

FRANCE



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This number, dated July-September 1944, has been much delayed by various causes, and is published November, 1944. The sixth number of Vol.3 will, we hope, appear during December 1944.

PORT DE LA ROCHELLE

by

HENRY JERVIS, M.A.

In The Philatelic Magazine, April 23, 1943



This beautiful example of the artistry of Monsieur Cheffer, the designer and engraver of the famous *Pont du Gard* stamp of France, has the distinction of being the first French postage stamp to be printed in *taille douce* (line-engraving or recess-printing) on Rotary presses. Of two types listed by Gibbons, the first, printed in bright ultramarine, is identifiable by its colour and by the well-known downward serif attached to the upper bar of the E. of POSTES (Fig. 1).

The second of the catalogued types, printed in deep blue, is characterised by the absence of the serif and the appearance of small vertical lines of shading (Fig. 2), on the side of the boat above the R of REPUBLIQUE.

Although the listing of the *Port de la Rochelle* printings in the general catalogue of MM. Yvert

is absent, the stamp definitely belongs to this printing irrespective of shade, for the "open 0" is an invariant. Most if not all of the stamps of this type also show peculiarities at the foot of the same digit (0) in the value-tablet, some of which are shown in Fig. 4, for which acknowledgment is due



Fig. 2.—No serif. Shading added.



Fig. 1.—Downward serif.

and Tellier agrees with Messrs. Gibbons' classification, it is possible that the third type, second in point of time, and carried out in a colour intermediate between ultramarine and deep blue, may be worthy of more attention than it appears to have received from English philatelists and collectors. It is at least remarkable that such a well-defined and easily identifiable type should have remained so long uncatalogued by Gibbons and by Yvert and Tellier.

This stamp is readily identifiable by the engraving of the 0 of 10, the figure of value, and by the absence of the serif. If the interior elongated oval of this 0 is open at the base (Fig. 3), and the serif

to Monsieur Thiaude's excellent "*Projet d'Inscription au Catalogue*" of 1940. All these variations, another of which may be seen in Fig. 3, form admirable aids to the identification of stamps of this printing.

The third and final issue of the *Port de la Rochelle* stamps (Gibbons' and Yvert's second type) is characterised by the closure of the 0 and the entire disappearance of irregularities of engraving in the *cartouche* of value (Fig. 5) Monsieur Thiaude is not the only French cataloguer who recognises three printings, for Monsieur Bourcvet also lists three, and the Baron de Vinck, that most learned of French philatelists, gives their dates of printing as—

Type I (serif), 22nd March, 1929 to 8th June, 1929.
 Type II (open 0 without serif), 18th September, 1930 to 4th May 1931.
 Type III (closed 0 without serif), 10th June, 1931 to 26th Feb., 1938

It may be convenient if the three types are referred to subsequently either by type-number or as "serif," "open 0," and "closed 0," respectively.

From the Baron de Vinck's dates it will be seen that the three printings extended over periods of 2½ months, 7½ months, and 6½ years respectively.

Hence it might be thought that the length of these periods would indicate more or less approximately the relative frequency of occurrence of the three types. That this is not the case is shown not only by experience but also by the French pricings for the "open 0" in mint condition was valued by Monsieur Thiaude in 1940 at no less than twice the price of the mint "serif" while Monsieur Bourcevet left the "open 0" unpriced. Possibly this printing, like its successor, type III, was discontinuous between the dates given above. The "closed 0" type is not nearly as common as might be supposed from its 6½ years run, for its printing was discontinued from 1932 to 1935, both years included.

The rarest of all the *Port de la Rochelle* stamps was printed quite exceptionally, not in a shade of ultramarine or blue, but actually in *chaudron clair*, the colour of the second type of the *Pont du Gard* stamps, in which hue a few copies ("un tirage très limité") are recorded to have been produced for an eminent French personage. The writer of this article has never seen a reference to the appearance of these rarities upon the market, whether in France or elsewhere.

As is well known, the Chambon rotary machines in use at the *Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres* impress the date of printing (day, month, and year) on the left-hand lower corner of every sheet of line-engraved stamps, and the collection of corner blocks of four stamps thus dated is a serious pre-occupation of French collectors, who sometimes indeed aim at acquiring one such "coin daté" for each year of issue of any given stamp. In the interests of accuracy it should be noted that whether the designs are horizontal or vertical, the Chambon machines deliver sheets of stamps of *grand format* in long continuous rolls with the short sides of the stamps parallel to the edges of the roll. Thus a sheet of stamps of vertical design, as for instance *Cézanne* or *La Champenoise*, will appear to be dated on the right-hand lower corner, though the date would appear on the left side as the sheet emerged from the machine.

By an error which has never been repeated in any French stamp the first sheets of the "serif" issue were printed, on and after 22nd March, 1929, with the plate reversed from top to bottom. Hence as the date naturally does not appear on the plate, but is applied to the sheets by a separate mechanism, it was printed at the right of each of these sheets. A few days later, on the 27th March, the plate was again reversed with the result that subsequent sheets were dated normally.

This accidental circumstance is responsible for the second scarcest product (after the exclusive *chaudron clair* printing) of the *Port de la Rochelle* plates, for in 1940 a corner block of the "serif" type, dated abnormally on the right, was priced in France at 1,200 francs, or about £7 at the rate of exchange then current. At the same time *coins datés* of the same type dated normally were selling at 550 francs each, or about £3, while *coins datés* of type II, the "open 0," were realising 1000 francs or roughly £6. There can be little doubt that copies of the scarce "open 0" type have passed as examples of the relatively common type III.

One of the most interesting features of the *Port de la Rochelle* issues is the existence of re-entries, which may be found in both types II and III. Among even a few copies of the stamp a re-entry is likely to be found, given sharp eyesight and a small hand-lens. Re-entries are always total, affecting the whole of the design, and the amount of the displacement varies from stamp to stamp. As its direction is always lateral the effect is more readily seen in vertical or nearly vertical lines. The cause of this intriguing phenomenon, with particulars of other French line-engraved stamps on which it has been observed by the writer, is the subject of a detailed study now in progress.

According to the Baron de Vinck three *molettes* (roller-dies) were used in the printing of the *Port de la Rochelle* stamps, and the third or "closed 0" printing was carried out first in sheets of 25 and subsequently in sheets of 50. From these facts and from examination of the details of the engraving, it appears certain that a single master-die was used throughout. From this die, plate I was laid down by means of *molette* I. For the second printing, the master-die was re-engraved, the letters being thickened and all lines strengthened. In this process the serif disappeared and the general effect became more vigorous. Plate II was then produced, via *molette* II, from the re-engraved die. But an inspection of Figs. 3 and 4 above will show that this

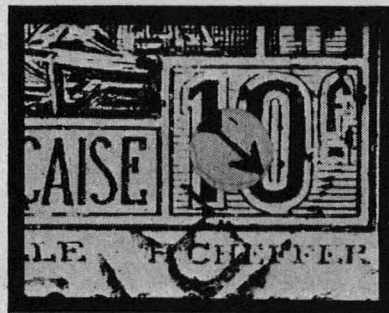


Fig. 3.—Open inner oval.

molette was certainly damaged more than once during the progress of this work.

Hence it would not seem extravagant to attribute to these defects the need for the preparation of a new plate (No. III), for the third or "closed 0" printing. This new plate could not readily be made by retouching Plate II, for that course would have required the closure of the apertures in every

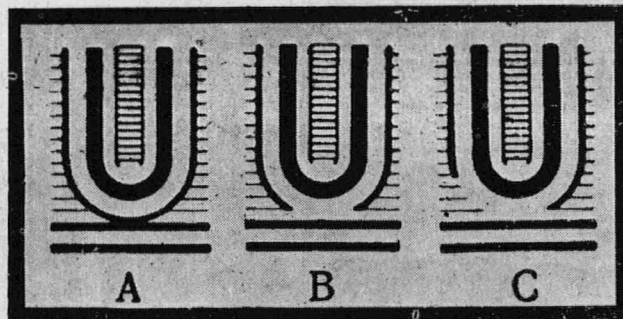


Fig. 4.—"O" flaws.



Fig. 5.—Closed "O."

"open 0" in addition to the repair of the multitude of minor defects produced in practically every stamp by the flaws in *molette* II. Most probably therefore the master die was retouched in order to close the open 0, and a new *molette* was impressed from the retouched die.

The Baron de Vinck has declared his opinion that unless pieces of the third type are dated it is impossible to allocate them to Plates III and IV respectively, but as the existence of the re-entries does not appear to have been known to the learned Baron, a basis of differentiation would immediately become available if it should prove to be the case that of the two plates one only contained re-entries. Even then there would remain the impossibility of distinguishing between normally printed and undated stamps produced from these plates unless they happened to be *se tenant* with re-entries.

Additional facts are required. The writer has found re-entries on all four stamps of a *coin daté* of type III, kindly lent to him for inspection by Mrs. R. A. Graham from her highly specialised collection of French stamps. Though the date of this piece is 18.4.36, it is possible that Plate III was still in use at that time. At the moment, the problem of the identification of stamps from these two plates must be regarded as unsolved.

The following schematic presentation of the *Port de la Rochelle* printings may prove convenient for use by students and collectors of this stamp:—

Molette	Plate	Date	Plate Characteristics	Special Features
I	I	1929	Serif	(a) Date on right of sheet (b) Date in normal position
II	II	1930	Open 0	(a) Re-entries (b) Various break-ages of lines in <i>cartouche</i> of value
III	III (sheets of 25)	1931 to 1938	Closed 0	Re-entries
III	IV (sheets of 50)			

The *chaudron clair* specimens produced for "*une personnalité haut placée*" are believed to have been printed from Plate I.

SUMMARY.

1. The plate-characteristics of the *Port de la Rochelle* stamps of France are reviewed and a definite third type (type II), the scarcest of the three, is described in addition to the two types (I and III) already listed in this country.
2. Additional facts are required before stamps of type III can be allocated to Plates III and IV respectively.



MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE.

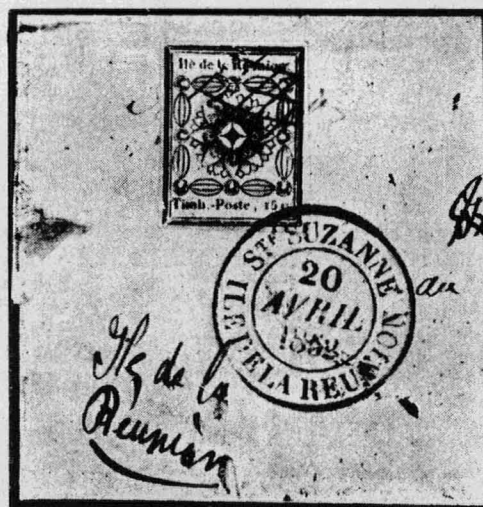
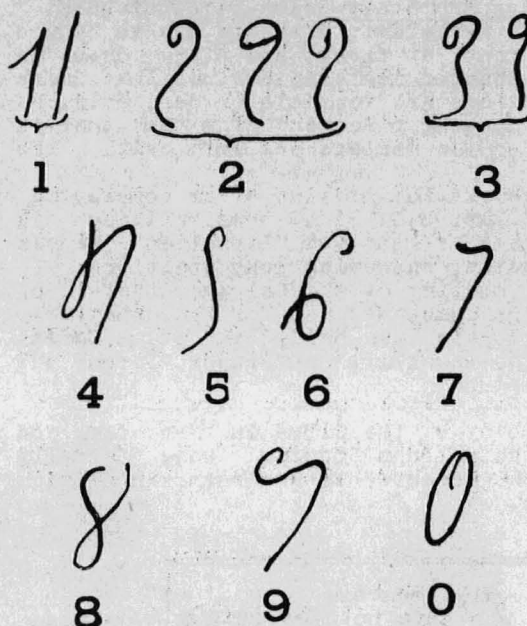
Those of you who have not yet paid your dues for 1944-45 will aid your Secretary, whose time is not unlimited and whose work for so large a society uses a great many hours, if you will not wait for a notice but remit when you see this. The officers are giving their time and labor without pay, for our mutual and philatelic good; help make their tasks light.

Press of professional duties prevents Dr. Vaurie from assembling and editing this number, but others are doing it, as nearly as possible according to the way he has done and has suggested to us.

THE "POST OFFICE NUMERALS."

These rating handstamps were in use as late as 1882, and may cause some confusion on covers because certain of the figures are not according to the modern forms. These originated about 1793, as handwritten numerals --- the same forms were later made up as handstamps. Some of them, as shown, differ more or less from place to place.

Reprinted from *Catalogue des Estampilles et Obliterations Françaises* but reduced to about half size.



1862
REUNION ISLAND
in the Indian Ocean

French Field Post
in World War I.

Office or Sector
No. 148.

From "Postal Markings"
magazine, 1935



CHICAGO CHAPTER ORGANIZED

The Chicago Chapter of the France & Colonies Group was organized on August 21, 1944, at the meeting called by Mr. Ben Reeves and held at the Hotel La Salle during the Chipex-S.P.A.

Thirteen persons, including eight of those already members, were present. The other five joined the Group at this time.

Officers of the Chicago Chapter were chosen as follows:

Chapter Chairman, Dwight B. Ball.

Chapter Secretary, Helen T. Cunningham.

By general agreement, meetings are to be held every other month at first, and every month as soon as the Chapter membership finds that more frequent meetings are feasible or desirable. The choice of a meeting place and of a time that is convenient for the members was left with the officers.

At the organization meeting, after completing the business, Mr. S.G. Rich, then visiting in Chicago, gave a talk on the "Richelieu" labels and their status, answering many questions.

The first meeting of the Chicago Chapter, of which word has come, was set for Wednesday, Nov. 22, 1944, at Austin Town Hall, Lake St. & Central Ave., Chicago. An exhibit of France forms the announced feature.

At the meeting of the Group in New York on Sept. 7th, the Chicago Chapter was formally recognized and accepted as an organized portion of the Group.

Will members
who have not yet paid
the 1944-45 dues
please send in theirs
now, to the Secretary
Helen V. Anthony
24 Franklin Place
Montclair, N.J.

"1" AND "1a" IN THE SUPPLEMENT LISTS

In the Numeral Cancellation supplement lists which, by courtesy of our member John R. Mc Gee, we are furnishing to members with the Philatelist, some of us may be puzzled by what look like duplicating département numbers in a few cases.

What appears to be "One-A" or "One with an apostrophe" precedes the regular numeral after the office name.

Thus, if you look on the very first page of the supplements, you find:

6 8 Absie (1') (75)

The town name is L'Absie: the "One" is the article.

On page 2, similarly, Les Arcs-sur-Argens is given thus:

106 137 Arcs-sur-Argens (les) (78)

In the second instalment we have:

4495 Brasse(1a) (82).

This is the office La Bresse.

Convenience is served by omitting the article

Convenience is served by listing without the article, especially as the numbers were given on that basis in the original serial numbering.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

June 1 to Oct. 30, 1944.

NEW MEMBERS. Welcome to our new members:

176. HASSLER, G.E., 2618 Chesterfield Boulevard, Norfolk, Va.
177. DOMANSKI, Vincent, Jr., 4545 North Carlisle St., Philadelphia 40, Pa.
178. WEBER, A.H., 110 Ardmore Road, Berkeley 8, Calif.
179. BIERBAUER, S.L., Box 525, Pasadena, Calif.
180. SINSHEIMER, Capt. Maurice B., QMC, Hq. S.O.S. A.P.O. 502, San Francisco, Calif.
181. HORWITZ, Sgt. William, Hdq. Co., Base H, A.P.O. 920, San Francisco, Calif.
182. SABBATH, William B., 4018 Broadway, Chicago 41, Ill.
183. FALK, Mrs. Marjorie, 4871 North Talman Ave., Chicago, Ill.
184. ZAPP, Karl H., 1518 North Washtenaw Ave., Chicago, Ill.
185. BLAIS, Richard L., 282 Pleasant St., Berlin, N.H.
186. KAHN, S.S., 33-38 191st St., Flushing, N.Y.
187. WRIGHT, Comdr. W.R., U.S.S. New Jersey, c/o Fleet P.O., San Francisco, Calif.
188. BURKHARDT, Harry L., 10636 South Leavitt St., Chicago 43, Ill.
189. ESTEP, A.L., 5108 West 22nd Place, Cicero 50, Ill.
190. KOCH, Miss Elsa, 1120 Drummond Place, Chicago, Ill.
191. KUNZENDORF, Miss Viola, 1255 East 96th St., Chicago, Ill.
192. CUNNINGHAM, Miss Helen T., 6112 Caldwell Ave., Chicago, Ill.
193. RUTHERFORD, S.G., 8910 Blackstone Ave., Chicago 19, Ill.

---CHANGES OF ADDRESSES---

- CRAPSER, Charles B. (147) to 737 Aldine Ave., Chicago, Ill.
CHATTERTON, C.M. (160), to 9210 Petoskey Ave., Detroit 4, Mich.
HARMER, Gordon R. (116) to 560 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N.Y.
LEAVY, Louis R. (96) to 18 Richardson St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

-----REINSTATED-----

54. A. Landauer
96. Louis R. Leavy
56. D.L. Harkins
58. Delf Norona.

-----RESIGNED-----

44. GOOTEE, Capt. T.E., Chicago, Ill.
33. LARSON, R.L., South Milwaukee, Wis.
67. NOUSS, Henry O., Ferguson, Mo.

-----DECEASED-----

153. DWORKOWSKI, Z., Detroit, Mich.
(reported June 1 1944)

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED

Yes This Means YOU	TO NOTIFY THE SECRETARY IN CASE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS	yes this means you ---
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