

# FRANCE and COLONIES PHILATELIST

January 2013  
Whole No. 311 (Vol. 69, No. 1)



*Gleanings From the French Colonial Group Type: Obock, Djibouti  
and the Somali Coast (see page 8)*



*Ballons Monté-A Unique Historical Perspective (see page 19)*

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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*

All communication about membership, subscriptions, publications, back issues, activities and services of the Society should be sent to the Corresponding Secretary:

Joel L. Bromberg  
P.O. Box 102  
Brooklyn, NY 11209-0102, USA

All contributions to and questions concerning the contents and policy of this periodical should be sent to the Acting Editor:

Norval Rasmussen  
224 Wilson Ave  
Morgantown, WV 26501

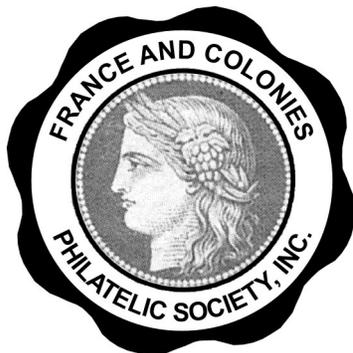
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Periodical Postage paid at Publications office,  
P.O. Box 102, Brooklyn, NY 11209-0102  
An additional entry office at Platteville, WI 53818  
Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to Publications Office noted above

## 2013: Already?

*David L. Herendeen*

I don't know about you, but doesn't it seem like yesterday when we were all worried about the Y2K problem and the fantastic millennium celebrations? In retrospect, my favorite thing about the millennium was the lighting of the Eiffel Tower. Not only have the lights remained installed, but they twinkle for 10 minutes every hour at night. It is truly an inspiring spectacle.

### *In this Issue*

I am pleased to publish a contribution from member **Peter Kelly** of the UK. Peter is not only a fine gentleman who I have had an opportunity to meet two or three times, but he is also one of only eleven *membres correspondants* of the *Académie de Philatélie*, a position to which he was elected in 2005. Peter's paper helps clarify the myriad confusing aspects of the French postal bureaucracy.

This time we have a major contribution by Ed Grabowski showing colonial group type postal history from the Obock-Djibouti-Somali Coast complex. Certainly among the most difficult material to find (aside from piles of philatelic creations) properly used. Ed shows no fewer than 28 items that form the basis for his exhibit of this area. Gems include the elusive valeur declare covers and a complete newspaper. The eleven pages devoted to the article are well worth the space given the few articles devoted to this area.

### *International Symposium*

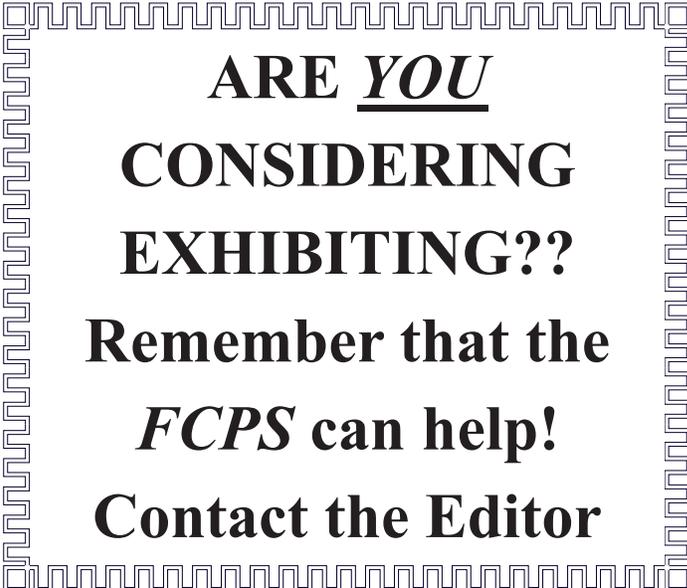
In November, the First International Symposium on Analytical Methods in Philately was held in Washington, DC. More than 50 enthusiastic participants from across the U.S. and five other countries attended. Although no projects have been performed yet relative to French philately, many of our members support this philanthropic group. These include **Dave Herendeen, Ken Nilsestuen, Jack Dykhouse, Steve Tucker, Ed**

**Grabowski, Larry Gardner, John Bloor and Jim Taylor** (I hope I didn't forget anyone!) Members interested in learning more about this organization may visit their web site at:  
**[www.AnalticalPhilately.org](http://www.AnalticalPhilately.org)**

### *Members in the News*

In a press release dated December 2012, the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC) was pleased to announce the appointment of **James R. (Jim) Taylor** of Calgary as its International Liaison Officer (ILO), effective immediately. Jim succeeds Dr. J.J. Danielski.

In addition to the *FCPS*, Jim is actively involved in several specialist societies and study groups. His collection of St. Pierre & Miquelon (SPM) has won international gold medals, and he has published books and articles on the subject. His catalogue of SPM stamps is considered the definitive reference on the subject, and was awarded a gold medal at CHICAGOPEX 2000.



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**CONSIDERING**  
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# Facteurs Boitiers *and* Facteurs Receveurs During the Type Sage Issue Period (1876-1900)

Peter R. A. Kelly

## Background

In considering the *facteurs boitiers* we have to look at the system in which they played a part. The most important offices were the *bureaux de recette* which were graded according to their size and importance but were all able to provide a full service. (To avoid confusion, note that these were referred to as *bureaux de direction* prior to December 1864).

These were followed by the secondary offices of which the most important were the *bureaux de distribution*. The *distributeur* ran offices that were open during normal working hours and were authorized to offer most post office services although there were some constraints on financial type transactions such as *articles d'argent*. They were generally run by women and because of the hours that they were required to remain open they did not, generally, distribute mail. The *distributeur* was a full *agent de la poste*.

The position of the *facteur boitier* was different in that he ran his office and operated as a postman at the same time. This required restricted opening hours that was not popular. The *facteur boitier* also had a lower grade and was classed as a *sous agent de la poste*.

The two services ran parallel until 1874 and shared the same handstamp with the distinctive dotted outer circle.

A major upheaval in the system occurred in 1874 when the *bureaux de distribution* were converted en masse to full *recette* status but in a newly created fourth grade. They no longer used the 'distribution' type handstamp and in many cases had to file off the outer dotted line from their existing handstamp. (The post office

hated waste!). This left behind only a small number of *facteurs boitiers* and initially there was little demand for new ones as the post office bore the cost of these offices and was reluctant to invest in new offices.

When the Sage period dawned in mid-1876, the *facteurs boitiers* were the only kind of secondary office in existence. Many of the early publications on the subject have confused the *facteurs boitiers* with the *bureaux de distribution*. For example, de Beaufond in the leading work on the cancellations of Type Sage makes no reference at all to *facteurs boitiers*, attributing all of the dotted outer line cancellations to 'distributions' up to 1900 which is incorrect. The fact is that there were no *bureaux de distribution* during the Type Sage period.

In the early years of the Sage period there was only a small number of *facteurs boitiers* and examples are difficult to find. There was a gradual increase particularly with the limited development of *facteurs boitiers municipaux* but little real growth in the country until early 1879 when the post office decided that the communes that wished to have offices could do so provided that they paid a substantial part of the overheads, at least until the office was covering its costs. The announcement was welcomed widely and the number of offices increased substantially.

On 2 May 1893 the *facteurs boitiers* were renamed *facteurs receveurs* although their function remained unchanged. This name was retained until 1943 when they were, again, renamed but this time as *receveurs distributeurs*. The precise functions of the *facteur boitier* consisted of the distribution of mail, clearing the boxes, keeping the office open in accordance



Figure 1. Type 23, Lamonzie-Saint-Martin (23) Dordogne to Sainte Foy-la-Grande (Gironde), 15 January 1885, Franked 15c (Tariff 1.5.1878) (population in 1892- 1298).

with the amount of time available, sale of stamps, receiving registered and insured items and the issue and payment of mandates. They did not handle certain financial products involving *articles d'argent*. The office was not self accounting and was under the control and supervision of a *recette*.

### The Postmarks

There were three separate postmarks in use at the beginning of 1876. These are referred to as "Types 23,24 and 25."

#### Type 23

This was a modified form of the old Type 22 required to meet the new regulation (BM no 1 July 1868) that the date slug should include a collection number so that the post office could establish at what time a letter entered the system. The only way this could be achieved was by removing the inner ring to accommodate a larger date slug. This procedure was carried out to use up unutilized stocks of type 22 (Once again the post office avoided waste wherever possible). Only some 30 offices were provided with this modified stamp (Type 23) and

as they became worn out or damaged they were replaced by type 24 up to May 1875 and then by type 25.

By mid-1876 only three offices were using a type 23; *Appoigny*, *Ivoy-le-Pre* and *Lamonzie St Martin*. These are all cherished by Sage collectors and hard to find. An example is seen in Fig. 1.

#### Type 24

Type 24 was a new handstamp, introduced in July 1868. It was slightly larger and featured the collection number. The department in which the office was situated was identified by means of the department number shown on the bottom of the stamp as seen in Fig. 2.

#### Type 25

In May 1874 (BM74) new instructions were received to the effect that the department number was to be replaced by the department name and the Type 24s were replaced progressively with Type 25 which reflected this. (See Fig. 3) The Types 24 and 25 continued to be used well into the 20th century despite a further change in 1886.

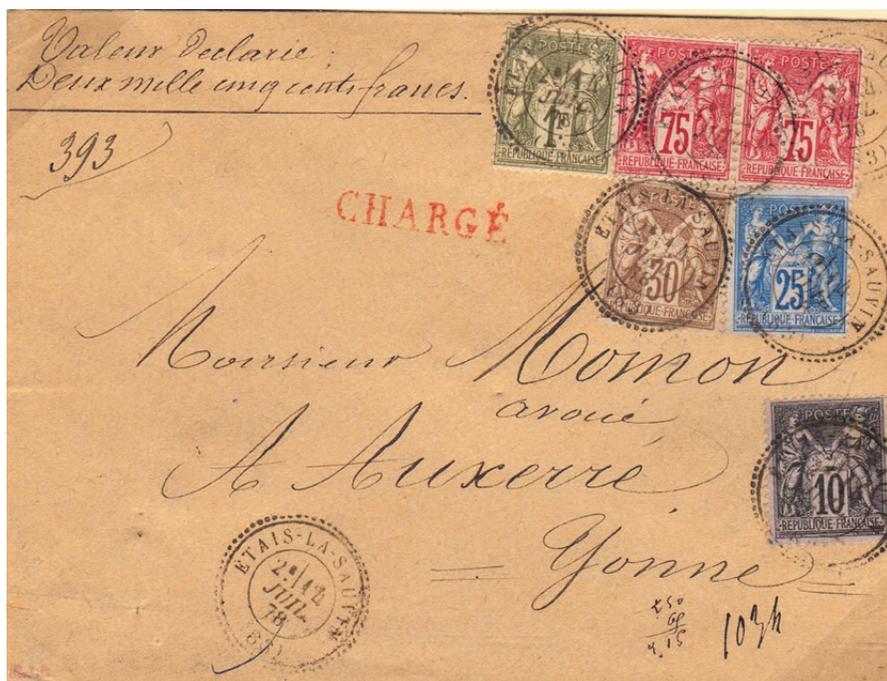


Figure 2. Type 24. Insured letter from the commune of Etais-la-Sauvin (83) – Yonne to Auxerre, Yonne 14 July 1878. Weight 14.6 grams. Insured value F2500. Postage 15c (T. 1.5.1878) + Registration 50c (T 2-1873)+ Insurance F2.50 (10c per F100 – T 1.5.1878) (Population in 1884 – 1660)

### Lautier Type B2

In 1884 the decision was taken to increase the size of the datestamps from 22 to 25mm across the board but it took until 1886 for this to happen with the *facteurs boitiers*. The old numbering system ended with the Type 25 and was replaced by a new system devised by André Lautier. (Ref. 3) The prefix 'B' refers specifically to the *boitiers* and their descendants. The other change is that the names in italics were replaced by block capital letters. This is the datestamp that collectors will come across most frequently as they remained in use for many years. (J-F Brun quotes that a dozen or so offices were still using them in 1951.) The next new date slug, all in figures and without any letters in it, was introduced in 1904 after

the end of the Sage period. An example is given in Fig. 4.

For those that use the Lautier classification (that I, personally, have found very useful) it may be noted that type B.1 has been omitted and the reason for this is that it is extremely rare. It has the date slug in italic letters and figures which means that only offices existing at 1886 and having kept their date slugs could have achieved this. New offices would be issued automatically with the new format in block capitals.

### Final Word

The study of these secondary offices is a worthwhile one because they often come from locations with a relatively small population and a correspondingly small volume of mail. It is possible to find

both registered and insured letters as well as printed matter and other categories of mail. It is also useful to have an idea of the population of the communes concerned. The following bibliography will be of great assistance.

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3. Lautier A. Nomenclature des cachets à date manuels postérieur aux types 18 & 25 (1884-1969) Published by the author 1984.
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Figure 3. Type 25. Registered letter from St Bomer-les-Forges, Orne to Paris. March 1883. Marked 'OL' in a circle of dots signifying that the letter was handed to a local postman operating in the commune in which the office was located. Franked 40c. Postage 15c (T 1.5.1878) + Registration 25c (T 16.1.1879) (Population in 1884 – 1589).

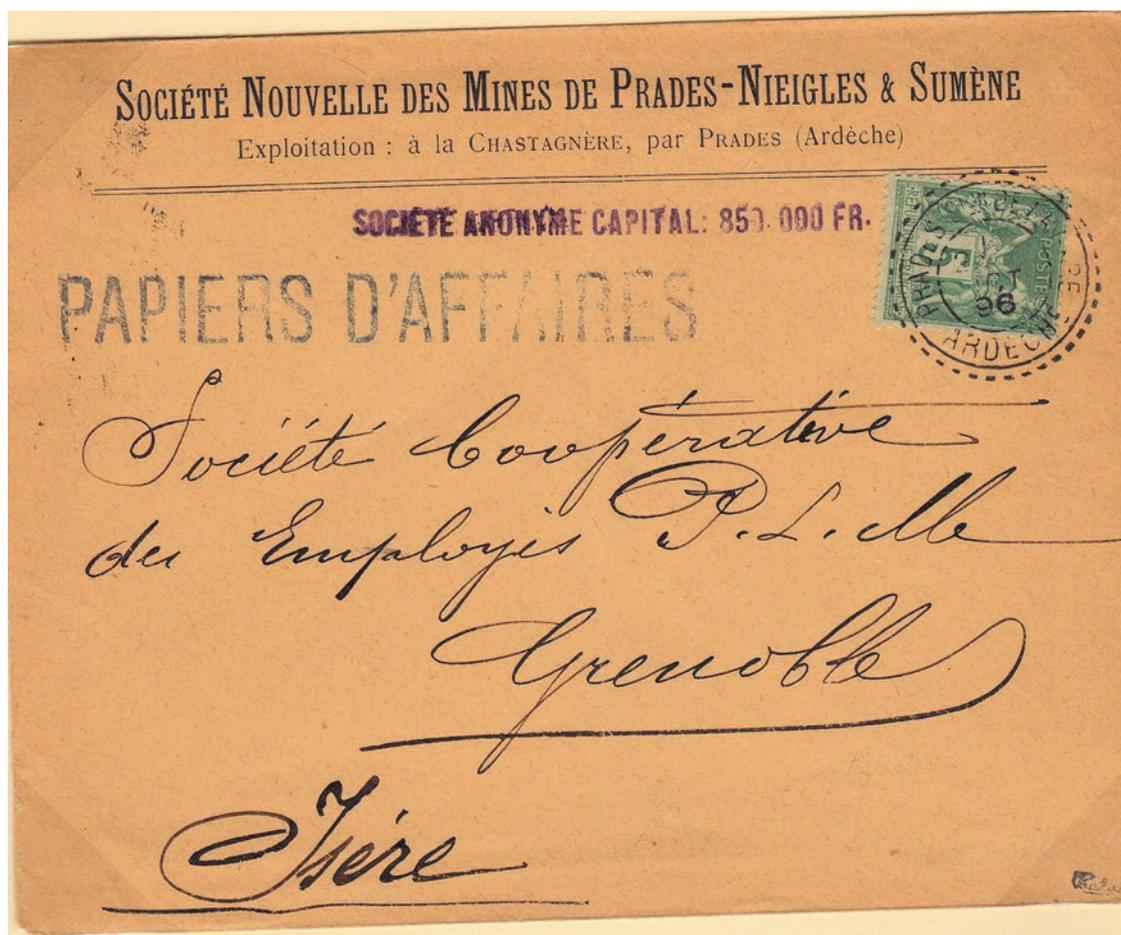


Figure 4. Lautier B 2. Prades Sion de la gare (section), Ardeche, to Grenoble, Isère. Franked 5c for the business papers rate of 1.1.1876. Note that there was no other office in this commune and it was the nearest to the mining operation at Niègles. The population in 1892 was 1150.

# *Gleanings From the French Colonial Group Type: Obock, Djibouti and the Somali Coast*

*Edward Grabowski*

**M**y odyssey to prepare eight exhibits on The Era of the French Colonial Group Type has reached the half-way point with the completion of the exhibit on Senegal & Dependencies. The next exhibit will deal with Obock, Reunion and French India, three small and totally different entities located more-or-less in the Indian Ocean area. I am currently preparing the part of the exhibit that features the use of the Obock Group Type issues, and I was struck by the paucity of material illustrating use of these stamps. I have been collecting the Group Type since 1976, and have amassed but twenty-five Group Type covers from the Obock area franked all or in part with Group Type stamps. For this exhibit I will s-t-r-e-t-c-h these covers to one frame. It has become quite clear that of all of the French colonial entities that used Group Type stamps, use from Obock and its related areas represents the most insignificant aspect of the overall use of the Group Type.

Why should this be? An examination of the history and stamps of the area provides an answer.<sup>1</sup> Obock was a coaling station for French ships heading to and from the Suez Canal (Fig. 1). To maintain ready access to the canal, the French believed it mandatory to have their own coaling facilities independent of those of the British. The post office at Obock in the Somali Coast area received its first stamps in February 1892. These initial stamps were overprints prepared on the Type Dubois issue of the Colonies General Issues. The Yvert catalog lists thirty-one members of this first series of overprints. In November 1892 the Group Type Issue (1c to 1F) was shipped to Obock. In 1893 and 1894 the spectacular triangular and rectangular pictorial issues of the colony were issued. These were the first stamps issued specifically for a

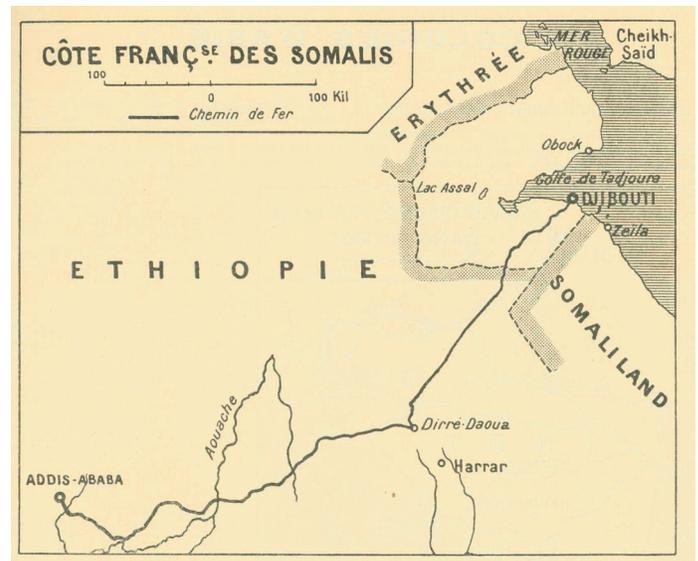


Figure 1: Map from Langlois & Bourselet showing the colony of Obock-Djibouti and surrounding areas.

single French Colony with scenes reflecting the colony.

So the Obock Group Type Issue was sandwiched between the initial provisional issues of the colony and the spectacular large format pictorial issues of Obock which came shortly after the Group Type Issue. Only the Group Type printings from 1892 and 1893 were shipped to this colony, and they were used from 1892 until stocks were exhausted around 1910. The transfer of the port to Djibouti in 1894, a much better facility, brought additional large format pictorial issues from Djibouti – Somali Coast. During 1902 – 1903 the Somali Coast received its first definitive issue as French activities in the area expanded. Essentially the Obock Group Type stamps became a relatively insignificant appendage in a plethora of provisional, pictorial and definitive issues as the colony grew and made the transition from



Figure 2: Earliest recorded Group Type cover from any of the French Colonies posted in Obock on 11 December 1892.

Obock to Djibouti to the Somali Coast. Books, articles and exhibits on the Obock-Djibouti-Somali Coast issues have received considerable attention, but the Group Type has always been the tail wagged by the big dog. Herein, I would like to examine, for what I believe to be the first time, the use of the Obock Group Type Issues, and answer the question: “Does the Group Type usage represent a significant aspect of the postal history of the area?”

Obviously, I believe the answer to be ‘yes’, but I will leave it to the reader to develop his/her own opinion. My first Obock Group Type cover, shown in Fig. 2, was posted from the colony on 11 December 1892. It is a fourth-weight registered commercial letter to France franked with 50c and 75c Obock Group Types with a Reunion-Marseille French Packet transit. The stamps are tied by the **OBOCK COLONIE FRANCAIS** datestamp in use in late 1892. At the time I purchased this cover, I thought it might be **the earliest**

**recorded Group Type cover from any of the French Colonies.** I did a short note in the **FCP** presenting this point of view.<sup>2</sup> I also challenged Group Type specialists in France and the US with this possible first date of use. As of this writing, no one has come up with an earlier date. If shipment of Group Type stamps began in November 1892 as the literature suggests, the most logical places for the earliest recorded use would be Dakar, Senegal and Obock, the most probable ports of their first arrival. I have and have seen other Group Type covers from January 1893, but none from 1892 except that shown in Fig. 2. No earlier cancellations on loose stamps have surfaced to date. I consider this cover to be one of the most important in my entire collection of Group Type Era covers which numbers more than 2500 today.

The second cover illustrating use of the Obock Group Type stamps is shown in Fig. 3. It was posted at the triple weight registered rate from Obock on October 10, 1893 showing use of the 25c Group Type issue in combination with the 75c straight-line **OBOCK** provisional issue



Figure 3: Combination cover posted 10 October 1893 franked with 25c Group Type and the 75c provisional of the second series of 1892.

overprint. The latter is the rarest stamp of this group of overprints, and it is quite remarkable to have an example on an apparent commercial cover in combination with a Group Type issue that appears free of philatelic influences.

Fig. 4 illustrates use of the **CORR. DES ARMEES OBOCK** circular datestamp on a 15c military concession rate letter posted on 11 August 1893 to France. Validation of this rate is provided by the anchor cachet of a colonial marine unit on the reverse as shown in Fig. 5.



Figure 4: **CORR. DES ARMEES** military datestamp from 11 August 1893 on a Group Type military concession letter.

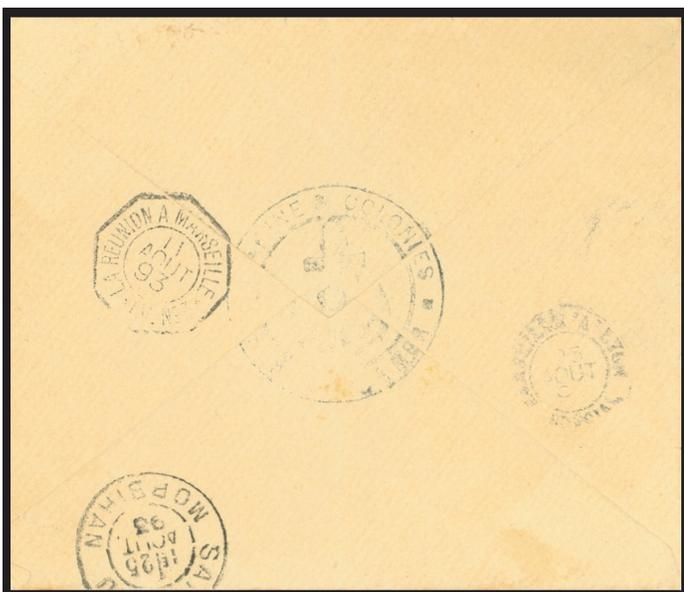


Figure 5: Reverse of the letter in Fig. 4 showing the military cachet which validated the concession rate.



Figure 6: Mourning cover from 1893 sent via Aden, Brindizi and the Modane A Paris rail line to the Jura.

A few examples of this military datestamp have been recorded on letters franked with the 15c Type Dubois stamp. To my knowledge only two military concession covers are known with Group Type, this being the better of the two.

To illustrate use of the single 25c stamp on a French community rate letter (prior to 1 January 1899) or an overseas letter, I have been fortunate to find the mourning cover with its massive black borders shown in Fig. 6. The letter was posted at Obock on 23 March 1893 and bears a **MODANE A PARIS, 1 AVRIL 93** transit on the front. The reverse shows a Marseille-Reunion French Packet transit from 23 March, and an Aden transit from 29 March. Clearly the route through Italy was better timed than transit via Marseille, especially for a letter bound for the Jura. As an added bonus, the envelope still has its original contents.

In 1894 the port and colonial administration were moved across the bay to Djibouti, a better and safer harbor, and Obock fell into relative decline as a result. However, mail from Obock is still occasionally seen, and use of residual Obock Group Type stamps from Obock and Djibouti continued at least until 1910. Anticipating the transfer of the colonial government to Djibouti, three Group Type overprints were locally created on Group Type issues in December of 1893. These were the **DJ** overprint on the 5c stamp with the **OBOCK** struck out, the **DJIBOUTI 25** overprint on the 2c stamp



Figure 7: Strip of five of the 1893 **DJ** Djibouti overprints tied to a small piece by the **DJIBOUTI POSTES** undulating dates-tamp, illustrating the crude nature of these overprints.

and the **DJIBOUTI 50** overprint on the 1c stamp. These stamps were overprinted in limited numbers and are difficult to find used properly on covers. Shown in Fig. 7 is a piece with five of the very crude **DJ** overprints on what was a 25c rate letter to France or overseas, with the new undulating **DJIBOUTI POSTES** Djibouti datestamp tying the stamps. I have yet to find a satisfactory cover illustrating proper use of this stamp. The overprint and new undulating **DJIBOUTI POSTES** datestamp on the two centimes stamp is shown in Fig. 8 on a beautiful commercial envelope posted on 20 September 1894 to Marseille transiting via

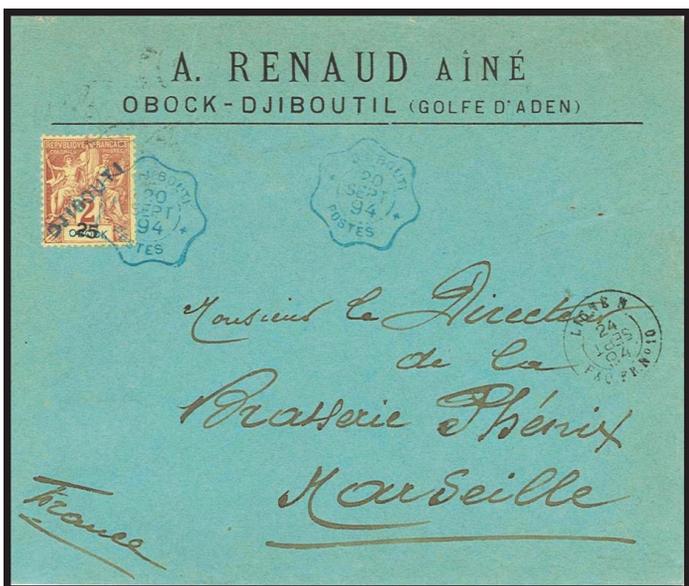


Figure 8: The **DJIBOUTI 25** overprint on the 2c Group Type stamp used on a commercial letter from 1894.

Packet Line N. My only example of the **DJIBOUTI 50** overprint is shown in Fig. 9. It was posted in Obock at the 50c registered rate to Paris, and bears a curious lozenge of dots obliteration on the stamp. This cancellation saw use on revenue documents at the time, and suggests a philatelic taint to the cover. However, the rate is correct, and the cover does not have the blatant philatelic character seen on covers franked with huge multiples of these stamps.

Although the Obock and Somali Coast-Djibouti pictorials became available at this time, the



Figure 9: The **DJIBOUTI 50** overprint used on an 1894 registered letter to Paris with the lozenge cancel normally used on fiscal documents.



Figure 10: Proper use of the 1F Group Type stamp on a triple weight registered letter from Obock in 1896 to Germany.



Figure 12: Use of the 75c Group Type stamp on a double weight registered letter to Abyssinia in 1910.



Figure 11: Use of the 40c Group Type stamp at the registered French Community rate in 1901.

available Group Type issues continued to be used both singly and in combinations with the pictorial issues. Shown in Fig. 10 is use of the 1F Obock Group Type stamp from Obock on 14 May 1896 at a triple weight registered letter to Germany. The letter bears proper Djibouti and Reunion-Marseille transits, and a Leipzig arrival. The 40c stamp is seen in Fig. 11 on a registered French Community rate letter (15c postage and 25c registration, the 15c rate being effective on 1 January 1899) to Paris with the **COTE FRANCAISE DES SOMALIS DJIBOUTI** datestamp of 23 May 1901. The final

example of a single use is of the 75c Group Type stamp posted from Djibouti at the double registered overseas rate on 27 April 1910 to Dire-Daoua, Abyssinia as shown in Fig. 12. This letter bears an arrival datestamp from 29 April 1910.

Obock also received its complement of Group Type stationery, although much of its usage appears to be philatelic. A fine, non-philatelic use of the 5c envelope is shown in Fig. 13 used from Obock on 17 December 1897 to the English coaling station at Perim, with an Aden transit on the reverse from 6 January 1898. The 25c letter card is seen in Fig. 14 posted



Figure 13: Group Type 5c postal stationery envelope used at the printed matter rate to the British coaling station at Perin via Aden in December 1897.



Figure 14: Properly used 25c letter card from Obock to Bordeaux in 1896.

from Obock on 27 October 1896 to Bordeaux bearing a Djibouti transit and Bordeaux arrival

on the reverse. It bears a full message inside.

Sometimes even philatelic uses of items have a significant story to tell. The 15c letter card shown in Fig. 15 was posted from Obock on 11 March 1896 to Justice Salzman in Berne. Significant philatelic mail was sent to him during this period, much of it postal stationery. However, this 15c card was underpaid by 10c relative to the 25c international rate in effect at this time. But, the originating office at Obock did not note the deficiency by applying a **T** in triangle to the face of the item, to alert the receiving office at Bern. The failure to denote a deficiency in postage is often seen on Group Type material of this period, and these items often arrive at their destinations under paid and not charged postage due. In informal dis-



Figure 15: Underpaid 15c letter card posted from Obock in 1896 to Switzerland, recognized as underpaid on arrival in Bern.

cussions, Harlan Stone has noted that the Swiss post offices were particularly fastidious about catching deficiencies in postage, even if they were missed by the originating offices. Such happened in this case, where the clerk at Berne noted the 10c deficiency, marked the item 20c due and applied an appropriate 20c postage due item for the money to be collected. The card bears wonderful Djibouti, Reunion-Marseille and Lyon-Gare transits (See Fig. 13), and a Bern arrival. Yes, a philatelic item with no message, but it was beautifully prepared and illustrates the attention that the Swiss paid to incoming mail.

In the 1893-1894 period the Obock and Djibouti-Somali Coast pictorials become the predominant stamps of the area, and Group Type usage is most often seen in combination with these issues. After 1902 use of the first Somali Coast definitives is also seen in combination with other previous issues including the Group Type. Shown in Fig. 16 is the 40c registered French Community rate prepaid with two 10c Group Types and a 20c pictorial of Obock posted from Djibouti on 22 February 1901 to France. The sender was affiliated with the construction of the Ethiopian railroad in the area at this time. A very similar letter, but at the 55c double weight registered rate, is shown in Fig. 17 franked with a 40c Group Type and a 15c pictorial from Djibouti-Somali Coast. Fig. 18 illustrates the 40c registered French Community rate with overprints on the Obock and Djibouti pictorial issues from 1902 created to provide additional low value stamps which were in short supply. Despite the plethora of



Figure 16: Mixed Obock Group Type and pictorial franking at the 40c registered French Community rate to France in 1901.



Figure 17: Double weight registered French Community letter to Paris from 1900 employing a Djibouti pictorial issue.



Figure 18: French Community rate of 40c from Djibouti franked with a 25c Group Type and two pictorial overprints from 1902.

philatelic frankings available from this period, all of these covers are commercial usages.

Fig. 19 illustrates the combination of a 25c Group Type issue and three of the 5c 1902 definitive issues used to prepay the 40c registered French Community rate. Finally for this section, Fig. 20 illustrates a triple combination of Group Type, pictorial and definitive issues prepaying the 70c triple weight (3 x 15c) French Community registered rate from Djibouti to Paris in 1902.



Figure 19: Combination of the 25c Group Type and the 5c definitive issues at the French Community rate from Djibouti in 1922.



Figure 20: Combination of the 25c Group Type, the 40c Djibouti provisional and the 5c Somali Coast definitive on a 1922 registered French Community letter to Paris.

In the early 1900's bisecting of many of the pictorial issues was done, presumably to compensate for the shortage of low value stamps. As with the Madagascar bisects of 1904, bisectomania became rampant, and it is quite common to see philatelic letters franked only with bisects, often with both halves of the same bisect on the same letter. Finding commercially used bisects is quite difficult. Shown in Fig. 21 is a declared value letter of one hundred francs franked with two 30c Group Type issues and a bisect of the 20c Obock pictorial prepaying a rate of 70c on a letter to Suez, Egypt. The cachet on the reverse of the envelope (Fig. 22)

shows that at seven grams it was at the first weight level. Thus, the breakdown of the rate is 25c for overseas postage, 25c for registration and 20c for insurance on 100 francs. The declared value cachet, five security seals, Reunion-Marseille Packet transit and the Suez arrival clearly show on the reverse. A second declared value letter from 1909 from Djibouti to Diredaoua, Ethiopia (Fig. 23) is franked at a rate of 2F20c with high value Group Types and 5c and 40c definitives with a declared value of one thousand francs. Unfortunately, this is only a front, and without the declared value ca-



Figure 21: Declared value letter posted from Djibouti in 1922 franked with two 30c Group Types and a bisect of the Obock 20c pictorial stamp.



Figure 22: Reverse of the letter shown in Figure 21, showing the **DJIBOUTI** declared value cachet, security seals, transit and arrival on this 7 gram letter.



Figure 23: Declared value front franked at 2F20c on a declared value of 1000 francs on a letter posted from Djibouti to Abyssinia in 1909.

chet on the reverse to show the weight of the letter, it is not possible to readily show the breakdown of the rate.

There is one final important aspect of the postal history of this area. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Ethiopia was not a member of the UPU. To send international mail from Ethiopia, Ethiopian postage was required to prepay the local rate in Ethiopia, and, for mail

transiting through Djibouti, French Colonial postage was required to prepay the international rate in an arrangement made by Ethiopia and Djibouti.<sup>3</sup> Frankings employing the pictorial and definitive issues of the Somali Coast are rare and prized by collectors. Examples employing Group Types are even rarer, though such is not appreciated by collectors and dealers. Shown in Fig. 24 is a ½ guerche Ethiopian post card mailed locally from Harar, Ethiopia and franked with a 10c Group Type prepaying the international postage via Djibouti to France. The card was posted on July 28, 1898 and bears a Lieurey arrival and message on the reverse. Shown in Fig. 25 is a registered letter from Harar posted in 1903 to Bern Switzerland franked at ½ guerche for the local registered postage, and with 50c employing two 15c Group Types and a 20c Obock pictorial for the registered international rate via Djibouti. Bern arrivals are present on the reverse.

My Group Type exhibits employ the word 'Era' in the title, which enables me to also show non-Group Type material from the relevant time period in the exhibits. This often includes unpaid and underpaid mail, military and government franchise letters, local responses to a shortage of stamps, etc. Shown in Figure 26 is a post card from Djibouti in May 1903, wherein the sender believed that he was deserving of



Figure 24: Mixed franking postcard from Harar to France at a ½ guerch local rate and a 10c international rate.



Figure 25: Mixed franking registered letter from Harar with Ethiopian and French Colonial postage to Switzerland in 1903.

the military franchise privilege. This post office in Djibouti disagreed, and the card was struck with a **T** in triangle for postage due. Upon arrival in Paris the card was considered to be at an unpaid 10c rate, and charged 20c postage due. In early 1902 there was a shortage of low value



Figure 26: Failed military franchise postcard from Djibouti in 1903 charged 20c due on arrival in France.

stamps used to prepay printed matter, etc. as already noted. Shown in Fig. 27 is a complete copy of the **Journal Franco-Ethiopien** posted from Djibouti on 3 January 1902 to France. The 5c postage was prepaid in cash as noted by the boxed blue **P.P.** present at the lower left. Relative to Government Franchise Mail, Fig. 28 shows a large, registered envelope posted from Djibouti on June 1905 with a preprinted man-

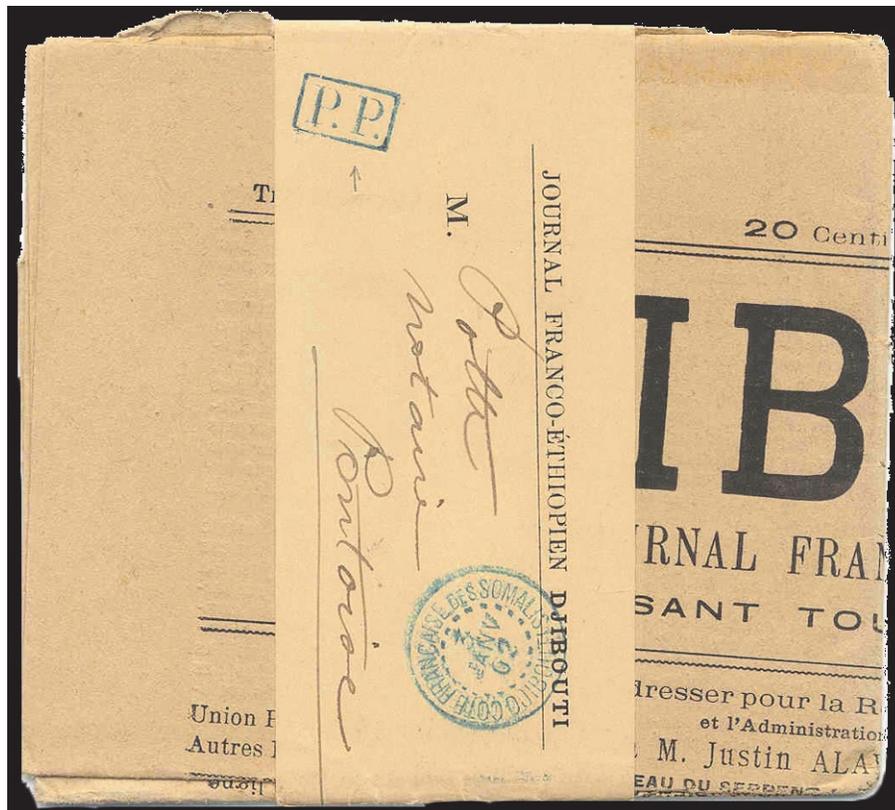


Figure 27: Complete newspaper prepaid at 5c cash from Djibouti in January 1902 during a shortage of low value stamps.

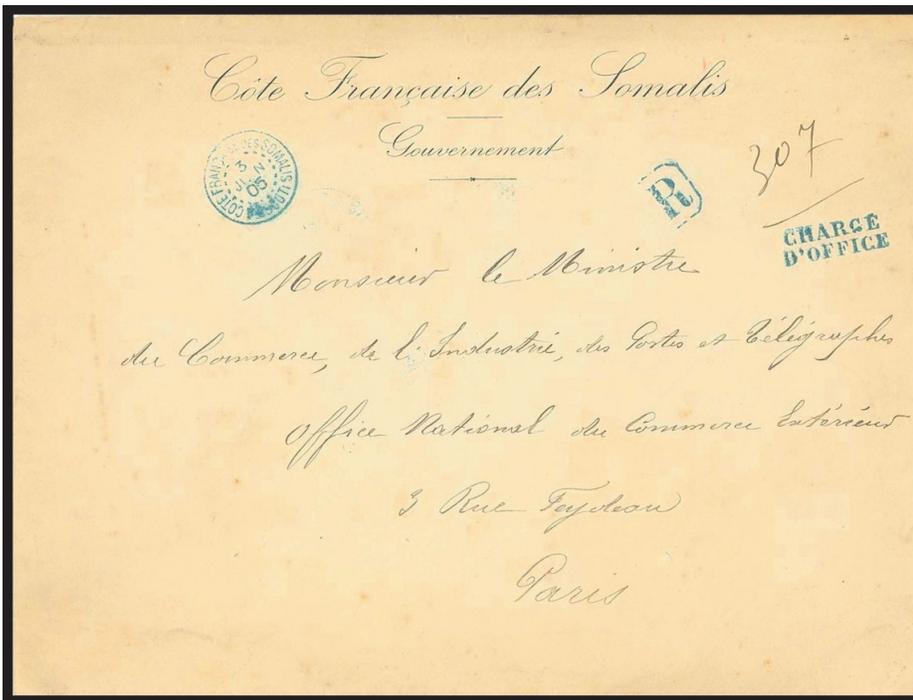


Figure 28: Registered government franchise letter from Djibouti in 1905.

uscript: **Cote Française des Somalis – Gouvernement** and a blue **CHARGE D'OFFICE** handstamp indicating registered official mail.

Finally, Fig. 29 shows a piece that is clearly philatelic and a member of the bisectomania class of material. It shows two 2c Group Type issues, a bisect of the 10c Djibouti pictorial and a bisect of the 2c Group Type stamp pre-paying 10c in postage if one can call it that. The stamps bear Djibouti cancels of 13 August 1901. I have not seen an example of the 2c Group Type of Obock properly used on anything, excluding the overprint noted earlier in the article. Most probably this piece was a philatelic hand back, the creator wanting a Group Type bisect to complement his collection of pictorial bisects.

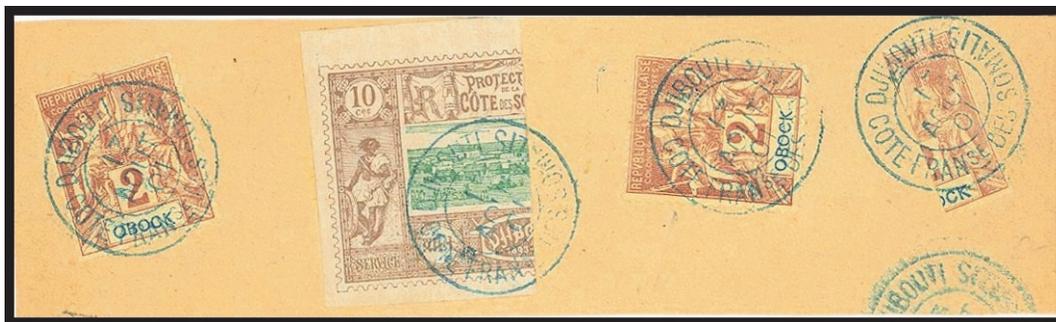


Figure 29: Bisects of the Obock 2c Group Type issue and the 10c Djibouti pictorial issue on a philatellically inspired piece in 1901.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this presentation was to show what is available in Group Type material from the Obock-Djibouti-Somali Coast area. Hopefully, the reader will agree that save for the two very philatelic items, interesting and rare Group Type material can be obtained if one is patient, and even from this limited area there is interesting and unusual postal history. A number of the items shown are in the 'only example recorded category' or 'very few recorded'. In thinking about this one frame of material, the time it has taken to acquire it and the rarity that it represents, I may show it as a one frame exhibit in

the near future to see what the judges might think.

## References

1. For those interested in a comprehensive discussion of the history and postal history of the area covering the history of the posts, decrees, stamps, cancellations and French mails from Ethiopia the *Le Monde* series by Tristant is highly recommended: H. Tristant, *Histoire Postal de la Cote des Somalis*, **Le Monde Etudes**, No 108 (1969), 146 (1972) and 175 (1975).
2. E. Grabowski, **France & Colonies Philatelist**, No 293 (Vol 64, No 3), p 64 (2008).
3. A. J. Morvay, **France & Colonies Philatelist**, No 292 (Vol 64, No 2), pp32-35 (2008).

# Ballons Monté

## *A Unique Historical Perspective*

Warren Wolfe

In recent issues of the FCP I find requests for additional articles for the journal, especially concerning France and French stamps. This article examines the "ballons montés" posted during the siege of Paris (September 19, 1870 to January 28, 1871). It describes, briefly, the months preceding the Commune, so well documented in the recent article by Fiset.<sup>1</sup>

I first become interested in the *ballons montés* letters when I purchased my first Yvert & Tellier catalogue in 2003. In it I found a list of 54 balloons that had carried mail from Paris to the provinces and beyond. I found also what appeared to me *astronomical* catalogue values, ranging from €300 to €5,750, depending on the balloon, the franking, and/or destination. Some years later, through the Stamp Store of the APS, I was able to purchase my first *ballon monté* letter which is shown in Fig. 1.

Those who can collect these covers may be interested in the stamps themselves, the postmarks, or the stories they tell.<sup>2</sup> As an amateur historian, my own interest is to learn what it was like to live in a besieged city. Fortunately, many of these letters have been published, either in book form or in articles.<sup>3</sup>



They tell of the sorrow of receiving no news of loved ones, of the shelling of the city by Prus-

sian troops, of the problems of transportation within the city, of hunger, of sickness, and of death.

This *ballon monté* letter is dated 12 December 1870. It was written by Edouard Mauffron and addressed to a Mr. Jean Comeau in Auxerre in the Yonne département. Auxerre is only 166 kilometers southwest of Paris. This letter (the complete text of which is shown in Fig. 2) was probably written in haste, for there are frequent spelling and grammatical errors. It seems probable that Mauffron had little formal education. The text of the letter follows:

*Dear Friend,*

*I am writing you these few lines to give you my news and to tell you I miss you very much, for it is too long since I have had news of you. I hope that I shall have some soon.*

*You mustn't worry about me, for we are well enough presently. We are no longer in the Boeuf street. [They] are training us. It is the gendarmes who are drilling us, but we're [already] quite good. It is Eugène Dehal who is our captain. We are all together with those from/of Coulon.*

*But I should tell you that I have been very sick. I was in the hospital for two months. I had a bad fever. I left last Monday, but it's not too bad now. The comrades didn't know what had made me sick.*

*When I was a little better, I wrote you [a letter]. I don't know if you received it. I also wrote home, but if you did receive it, you must share it with them right away.*

*Nothing else to tell you for the moment, that I am well and that I embrace you with all my heart, as well as your dear Mother and all the household and all your relatives.*

*Your heartfelt and faithful friend,*

*Edouard Mouffron, who thinks of you constantly.*

It is obvious that Mouffron's letter is of little or no historical interest. The two themes, which are common to so many of these letters, are his worry about having no news of the family, and his effort to reassure his friend that he is in

Paris Le 12<sup>e</sup> Decembre 1870

cher amie

Je t'écrits ces quelques lignes  
 c'est pour te dire de mes nouvelles c'est  
 pour te dire que je m'ennuie beaucoup  
 de toi car voilà trop que longtemps  
 que je n'ai pas eue de tes nouvelles  
 mais il faut espérer que d'ici peu que je  
 enverrai il ne faut pas te inquiéter  
 pour moi car nous sommes pas mal repris  
 nous sommes plus aux B<sup>re</sup> je nous font l'acadie  
 c'est des gendarmes qui nous monte mais nous sommes  
 très bien c'est eugene destral qui est notre capitaine  
 nous sommes tous ensemble avec eua de coulou  
 mais je te dirait que je suis etait bien  
 malade je suis etait deux mois a l'hopital  
 j'ai eue les manoirs fieres je suis rente de  
 l'indi prochain mois se nait pas mal a  
 present les camarades ne savaient pas quel malade  
 que j'avait quand je suis etait retablie je  
 ne peut je t'avait ecrit je ne sait pas si  
 tu la reu j'ai ecrit chez nous aussi mais  
 si tu la recoit il faut leur en faire part  
 de suite Rien autre chose a te dire  
 pour le moment que je ne peut assez  
 bien et que je s'embrasse de tout mon cœur  
 ainsi que ta cher mere et toute la maison  
 est tout les parents ton amie Derceul est  
 fuché. Adieu toujours  
 a toi

Figure 2. The message in the Ballon Monté folded letter sheet shown in Figure 1. The translation appears on the previous page.

better health. Of greater historical interest than personal letters are those letters which also include the *Gazette des Absents*. Printed by the postal authorities, these provided space for a letter plus information concerning weekly events in Paris.

Mouffron's letter left Paris 15 December 1870, on the balloon "Le Ville de Paris." It carried 65 kilograms of mail and 12 pigeons. Unfortunately, the winds being unfavorable, the balloon fell to earth near Wartzlür, in Prussia, and the letters were confiscated. They were returned to the French postal authorities in late July 1871.

The siege of Paris was lifted on 28 January 1871, and the Franco-Prussian war ended. One can imagine that Mouffron was well enough to return to his friend and family in Auxerre.

### ***Commemorative Cards and Expositions***

Although Paris was once again free, it was far from peaceful. There was the Commune and its many victims (described in the article by Louis Fiset, mentioned above), and, in the 20th century, the two world wars once again opposing France and Germany.

The fiftieth anniversary of the "manned balloons", in 1920, seems not to have been commemorated, coming so soon after the Treaty of Versailles (28 June 1919).

In 1946, however, an exposition was organized for the 75th anniversary. The postcard shown in Figs. 3a and 3b addressed to the organizing committee is interesting in many ways. There is the beautiful cancellation, with the balloon image and the date of 27 January 1946. Then, the red cachet on the upper left, which provides the names of the three balloon pilots who formed a company to construct and fly the balloons: Nadar, Dartois, Duruof. Of these three, Nadar, the famous photographer [Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, 1820-1910], is the best known. On the back, a vignette depicting the departure of the last balloon, the *General Cambonne*, from the Gare de l'Est, "before dawn" on January 28, 1871. The vignette was by

Claude Hertzenberger (1912-2002), who engraved some thirty French stamps between 1955 and 1973.

The second item (folded out and shown in Fig. 4) is even more interesting and is filled with information. It too, has the red cachet with the names of the balloon pilots, but the cachet is larger. The cancellation is also different: it features the balloon, but also the windmill of Montmartre, with the date of September 23, 1946. At the top of the card: "Montmartre, Place Saint-Pierre, 27 September 1964. Flight of a balloon recalling the departure of the *Neptune*, the first *ballon monté*." In the center of the card: "Flight of the balloon 'Neptune' forbidden by the Préfecture de Police," and at the bottom, with the date of 21 September 1870: Notice: "The public is urgently requested to use only very thin paper and to fold each letter so as to avoid the use of an envelope." Unfortunately, a photo does not do justice to this card, since it reproduces neither its colors nor its texture.

The reverse side reproduces some of the documents which were part of the exposition. To the left are excerpts from the *Gazette des Absents*. To the right, a passage from the book *La Poste par 'Ballons Montés' 1870-1871* by J. Le Pileur, published in 1943.

### ***Commemorative Stamps***

In March of 1955, to celebrate the 85th anni-



Figure 5. The 1955 commemorative: 85th anniversary of the balloon monté.

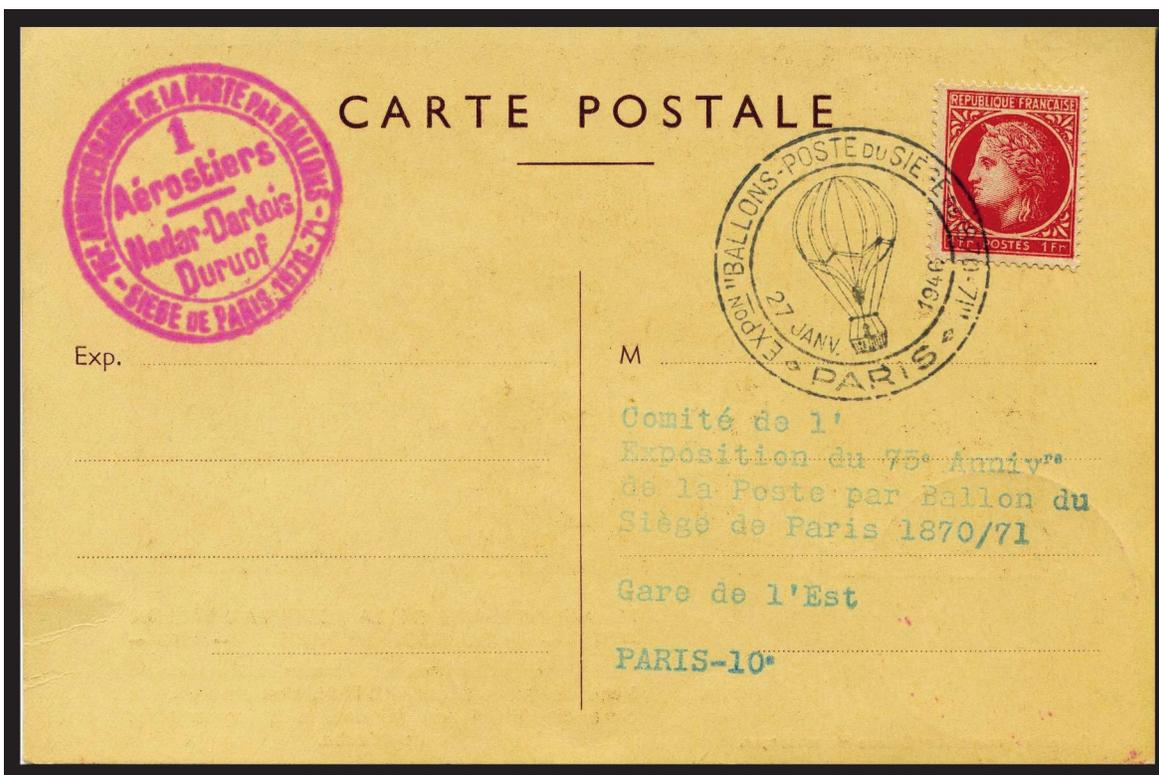


Figure 3a. Front of commemorative card showing special cancels.



Figure 3b. Reverse of commemorative card. Departure of the last balloon, the General Cambronne.

**1. — LE NEPTUNE (1200 m. c.)**

Départ de la Place St-Pierre, à Montmartre, le Vendredi 23 Septembre 1870, à 8 heures du matin.

Atterrissage : le même jour, à 11 h., dans le parc du Château de Craconville commune de la Trinité, à 5 kms. 500 S.-E. d'Evreux (Eure).

Distance de Paris : 104 kms.

Aéronaute : J. Duruof.

Passager : Néant.

Poids du Courier : 125 kilogs.

Historique. — Ce vieux ballon qui avait été construit en 1868 et qui avait très souvent navigué, fut frété par l'Administration des Postes, sur la proposition de MM. Nadar et Rampont

Ce premier départ eut lieu en présence d'une foule considérable qui acclama l'aéronaute.

Après un voyage effectué à 1.500 m. d'altitude, J. Duruof estima sa mission terminée et descendit dans une région calme.

Communiqué pour les absents, n° 1  
Montmartre, le 23 Septembre 1946.

Une exposition rétrospective de Documents Historiques, Souvenirs aéronautiques et philatéliques, a lieu Place St-Pierre à Montmartre, sur les lieux mêmes d'où parti le "Neptune" premier ballon-poste ayant rompu le blocus ennemi en 1870. Une plaque commémorant cet événement est inaugurée sous les auspices d'un Comité de patronage comprenant : MM. les ministres des Postes, de

l'Armement, des Armées, M. le Général de l'Armée, Gouverneur militaire de Paris, M. le Maire du 18<sup>e</sup> arrt. et de ses Adjointes, M. le Président des « Anciens de l'Aérostation Militaire », M. le Président de la société "Arts, Sciences, Lettres", M. le Président de la société "Les Parisiennes de Paris", ainsi que M<sup>lles</sup> Nadar, M<sup>lles</sup> Paul Dartois et Létourneau-Dartois, filles des Aéronautes du Siège. Le ministre des P. T. T. a bien voulu accorder pour cette circonstance l'établissement d'un bureau de poste temporaire, muni d'une oblitération commémorative illustrée. Le 23 Septembre, un ballon va prendre le départ, reconstituant l'envolée des premiers Aéronautes-Postiers de 1870-1871.

MONTMARTRE, place Saint-Pierre, le 23 Septembre 1946

Envol d'un sphérique rappelant le départ du  
"NEPTUNE"  
PREMIER BALLON MONTÉ

22 SEPT. 1946

CONFIE A L'AÉRONAUTE



23 SEPT. 1946

Envol du Ballon  
"NEPTUNE"  
Interdit  
Préfecture de Police



Paris, 21 Septembre 1870. — AVIS : le public est instamment prié de ne faire usage que de papier très mince et de plier chaque lettre de façon à éviter l'enveloppe.

Signé : G. RAMPONT, Directeur général des Postes.

**"GAZETTE DES ABSENTS"**

Place Saint-Pierre — Montmartre

DOCUMENTS INÉDITS GUERRE 1870-71

Historique de la création de la première poste aérienne du monde

1870. Télégrammes officiels annonçant les faits de guerre. N° 29. Paris, 17 août, 8 h. 45 m. du mat. Le maréchal Bazaine est nommé, par décret du 12 août, commandant en chef de l'armée du Rhin. Le général de division Jarras est nommé chef d'état-major général. Notification du blocus du littoral de la Prusse et des Etats allemands dans la mer du Nord.  
Le ministre de l'Intérieur, Henri Chevreau.

N° 30. Paris 17 août, 10 h. 55 m. du mat. Le Ministre de la guerre a reçu des nouvelles de l'armée qui continue à opérer son mouvement combiné après le brillant combat de dimanche soir. Dans la journée d'hier deux divisions ennemies ont cherché à l'inquiéter dans sa marche; elles ont été repoussées. L'Empereur est arrivé hier au soir au camp de Chalons où s'organisent de grandes forces.  
Le Ministre de l'Intérieur, Henri Chevreau.

N° 31. Paris, 18 août 1 h. mat. Dépêche du général Bazaine. 17 août, 4 h. soir. Hier, pendant toute la journée, j'ai livré bataille à toute l'armée prussienne, entre Doucourt et Vionville. L'ennemi a été repoussé et nous avons passé la nuit sur les positions conquises. J'arrête pendant quelques heures mon mouvement pour remettre mes munitions au grand complet. Nous avons en devant nous le prince Frédéric-Charles et le général Stemetz. Le Ministre de la guerre, Palikao.

(Ces documents inédits sont communiqués par « Le Registre de la Philatélie » et exposés pendant la manifestation commémorant la "Première Poste Aérienne du Monde".)

SIÈGE DE PARIS. Le soir du 18 septembre 1870, les armées allemandes avaient envahi les environs de Paris et le lendemain 19, les fourgons de la poste étaient obligés de rentrer dans la capitale avec leurs sacs de dépêches. Dès lors, le comité de défense avait à résoudre le problème de la communication de Paris avec l'extérieur.

**La Création de la Première Poste Aérienne du Monde**

(D'après « La Poste par Ballons Montés 1870-71 », par J. Le Pileur de l'Académie de Philatélie. - Yvert et Teller éditeurs).

Dans l'histoire contemporaine, le véritable premier service de poste aérienne a été organisé en France à l'occasion du Siège de Paris.

La délégation de Tours avait quitté Paris le 17 septembre 1870 et le 18 septembre marque la date de l'investissement de la capitale. Dès le 20 septembre il était excessivement difficile, sinon impossible, à un homme de franchir les lignes ennemies. Sur vingt-huit facteurs partis de Paris dans les jours qui suivirent le 19 septembre, seuls Létaille et Brard réussirent à traverser les lignes et purent remettre leurs dépêches, le premier au bureau d'Evreux, le second au bureau de St-Germain-en-Laye. Létaille rapporta de l'Eure cent cinquante lettres. De retour à Paris, Brard en ressortait le 27 septembre et remettait à Triel un sac de lettres. Tous les autres essais échouèrent à l'exception de ceux de Loyet et de Chourrier qui purent rentrer à Paris avec sept cent quarante lettres.

D'un autre côté la Seine était l'objet d'une surveillance des plus attentives.

Il ne restait comme tout moyen de transmission éventuelle que la voie aérienne et c'est de ce côté que se portèrent les efforts de l'Administration pour faire parvenir hors de la capitale des nouvelles officielles et privées susceptibles de calmer l'anxiété compréhensible qui régnait en France.

Deux problèmes se posaient donc : celui du mode de transport et la possibilité de créer un organe d'informations de transmission facile.

Le problème du transport étudié à la fois par M. Rampont, alors Directeur général des Postes, et par M. Steenackers, fut résolu. Entourés au début de balloniers, hommes d'action qui avaient fait leurs preuves, tels que Nadar, Dartois, Yon, Duruof, A. Tissandier, W. de Fonvielle et Louis Godard, pour ne citer que les principaux, ils firent signer par la Direction des Télégraphes un traité pour le premier aérostat-poste qui partit le 23 septembre, à 8 heures du matin, de la place Saint-Pierre, à Montmartre. Piloté par J. Duruof, le Neptune emportait cent vingt-cinq kilos de dépêches.

Le blocus postal était rompu et le problème des communications par aérostat avec l'extérieur était résolu.

De son côté l'imprimeur Jouaust créait, la Lettre-Journal de Paris, plus connue sous le vocable Gazette des Absents. Son initiative, qui résolvait le deuxième problème, eut un grand succès.

Ce document a été tiré à 2.500 exemplaires numérotés

Figure 4.

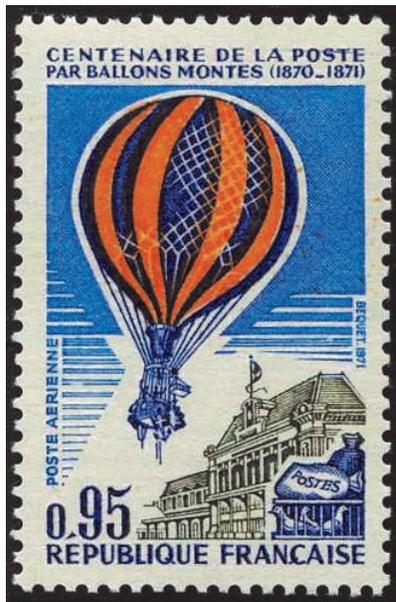


Figure 6. The 1971 airmail issue for the ballon monté centenary.

versary of "la poste par ballon," the postal services issued a "Journée du Timbre" stamp [Fig. 5] (Y & T, 1018). The balloon stands in an open field and is being loaded with sacks of mail by army troops, while a few spectators look on.

Then, in 1971, the postal authorities celebrated the centenary by issuing, very appropriately, an airmail stamp as seen in Fig. 6. (Y & T, 45). The balloon, with vivid stripes of orange and blue, is now seen proudly rising near a Paris railroad station.

Stacks of mail and a cage with pigeons are at the right. The image of this balloon sailing away brings my article to a close.

So, what's in a "ballon monté"? The fun of searching for unusual stamps or combination of stamps, for different Paris obliterations and arrival dates, and the pleasure of learning much about the siege of Paris in 1870 and 1871.

### End Notes

1. Fiset, L., "1871 Commune of Paris Prisoners' Mail," *FCP*, 68(2), July 2012, pp. 67-75.
2. A useful book, translated from French, is Louis Chantrier, "Balloon Posts of the Siege of Paris, 1870-71," published by the American Airmail Society, 1976. In addition, much information is to be found on line. Wikipedia has a detailed study, including a bibliography.
3. Many letters were published by Louis Moland, "Lettres envoyées de Paris pendant le siège, 1870-71," (Paris, Garnier, 1872). A fascinating series of eight letters, also on line: //Les lettres ballons montés de Caroline//, written by Caroline Rouillard to her mother in Nantes, describe the evolution of affairs in Paris from the first letter of September 30, 1870, to January 14, 1871. There are many photographs and engravings. See also a recent study by Hollis Clayson, "Paris in Despair: Art and Everyday Life under Siege (1870-71)" U. of Chicago Press, 2002.

### TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2012

As of December 31, 2012

#### ASSETS

Checking	33,565.16
Paypal	650.34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34,215.50</b>

#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Prepaid Dues	2,207.00
Spiegel Fund	1,242.29
Vaurie Fund	20,284.23
Equity	10,481.98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34,215.50</b>

#### INCOME

Dues	7,168.00
Donations	762.00
Publications	42.00
Reimbursement	2,649.00
Advertising	750.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,371.00</b>

#### EXPENSES

Printing	4,571.38
Postage	62.55
Officer Expenses	133.90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,767.83</b>

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## We Get Letters

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### *Member "Mining"*

A suggestion to enroll new members: The APS's monthly magazine lists all their new members with names, addresses and collecting interest. Several new members each month list "France".

I suggest that FCPS officers contact these people and personally invite them to join FCPS. The emphasis should be on what FCPS can do for them: Introduce them to like-minded people, provide expertise for beginners, help them with exhibition tips, provide a source for trading or buying/selling and so on. And the price is right: only \$20 a year.

It would also be easy to find back issues of American Philatelist and find previous "new members" who collect France.

I think new members tend to be beginners so more beginner articles in the FCP might be helpful. They needn't be on particular stamps but on general issues of collecting France & Colonies, even if the material is available elsewhere. My experience is that most people don't seek out information but will read it if given to them.

**Larry Kunstadt (FCPS 1883)**

*Larry's idea to approach new APS members is a good one, although not as easy to do. Only towns are listed in the AP! This idea has been passed on to the president. Any member who would be interested in following up on this idea, contact Ken (nilsestuen@sbcglobal.net) directly.*

*More articles for beginners is also a good idea, but we need to find contributors willing to help. Any takers?*

### **Observations**

I'm a member of the FCPS who you haven't met and probably won't. I had been one of those on the list of those who hadn't paid. I immediately sent my check in.

The check has cleared so I suppose everything is ok.

But I gather from #310 maybe it isn't.

I thought I might provide some background.

I am the classic example of the fellow who was introduced to stamp collecting as a child, put the album away and upon retiring took the album out of storage and got re-engaged. I have exhibited now and won a Gold at StampShow 2012 and I intend to continue to exhibit since it provides a focus, a goal for my collecting. I enjoy meeting and speaking with other exhibitors and even the judges, on occasion. As a child I collected US & Swiss and upon my return I picked up there. I felt that US stamps wasn't doing it for me and with the Swiss, the exhibiting opportunities what with Harlan Stone on the circuit were thin. I started casting around for another country. I tried Portugal, but that didn't interest me. And, then I thought of France. I bought a collection on auction, mostly a few items from the 1920s through to the late 1950s. And, they are beautiful stamps. But then I hit a problem.

Doing a Google search, I found your website. It looked dead. Especially based on this page [http://www.drunkenboat.net/FrandCol/pages/member\\_frames.html](http://www.drunkenboat.net/FrandCol/pages/member_frames.html) So, I passed on. And started looking for other sources of information about French stamps. I do not speak or read French, unfortunately. I contacted the APRL and asked for a basic text that provided background on France. The stamps, the series, how they are printed how they are used. The response from the APRL was that there wasn't really anything.

I did circle round to the website again and sent an email off and it was answered and I joined.

But I was still lacking basic beginner information on France. Unfortunately, I drifted across the Channel and have gotten quite engaged in GB, both QV and Machins and that is what I exhibit. My France album sits on the shelf. I did buy a few more items but it is a low priority and when I have a chance I might just sell the material.

Why:

In my view, new members looking for you will

not get a good first impression from the website. Based on the website the society looks dead. The url is awful. Drunkenboat?

Second, many of us lack language skills, there isn't an introductory text on French philately in English. But, the Swiss society, the AHPS, has prepared a small magazine-like brochure that provides a brief but good overview to Swiss stamps. The FCPS needs this in my view. Badly. I still am not sure what Groupe type is. Took awhile to figure out Sage.

Lastly, in the journal, you print author's FCPS number. Mine is 3433. Why? For what purpose? To remind me I am a new boy?

I wish I had gotten more engaged in French philately. The stamps are just so beautiful. The quality of the engraving is extraordinary but I found myself getting frustrated. I now can plate penny blacks and reds, so I want to understand what I am doing, and I couldn't get information except from Wikipedia. And that's not good enough. Yes, I bought the Y&T catalog, but you need more.

So I think you need to address the website as a matter of urgency, if you want more members. Please develop a 24 page color glossy overview of France. A member auction might be nice but you need members and I am afraid your public face is costing you members. The membership numbers for the society are not acceptable.

**Larry Haber**

*This letter should underscore emphatically our need of a new website. Of course the digitalization project will address this.*

### **More on Airgraphs**

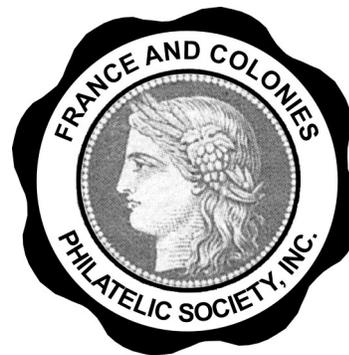
I enjoyed James R Taylor's article in the October 2012 issue of France and Colonies Philatelist. Taking one item out of his collection, he was able to develop a great story. Using his computer (or maybe a shared computer at a public library) he was able to find some references to help tell his story. He could have used the American Philatelic Research Library to search for articles and books on the subject. One of my favorite books on the subject is *The Air Age: Being the bound volume of the 1944*

*Air Mail Magazine* edited by Harold D Phillips. It was neat that our society was able to publish, in a timely fashion, an article that two other leading philatelic groups would also be interested in. Both the *American Philatelist's* December 2012 issue and *Linn's Stamp News* of December 17, 2012 had related articles.

The use of airgraph letters for British or V-mail for Americans servicemen was an easy method for them to keep in touch with their home folks. There was no need to compose a long letter, which was a problem for some men, as the airgraph/V-mail was limited to one given page. And what a gift left for future philatelists and historians. I enjoy hunting for Boy Scout related V-mails with either scout artwork or messages to Scoutmasters and members of the serviceman's former troop back home. Members of our society can easily collect artwork V-mails or composed letters from APOs located in France. When you get some V-mail be sure to read the letter; it's the reason why many collectors enjoy this type of collecting.

Documenting an item in one's collection by writing an article and keeping a published copy in the album greatly increases the worth of the item. Spending some time on researching a cover or stamp is much more enjoyable than spending money on another item that would just be stored away in an album or box. Well done Jim. And I hope each of our members search their collection and pick an item that they themselves and other members would enjoy reading and learning about.

**T.P. McDermott** [tpwzrmcd@hotmail.com](mailto:tpwzrmcd@hotmail.com)



## *An FCPS Auction?*

In the last issue, a Letter to the Editor from member **Alan Morvay** suggested that the FCPS consider a Society auction as a method for helping members and raising additional money for the group. Below are a number of correspondences relative to the topic.

Thanks. It's a tempting thought (to have an auction, but not at all tempting for me to consider coordinating). Most of us have such specialized former and current interests, that I fear that there would not be much bidding activity. Perhaps there could be a member forum "on our web site" where members wishing to acquire material could post their interests and those wishing to dispose of material could post their offerings. Then it would be member-to-member transactions. Something like this would be a great service to members.

Tom Broadhead

With eBay, Delcampe and the APS's Stampstore I do not think that another much smaller site is warranted.

Ed Grabowski

If someone comes forward we can develop a policy. I think eBay has eclipsed the potential success of such an effort.

Norval Rasmussen

With the many, many areas of specialization within France and colonial collecting, it is hard to imagine a large number of bids on the material being offered. As others have noted, the availability of online auctions, not only eBay and DelCampe, but also the major French auction houses makes the local "club auction" obsolete.

Dave Herendeen

He [Morvay] has good suggestions to make, but auctions may not be one of them; they result in too much work for auction managers, who burn out too soon.

Stan Luft

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## Show Reports

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### **OKPEX 2012**

Oklahoma City, OK October 2012

Gold medal to **Ralph DeBoard** for "The Postal History of Tahiti Through the First Pictorial Issue" Also the Oklahoma City Stamp Club Robert T. Pollard Memorial Award and the Postal History Society Medal. Gold to **Alfred F. Kugel** for "The Allied Occupation of Germany 1918-1935." Also the Military Postal History Society Award.

### **Chicagopex 2012**

Chicago, November 2012

Gold medal to **Alfred Kugel** for his "American Intervention in Caribbean 1898-1934." Also the Military Postal History Society Award. Also a single frame Gold medal for "American Intervention at Vera Cruz 1914." Gold medal also to **Eliot Landau** for "Classic France: Postal History of the Ceres and Napoleon Issues of 1849-1875."

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## Membership Notices

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### **REINSTATEMENTS**

- 3350 Collins, Ross F, Fargo, ND  
3293 Stockton, Peter, Cheshire, UK

### **Mail Returned**

- 1999 Rock, James A, Lynn, MA

### **ADDRESS CHANGES**

- 3408 Bazzi, Rida A, Scottsdale, AZ  
3370 Dufresne de Virel, Loic P, Portland, OR  
1493 Gordon, Lee, Owings Mills, MD  
2952 Mattei, Bruno, Colmar, France  
1976 Swanson, William F, Tiverton, RI

### **DECEASED**

- 3395 Brouillette, Daniel A  
2532 Herendeen, David

## *President's Letter*

### **President's letter**

With sadness I start this quarter's letter announcing the untimely death of Dave Herendeen on January 4. As most of you know, Dave was responsible for lifting our society out of its doldrums and making it a vibrant national philatelic organization. Dave's vision of a group that devotes itself to the study of French area philately is one that has been around since the beginning. Probably the most important thing that Dave added was his belief that our society should also have a social aspect to accompany our studies. It's fun to collect stamps and postal history, but it's a lot more fun to meet colleagues and share our enthusiasm together. It is up to us to keep our momentum, although it will certainly be harder without him.

Several of us have offered comments about Dave elsewhere in this edition of the *FCP*. I have one story to share. Dave and I spoke in November about how we unexpectedly had to add our good friend David Straight to the list of philatelists who are no longer among us. We joked about the importance of keeping our names off that list as long as possible. Neither one of us expected to be added to that list very soon, but that has turned out otherwise. Dave was always a good adviser to me, and I will certainly miss his counsel.

I was able to notify a significant fraction of our membership about Dave's death via email in mid-January. Unfortunately, our email list is not complete, and several addresses were out of date. Please send your current email address to me or to Joel Bromberg (our email addresses are on the masthead inside the front cover). If you received my message on January 11, we have your current address. Otherwise, please let us know.

Of course we now are searching for an editor to replace Dave. Dave had defined the positions as an editor, an associate to help the editor and to eventually replace the lead editor, plus two assistant editors to focus separately on France and its colonies. Ed Grabowski is

our current Colonies assistant editor, but he was elevated to president of the Collectors Club of New York, so he may not have as much time for us for a while. The other positions are all open. Please consider becoming editor of our journal – there is a description of the duties elsewhere in the *FCP*.

I want to thank the officers and directors for the good advice they have provided as a result of losing Dave. I especially thank Dr. Rasmussen, a longtime friend, for volunteering to serve as temporary editor of the *FCP*. While Dave had put a lot of work into this issue already, without Ras stepping up we might have had to wait a lot longer to see it in print. We have others who have offered some temporary assistance as editor, too. I hope that we don't have to accept their offers because we have found a permanent answer. That depends on you, my friends, so I hope you can say yes to your society. If you want to talk it over, please give me a call at 330-869-0002 (EST) or send an email with your phone number and a convenient time to talk.

To update you on our digitization project, Mike Bass and I are working with a Cleveland area company to complete our project and to get our website updated. No completion date yet since Mike and I still have regular employment that takes priority. However, I think we will at last have a searchable electronic journal by the end of 2013.

Remember to block out January 2014 for SANDICAL, our next meeting. It won't be long and you will get a tap on the shoulder to speak to your FCPS friends. Those of you who volunteered last time are at the top of our list! More on those plans in our next *FCP*.

A few more items before I close. First, please pay your dues if you haven't already done so. It saves time and money if you respond to the first request.

Next, we mentioned the possibility of an FCPS auction last quarter. I received emails from several members who expressed an interest in buying or selling, but no one volunteered to run the show. Therefore, the best avenues for less expensive material will remain eBay and

Delcampe. I thank those of you who took time to write.

Last for this letter, you will see my name as a candidate for treasurer of the American Philatelic Society in 2013. I hope you will support me, but I want to reaffirm my commitment to you, the members of FCPS, as president, too. My current plans call for me to retire from my paying job at the end of October. That should give me plenty of time to serve both organizations.

Go find a new member or two! We need replacements, and you are our best source. Also, please write an article for the journal.

## *Editorial Comments*

In this space you are used to seeing a letter or discussion from your editor, David Herendeen. He hadn't gotten to that project yet when he passed. His editorial on page 3 are his last words. He had completed the major portion of this issue of FCP, and most of what you have read was his work. Three board members wrote the following eulogies and all board members expressed appropriate levels of consternation.

David Herendeen was my friend and my mentor. He shared his considerable intelligence and knowledge without hesitation, restraint or expectation of anything but the pleasure of doing so. We spent enough time together that I knew he had the same relationship with many others.

We roomed together often, including a trip to Paris where I was introduced to the joys of Rue Drouot, the Nation Postal Archives and more. "Mr. Behr, may I introduce my friend from Las Vegas Stephen Tucker. Pascal, didn't you say you had some special material from Guinee in your office? And while we are at it have you considered how much exposure you would get from renewing your ad in the F&CPS bulletin?"

He was a respected APS Chief Judge and I treasure his critique comments from judging my exhibits on several occasions. He was a prolific author and columnist. I especially enjoyed his recent series in the APRL Philatelic Literature Review. Others can no doubt add much more to this list.

My introduction to Dave was through the France and Colonies Philatelic Society. To recite that Dave was a Past President and the Philat-

elist Editor barely scratches the surface. He was the heart and soul of the present organization. His tireless work for the Society included not only pulling his own considerable oar but pushing, dragging and cajoling all of the rest of us to exhibit, attend, write, lecture, achieve and enjoy.

Dave was not without some pleasure in putting himself out there as a bit of a curmudgeon at times, but he had a secret. More than once he confided that for all the enjoyment and challenge things philatelic brought, in the end the greatest enjoyment he received from it all was in really getting to know the people involved and renew those relationships at each gathering.

I believe my numbness in coming to grips with losing Dave is shared by many. As I come out of it and begin to accept his loss I believe that it will take many of us to do more to fill the void. I have resolved to be a little more like Dave and hope many others will sign on as well.

### **Stephen Tucker**

David Herendeen influenced the way I have approached philately in many ways over the last few years. The first thing that came to my mind when I heard about his death was the question: "*How will I keep improving my exhibit?*" Every time we stood in front of the frames he had terrific suggestions about the things he liked best and some ways he thought I could make it better. Yesterday I went back and read a long analysis he sent me by e-mail with many of those suggestions and realized again that his death will leave a huge hole in my view of the hobby. But then I realized that he would never want that to be the whole reaction I would have. A much better response is to let his example lead me - and the rest of us - to help other collectors and exhibitors find the same love for stamp collecting we have. David was a master at that.

David and I had another thing in common. We both owned time shares at the Bali Hai Club in Tahiti. We spent lots of time sharing stories about the great times we have spent over there. I loved to hear the emotion you could read in his voice when he talked about evenings sitting around a small table on Cook's Bay listening to the stories (some I'm sure were actually true) during "Muk's Happy Hour". David enjoyed those as much as I did.

Then over the past few years David came up with the wonderful idea of using scientific methods to increase the understanding of philately. One of my great regrets is that I had to miss the first IAP Conference this past summer due to surgery I had a few weeks before the conference. If I had any idea it would be his last one, I would have found some way to be there anyway. I guess that is a final lesson we can learn from this loss. Never take things for granted.

I haven't even mentioned his role in reforming the F&C Society, his marvelous skill as editor of the F&C Journal, and his talent as a Chief Judge. David cannot be replaced – and need not be. We just need to follow his example and “pass it on”.

David, we will miss you, but know you are happily adding new items (with perfect margins, perfect cancels, and pristine condition) to your collections in that new home in the sky.

### **Ralph DeBoard**

All in philately are saddened to note the most untimely death of David Herendeen who was a friend, mentor and philatelic compatriot of so many. Most of us are pleased to go through life and do well in a few areas; David was an exceptional individual who did well in any area in which he chose to venture. Unfortunately, philately now has a large void to be filled.

I first met David many years ago at one of his Collectors Club presentations. This was at a time when talks were done with slides or a pointer at the frames. David had hooked his computer to a digital projector and ran a beautifully developed full color presentation with philatelic detail that I had simply never seen before. As was typical of many things he did, he was working outside the proverbial box and showing us where we would be in the coming years.

Most of our common ground was with the France & Colonies Philatelic Society, in which David became seriously active around 2000. He was a recognized world expert in postage due stamps and their use, and had formed formidable collections of British Colonies and French Colonies postage dues which have received just recognition in the United States and overseas. David became President of the FCPS and quickly set about changing the organization from a New York-centered society to one of national prominence.

Seeing other opportunities and challenges, David turned the Presidency over to Ken Nilsestuen, and became Editor of the France & Colonies Philatelist. In prior years he had been Editor of a British area journal, and brought lots of experience and ideas to the job. He improved the quality of our journal and increased its size. He began using modern computer-based publishing methods and high resolution graphics. David recruited an army of contributors on a variety of French area topics to keep the journal diverse and interesting, and added many photos of society members and activities to show the life of the society. He was also a regular contributor of articles to the FCPS journal and others. He always championed articles for the new members of the society such as those on what to collect, or how to exhibit, or how to do philatelic research.

His 2001 monograph on *The Parcel Post*

*Stamps of the Ivory Coast* remains the seminal work in the area. The documentation and history on these issues were in archives in France, and much of the key material was scattered amongst collectors and dealers in Europe. David painstakingly gathered all of this information to produce his beautifully illustrated book, and came to numerous previously unrecognized conclusions about these issues.

Despite the time required by these activities, David found the time to be a philatelic judge and often chaired judging panels. He was in constant demand by show committees, and known for his focused to the point critiques of philatelic exhibits.

David seemed to have an endless appetite for new ventures. He was one of the leaders in the formation of the Institute for Analytical Philately. Under his leadership the IAP began supporting the application of modern analytical techniques to old and new philatelic problems. The IAP reached a critical milestone last November when the first International IAP Symposium was held at the National Postal Museum. By all measures the over-subscribed symposium was an outstanding success.

David was always a person of strong opinions. When challenged, he would often dig in harder rather than yield. A few years ago he organized a trip to Paris for members of the FCPS. He led us on visits to the French Postal Museum, the dealers on the rue Drouot and the Marigny outdoor stamp market. David also planned to take everyone to a ‘good Indian restaurant’ that he knew of in Paris. I was aghast! How could one take a group to the gastronomic capital of the world, and then take them to an Indian restaurant, or a restaurant of any other country than France? *Sacré bleu!* I challenged David on this choice, and he persisted, ‘It’s a good restaurant and they will like it! What’s wrong with an Indian restaurant in France?’ I recommended a good restaurant in the 7<sup>th</sup> specializing in French country food. David settled the matter by going to both.

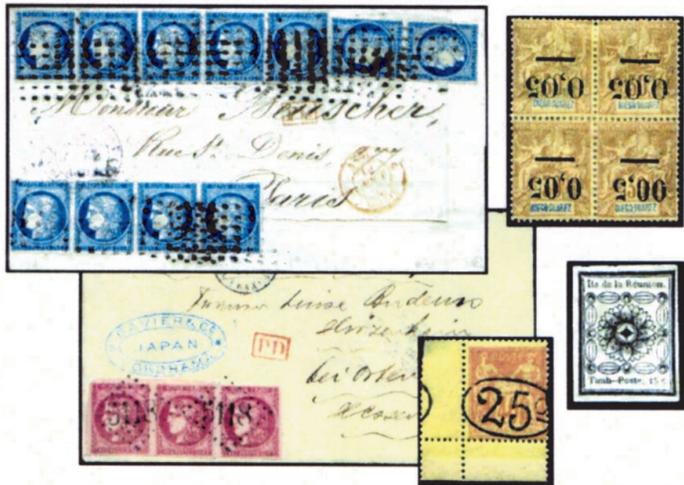
There is no happy way to end this remembrance. We have lost one of the most active and creative members of the philatelic fraternity. Those of us remaining will try to pick up as many pieces as possible, but we will not succeed in replacing him. My last contact with David was a phone call from him thanking me for an FCP article on locally produced AR handstamps in the French Colonies. He was exceptionally pleased with the article and thought it well done.

### **Edward Grabowski**

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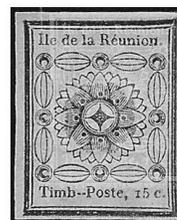
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