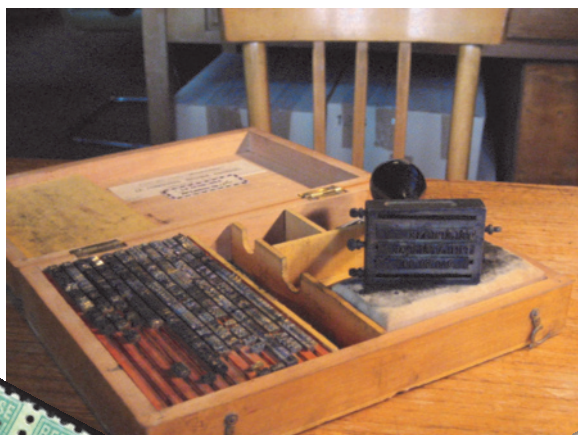




# FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST

April 2011  
Whole No. 304 (Vol. 67, No. 2)



*Handstruck Overprints in the French Colonies*  
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**FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST**

USPS #207700

ISSN 0897-1293

Published quarterly by the  
**FRANCE AND COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY, INC.**  
 Affiliate No. 45, American Philatelic Society

The France & Colonies Philatelist (FCP) is the official journal of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society, Inc. Permission to reprint material appearing herein is granted provided that proper credit is given to the FCP and the Editor is notified.

Dues for U.S. addresses \$20.00 per year (\$22.00 using PayPal)  
 Dues for others: \$25.00 per year (\$27.00 using PayPal)  
 Dues include a subscription to the FCP

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# Handstruck Overprints in the Colonies

David L. Herendeen (FCPS 2532)

The study and collection of related issues of the French colonies has often been pursued by collectors, exhibitors and researchers. For example, the late **Robert Stone**, long-time *FCP* editor and prolific researcher of French colonial issues, performed detailed studies of provisional surcharges and overprints,<sup>1</sup> typeset colonial issues,<sup>2</sup> local postage due stamps<sup>3</sup> and more. *FCPS* member and international Grand Prix d'Honneur winner, **Ed Grabowski**, has collected Group type (Navigation and Commerce in Scott) postal history across colonies, and member **François Delpy**, of France, similarly for the type Sage issues. The author studies all of the colonial postage due issues and has published many articles about them. All of these studies are fruitful when they allow underlying themes in stamp issuance to be identified. This article revisits a portion of the Stone work.<sup>1</sup> While he covered all of the groups of provisional overprints from 1881 through the 1940s, this article covers only the *handstruck* surcharges issued from 1881 until 1906. There is a section for each of the 17 colonies using these overprint methods. This article is not intended to be a catalogue, but rather an overview of these fascinating and elusive issues which are often taken for granted by modern collectors.

Much of the fundamental catalogue information may be found in the seminal 1936 *Yvert et Tellier* catalogue<sup>4</sup>, and there is some useful information in the new series of *Dallay* catalogues.<sup>5</sup> There are also some papers that have appeared in the journals of our sister groups the *FCPS* of Great Britain and *COL.FRA* in France. For convenience, catalogue numbers are given from both Scott<sup>6</sup> (Sc.) and the modern *Yvert and Tellier*<sup>7</sup> (Y&T.)

The author hopes that this overview might inspire fellow members and collectors to specialize in this area for one, or perhaps several related, colonies. The opportunity for research and new discoveries is indeed boundless.

## Historical Background

On 10 June 1859, by imperial decree, a special issue of postage stamps was designed and produced for use in the French colonies. These new *aigle* (eagle) stamps were released over a period of time to the colonies from 1858-1862. After this special issue, the stamps of France were simply distributed to the colonies without perforations. These included the types Napoleon and Cérès of 1871-1872 (Scott 7-15), type Sage (Peace and Commerce in Scott, 24-45) of 1878-1879, and type Commerce of 1881-1886 (Scott 46-59). The type Duval postage due stamps (both the black issues of 1884-1885 and the colored issue of 1893-1906) were also distributed to the colonies.

As Stone notes,<sup>8</sup> the Ministry of Colonies did not direct the colonies to create any provisional overprints during the 1880-1890 period. He also notes factors contributing to the first wave of provisional overprints. Several cited specifically are: that the policies and procedures set forth by the Ministry of Colonies were not well-defined; that governors were often inexperienced in administration; and that the system for estimating postal needs and requisitioning stamps was inefficient and slow reacting. Readers should note that the overprints often favored 5c, 10c and 25c values. These reflect the common UPU rates at the time: 25c per 15 grams for French Community or overseas letters; 10c for post cards and 5c per 50g of printed matter. Usages of the 5c stamps on printed matter envelopes or wrappers are generally rare, and much sought-after by specialists.

The handstruck overprints, most of which included surcharges, were always printed locally using indigenous labor and materials. Many, but not all, were crudely applied using a variety of methods described in the next section.

The French position on overprinting of stamps locally changed when a Ministerial Dispatch of 6 May 1891<sup>9</sup> authorized the colonies to over-

print all remaining stocks of colonial stamps with the name of the colony. This was to prevent arbitrageurs from profiting by buying stamps in one colony and selling them in another where there was an exchange imbalance. Many, but not all, colonies implemented this policy. However, a number of colonies continued this practice after the new Group type stamps arrived in the colonies. These abuses led to the Ministerial Circular dated 29 Dec 1892 forbidding the practice. The warning was repeated in another letter of 28 Jan 1895. These orders did not deter some colonies from continuing the practice for several more years.

Handstruck overprints were also employed in French territories other than colonies, including foreign post offices (Madagascar-pre 1896, China, Morocco) and military occupations (Castellorizo, Cilicia, Rouad). Only the colonies are considered in this study.

### Overprint Methods

The methods for creating the devices for overprinting the stamps by hand varied. There were four major procedures employed:

- ♦ Carving a stamp in wood
- ♦ Engraving a stamp in copper
- ♦ Carving a stamp in rubber
- ♦ Using printing type set up in a *Composteur*

The procedure for creating handstamps — often referred to as *tampons* in the French literature — is basically the same using the first three methods. As seen in Fig. 1,<sup>10</sup> the first step is the engraving, or carving, of the reversed design to be printed into the smooth surface of a block of wood, copper or rubber. None of these substances has a high durability so that the images produced from them can deteriorate quickly. It will be noted that stamp issues using these procedures were mostly printed in quite short runs. If long runs were made, then the occurrence of damaged or missing letters increased dramatically.

The main tool for working with these media is called the *burin* (arrow Fig. 1). It is a sharp metal implement that lets the artist cut around the design model. In today's world, such work is generally performed by laser cutting devices.



Figure 1. An example of a handstamp engraved on wood. Note the burins pictured (arrow). They are used to cut the wood from around the reversed design.

The fourth method uses a composing stick, or, in French, a *composteur*, to setup the overprint in moveable type. This is not dissimilar from printing sets we may have had as children. The loose type is set into the device as seen in Fig. 2. When used for stamps, the type is then locked in to the *composteur* for the overprint run. The durability and quality of this method is generally better than the other three, but, as will be seen, it can still result in many varieties and errors. Also, depending on the size and complexity of the overprint, several stamps may be struck in a single operation.

### The Issues Described

In organizing this study, the author was torn between presenting an alphabetical list of the colonies concerned, or a more chronological treatment. Although the alphabetical list would have been perhaps easier to follow, the chronology won out because of its ability to isolate the historical context of the issues.



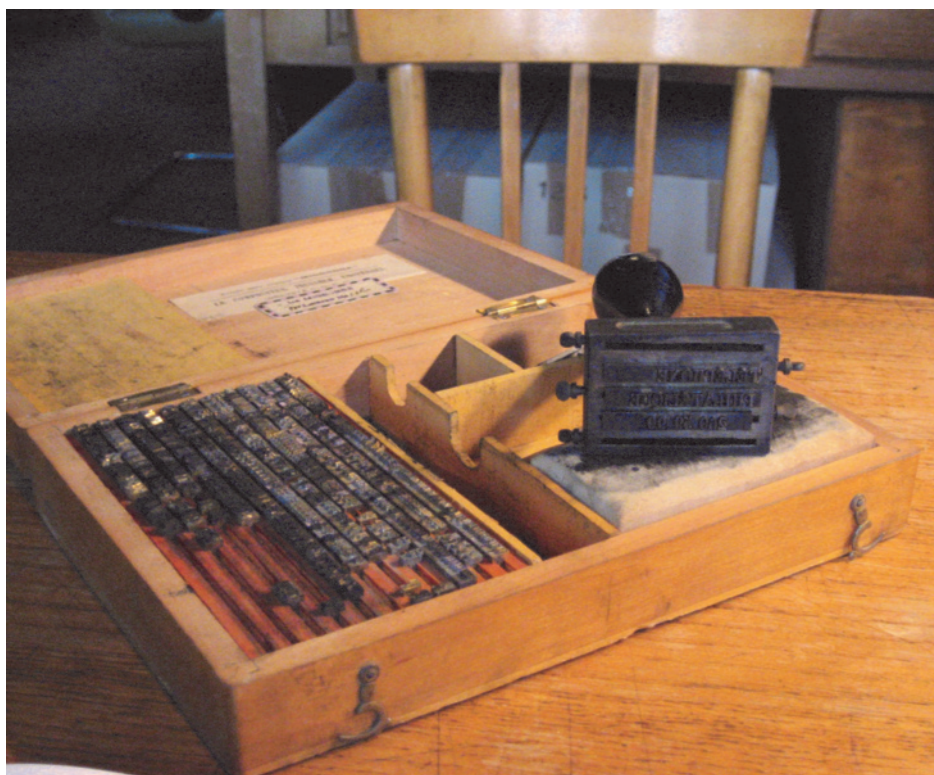


Figure 2. Setting loose type in a composteur. (Courtesy J.-F. Brun)

### Tahiti (1882-1893)

The colony of Tahiti issued the earliest and greatest number of handstruck surcharges by far. This started with the first issue of 9 June to 6 December 1882. A single *tampon*, carved in wood, was used to surcharge type Sage stamps with new face values. These included **25c** on 35c, **25c** on 40c and **25c** on 35c. Two separate formats were used, as seen in Fig. 25.

Note that the surcharge in Fig. 3a is inverted, and that in Fig. 3b is applied vertically. These are some of the examples of the varieties arising



Figure 3. The June-July 1884 provisionals of Tahiti.



Figure 4. The June-July 1884 provisionals of Tahiti.

from the use of these handstamps (Sc. 1-1B, Y&T 1-3). As shown, varieties exist including vertical, inverted and doubled surcharges.

An *arrêté* of 12 June 1884 authorized additional surcharges using the same format as shown above. The three values were **5c** on 20c, **10c** on 20c and **25c** on 1f, as shown in Fig. 4 (Sc. 2-4, Y&T 4-6). Vertical and inverted surcharges exist.

The **25c** surcharge used the same cachet as the 1884 issue. An interesting point is that the three *tampons* were used in June 1884 as indicia — they were struck directly on covers and wrappers. (cf. Y&T 4aA-5cA)

On 1 July 1892, the entire series of both the type Commerce definitives and the Duval postage dues were surcharged **TAHITI** in response to the Ministerial decree (Sc. 5-16, Y&T 7-18 and Sc. J1-13, Y&T TT1-13). A pair of the postage dues, showing different surcharge varieties which are mixed in the panes, is shown in Fig. 5. As seen, both inverted and doubled surcharges exist.



Figure 5. The July 1893 provisional issue of Tahiti.





Figure 6. The August 1892 provisional issue of Tahiti.

Finally, in August 1892, both the Sage and Duval issues were again surcharged. This time the surcharge was in two lines: **1893/TAHITI** (Sc. 17-28, Y&T 19-30 and Sc. J1-13, Y&T TT14-26). It is believed that this surcharge was made with a *composteur* that included two clichés. This is easily visualized by examining Fig. 6 and noting how the pairs of surcharges appear to be in perfect alignment.

### *St. Pierre et Miquelon (1885)*

The FCPS is fortunate to have member **Jean-Jacques Tilliard** who is a specialist in, and exhibitor of, early St. Pierre and Miquelon material. He has been participating in U.S. philately for several years and many of us have gotten to know him. This section will be brief because he has already treated the first three issues in our journal.<sup>11</sup>

As a brief review, the first handstruck provisionals were issued in St. Pierre on 6 January 1885. The first surcharge transformed stocks of the 2c French Colonies Commerce issue into 5c values (Scott 9, Y&T 1). This surcharge is

especially interesting for two reasons:

- ♦ It was printed in two parts
- ♦ Both parts were always inverted

Only 300 stamps were surcharged. The two operations result in a variable distance between the **5** and **S. P. M.**, and the **5** is often struck obliquely with respect to the **S. P. M.** The handstamp, which was carved on wood, was printed in gray-black. This stamp is shown here as Fig. 7a.

Additional values were surcharged in the same manner 7 March and 25 March 1885, also using a *tampon* carved on wood in gray-black ink. (Sc. 7-8, 10 and Y&T 2-4) There are a number of errors and varieties in both issues, and the printings were small, 600-900. A fourth group of handstruck surcharges was issued from 27 July to 17 December 1885. The type Sage values of 40c were surcharged **05**, **10** and **15** in black using a *composteur* and a rather fancy typeface for **SPM** as seen in Fig. 7b. Ref 4 reports that three surcharges were set up in the *composteur* and printed simultaneously. However, it is also noted that the early part of the printing was made with a single cachet. The quantities reportedly printed were 6500 for the **05** and 20,000 each for the **10** and **15**.

The final provisionals were issued from 21-31 December 1885. A new value of **05** was applied to the 20c type Commerce and the 35c, 75c and 1f values of the type Sage (Sc. 4-6, Y&T 5-7). It was applied in black ink using a *composteur* which included three horizontal surcharges. Quantities surcharged ranged from 800 to 13,500. An example is shown in Fig. 8.



a.



b.

Figure 7. Examples of St. Pierre and Miquelon issues, 6 January 1885 and 27 July 1885





Figure 8. Example of St. Pierre et Miquelon December 1885 overprint.

### Gabon (1886-1889)

The governor of Gabon issued an *arrêté* on 31 July 1886 that authorized that 15c and 20c values of the current type Commerce definitives to be surcharged with a new value and an identification of the colony by an additional surcharge using a cropped version of the lozenge cachet **GAB**. At this time, Gabon had a shortage of stamps of the commonly used values 5c, 10c, 25c, 50c and 75c (Sc. 1-5, Y&T 1-5). These new values and the **GAB** cachet were applied in two operations using separate handstamps. As noted, much of the lozenge cancel had been deleted leaving **GAB** and only 13 points. An example is shown in Fig. 9a. Only the **25** on 20c is relatively common with a printing of 10,500, while the other values were printed in quantities ranging from 50 to 900.

Not surprisingly, numerous varieties exist in-

cluding doubled digits, missing digits, missing **GAB** and inverted **GAB**.

A continuing shortage of 15c and 25c values led to another issue. Printed over a period of less than three months, five new surcharges were created (Sc. 6-10, Y&T 6-10). This time, as shown in Fig. 9b, the surcharge was only the digits representing the new value. These stamps were printed in very limited quantities from 400-1,000.

The most complex of the handstruck surcharges were authorized by three *arrêtés* of 27 March to 1 May 1889. These orders authorized the overprinting and surcharging of three postage type Duval due values to create postage stamps. These three values (Sc. 12-15, Y&T 11-13) were **15** on 5c, **15** on 30c, and **25** on 20c. The interesting thing is that three separate *tampons* were used to create each surcharge: **GABON**, **TIMBRE** and the new value. This procedure was obviously fraught with danger and varieties resulted. The basic surcharge is presented in Fig. 10, this block of four shows how the relationship of the three surcharge parts vary from stamp to stamp.

The final provisional issue (Sc. 15-16, Y&T 14-15) was again unusual. A special design was made and new stamps printed in Libreville in sheets of ten. The authorizing *arrêté* required the authentication of the stamps by surcharging them with the modified **GAB** obliterator used for the 1886 issue. These simplistic stamps, shown in Fig. 11, were printed in quantities 1,000 and 15,000, respectively. Some of the stamps escaped the **GAB** surcharge.



a.



b.

Figure 9. The Gabon 1886 and 1888-89 handstruck overprints.



Figure 10. The March 1889 overprint showing the different relationships of the overprint tampons.



Figure 11. The typographed stamps of 1889 with the **GAB** validator.

### French Guiana (1886-1888)

The first four stamp issues of French Guiana were created by surcharging various general colonial issues including types Sage, Commerce and Cérès. The first issue, shown in Fig. 8, was released in December 1886 (Sc. 1, Y&T 1,1a and 2a). 1800 stamps having a new value of 5c were made by surcharging 900 of each of the 2c stamps, one type Sage and the other type Commerce, with the new value **0 05**. As seen in Fig. 12a, the surcharge consisted of three lines that were setup using a *composteur*. There are a number of varieties caused by defects of type, and both surcharges are known doubled. The most obvious variety exhibits the missing **f** in the surcharge, i.e. **0 05** which is seen in Fig. 8a.

In April 1887, the supplies of 5c, 20c and 25c were running low. A governmental *arrêté* authorized a surcharge on existing stocks of type Sage and Cérès stamps. The three values, again surcharged using a *composteur*, were **0 05** on 2c, **0 20** on 35c and **0 25** on 30c (Sc. 4-7, Y&T 3-5). The format, shown in Fig. 12b,



a.

b.

Figure 12. The first two handstruck provisionals of French Guiana.

was quite similar to the setting used in 1887, with a small ruling line added between the date and **GUY FRANÇ**. Again, there were numerous varieties and doubled surcharges for the **0 20** and **0 25** values. Relatively large quantities were printed ranging from 3,000 to 10,000.

A continuing shortage of 5c stamps resulted in another *arrêté* dated 21 December 1887. It authorized surcharging of **5** on 30c Cérès and Sage stamps. In fact, the type Cérès stamp was used in error and corrected after two or three sheets were surcharged. Thus 5,700 stamps were surcharged on the Sage stamps (Sc. 8, Y&T 6) and 300 on the type Cérès (Sc. 9, Y&T 7). Again, there are inverted and doubled surcharges. The type Cérès stamp, Fig. 13a, was printed in quantity 5,700, but only 300 of the type Sage were printed.



a.

b.

Figure 13. The second two handstruck provisionals of French Guiana.

The persistent shortage of 5c and 10c stamps resulted in yet another *arrêté* issued February 1888 (Sc. 10-11, Y&T 8-9) that authorized the surcharging of **5** on 30c Cérès and **10** on 75c Sage stamps. Quantities printed were 6,000 for the **5** on 30c, and 2,000 of the **10** on 75c, Fig. 13b. The latter surcharge was applied to stamps of both red and carmine shades in about the same quantity. The **5** on 30c is known with double and inverted surcharge, the **10** on 75c with double surcharge. Both values are reported in pairs, one with surcharge missing.

A final emergency surcharge was authorized on 5 December 1892 (Sc. 31, Y&T 29). One of the type Commerce definitive that had been surcharged **GUYANE**. in February of that year, were additionally surcharged **DEC. 92/0 05**. The printing quantity was 10,000.



## Annam and Tonkin (1888)

A decree dated 21 January 1888 authorized the creation of the single issue of provisional stamps. This decree read:<sup>4</sup>

*The secretary general. Interim resident general in Annam and Tonkin :*

*Given the report of the Director of Posts and Telegraphs indicating that supplies of postage stamps of values 1c and 5c are almost totally exhausted :*

*Whereas these stamps are commonly used and it is essential that supplies do not run out.*

*Given the urgency :*

*It is decided :*

*The Director of Posts and Telegraphs is authorized to transform the quantities of 2, 4 and 10 centimes indicated below into stamps having values of 1c and 5c. :*

*First, Into stamps of 1c, 20,850 2c stamps.  
30,000 4c stamps*

*Second, Into stamps of 5c, 45,000 10c stamps*

*Hanoi, 21 January 1888  
[signed] Raoul Berger*

In order to produce these surcharges in a timely manner, a number of different *tampons* were created. Some were engraved on copper, and others were carved on wood. It appears that ten different *tampons* were used for the **1** surcharge. Eight of these were generally of the format shown in Fig. 14a (**A&T**), and one of the format shown in Fig. 14c (**A-T**). Only two *tampons* were used for the **5** surcharge, an example of which is shown in Fig. 14b. The stock used for the surcharges included the 2c, 4c and 10c values of the Commerce general issue. (Sc. 1-9, Y&T 1-7)

The surcharges vary considerably from stamp to stamp because of different inking and wear

on the *tampons* during a large press run for handstruck stamps. Although a specialist might be interested in searching out all of the *tampons* and their states, there is no real philatelic significance to the different formats and minor varieties. There are several major varieties including vertical surcharges, inverted surcharges and a doubled, vertical surcharge.

## Nossi-Be (1889-1893)

The first issue of stamps in Nossi-Bé was printed in the period 5-25 June 1889. They were authorized by an *arrêté* dated 5 June 1889. The order noted that supplies of 5c and 25c stamps were exhausted while awaiting new stamps from Paris. The surcharges were applied to the 40c type Commerce issue (Sc. 1, Y&T 1), and the 10c, 20c, 30c and 40c values of the type Sage issue (Sc. 3-9, Y&T 2-6). A second *arrêté* dated 25 June authorized additional surcharges to be made on existing supplies of 10c, 20c and 30c type Sage values (Sc. , Y&T 7-9). The surcharges, shown in Fig. 15a, were applied in blue, ultramarine and indigo ink. While most were applied horizontally, some were struck diagonally. Details may be found in the excellent paper by Drye.<sup>12</sup>

After several issues of typographed provisionals, another handstamp was used to create stamps with the colony name impressed. These were issued in May 1893 and probably were created in response to the Ministerial Dispatch of 1892. The 10c, 15c and 20c type Commerce stamps were overprinted as shown in Fig. 15b, and then the 20c as shown in Fig 16. This block shows how the position of the overprint varies. It also shows an inverted overprint on the center stamp.



a.

b.

c.



a.

b.

Figure 14. Crude Annam and Tonkin provisionals of 1888.

Figure 15. Nossi-Bé provisional of 1889 and 1893.



Figure 16. The last Nossi-Bé provisional showing the different positioning of the overprints.

### Madagascar (1889-1896)

Until 1895, Madagascar was technically a French post office abroad. It then became a French protectorate, and finally in 1896 it gained colonial status. There were numerous handstruck surcharges during the earlier period (including the very rare Majunga surcharges of 25 February 1895 and the elliptical surcharges authorized by the military post office on 5 March 1896), but after 1896 the only handstruck items were the Group type stamps of Madagascar or Diego-Suarez. These stamps were bisected and surcharged with a rubber handstamp:

**Affranchissement  
exceptionnel  
(faute de Timbres.)**

and other various styles. Because it may be argued that these are cancellations, they are not listed in the Scott catalogue. However, they have been chronicled in the French catalogues for many years. (Y&T 78-93).<sup>13</sup> These should only be collected on covers, and further discussion is outside the purview of this article.

### Diego-Suarez (1890)

On 21 November 1889, a presidential decree set 1 January 1890 as the date that the military franking privilege for troops stationed in Diego-Suarez would end. The military were then subject to the standard 15c rate for letters to



Figure 17. The 1890 Diego-Suarez provisional.

France. However, the stock of 15c type Commerce stamps was too low for the expected mail volume. A series of *arrêtés* issued from 25 January to 3 August 1890 resulted in the first stamps of Diego-Suarez. Five values of the type Commerce issue (1c, 5c, 10c, 20c and 25c) were surcharged **15** in violet using a rubber handstamp. An example, with inverted surcharge, is shown Fig. 17. Quantities issued ranged from 1360 for the **15** on 5c to 6,000 for the **15** on 25c.

The overprint was to be applied diagonally to covering the old value, but a number of the surviving examples were applied with less precision. All five values are known with inverted surcharges, and the **15** on 10c is known doubled.

Of further interest is the use of a very thin liquid ink. This resulted in the ink showing through on the back of the stamps. Reprints made later for the philatelic trade used thicker ink which barely bled through the stamp, if at all.

### Indochina (1891-1902)

Indochina introduced special stamps in 1889 by surcharging type Commerce stamps. The only handstruck surcharges were those applied for use as parcel post (*colis postaux*) stamps (Sc. Q note, 3-4, Y&T CP2, 4, 5). The first, shown in Fig. 18a, was released in 1891. It was applied in brilliant or dull red ink to the 10c type Commerce stamp. The surcharge is known inverted. The second, shown in Fig. 18b, was issued in 1902 and the surcharge was applied in red or blue to the 10c Group type stamps of 1892 and then 1900. Existing varieties include inverted, double and vertical surcharges.



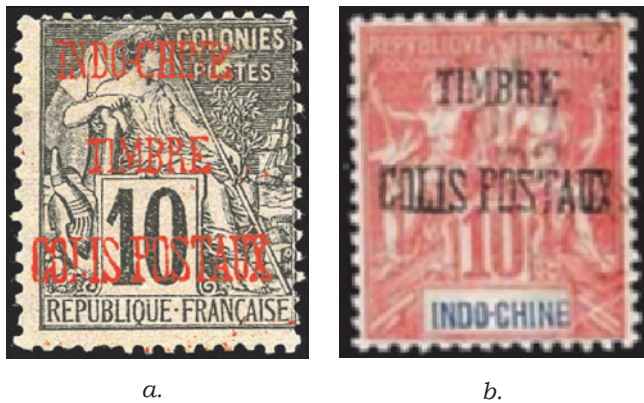


Figure 18. The two provisional parcel post stamps of Indo-China.

### New Caledonia (1892-1899)

New Caledonia issued many typographed provisional surcharges from 1881. However, a shortage of 5c and 10c stamps in December, 1892 resulted in the surcharging of 100 type Sage 1f values with the new value **10** and a fancy **N.C.E.** indicating the colony name. This stamp, a great rarity, is shown in Fig. 19a (Sc. 34, Y&T 35). Additionally, from 12,000 to 18,000 each of the **5** on 75c and **10** on 1f type Commerce definitive were also surcharged. These latter two were surcharged in both black and blue ink (Sc. 35-39, Y&T 36-40).

A second group of handstamped provisionals were authorized by an *arrêté* date 29 December 1899. The 2c and 4c Group type stamps of 1892 were surcharged **5** using the same design as the previous issue. In addition, the 30c, 75c and 1f values were surcharged in a new format shown in Fig. 19b (Sc. 59-63, Y&T 54-58).



Figure 19. New Caledonia provisionals of 1892 and 1899.

These stamps had extremely high printings for handstamped issues — on the order of 40,000 each. There are inverted and doubled surcharges.

### Obock (1892)

Obock was a port in the Somali Coast that issued its own stamps from 1892-1894. Its first two issues of stamps, and its first postage due stamps, were created with handstruck surcharges. The *arrêté* authorizing the issue cited the Ministerial Decree as the justification. The first surcharge used was simply a slightly curved **OBOCK**, which was applied with a rubber handstamp, as seen in Fig. 20a (on the 5c postage due, see below). This surcharge was applied to 11 values of the type Commerce general issues (Sc. 1-11, Y&T 1-11).

It is believed that a second *tampon*, carved in wood using sans serif letters set in a straight line, was used simultaneously.<sup>14</sup> This is seen in Fig. 20b. This surcharge was applied to nine of the type Commerce definitive values (Sc. 12-20, Y&T 12-20). The second *tampon* was re used to surcharge the series of 14 Duval postage due stamps from 1c to 5f, (Sc. J5-18, Y&T TT5-18) while the first was only applied to the 5c, 10c, 30c and 60c values (Sc. J1-4, Y&T TT1-4). With a printing of only a single pane of 25, the 5c postage due is the greatest rarity in Obock philately. All of these surcharges were printed in black ink. Inverted and double surcharges are found for many of the values including the postage dues. The curved tampon was later used to reprint some values. However, through time it had shrunk and the reprints have a discernably smaller surcharge.

A final group of provisionals (Sc. 21-31, Y&T 21-31) was authored by two *arrêtés* of 29 Feb



Figure 20. The three types of Obock provisionals.

and 6 April 1892. Values from 1 to 5F were surcharged on the previously surcharged issue with the linear surcharge (Sc. 21-31, Y&T 21-31). These were done in black, red and violet ink. Quantities printed ranged from 600 to 7,000. The *tampons* were carved into wood, and each character was printed separately. This resulted in numerous errors and varieties.

### Benin (1892-1894)

The colony of Bénin existed until 1899 when it was renamed Dahomey. Prior to the distribution of the Group type to the colony in March 1893, two issues of postage stamps and one of postage due stamps were issued. An *arrêté* was signed by the colonial governor on 10 August 1892. This order, based on the 1892 decree, authorized the colony name to be surcharged on the 5c, 10c, 15c and 25c values of the type Commerce stamps (Sc. 1-15A, Y&T 1-13).

A simple handstamp, carved on wood, was used to surcharge the stamps. Black, blue and red inks were used. In fact, there are three slightly different *tampons* that were used.<sup>15</sup> In addition, as these *tampons* wore, various states of the surcharge can be identified. Shown in Fig. 21a, these are detailed in an article by Jouvent<sup>16</sup>

The same *arrêté* also authorized the surcharging of the 15c type Commerce with new values of **40** and **75** corresponding to a domestic registered letter and the UPU registered letter. (Fig. 21b) An additional value of **01** on 5c was issued in October 1892. (Sc. 16-19, Y&T 14-17). These were surcharged in red ink, but 100 of the 75 on 15c were surcharged in black.

Finally, four of the black Duval postage due



a.

b.

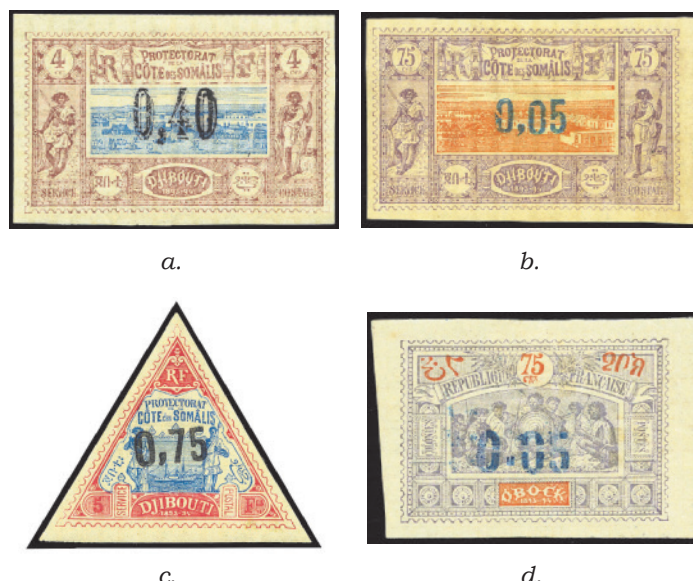
c.

stamps were also surcharged (Sc. J1-4, Y&T TT1-4) as seen in Fig. 21c.

### Somali Coast (1893-1902)

Somali Coast (along with its precursors of Djibouti and Obock) also issued handstruck provisionals. The first of these, (Sc. 23, Y&T 22) shown in Fig. 22a, converted the 4c definitive to a value of **0,40**, corresponding to the additional fee for registered letters within the French community. The surcharge, printed in black, is known inverted and doubled.

In January and February 1902 another provisional issue was released. (Sc. 24-27B, Y&T 23-26). New values of **0,05**, **0,10**, **0,40**, and **0,75** were applied to the stamps of Somali Coast (Fig. 22b) and an Obock triangle (Fig. 22c) using blue ink — note that the decimal was represented by a *virgule* or comma. The surcharges were handstruck with a *tampon* carved in wood. Quantities printed ranged from 436 to 18,860. The surcharges are known inverted and doubled. Also, the wear in the wood *tampon* resulted in many broken and deformed letters. One of the values (Sc. Unlisted, Y&T 28), shown in Fig. 22d, was printed with a decimal point rather than the comma. These were surcharged in blue, with the exception of the triangle which was surcharged in black, in quantities ranging from 436 to 8,000.



a.

b.

c.

d.

Figure 21. The three types of Bénin handstruck overprints: Issues of 1892-1893, surcharged stamps of 1892, postage dues of 1894.

Figure 22. The Somali Coast provisional overprints.



## Congo (1891-1900)

The first issues of French Congo, beginning in 1891, were created by applying handstruck overprints to existing general Colonies stamps. Three separate *arrêtés* between March and September authorized the first issue which created the most useful values, **5c**, **10c** and **15c**, by surcharging type Commerce stamps with face values of 1c, 15c, 20c, 25c and 40c (Sc. 1-10, Y&T 1-7). The surcharge, shown in Fig. 23a, included the colony name and the new value. The surcharge was applied with a *composteur*, and all characters were printed in a single operation. The stamps are known with vertical and double surcharges.<sup>17</sup>

A continuing shortage of 5c and 10c stamps led to the creation of another handstruck issue authorized in September and November 1892. This time, four of the Duval postage due stamps were surcharged with three lines as seen in Fig. 23b (Sc. 14-17, Y&T 8-11). The dues included the 5c, 20c, 30c, and the 1f brown. There are many minor varieties caused by broken characters, and the 10c on 1f is known both inverted and doubled. Printing quantities were about equal ranging from 2200 to 2750.

In 1893, a parcel post stamp was created by overprinting a 10c French revenue stamp as shown in Fig. 24a. A double surcharge is known.

Finally, the last handstruck surcharges were created on 9 July 1900 because of a shortage of 5c and 10c values. The 20c and 30c Group type stamps were surcharged with two lines: **Valeur/new value**. An example is shown in



Figure 23. Congo provisionals of 1891 and 1892.



Figure 24. The Congo parcel post of 1893, and the last provisional of 1900.

Fig. 24d. Both stamps are very rare although printing quantities are not known.

## Senegal (1892)

Although the first issues of Senegal (1887) were surcharged typographically, it is the 1892 second handstruck issue that has a very interesting story. Several important companies required a large number of stamps having face values of 75c and 1f. While these were being surcharged with a *composteur*, As these were being printed, the postmaster noticed that, by the decree of 1891, the colony name must appear on the stamps. He ordered this to be done, and a second handstamp was used to apply the additional surcharge **SENEGAL** to each stamp. These surcharges were first applied in red ink (Sc. 33-34, Y&T 6-7). The red was not legible on the dark colored stamps, so the ink was changed to black (Sc. 31-32, Y&T 8-9). The **75** value is shown in Fig. 25. Two errors are known: double **SENEGAL** in black; and double **SENEGAL**, one in red and one in black.



Figure 25. The Senegal provisional of 1892.

## Djibouti (1893)

Djibouti, the capital of the Somali Coast, issued its own stamps in December of 1893. These five stamps are among the most complex and intricate of the handstruck issues in the colonies (Sc. 1-5, Y&T 1-5 listed with Somali Coast). The first value, shown in Fig. 26, was an surcharge applied to the 5c group type stamp of Obock. The three parts of the surcharge, **D**, **J** and the dash, were all printed separately. This is well illustrated in the Figure which shows the erratic alignment of the different parts. Naturally, many varieties exist including missing, inverted and doubled **D** and **J**, and missing and doubled bar.

A second handstamp was composed of two separate *tampons*. The first was the colony name, **DJIBOUTI**, and the second a new value, 25. These handstamps were applied, in blue, to the 2c group type stamp of Obock. This is shown in Fig. 27a.

A third handstamp, also composed of two parts, was applied to the 1c Obock Group type stamp. It included the previously used **DJIBOUTI** handstamp in red, and a new value 50 in large characters and blue ink applied vertically as seen in Fig. 27b.

Finally, two provisional surcharges were applied to the large format triangular stamps of Obock. The first was 1 (franc) and **DJIBOUTI** on the 5fr value, and the second, shown in Fig. 28, simply **DJIBOUTI**, without revaluation, on the 5fr value.



Figure 26. The first Djibouti handstruck overprint showing significant variations between stamps.



a.

b.

Figure 27. Other Djibouti provisionals of 1893.



Figure 28. The handstruck overprint on the Obock triangle.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the fascinating handstruck provisional surcharges that were issued by 17 colonies in the last 20 years of the 19th century. Each has a story to tell and the potential for stimulating personal study and research. While the cost of entry into this field is significant, it has been many years, since Stone's era, that anyone — anywhere — has specialized in more than one of these issues.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank a number of our advertisers for allowing us to see their wonderful stamps used for the illustrations in this paper. These include:

**Pascal Behr** ([www.behr.fr](http://www.behr.fr))

**Alexandre Roumet** ([www.roumet.fr](http://www.roumet.fr))

**Jean-Phillipe Kalkstein** ([caphila.free.fr](http://caphila.free.fr))



It is impossible to form a world class collection of French colonial material without working with these venerable philatelic merchants. The author strongly recommends that readers become familiar with these houses as well as those of our other advertisers who also offer an incredible range of colonial material (and France, too!)

I would also like to thank colleagues **Ed Grabowski** and **Steve Tucker** for reading the manuscript, finding errors and making useful suggestions.

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The following references, especially for single colony discussions, are far from complete. Before embarking on a serious study of one or more of these areas, a thorough literature search will be required.

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# A Cover Story

*Stan Luft (FCPS 915)*

An interesting cover described in *Le Trait d'Union*<sup>1</sup> in 1998 caught my attention, and I wrote it up in our *FCP* as "For the Record"<sup>2</sup>. For those of you who don't have or never had a copy of that Number, I'm copying that item here almost in its entirety.

In September 1939, during the first days of the Second World War, the civilian population of Strasbourg and its suburbs was evacuated to southwestern France and elsewhere. According to *Le Trait d'Union*, a few thousand persons stayed behind: employees of the gas, electric, water and sewer enterprises; police and firemen; and those who would be feeding and caring for them and handling their mail. Apparently only four post offices remained open. These were *Strasbourg-RP*, *Strasbourg-Place de la Cathedrale*, *Strasbourg-Gare* and *Rue de Bouxwiller*. No examples of this last, temporary bureau have been found. It may be possible that it used the postal markings of Strasbourg-Quai de Paris. Photocopies of mail sent from and to Strasbourg between September 1939 and June 1940 would be highly appreciated.

The photocopy of the cover was dated 29 Oct 1939 and mailed from the *Place de la Cathedrale* office. It is addressed to Madame B. at Biarritz (*Pyr. Orientales*). It carries on the front a large circular inscription that is quite incomplete.

More recently I found an almost identical cover, shown in Fig. 1,

which is now lodged in one of my exhibits. It departed from the same office two days later on 31 Oct. The large blue cachet reads (loosely translated) "The Commission for the transport and evacuation No. 1."

Has anyone seen another such cover, preferably with a different date and another Strasbourg post office? If so, I'll gladly convey a photocopy to that society in France for its ongoing studies.

## End Notes

1. The journal of the fine and very active *Association des Spécialistes en Marques Postales et Oblitérations d'Alsace-Lorraine*, better known as SPAL.
2. *France and Colonies Philatelist*, No. 256, April, 1999., Note 2, p. 61



Figure 1. Cover from Strasbourg showing complete handstamp described herein.



# The Amazing Group Type

Edward Grabowski (FCPS 1469)

I began collecting the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type almost thirty-five years ago. It started as an area to help fill the void in General Issues collecting, which was producing only a small handful of exciting pieces, despite an endless search for material. What amazed me about collecting Group Type postal history is that I was frequently able to come up with exceptional, though not necessarily expensive, material on a regular basis. One early find was a 5c printed matter envelope from Saint Louis, Senegal franked with what seemed to be 4c and 1c Group Type stamps.<sup>1</sup> Close inspection of the item revealed that the 4c stamp had been fabricated out of unused portions of the 2c issue and the 4c issue. To date, this is the only example of outright postal fraud that I have been able to document for the Group Type. Soon thereafter, I was able to purchase from a Canadian dealer what I believe to be the only recorded example of Group Type mail carried by a camel, posted from Tombouctou in the French Sudan in 1902.<sup>1</sup> On a trip to London, I was able to purchase the only recorded example of the single use of a 2F Group Type stamp on cover on a declared value letter from Dahomey to Germany.<sup>2</sup> More recently, I came up with a 1900 5c printed matter rate from Saigon that was charged an outrageous 60c postage due on arrival in Hatien, based on application of an obscure 1856 French postage due decree.<sup>3</sup>

Just about every colony has provided one or more truly exciting and unusual pieces of Group Type postal history. I have often wondered if such would cease with time. A recent purchase from France suggests that this time is yet to arrive. In 1904 the colony of Guadeloupe overprinted stocks of the 10c red Group Type issue of 1900 with a frame and the word **QUITTANCE** in the center of the stamp.<sup>4</sup> These stamps

were to be used for fiscal purposes, although examples of such on document have been very rare in my experience. However, I recently purchased a 1907 cover, shown in Fig. 1, from Guadeloupe which shows an unusual and exceptional use of these stamps. It is a registered mourning cover posted from Basse-Terre on March 10<sup>th</sup> to an employee of the A.D. Strauss firm, an established export-import business, in New York City, and was received on the 19<sup>th</sup> of the same month. It is franked at the proper 50c



Figure 1. Guadeloupe cover franked with revenues stamps.

rate (25c overseas postage and 25c registration), and proceeded normally through the mails. What makes this cover unusual is that it was franked with five of the 10c Group Type fiscal stamps. The stamps were cancelled with a standard Basse-Terre datestamp, and a registration number was assigned to the letter (upper left). Why would the office at Basse-Terre accept fiscal stamps in lieu of regular postage stamps at this time? The only recorded shortage of stamps in the colony occurred during December 1900 - January 1901.<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, nothing about subsequent stamp shortages in Guadeloupe has been reported in the literature. For the moment, the reason for the use of these fiscal stamps for postage remains a mystery.

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3. E.J.J. Grabowski, "A Colonial Application of an Obscure French Postal Law", *Collectors Club Philatelist*, 2010, Vol 89, 48.
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## Picirilli Book Available Soon

*After many years of labor, FCPS member Bob Picirilli's new book is nearly ready for release. The following information has been supplied by our sister society, France & Colonies Philatelic Society of Great Britain, who graciously funded the publication of this work.*

The France & Colonies Philatelic Society of Great Britain is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of a major new philatelic work, this time covering French Colonial Airmail rates from 1920 to 1945, compiled and written by our overseas member Bob Picirilli, of Hermitage, Tennessee, U.S.A. This A4 format, 234 page, card backed volume covers the letter rates and airmail surtax for French colonies from the start of commercial aviation to the end of WW2, and provides for the first time a comprehensive source of information to explain the postage rates applied to pre 1946 French colonial airmail covers.

Without doubt this is an important publication. It contains a huge amount of original research from French Government, UPU and other sources, which has been combined with the information gathered from a data-base of almost 7,500 covers.

An international group of collectors was involved, over a period of some 14 years, in supplying information from other sources and

providing valuable input for the data-base. Routes and airlines are mentioned where these have a bearing on rates.

The size and cost of the book have been kept to a most reasonable level by including extra material on a **CD**, which is a **free** courtesy of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society. The additional information includes the 7,500 cover data-base, in Excel format, Bob Picirilli's comments on the postage rates, the covers on the data-base plus full colour versions of the black and white illustrations used throughout this magisterial work

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## Book Review

**Cote d'Ivoire - Les vignettes pour colis postaux dans leur environnement historique et fonctionnel (1902-1906)**, by C. Bouérat and H. Drye, Bulletin COL.FRA Hors-Série No. 16-4, 2010. 188 pages plus a 12 page pamphlet summarizing the various parcel post issues, plus a 4 page reference showing the basic types useful to keep handy while reading the main volume. Available from: COLFRA, BP 628, 75367 Paris Cedex 08. Price €34 or €26 for COL.FRA members (11.5% extra for Paypal). Postage is included, even to the U.S. To order, contact:

Colfra-publications@orange.fr

This excellent new book on a still complex subject is comprised of five parts. The first part is the history of the Ivory Coast from an administrative point of view. It discusses the development of the colony, the major towns, the evolution of the postal service and post offices and the postal employees. It goes on to describe the need for, and history of, the parcel post service. Then, it discusses the use of the parcel post labels. As you can tell from the title, this work analyzes all of the aspects of the colonial administration.

The second part is very interesting and presents an incredibly rich detail of the Post and Telegraph (P&T) of the Ivory Coast. It discusses the handling of parcels in the colony and the legitimacy of the overprints. It then presents short biographies of many of the personalities in charge of the post office of the Ivory Coast at the time the stamps were issued. It also describes changes made to the procedures of is-

suing the stamps that resulted from various personnel changes at the P&T. In conclusion, the authors identify those responsible for the parcel post issues.

It is these first two parts that greatly expand on these issues and compliment the analysis that I used in my 2001 book *The Parcel Post Stamps of the Ivory Coast*. M. Bouérat's invaluable contribution is the more than 30 years he spent working in French West Africa. As a student of the area, he brings first-hand detailed information about the government workings.

The third part comprises 90 pages or about half of this work. First a very useful chapter presents the details of how the type was set and the surcharges printed on the underlying postage due stamps. It provides details of the printing press used for this purpose. This is followed by the detailed descriptions of all nine parcel post issues. For each issue, the text of authorizing *arrêtés* and detailed descriptions of the stamps including the overprint schema, the preparation of the settings, varieties, and quantities printed are presented. Of special interest are the discussions of the *arrêtés* which include descriptions of other cited *arrêtés* or *décrets* and the colonial bureaucrats involved in them. Each section also describes the essays that exist for the issue.

The fourth part discusses the fate of the parcel post issues. Included is an analysis of the functional usage of the stamps and the sale of the stamps by the post office to collectors and dealers.





The fifth part presents the conclusions of the authors' analyses. This includes additional support for the fact that the small varieties were undoubtedly caused by lack of sufficient quantities of type to set complete panes. This notion is believed to have occurred throughout the colonial world. Finally, it presents a short list of open research topics with questions that have still not been answered.

There is also an appendix covering a number of interesting topics including a review of the early marketing of these stamps, the philatelic history from 1908-2000, and their history since 2001. It is noted that the catalogue value of the issued stamps (Y&T in 2008) was only 12,000 compared with a total catalogue of about 400,000 for the entire 90 varieties. It is suggested that this has certainly dissuaded collectors from collecting these issues.

The exposition is clear and comprehensive. The

combination of M. Bouérat's local knowledge and M. Drye's editorial and research skills (he was the founder and long-time editor of the Bulletin COL.FRA) have resulted in clear and logical arguments being made for all aspects of the stamps.

Two minor things I think would have improved this wonderful work would have been higher quality illustrations and an in-depth analysis of the used stamps that I began to address in 2001.

This book will be a wonderful addition to the library of any collector of French West Africa, or its constituent colonies, because of the rich historical commentary and analysis drawing from M. Bouérat's personal experiences in French West Africa from 1948-1976. I do not know any other source for understanding the inner workings of the P&T this well.

DLH

## *Gough Article Required Reading for Postal Historians*

Well-known postal historian and long-time FCPS member **Jamie Gough** wrote a four-part article entitled *The Changing Formulas of the GPU/UPU for Postage Due* that appeared in four consecutive issues of the Collectors Club Philatelist. (Vol. 89, Nos. 4,5 and 6, and Vol. 90, No. 1). For those of us who collect postage due usages between many countries, the rates and rules are often perplexing. Jamie clearly describes the evolution of postage due mail

After presenting general background, the first part describes the rules including standard weights, the use of the French centime for international mail. It then goes on to describe base rates were established, rules for forwarded mail and the complex handling of maritime mail. He also talks about the adoption of the T (taxe) markings, how and when the marks are applied, and the complexities of postage due for underpaid mail and mail from countries outside the union.

The second part covers some very complex areas including more about ship markings and how countries just entering the union were treated. Then, a section on the 1878 Congress of Paris describes the new application of double the defi-

ciency to unpaid and underpaid material.

The third part talks about the special UPU provision for "Mini-Postal Unions" such as the one between the U.S. and Canada which began in 1875. It then discusses the Conference of Paris of 1880 and the origins of parcel post mail. It concludes with a description of the new features and regulations established by the Congress of Lisbon in 1885. Jamie points out that this congress introduced the mandatory requirement that all postal forms include both the native language and French inscriptions. There were, many, many more changes as well.

The final part reviews the changes in the Congresses of Vienna (1891), Washington (1897) and Rome (1906). Along with many arcane changes, Rome resulted in some very complicated UPU rate structures based on weight.

This series of award-winning articles is highly recommended to ground all postal history collectors in the wide variety of different regulations and handling requirements for international postage due mail. One will definitely appreciate the complexities of this area. The paper should provide an indispensable reference.

# Paris to Hawaii in 1897 — An Interesting Story of Handling

Richard C. Malmgren

Richard Malmgren of Honolulu is a well-known collector and exhibitor of all Hawaiian philately. His successful résumé includes the 2010 Champion of Champions title for his exhibit of Hawaiian postage stamps. He has just completed a new exhibit of early Hawaiian postal history. While assembling this new exhibit, he “discovered” (lerking in his hoard) a rather fascinating and important cover from Paris to Honolulu. This note tells us the interesting story of this item.

I have been assembling my Hawaiian postal history for many decades and now, in order to create my new exhibit, I have been able to revisit many items that I have not seen in years. The cover shown in Fig. 1 is such an item.

It was mailed from Paris (44) on 14 October 1897. As indicated by the corner card, it was sent from the Undersecretary of State for the Post and Telegraph to one Prof. A.B. Lyons at Oahu College. The letter was registered, and a return receipt



Figure 1. 1897 cover from Paris to Honolulu.



(*Avis de Reception*—**AR**) was requested. The franking is perfect: 25c for the postage, 25c for the registration, and 10c for the **AR**. The letter transited San Francisco on 29 Oct 1897 where the registration label shown in Fig. 1 was added. It arrived in Honolulu on 5 November 1897 and left Honolulu for Detroit on 10 November.

After a lengthy stay in Hawaii, the professor had returned to the United States to Detroit, MI. The cover was then forwarded under UPU regulations from Honolulu back to the U.S. It arrived in San Francisco on 17 November, and finally Detroit on 21 November. Redirection was immediate, thus no forwarding fee was applied. An attempt was made to locate Prof. Lyons as indicated by the partial handstamp “[2]d NOTICE” and the manuscript “will call”. Since it was not returned to the sender, Lyons must have finally received the let-

ter, and our odyssey was concluded.

From the French side, this letter would have been accepted as official mail had it been mailed to a French destination. That privilege was not allowed on international mail. Also, the **AR** is very scarce for external mail. Finally, this is the only known registered letter forwarded from Hawaii. In all respects, quite a nice item, *n'est pas*?

As luck would have it, Prof. Lyons was an eminent chemist of the day who lived in Detroit. He was born in Hawaii in 1841, leaving in 1863. He received his MD in 1868 at the University of Michigan. He returned to Hawaii, and in 1888 he became a government chemist and a professor of chemistry at Oahu College. By 1897 he had returned to Detroit and worked as a chemist for a major pharmaceutical company. Altogether, a very interesting story!



Figure 2. Backstamps on 1897 forwarded cover.

## President's Letter

Here we are, welcoming another season. In northeastern Ohio, spring is having a tough time pushing winter aside. The crocuses have bloomed, but the daffodils are just showing leaves. It's still too chilly to see the yellow and white flowers that really announce warm weather.

My most important message this quarter is a reminder that you must pay your dues!! If you have somehow overlooked an e-mail from Jeff Ward, our new treasurer, it is past time to send a check or pay through PayPal. Only ¾ or so of our members had renewed when I last corresponded with Jeff, so there are way too many of you who need to send in your money. I hope you will do it **TODAY** while you are thinking about it. Make your checks out to the "France and Colonies Philatelic Society, Inc." and send them to

**Jeff Ward,**

13155 Wimberly Square #284  
San Diego, CA 92128.

U.S. dues are \$22 if paid via PayPal, \$20 if you pay by check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank. Our international colleagues must add \$5 to each amount, which still must be instruments drawn on a U.S. bank. Jeff's e-mail, should you want to correspond about your dues, is:

**ward-jeff@san.rr.com**

Remember the benefits of membership: Our excellent quarterly journal is the most important, since it not only provides interesting articles about philately, but it is also our principal means of communication. You also have access to our website, and will have searchable online access to all of our journals from the beginning! I have used our journals many times when researching for my exhibit. It is a terrific source for many facets of French philately. Members also receive invitations to exhibit and attend our meetings. Anyone who was in

Chicago last fall can tell you what a wonderful affair that was. Take a look at the January 2011 *France & Colonies Philatelist* to refresh your memory.

There's more, of course, but those are the main reasons to continue your membership. So please get your payment to Jeff as quickly as you can. It will save a lot of time and effort in follow-up calls that place big time demands on our volunteer officers.

I should also mention that we encourage additional contributions from our members, essentially to replenish the Vaurie Fund. We want to provide for the future of our society, and after using most of the Vaurie Fund to digitize our past journals, all of us should do what we can to restore our seed capital.

Last quarter I listed our future meeting plans. We have had to drop St. Louis because they are full. We instead have approached TEXPEX to see if they will welcome us in 2015. Their show is usually in April, so it is about the same time of year as St. Louis (usually March). I have not yet had a confirmation from them (nor from SANDICAL 2014), but will continue to pursue those venues.

STAMPSHOW 2011 will be in Columbus, Ohio in a few months. For those of you who attended a few years ago, you should remember that the venue is outstanding. Hotels are reasonable and close by. Food is good, of course. Columbus is one of those cities within 500 miles of Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Washington, St. Louis and many more, so it is pretty easy to get there. I hope to see many of you admiring **Dave Herendeen's** exhibit in the Champion-of-Champions competition. We expect to have a society table, so please stop by to say hello. We can use a few volunteers over the four days to solicit new members or just to greet the ones who attend.

Until next time I hope you keep having fun with our great hobby!



# Unusual Originations and Destinations

## Tahiti to Turkey

David L Herendeen (FCPS 2532)

A recent purchase for my French community postage due collection was the cover shown in Fig. 1. It was mailed from Papeete, Tahiti on 5 June 1908 to Constantinople, Turkey. It is franked with a 10c Group type stamp which was the French community rate in effect from 1906-1920. It arrived in Turkey on 3 July 1908, nearly a month later.

As you will note, the letter was charged 30c postage due, double the deficiency, as evidenced by the French postage due stamp. This is because the postal rates between France and colonies to foreign post offices were treated as international mail subject to the UPU rate of 25c, a fact confirmed by member **Robert Abensur** of France.

There were actually three French post offices in Constantinople. The main post office, which was opened in 1799, used the cancel *Constantinople-Péra* starting around 1902. In addition, there were two sub offices: *Constantinople-Galata*, opened in 1879; and *Constantinople-Stamboul*, opened in 1880. These offices, along with those of other European powers including Great Britain, Austria, Germany, Italy and Russia, were a result of the Capitulation treaties with the Ottoman Empire. All three French offices were closed from 1914 to 1919 because of World War I, and then by 1923 they were permanently closed.

As you see, this letter was processed at the sub office *Constantinople-Galata*.



Figure 1. 5 June 1908, overweight letter from Papeete, Tahiti to Constantinople, Turkey.

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## Show Reports

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### Filatellic Fiesta 2010

San Jose, CA, November 2010

Two gold medals to **Charles Lablond** and a Vermeil to **Steve Tucker**.

### Sandical 2011

San Diego, CA, January 2011

Vermeil to **Steve Washburne**.

### COLOPEX 2011

Columbus, OH, February 2011

Gold medals to **Eliot Landau** received for his "Classic France: Postal History of the Ceres and Napoleon Issues of 1849-1875." and to **Ken Nilsestuen** for his "Algerian Postal History to 1876." Gold to **Al Kugel**, who also received a Silver for a one frame exhibit.

### ARIPEX 2011

Phoenix, AZ, February 2011

Gold medal and Reserve Grand to **Jamie Gough** for his UPU exhibit. **Paul Larsen** received a Gold and the Reserve Grand for his one frame exhibit of the Leeward Islands.

### St. Louis Stamp Expo 2011

St. Louis, MO, February 2011

Vermeil medal to **Ralph DeBoard** for his "French Polynesia - The Regular Issue of 1958: Design, Production, & Usages." Also two vermeils to **Al Kugel**, one for a multi-frame exhibit, and one for a single frame.

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## Membership Notices

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### NEW MEMBER

3430 Kobelt, J. Larry, Evergreen Park, IL

### RESIGNATIONS RECEIVED

3398 Boucher, Marc

3123 Giles, Stephen B.

2180 Kinsley, Robert T.

2688 Woods, James L.

### DECEASED

1435 Norton, Jack H.

## Cameroun Book Available

Dudley Cobb has released the third volume of his treatise on the philately and postal history of Cameroun during the First World War.

The series of books, with the overall title **Cameroun in the Great War**, includes: Volume I The Military Handstamps and Early Overprints; Volume II The French Navy and the AEF Columns; and this final part **Volume III The Homeward Mail**. We hope to have a review of this book in the next FCP.

Cobb also published **Cameroun: The 1940 Overprints**. The latest book is available from the author:

[cobweb@wanadoo.fr](mailto:cobweb@wanadoo.fr)

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## Member to Member

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For Sale: Deluxe Presentation Proofs of 1946 Victory issue for French India, French Oceania, Guadeloupe, Madagascar, New Caledonia, Reunion and St. Pierre et Miquelon. \$22 each or all 7 for \$120 postpaid.

Jack Dykhouse  
PO Box 211027, Bedford, TX 76095  
[vpjack@umich.edu](mailto:vpjack@umich.edu)





# What I Collect and How I Do It

*Benjamin Bump (FCPS 2482)*

My collecting days began in 1949 at about the age of six, when I happened one day to surprise my father at work on his stamps. Anxious to keep my sticky fingers off his albums, he soon set me up with my own materials. Within two or three years I was soaking and drying, had learned to use tongs, a perforation gauge and a Scott catalog. Saturday mornings we visited my grandfather's hardware store where the employees dutifully set aside Presidential high values, blocks, and commemoratives from the incoming mail. I traded duplicates with friends and combed the dump for discarded mail.

By the mid fifties I had graduated to a Scott's "Modern" album, which served me well for a decade. In high school and college, the collecting interest took a back seat, but never went away. My fellow dormitory residents howled with laughter when the burlap bag delivered to my mailbox was revealed to contain twenty pounds of kiloware for ten dollars. I still have a few pounds of it left, if anyone's interested.

As a working adult, my philatelic enthusiasm returned. While I never abandoned my worldwide and U. S. collections, I did take up interest at various times in Hungary, Netherlands, Yugoslavia, British Honduras, Newfoundland, revenues, local postal history, and of course France. As a pre-teen I had exchanged stamps with a pen-pal in *Haute Loire*, and at age seventeen, my parents were able to arrange for me a summer job at a factory in the *Pas de Calais*. With those experiences and a high school knowledge of the language, collecting French stamps was inevitable. Early on, I acquired a Scott Specialty album for France, then others for French Africa, and French colonies ex-Africa. My collection, at least the major varieties, is more or less complete through about 1995, except for most items above \$500. After about 1925 it is almost all mint NH, although I'm not cranky about hinging. Prior to 1920 it's largely used. After 1995, no country's stamps interest me much, with the proliferation of

small sheets, subjects with little or no connection to the issuing country, and other philatelically inspired detritus. I do have a completed collection of Red Cross booklets through the early eighties, which I put together in order to provide a program for the local stamp club.

My *modus operandi* has evolved over the years. I began by acquiring material from dealers' price lists, and from local dealers' shops while they still existed. The last one in Springfield closed his doors last fall. As they proliferated, I had good luck at bourses and shows. More recently I've gotten material through public auctions and mail sales. But the greatest invention of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has been eBay and its imitators.

I confess that I differ from many collectors in one important way. Like most of ours, my stamp budget has a limit. My constitution prevents me from ever selling a collection to raise money. (I tried doing it once, and I really miss those stamps.) I get my fun from acquiring material and lots of it. I'd rather spend ten dollars each for a hundred stamps than a thousand dollars for one great item. That's not a hard and fast rule, but you get the point. With my varied philatelic interests, I'm never going to run out of things to hunt for. It may not be a recipe for a gold medal exhibit, but it's a great deal of fun. I tell my wife that when I'm gone, she'll be able to sell my stamps for \$5 million! That's a million items at five dollars each.

I joined the APS in 1964, FCPS in 1985, and also maintain memberships in ASNP, SAS/O, APRL, MPOS, BCPSG, and two local stamp clubs, one in Springfield and one in Brattleboro, VT. I'm also a literature collector. My library is up to about 300 volumes, and I make it a point to read them, or at least to become familiar with the contents of those that aren't in a narrative format. I also make a point of studying as many exhibits as I can at the big shows. Furthermore, the proliferation of philatelic lore on the internet is astounding.

Among my prize possessions is a censored cover dated 1917 from the Serbian forces in exile on Corfu, bearing a 50c Type Merson overprinted "POSTES SERBES". I got it in a mail auction about 35 years ago. This is the kind of item that gives me that warm fuzzy feeling all over.

The best part about this hobby is the people I've encountered over the years. From my local

stamp club buddies, to those I've met from every continent at international shows, I've been fortunate to meet scores of people with whom I have a common interest. My horizons are always broadened, and I never fail to pick up valuable pointers from each of them.

The general public may think of us as tending towards the nerdy end of the coolness scale. But you and I? We know better.

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## ***Help Needed Now!***

*David L. Herendeen, Editor*

I would apologize for taking so much space with the lead article in this issue, but the fact of the matter is that the cupboard is bare. We need more contributions to keep our publication vibrant and interesting. I am hoping that some of the problem was a combination of the intensity of Chicago, the holiday season and that annual hobgoblin—tax time.

I do hope that more members will be able to contribute for the rest of the issues this year.

I know it's difficult for many people to put their ideas down on paper. That's where I come in. I am always available to help. Present me with an idea and I will do my best to help you figure out how to tell your story. I'm only an email away at:

**fcped@aol.com**

Last year we had an issue that many members raved about. It contained a number of one and two page shorts describing a wide variety of covers from different parts of the French community. It provided something for everyone. I would like to do this regularly, but I need the help of all FCPS members to do this. Please consider writing up one of your interesting covers for us. I know you have interesting items—after all, you've been a collector for years!

## ***Less than a Year***

As we all know, time marches on much faster

than we would like. Our next show at Garfield Perry (Cleveland, OH) will take place in less than a year—March 2012. Start thinking about your exhibit and plan to make a presentation to entertain and enlighten your fellow members. Again, I am always at the ready to help create a PowerPoint presentation or help you with a topic that will be informative to us all.

## ***Feedback***

The officers and directors of the FCPS are volunteers who work hard and give of themselves to keep the society vibrant and interesting. As members, one of the most important things we can do is to provide feedback on any and all "services: being provided.

This is especially true with respect to the *France and Colonies Philatelist*. Letters to the Editor let others know that their work is being appreciated. It allows us to comment on the content and form of the FCP. Feel free to comment on the good and the bad. The only purpose of the FCP is to provide hopefully interesting and informative content to members. It is important to know if we are doing this.

## ***More from Paris***

I am scheduled to visit Paris later this year and hope to inspire participation from our French friends again. I know they had a great time in Chicago. Naturally, it is not easy to convince them to embark on such a long trip, but, then again, they did attend this time.

Speaking of the Parisian dealers, any member wishing me to give our dealers their mailing address, please let me know. I will deliver such to them while on *Rue Drouot*.



# A Nice Destination

Kenneth R. Nilsestuen (FCPS 1990)

FCPS member M. Lallavee [*Lugdunum Philatelie*] offered this interesting folded letter in a recent auction. As the successful bidder, I now have had a chance to study it.

The folded letter, the front and back of which are shown in Fig. 1, was posted 10 July and written on official stationery of the Sardinian consul at Algiers. While not evident in the Alger cancel on the face, this letter was written in 1844. If my poor understanding of Italian is correct, the Sardinian consul at Gibraltar received the letter on 10 September and replied on 11 September. A two month trip across the Mediterranean Sea is much longer than usual.

I suspect part of the reason is that there was some confusion about the payment of postage. On the reverse in addition to the consular seal are two Marseille transit markings. One is dated July 17, reflecting the typical time required to traverse the Mediterranean. The second is dated July 23.

Back to the face of the letter, there is a m/s “Artl 79 aff obl.” crossed out and followed by “Erreur.” The letter was evaluated in Marseille (not Alger) and would ordinarily have been sent along to Gibraltar without any rating. However, the French postal clerk decided that under Article 79 prepayment was mandatory and made an appropriate notation on the letter. Whether a second clerk disagreed or some postal supervisor caught the mistake is obviously unknown. I suspect, though, that the letter sat in Marseille for six days awaiting a final decision.

The best rate book in my library is *Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969*. International rates begin in 1849, so there is no 1844 rate for Gibraltar in that text. There are a couple of interesting clues, though. One is that there are three means to send letters to Gibraltar – two via Spain (land or sea), the other through England. The notation via either Spanish route is that prepayment was impossible. So it may be that there was confusion in Marseille about

how the letter was going to continue its trip to Gibraltar. Because it took six more weeks after the second Marseille marking to arrive in Gibraltar, it is entirely



Figure 1. 1844 Folded letter from Algiers to Gibraltar.

possible that the letter went all the way to England before arriving at the Rock. In the end the Gibraltar post office collected one shilling three pence for delivery.

I await corrections and improvements to my interpretation from other FCPS members.

### Reference

1. Alexandre, J.-P., C. Barbey, J.-F. Brun, G. Desarnaud and Dr. R. Joany, Éditions Loisirs et Culture (1982).

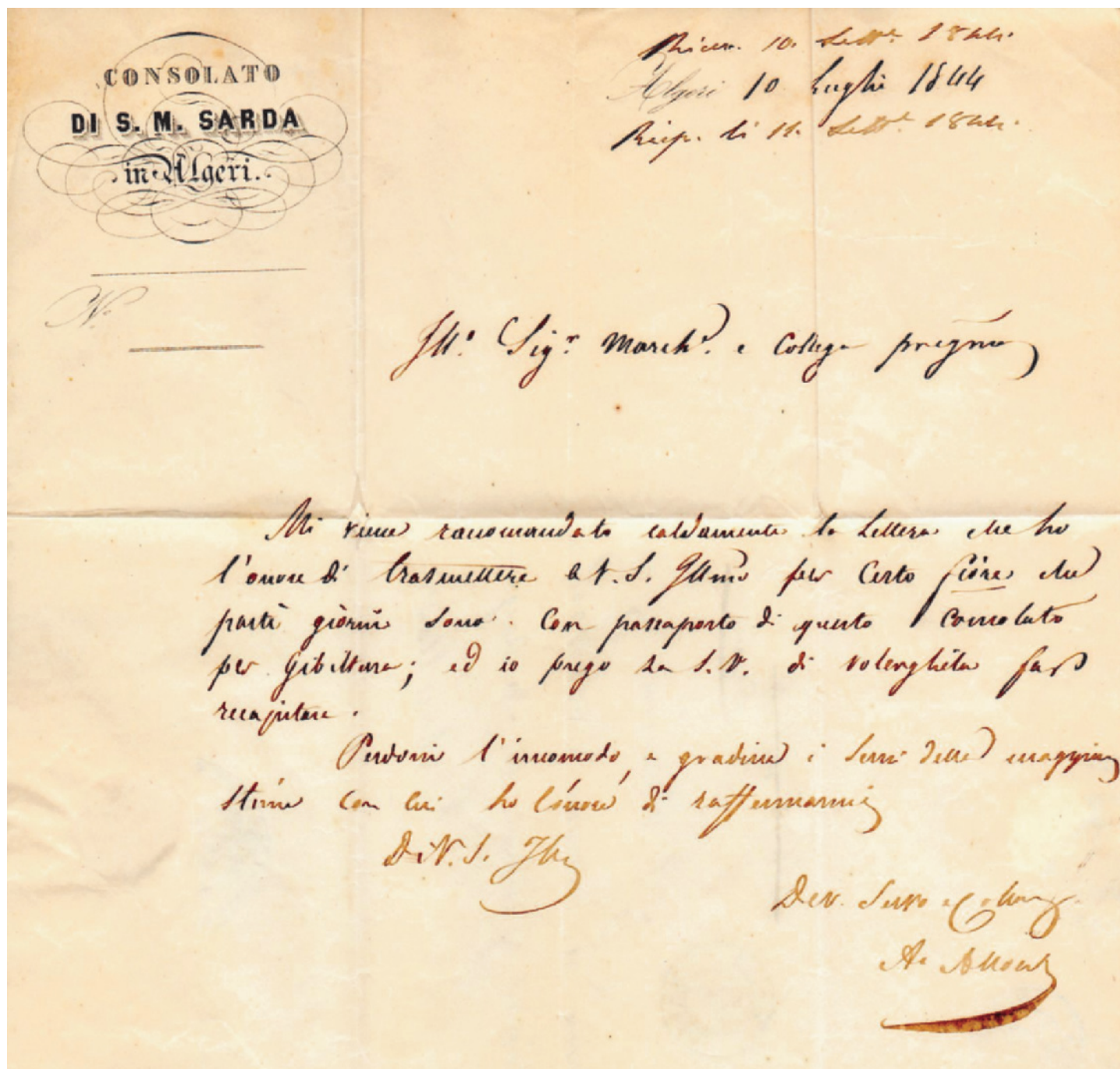


Figure 2. Official stationery of the Italian Consel to Algeria.



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I will have a stand at Chicagopex 2010. While I always have a stock of interesting France and Colonies postal history, if FCPS members will email me with their particular interests well in advance, I will try to have some special items available. Don't hesitate to contact me at any time to see if I may have items that will enhance your collection.

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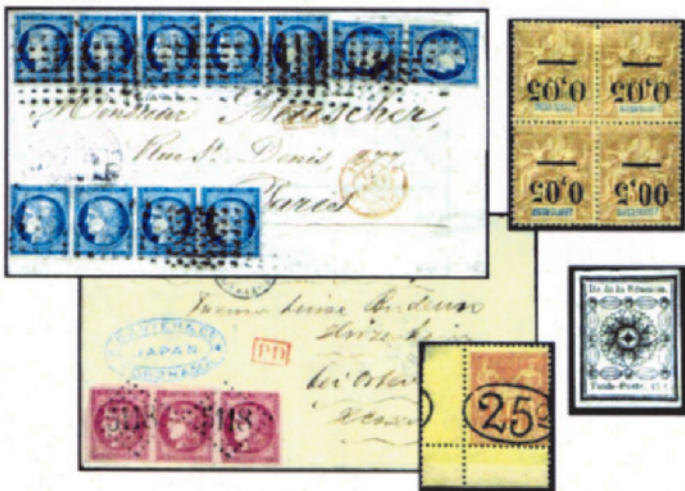
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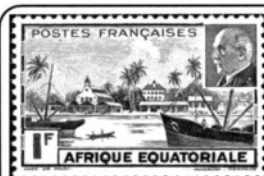
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