

France & Colonies Philatelist



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The Stamps of St. Nazaire.

Translated from Philatelic Supplement of *Je Cherche*, Paris
by W. D. W. and reprinted from *Stamp Collectors Fortnightly*.

ALL collectors are aware that special stamps were issued in April, 1945, at St. Nazaire, but most are ignorant regarding the conditions in which the issue was made and in details regarding the characteristics of the stamps.

It was on April 9th, 1945, that the Chamber of Commerce of St. Nazaire, which was, during the siege, situated at La Baule, proceeded under the initiative of its President, M. Nassiet, to produce two postal vignettes, intended to replace missing values in the regular P.T.T. service.

The German troops had occupied the whole of the Guerandaise peninsula, thus isolating St. Nazaire from Liberated France, and without means of communication with the Central Administration. Because of this the postal authorities found it impossible to obtain stamps to prepay postage in the peninsula. The issue of these provisional stamps was therefore caused through sheer postal necessity.

In agreement with M. Roques, the P.T.T. Postmaster at La Boule, the Chamber of Commerce of St. Nazaire ordered from the firm of Le Mouette 20,000 stamps of Frs. 2 and 30,000 of 50 centimes. The design of these vignettes shows a caravel at sea, with sail set, flag at the masthead and oarsmen, at the left. Across the top and in the right corner is the inscription "Chambre de Commerce de St. Nazaire", and at the foot is "Front Atlantique". At the right of the vessel the minute letters "E.G." are the initials of the name of the designer-engraver.

All the stamps were printed on pale green paper; the 50 centimes in dark green, and the Frs. 2 in chestnut. They were printed in small sheets of ten, arranged in two vertical rows of five.

The printing of the Frs. 2 was commenced first. After most of the sheets had been printed it was seen that the space between the stamps was insufficient, and in consequence it would not be possible to perforate them properly. Slight modifications were made in the composition of the plate, and the width of the spaces was increased from 2 mms. to 4 mms.

Stamps of the first printing may be identified by their perforation, which is formed of 22 or 23 holes

on the vertical sides, whilst in the later vignettes there are 24 or 25 holes. It is estimated that there were 18,000 stamps in the first printing and 2,000 in the second. Between April 9th, 1945, and May 9th, 1945, 16,000 stamps of this value were sold.

The vignettes of the 50 centimes value were also placed on sale on April 9th, 1945, but of the 30,000 copies printed, only 19,000 were sold at the post office windows.

Printing was completed on April 13th, when the stamp matrix was returned to the engraver, M. Guillaume. He, with the aid of a burin, made two cross-wise grooves on the matrix, which so damaged it that it is impossible for the plate to be used for any ulterior purpose.

These stamps, together with the regular supplies of other stamps which had been in stock at the post offices of the St. Nazaire "Pocket" are known overprinted "Ilot de St. Nazaire — Vive la LIBERATION". By a decree of May 8th, 1945, the Under-Prefect gave his authority to apply this overprint on all postage stamps. This was done after the envelopes had been franked and deposited at the post office, with the aid of a handstamp of small printing characters. Mint stamps showing this overprint are forgeries.

The overprint was brought into use at the principal post offices on May 9th, and used also on May 10th and 11th. However, offices some distance from La Baule did not receive the handstamps in time, and in those cases the three days were May 12th, 13th and 14th.

There is another vignette, this time issued by private enterprise, but which was accepted at the following four post offices: — Baiz-sur-Mer, Guérande, La Turballe and Pirlac-sur-Mer. It is perforated and consists of a type-set design with the legend: "Ilot de Saint-Nazaire: Poche de l'Atlantique: Taxe percue 4.50". It is printed on bistre coloured paper and measures 45 x 29 mms.

It is difficult to determine the value of these stamps, but one supposes that they will soon be very scarce. They constitute one of the most interesting issues of the war which have seen the light of day on French territory.

BOOK REVIEW

Les Emissions Generales des Colonies--Catalogue Documentaire. By Dr. E. Lochard. Lyon, 1944, 119pp, Robert Jung, 45 rue de la Republique, price 70 francs.

This little book, a wartime product on very poor paper, is both a condensed compilation of available information and a priced listing. The documentary part contains more than is in any other publication; every collector of these stamps, whether beginner or advanced, will find it useful. Apparently it is based mainly on Dr. Bouvet's articles in "L'Echo de la Timbrologie". The author has also gleaned what he could from other catalogs, from collectors, and from writers. The literature on these stamps is not, however, very extensive.

This reviewer noted very little "new" information except about the printings.

The listing and pricing is done in great detail. Prices are given for each stamp: unused, used, on cover, pair, in superb condition, in block of 4, in shades, in reprint, with private perf., with various types and colors of cancellation for each colony and with special cancellations such as army or paquebot. This pricing is sometimes apparently based on little information or even on mere imagination, for some glaring inconsistencies and even impossibilities are found here and there. These will not bother the collector experienced in these stamps, but may easily mislead the novice.

Apparently in the absence of information as to relative scarcity of certain usages and prices actually obtained, the author has relied on some formulas for pricing. Thus, singles on cover are generally 1.7 to 2 times price of used singles off cover. When applied to pairs, strips or blocks of four of even common stamps on cover, this formula leads to absurd prices. Such difficulties may be tempered by other considerations, such as rates etc., in some cases --but not in all.

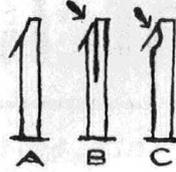
In pricing for cancellations, those of French India are consistently rated very high, while rarer or equally scarce usages, such as Nossi-Bé, Guiana, Assinie, Mayotte and St. Pierre, are often set much lower. This may reflect current popularities in France, or even the whims of certain collectors. Certain cancellations are sometimes not even quoted on the correct issue, but are listed on issues on which they rarely occur: the rare GPE in lozenge of dots is a case in point. Some errors indicate that the copy was prepared or the printing done in haste or under difficult conditions. For example, some illustrations of cancellation types are incorrectly repeated or interchanged.

Offsetting these defects, we are grateful to the author for including information on several little known and interesting matters. These include: use of French stamps in the Colonies; Colonies used in France and Algeria; postal stationery; revenues; plate varieties of France on Colonial stamps, forgeries, reprints, dates, shades and quantities of printings. A synoptic table of price changes in certain colonials from 1890 to now indicates that, allowing for the varying rate of exchange, prices in France have not exceeded and do not now exceed notably these in this country.

--Robert G. Stone

Varieties on the 1.50f Iris of 1941.

Mr. A.H. Weber, our member in Berkeley, Calif., informs us that the 1.50f Iris of 1941, orange brown, shows three variants in the large figure 1 in the value. The accompanying pictures show these. The first one (A) is the normal form. The second (B) and third (C) are the aberrant forms. Form B shows a vertical colored stroke in the numeral; Form C a notch under the serif. Mr. Weber found the variants on unused copies.



From Mr. Louis Moonitz of Castle Point, N.Y., we have received two copies of this stamp which show interesting print variations. One copy, looking conspicuously roughly printed, shows us an effect like a woven textile over the entire printed surface. The other shows many vertical irregular white lines across the design.

Quite possibly the print variations may some day be ascribed to particular printings -- yes, even dated. The used loose copies which came to us from Mr. Moonitz lacked year dates showing in the part of the cancellation on the stamp.

This Iris issue, with many shades, flaws and varieties in the plate and printing, etc., might well be a fruitful field for someone who seeks specialization without great expense. Recent French issues will reward such students just as did the issues before 1876 those who went into their detailed study many years ago, and whose "flyspeck study", then derided, has vanquished the carping of objectors, to find place as the "standard varieties" that are now sought after.

Color Changelings of an Older French Stamp.

One of our members was recently offered, at a slightly fancy price, a used 1 franc Type Sage, (Type 2), in blue-gray instead of in the usual bronze-green on straw. This was offered as "a rare unlisted color."

Your editor was able to duplicate the color by use of simple cheap reagents. All that was needed was a weak acid--hydrochloric acid -- or even plain vinegar. The straw underprinting on the paper's surface vanished; it was missing on the copy offered our member.

The Bronze-green is a mixture of a blue and a yellow pigment, with probably others as well. This holds true for at least the printings in the middle 1890's, from which all the copies to be chemically treated came. This blue color is not provided by ultramarine, for it resists all acids tried. Ultramarine goes colorless under acid treatment.

Alkalis have no effect on some copies, but a few others were slightly faded by a weak base. Alkalis affect copies that have previously been turned pale blue-gray with an acid: such copies darken or assume a faintly greenish tinge when left for a fairly long time in an alkaline weak solution.

Unless a color is known to exist as a proof or trial printing, any aberrant one on such a stamp should be looked on as almost surely a changeling. This holds true specially for used copies.

New Colonial Issues.

The latest catalogs show some of the new regular sets for various of the colonies. Some appeared in 1945; more are appearing this year; still more are on the way.

As yet, most of these issues are hard to find in the market, except from importers at up to 10 or 20 times face value. Yet these stamps are being printed in normal large quantities. There is so much red tape involved in importing them that it is months ere wholesale dealers can get them at reasonable or legal prices and in good bulk. Small retailers will not go to the cost of importing such sets themselves, because the possible profit is small.

We therefore advise our readers to bide their time, waiting along with most dealers, and thus saving themselves much money when these stamps can be had.

Some issues, such as that of Guadeloupe, are London products in typical "Free French" style; others are Paris jobs comparable to pre-war French Colonials. Among the Paris printings, the "Felix Eboue" sets are well made, but the new "Schoelcher" set of Martinique is a very poor job.

Apparently the French are continuing in the policy of occasionally issuing sets for use in all the colonies, concurrently with the regular definitive issues for each colony. The obviously speculative treatment of the limited general issues of the French colonies has not helped philately during the last decade, nor has it helped the majority of collectors of these stamps. We therefore look with misgivings on the tendency to general issues. Particularly bad is the practice of selling the general issues in Paris and sending very few to the colonies that are to use them, for actual postal service.

--- R. G. S.



1862 1867 on
FRENCH SEAPOSTS -- Early Types
-- Les Annales de Philatélie.

THE NEW SERVICE

Want or exchange notices: 25 words or less: one or two insertions. Members only; no charge.

Wanted: Algeria, Scott Nos. 13a, 16a, 29a, 78a, 99a, 132; also errors, etc. D. L. Harkins (56) Caldwell, Ohio (Ohio, not Idaho).

Paris covers wanted: pre-stamp, numbered stars, ambulants, and neat modern. John B. Morton (79), 1170 1/2 Delaware Ave., Buffalo 9, N. Y.

Exchange and correspondence wanted with any member collecting Free French issues. Pvt. K. P. Senstad 46049537, A. A. F. Bu. B. T. C. 3706, Squadron H, Sheppard Field, Texas (194).

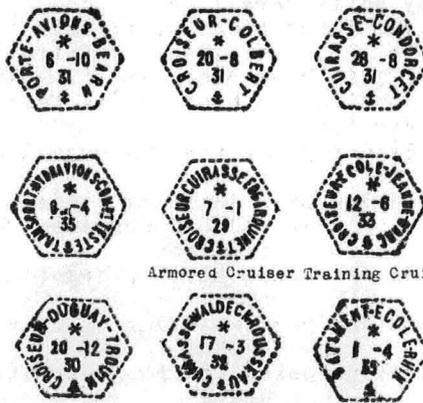
Wanted: To purchase cancellations: 19th Century: Anchor, Numeral, Registered, Straight Line, Paris and Paris stations particularly. K. F. Olson, 835 North Cass St., Milwaukee 2, Wis. (198).

POSTMARKS OF THE FRENCH NAVY

by Herwyn Hertzberg

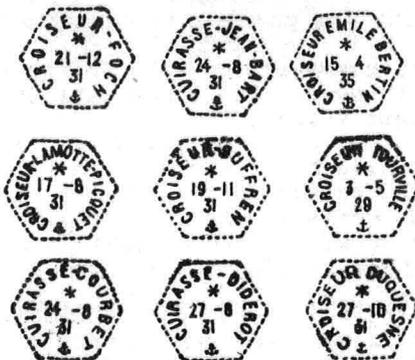
(Reprinted from Postal Markings Magazine, Jan. and Feb., 1936)

Unlike the American Navy, the French one has the class of the ship indicated on the postmarks used on each vessel. "Porte-Avions" for example is "Airplane Carrier" and "Porte-Hydravions" is "Seaplane Carrier." "Croiseur" translates as "Cruiser" and "Cuirassé" as "Armored" -- probably meaning Battleship. An interesting one is the training base for river service on the Rhine -- reading "Batiment-Ecole-Rhin."



Armored Cruiser Training Cruiser

Not all French naval ships have postmarks but only the major craft.



Interesting Cover from French India, 1941

Our member, Mr. Albert Thivierge, of Amesbury, Mass., writes inquiring if anyone else has seen a similar piece:

"This cover is an Official French India Postal Department envelope, used with (British) Inda Scott No. 175, the 3 1/2 annas ultramarine of 1941. It was mailed in Pondicherry and has a British censor label. Enclosed was a letter to me from the postmaster of Pondicherry, with a list of all the Free French stamps then on sale by him. Postmark date is Nov. 15, 1941"

"I know that such occurrences are not new; but why was it done this time?"

(Your editor has given Mr. Thivierge one possible explanation, in terms of the then status of the Free French government, whose stamps did not yet have international validity, and the general practice in Britain at that time, of opening almost all foreign letters in transit. The censor seal is of Britain, not of India. If any member wishes to enlighten Mr. Thivierge on a different basis or further, please write him direct.)

Varieties
of the
2.25 franc Ceres
of 1939



This stamp, issued in 1939, has a number of constant varieties which are not likely to be overlooked by collectors.

Thus, in the first printing of this value, dated Jan. 18, 1939, the sheets printed in pairs have, on the left hand pane, in the circle of pearls surrounding the head, these features on the stamps mentioned:

- No.34: One pearl missing opposite the chin.
- No.44: One pearl missing opposite the chin and one opposite the forehead.
- No.52: One pearl missing opposite the chin.
- No.63: One pearl missing opposite the chin.
- No.73: One pearl missing opposite the chin.
- No.92: One pearl missing opposite the forehead.
- No.93: One pearl missing opposite the forehead.

These flaws are not present in the unpaired sheets; but those do have three blemishes on the cheek in stamp No.38.

In the second printing, dated Jan.23,1939, all the defects have been removed; and many dots appear on the cheeks. However, the variety in stamp No.38 persists; and it is also present on stamp No.29 of the sheets printed in pairs. The three cheek blemishes are a little less conspicuous.

None of these varieties, it should be made clear, occur on the 2.50 franc green.

--L'Echo de la Timbrologie, Apr.15 1939.

Double Prints of Modern French Stamps

Mr. Henry Jervis of Coalville, Lancs., England, came out in the American Philatelist of December 1935 with an article in which he showed a beautiful example of a 45c Pasteur with double print. In the article he mentions finding two more such copies of the same stamp. Ingeniously but by no means convincingly, he tries to make a case for this being an actual plate variety. It is quite evident that he does not have much experience with print varieties on typographed stamps; for if so, he would recognize its true nature forthwith. Clearly a whole sheet or a part of a sheet came through printed doubles.

STAMP EX 1946

The annual National Stamp Exhibition to be held at Newark, N.J., Stampex, will be on Oct. 11, 12, 13 and 14, the usual Columbus Day weekend, this year. Several of our members have taken awards at previous Stampex shows; and we learn that exhibits of France and Colonies will be specially welcomed this year. Prospectuses are expected to appear in August; and your editor will have a supply for distribution.

SECRETARY'S REPORT
Feb. 24 to April 10, 1946

APPLICATION PENDING

Jervis, Henry, Coalville, Lancashire, England.

DUES:

\$1.00 for your regular membership for the current year are now payable, unless already in. Members in the New York metropolitan area who pay \$2.00 are entitled to Resident Member privileges and receive meeting notices for every New York meeting.

APPLICATION BLANKS:

These are now available. If you have any friends whom you wish to interest in the Group, the secretary will send you blanks to give them so that you may sponsor their applications; or a blank will be sent direct to any person whose name and address you furnish the secretary.

SUPPLEMENTS TO THE PHILATELIST:

(The Numeral Cancellation Lists of France)
The pages of Numeral Cancellations of France which have been included with the Philatelist in the last two years have been missed by many of our members, who have written in inquiring. The list is not completed: we are well aware of the fact.

BUT: the preparation of this series of pages is a VOLUNTARY gift from one of our members, one who is most enthusiastic, and who had been working for Uncle Sam. He gives us these sheets as often as he can turn them out. He finds his time too much taken up by those obligations to turn out the list as fast as he or we might wish. So please be patient: they will be distributed in the Journal whenever we receive any from Mr. J.R. McGee. We are indebted to him for this truly valuable contribution.

OFFICERS 1946-1947

As this "January-February" number does not go to press till early in May, we are able to give a report on the election of officers which was held at the meeting on May 2, 1946. Your new officers are:

President: Mr. Raoul Lesgor.
1st Vice-President: Mr. Dwight B. Ball.
2nd Vice-President: Dr. A.J.C. Vaurie
Recording Secretary: Mr. George Mary
Corresponding Secretary:
Mrs. Helen A. Stringham.
Treasurer: Dr. Robert L. Wood.

R.F. Cancellations on U.S. Airmails

In addition to regular use, several among the R.F. cancellations pictured and reported by us in recent numbers of the Philatelist, have been applied "by complaisance" to U.S. 6-cent stamps (the red airmail ones) in entire sheets or in large blocks. Uninformed and perhaps purposely misleading dealers continue in selling such items as "investment" material, continuing to allege that the cancellation is an "overprint." Such material still has the original gum, not marred, and is being sold at upwards of \$1 per stamp to the unwary. Others, knowing that the "R.F." is a cancellation, have tried to assert that these are "precancels".