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 Editor, Dr. A. J. C. Vaurie * * * Secretary, Miss H.V.Z. Anthony

HOW TO IDENTIFY 'BLIND' CANCELS

On the General Issues of the French Colonies, 1859-76

by Robert G. Stone (61)

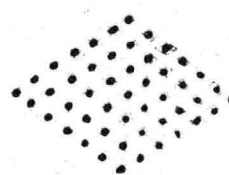
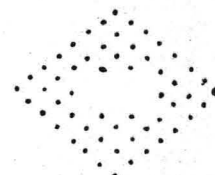
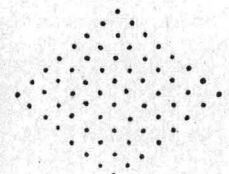


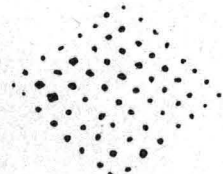
Fig 1



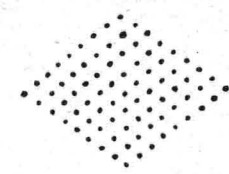
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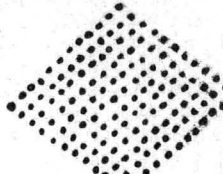
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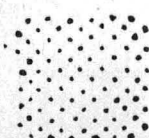
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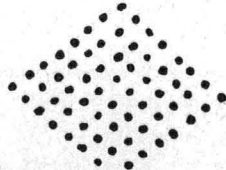
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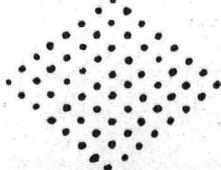
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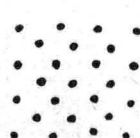
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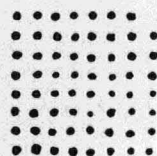
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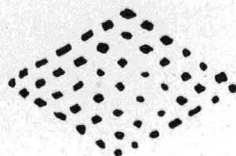
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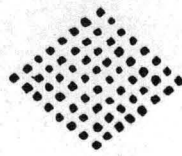
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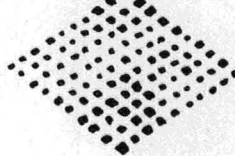
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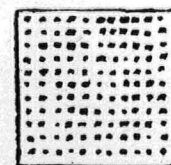
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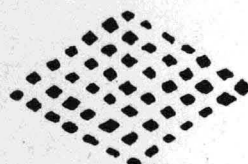
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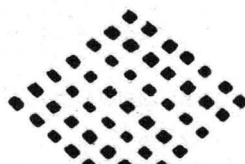
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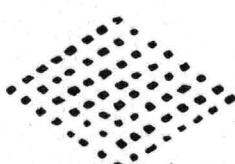
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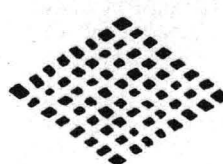
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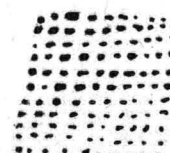
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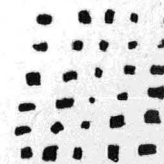
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KNOW YOUR FORGERIES

(Continued from Vol.III,p.11)

CONGO

1891-92 - Local overprints and surcharges - many types which require specialized study. -- There are numerous forgeries, including varieties, and as all these stamps are expensive, they should be expertized.

1892 - Groupe type - the whole set has been forged by Fournier (see General Issues).

1900 - 5 on 20c and 15 on 30c - Highly dangerous - expertization absolutely essential.

1900 - Large pictorials - many fancy varieties probably of philatelic intent.

1903 - Surcharges - expertization necessary.

1891 - Parcel Post (not listed by Scott) - Fournier's forgery shows bluish silk threads in the paper and is crude, measuring 75 mm instead of 85 mm.

The forged cancellations of Fournier for this colony are: 22½ mm, LIBREVILLE 13 NOV 92 GABON-CONGO; 21½ mm, LIBREVILLE 10 MARS 00 CONGO FRANCAIS (the hyphen is omitted after CONGO, while present in the original), LIBREVILLE 1E/15 DEC 86 CONGO FRANCAIS.

COCHINCHINA

1886-88 - Fournier has forged all the overprints including #4a. These forged overprints have also been applied to already cancelled stamps. Fournier also made up several forged cancellations: a) double circle, inner interrupted, COCHINCHINE 6 OCT 76 SAIGON (the 76 is not bad! seeing the stamps were only issued 10 years later!), b) SAIGON 3E/7 NOV 86 COCHINCHINE, c) SAIGON CENTRAL 2E/24 OCT 92 COCHINCHINE, d) MYTHO 2E/16 AOUT 92 COCHINCHINE, e) BACLIEU 1E/27 JUIN 92 COCHINCHINE.

Postage Dues - with COCHINCHINE overprint diagonally - these were not officially authorized.

CILICIA

All the overprints have been forged and all the varieties, which are legion. If you must collect these most unpopular stamps, check the expensive stamps with the cheapest ones - and absolutely do not buy the two Air Mails without having them expertized -- 99 and 9/10 % of the Air Mails are forgeries!

CASTELLORIZO

1920 - Numerous forgeries of all the more expensive stamps - expertize. As Castellorizo was occupied since 1915 and used quite happily the unsurcharged stamps of the Levant, why suddenly did it require in 1920 special stamps? Of course printed in extremely restricted quantities! Could the Governor have been philatelically minded or in need of a little extracash??

BENIN

1892 - Overprinted locally on Dubois type - The forgeries are extremely numerous, the forged overprint being applied on original stamps, as well as on the Fournier forgeries (see General Issues). The Fournier cancellation is: GRAND POPO, 7 NOV 92 BENIN, double circle, inner interrupted.

1892 - Same but surcharged with new values - forgeries are just as numerous as those of the preceding issue. On these two issues and all the Postage Dues, the fact that a stamp has been legitimately used on cover proves nothing, as the forgeries went through the mails by connivance of the postal clerks. These issues should be expertized.

1893-94 - Groupe type -- The whole set has

been forged by Fournier (see General Issues).
1894 - Postage Dues - see remarks above.

ANNAM AND TONKIN

1888 - Dubois type overprinted locally - The genuine varieties are numerous and specialization is essential as there are numerous forged surcharges. Expertization is necessary. The original handstamps were used clandestinely at a later date but in these printings the ink is different. Fournier "imitated" no less than 14 varieties, using the following forged cancellations: a) double circle, HA-NOI 2E/21 JUIL. 92 TONKIN, b) with interrupted inner circle, NAM-DINH 1 OCT 92 TONKIN, c) HANOI 3E/27 FEVRIER 88 TONKIN, d) HUE 6 JUIL 88 ANNAM.

ANJOUAN

1892-1900-07-12 - Groupe type -- The whole set has been forged by Fournier (see General Issues). The forged cancellation is: double octagon, ANJOUAN 19 JUIN 04 COL. FRANCO.

Postage Dues - The overprint ANJOUAN in blue or black on the dues of the general issues for the colonies are mere fantasies.

ALGERIA

1924-25 - There exist very dangerous forgeries of the varieties of the first issue. Do not buy these without expertization.

1927 - Semi-Postals - The whole set of overprints has been forged cleverly.

ALEXANDRIA

1899-1900 - The overprint has been forged, as in the case of Port Said. See forgeries in French Offices (in the General Issues).

1902 - Merson type - Dangerous forgeries (see General Issues).

1921-23 - Surcharges -- All the expensive ones have been extremely well forged. Do not buy without expertization.

ALAOUITES

I don't know of any forgeries.

(This concludes this long series of articles on the forgeries of the Colonies and offices. Much had to be omitted, especially the forgeries of the overprints and surcharges. It is earnestly hoped that this will be of service and will help members avoid a few pitfalls.)

SOCIETY NOTES AND ACTIVITIES

Address communications to Miss Helen V. Anthony
24 Franklin Place, Montclair, New Jersey

NEW MEMBERS Welcome to our new members:

172 - LIEBMAN, Mrs. Stuart A. - 12028 Miranda St. North Hollywood, Cal. (Indo China)

173 - MC INTOSH, W.H. Jr. - 25 Hall Ave., Medford 55, Mass.

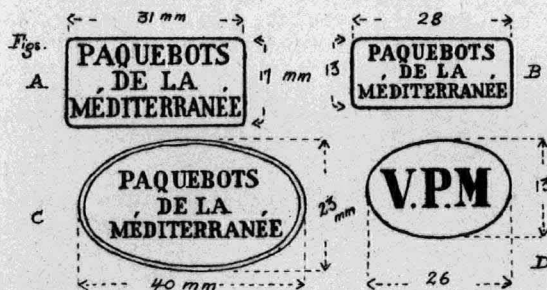
174 - UZNANSKI, Dr. Matthew E. - Wicker Park Medical Bldg., 1550 North Damen Av., Chicago, Ill.

175 - WASSERSCHIED, August A. - 72 Gold St., New York 7, N. Y.

- CHANGE OF ADDRESS -

LARIMORE, Dr. Louise, to 100 Lake Av., Greenwich, Conn.

In "Les Paquebots Français et leurs Cachets" by Bourselet, Marechal, Francois and our own regretted Gilbert (Editions du Graouli, Paris, 1936) are illustrated the following marks:



These marks were applied at the Bureau Maritime of Marseille on all correspondence arriving on French packets from the Far East and the Near East. They are therefore arrival marks or transit marks. The oldest marks are those in the oblong frames and they appear in 1837. These are of two types (Figs. A and B) differing only in size. I have seen them still in use in 1872 or thereabouts. They are not particularly rare. They are usually struck in red and very occasionally in black.

Much scarcer is the mark in the double oval (Fig. C). It is almost always struck in red and exceptionally in blue. This mark makes its appearance in 1845.

Scarcer still than the oval or oblong marks is the small oval with capital letters V.P.M. (Fig. D) standing, according to M. Doš, for "Voie Paquebots Méditerranée." This mark struck in red appears in 1850-51 only on mail originating from Tuscany (main port is Leghorn (Livorno) near Pisa). It is a very rare mark.

These markings are always applied on the front of the cover and they sometimes strike the stamp. On the back is the Marseille dated postmark - usually but not always.

Mails arriving in Marseille by other than French packets received instead circular dated postmarks such as: Pag. Ang. -- Marseille, Outre-Mer -- Marseille, Col. Fra. v. angl., Poss. angl. v. Suez -- Marseille, Indes Or. -- Marseille, etc....
Vaurie

IN MEMORIAM

We sincerely regret to report the passing of Mr. Z. Dworkowski of Detroit, Michigan. He had not been a member for very long, having been admitted at the December 1943 meeting with membership No. 153.

- ELECTION OF OFFICERS -

At the meeting of Thursday, May 4th, the present officers of the Group were reelected unanimously. They are:

President: Mr. Stephen G. Rich
Vice President: Mr. Raoul Lesgor
Corresponding Secretary: Miss Helen V. Z. Anthony
Recording Secretary: Mr. George Mary
Treasurer: Mr. Paul Baudry

"Blind" Cancels . . .

During the period 1859 to 1876 the regulations required the stamps to be cancelled only with a grid of dots. Since most of these grids were "blind" it is a recurrent question with collectors whether one can certainly identify the origin of the cancel when the stamp is off cover and only part of the cancel is visible. Fortunately, the circular postmark with name of postoffice and colony of origin always appears on the cover or front and sometimes on a piece.

Study of numerous covers by many specialists has gradually accumulated over the years to the extent that it is now possible to say that the origin of all but 2 or 3 of the numerous varieties of these mute cancels known on stamps off cover has been discovered and that the great majority of them are sufficiently distinct in some particular or other that they can be identified even when off cover and only a half or more of the grid shows. The information about them in stamp magazines and catalogues is generally out of date and incomplete, if not erroneous - we still find Marconnet's handbook (1898) - and old Yvert catalogues quoted in the press! A recent series of articles by Bouvet in *L'Echo de Timbrologie* is almost the last word. But he makes the classification of the types unnecessarily complicated and unhandy to apply in practice. We have rearranged his information, and, including some revisions and additions from our own collections, come up with the following simple key. The illustrations herewith show the major types. These figures must be studied carefully with reference to the key in order that the meaning of the descriptive terms in the key can be visualized. However, the key is designed to be ultimately used without aid of the illustrations, once the meanings of the terms have been understood. The illustrations themselves cannot be so conveniently used for identification because the critical distinguishing features are not immediately evident in most cases. Also the appearance of a particular cancel varies so greatly with the clearness and strength of the strike, the color and amount of ink and the extent of wear of the die, that a single illustration can be very misleading. In fact, a certain amount of experience in comparing many copies is needed to fully appreciate the basis for the key offered here. The chief consideration was that the key be based on the most obvious characteristics, and at the same time ones which do not require too frequent resort to the millimeter rule nor to possession of the entire cancel. - The shortness of the key list is also a great help. This key can be memorized easily and with it over 90% of the cancelled stamps can be sorted at a glance.

* * * *

KEY TO FRENCH COLONIAL "BLIND" CANCELS, 1859-76

Procedure: First note the character and size of the points making up the grid. Are they round, squarish, or lozengic? Very fine, medium or large? Examine with hand lens in smudgy or indistinct cases. Next count or estimate the numbers of points on each side row of the grid. Is the number 4x4, 6x6, 7x7, 8x8, 9x9, 10x10, or 12x12? Then determine the shape of the grid. Is it a lozenge (diamond), a square, boxed, or with staggered instead of in-line rows? Finally, note the color (black, blue, red), and the issue on which it appears.

The key is arranged to eliminate each of these characteristics in the order cited. The chief difficulties are in distinguishing the original shape of the points when the die is worn and/or the strike is not clear. Experience

and use of lens is necessary to distinguish most examples of the first Martinique grid from poor strikes of Reunion and perhaps others. But very few uncertainties arise when enough of the cancel shows. The 8X8 lozenges of small dots with initials in the center for MQE, GOR, ASI, GPE, CCH, NSB, OCN, SPM, GAB, SNG, INDE, OCN2 to OCN8, C1 to C22, and T1, T2, can be easily confused, when only a few rows of dots at one end are visible, with the 8X8 lozenges of small dots without initials, that were used in Mayotte, Pondichéry, Martinique, Senegal, and incomplete 7X7, 9X9, and 12X12 lozenges of dots for Guadeloupe, India, and Senegal. Hence at least half of the cancel must be present in order to make certain identification in these cases. However, for the initiated there are sometimes minutiae and small differences in spacing of points or overall dimensions that may help when other criteria are inadequate. These cannot be communicated objectively because they require knowledge of the variations in strike of each cancel - and where are you going to get the stock to study them on? (The list is not of distinct original dies but merely a guide to places of usage. Some dies are listed several times, and some cancels listed had many dies.)

ROUND POINTS:

Very fine dots:

- 6X6 (Fig.7) - see medium dots.
- 7X7 (Fig.1) lozenge, black or blue; about 15 small towns of Guadeloupe, 1859-77.
- 8X8 (Fig.2) lozenge with 8 dots in center missing: Mayotte, 1864-.
- 8X8 (Fig.3) lozenge, black: Pondichéry, 1868, very rare.
- 8X8 (Fig.4) lozenge, black, dots varying some in size and shape: Martinique, (St. Pierre and F. de Fr.) 1859-60 only.
- 9X9 (Fig.5) lozenge, black or blue: Pondichéry
- 12X12 (Fig.6) lozenge, black: paquebots of Ligne J and K, on letters from Sénégal, (Gorée) very rare.

Medium dots: (sharp)

- 6X6 (Fig.7) square of 84 points, fine dots inside, staggered rows: Gorée, rare.
- 8X8 (Fig.8) lozenge, black, bright or greenish blue: Reunion (many p.o.'s), all issues, 1859-77.
- 8X8 (Fig.9) lozenge, deep blue: St. Louis, Senegal, scarce, on 1, 5, 10, and 40c Eagles only.
- 8X8 (Fig.8) lozenge, red or brown-red: St. Denis, Reunion, 1862-69.
- 8X8 (Fig.4) lozenge, black, very irregular, smudgy points, fine to large: Martinique, 1860-61.
- 8X8 square (see Large dots)

Large dots:

- 4X4 (Fig.10) square, black, 25 pts. in staggered rows: a fake cancel, common, never seen on cover.
- 8X8 (Fig.11) square, black, often 1 corner point missing: Cayenne, 1860-.
- 8X8 (Fig.8) lozenge, black or blue, irregular smudgy points: Reunion, heavy impressions.
- 8X8 (similar to 4?) lozenge, black, very irregular, some squarish points, often extra "row" or line parallel to 1 or more sides (made by edge of die block), giving appearance of 8X9 or 9X9: Martinique, late worn impressions, 1861-64.

SQUARISH POINTS: (mostly worn lozenges, squares, or dots)

Small:

- 7X7 (Fig.12) lozenge, black or blue, worn or smudged lozengic pts: Guadeloupe, many towns, 1859-.
- 8X8 (Fig.13) lozenge, black, sharp pts., small

overall size: Port de France, (Nouméa).

Medium:

- 7X7 (Fig.16) lozenge, see Large, Squarish, or Lozengic points, Guadeloupe.
- 8X8, "8X9" (as some in Fig.4) lozenge, black (see "large dots," Martinique.)
- 10X10 (Fig.14) lozenge, mixed medium and fine squares: Pondichéry, 1864, rare.
- 10X10 (See 15) square in box, 100 irregular points, black: Pondichéry (?), very rare.
- 11X11 (Fig.15) square in box, 121 irregular points, bluish: Chander Nagar.

Large:

- 7X7 (Fig.16) lozenge, 18-21mm, black or blue, (worn lozengic pts.): Guadeloupe (Basse Terre, Pointe à Pitre).
- 7X7 (Fig.17) lozenge, 25mm, black: St. Pierre-Miquelon, 1860-66, exceedingly rare.
- 8X8 (as some in Fig.4?) lozenge, black (see Medium and Large dots, Martinique).

LOZENGIC POINTS: (generally sharp)

- 7X7 (Fig.18 on cover) lozenge, black or blue: Guadeloupe, nearly all towns, 1859-72.
- 8X8 (Fig.19) lozenge, black or blue: Guadeloupe (Basse Terre, Pointe à Pitre, and others possibly, 1871-77).
- 8X8 (Fig.20) lozenge, red (rarely black, -- 1859?): Mahé, 1872-77 issue mostly, possibly Yanson also.

Note that Cochinchine, Gabon, Nossi-Bé, Océanie, and Assinie never had "blind" cancels, - whereas Guyane, Mayotte, Nouvelle Calédonie & Réunion never had lozenges with letters in the center. The use of the lozenges of 8X8 fine dots with letters (Fig.21) was as follows: ASI 1862-76; GAB 1862-76; CCH 1863-76; OCN2-OCN8 (lower Cochinchine) 1864-1880's; MQE 1864-76; NSB 1864-76; GOR 1864-76 (often blue); OCN 1864-76; SNG 1864-76 (often blue); SPM 1866-76; C1-C22 1871-81(?) on Cérés, Cochinchine?; T1-T2 1871-81(?) on Cérés, Tahiti?; GPE 1872 only (often blue) - rare; INDE 1881-93; INDE in square grid, 1890's (not on general issues).

Ed.'s Note: To complete Mr. Stone's list, I am including two more "blind" cancels as illustrated and listed in G. Gilbert "La Poste Maritime." One is made up of 110 irregular dots or squarish or lozengic points (10X11) (Fig.22) and was used on board Ligne U in 1872. The other, of very irregular make-up of 30 points (5X6) (Fig.23), was used on Ligne J in March 1872. These two cancels are "cachets de fortune" of provisional origin and were probably in use for only a trip or two and hence are extremely rare.

CHICAGO CHAPTER, F. & C.G. TO BE FORMED

Ben Reeves, 4429 N. Keystone Ave., Chicago 30, Ill., is arranging for a meeting to form a Chicago Chapter or Section of the Group. This meeting will be held during the Chipex-S.P.A. exhibition and convention, August 10th to 13th.

Watch the stamp papers or write Mr. Reeves for place, time, etc. We have enough members in and near Chicago to form such a chapter.