1<sup>re</sup> Division Militaire  
JUSTICE

DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS

Addressée à M. le Commissaire de police du quartier  
de la rue des Chemins de fer

TRÈS URGENT

Nom : Delanoue  
 Prénoms : Michel Hippolyte  
 Age : 47 ans  
 Adresse : rue des Chemins de fer, 41,  
 Profession : bouclier  
 Conduite : à Londres à - Doune  
 Du 19 Avril 1868 au 30  
 Mai 1871.

Moralité :

Antécédents

condamné le 19 juillet 1870  
 par le cour d'Assises de la  
 Seine, à cinq ans de travaux  
 forcés, peul corps et blâmes  
 volontaire et sans qualité

Quelle part prise  
à l'insurrection :

Paris, le 14 8<sup>bre</sup> 1871. *Je suis de la garde nationale  
 et qu'il n'a pas combattu*  
 Le Commissaire de police  
 de Paris (Cherbourg), le 10 (octobre) 1871.

L. L. L. Le Substitut du Rapporteur en mission,

*L. Bernier*  
 Prère d'adresser ce bulletin à M. D... Substitut du Rapporteur à  
 (Cherbourg). *Montrouge Rhône*

Typ. A. Morel.

Figure VII-13 Typical contents of a letter from the Justice Militaire to the Police Commissioner of the district where the defendant had lived. In this case from Paris to Montrouge, October 12, 1871.

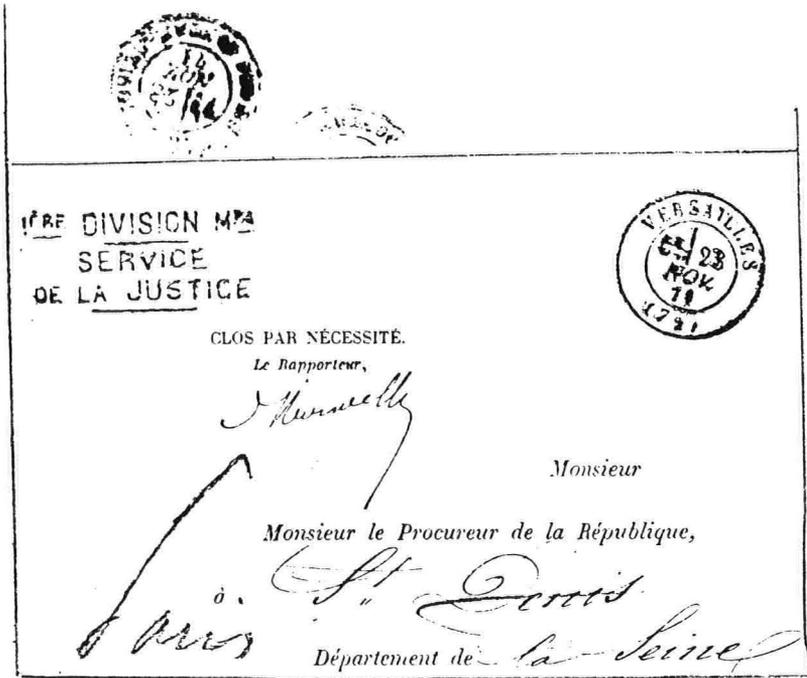


Figure VII-14 From the Military (abbreviated) Division of the Service de la Justice to the Public Prosecutor in St. Denis. Red Contre-seings on back.

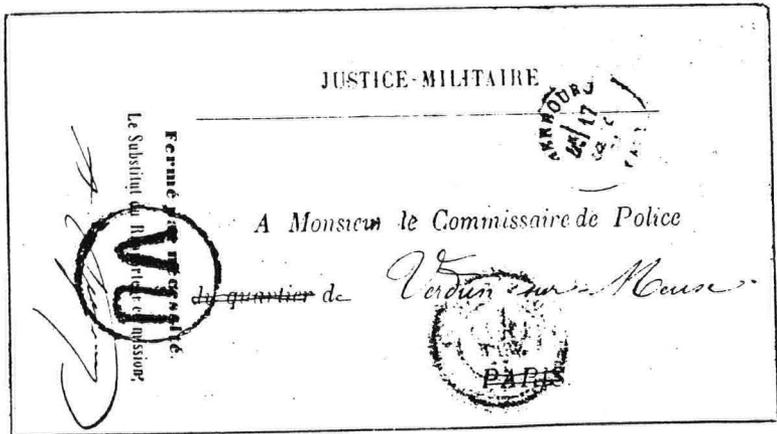


Figure VII-15 "VU" in circle is an obsolete form, preceding use of the Contre-seings cachet. From Cherbourg to Verdun-s-Marne September 17, 1871.

With the exception of one letter written off the coast of Brazil Nov. 24, 1872 and carried to France in a sealed official Navy bag, no other mail FROM New Caledonia prisoners is known. This one was posted in Paris February 14, 1874, 18 months later!. A similar letter is in the Archives.

Apart from the Emile Fortin correspondence, two letters were sent to prisoners on board ships at Toulon and Cherbourg. No details are known about the one cover, but the Cher-

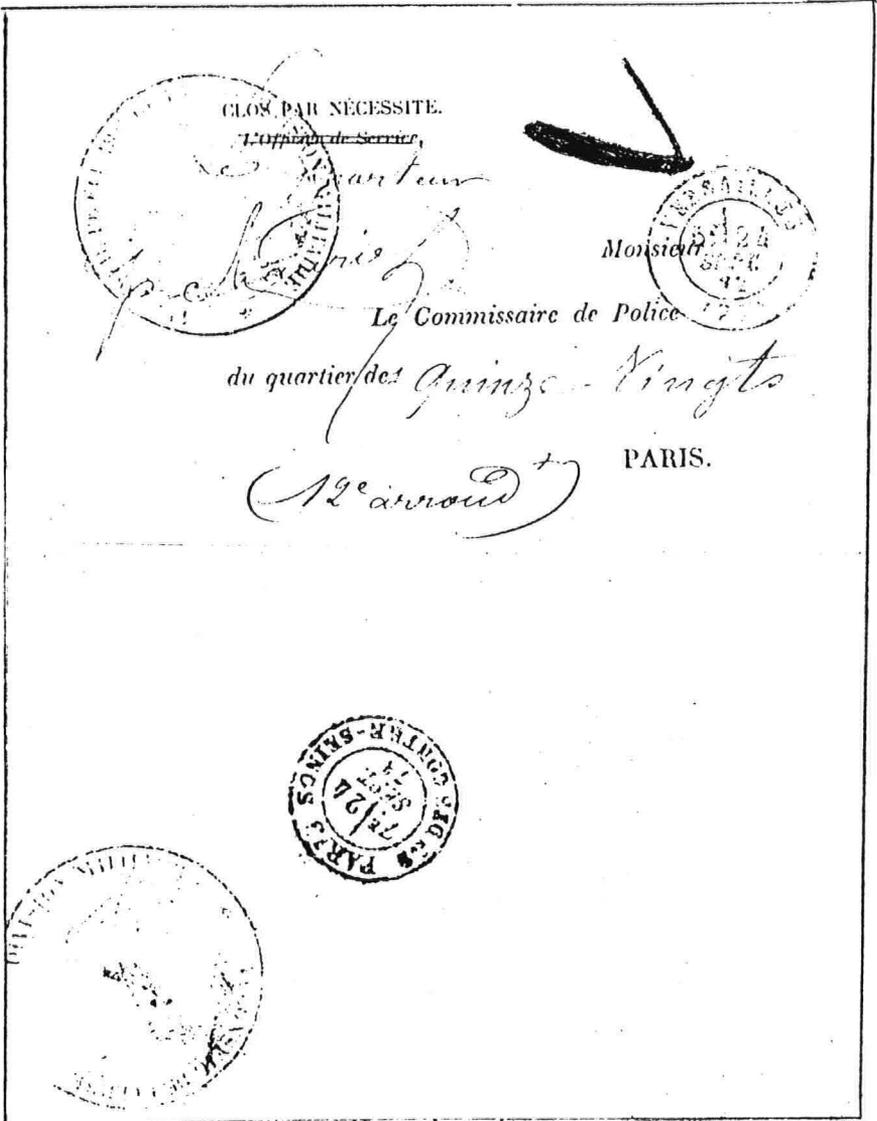


Figure VII-16 Same as Figure 15 but with single-letter "V" instead. Contre-seings added on back. September 24, 1873.

bourg letter was hand stamped VU: BON A EXPEDIER and it must be assumed it was forwarded to New Caledonia although there is no proof of this.

By far, the most interesting cover to a prisoner in New Caledonia is the one illustrated by Chanaryn (4) and exhibited at PhilexFrance '89 by John Levett. Now we know there are 4 others described by Parlange. Three of them are addressed to Prisoner No. 23,792. When Fortin arrived in New Caledonia his number changed to 4419. The details follow:

France date	Addressed to	Arrival	Comments
11/24/72	Toulon	Toulon 11/25/72	
2/16/73	Toulon	Noumea 7/23/73	Via next ship
6/21/73	Toulon	Noumea 10/10/73	Via unknown ship
12/22/73	New Caledonia	Noumea 22?/74	3rd stamp missing
12/23/77	New Caledonia	No arrival date	3rd stamp missing

Parlange listed the 1st four covers as being in private hands and presumably they still are. He did not list the Chanaryn (last) item.

It is difficult to understand the rates. The first cover has only a 25c stamp, enough to get it to Toulon. The description of the 2nd cover makes no mention about the franking. The third cover has a 25c stamp and was taxed, but it doesn't say how much.

The last two Fortin covers are the strange ones due to the missing stamps. The December letter has a 25c and a 5c with the third stamp scissored out. Parlange expresses the opinion the third stamp was removed because it was not needed for the rate. Indeed other covers are known to New Caledonia in this time period with only 25c franking. The last cover is the ex-Chanaryn item. He felt a high-value stamp was smuggled into the prison under the stamp which was removed from the cover. The purpose was to give the prisoner something which could be traded for spending money. The cover carries a 15c and 40c stamp and the correct rate is thought to be only 40c!

Of this handful of covers to prisoners in New Caledonia, the whereabouts of only two are known to us. The second is illustrated in Figure VII-17 and is addressed to a convict who had been pardoned but apparently chose to stay there. It was postmarked in Paris March, 1879 and arrived in Noumea June 12, being franked with the 35c UPU rate.

Figure VII-18 shows the attachment which had been glued to the letter which states the man had died May 4, 1879. Although there are no signs of it, one would assume the Navy had returned the letter to the sender under separate cover.

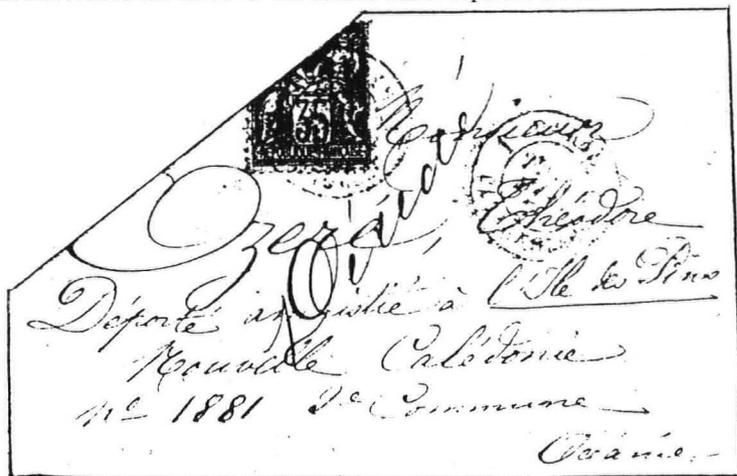


Figure VII-17 Addressed to pardoned convict in New Caledonia. Paris March 1879, Noumea (on back) June 12, 1879. Over-franked by 10c as the 35c rate was replaced by the 25c rate after February 16, 1879.

(4) Chanaryn, Victor: "An Introduction to the Posts of France in the Franco-German War of 1870-1871 and its Aftermath." Published by the author, 1976.

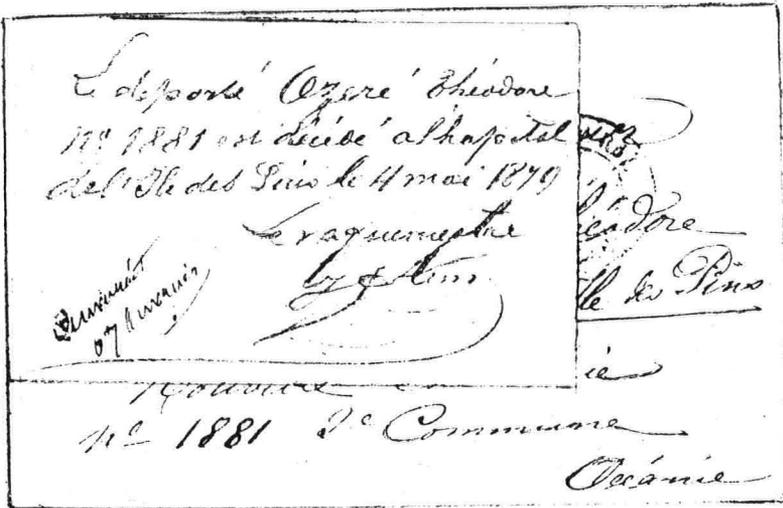


Figure VII-18 Sticker applied to Figure 17 announcing the man had died May 4, 1879, at the hospital on Ile de Pins off New Caledonia.

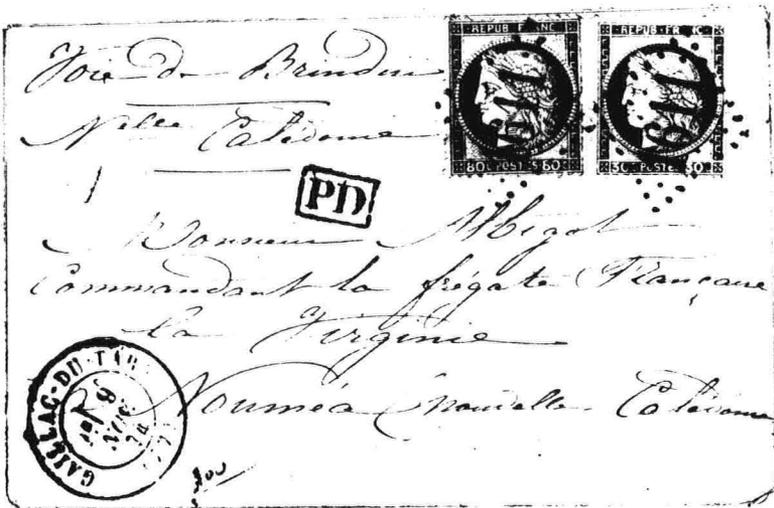


Figure VII-19 Letter to Commander of frigate Virginie which had just arrived in Noumea with 169 convicts. Virginie made the trip in 128 days under sail. This letter went by steam via the Suez Canal in 74 days. 1F10 rate.

The details given by Parlange make the cover in Figure VII-19 interesting to the collector of the Commune. Commander Albigot was in charge of the frigate *Virginie* which left Brest on August 29, 1874 with 169 convicts. He arrived in New Caledonia January 4, 1875 after 128 days under sail via Cape Horn. The letter shown addressed to him went by steam via Brindisi, the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean, arriving in Noumea January 22, 1875, only 18 days after the *Virginie* had made port. The letter was carried by commercial mail and rate was 1F10.

#### **Mail from New Caledonia**

Apart from the single letter posted (plus the one in the Archives) while en route to New Caledonia, no examples of mail from the deportees are known to us. We think the reason is fairly obvious; there is nothing about them to draw the attention of a collector. Unless the convict wanted to come up with the money to send his letter via commercial mail, he gave his letters to the prison authorities. They sent them in a bag addressed to the Minister of the Navy in Paris to be carried in the next homeward-bound Navy vessel. This mail was turned over to the Paris post office and they were delivered with postage due. Since there were no New Caledonia markings, only the contents would show they were something more special than unfranked mail from Paris. Here is a chance for sharp-eyed collectors to make a "find."

According to the 5 letters found in the Naval Archives by Parlange, some people thought the same system should work both ways. All of the covers were sent to the Minister of the Navy in Paris to be forwarded to specific convicts in New Caledonia. They must have been sent under separate cover for there are no postmarks but several do have manuscript notations (prisoner escaped in 1875) which indicates that if they were not delivered to the convict (QED), at least they were the subject of an investigation.

## CHAPTER VIII – CACHETS DE FORTUNE

Eleven French towns outside of Paris are known to have used unusual cancelling devices (or cachets), mostly during the period of the Commune Revolution. Nine of them were within 8 miles of the Paris walls. The two exceptions are Outarville, near Orleans, and Ste. Suzanne, close to Laval. The existence of these abnormal cachets probably has more to do with the just-finished Franco-Prussian War than the Commune Revolution, despite the dates of use. In fact, Yvert & Tellier (1) refers to them as being from towns evacuated by the enemy in 1871. In earlier days the Montmorency straight-line cancellation was spoken of as belonging to the Commune period. Hence, Commune collectors desire these rare covers although the catalogs now correctly refer to them as "Cachets de Fortune."

Very little has been written about them, and we do not have a reference other than the catalogs for our readers. They are not regarded as being of German manufacture as is the case with the Amiens, Epinal, and Rouen special cancellations or date stamps. The reason for their existence is not known to us.

The entire survey only documented 20 full covers and 13 of these were from Montmorency. Unaccountably four of the nine towns near Paris which used "cachets de fortune" are within three and one-half miles of each other. They are Montmorency, Sannois, Enghien, and Deuil. We will discuss each in turn.

### Montmorency:

Of the 13 known Montmorency covers, the information on five of them is sufficient to document they were brought out of Paris during the Commune to be posted in Montmorency. This makes them legitimate Commune covers. Of the other eight, we know that two of them were written in Montmorency. The one we happen to own (Figure VIII-1) is one of them. The date of April 20, 1871 is within the Commune time-frame.

The other letter written in Montmorency is most unusual:

1. It predates the Commune (March 12).
2. It is before the Germans had returned the control of post offices to the French in occupied areas which were not to be annexed (March 24). Therefore one might expect this would have been franked with an occupation stamp.
3. The cancellations are in blue.

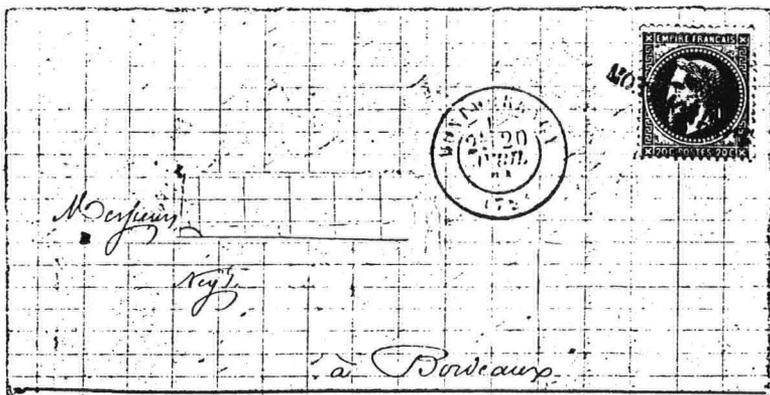


Figure VIII-1: Written in Montmorency and posted there April 20, 1871. For Bordeaux.

(1) "Catalogue Spécialisé des Timbres des France," Tome 1, Yvert & Tellier, Amiens, 1975.

An excellent color photograph of this cover is in the catalog for the Soluphil sale of November, 1983 (lot 4906). The 20c Napoleon lauré has two strikes crossed at an angle of about 30°. The date of 12 Mars '71 has been written in the circular date-stamp where the printed date should have been. The letter was addressed to Paris and there an unnumbered star was added. We assume the Paris clerk thought the stamp had not been properly cancelled!

Montmorency is very close to St. Denis and St. Denis was part of Paris during the Siege. It was protected by the Fort de l'Est and Fort d'Aubervilliers. Paris balloon mail exists postmarked from St. Denis. This puts Montmorency, and the other three towns mentioned earlier, in a sort of "no-man's land." However, there is no philatelic evidence (2) that occupation stamps were ever sold in these four towns.

According to de Beaufond (3), the Montmorency straight-line comes in two varieties. We have seen only the simple straight-line, but it is known with the numeral 70 underneath. The number for Seine-et-Oise is 72 so the meaning of the 70 is unknown to us.

In addition to the 13 covers, the survey found 12 examples of the cancellation on single stamps and four more on fragments. Among the fragments were some interesting frankings, and it is too bad the entire covers do not exist. One was 20+80, another 30+30 and one 80+80, all being the lauré issue. Including all the stamps and covers only four were franked with the Siege issue, the rest being lauré.

#### Deuil:

The survey found two covers and one single stamp with this cachet de fortune. The stamps were cancelled with a straight-line Seine-et-Oise and the straight-line Deuil (Figure VIII-2) is added at the side instead of a date stamp. Only one cover appeared to be really legible. It was written in Paris April 12 and was taken to Deuil to post and the manuscript date April 20 was added next to the Deuil handstamp.

Figure VIII-2: Straight-line Deuil used in lieu of date stamp. Stamps cancelled with straight-line Seine-et-Oise. Illustration from reference (1).

**DEUIL**

#### Sannois:

Our survey did not unearth any covers, but we did find five stamps cancelled with the date stamp as shown in Figure VIII-3. The illustration is from reference 1 and shows a date of June 2. The ones we found were from May 5 (date block inverted), 26 and 29, July 8 and one was 21-70 with the month omitted.

The denominations of the stamps were unusual. There was a 1c and a 5c with the other three being 10c.



Figure VIII-3: Appears to be normal Sannois date-stamp but was used to cancel the stamps. This was also common practice in Versailles during the Commune. Illustration from reference (1).

#### Enghien:

No examples of this cancel were found in our survey, but Yvert states it is a straight-line cachet. No illustrations were found in the literature.

(2) Schott, Ch., "Catalogue des oblitérations d'Alsace-Lorraine, 1848-1871." Strasbourg, 1972.

(3) de Beaufond, E.H., "Catalogue des Oblitérations des Timbres de France, 1849-1876," Yvert & Tellier, Amiens 1947.

**Artenay:**

This is the town near Orleans. Three letters are known, all with the stamp cancelled with the normal GC lozenge 179. In place of the circular date-stamp is a straight-line Artenay with no date. One of the covers had a manuscript May 13 next to the cachet.

**Villeneuve St. George:**

Two covers are known with the stamps cancelled as in Figure VIII-4. One was dated in Crosne (next door to Villeneuve) on May 13 and the date for the other is not known. In addition, a single stamp is known plus two fragments. One of the fragments is a band of four stamps used on a circular.



Figure VIII-4: Illustration from reference (1).

**Longjumeaux:**

The survey found only a single stamp with a circular date stamp of the type as with Sannois but without the date center. It was on a 20c Type 3 Bordeaux Issue.

**Chelles, Outarville, Ste. Suzanne:**

No examples were found of these cachets which are all described as being of the straight-line variety.

**Versailles:**

Of the towns known to have used cachets de fortune, Versailles is the only one known (2) to have had a German post office. Occupation stamps are known cancelled there.

Three different types of cachets are known, but only one of them was found in our survey. Two single stamps were offered for sale cancelled with the device shown in Figure VIII-5. One was on a 4c stamp, the other on a 10c Siege Issue.

Yvert (1) also describes a cancellation like VIII-5 but with an interior circle and one similar to VIII-4.

In addition Robineau (4) has classified as cachets de fortune two examples of the Versailles Poste-Quartier, Distribution type struck in blue.

Figure VIII-5: One of three cachets de fortune used in Versailles. Illustration from reference (1).




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(4) Robineau sale 65, April 1964, lot 165 and sale 110, June 1974, lot 1609.

## CHAPTER IX — SIGNIFICANT NEW MATERIAL

Over the months it has taken to write about this subject, we have become aware of some significant covers which were new to us. We have organized them herewith to correspond with our earlier chapter titles.

### The Beginning and the End:

Figure IX-1 shows a cover with a manuscript Paris date of April 3 and a Paris date stamp of April 6. The backstamp shows it did not arrive in Toulouse until May 29. A good example of mail which did not make it out of Paris until after the Revolution.

Figure IX-2 appears to be unique. We have folded it out to show the Paris date of April 8. It didn't get to the Paris to Marseille train until May 29 and was delivered in Dijon on May 30. The unusual part about this cover is the straight-line Chapelle St. Denis handstamp which starts in the word Cote and ends in Negociant. For better viewing we show a tracing of it in Figure IX-3. We know of only one mention of this handstamp (1) which was used in place of the date stamp during the Commune. The reference mentions the use of this on a Paris for Paris letter with the stamp cancelled with the usual GC 892 lozenge.

The fact the letter has no stamps and no tax markings remains unexplained.

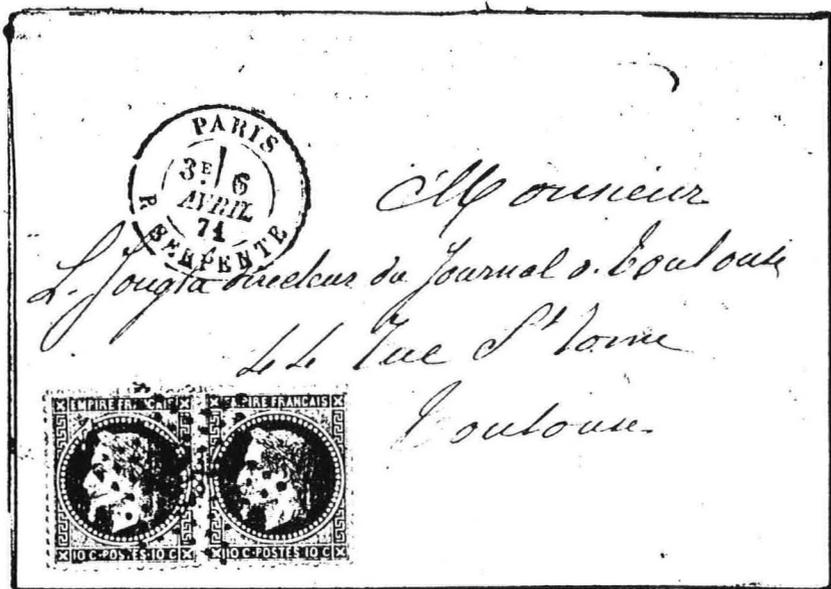
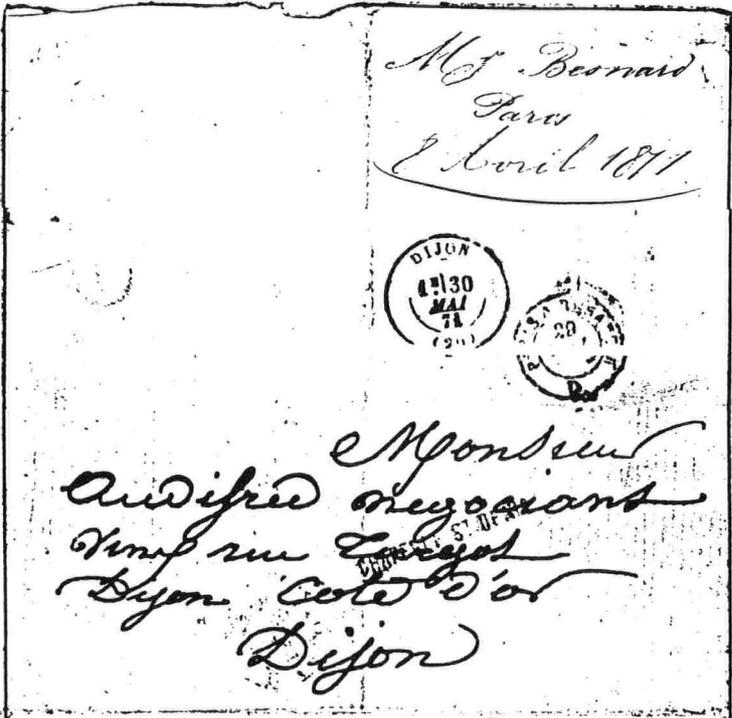


Figure IX-1: Cancelled in Paris but not delivered until after the Revolution.

(1) "Marianne Catalogue," Storch, Françon, Brun, 1983-1984.



Saisissez vite  
 Deux pièces de  
 votre arrivée sur mail  
 par attes. tot pour pouvoir  
 vous en servir en suite  
 J'ai payé comme  
 indication entendue  
 J'ai thomen  
 de vous valuer  
 Bernard

Figure IX-2:

Written in Paris April 8 but not delivered until May 30. Rare straight-line Chapelle St. Denis used in lieu of date stamp. Cachet begins with word "Cote" and ends in "Negociant."

CHAPELLE ST DENIS

Figure IX-3: Tracing of Chapelle St. Denis cachet.

Mail From Paris:

The recent Holder sale (2) adds new information about the postal involvement of the British Embassy. We illustrate it in Figure IX-4, courtesy of Albert Schneider. In the upper left corner are the words, "per favor of the British Embassy." The stamps were cancelled with a Versailles date stamp May 2 and arrived in Plymouth, England May 3. We quote here the unsigned letter in its entirety because it will be of interest to students of the Franco-Prussian War as well as those whose interest lies mostly in the Commune:

Hotel Byron, April 27th, 1871 10 pm

"I found on taking my letters to the Embassy that 10:30 am was the latest for posting so write such particulars as I have heard and seen. A heavy cannonade has temporarily silenced Fort Issy and I have today been at Point de Jour looking at the new batteries that did the work - which by the way are much bothered by the gun boats which shelter themselves, as in the embassies, under the 2 storied railway bridge there. The firing was very heavy at midnight and also at 5:30 this morning waking me up. This afternoon there was a furious cannonade at Maillot and Ternes in Neuilly the mitrailleuse was grating furiously and continuously. I estimate over 1500 explosions took place in an hour most of these between 3 and ½ past 3. I went to all the gates on the west where the fire was only moderate and was able to peep from a safe place. I could only see smoke and a flash now and again, of course I could only imagine some stratagem was being attempted and discovered. I cannot imagine where the correspondents are. I have enquired and cannot hear of any here nor do I meet any body near the firing points looking like a countryman. I also note many inaccuracies in the papers which reach here from London. On a visit to the ambulance I find 13 dead this day the wounds not so bad as yesterday - one of them is a shell fragment gatherer a boy of 12 who had paid for his temerity at the Porte Maillot. A bomb came up to the Arch at 3 this afternoon but hurt nobody. Just now the cannonade at Issy, I think by the sound, is very heavy. Valerien is also firing at Point de Jour. Every body looking for a speedy end but I fancy it will be some time yet. They say here every soldier is asked before he is rearmed on arrival from Germany if he will do his duty, if he hesitates he is not obliged to serve. It seems to me in my frequent looks at the principal position that 5000 good troops could easily take it, but Versailles seems to prefer wasting life in a desultory way instead of being short, sharp and



Figure IX-4: From Paris to England by favor of the British Embassy. Collection Schneider.

(2) "Etude Jutheau" Public Sale, June 27, 28, 1990. Lot 613.

decisive. Paris is looking very pretty so far as vegetation goes. All the horse chestnuts are out in bloom and really very few trees are gone. I am told all the partially decayed and badly shaped trees have been removed and then only as a judicious thinning. It is not so in the Bois which has suffered very much.

"April 30th. The cannonade has been very severe against Issy and Vanves these 2 days and nights and about twice a day for 2 days past there have been about 2 skirmishes at Neuilly or Levallois daily, the firing at such times is very heavy but still they only end in a loss of life which seems to leave both sides where they were as no position has been gained by either. From the heights of Montmartre you can take it in very well and see the armour plated engine steam out and fire, on the railway line. There is always a great crowd here as it commands nearly the whole area of the present struggle. The Versaillais generally aim very bad their bombs from Neuilly exploding 300 feet over the Porte Maillot, and on Saturday they bombarded the Arch again, and the Champs Elyseés being crowded with people one passed me like a rocket and burst half way down the avenue causing loss of life and severe wounds to several. 50 seconds after another struck a house nearby and the sound of falling glass and stonework was not pleasant 10 yrs. off. Today I have been to Versailles by way of St. Denis passing the redoubts made by the French at points on the road they have made the bomb proofs very large covering the open side with railway bars which form safe splinter proofs. You pass through Colombes and Nanterre where you come near the zone of the Prussian destruction. The places here and at Malmaison swarm with troops and artillery. This beautiful neighborhood has suffered much but the trees in leaf hide much of it and the owners have begun to repair. You now pass Prussian redoubts and loopholed walls. The woods near Celle St. Cloud are much cut down but the Prussian officers I suppose have judiciously left large trees all over the place destroyed so as not to completely destroy the effect. You catch a fine view here of St. Germain and the Seine the whole is really charming at this season. Versailles is a sight to see, the town and neighborhood swarm with camps, troops and artillery. I counted 30-40 pounder siege guns, and 50 field and mountain guns with no end of ammunition wagons drawn up before the chateau. Painted notices direct you to the different bureaus of the ministers--Finance, Intérieur, etc. Also members' entrance to "National Assemblée." The place where the King of Prussia lived is the handsome new prefecture in the Route de Paris and Bismark's in the rue Plessis. Deputies are walking about with their families and the whole place is very gay. I paid a flying visit to Garches and St. Cloud, but they only present the same dreary monotony of destruction I have seen so often during this war. The day was quiet so far as the guns went. I rode back to Courbevoie in an artillery wagon which was carrying a large number of percussion fuses and springs for them, and at 7:45 a tremendous cannonade broke out as I passed through Argenteuil to St. Denis. Here there are no less than 3 bridges destroyed one of which is temporarily restored but the long iron girder railway bridge lays in a long irregular string in the river except where one of the 5 spans has been removed for navigation. This bridge is on iron columns filled with concrete and it is curious to note the way it was destroyed. St. Denis has suffered much, churches, houses and pavements smashed by bombs. The cannonade this evening was the heaviest I have heard and they were at it until far into the night when I am writing this. They are threatening to stop the railway so I am about to leave, as the thing may drag on for weeks."

While this letter is very long we think it important as it gives an idea about the trip from Paris to Versailles and back again.

Figure IX-5 illustrates the only known outgoing letter from the Huillard and Marquet concern in Paris. Since their incoming mail was handled by M. Grelly of Montreuil sur Bois (near Vincennes), it is only reasonable to assume M. Grelly took this letter out on his return trip home and posted it at Vincennes. This will be mentioned again later as four Grelly (Huillard) letters are to be covered in this chapter.

A novel method of getting mail out of Paris was mentioned in a recent Soluphil sale (3). Writing to Argenteuil the author said his letter was going by water. It was posted in Rouen May 1 and arrived on the third. It would seem apparent it went down the Seine to the port of Rouen by boat. As mentioned before he gives the name of M. Weiss in Auberwilliers for return mail.

We can now add the following to our list of posting places for Paris mail: Auxerre to Paris train (Figure IX-6; Villemonble, now spelled Villemomble (Figure IX-7); Le Mensil-St. Denis, now known as Mensil-en-Thelle, Andressy and Brunoy.

In addition we know of two examples of mail from government organizations in Paris which bear the red cursive handstamps which entitle them to free-franking. One is from

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(3) Soluphil sale June, 1989, lot 882.

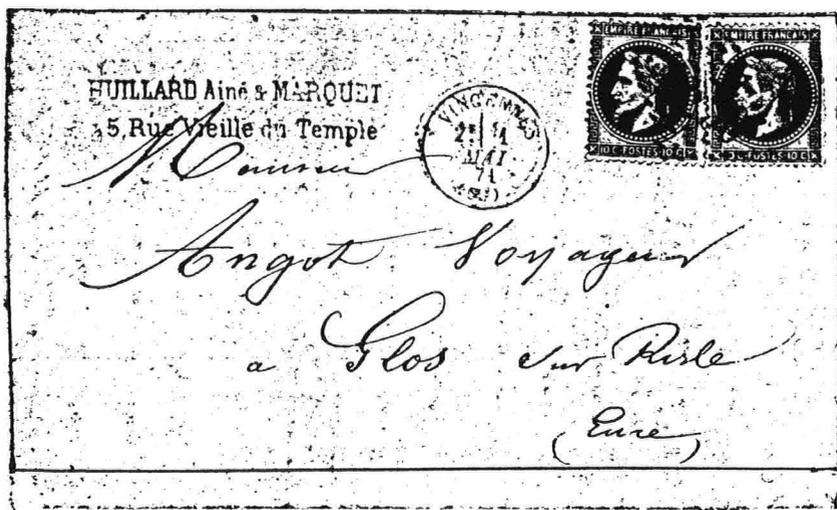


Figure IX-5: 9 covers are known sent to Huillard & Marquet care of Grelly in Montreuil s/Bois (near Vincennes). This is the only cover we have seen going from Paris to be posted in Vincennes, obviously by Grelly.

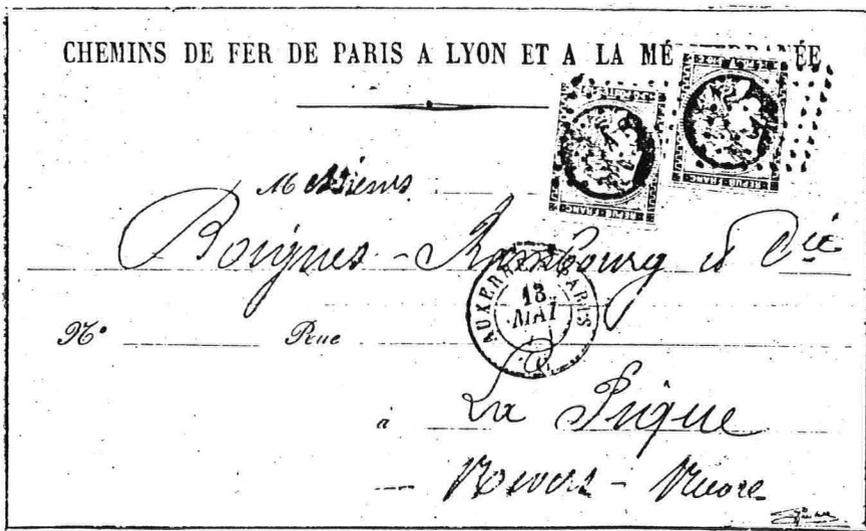


Figure IX-6: From Paris and posted on the Auxerre to Paris train.



Figure IX-7: Tracings of the cancellations on the Paris cover posted in Villemonble, now spelled Villemomble.

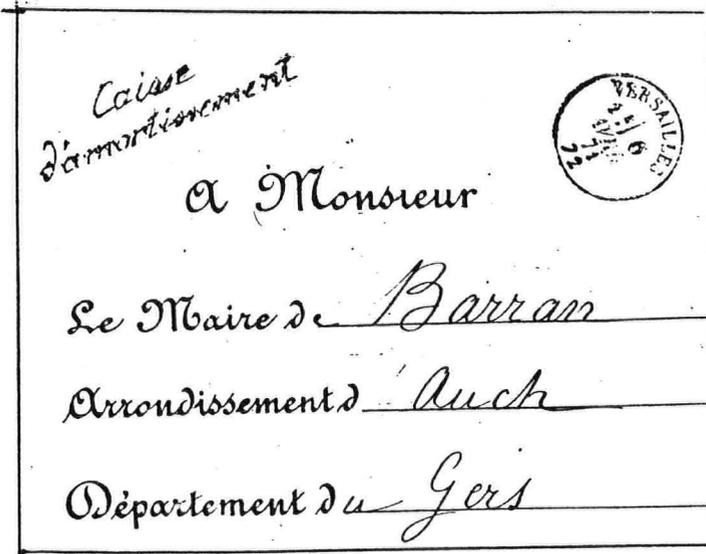


Figure IX-8: Red cursive "Caisse d'amortissement" allowed for free-franking. Brought from Paris to mail at Versailles.

the Caisse d'amortissement (Figure IX-8). It was posted in Versailles April 6. The other was from the Ministère des Finances. The date of the Versailles handstamp is illegible but it has an arrival backstamp of Grenoble, May 19.

**Mail Into Paris:**

In Chapter IV we listed two covers handled by the Bureau de Correspondance agency. One more has surfaced (Figure IX-9). Whereas the others used a printed Bureau de Cor-



Figure IX-9: From London to Bureau de Correspondance, Bureau Restante in St. Denis to be delivered to Mr. Wiese, 86 rue de Richelieu in Paris. 10c French stamp cancelled by this agency with a blue rectangle.

respondance envelope, this one is handwritten. The agency cancellation on the stamp is an 11x14mm rectangle in blue. It appears to have a design inside the rectangle, but this is not legible.

We also listed one letter handled by the Choudens agency. The Levett exhibit (Philex-France '89) showed two more. Both were addressed to Erard in Paris. Both had a 10c Siege Issue cancelled in Paris, one April 29, the other May 2. The April letter had an oval Choudens cachet on the back, the other a Choudens sticker.

We now know of two more letters addressed to Bac making the total of 20 covers. One was posted in Chalons-s-Saone April 21. It was addressed to Paris but was forwarded in Versailles to St. Mandé. The other was from Chatillon s/Seine May 23 and was addressed directly to St. Mandé. The Paris address of G. Bac was 12 rue Portefoin. We have just noticed the letter from La Roquette prison which we showed in Figure VII-1 is addressed to M. Barque, porte au foin 12. Coincidence??

From the Huillard/Marquet correspondence we have found four more covers. One is a simple Paris-for-Paris letter and another we have already illustrated in Figure IX-5. The other two were sent to Grelly in Montreuil s/Bois, near Vincennes. Figure IX-10 shows the one from Strassburg which was cancelled April 20, although the date to the left of the stamp looks more like April 10. There is no Vincennes arrival marking but the manuscript R16 was the usual manner of Huillard in noting the arrival date. The other letter was from Caen, the letter being dated May 9. It was franked by two 20c stamps due to confusion about the postal rate. This brings the total known from this correspondence to 11.

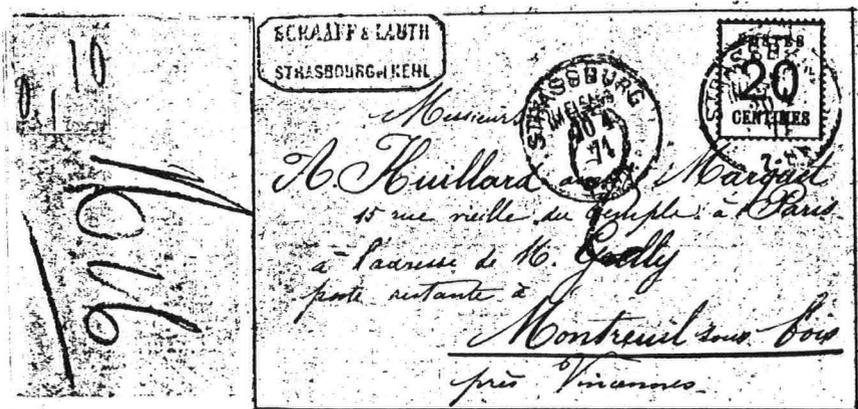


Figure IX-10: Doubly-franked letter from Strassburg to Huillard & Marquet via Grelly. 2 décimes French tax.

Figure IX-11 is a Correspondence Card from a French soldier who was a prisoner of the Germans. The German postmark is May 31 which is a bit late for the Commune, but it was sent to Monsieur Desloper in St. Denis to forward to Mme. Bauduer. Since no Paris address is given, we assume the recipient was a family friend.

Figure IX-12 shows a letter addressed on a printed form to a member of the National Assembly with their special date stamp of May 5. We classify it as Mail-Into-Paris because Rue du Bac is a Paris address.

The literature has not described the treatment of mail brought into Paris which would normally have enjoyed local delivery for less than 10c. This would include newspapers, books, etc. Cohn has described (*F&C Philatelist* Vol. 45, No. 3, Page 16) the operation of the Cercle de las Librairies but not examples of their mail seems to have survived.

A recent lot (1629) in the Baudot sale No. 153, May 1991 gives evidence that incoming mail that would normally require a 4c stamp for local delivery was franked with a 4c lauré instead of the usual 10c stamp. The stamp is cancelled by the previously unlisted agency Librairie Classique, E. Belin. This type of cancellation is known only during the Commune and was used on mail hand delivered by the agency rather than going through the regular Commune postal system.



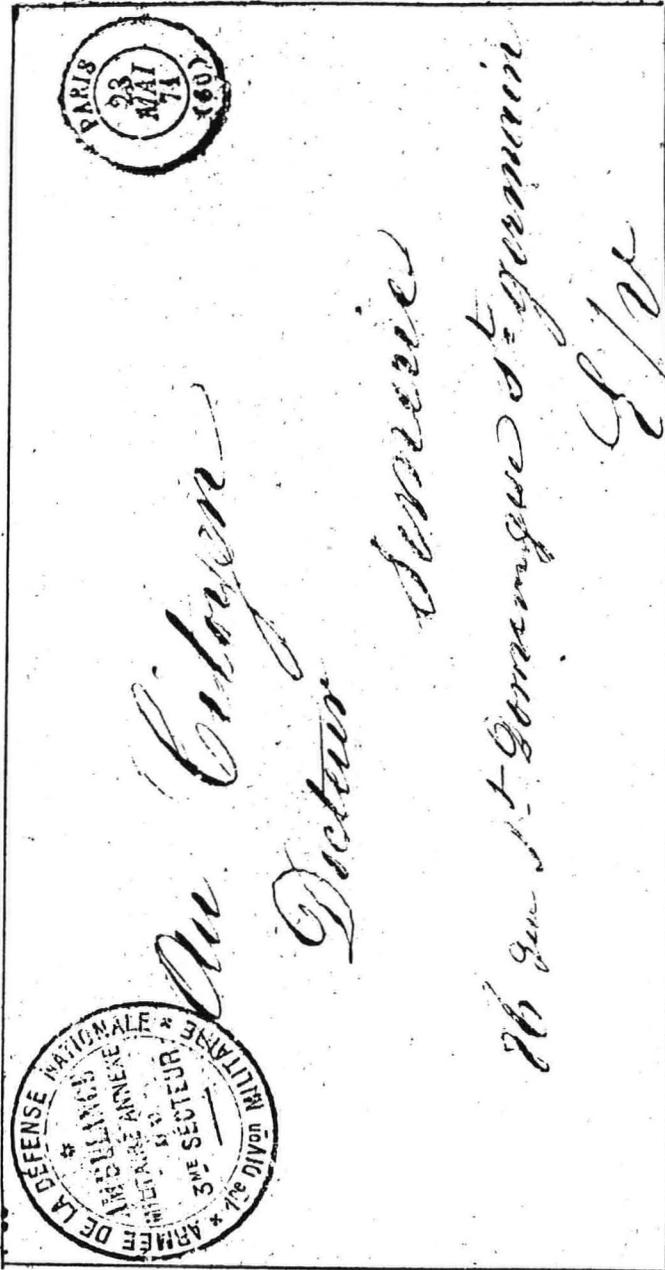


Figure IX-13: Bloody Week cover cancelled at the main post office the day before it was recaptured.

A word description of the cancellation is of more use than a photograph of the stamp. Lot 1630 of the same sale shows an oval cachet used as a return address on the envelope. The words *Librairie Classique* follow the shape of an oval at the top. The rest is in a straight-line fashion; d'EUGENE BELIN/52 rue de Vaugirard, 52/PARIS. The blue cancel on the stamp is very similar but the four lines all follow the shape of the oval. The letters that can be seen on the stamp are: *rai/EUGENE B/RUE DE VAU/PAR*.

Since non-government cancellations are known only during this commune period, and libraries can be expected to bring in material for which the local delivery rate would be less than 10c, we regard this stamp to be evidence that the rule of April 26 was taken to mean that a stamp should be applied which would be equivalent to the normal local rate rather than exclusively a 10c stamp.

This appears to be the only example known.

### Paris For Paris:

We have found three more covers with an anchor cancellation bringing the total known from this survey to 16. One is from the Holder sale, dated 1 Paris 1 May 18 to a soldier at Passy. Another was in the Roumet sale of Oct., 1990 and was dated Paris 60 for M. Berger. The third carries the date stamp of 4 Paris 4 May 16 and is addressed to Neurmerik.

Finally we have a rare "Bloody Week" cover (Figure IX-13). It carries the cachet of the Ambulance, Militaire Annex with no other markings to indicate free-franking. It was postmarked at the main post office May 23, the last day of its operation under the Commune personnel. It should be compared with Figure II-7 which was postmarked there May 24.

### Prisoner's Mail:

In Chapter VII we illustrated the *Bon-à-Delivrer/Verifié* cachet (Figure VII-11) which we knew about from Parlange, but had never heard of one being sold. Now we own two, one of which is pictured in Figure IX-14. Neither cover has a good strike of this handstamp.

Finally, at PhilexFrance '89 we were able to see the Emile Fortin cover described by Chanaryn and now owned by John Levett (see Chapter VII). From the illustration by Chanaryn, we were not able to determine the denomination of the two stamps on the envelope. They are a 15c Peace and Commerce and a 40c Siege Issue.

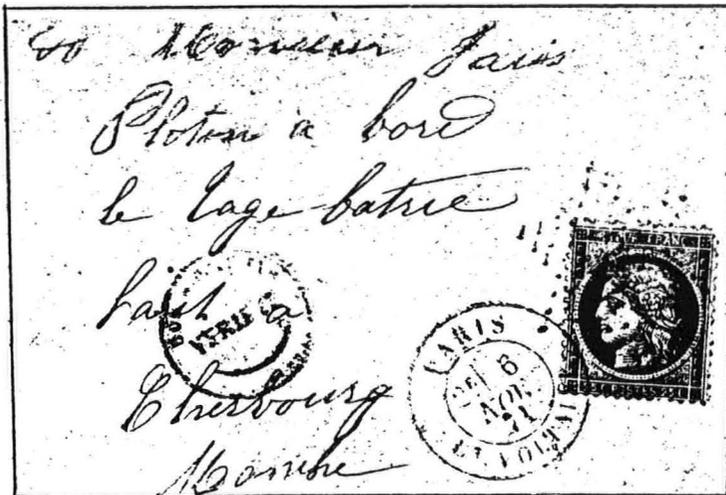


Figure IX-14: From Paris to a prisoner on board a ship at Cherbourg. Even though the *Bon à Deliverer/Verifié* strike is a poor one, it is one of the only two we have seen.

## CHAPTER X — POTPOURRI

This, the final chapter of our article on the Postal History of the Commune Revolution, is intended to cover several subjects which did not fit into the other chapters. They are as follows:

1. The 20-Centime Siege Issue (The Commune Print).
2. Hanky-Panky.
3. How Complete Is Our Survey?
4. Erratum.
5. Acknowledgments.

### The 20-Centime Siege Issue:

For many years collectors spoke of the "Commune Print" of the 20-Centime Siege Issue. Supposedly these were stamps which the Communards had produced using printing plates which they had found (left in the mint?). Maury (1) has reproduced a list of the quantity of stamps which the Communards had printed. But there has been a question as to whether or not they printed the Siege Issue. We have not bothered to include that listing since all but the value under question are indistinguishable from those printed by the regular government.

The so called "Commune Print" is printed on paper which has been described as grayish or slightly yellow. Suffice it to say, the color just doesn't look "right." In addition, the quality of the printing is poor, especially in the region of the brickwork found in the corners just outside the medallion circle. This has been ascribed to the inept use of the decoupage placed behind the sheet to be printed so as to vary the printing pressure on various parts of the design. The covers shown in Figures V-1 and VI-13 have stamps which collectors have long called the "Commune Print."

Fromageat (2) has had the last word on this subject. He points out that covers franked with the "Commune Print" are known on balloon mail, well before the Commune Revolution. Therefore there must be different reasons than inexperienced communard printers to explain the difference in appearance.

We are tempted to speculate there must have been shortages of paper, as well as food, during the Siege and perhaps the "Commune Print" is simply the result of the use of substandard paper.

### Hanky-Panky:

Hanky-panky is an American slang expression defined as "devious or mischievous activity." In other words, it means doing something you really shouldn't be doing. We like the use of the expression in connection with the Postal History of the Commune because it is broad enough to cover both outright forgeries and material produced as souvenirs.

It has been our observation that very little of the Commune material we have seen bears the signature of an expert. The wonderful book on forgeries by Brun (3) contains no examples of Commune forgeries. Yet, we know from his book that very elaborate forgeries of other material have been produced.

This leaves the ordinary collector in the position of applying the age old question of postal history, "Does it make sense?" For instance, we have seen described a letter for Paris postmarked in a French town on March 24, 1871; yet, it also has a 10c added stamp postmarked in Paris in May. We did not include it in our survey because it "did not make sense" to us. While the item may be perfectly legitimate, there was no reason for the letter not to have reached Paris before the beginning of the postal blockade.

As another example, the validity has been questioned concerning the Bruner cover shown as Figure IV-24 (*F&C Philatelist* #218). Certainly, it would be simple to forge such a cover by writing the word Bruner on the envelope. Some feel this letter posted on March 28 should have arrived in Paris by the 30th, the blockade having begun that evening. However, it was posted in Blidah, Algeria, and had to cross the Mediterranean to reach the train for Paris. It is very reasonable to assume this letter was among the first to be detoured to the Palace at Versailles, and thus impounded.

(1) Maury, Arthur: "Histoire des Timbres-Poste Française," Paris 1907.

(2) Fromageat, Dr. Jacques: Documents Philatélique No. 90, 1981.

(3) Brun, Jean-François: "Faux et Truqués," Editions Loisirs et Culture, 1980.

The only question that remains is why did it take so long (May 1) to get into Paris? It is also reasonable to assume that the answer lies in the fact, that in the early days of the blockade, things were very confused at the emergency post office at Versailles.

We think this cover "makes sense" and so did the two experts who signed it.

It is because of the old warning, "Caveat Emptor" that we do not like covers with stickers on them. We know that some of these stickers exist not on cover. It would be so easy to glue one of them on the back of an ordinary cover and thus, transform it into a rarity! The wary collector should look for other evidence (the text of the letter) that the sticker really belonged there.

We have shown the Lorin-Maury vignettes in earlier chapters (Figures IV-6 and V-3 in *F&C Philatelist #217* and *F&C Philatelist #220*) and have discussed the controversy about their use on covers. Now, several months after our earlier pontifications on the subject, we find no reasons to conclude these covers do not "make sense." Certainly, the doubts raised have diminished their value in the philatelic market, but it is very difficult to prove a negative.

Nowhere in the literature has anyone described the colors of the vignettes. For the ones used on outgoing mail the 5c is green; the 10c is violet and the 50c is red. The same colors were used on the vignettes used on incoming mail: green for imprimé; violet for lettre and red for chargement.

Figure X-1 shows a group of seven vignettes similar to those of Lorin and Maury. They are overprinted with apparently meaningless numbers. The design of the top three is similar to the L&M labels used on mail from Paris. However, they do not have the dotted line found on the original designs between the numeral and the word centimes. This was intended as a guideline to show where to cut off the top part to affix on a letter. In addition a new "imprimé" value has been added this time as 10c and perforated. It is in green as was the original 5c version.

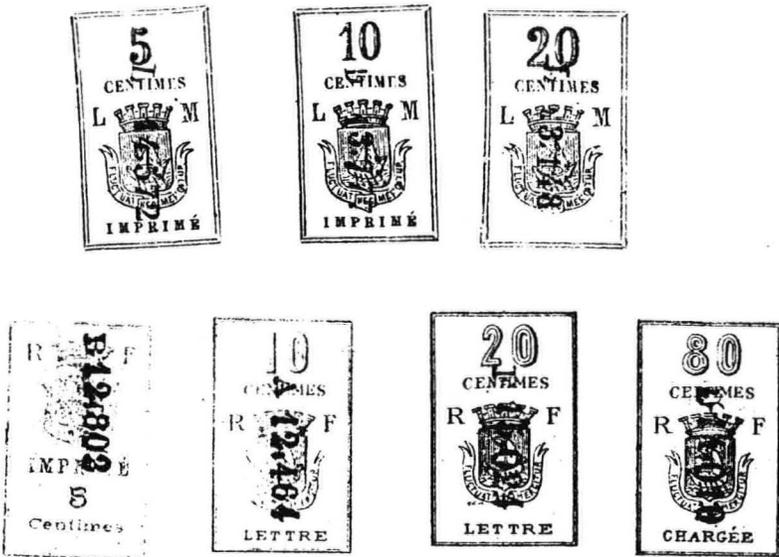


Figure X-1. Souvenirs similar to the vignettes used by the Lorin and Maury Agency for use on mail from Paris to be posted outside the city.

The bottom four are even stranger. All have the initials L and M replaced by R and F. Although all are similar, new values and colors appear as well as some design changes. The 5c imprimé is in dull gray with the cutoff label at the bottom. The 10c lettre is gray and the 20c lettre is red. Finally, there is an 80c chargée in violet.

Figure X-2 shows four fantasies for the Agence Moreau. Only the 25c value has been published in the literature and they all have a circular cancel in the upper right corner. The 5c is red, 10c is violet, 15c is green, and 25c is pale red.

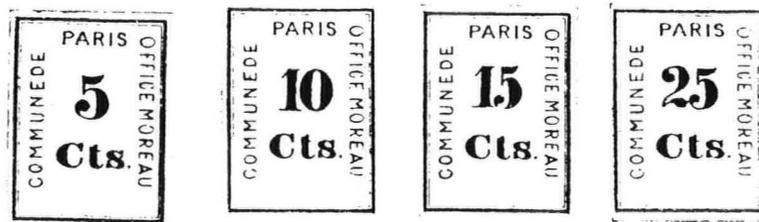


Figure X-2. Souvenirs of the Moreau Agency. None are known used on cover.

Figure X-3 is taken from Chamboissier and is said to be part of the production of M. de Té....., a printer in Versailles who printed 250 varieties of souvenirs such as this.

One more souvenir should be mentioned as it sometimes comes up for auction. While it is illustrated in Maury (1) we have been unable to get a good photocopy as the design is so dark. It can be recognized in the auction descriptions because it is called an essay with the value tablet listed as "00 Centimes." In a curve at the top are the words "Commune de Paris."

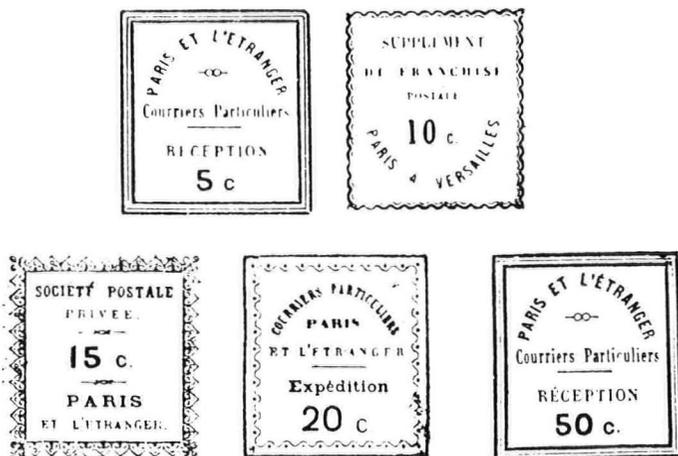


Figure X-3. Some of the handiwork of Mon. de Té..... a printer in Versailles. (From Chamboissier).

### How Complete Is Our Survey?

Our survey identified 364 Commune covers which is close to the 380 we estimated in Chapter I. The information was derived from friends, the philatelic literature and from over 350 mostly European auction catalogs, as well as what we have seen at exhibitions. Accordingly, we have mounted our Commune Exhibit using phrases like, "one of two known," etc. Stanley Luft has pointed out the danger of making such comments in his "Thoughts on Philatelic Censuses." (4) He cited a case history on a survey of the February, 1871 German Censor Marking used at Versailles on mail to foreign countries. Starting off with only a very few known covers, his publication identified 37 examples. It has been two years since his publication and he has now received enough information to expand the list to 41 items.

As another example Lewis Bussey made a census of RF overprints starting out with the 250 items noted in Goodkind's Handbook of 1958. Bussey found another 50 and suspects there are 50 more that he does not know about.

Even though we believe our survey used greater depth in terms of auction catalogs, the other surveys caused us to wonder how "complete" was our own census? Coincidentally, two opportunities have arisen to test this question.

At PhilexFrance 89 John Levett showed 19 Commune covers in one of his exhibits. We have examined them with a view to establishing how many of them we already knew about before the exhibition. We have tabulated them by type as follows:

	Total In Exhibit	Number We Knew About
Mail Into Paris	7 covers	3
Mail From Paris	5	0
Paris For Paris	2	2
Prisoner's Mail	5	2
Total	19	7 (37%)

This means that, despite our survey, John Levett had 12 covers we did not know about.

A second opportunity for a test came with the Soluphil Sale, June 27, 28, 1990, in which the Stephen Holder collection of the Franco-Prussian War was sold. It contained 35 items which we would classify as Commune covers.

	Total In Sale	Number We Knew About
Mail Into Paris	10 covers	2
Mail From Paris	18	3
Paris For Paris	6	1
Prisoner's Mail	1	1
Total	35	7 (20%)

On the basis of these tests one might conclude that there exists three to five times our survey of 364 Commune covers. We think this is not the case. John Levett and Stephen Holder are very serious collectors judging by the numbers of International large golds they have won. They are hardly what one might call "average collectors." What surprises us is that we have been "fishing the same philatelic brooks and lakes" for many years. Despite the fact that "fishing has not been good," we note that many of our acquisitions have been made by private sale rather than through auctions.

We have been collecting the Commune for over 35 years. We got started because the New England Stamp Company, then located in downtown Boston, had acquired a "lot" of Commune covers. Gradually we acquired them at very reasonable prices for not many in the U.S. were interested in the subject. There were enough of them to win a gold at a local show, The Mahoning Valley Stamp Club (Youngstown, Ohio) in 1961.

To the best of our recollection, we estimate that of our 97 covers, only 22% were obtained from auction sales. Our estimate follows with the caveat that it is a little difficult to remember where you bought something 25 years ago.

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(4) Luft, Stanley J.: American Philatelic Congress 1988 Yearbook, pp. 35-39.

To illustrate this point we offer the following tabulation from memory:

	Our Collection		
	No. Covers	From Auctions	Private Sales
Mail Into Paris	25	7	18
Mail From Paris	33	9	24
Paris For Paris	23	2	21
Prisoner's Mail	16	3	13
Total	97	21 (22%)	76 (78%)

While our survey identified 364 Commune covers (not including the 40 Levett/Holder covers we did not know about), we estimate there may be as many as 500 covers in existence, a very small number in comparison with balloon mail. While some Commune covers are more common than others, there is no such thing as a common Commune cover, and many are very rare.

#### Erratum:

We were aware of only one serious error in this treatise and this has been corrected in our chapter on Mail From Paris (V).

We had also commented that the use of the Bordeaux Issue was as common as the Siege Issue, which isn't true and was corrected.

What we should have done was to point out the vast preponderance of covers franked by the Napoleon Issues:

Napoleon	95 (76%)
Siege	20
Bordeaux	9
Total	124

Since our objective now is to deduce whether or not the Siege Issue was commonly available in Paris we should also look at the figures for the 10c rate on Paris For Paris mail:

Napoleon	43 covers
Siege	3
Bordeaux	3
Total	49

Since we know the Bordeaux Issue was not commonly available within Paris, we must conclude from this analysis that the Siege Issue was not either. Maury (1) has stated the Communards printed a little over five million 20-centime stamps. It would seem apparent to us that they did not print any of the Siege Issue. They must have printed the Napoleon Issue despite their dislike of the gentleman.

Fromageat (2) also noted he had made a survey of Commune covers in the hands of collectors and found the stamps used were about 50% Cérés and 50% Napoleon. Obviously this differs widely from our results. However, we are sure he knew a lot more about covers in the hands of collectors than we do.

It has been said the post offices outside of Paris were instructed not to accept Paris mail, and one might argue the use of the Siege Issue might be construed to be a sign of Paris mail. However, this argument is weakened by our observation that two-thirds of the covers in our own collection of outgoing mail has a Paris business logo on the outside.

**Acknowledgments:**

Many thanks are due to several France and Colonies members. To our good-humored editor Bob Stone who kept our article remarkably free of errors and whose prodigious memory gave us the obscure (to philatelists) Parlange reference without which our chapter on Prisoner's Mail would have been much less informative. To John Lievsay who is always the first to spot something that doesn't make sense and for photocopies of several important items. To Ernst Cohn for his translation of a letter written in German script and for being the first to recognize our diplomatic pouch cover for being what it is. To Yvonne Newbury for the photocopy of her diplomatic pouch cover which is a look-alike to ours but is from the Siege Period. To Marc Martin who ensured we had captured the true sense of several journal articles written in French. To Stan Luft and Jeff Bohn for the details on their Commune holdings. To Alain Millet for sharing with us his expertise about New Caledonia as we searched for information about mail to and from this colony. Finally, to Albert Schneider for sharing with us his extensive knowledge about the Commune and for his positive genius in finding what he calls "juicy" items for sale.

— FINIS —



