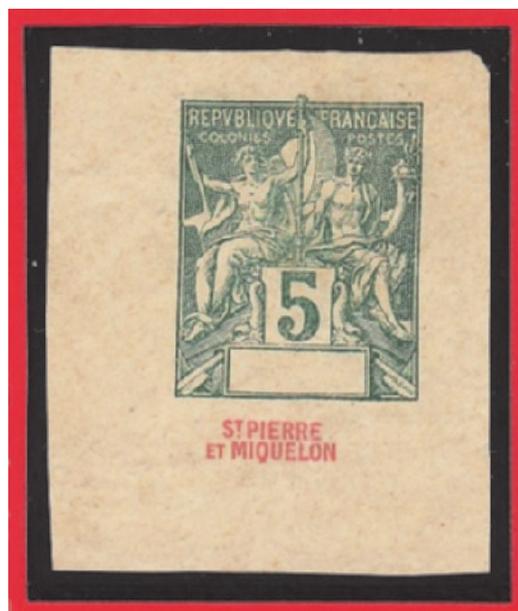


FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST

July 2012
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*1871 Commune of Paris Prisoners' Mail
(see page 67)*



Incredible St. Pierre Archival Material (see page 85)

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1871 Commune of Paris Prisoners' Mail

Louis Fiset

Introduction

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the siege of Paris that followed have generated a significant body of military postal history, resulting in both national and international exhibits that have garnered major recognition.

The 1871 Commune of Paris that followed the siege has received relatively little attention by collectors, with even less focus given to the mail of suspected Communard prisoners who survived the three-month civil war lasting from 18 March to 29 May.

Brown¹ cites 20 known examples of prisoner's mail from Paris region prisons and an additional 52 items from coastal prisons and prison ships known as hulks (32), military tribunals (4) and political exiles to New Caledonia (16). The author compiled his survey from a listing found in Parlange² and from archival holdings. Less than half of Brown's total included items he had identified as privately owned.

This article documents an additional 93 folded letters/covers to and from Paris region prisons (10) and coastal prisons and hulks (83), all of which currently reside in collectors' hands.

Background

In January 1871, with the Franco-Prussian War ended and an armistice signed, Bismarck insisted a properly constituted French government negotiate the peace. The National Assembly that resulted in March sat at Versailles, a symbol of the monarchy. Paris workers, however, refused to recognize its authority, which led to fighting — French against French; the new government against the city of Paris and its municipal council, the **Commune**. In just 72 days the Commune fell to *Versaillaise* troops who killed as many as 20,000 and arrested 38,000 suspected *communards*.

Prisoners were first detained at Versailles, then transported by rail to coastal land and ship prisons at the harbors of Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient, and Rochefort. The official record documents 27,837 male prisoners held aboard the hulks (19,750) and at the coastal forts (8,087).³ Female prisoners were sent to houses of correction at Rouen, Clermont, Arras, and Amiens. Ensuing military tribunals over the next several years resulted in release, imprisonment, execution, or exile to New Caledonia.

Prisoners' mail

Communard prisoners' mail was generated from within the universe of approximately 40,000 individuals taken during 21-28 May 1871 — *Bloody Week* — when Paris was recaptured by French troops. Detainees were permitted to send mail once a month, but only to nearest family members — father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, Content was limited to personal affairs. Forbidden were requests for either money or postage stamps. This last point explains why most reported outbound mail bears postage due markings.

A new finding of prisoners' mail

Sterling S. Taylor, a noted Seattle collector of prisoner of war postal history from the 16th century through World War II, acquired the 93 letters documented and illustrated below during the 1950s. He exhibited a sampling at the 1956 FIPEX exhibition in New York under the following catalogue description:⁴

French Prison Mail of 1871. Letters to and from the twenty-five prison ships holding the prisoners of the Commune of Paris in 1871, some of which are believed to be unique. 2 frames.

The next year Taylor published an article in *Covers*,⁵ highlighting individual letters with translations of content. The collection has since remained in seclusion until the present

time. Since Brown's descriptions fail to match any of the letters in the Sterling collection, what is described here may represent a "new" find.

The Sterling Collection

The letters from the Sterling collection, with few exceptions, span a three month period, from 29 May through 19 September 1871. During this time prisoners awaited the political trials that would determine their fates. Three of the six known prisons in the Paris region that briefly detained suspected Communards are represented in this collection. Of the 25 prison ships moored in the four harbors, Taylor found examples for 24 of them. Finally, of the 16 recorded forts and isles in the harbor environs, eight examples may be found in the collection.

Communard prisoners wrote 41 of the letters to families and associates, while 52 letters were incoming to them. All but two of the letters (England, Switzerland) were domestic correspondence. Only four outgoing letters bear pre-paid postage, three of them from Italian nationals.

Content of the outgoing letters shows that many prisoners were both literate and good writers. Much of the correspondence centers on attempts to vouch for prisoners' innocence.

Table 1. Prisons in the Paris Region.

Versailles (Satory)	3 examples
Versailles (Orangerie)	1 example
Versailles (Unknown origin)	2 examples
St. Cyr	2 examples
Bicetre	1 example

While most outgoing letters appear to have been written by Paris workers and artisans, a few were generated by Italian or Swiss nationals caught up in the uprising and consular representatives responding to their queries.

Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the correspondence in this collection and is organized by geographic location. Figures 1 and 2 provide examples of letters with detainees at prisons in the Paris region.

Fig. 1 shows local (Paris district) mail from a prisoner documenting his presence in the Orangerie at the Palace of Versailles. Postmarked Versailles, 2 June 1871, it was received the next day then forwarded within the city. A 15 centimes postage due stamp assesses the current 10 centimes local letter rate plus 5 centimes surcharge for unfranked mail.

Figure 2 shows an incoming franked letter to a detainee at the military riding-school of the



Figure 1. Letter from prisoner held at Versailles(Orangerie), 2 June 1871.



Figure 2. Incoming franked letter to Ecole de St. Cyr, received at St. Cyr 5 June 1871.

Ecole de St. Cyr, received at St. Cyr 5 June 1871. A marking in red at the top left of the letter reads: "Unknown at the station/Seen at the hulks." The letter was posted 31 May, three days after the end of *Bloody Week*.

Figures 3 through 13 provide examples involving prisoners detained in coastal hulks and land prisons.

Figure 3 shows an incoming letter from the Chancellor of State's office at Geneva to a Swiss national detained aboard *L'Arcole* in Cherbourg harbor.

Figure 4 illustrates an incoming letter posted in Paris 27 July 1871 to a prisoner on board *La Ville de Nantes*. From the Counsel to the Court of Appeals it says, in part: "I have the honor of explaining to you that from inquiries made here of persons known to you . . . it appears you could not have had any part in the insurrection of the Commune."

Figure 5 shows a letter incoming to a prisoner at Île St. Marcouf from the prisoner's former landlord in Paris. The "Casemate 9" notation is likely an internal routing directive applied at the prison.

Figure 6 shows an outgoing letter from the prison ship, *L'Austerlitz*. Written to a Catholic

priest in Paris and postmarked Brest 12 June 1871, the letter shows a typical postage due marking indicating the 20 centime domestic rate plus an additional 10 centimes assessed for unfranked mail.

The letter illustrated in Figure 7 is unique in this collection because it documents two prison ships at Brest harbor. It is addressed to a "Political prisoner" aboard *Le Duguay-Trouin*, at Brest, Lands End. In a different script the letter was forwarded to the prisoner on *Le Tilsitt*. A third handwriting at the left notes "please attach this."

The letter in Figure 8 was outgoing from Fort de Quelern to the prisoner's parents in Paris. It was postmarked Brest 30 June 1871. This is one of the four outgoing letters in the collection with prepaid franking applied. The prisoner may have been carrying postage stamps when he was detained, since acquiring stamps during imprisonment was forbidden.

Figure 9 shows a letter written by a pre-Commune gardener/doorman on *La Pénélope* and addressed to a commanding general at Versailles. The 30 centime postage due marking has been pen-cancelled because the letter was treated as official mail.

The coastal fort on Belle Île-en-Mer is repre-

Table 2. Summary of Coastal Hulks and Prisons.

Cherbourg Harbor		
Hulks		
<i>Le Bayard</i>		2 examples
<i>Le Tourville</i>		4 examples
<i>Le Ville de Nante</i>		3 examples
<i>Le Tage</i>		3 example
<i>L'Arcole</i>		2 examples
<i>Le Rhone</i>		2 examples
Land Prisons		
Homet		None
Pelée		2 examples
St. Marcouf		1 example
Chaussey		None
Brest Harbor		
Hulks		
<i>La Ville de Bordeaux</i>		4 examples
<i>La Marne</i>		3 examples
<i>Le Tilsitt</i>		4 examples
<i>Le Duguay-Trouin</i>		5 example
<i>Le Breslaw</i>		3 examples
<i>L'Aube</i>		4 examples
<i>L'Hermione</i>		5 example
<i>La Ville de Lyon</i>		4 examples
<i>Le Fontenoy</i>		3 examples
<i>Le Napoleon</i>		4 examples
<i>L'Austerlitz</i>		3 examples
<i>L'Yonne</i>		1 example
Land Prisons		
Queuern		1 example
Tréberon		1 example

Lorient Harbor		
Hulks		
<i>La Pénélope</i>		4 examples
<i>La Vengeance</i>		4 examples
<i>La Prudence</i>		2 examples
Land Prisons		
Belle Île-en-Mer		1 example
Noirmoutiers		None
d'Yeu		None
Rochefort Harbor		
Hulks		
<i>L'Orne</i>		3 examples
<i>L'Iphigenie</i>		None
<i>La Pandore</i>		2 examples
<i>La Foudre</i>		1 example
Land Prisons		
Bayard		1 example
Furas		None
d'Enet		None
Liedot		None
d'Oleron		1 example
d'Aix		1 example
Madame		None



Figure 3. Incoming letter from Geneva to L'Arcole in Cherbourg harbor, 31 July 1871



Figure 4. Incoming letter to La Ville de Nantes from Paris 27 July 1871.



Figure 5. Incoming letter to Île St. Marcouf from Paris.

Figure 6. Outgoing letter from the prison ship, L'Austerlitz., 12 June 1871 .





Figure 7. Letter documenting two prison ships at Brest harbor. It is addressed to Le Duguay-Trouin, at Brest, Lands End, and then forwarded to Le Tilsitt.



Figure 8. Outgoing letter from Fort de Quelem, 30 June 1871.



Figure 9. Outgoing letter from La Pénélope to Versailles, 6 June 1871.



Figure 10. Incoming letter to Belle Île-en-Mer from Paris.



Figure 11. Sent to a prisoner aboard La Foudre, from Ivry-sur-Seine, 8 August 1871

sented in Figure 10 by an incoming letter to a “political prisoner” from the prisoner’s wife in Paris. “*The children send their best and kiss you with all their heart.*”

The incoming letter in Figure 11 was written to a former slaughterhouse worker aboard *La Foudre*, by his employer in Paris. It was postmarked Ivry-sur-Seine on 18 August 1871 and received the next day.

New Caledonia mail

Mail to or from exiles in New Caledonia falls outside the time frame of this collection so is not represented here. However, the collection contains a folded letter postmarked Paris, 5 June 1871, to a prisoner aboard *La Garonne*, at Cherbourg harbor, as seen in Figure 12. The official French government report does not list this ship among those used to detain Communard prisoners, but as one of the transports used to take exiled prisoners to New Caledonia. Parlange reported prisoners being held on *La Garonne* from 29 May to 30 June 1871 with the ship subsequently employed to transport exiles from Brest to Nouméa on several voyages from 1872-1875. Other ships assigned to transport prisoners to New Caledonia were *Guerriere*, *Var*, *Sybillie*, *Calvador*, and *Virginie*.

Censored mail

All correspondence to and from prisoners likely first passed through the hands of their captors before being sent on and may have been examined. However, only a small quantity of mail has surfaced with actual censor markings applied, all of it involving Cherbourg harbor correspondence.

Three letters in the Sterling collection bear the marking VU: BON A EXPEDIER, indicating “Seen: good to deliver.” Each marking appears on outgoing mail from a hulk and was applied in black ink. Figure 13 shows an outgoing letter from a prisoner aboard *L’Arcole*, written 16 Ju-

ly 1871 and postmarked Cherbourg three days later. [Brown documents other censor markings that are not part of the Sterling collection.]

Conclusion

The 93 covers documented here now bring the number of Communard prisoner letters recorded in the philatelic literature to 172. The Sterling collection by no means covers all aspects of Communard prisoner mail. Absent, for example, are letters to and from prisons located within Paris as well as mail involving female prisoners. More, the collection is missing examples of New Caledonia exiles’ mail.

Communard prisoners’ mail represents a small, but important, chapter in the postal history of the Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath. Although this mail remains relatively scarce, collectors with a basic knowledge of the historical events, as well as in possession of considerable patience, will ultimately be rewarded for their efforts.

References

1. Brown, Gardner L. *The Postal History of the Commune Revolution, Paris 1871*. (New York: The France & Colonies Philatelic Society, Inc., 1992), Chapter VII - Prisoner’s Mail.
2. *L’Annales de L’Assemblée Nationale*, Vol. 43, Décembre 1875, pp.147ff [lists the hulks and numbers of prisoners.]
3. 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* 140(Jan 1958).
4. Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition (FIPEX) Catalogue (New York: The Fipex Committee of the Association for Stamp Exhibitions, Inc., 1956), Frames 980-981.
5. Taylor, Sterling S. “The Mail of the Prisoners of the Commune of Paris, 1871,” *Covers*, XVII(9):6-10, September 1957.

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Figure 12. Incoming letter from Paris 5 June 1871, to La Garonne, at Cherbourg harbor.



Figure 13. Outgoing letter from L'Arcole, written 16 July 1871 and postmarked Cherbourg three days later

French Post Offices in Egypt

Part I: The Postage Due Stamps of Alexandria

David L. Herendeen (FCPS 2532)

This is the first of a two part series on the postage due stamps of the French post offices in Egypt. The second part, the office in Port-Said, will appear in the October issue.

The purpose of this paper is to present, in a comprehensive fashion, all of the information known about the adhesive postage due stamps used in the French post offices in Egypt. As is often the case, the story of such a small number of stamps is more complex than meets the eye.

1. Introduction

By 1453, the Ottoman Empire controlled a huge empire spanning north Africa, the middle east, western Asia and southern Europe. In 1500 what are called the *Ottoman Capitulations* began. These were essentially grants made by successive sultans to Christian nations, conferring rights and privileges in favor of their nationals resident or trading in any of the Ottoman dominions. This continued a policy toward European states that was established

during the Byzantine Empire.

The French post offices in Egypt were part of an extraterritorial network of such offices and commercial centers operated in the Ottoman Empire under the capitulations. Such offices were also created by other European powers including Great Britain, Austria, Germany and Russia. The details of these agreements, and their relationship to the Ottoman legal system, are far beyond the scope of this paper. They are also not necessary to understand the stamp issuing policies of any of the European powers within the Ottoman Empire. They are simply the controlling documents that led to this philatelic curiosity.

2. The French Post Offices

France opened four post offices within Egypt. These were (in the order they were opened):

- ♦ Alexandria—an important Mediterranean port in which a *bureau de recette*^{1,2} was opened in 1830.



Figure 1. The Four French Offices in Egypt.

- ◆ Cairo—the capital, in which a *bureau de distribution* was opened in November 1865 and converted to a *bureau de recette* in 1869.
- ◆ Port-Said—the northern terminus of the Suez canal in which a *bureau de distribution* was opened in June 1867 and converted to a *bureau de recette* on 1 January 1894.
- ◆ Suez—the southern terminus of the Suez canal in which a *bureau de distribution* was opened in November 1862 and converted to a *bureau de recette* in 1875.

The locations of these offices is shown in Fig. 1. While their primary purpose was for the development of trade and commerce, they also included post offices for the convenience of French citizens living in Egypt. The office in Cairo was closed in March 1875. Smith³ notes the importance of the post office in Cairo declined rapidly after the opening of the Suez canal. The offices in Port-Said and Suez were opened during the building of the canal. The one in Suez was closed in December 1888. Again, Smith observes that the importance of this office declined after the opening of the canal. There are no known postage due usages from either Cairo or Suez. Therefore, there will be no further discussion of them in this paper.

3. Use of French Stamps in the Offices

Because the foreign post offices were under the control of the French post office, they were given normal French postage stamps for use. Specific French stamp issues used include the perforate and imperforate Empire issues (1853-62), the laureated Empire issue (1863-70), the siege of Paris issue (1870), the Bordeaux issues (1870), the Cérès issue of the republic (1871-75), and, finally, the type Sage (1876-1900.) Since French cancellers were also employed, the usual variety of cancellations may be found on the noted French issues used in the four offices. These include the *petits chiffres*, the *gros chiffres*, and the various, and well-documented, circular date stamps used by the *bureaux de distribution* and the *bureaux de recette*.

The postage due situation is slightly more

complex. It has been reported that the use of French postage dues was authorized in the Egyptian offices in 1862.⁴ However, no uses of the type Carré postage dues (used in France until 1881) have been seen from anywhere in Egypt. Thus, the first verifiable uses of French postage dues were the black type Duval issue (1881-92). These were then followed by the colored type Duval issue (1893-1935).

4. Postal Rates in Egypt

There are two basic sets of postal rates in effect in all of the French offices in Egypt. The first set of rates, prior to 1921, were those of France. Then, in 1921, in the aftermath of World War I, France devalued her currency. This allowed travelers to post letters in Alexandria, or the other Egyptian offices, at a fraction of their actual cost. This was, indeed, a problem faced in all of the foreign post offices abroad. At the UPU Congress held in Madrid in 1920, the *gold franc* became the standard currency for all postal exchange among members.⁵ This monetary unit simply had the same value as the previous French franc had prior to devaluation. The Congress also required that all member nations (and their offices abroad) must overprint their stamps in local currency equivalent to the face value in gold francs. This was done, and as shall be seen subsequently, new stamps and postage dues were overprinted in Egyptian currency: *millièmes* and *piastres*. This currency change remained in affect until 1931 when the offices were closed. Basic rates, exhaustively reported by Smith,³ are often important to the computation of postage due. Rates for both periods are presented in Table 1 for the most commonly encountered types of mail.

For “domestic” mail, which includes drop letters in the office and letters to destinations in Egypt, the Egyptian rates were used. However, the French Office stamps could not enter the Egyptian mails.

5. Alexandria

5.1 Background

The first post office opened by France was in the port city of Alexandria. This office was established on 1 May 1837 and opened for

Date	From France		Reg
	Letters	Cards [†]	
1 Oct 1881	25c/25c	10c	10c
1 Oct 1907	25c/15c	10c/5c	
1 May 1910	25c/15c		
1 Apr 1921	50c/25c	30c/10c	50c
1 Apr 1924	75c/40c	45c/15c	75c
16 Jul 1925	1f/50c	60c/20c	
1 Oct 1925	1f/60c		
1 Feb 1926	1.25f/75c	75c/25c	1.25f
1 Aug 1926	1.50f	90c/30c	1.50f

[†] If two values are given, the second is for messages of 5 or fewer words.

Table 1. Postal rates in the French offices in Egypt.

business on 7 May. It remained in continuous operation until 31 March 1931.

In 1899, the first special postage stamps of the office in Alexandria were created by simply overprinting the Sage stamps of France **ALEXANDRIE**. Beginning in 1902, special stamps based on the types Blanc, Mouchon, and Merson of France were issued. The dies were modified to include the inscription **ALEXANDRIE** within the design as seen in Fig. 2.

As noted previously, the devaluation of French



Figure 2. Stamps of France with modified inscription for Alexandria.

currency in 1921, and the regulations of the UPU Congress of 1920, resulted in Paris printing new issues for Alexandria that were overprinted in Egyptian currency: *millièmes* and *piastres*. Such overprints were used until 1927 when new plates were laid down that integrated the values in Egyptian currency into the actual stamp design.

5.2 The Postage Dues

5.2.1 Use of French Postage Dues

The first dues used in Alexandria were those of the French Duval issues. The black dues were in use from 1881 until 1892. All reported uses of both the black and colored issues are shown in Table 2. The symbol ☉ indicates that the Alexandria cancelation is known on loose stamps, the symbol ☐ indicates a cover is known to exist, and ♦ indicates a usage has been reported but it has not been viewed and verified by the author. An example of the 50c use is shown in Fig. 3.

In 1893, the black Duval dues were replaced by the same values printed in colors. Usages of these are also presented in Table 2, and a cover showing use of the 50c lilac in Alexandria is shown in Fig. 4.

Examples of some of these stamps off cover with Alexandria cancels are shown in Fig. 5.

The black Duval issue of France (1881-1893)

1c black	☉	☐
5c black	☉	
10c black	☉	
30c black	♦	
50c black	☉	☐

The colored Duval issue of France (1893+)

5c blue	☉	
10c brown	☉	☐
20c green	☉	
30c red	☉	
50c lilac	☉	☐

Table 2. French Postage Dues Used in Alexandria.



Figure 3. Incoming short paid letter from New York, 2nd weight step. Correct rate = $2 \times 5c = 10c$; paid 6c; short 4c; postage due = $4c \times 2 = 8c = 40$ centimes. However, New York outgoing cancel indicated that the due was 25 centimes, thus charged $2 \times 25 = 50$ centimes. Courtesy P.A.S. Smith.



Figure 4. Incoming unpaid letter from Morocco. Attempted use of military franking privilege denied. Correct rate = 25c; paid none; short 25c; postage due = $25c \times 2 = 50$ centimes. Courtesy P.A.S. Smith.



Figure 5. Examples of other French postage dues with Alexandria cancels. Courtesy P.A.S. Smith.

5.2.2 Provisional Issue of 1922

Special postage dues for the office were issued in 1922 when five values of the colored Duval issue of France were overprinted in Egyptian currency to supplement the recently issued definitives. Again, this was a consequence of the new UPU regulations. The overprints were applied in Paris to full sheets of 150 stamps.

The archive of *le Musée de la Poste* in Paris includes complete proof sheets of 25 of the overprint settings. It is supposed that the setting was then reproduced 6 times to create the plate for overprinting. The setting for the 30m on 1f is illustrated in Fig. 6. It has been cropped to eliminate excessive blank space. The ruling lines simulating the stamps were hand-drawn in ink on the original proof.

The reference list for these stamps, examples of which are shown in Fig. 7, is given below:

- 1 2m on 5c blue
- 2 4m on 10c brown
- 3 10m on 30c red
- 4 15m on 50c lilac
- 5 30m on 1f brown/buff

Of all the varieties, the single major error is the 30m with double overprint. Ref. 6 indicates



Figure 7. The Provisional Overprints of 1922.

that a single sheet of 150 was printed.

The 10m, 15m and 30m values included several stamps which had a wider spacing between the digits of the new value. The spacing for the 15m variety is 1.25mm rather than 1.0mm, and the spacing for the 30m is 0.75mm rather than 0.20mm.¹ Subsequent work reports that the spacing for the 10m variety is 2.0mm rather than 1.0mm.⁶ This reference mistakenly reports the spacing for the 30m to be 3.25, rather than 1.25mm. The 30m/1f value is shown in a position piece in Fig. 8.

As to positions within the setting, Ref. 1, states that for the 15m the variety is found in position 15, and for the 30m, the variety is in position 41 and in either 91 or 141. A position piece showing the 30m variety is shown in Fig. 6. Again, Ref. 6 indicates that the 10m variety is found in position 15 of one of the panes of 25. Two other minor varieties reported in this reference are the 10m and 15m with a “fat 1” in the overprint. The author can find no further reference to them. However, for completeness they have been included in the reference list below:



Figure 8. The “wide spacing” variety of the 30m.

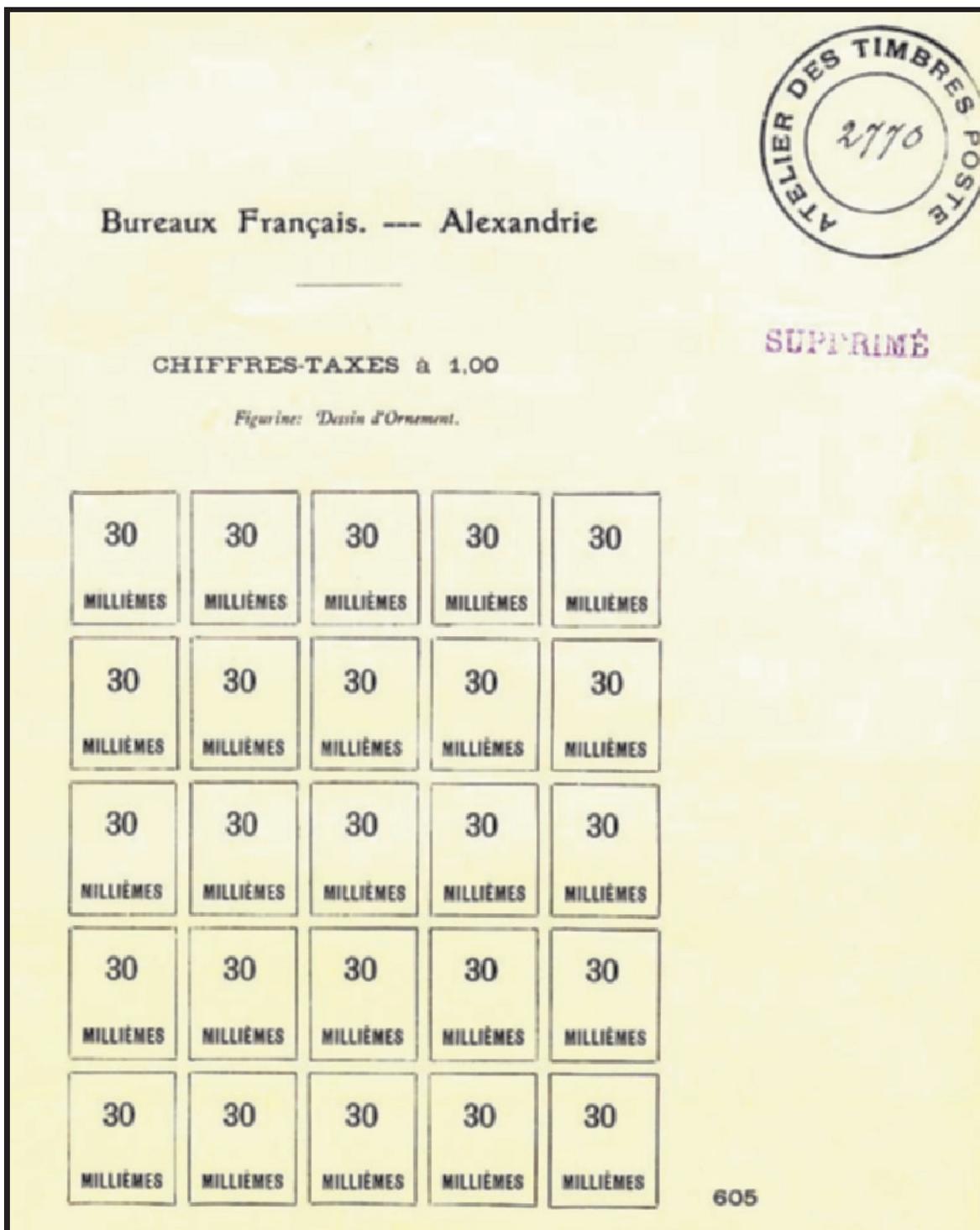


Figure 6. Proof of the First Overprint for the postage Due Stamps of Alexandria.
(Courtesy les Collections du Musée de la Poste)

- 3a 10m on 30c red, wide spacing
- 3b 10m on 30c red, "fat 1" in overprint
- 4a 15m on 50c lilac, wide spacing
- 4b 15m on 50c lilac, "fat 1" in overprint
- 5a 30m on 1f brown/buff, wide spacing
- 5b 30m on 1f brown/buff, double overprint

Each value is known with only a single *millésime*. The 2m, 15m and 30m are 1920, the 4m is 1919 and the 10m is 1921.

There are two sets of specimen stamps. For the first set, each stamp is overprint **COLONIAS** in sans serif type. This is the receiving authority specimen overprint created in Portugal for use on stamps received from the UPU. for distribution to her colonies.⁷ For the second set, strips of three specimens are handstamped:

SPECIMEN COLLECTION MAURITANIA

in red sans serif type. As was true in many colonies, the specimen stamps were generally affixed to accounting sheets when they arrived at the main colonial post office. Examples of the **COLONIAS** specimens are shown in Fig. 9. They are still mounted on fragments of those sheets. The **COLONIAS** set is believed to have originated from the



Figure 9. Receiving authority specimens. Overprint applied after receipt from the UPU. **COLONIAS** used by the Portuguese for their colonies, and a special handstamp, described in the text, used in Mauritania.

archive in Goa. Also shown in Fig 7 is a strip of three with the local Mauritania handstamp.

Usages of this issue are not common. One of the few known covers is shown in Fig. 10. This cover from France to Alexandria was sent on 18 July 1923. It apparently was a third weight step envelope (50-100g, 1920-1924 rate period) that required 50c postage. Since only 25c was paid, the cover was marked 50c postage due. This was converted to 28 *millièmes* (noted in manuscript), and the appropriate dues applied in Alexandria. The use of the manuscript cancel is unusual.



Figure 10. Short paid incoming letter from France. Postage due is 50c or 28 *millièmes* as noted in manuscript.



Figure 11. Examples of the 1928 postage due issue.

1.2.3 Permanent Issue of 1928

A second postage due issue was printed in 1928 to reflect the new currency. A set of eight Duval-type dues, denominated in *millièmes*, was released. This was a customized variation of the standard French Duval design. Two of the values, shown with the 1927 *millésime*, are shown in Fig. 11. The reference list is::

- 6 1m black
- 7 2m blue
- 8 4m lilac-rose
- 9 5m olive
- 10 10m red
- 11 20m red-brown
- 12 30m green (issued in March 1930)
- 13 40m violet

This issue was typographed in Paris in sheets of 150 with *millésime* 1927. There is a single know variety: the missing “F” in “FRANCAISES” shown in Fig. 12. This is reported to be from position 44 of the sheet, and it was corrected sometime during the print run.



Figure 12. The “RANCAISE” variety.



Figure 13. The “ESPESIMEN” specimen stamps.

9a 5m olive, “RANCAISE”

In addition, there are receiving authority specimens overprint “ESPESIMEN” which was a later overprint used by Portugal for stamps received from the UPU and then distributed to the colonies. Examples are shown in Fig. 13.

These stamps are not often encountered on cover.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Prof. Peter A.S. Smith, preeminent scholar of Egyptian philately, both for providing some of the figures for this article from items in his international Large Gold Medal exhibit, and for his invaluable council and reading of the drafts of this article. Additionally, I would like to thank Joseph Chaloub for his wonderful cataloging of

the stamps of the French Offices in his Nile Post and his kind permission to reproduce some of his figures. As is often the case, it is difficult to perform research without the support of professional librarians and archivists. To that end, my thank to Ms. Ellen Peachey, library services coordinator of the American Philatelic Research Library, for diligently searching out a number of references. Also, special thanks to two staff members of *Le Musée de la Poste* in Paris: Mme. L. Fabre, librarian, for her help in searching literature sources in French; and Mme. A.-C. Célimon, curator of the philatelic collections, for reviewing the archival collection for me.

References and Endnotes

1. Yvert & Tellier, *Catalogue des Timbres-Poste de la France et des Colonies Françaises, Titre III Bureaux Français à l'Etranger et Territoires Occupés*, Yvert et Cie, Amiens, France, 1940.
2. As noted in Ref. 1, post offices outside of France were divided into four categories;:
 - 1st class**, which were called *bureaux de recette*. These were full service post offices.
 - 2nd class**, which were call *bureaux de distribution*. These offices could issue and pay postal money orders up to 500f.
 - 3rd class**, which were also *bureaux de distribution*, but they could only process money orders up to 50fr.
 - 4th class**, which were really only mail transit offices, having neither a postmaster nor any employees.
3. Smith, P.A.S., *Egypt: Stamps and Postal History – A Philatelic Treatise*, Jame Bendon, Limosol, Cyprus, 2001.
4. Noel, G, J. Blanc, J.-C. Delwaulle, R. Loeuillet, and J. -P. Schroeder, *Les Chiffres-Taxe Carrés 1859-1882*, Bibliothèque de l'Académie de Philatélie, Paris, 1996, pp. 59-60.

The authors note that the first mention of postage due usage in the foreign post offices is found in Circular no. 274, *Bulletin Mensuel* no. 88 of December 1862. Paragraph 12 of this document said, “*Les bureaux français établis en Turquie et en Egypte adresseront leurs chiffres-taxes (sic) à 10 centimes au commissaire du gouvernement à Marseille, en se conformant au paragraphe 8 de la présente circulaire.*”

They also indicate (p. 60) that “*En Égypt, rien n'est connu a ce jour.*”
5. The 7th UPU Congress of 1920. Madrid, Spain.
6. Chaloub, J., *The Nile Post : Handbook and Catalogue of Egyptian Stamps*, H. Chaloub, Westmount, Quebec, Canada, ca. 2003. Chapter XII is devoted to the French Consular Post Offices in Egypt. Of this, about four pages concerns postage due stamps.
7. Bendon, J., UPU Specimen Stamps, James Bendon, Limassol, Cyprus. 1988. pp. 19-21.

PAID YOUR DUES?

Incredible St. Pierre 'Type Groupe' Items

J.-J. Tillard (FCPS 3401)

I was able to purchase some incredible items that are essays for the *Type Groupe* of St. Pierre et Miquelon, but also some very important items for all of the *colonies anciennes* which have rarely been seen.

Fig. 1 shows a die proof of the frame. Note the round die that was used until the early 1900s. Figure 2 shows a proof of the 5c value with a proof of the the St. Pierre et Miquelon inscription below. This item is believed to be unique.

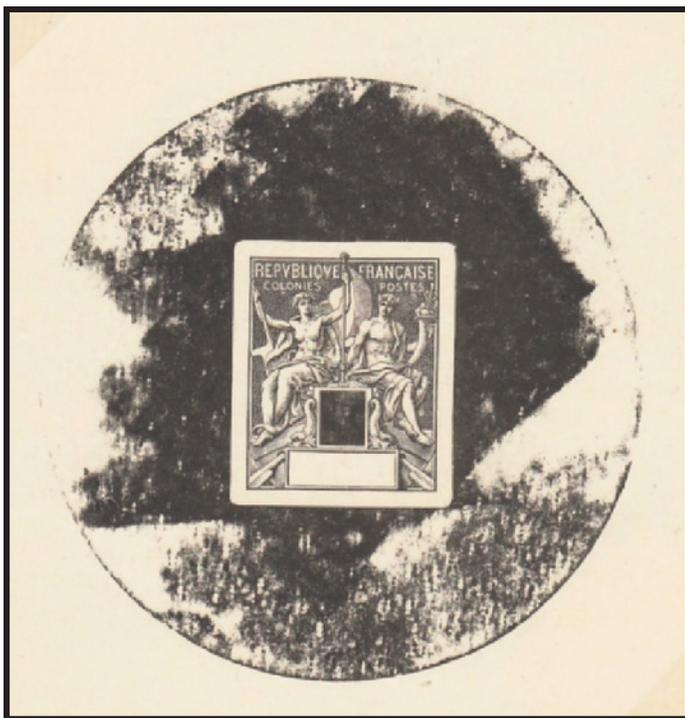
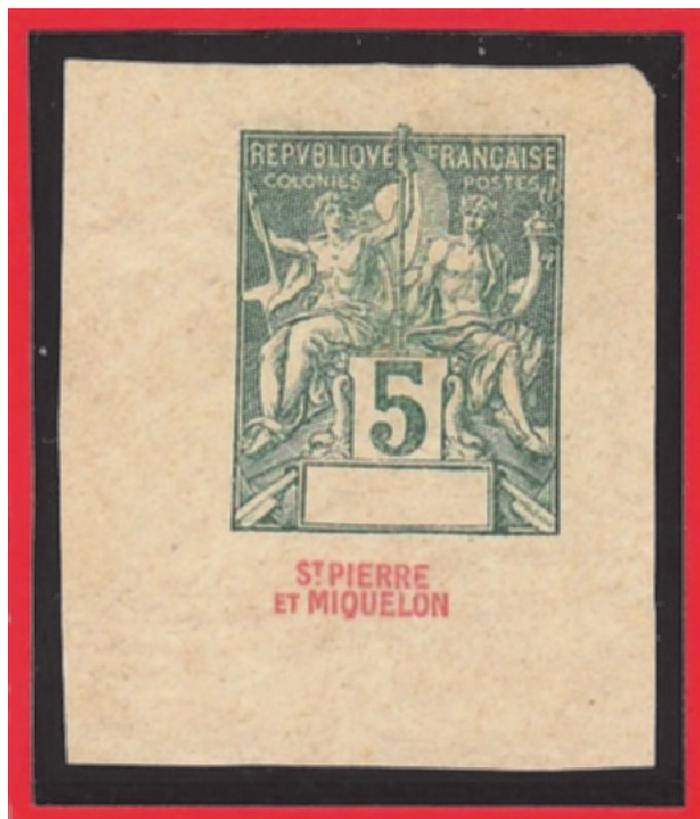


Figure 2. Type Groupe frame proof showing 5c value and proof of colony name below the frame..

Figure 3 shows the schema for the Type Groupe stamps that were issued for the 18 colonies in 1892-93. A single sheet of 25 was printed for each of the thirteen values (1c-1f). Unlike for the issued stamps, the essays are imperforate, and the paper is without tint and gum.

Like many other great rarities, these items were obtained from our long-time advertiser and good friends at *Maison Behr* in Paris.

Figure 1. Type Groupe frame proof showing circular die. No value or colony name.





Congo Français	Cote d'Ivoire	Diego Suarez	Etablissement de l'Océanie	Indo-Chine
Golfe de Bénin	Guadeloupe et dépendances	Guyane	Guinée Française	Obock
Sénégal et dépendances	Mayotte	Nouvelle Calédonie et dépendances	Martinique	Etablissement de l'Inde
Réunion	Sultantat d'Anjouan	Saint-Pierre et Miquelon		



Figure 2. Schema of the proof sheets and four of the essays for the 4c, 5c, 10c and 16c. Examples showing not only the St. Pierre et Miquelon inscription, but also that of the Etablissements de l'Inde and two blanks. Unique items.

Cameroun – Mystery Postmarks

M.P. Bratzel, Jr. (FCPS 2394)

To date, more than 500 different date stamps have been identified for Cameroun under French administration, a period of less than 44 years (Ref. 1). Among these are two mystery postmarks.

The registered cover, whose front and back are shown in Figure 1, was posted at Yaoundé on 6 January 1951. Since the letter was sent on official business – S.O. notation – two strikes of an administrative cachet were applied, one on each side. Postage was required because the destination was outside the French community. Backstamps include transit marks applied at Douala on 8 January and Mbanga on 9 January. The cover arrived at its destination, Kumba, British Cameroons on 16 January. Despite the air mail notation, the cover travelled by train from Yaoundé to Douala, ferry across the Wouri estuary, then train from Bonaberi to Mbanga. The letter was transferred to the Nigerian postal authorities at Mundame, on the border near Mbanga.

The Douala transit mark on the back is a mystery. The top half appears to have had letters excised, leaving only a “C” and three periods, plus perhaps some remnant to the left of the “C”. From this, one can infer that the original inscription consisted of three letters. The device looks well used, as the outer ring is slightly dented. But what was its intended use, and why were some of the letters removed? To date, this is the only example seen. Other registered mail transiting Douala during this time period received one of two Douala *chargements* postmarks then in routine use.

The postmark on the two 10-centimes stamps electronically joined in Fig. 2 reads “G A I / Cameroun 31 Dec 26”. G A I is widely spaced, with sufficient room for two additional letters between the G and A and between the A and I. Was the datestamp prepared this way, or were letters excised? If letters were removed, what was the original wording, and why was G A I

retained? The letters do not correspond with anything familiar to the author. We speculate that the original lettering was GABASSI, an incorrect spelling of the original German Jabassi or the subsequent French Yabassi (Fig. 3). Spelling mistakes on Cameroun postmarks are not unknown – Ebolowa for example has also been spelled variously as Ebolwoa, Ebolona, and Ebolova. And, mistakes continue to occur – a canceller introduced for Nkongsamba early in 2012 has the town name speeled without the G!

Since the G A I postmark had only been recorded on two loose stamps, one could speculate that the strikes were a philatelic creation – not unheard of for other devices during that time period – and that the device saw no postal use. Then, in December 2011, the cover front in Fig. 4 was offered on eBay and purchased at a modest price. Addressed to Switzerland and properly franked at 1f50, the cover is postmarked G A I 14 FEV 28. So, we now know that the device saw legitimate use – but probably not at Yabassi, which had its own canceller at that time. So the where and why, in addition to the lettering, remain a mystery.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are expressed to Michael Wright and Dudley Cobb for bringing the items in Figs. 1 and 2 to my attention. We welcome readers' further suggestions for both mystery postmarks.

Reference

1. Bratzel, M.P. Jr., H. Kraja, and R.J. Maddocks. *Les oblitérations du Cameroun 1914-1960*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 1990. 83 pages. ISBN 0-9694026-0-0. This listing, prepared almost 20 years ago, has been expanded upon through various articles published in the France & Colonies Philatelist. Bibliography available upon request. Additional information awaits publication.

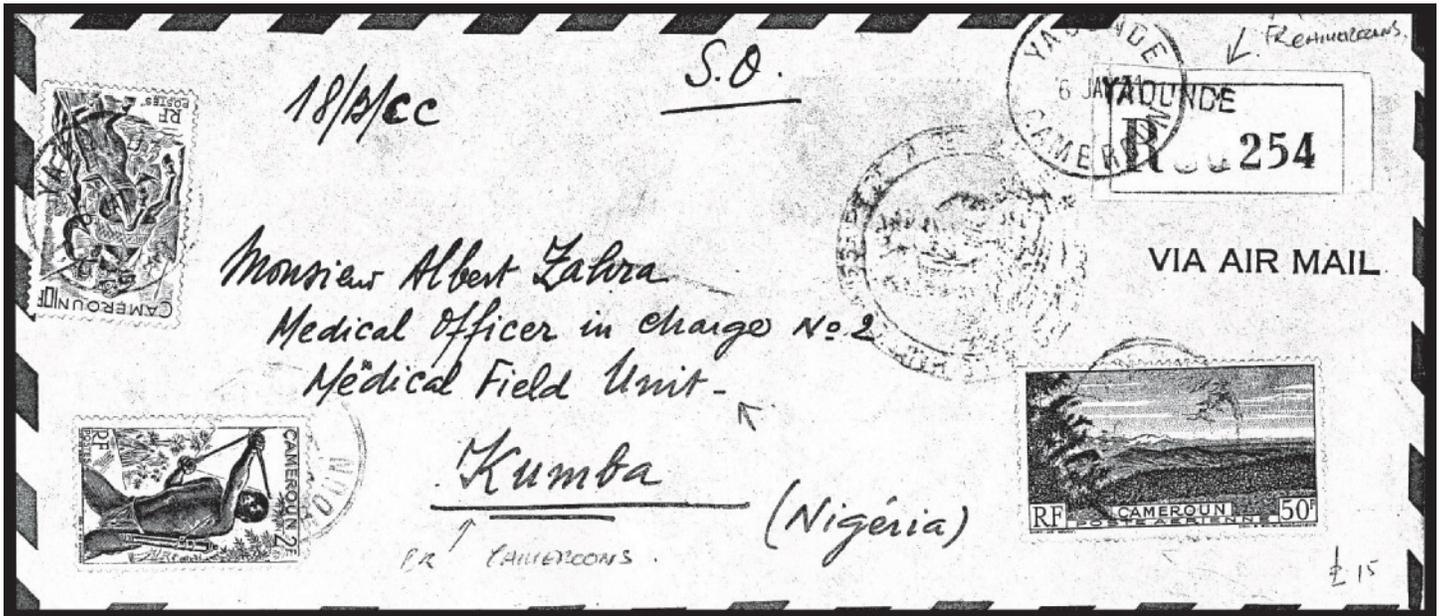


Figure 1. Front and back of registered cover posted at Yaoundé on 6 January 1951 See text for more description..



Figure 2. The mysterious "G A I" cancel.



Figure 3. Perhaps a variation of the YABASSI cancel resulted in the "G A I" cancel.



Figure 4. Cover front showing the "G A I" cancel.

Cameroon: 1f75 forgeries

Dudley Cobb

In my book **Cameroon: The 1940 Overprints**, I described what I then believed to be a trial overprint, “the only one known in orange”, on the 1f75 elephant design. “I have seen two copies as a vertical pair, and the overprint on the lower stamp is inverted...the stamps appear to be authentic”. The *tête-bêche* pair was illustrated there, in Plate 4. Further on, without doubting its authenticity, I said “More copies of the 1f75 trial are needed before it can sensibly be discussed”.

Fifteen years on, that time has come. I have recently been able to examine four of these *tête-bêche* pairs. None of the overprints are in my opinion authentic. Two of the other holders share that view. Most significantly, the font differs in several aspects from that employed on the 1940 postal overprints, and the wartime revenue overprints, made by *Imprimerie Commerciale du Cameroun* at Douala.

The references to a 1f75 trial in my book are accordingly wrong. There is a further conse-

Summary of FCPS Grand Prix Winners

The *nouvel régime* of FCPS exhibiting began in 2007 when we reinstated annual (roughly) meetings and exhibitions. At this time, we instituted an FCPS Grand Prix for the best exhibit of France or French Community philately. This award is determined by the show jury. To win, the exhibit must be at least five frames and contain at least 50% France or French Community material.

quence. My pair, and at least one other, are signed (on the inverted stamp): potentially, if separated the lower ones could be taken for authenticated examples of the known variety among the 1f75 definitives. That inverted overprint can, however, be plated and the font shows no departure from the norm for definitive. **Caveat emptor.**



YEAR	EXHIBITOR	SHOW	EXHIBIT TITLE
2007	Ken Nilsestuen	Garfield-Perry	Algeria Through Early 1876
2008	Dave Herendeen	NAPEX	The Evolution of Postage Due Stamps in the French Colonies
2009	Ed Grabowski	ROMPEX	The Colonial Group Type: Indochina and the French Offices in China
2010	Dave Herendeen	CHICAGOPEX	The Evolution of Postage Due Stamps in the French Colonies
2012	J.J. Tillard	Garfield-Perry	Les vignettes postales de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon 1885-1893

Note: Beginning in 2012, we instituted a rule that an **exhibit** (not exhibitor) can only win the FCPS Grand Prix **twice**.

We Get Letters

St. Pierre et Miquelon 17f Rate

I refer to the very fine and comprehensive article "Le Renard of 1952" by J.-J. Tillard in the April 2012 issue of the *FCP* (pages 43-50)

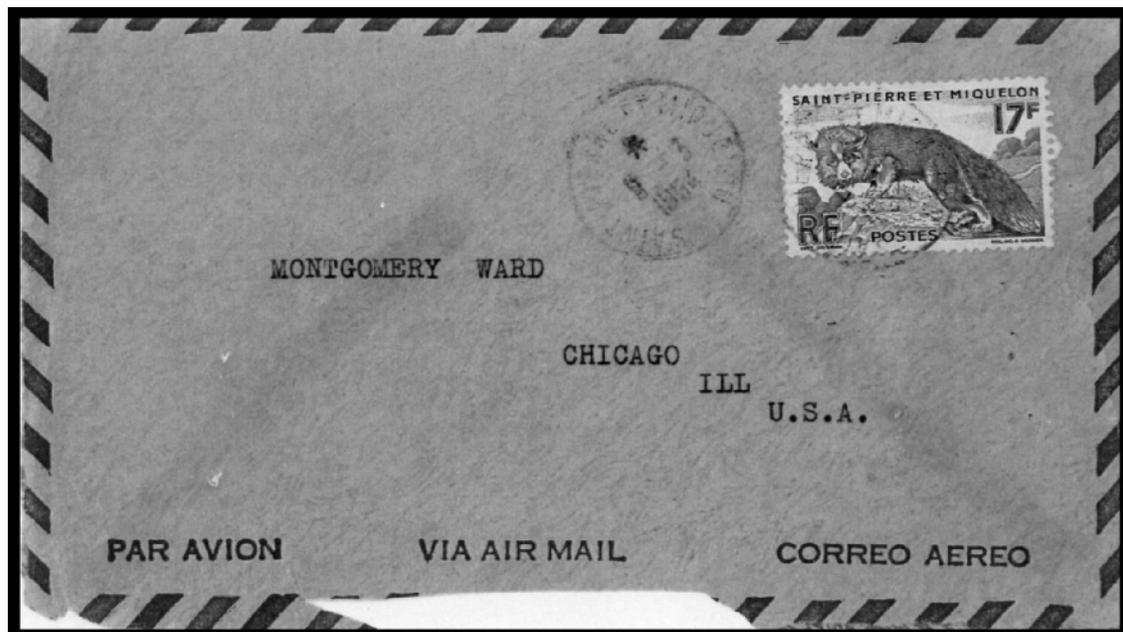
Reading the details of the development, printing and issuance of this definitive issue, I was startled by the author's remark that while the 8ff denomination paid the surface letter rate to France, "...no special postal rate required the 17f values."

As someone who was in correspondence with various friends in St. Pierre and Miquelon for some 25 years beginning in 1948, the date of my first visit to the islands, I can recall quite well that some time in 1952, possibly in early 1953, the rate for letters to the USA (and presumably other foreign countries besides Canada, for which a special concessionary rate existed) increased from

the 10 francs which prevailed during my visit in the late summer of 1951 to 17 francs, for which the silver fox (Renard) stamp of 1952 was issued. I recall receiving several letters, especially around Christmas, all with 17f postage, some of which were franked with the Renard stamp. Regrettably, I did not keep any of these on cover. As shown below, I do own a cover in not particularly good shape (but certainly authentic) addressed to Montgomery Ward in Chicago, a rich source of non-philatelic mail over the years, cancelled 9 March 1954. I have seen other such covers with solo use of this stamp on similar correspondence, which should adequately document the existence of this rate.

I do recall that this rate was overtaken in a relatively short time so that solo use of the 17f Renard stamp from the small population of the islands is not found very frequently.

Frank Correl (FCPS 3428)



Show Reports

COLOPEX 2012

Columbus, OH, June 2012

Silver medal to **Jere Dutt** for “Dahomey—Man Climbing Oil Palm: The Workhorse of Dahomey Definitives” Also the AAPE Novice Award and the WE Sterling Achievement Award. Gold to **Al Kugel**.

WESTPEX 2012

San Francisco, April 2012

Gold medal to **Ed Grabowski** for his “The Era of the French Allegorical Group Type-Part II: Postal History from the Pacific Islands Colonies” and the APS Pre-1900 Medal of Excellence. Gold medals also to **Al Kugel**, **Eliot Landau** and **Steve Turchik**. Also a one-frame Silver to **Al Kugel**.

Philatelic Show 2012

Boxborough, MA, May 2012

Two Gold medals to **Ed Grabowski** for his “The Era of the French Allegorical Group Type-Part IV: Postal History from the Senegal and Dependencies” and “The Era of the French Allegorical Group Type-Part III: Postal History from the Madagascar and Dependencies.”

Rocky Mountain Stamp Show 2012

Denver, CO, May 2012

Vermeil medal to **Stan Luft** for his “Alsace-Lorraine 1925-1948” which also received the APS 1940-1980 Medal of Excellence. Stan also received a Vermeil for his one-frame “Rixheim in the 19th Century.” Gold and Vermeil medals to **Roger Quinby**.

NOJEX 2012

Secaucus, NJ, May 2012

Two Gold medals to **Ed Grabowski** for his “The Era of the French Allegorical Group Type-Part IV: Postal History from the Senegal and Dependencies” and “The Era of the French Allegorical Group Type-Part III: Postal History from the Madagascar and Dependencies.” Gold medal to **Roger Quinby**.

Membership Notices

REINSTATEMENTS

2355 Coulbourne, Joseph C., Locust Grove, VA

ADDRESS CHANGES

2201 Edinger, Paul, Hartsville, SC

2459 Morales-Lugo, Arnulfo, Bayamon, PR

2135 Wallis, William, Scotch Plains, NJ

963 Winter, Richard, Colfax, NC

2012 Dues

We have about 70 members who have yet to pay their 2012 dues. A form is included within this FCP. Please help us keep the FCPS financially healthy. Please pay your dues if you have not done so. Thanks for your support. Our records indicate that the following members have not renewed for 2012. Please check your records.

Domestic: Abram, Barber, Barie, Blackledge, Blank, Brown, Buckles, Buono, Burton, Carleton, Clarkston, Collins, Craven, Cummings, Dawdy, DeJong, Dutt, Edinger, Fabian, Ganz, Gibson, Gilbert, Goeringer, Gordon, Grantham, Grasmick, Haber, Haskell, Hoefler, Howard, Jeter, LaChance, Lampen, Lee, Luchini, Marinescu, McConnell, Miller, Naumick, Noonan, O'Brien, Picirilli, Postal History Foundation Library, Roth, Schlesinger, Siddens, Smiley, Wexelblat, Wulff

Abroad: Beslu, Bonnel, Charon, Delpy, Detchevery-Vallee, Feldman, Gaetjens, Grace, Lallevee, Lawson, Meadowcroft, National Archives of Canada, Polk, Ruimy, Todd, Yeomans

BALLOT FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ENCLOSED

The ballot for officers is inserted in this FCP. Please vote early.

President's Letter

Greetings, friends. A quick comment on the heat – Akron reached 101° yesterday and broke a record set in 1988. The summer has been too hot to do much of anything, even collect stamps! Let's all hope for moderation in the temperatures before too long.

Next some comments on our society's future. First, I made a mistake that I am still trying to sort out. Our next meeting has for a long time been scheduled for SANDICAL in January 2014. When our group met in Cleveland this past March we set OKPEX 2013 as our next meeting. I am trying to rearrange that with the OKPEX people so we meet there later. We should continue planning our next meeting for SANDICAL. Watch this column as I straighten out the confusion for the society meeting that follows SANDICAL. And please accept my apologies for confusing our schedule.

Now to broader comments on our future. Our dues renewals continue to be a significant problem. For years we have been losing members, many because they forget to pay, some due to age, a few because they are no longer interested in the France and colonies collecting field. We also add many fewer new members. This year, now more than six months beyond renewal time, we have 70 non-renewing members, which is about 20% of our total membership. The non-renewal list includes two directors! So clearly a part of the problem is forgetfulness: an email that is lost in the hundreds that we receive in the course of a day or a week, an intent to get the check sent in a day or two but the task slips away before it is finished.

My first request of you, (and just like the Uncle Sam poster, I mean YOU!), is to pay your 2012 dues if you haven't done so already. There should be a paper notice inserted in the journal so you can remit dues by mail RIGHT NOW. If you aren't sure if you have paid, send an email to **Joel Bromberg** at:

jbromberg@inta.org.

He can confirm whether or not you have paid.

My next request is for a volunteer to call or

write the 70 people on our non-payment list and ask them to renew. Remember, this isn't a "cold" call, but rather is a warm call. In this day of cell phones long distance calls are essentially free, so there should be little financial burden associated with the task. Foreign non-renewals require an email if you don't have international calling privileges. What a chance to make some new friends and also keep our society alive!

Think about this. If we lose these 70 members we are approaching the point at which we can no longer publish a quarterly journal. We lose authors and contributors. We lose their dues, which we need to cover publishing costs. We lose their knowledge, which is certainly considerable.

So the volunteer we need is critical to the continuation of our society. I cannot overemphasize this. If you are interested, please let me know TODAY. Our society depends on YOU! Send me a quick email at:

Nilsestuen@sbcglobal.net

or call me at 330-618-5070.

My next topic for this quarter is a bit more pleasant. Thanks to an incredible time commitment from **Mike Bass**, we appear to have reached a settlement with the business that agreed to digitize our journals. We should again be on track to have this project complete by the end of 2012. Just this past week (July 4th week) we received a proposal from the business to transfer the project to a consortium of which our society is a member. Mike will assume the role of project manager for the consortium so that we complete the digitization of our journals. We are reviewing the proposal and expect to reach agreement soon. The work should get done shortly after that.

Let's not celebrate yet, but it looks like a project we commenced more than two years ago may soon reach fruition, making our past journals accessible to all members.

And now let's look to our journal. We depend on you (again, envision Uncle Sam's finger pointing right at YOU) for journal material. Often it is difficult for an author to settle on a topic, so I have a few suggestions. One is that

there are articles from the past that need updating because of new knowledge. The prolific authors of the past, of whom the late Bob Stone was the most significant, didn't know everything. Use one of those older articles as a basis to update the rest of us for recent discoveries, a new view of the old subject, or better illustrations.

Another generalized subject is to explain to us why you find your collecting area interesting enough to pursue it. That's a great way to entertain our members and shouldn't require a great deal of time or research.

Of course, a more scholarly article on your area of interest is always welcome. Every one of us should be promoting our specialty, because if we don't, there won't be a next generation ready to enjoy the material we have worked so hard to collect.

I hope to hear from YOU soon. We need people like us to keep our society alive and flourishing. If our inaction leads to its demise, the responsibility will fall on all of us. Let's get excited! Our hobby is challenging, it is rewarding, it is stimulating, it is exciting. Most importantly, it is FUN!

The Dog Days of Summer

David L. Herendeen, Editor

At this writing, there is a miserable heat wave blanketing much of the upper Midwest and the Atlantic seaboard. Triple digits throughout the area are common. And then, there is the excruciating humidity. It seems our 103-107 temperatures in Las Vegas are just ho-hum. At least we have a "dry heat."

The Cupboard is Bare

Readers may have noticed my name appearing as an author a little more than usual. This is because we are not coming close to receiving the 26 or so pages of editorial content we need for each issue. While I thank those who have made contributions, we need others to participate in order to keep the society vibrant and

healthy. It is neither my desire nor duty to fill the *FCP*. I have other responsibilities that absorb a goodly portion of my time and energy.

Breaking Point

I refuse to fill this journal with reprints, new issue fluff or other fillers. I don't think this is what the membership wants. So, then, what does the membership want? We are simply a group of stamp collectors that have a common interest in the philately of France and her colonies. We are also in the position of having numerous members who, while they don't directly collect these areas, know the importance of France on worldwide philately and support us for this and other altruistic reasons. We need help now to keep our quality journal. The editor can not do it alone.

If memory serves, the *FCP* costs from \$5,000-\$6,000 per year to produce. From this we can easily compute a "critical mass" of memberships needed to support this. A simple division by our membership fee of \$20 shows we need between 250 and 300 members to break even. The Secretary's Report in the last issue shows a current membership of 287. This is an emerging problem. What happens when membership can't support the *FCP*?

What to do? Well, we could cut the number of issues from four to three. We tried to pursue the notion of an all electronic journal, like the Indochina Society does. This was not well received. We could obviously use treasury surplus for some finite length of time. You know, pretend we're the federal government. This is not a fiducially sound approach. If readers have any thoughts on solving this conundrum, please let us know.

2012 Dues

As noted by the President, a large number of members have yet to pay their 2012 dues. For everyone's convenience, there is a form enclosed in this *FCP*.

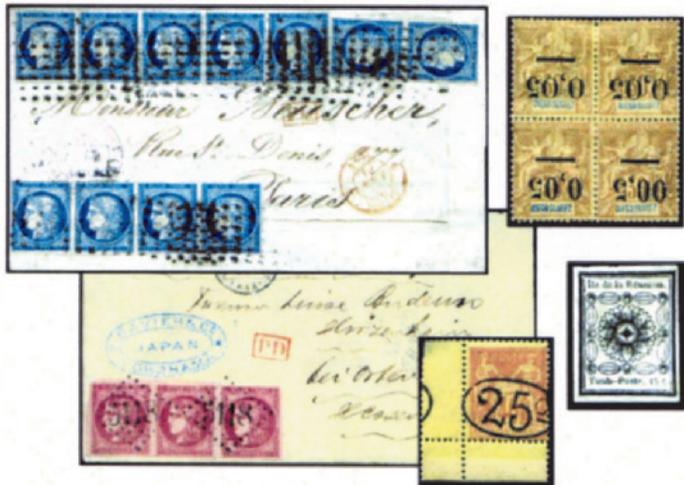
Election

The ballot for the election of officers is enclosed in this *FCP*. Please vote early.

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