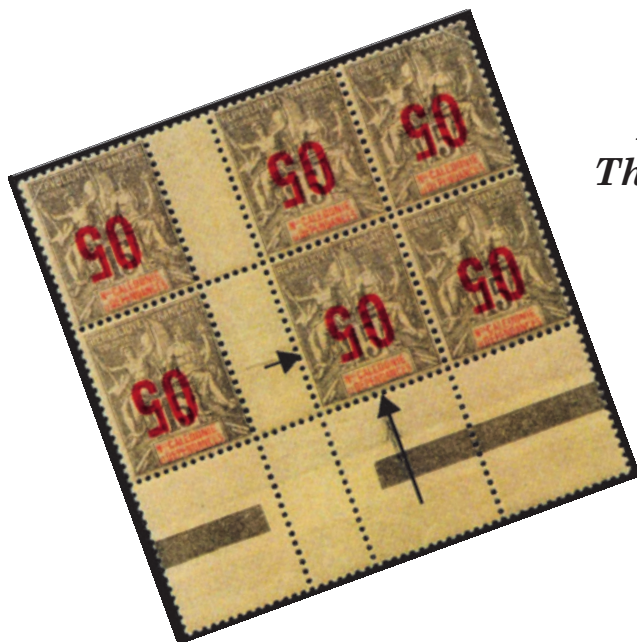




FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST

October 2012
Whole No. 310 (Vol. 68, No. 4)



*New Caledonia:
The 1912 Overprints
(see page 99)*



*The Local AR Markings on Group Type Covers
(see page 112)*

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New Caledonia: A Study of the Issue of 1912

Jean-Denis Ladiesse

As Translated by Prof. Warren Wolfe (FCPS 3323)

This article appeared in Le Cagou No. 57, Supplement 1, pp. 1-7. Written by J.D. Ladiesse, its original title was "13 Juillet 1912 ou l'étude des n° 106 à 110 (yt n° 105 à 109) en Nouvelle-Calédonie." It appears here with permission of the editor of La Cagou, M. Roire, and the author.

The editor has taken the liberty of massaging the translation to make the sentence structure clearer in english.

After a calm of nearly nine years, has New Caledonia perhaps gone back to its previous manias? Might she be delighting in her former demons, acute surcharge-itis? Does this stamp issue, and those following up to 1922 - for ten years -, not confirm this relapse? In her defense, for the issue of 1912, if she was afflicted, all the colonies were infected, and there was neither recrimination nor criticism in the press. Quite the opposite:¹

"Just think! It meant starting the sale in the mother country, which had never been done before, of colonial provisional stamps, officially surcharged 5 and 10 (centimes), in the workshop on Brune Boulevard, so as to use stamps from earlier issues.

Thirty-two different stamps for 43 sous: you can be sure they went quickly! And what might have happened if a goodly number of philatelists had not deserted Paris on the eve of Bastille Day? Some dealers, rather arbitrarily informed, didn't hesitate to order from 8,000 to 10,000 complete sets. But the accountant, the conscientious M. Gombert, was not reluctant to make more work for himself and to satisfy the largest number possible by reducing the orders of those who sought to mo-

nopolize. Despite this, that very evening it was impossible to provide complete sets. The morning following the two holidays, no more than 18 values out of 32: soon only 12, then 9, then six.

Thus, not all philatelists were ecstatic. The happiest seemed to be the assistant accountant, M. Prével, who in shirtsleeves - for summer was still in full bloom - and aided by his wife, handed out the stamp sheets while M. Gombert happily wrote the numbers on the individual invoices.

Standing in a crowded hall, with a temperature of 32 degrees in the shade, perspiring clients saw their sweat and their illusions vanish, drop by drop, each time that M. Prével, with a mocking smile, announced the depletion of yet another value, and the most distracted among them, busy with their calculations, mopped their brows with their unwanted bank notes.

Prestige of surcharged stamps!

For twelve years, collectors avoided the four values of 1900, Type Groupe, in the colors of the Postal Union, many of which were printed only in quantities of 10,200, and today they hasten to buy stamps, the rarest of which is 29,000 and the most common is 453,000. What logic!

Marcevaux

A certain number of all these values, it seems, were sent to the four colonies listed below. Similar surcharges, on other coloni-

al stamps, were announced for the month of October.

Here, according to the *Echo de la Timbrologie*, are the numbers printed of the 32 provisionals of 13 July: inexact figures. We are told, indeed, that these numbers represent the quantities sent to the printers. However, the preparation, the impression of the letters on the values on their paper,

Guinée	
...	
Guinée (Indigène)	
...	
Martinique	
...	
New Caledonia	
5 on 15	65,000
5 on 20	82,000
5 on 30	57,000
10 on 40	41,000
10 on 50	37,000
Réunion	
...	

the printing on gummed paper, necessarily brittle -- all that must have produced quite a lot of wastage. Consequently we have only approximate figures.

The cited article gives us certain information. First, the number of each stamp issued, even though the figures indicated are the maximum number, not taking into account the wastage

linked to the printing. Then, it gives us to understand that additional issues will be made for the other colonies (Anjouan, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Gabon, Grande-Comore, Madagascar, Mayotte, Mohèle, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, Senegal).

For New Caledonia, only the first issue, that of July 1912, of which there was only one printing, is noted.

Surcharge Stock in New Caledonia

This article only mentions stamps of type *Groupe* from the issue of 1900-1901 (in the colors of the Postal Union) as stock for this surcharge. That is not exactly accurate, for we find the 20c, 30c, and 40c were already available having been issued in 1892-93. The stamps used for the surcharges are shown in Figs. 1-5.

Why only these stamps? Those of the issues of the Postal Union, printed in 1900-01, can be explained, for, issued more recently and not having been utilized before the year 1902, their use was mixed with that of 1903-1904 (local use), and especially with the issue of 1905.

For the other stamps, we shall see when we examine the *millésimes* [year dates], (or rather the absence of *millésimes*) that their issue seems to corroborate what we supposed earlier: “It is perfectly plausible that certain printings had been completed after 1893 (but without *millésime*), in order to provide stocks of stamps for surchargeing. This made it possible to fill special or exceptional orders.”

These five stamps provided a sufficient stock, when surcharged, to be usable for most common postal rates, thus justifying the expression: *the art of of using leftovers*. At the same time,



Figure 1.
15c of UPU
issue 1900-01.



Figure 2.
20c issued
1892-93.



Figure 3.
30c issued
1892-93.



Figure 4.
40c issued
1892-93.



Figure 5.
50c of UPU
issue 1900-01.

the stamps made philatelists happy!

Surcharges

Unlike most of the surcharges carried out in the colony, these surcharges are of exemplary simplicity.

05

Black surcharge
on 5c and red
on 15c and 30c.

10

Black surcharge
on 40c and red
on 50c

These two values corresponded, either singly or

in combination, to the usual postal rates of the period, 10c for the first echelon letter for domestic and Franco-colonial use, respectively. These were effective from 1 September 1907, and 13 May 1906, respectively, until 1917.

The surcharges were surcharged on sheets of 150 stamps (see Figs. 6 and 7) by typographic setting. The only constant varieties lie in a wide spacing (1.75mm rather than 1.25 mm in position 105 for the 5c, and 2.75mm instead of 2.25mm in position 81 and 131 for the 10c.

Figure 6. Surchage layout for 5c sheets of 150. Note wide spacing only in position 105.

Figure 7. Surchage layout for 10c sheets of 150. Note wide spacing in positions 91 and 131.

Study of Varieties and Millésimes

05/15c: Y&T 105

This stamp has two *millésimes* (1900 and 1901) and a third *sans millésime* [without year date]. The one with 1901 was only recently discovered, and it has not yet been catalogued. The *millésime* 1900 is distinguished by a gray printing which is slightly lighter, more apparent than those of the *sans millésime*. Examples of these are shown in Figs. 8-10.



Figure 8. Millésime 1900. Note inverted surcharge.



Figure 9. Millésime 1901. Note inverted surcharge.

A maximum of 65,000 copies of this stamp, were printed. We do not know the division of printings between the *millésimes* and the *sans millésimes*. However, it seems that the *millésime* 1900 and the *sans millésime* are more common than the *millésime* 1901.

- ♦ The wide spacing variety is constant (1.75mm instead of 1.25) is in position 105. Thus no more than 433 copies may exist.
- ♦ Another variety is the inverted surcharge. Only six or seven sheets have been found, thus, the number of the wide spacing variety cannot exceed six or seven copies. This



Figure 10. Block of four *sans millésime*.

variety is to be found in position 46, as seen in Fig. 11

- ♦ A third variety, not constant, is the shifted surcharge seen in Fig. 12. (also see Fig. 8).

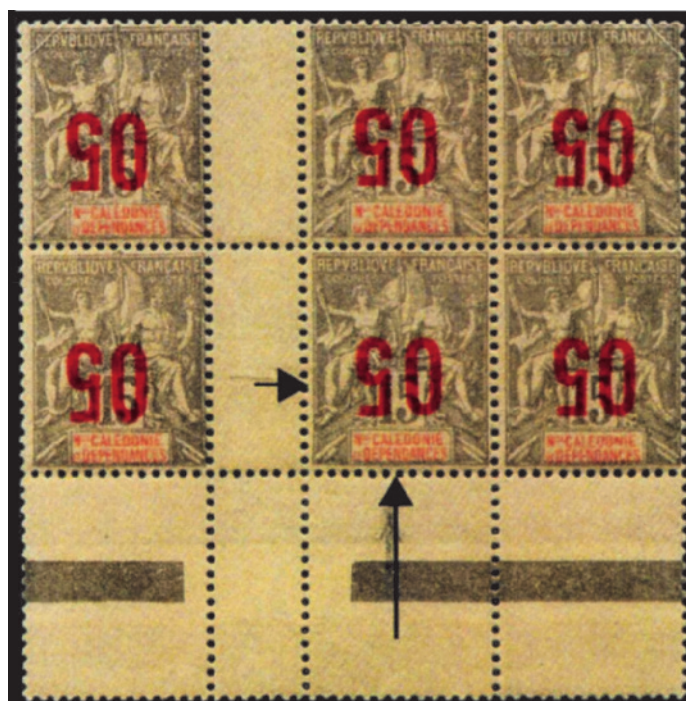


Figure 11. Inverted surcharge including the wide spacing variety in position 46.



Figure 12. Shifted surcharge.

05/20c: Y&T 106

This stamp is found in only one *millésime* (1901), as seen in Fig. 13. The printing quantity was large: 82,000 copies. The underlying stamp, the 20c, must not have been utilized frequently, since a single stamp did not correspond to any current postal rate.



Figure 13. Y&T 106 block of four showing millésime 1901 and wide spacing variety.

05/30c: Y&T 107

As shown in Fig. 14, this stamp is only known *sans millésime*. A total of 57,000 were surcharged. This demonstrates and reaffirms the use of *provisional stocks* described above.

The two varieties include the wide spacing, Fig. 15, and an catalogued value showing a pair, one without surcharge. This is expected to be caused by a dramatic shift in the surcharge

plate, Fig. 16.



Figure 14. Y&T 107, block of four sans millésime.



Figure 15. Y&T 107 wide spacing se tenant with normal. Only 380 varieties printed.



Figure 16. Y&T 107 missing surcharge se tenant with normal. Appears caused by a shift of the surcharge setting.

10/40c: Y&T 108

As shown in Fig. 17, this stamp is only known *sans millésime*. A total of 41,000 were surcharged. Once again, this demonstrates and reaffirms the use of *provisional stocks* described earlier. The only variety is the wide spacing shown in Fig. 18.



Figure 17. Y&T 108, block of four *sans millésime*.



Figure 18. Y&T 108 wide spacing *se tenant* with normal. Only 546 varieties printed.

10/50c: Y&T 109

As shown in Fig. 19, this stamp is only known *sans millésime*. A total of 37,000 were surcharged, reaffirming the use of *provisional stocks* described earlier. The only variety is the wide spacing shown in Fig. 20.



Figure 19. Y&T 109, block of four *sans millésime*.



Figure 20. Y&T 109 wide spacing *se tenant* with normal. Only 493 varieties printed.



Figure 21. Y&T 109, shifted surcharge.

The Stamps Reach New Caledonia

It seems that these stamps arrived in the Colony only in small batches which resulted in the usual complaint:²

For 4 months, our friends from France have been telling us that the Minister of Colonies has decided to cancel all the colonial stamps of 1892 and to surcharge them. In July, we were receiving these stamps, placed on sale by the Ministry, and it was decided to send us a small number by the "Oceanian" arrived in the month of October.

This inside colonization in Paris with the colonial stamps is more than a traffic; it has become an outrage and deprives our local budget of important sums. It is useless to explain to us that quantities are distributed without charge to Berne, to Messieurs senators, deputies, and prominent persons who request them. This mis-handling should cease, and should be brought before the Conseil d'Etat in order to regulate this situation.

Some Covers

These remarks seem corroborated by the small number of envelopes franked with these stamps (other than those known as philatelic or *par complaisance*, including the frequently found complete set of the series on a cover.

These comments above appear to be corroborated by the low number of covers with these stamps, except those so-called Philatelic covers which are often found. Five example are shown in Figs. 22-26.



Figure 22. Registered letter to Chaville dated 14 October 1912. Franked 35c (Y&T 105 to 109), the Franco-colonial rate which includes 10c. for the first weight step and 25c for registration.³ One of the earliest known uses of these stamps. Note that the recipient, Jules Herman, is a well-known forger of the double surcharge of the 1917 Red Cross issue. This cover appears authentic, this date stamp was placed in service in 1901 and I can't imagine that the surcharges are forged given the large number printed.



Figure 23. Letter to Bordeaux dated 28 March 1913. Franked 20c including: YT 88 x 2 - YT 89 x 2 - YT n° 90 - YT 91 and finally YT 106), the Franco-colonial rate for the third weight step (between 50 and 100 grams).³



Figure 24. Letter to Sens dated 14 August 1913. Franked 10c with: YT 105 x 2, the Franco-colonial rate for the first weight step.³Includes the wide spacing variety which is rare on cover.



Figure 26. Registered letter to Prague, Austria dated 28 March 1913. Franked 50c with: Y&T 105 to 109 representing 35c and additionally Y&T 88—Y&T 90—Y&T 92 making up the remaining 15c. The 50c is for the international first step letter: 25c postage and 25c registration.³ Although the rate is correct, the franking appears philatelic.



Figure 25. Letter to Sens dated 19 February 1914. Franked 10c with: YT 108, the Franco-colonial rate for the first weight step.³Includes the wide spacing variety which is rare on cover.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a comprehensive study of the New Caledonian provisional issue of 1912. It shows all of the basic information

including several uncatalogued items. A summary of these stamps is given in Table 1.

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Table 1. Summary of all known varieties of the 1912 provisional surcharge.

Y&T Number	Description	Number Printed	Unused
105	05 on 15c, Black Surcharge	65,000	
	VARIETIES		
	wide spacing	433	150
	inverted surcharge	?	150
	wide spacing and inverted surcharge	6 or 7	2,600
	MILLESIME		
	1900	?	85
106	1901	?	150
	without	?	85
107	05 on 20c, Black Surcharge	82,000	
	VARIETY		
	wide spacing	546	300
	MILLESIME		
108	1901	1,640	150
109	05 on 30c, Red Surcharge	57,000	
	VARIETIES		
	wide spacing	380	110
	Pair, one without surcharge and displaced	RRR	500
	MILLESIME		
110	without	1140	100
111	10 on 40c, Black Surcharge	82,000	
	VARIETY		
	wide spacing	273	120
	MILLESIME		
	without	820	150
112	10 on 50c, Red Surcharge	37,000	
	VARIETIES		
	wide spacing	246	80
	Wide spacing and shifted surcharge	?	150
	MILLESIME		
113	without	740	100

NOTES:

1. The date authorized is unknown for all of the values.
2. All stamps were issued on 13 July 1912.

Airgraph Extended to Wartime

St. Pierre & Miquelon 1943

(c) *James R. Taylor (FCPS 3404)*

Airgraph letters were written on special standard sized Airgraph forms. While the forms were usually supplied free from the Post Office, postage stamps in payment were applied to the back of the completed forms. Members of the military on active service could send Airgraphs without charge.

The completed forms were handed back across the civilian Post Office or military Post Office counter. The completed forms were postmarked on the face and the messages were examined and passed by civilian or military censors. The forms were then photographically reduced on microfilm using Recordak equipment. Two copies of each microfilm were made, one to be sent, the other to be held as a backup. The volume and weight of the roll of microfilm with 1,600 letters on film weighed just 149 grams (5.25 ounces), less than one fiftieth of the volume and weight of the equivalent letters. The rolls of microfilm negatives were then sent as air cargo. At their destination the negatives were enlarged, printed on photographic bromide paper, folded into windowed envelopes, free franked usually by postage meter and delivered as Airgraph letters through the normal mail system.

During the early stages of the Second World War, delivery times for letters sent via regular Airmail services were greatly slowed, or the letters lost and not delivered at all, due to accidents or enemy action in the Mediterranean. The British Post Office and Military needed to find a speedier and safer alternative for delivery of mail to and from serving troops; it adopted the Airgraph service. Airgraphs were introduced in 1940 to mail between England and British military bases in the Middle East. The service met with early success, and the Airgraph service was later extended to Canada (1941), East Africa (1941), Burma (1942), India (1942), South Africa (1942), Newfoundland (April, 1943), Australia (1943), New Zealand (1943), Ceylon (1944) and Italy (1944) (Senkus, 2007).

In July 1943 the Airgraph service was extended, via Canada, to the North American French Colony of St. Pierre & Miquelon. Several hundred St. Pierrais served with the Free French armed forces in North Africa, Europe and on Free French naval ships in the North Atlantic.

The first Airgraph envelope (six known) was delivered in St. Pierre on 11 August 1943 an example is shown as Fig. 1. The Airgraphs were sent from Norman Hill of Rotherham, Yorks, England to the British Consular office at St. Pierre (Fig. 2). Airgraph processing in Canada was carried out at Toronto. The first Airgraph outer envelopes to St. Pierre (Fig. 1) contained a message from England, reduced to microfilm, carried by trans-Atlantic air and developed and mailed from Toronto to St. Pierre. The franking, done by postage meter, is a straight line italic "AIRGRAPH" with stylized wing and arrow and a double circular "AIRMAIL/ JULY 28/ 530 PM/ 1943/ POSTAGE PAID" in blue ink. The cover is



Figure 1 front. The first Airgraph outer cover (one of six) mailed from Toronto, Canada Airgraph depot with a message from Rotherham, England. Arrival postmark at St. Pierre is dated August 11, 1943. (ex. Keeton; 1987 page 229A). (James R. Taylor Collection)

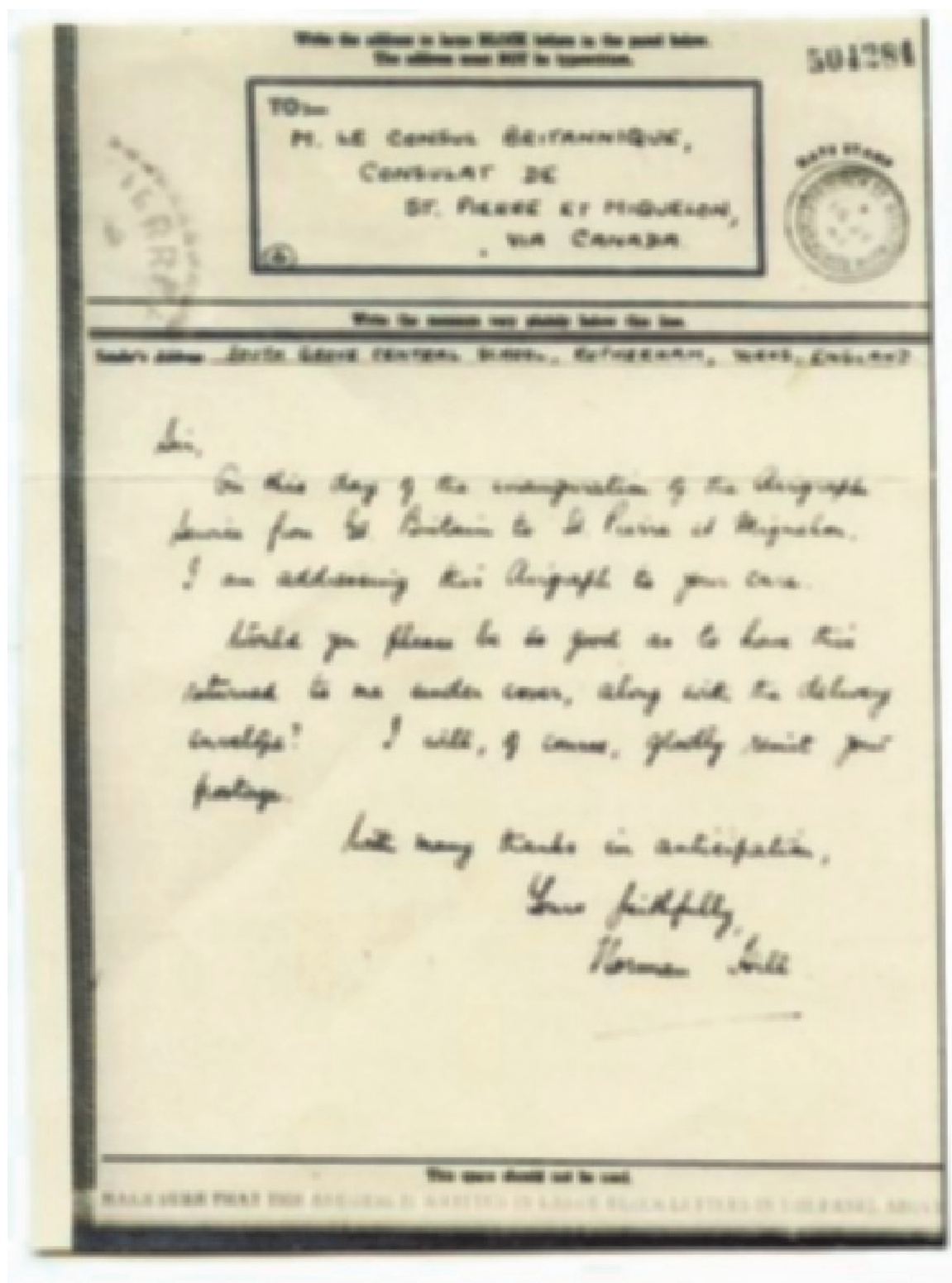


Figure 2. The first six Airgraph letters to arrive at St. Pierre contained the same message. It was sent dated 16 July 1943 from Rotherham, England (ex. Keeton; 1987 page 229A). (James R. Taylor)

struck with the broken-circular "ST PIERRE ET MIQUELON/ 11 - 8/ 43/ *." postmark (Fig. 1). The cover is marked in manuscript on the back "1st GB - St Pierre Miquelon" in Norman Hill's hand writing (Berman, 2011) . An example of the enclosed message is shown on Fig. 2.

Airgraph message 504284 from Norman Hill to the British Vice Consul at St. Pierre was one of six sent at the same time to test the newly inaugurated Airgraph destination (Fig. 2). Note the inbound Airgraph form with the address in block letters in a rectangular box. The serial number and the dated postmark of the dispatching post office in the upper right. The date is 16 July 1943 which according to the text was the first day that Airgraphs could be sent from England to the new destination at St. Pierre. Notice on the upper left, the partial receiving postmark of St. Pierre which managed to land within the envelope window onto the form. The sender's address appeared just above the fold in the paper.

The British Vice-Consul at St. Pierre A.R. Bartlett returned the six messages and their covers to Hill by registered mail (slow) and sent what is thought to be the very first Airgraph (fast) from St. Pierre back to Hill dated by the St. Pierre postmark 23 August 19 (Fig. 3). Note the Canadian PASSED BY CENSOR/ DB 156 marking that appeared on the original form and reduced on the Airgraph message. Although initially restricted to active forces mail, by 1943 civilian use of Airgraphs was permitted. Also note that Fig. 3 has the scarcer French language instructions on the front of the Airgraph form. Also note the distinctive border design on the left and the right of the form. These would have been printed in Canada mainly for use in the French speaking Quebec province. Archibald Bartlett besides being the Vice-Consul also represented the Western Union Telegraph Company which ran submarine cables that connected at St. Pierre to Europe, Canada and the United States.

In July 1945, Airgraph service was discontinued between Canada and all other countries. It is also interesting to note that the Airgraph system was also adopted by the United States that operated a similar independent system called V-Mail or Victory Mail.

The Airgraph forms, covers, message and any surviving paraphernalia such as film strips and packaging are of tremendous interest to the airmail collector and the postal historian. The forms were produced in many countries, from Aden to Zanzibar, wherever needed, and in whatever language was appropriate (Sanders, 2011). Troops stationed there would use these local forms, which were then sent to the nearest processing station. The basic format of all forms had to be the same, of course, to conform to the processing system. Forms printed outside the United Kingdom can be identified in various ways - some by mention of local currency, others by variations in the instructions, postmarks, or by local postage applied.

Forms available at the St. Pierre Post Office were printed in French (Fig. 3). The originating forms, with stamps attached to the back, were retained by the Canadian Post Office authorities in Toronto and the forms were destroyed after being microfilmed. Surviving blank or stamped Canadian forms in English or French are rarely found today. The used original forms would only have survived if they were returned to sender for some reason, such as a censorship violation, and were kept. Stamped Airgraph forms from the small colony of St. Pierre & Miquelon, population in 1943 of about 3500 (Cormier, 2011), while worth watching for, may not have survived destruction. Other Airgraph covers and enclosures to and from St. Pierre, although rare, may still be hidden in collections or dealer stocks. Those from and to serving St. Pierrais soldiers or sailors would be highly prized.

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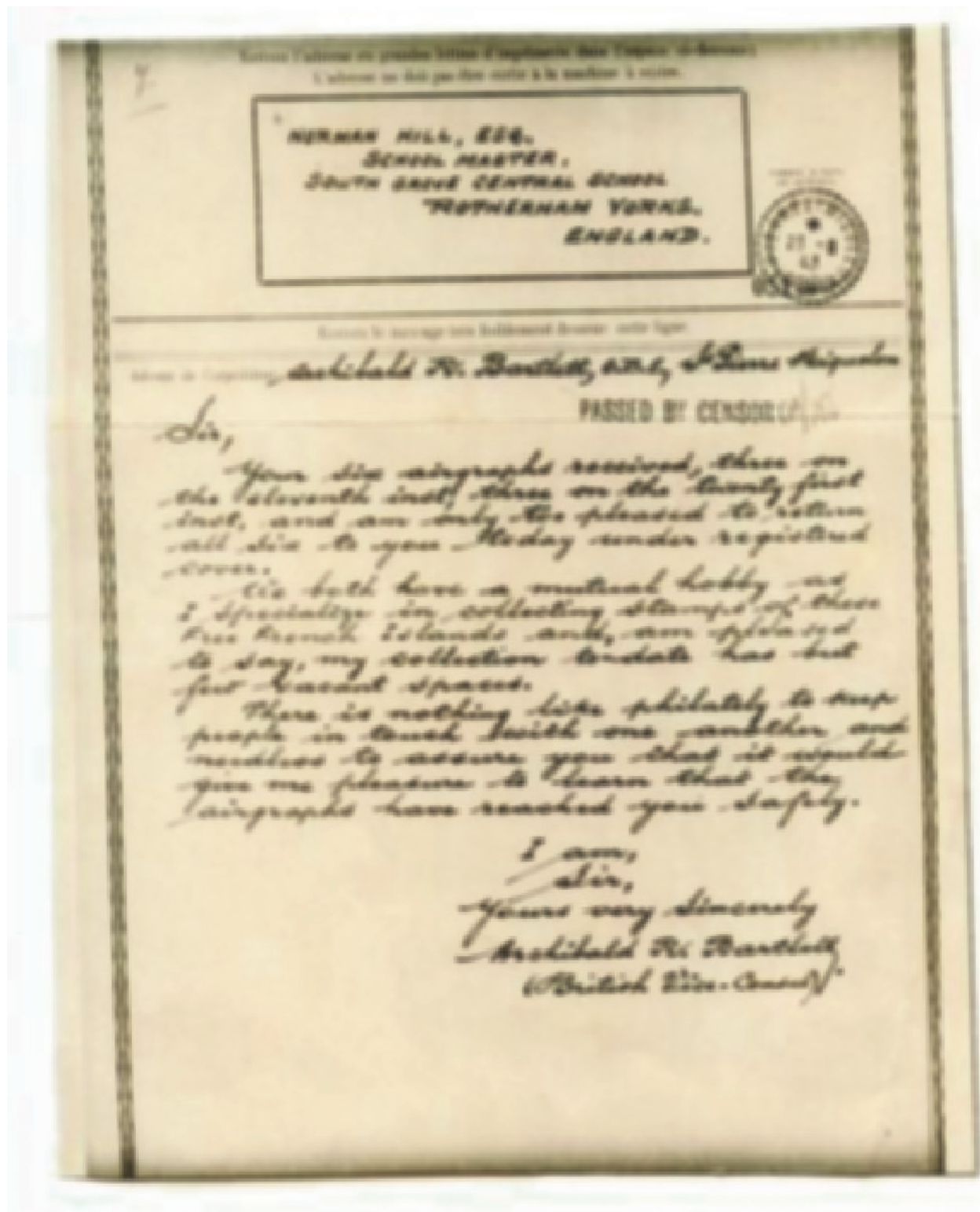


Figure 3. An Airgraph message from British Vice-Consul at St. Pierre & Miquelon, A.R. Bartlett, O.B.E., to Norman Hill at Rotherham, England acknowledging receipt of six Airgraphs at St. Pierre. (ex. Keeton; 1987 page 229A). (Berman, 2011)

Gleanings From the Group Type

Locally Fabricated AR Markings and Handstamps

Edward Grabowski (FCPS 1469)

The French Colonial post offices were typically provided with a standard group of handstamps necessary for processing of the mails. Included in the package was an **AR** handstamp indicating that return receipt service (*Avis de Réception* or *Acusé de Réception*) had been requested for the letter in question. While reviewing my database for Group Type covers indicating a request for a return receipt, I was struck by the number of covers which had manuscript markings or atypical handstamps in lieu of the standard **AR** handstamps. A typical example of a letter with a request for a return receipt is shown in Fig. 1 from the small village of Bafoulabe, French Sudan. It was posted on 11 March, 1896 at a 50 centimes rate with two 25c Group Type stamps, and bears an **R** handstamp for registration, an **AR** handstamp indicating a request for a return receipt, and a **CORR D'ARM LIG J PAQ F N°3** French packet transit datestamp.

At first this appears to be a curious assemblage of stamps and postal markings. But it is readily understood on examination of the reverse of the envelope. The reverse shows a standard manuscript endorsement and commander's signature validating the 15c military concession rate in lieu of the 25c regular rate to France. This is confirmed by the French Packet Line J military datestamp on the front. Thus, the 50c franking prepays 15c for the military concession rate and 25c for registration. The remaining 10c is to pay for the requested return receipt.

As Handleman has noted, from 1 July 1892 until 31 December, 1898 the 10c for return receipts was included in the postage on the face of an outgoing item, and it was up to the receiving post office to create the actual return receipt.¹ Beginning 1 January 1899, the actual return receipt was provided by the sending of-



Figure 1: Typical colonial **AR** handstamp as seen on a registered military concession rate letter from Bafoulabe, French Sudan in 1896.



Figure 2: Boxed **A.R.** handstamp most often seen from Indochina.

fice and it accompanied the item on its outward journey or was sent independent of the letter it related to. The **AR** form was franked at 10c postage, and was returned to the office of origin after the appropriate signatures and datestamps had been supplied by the destination office. The design of the **AR** handstamp in Fig. 1 is that most frequently seen from the French Colonies, with the **AR** enclosed in a chamfered rectangular frame. Fig. 2 shows another frequently seen design used in Indochina for French Colonial return receipt handstamps, wherein the **A.R.** is enclosed in a simple rectangular frame. This letter, from Haiphong, Tonkin, was posted to Australia in 1900. It shows the correct foreign registry rate of 50c, and the 10c postage for the return receipt was placed on the form which accompanied the letter.²

Of the approximately 50 Group Type letters in my collection showing a request for a return receipt, about 20% show manuscript inscriptions or non-standard handstamps. Generally the non-standard **AR** handstamps were fabri-

cated locally, most probably from type at the post office or local printers. This was most likely done because the offices in question did not have an **AR** handstamp, or such had been broken during the course of use and replacements had not yet arrived.

Manuscript endorsements indicating a request for a return receipt are often seen on military concession rate envelopes from offices in transition from military to civilian post offices. An excellent example of such is shown in Figure 3 from Kayes, French Sudan posted on 4 September 1894. The letter is franked at a 50c rate with 15c and 25c Group Type stamps of Senegal and a 10c Dubois issue from the General Issues. Senegalese Group Type stamps and stationery were used from the Sudan during this early period because of a shortage Sudanese Group Type issues. The 50c rate is comprised of 15c for the military concession rate, 25c for registration and 10c for the return receipt. The concession rate is validated by the manuscript endorsement on the front of the envelope and confirmed by the **CORR D ARM**



Figure 3: Manuscript **acusé de reception** used on a registered military concession rate letter from Kayes, French Sudan in 1894 employing two Group Type stamps from Senegal.

LIG J PAQ FR F N° 2, 19 SEPT 94 military French Packet transit datestamp. To confirm the request for a return receipt, a bold manuscript **acusé de reception** was added to the left side of the letter in lieu of the standard handstamp which was apparently not available.

A comparable example from Benin is shown in Fig. 4. It was posted from Porto Novo, Benin on 4 July 1894 at the same 50c rate comprised of the 15c concession rate, 25c for registration and 10c for a return receipt. The 15c concession rate is validated by the unit cachet and manuscript endorsement at the upper left of the envelope, and the **CORRESP^{SE} MILITAIRE PORTO NOVO BENIN, 4 JUL 94** military datestamp. In this case the request for a return receipt is indicated by the small manuscript **AR** located at the upper right of the envelope. A **LOANGO A BORDEAUX** French



Figure 4: Small manuscript **AR** used on a registered military concession rate letter from Porto Novo, Bénin in 1894 showing the rare military datestamp of that town.

Packet transit and Paris arrival are also present on the front of the envelope. The 10c and 40c Group Type stamps used to frank the letter bear the **GOLFE DE BÉNIN** legend, which is infrequently seen on letters as the legend was changed to **BÉNIN** in 1894. Also, the Porto Novo military datestamp is rare on franked letters.

The final example of a manuscript indication for a return receipt is shown by the envelope in Fig. 5. It is a 15c Group Type postal stationery envelope raised to the 50c rate with 25c and 2 x 5c Group Type stamps posted within the small village of La Foa, New Caledonia on 23



Figure 5: Local letter from La Foa, New Caledonia showing a manuscript **AR** used on a letter within the village.



Figure 6: Crude locally produced boxed **A.R.** handstamp from Haiphong, Tonkin with space for the registry number of the article. Possibly unique.



Figure 7: Letter posted from Noumea in 1896 showing a locally produced **AR** handstamp.

September 1898. The letter bears the archaic **POSTES LA FOA** datestamp which is rarely seen on Group Type mail. The sender indicated the service request with the manuscript endorsement: **Recommandée avec AC. Rec.** The local postal clerk confirmed the registry service with a return receipt with the manuscript endorsement: **311 AR**. The rate breakdown on this example is 15c for local postage, 25c for registration and 10c for the return receipt.

Locally fabricated **AR** handstamps are also seen from the French Colonies during the period of the Group Type's use. These were most probably prepared from type available to the post offices, and vary considerably in style. One of the most unusual examples in my collection is that from Hanoi, Indochina from 21 May 1896 as shown in Fig. 6. The envelope bears a locally fabricated boxed **AR** handstamp wherein space has been provided for the registry number of the item being mailed. The handstamp is quite crude in design, and it is the only example of such that I have seen. The letter was posted at a 60c rate which corresponds to 25c postage, 25c registration and 10c for the return receipt.

In addition to the manuscript **AR** marking from La Foa, New Caledonia discussed above, locally produced handstamps can be readily found from other offices in New Caledonia. A

surprising example is that shown in Fig. 7 from Noumea, New Caledonia posted to France on 12 August 1896. The letter is addressed to Captain Noël, a retired French Colonial military officer, who received correspondence from many of the colonies during the era of the Group Type's use. This example was posted at a colorful 85c rate corresponding to 50c postage for the second weight level, 25c registration and 10c for the return receipt. A crude locally fabricated **AR** handstamp is present, suggesting that the regular device employed at Noumea was unavailable. My personal experience indicates that mail to Captain Noël is typically correctly franked, but often colorfully so as is this example. A second example from the small village of Thio on 9 May 1902 (Fig. 8), also to Captain Noël, bears a very different locally produced **AR** handstamp. This envelope appears to be incorrectly franked at 50c in lieu of the 40c French Community registered rate effective in 1902. At this time the 10c required for the return receipt should have been on the actual receipt which accompanied the letter. So this letter is either overfranked by 10c, contrary to most of my Captain Noël mail, or the village of Thio lacked return receipt forms, and the form was to be prepared during transit through Noumea. Colonial return receipts are generally quite rare, especially from small villages, so there is little actual data from which to draw firm conclusions.



Figure 8: Locally produced **AR** handstamp from the small village of Thio, New Caledonia. See text for a discussion of the rate.



Figure 10: Locally produced **A.R.** handstamp from Saint Pierre & Miquelon, possibly unique.

Contrary to this proposition, the letter from the small village of Bourail shown in Fig. 9 indicates that this small village had return receipt forms. The letter was posted on 4 April 1900 at a proper 55c rate corresponding to 2 x 15c for French Community postage on a double weight letter and 25c postage for registration. The 10c for the return receipt was properly on the receipt in this case.

One of the more spectacular locally produced **AR** handstamps is that from Saint Pierre & Miquelon shown in Fig. 10. The letter was posted from Saint Pierre on April 17, 1897 to Montreal



Figure 9: Locally produced **A.R.** handstamp from the small village of Bourail, New Caledonia.

at the 60c rate corresponding to 25c postage, 25c registration and 10c for the return receipt. The bold locally produced **A.R.** handstamp is the only one that I have seen from this office.

The last item in this group which I wish to illustrate is the encircled **AR** handstamp used at Papeete during the period of the Group Type's use. I know of at least five Group Type covers showing use of this handstamp. However, I am not aware of any other colony or office using a handstamp such as this, nor was it used in France proper. Thus, I conclude that it was probably produced locally in Papeete. The example shown in Fig. 11 is unusual in that it shows late use (14 November 1912) on a French Community registered letter (35c = 10c postage + 25c registration) franked with a single 35c stamp. In my experience, use of a single 35c Group Type stamp from French Oceania is quite rare, possibly rivaling single use of the 40c and 45c Group Type stamps from this colony.

Finally, I thought it appropriate so show something further about the actual return receipts that these manuscript markings and handstamps promulgated. As noted, prior to 1899 the 10c postage for the return receipt was placed on the outgoing envelope, and it was the responsibility of the receiving post office to create the actual receipt. I have not seen any return receipts from the era of the Group Type



Figure 11: Encircled **AR** handstamp from Papeete, most probably locally produced and the most frequently seen of the locally produced **AR** handstamps in the author's experience.

created under these regulations. However, I did purchase the outer envelope shown in Fig. 12 which validates the procedure prior to 1899. It is a German Postal Contract envelope that has been modified to carry a return receipt. It was sent in response to a letter from Papeete to Baden-Baden requesting a return receipt which was sent from Baden-Baden on 28 April 1894. It bears Bremen, New York and San Francisco transits, Baden-Baden and San Francisco registry labels and, most importantly, a Papeete arrival on the reverse from 24 June 1894.

Beginning in 1899 the UPU regulations changed, and the return receipts were provided by the sending post office franked at a 10c rate accompanying the letter requesting the receipt. The receiving office gathered the necessary signatures and datestamps, and sent the receipt back to the sending office. Any colonial return receipts from the Group Type period or earlier

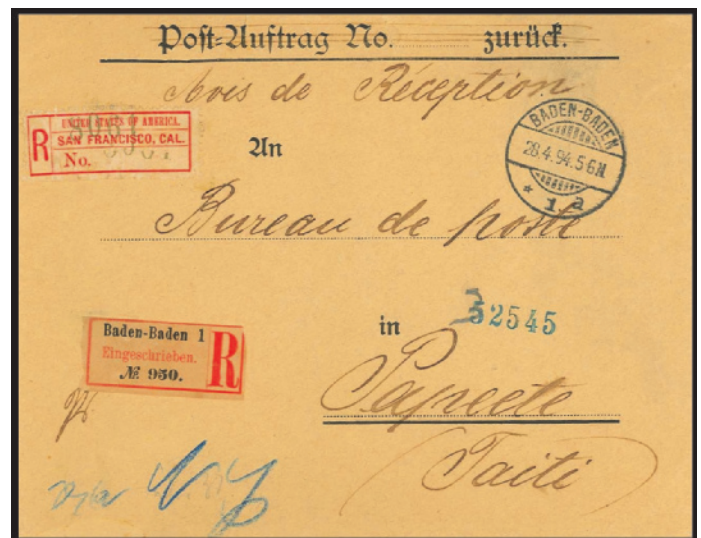


Figure 12: Envelope from the German office at Baden-Baden in 1894 which carried a return receipt produced in Germany for a registered letter from Papeete.

are rare and worthy of your attention. Some colonies used standard French return receipt forms for this service; other colonies had special forms created for their own use. Shown in

Fig. 13 is a French-based return receipt for a registered letter from the remote and small village of Bobo-Dioulasso, French Sudan posted on February 15, 1901 to Lille, France where it

Capitaine Baudouin

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

d'un (1) *lettre* { valeur déclarée } enregistrée sous le n° *368* et adressée à

M. *Colle*, à (2) *Lille*, le (3) *15 février* 189*01*

Le soussigné déclare qu'un (4) *lettre* { valeur déclarée } à l'adresse

susmentionnée et provenant de (4) **BOBO-DIOULASSO**

SOUDAN FRANÇAIS

a été dûment livré le *13 Avril 1901*

Timbre du bureau distributeur.

Signature du Chef du bureau distributeur :

(1) Lettre, boîte, objet.
(2) En cas de réexpédition, indiquer le lieu primitif de destination.
(3) Date du dépôt d'après le timbre du bureau d'origine.
(4) Nom du bureau d'origine (d'après l'indication complète du timbre à date) suivi de celui du département ou du pays.

NOTA. — Cet avis { dans le régime intérieur comme correspondance } par le premier courrier, au bureau d'origine de l'objet qu'il concerne.
doit être envoyé { ordinaire, sous enveloppe n° 818. }
{ dans le régime international sous enveloppe n° 289, }
recommandé d'office.

Figure 13: French-issue return receipt used from the small village of Bobo-Dioulasso, French Sudan in 1901.



Figure 14: Addressed portion of a return receipt from Sainte Marie de Madagascar in 1913 franked at 10c with a 1912 overprint from Anjouan. One of the few return receipts known from this village.

received the appropriate signatures and datestamps prior to its return to Bobo-Dioulasso. Members Peter Kelly and Alain Millet also have examples of comparable return receipts from the same sender.

Finally shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15 is a 1913 return receipt from Sainte Marie de Madagascar for a registered letter to Tamatave. Postage was prepaid with a 10c 1912 Group Type overprint of Anjouan which was valid in the colony of Madagascar at this time. The reverse of the form shows that it was a special form designed only for use in Madagascar & Dependencies.

Conclusion

This article is not meant to be comprehensive in its coverage, but only suggestive of what might be available. Hopefully readers will bring forward additional unusual examples.

References

1. D. Handelman, *London Philatelist*, Vol 116, 152-177 (2007).
2. E.J.J. Grabowski, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 86, 45 – 47 (2007). This article discusses the reunification of a registered letter from Indochina and its return receipt.

FCPS Auction—What do you think?

Member **Alan Morvay** has written about the possible benefits of the FCPS having a quarterly (or at some other interval) auction. He notes that an auction can be very valuable to members helping them build their collection, helpful to consignors by letting them share duplicate or no longer wanted material with other FCPS members, and allow the Society to raise additional funds.

To help the Board determine whether this is reasonable, we would like members on all sides to give us their opinion. Even more importantly, we would like to hear from members willing to be the auction manager. This position would be completely responsible for all aspects of auction sales. Please submit responses to President Ken Nilsestuen at nilsestuen@sbcglobal.net.

Figure 15: Interior of the return receipt in Figure 14 showing proper timestamps and signatures. This form was created for sole use in the colony of Madagascar.

Election Results

The results of the election for officers and directors of the FCPS are final. There were a total of 46 ballots cast for the unopposed candidates. The results are resented below:

For President
Kenneth R. Nilsestuen — 46

For Vice President
Norval L. Rasmussen, MD — 46

For Treasurer
Jeffrey K. Ward — 45

For Recording Secretary
Dr. Edward J.J. Grabowski — 46

For Corresponding Secretary
Joel L. Bromberg — 46

For Director for the Class of 2016:
John H. Bloor — 46
Jeffrey C. Bohn — 45
Thomas Broadhead — 46

FCPS Donations

Treasure **Jeff Ward** reports that donations so far during 2012 have reached nearly \$1,300. The Board thanks the membership for their generosity.

Balch	50	Kugel	20
Blackledge	5	LaChance	20
Broadhead	150	Lampen	20
Buchsabayew	5	Landau	50
Churchman	13	Larsen	50
Dutt	5	McGarrity	10
Dykhouse	100	Nilsestuen	100
Elmore	10	Perz	10
Faulkner	5	Richards	5
Faust	100	Schroedl	30
Fisher	10	Segal	10
Gilbert	80	St. Maurice	10
Grabowski	110	Stoddard	10
Hellebrekers	25	Teunion	10
Herendeen	100	Walske	100
Hussey	10	Ward	20
Kudzma	5	Wyer	50

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	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
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PS Form 3526, August 2012 (Page 2 of 3)

We Get Letters

Observations from the UK

I have read with interest the comments made by the President in respect of the substantial number of unpaid dues and by the Editor in respect of the lack of articles provided.

Quite rightly these sound a number of alarm bells for a society that has, over very many years, provided an important platform for those interested in French philately. The Journal is obviously of critical importance where members are spread over an enormous area and apart from different shows where the Society is represented, constitutes the glue that holds the membership together.

In Europe and the U.K. we certainly share the problems of diminishing memberships although not to the extent you are reporting. Ageism is certainly an important factor sadly as we steadily lose a stream of treasured colleagues and they are not replaced in the same proportion by new members.

Some members are naughty about not renewing on time. We see this too. However, for those members who attach importance to their membership, they make sure that this important duty is fulfilled. That senior officers / directors of the Society are in default 6 months into the year defies belief. Something is wrong somewhere.

Looking through recent Journals, I have to say that there have been many articles of considerable interest to me but, nevertheless I became concerned, initially, by the editorial "Is participation for you?" in No 305. Whatever the intention was, it came across that being, and I quote, "a Mover and shaker in organised philately" should be the goal along with participation in competitive displaying.

Since then, a number of Journals have given a great deal of prominence to competitive results, as well as detailed articles on how to exhibit competitively. Again, I am sure that this is not intended, but the impression that I have gained is that there is a editorial drive directed towards those persons at the top of the tree from a philatelic point of view.

I have no idea how many of your members exhibit competitively but surely it is a small percentage of the total membership. What you may consider as encouragement may well be seen by some as active discouragement. They may actually be very happy as closet collectors, and they may also collect at a very high level as is the case with some of your authors. It is important to develop the theme that members can develop their collecting skills and indeed enjoyment without being either a "mover and shaker" or exhibiting competitively. Over the years I have exchanged correspondence with a number of FCPS members who quietly go about their business of collecting and get a lot of enjoyment out of it at many different levels. For my part, I have never exhibited competitively and have no plans to do so. I prefer to build my collections in my own way and am happy to display publicly by invitation in France and the U.K and nothing pleases me more than to be of help to other philatelists.

I gave serious thought to the renewal of my membership last year and am glad to say that I am still on board. With respect, I would however suggest that the main focus is somewhat skewed and that more impetus be given to recognising and catering for the silent majority who may be slowly slipping through the net. I agree that the cult of elitism is important but a balance needs to be struck.

Peter R.A.Kelly (FCPS 3064)

I most assuredly can't argue with Peter's observations. There is certainly no intent to come off as elitists, but I see how it can certainly appear that way. Because my personal philatelic "career" has been deeply enriched by participation in organized (i.e. social) philately, I definitely focus on its benefits. I believe Peter feels the same, as he participates in many philatelic activities on both sides of the English Channel. One need not be a "mover and shaker" to greatly enjoy shows, conventions and other social gatherings. More in my editorial.

As far as FCP content, as with all such specialty publications, we print what we get. FCPS members are always encouraged to let us know what kinds of things they would like to see. Some of Peter's ideas are fine, we just need to get the ideas and then find someone to write the articles. — Ed.

*{The following letter is an abstraction of a number of communications between member **Alan Morvay** and the Editor. He has a number of good suggestions that might be implemented as needed in the future.}*

Thoughts for the Future

I am writing in response to your editorial "Breaking Point" in FCPS No. 309. I have the following suggestions:

As the membership declines, we should attempt to reduce the FCP costs. To this end I suggest: the cover of the FCP should be of the same paper as the body, and less expensive paper should be used for the entire journal; with fewer articles, the FCP should be smaller, e.g. 28 pages. The current number of pages is too large for only five articles and 287 members.

I was surprised to learn that the FCPS had dropped to less than 300 members. Now, I think it is appropriate to compile the list of members' interests. This could be sent out once a year to members. Other clubs do this so collectors can communicate with each other. Now, FCPS is small enough in size to do this.

Another suggestion is that the FCPS should hold quarterly auctions with funds going directly to the Society. I believe that we have a person well qualified to do this. My Italy and Colonies Study Circle has such auctions and there are many active buyers. These auctions raise a significant amount of money, and their receipts have funded a color journal and annual special club events. My friends and I have benefited greatly from the material we have bought in these auctions. It might even be possible to print the quarterly auction insert using funds saved in reducing the FCP costs.

Alan Morvay (FCPS 3167)

I would like to thank Alan for his thoughtful suggestions. One of the major sections of Alan's letter castigates me soundly for not answering correspondence, as earlier editors may have done in the pre-digital age. Of this I am guilty. It is a fact of life that I have many more commit-

*ments than the editorship of the FCP. I do not have the time nor the inclination to write letters to anyone. Period. I use email for most of my correspondence, but I know that there are still those who cannot or do not use email. If you write to me, please provide a telephone number and the best times that I may reach you. I will call you on **my nickel**! Talk is truly cheap in the digital age, and I am happy to call you.*

Relative to advertising items for sale in the FCP. Just send them along. As long as you are not a dealer I will (and have) run such offering ads.

With respect to the suggestions about printing, these are always welcome. The problem, as those who have dealt with printers know, is that the majority of the costs of printing are the initial setup for each job. The incremental costs, thus savings, that can be achieved by Alan's suggestions are, unfortunately, not significant. We all recognize that nearly every other journal is being printed in color. Editors tell me it's no big deal. Well, all printers I have spoken with would charge at least 50% more — not reasonable. The real answer is, of course, the use of an online publication that obviates the need for printing and postage costs altogether.

As to the auction, I know other groups I belong to have these. I have no personal experience with them, but the President is aware of the suggestion. Ed.

Member to Member

Alan Morvay is selling some of his collections. Among these are West African colonies including sections of French Sudan, Guinea and Senegal in the 1894-1906 time period. For example, the Senegal grouping includes usages from the following towns: St. Louis, Dakar, Goree, Rufisque, Kaedi, Louga and Foundioune. There are many ship and military cancels.

For more information, write to:

Alan Morvay
PO Box 48165
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Show Reports

Minnesota Stamp Expo 2012

Crystal, MN, July 2012

Gold medal to **Paul Larsen** for his "Ubangi-Shari-Chad 1900-1938" and to **Al Kugel**.

Stamp Show 2012

Sacramento, CA, August 2012

Our only competitor in the C of C this year was **J.-J. Tillard** with his "Les vignettes postales de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon." Members **Mike Bass** and **Larry Gardner** received Gold medals in the open competition.

Americover Expo 2012

Milwaukee, WI, September 2012

Two Gold medals to **Eliot Landau** and Gold and Vermeil single frame medals. The single frame Gold won the Grand Award.

BALPEX 2012

Baltimore, MD, August 2012

Gold medal to **Al Kugel** and also a Silver medal for his single frame exhibit.

OMAHA Stamp Show 2012

Omaha, NE, September 2012

Gold medals to **Paul Larsen** and **Al Kugel**. A Vermeil to **Stan Luft** for his "'Hors-sac' - Urgent Dispatch Mail."

MILCOPEX 2012

Milwaukee, WI, September 2012

Gold medal to **Eliot Landau** and a Vermeil to **Al Kugel**. **Al** also received a single-frame Silver-Bronze.

INDYPEX 2012

Indianapolis, IN, September 2012

Both a Gold medal and a single frame Vermeil to **Al Kugel**.

Membership Notices

NEW MEMBERS

- 3443 Paprock, Joanne M., Woodgate, NY
- 3444 McConnell, Barbara, Monroe, NY
- 3445 Buss, Dennis C., Petaluma, CA

ADDRESS CHANGES

- 3010 Landau, Eliot A., Woodridge, IL
- 1327 Lyman, R.W., Orr's Island, ME

DECEASED

- 3374 Faust, Keith N.
- 2413 McConnell, E. Joseph
- 1447 Woods, Carl P.

FLASH

Long-time member **Steve Walske** will sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists this month (October) in Perth, Scotland. More to follow.

**What would you
like to see in the FCP?**

**Contact the Editor
with any ideas that
you may have. This is
your journal!**

President's Letter

Last time I mentioned the weather in my opening remarks. Let's say that after that hot, dry summer we are in fall – a rather steep drop-off from the heat. Rain has returned, too. Hard to forecast the winter, but it looks like El Niño has broken up. Time will tell.

As you can see elsewhere in our journal, election results are in. Apparently there were insufficient write-in votes to unseat any of the nominees, so we are set for another two years. Thanks to all of you who took time to vote. Remember to vote in a much more significant election in early November!

There are two continuing story threads in my letters, so let's get to them right away. First, regarding the digitization project, we have a signed agreement, we have the unspent cash in hand, and we have a significant portion of the work that was completed by the original contractors. Mike Bass and I will now do what we can to get the project finished for *FCPS*. Keep your fingers crossed that all goes smoothly from this point forward.

The second topic is our meeting schedule. Still on for SANDICAL 2014. Still a bit early to plan an agenda for the show, but not too early for all of us to be blocking out the dates and planning to attend. And of course for those of you who are exhibitors, we should be working on them so we have another strong showing there. While I don't see all French auction catalogs, there have been a couple of recent sales with great material, so I hope some of it is now in your hands. If you are a closet collector, would you at least consider attending the show and sharing your wonderful material at our meeting?

A note on Garfield-Perry, where we have met twice in the past few years and is my home show. The group has moved out of the old Masonic Temple to a recently modernized party center. How long the show will be there is anyone's guess, but if we ever come back here again, the facilities should be much more comfortable. Since we are planned out to 2018 or so, (and we have an invitation for TEXPEX and Denver, too, that could take us out to 2019 or 2020), I don't expect to see our group back

here for a while.

We have been working on the membership list, too. **Joel Bromberg**, **Jeff Ward** and **Ralph DeBoard** have been tracking down non-renewals to beef up our roster. Again, the final results are not quite in, but their efforts have paid off for us. It is much easier to retain a member than to find new ones!

Now we need all of us to serve as recruiters for our society. We can advertise (expensive), rent tables at shows (helpful but not very productive), or sit back and hope. What might be best is to see if an auction house would include a membership application in their next mailing, but even that wouldn't be free. So I think we have to take on personal responsibility to find members and let them know what a great group we are. Membership offers a professional quality journal, regular meetings at APS shows with excellent presentations, the ability to ask questions of other members, and so on. And still at a reasonable price. So please make a pitch to your philatelic friends whenever you can.

Shall I continue my repetitive themes from last time? We can still use more articles for the journal. They need not be scholarly, but should reflect your knowledge of a subject and / or your enthusiasm. Take a look at your collection for something that interests you, whether a series of stamps, a commemorative theme, postal history (registration, wartime service, first day covers, etc.), lessons learned from exhibiting French material or a story about why you collect what you do. The journal attracts and keeps members, and we need your input to support the effort. Peruse other society journals to see what others choose as their subjects and pick one appropriate for *FCPS*. Writing is an activity that should even appeal to so-called closet collectors, since one can do it completely in the comfort of the stamp room.

Having read member **Alan Morvays's** letter (see page 123), I think that the idea of an *FCPS* auction in order to raise additional funds has potential merit. It does require consigners, buyers and most importantly, an auction manager who would volunteer for such a duty. See page 119 for more information.

The Social Aspects of Philately Revisited

David L. Herendeen, Editor

After reading Peter Kelly's Letter to the Editor (page 122), I began soul-searching about my editorial "slant" for the *FCP*.

There is absolutely no doubt that I focus on social aspects of our fabulous hobby. I do this because my life has been profoundly enriched by those I have met, those who have helped me and those whom I have helped.

I have seen our annual exhibition and meeting change from a moribund operation to one that attracts 30+ members each year. We are able to present an entire day of talks and programs on a wide variety of subjects. The *FCPS* now fields more frames of exhibits than nearly every other Society! We are in demand by shows to help them field better overall exhibitions.

I have seen the attendees grow and flourish from their attendance. Some have become exhibitors. Others have made contributions to the *FCP*. I personally see little downside in encouraging the social activities.

Movers and Shakers

We do have some "movers and shakers" in the *FCPS*. We also have national and international judges; International Grand Prix winners, acclaimed authors, signatories of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, and more. Participating in the social aspects of the hobby in no way requires you to become more than you desire. You know: to talk to the other nut that collects Nossi-Bé or postage due, or AR receipts; to open your own mind to new ideas; to see new places. Not to mention the opportunity to make lifelong friends with whom you may share other things beyond philately.

Of course not everyone has the resources, personality or health to do this. But, maybe you do. I once met a woman who had travelled to the stamp show in Denver. She was able to attend because her husband gave her the trip as a gift. I recollect that she was from central

Wyoming where shows are nonexistent. I have never seen such effusive joy. She was like a kid in a candy store. Imagine, there being hundreds of other collectors just like her. And, they spoke her language. Her entire collecting experience was instantly transformed to a new, exciting level.

Am I a "mover and shaker?" Probably to some extent. Do I expect you to be one? Absolutely not. I'm simply pointing out that there is a big philatelic world out there, and you may have the same wonderful experience many of us have had exploring it.

No Apology

All that said, I don't think I need to apologize for the "slant" of my writings. The social side of philately is simply ingrained in me after 30 years. I am not "making" anyone do anything — I am simply showing everyone that there are opportunities to expand our horizons.

Change is Necessary

I have been editing the *FCPS* for six years! I firmly believe that everything gets stale. I think new ideas and perspectives are necessary to keep any organization vital. I have been criticized for published mostly colonial material compared to that of France. This is true. The colonies are what I collect and love. My predecessor, **Stan Luft**, was a France collector and he published more France content. His predecessor, the prolific **Bob Stone** was also primarily a colonies specialist, and so it goes. That is why new perspective is needed periodically.

It is time for someone to step forward to breathe this kind of new vitality into our journal. Who shall it be?

**Do you have
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