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A KEY TO  
**THE LOZENGE OBLITERATORS**  
of  
**FRENCH COLONIES**

1860-1892

By **ROBERT G. STONE**

Published by  
The France and Colonies Philatelic Society, Inc.  
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For Sale at \$2.00 by the Corresponding Secretary of the Society



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We first published a key to the colonial "lozenges" and other obliterations in the *France & Colonies Philatelist*, May-June 1943, which was reprinted in *The Philatelic Magazine* for 11 Aug. 1944 (reissued as "PM Reprint No. 27"). That first attempt was largely based on the late Dr. P. Bouvet's articles in *L'Echo de la Timbrologie* 1932-1939, with some amendments from my own observations. In my book on "French Colonies: The General Issues" (Collectors Club, N. Y., Handbook #11, 1961) a much revised and extended version appeared (reprinted from *Coll. Club Phil.*, Vol. 37, #2), including information from later articles of Dr. Bouvet and others, my further extensive collecting experience, and auction records. Since these previous articles are out of print or out of date and there is a continuing demand for this information, a new revised edition seems justified.

There have been few "new discoveries" among the lozenges since 1960, but considerable clarification has evolved regarding certain rare or controversial ones, and on the confusing multiplicity of the Guadeloupe lozenges. Yet it cannot be said that the difficulties in identifying many of the lozenges when off cover have been greatly alleviated. There are still some mystery lozenges found on stamps but not definitely reported on covers—in some cases these may be common lozenges in aberrant strikes or unusual states of wear. The full period of use of some rare lozenges is not known.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the great variation in appearance that a particular lozenge may show due to wear, inking, dirt, slipped or uneven strikes, etc. Single illustrations are not therefore necessarily very typical, especially if they show an early pristine state or a very late worn one. Many subtle yet persistent characteristics of certain lozenges will be recognized only after numbers of examples on covers have been studied. The attempt of Pannetier (Dubus et al: "La Guadeloupe," 1958) to abstract the virgin appearance of each Guadeloupe lozenge of the small postoffices does not seem to be of much practical value, for we have been unable to identify most off-cover examples we have by reference to his illustrations. Included here are illustrations (Fig. A and B) of a number of Guadeloupe lozenges we traced from covers (*Coll. Club Phil.*, Vol. 33, #5), which will serve to show the subtle kind of differences seen which make it difficult or impossible to identify the origin office of many off-cover examples, except that they are all from Guadeloupe and not some other colony.

There are forgeries of some lozenges, at least of the types with the initials of a colony. They can be detected by careful comparison with genuines by measuring the dimensions, checking alignment of letters with dots, style, size and spacings of letters, etc. Fake SPM, MQE, CCH, and SNG lozenges are reported. We illustrate a common bogus 4 x 4 points and we suspect some bogus 8 x 8s of fine-round points (like #7).

Obviously one cannot expect to definitely identify strikes which show less than half of the lozenge or are very smudgy, faint, distorted, etc. But some lozenges are so distinctive that one may spot them from only one row of points or just a corner. We have, however, had very little success in using dimension measurements (side x shorter diameter) to distinguish between lozenges whose normal (average) sizes are within several mm of one another.

Some comments on the accompanying illustrations may be useful:—

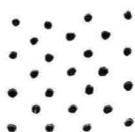
- #2: see the separate pages (Figs. A and B) of illustrations of these for some examples of different offices.

- #3: this is a typical strike for the period 1868-73; early strikes may have very fine points (see Fig. A), late ones are grossly enlarged. The convergence of points at one end is characteristic.
- #4: some strikes of this are neat, regular, and with smaller points; there were probably three or more dies issued from time to time. But all the 1870-72 strikes at Pointe-à-pitre are very distorted and smudgy. The Basse-Terre strikes after 1861 are generally smudgy and increasingly worn. (See Fig. A).
- #5: only one example known of the 1862 type; and two examples of the 1870, which has sharp neat points.
- #6: the large points and wider channel between 3rd and 4th rows are characteristic, always fairly neat and sharp.
- #7: Fort-de-France strikes become somewhat smudgy by 1862. Guadeloupe ones are very fine points and usually neat (see Fig. B).
- #8: only some 1860-61 strikes are clean, later ones usually have the "extra-row border effect" on one or two sides due to the edge of the die-block partly printing.
- #9: the Reunion lozenges seem to be nearly identical for the different post-offices; the points of some became enlarged somewhat with time or were slightly larger to begin with, sometimes smudgy but evidence of wear distortion is seldom seen, probably because numerous dies were used at the larger offices. The Karikal lozenge is known in only one example—it is practically square and the points are smaller than the average Reunion lozenge.
- #10: generally uniform and neat.
- #11: there is one corner point nearly always missing, and in the 1870s sometimes another corner has a point gone, or more than one point is missing (may be just poor inking or uneven pressure).
- #12: the first die, 1862-69?, is illustrated here; it has squarish points and is 15 mm on a side. The 1870-76? die has small lozengic-shaped points and is 14 mm on a side.
- #13: Guadeloupe strikes at Pointe-à-Pitre in the 1860s vary greatly, the points enlarging much with time but not badly deformed. There were several dies used at Pointe-à-Pitre, one 1862-72, and another 1872-7. The latter is generally neat as is also the lone Basse-Terre die. See Fig. A. The Yanaon (one known?) has sharp lozengic points.
- #14: the blank center is characteristic. Remained rather clean even in late uses.
- #15: for the complex history of the use of the GPE lozenge see my article in the Journal of the France and Col. Phil. Soc. (of G. B.) #128, May 1974. The Karikal of 1880s-90s is of dashes, in a frame, and the INDE is in larger letters than the earlier lozenge. The "T 1" lozenge was long disputed, but several examples on stamps are recorded, presumably (according to Desrousseaux) from Tonkin; the "T" is non-serif, the "1" serified, well separated. The "T 2" listed in some old catalogs has not been reported in recent years and is suspect. These are certainly not Tahiti.

- #16: the larger points at the corners are characteristic. Usually very neat and clean.
- #17: CCH is 8 mm long; it was also used on French stamps during 1862-63.
- #18: this mark was issued in various dies, and the CCH is in two sizes (or more?), one 7 mm long, the other  $7\frac{3}{4}$  mm. Uses other than at Saigon are very rare. Blue was the general color in Tonkin in the 1870s. The 7 mm was used 1864-72, the  $7\frac{3}{4}$  mm 1868-76.
- #19: the common bogus has CCH 6 mm long, a rarer one is 9 mm.
- #20: the duplicates of certain of these were transferred to other postoffices. The CCN2 became worn so it looked like a "C12" of #21. Some of these are known on French stamps also (1863).
- #21: origins uncertain as covers for most are unknown.
- #22: points enlarged somewhat with time but are usually clear.
- #23: the Yanaon is only known on one cover, its points are finer than the Pondichéry.
- #24: Bouvet suspected that a different boxed lozenge, which he found on a 40c Eagle, may have been an earlier Chandernagore.
- #25: the several oversized points in the margins are characteristic.
- #26 and #27: a "PP" in a circle of 13 mm diam. of Reunion is frequent on the Dubois issue. The "PD" marks of Reunion were regularly used at some offices to cancel stamps on local letters and printed matter.
- #28: the framed Guadeloupe "PP"s were occasionally used at many postoffices by accident or carelessness as a substitute for a lozenge. The "PP" of each postoffice is slightly different.

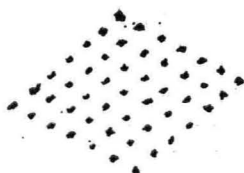
There is a lozenge of 12 x 12 small irregular points used as a provisional killer in lieu of the "anchor" on several trips of the French packets of Ligne J and K during 1867-74, which is known on a few colonial stamps from covers from Dakar—extremely rare. Another of crude 6 x 6 points is not recorded on colonies stamps. The "anchor" lozenge of the French packets is frequent on colonial stamps used on board the packets (1862-76). The small "PD" in 8 x 12 mm frame used on stamps in Reunion (Fig. #27) is the type which was available at all French and colonial p.o.'s to mark letters "paid to destination," but except in several Reunion p.o.'s only appears on stamps extremely rarely by accident. A "PF" in 7 x 11 mm frame is seen rarely on colonies stamps but its provenance is unknown, probably in France. Various odd, mostly accidental, marks on the colonies stamps are illustrated and identified in my article in the Journal of the France and Cols. Phil. Soc. (of G. B.), #128, May 1974—they are mostly French and foreign marks but some, such as BM, BM in oval, R or AR in rectangle, could be of colonial origin.

Colors of nearly all the lozenges are normally black, but where they are sometimes also blue or red it is so noted in parenthesis in the captions.



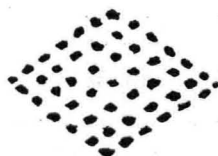
1

4 x 4  
Bogus.  
Common  
on 1st  
3 issues



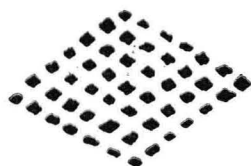
2

7 x 7  
Many offices of  
Guadeloupe 1862-69—  
shape & size varies  
(some blue)



3

7 x 7  
Moule  
(Guadeloupe)  
1864-79  
(red 1875)



4

7 x 7  
Pointe-à-Pitre  
& Basse-Terre  
(Guadeloupe)  
1860-72 (blue)  
Great var. from wear



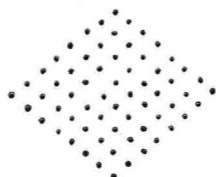
5

7 x 7  
Papeete (Tahiti)  
1862-70? (extr. rare.)  
1870-?: 18 x 20 mm  
regular sharp rhombic pts.  
(extr. rare)



6

7 x 7  
St. Pierre  
(St. P. & Miq.)  
1860-64  
(very rare)



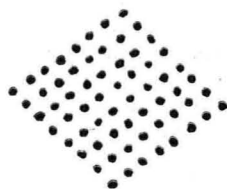
7

8 x 8  
Fort-de-France  
(MQE) 1860-64;  
Morne-à-L'Eau, &  
Port-Louis (GPE)  
1864-77;  
Unknown or bogus?  
1870s?



8

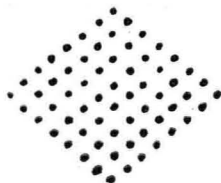
8 x 8  
St. Pierre  
(Martinique)  
1860-64.  
Varies due  
to wear



9

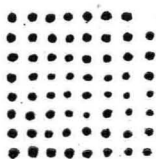
8 x 8  
Reunion:  
all p.o.s  
1860-89  
(blue, red);  
Karikal  
(India)  
1860s (v.r.)





**10**

8 x 8  
St. Louis  
(Senegal)  
1860-64  
(blue)



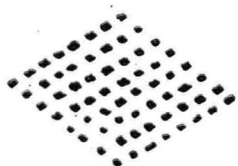
**11**

8 x 8  
Cayenne (Guiana)  
1860-76  
(one or more corner  
pts often missing)



**12**

8 x 8  
Noumea  
(Port-de-France)  
1862-69 (15 mm):  
1870-76: rhombic pts.  
(14 mm.) (rare)



**13**

8 x 8  
Guadeloupe:  
Pointe-à-Pitre 1869-79;  
Basse-Terre 1862-77  
(blue);  
Yanaon (India)  
1860s (extr. r.)



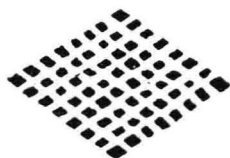
**14**

8 x 8  
Mayotte  
1864?-80  
(blue)



**15**

8 x 8  
GOR (Gorée) 1863-78 (bl)  
ASI (Assinie) 1862-71 (bl)  
GAB (Gabon) 1862-76  
(blue, red)  
MQE (Fort-de-France, St.  
Pierre) 1864-79 (bl)  
NSB (Nossi-Bé) 1864?-76  
(blue)  
OCN (Papeete) 1864-76  
SNG (Senegal) 1864-80s  
(blue)  
SPM (St. Pierre) 1864-76  
GPE (Pointe-à-Pitre &  
Basse-Terre) 1871- 1910  
(blue)  
INDE (Pondichéry) 1863-77  
(Karikal 1870s-90s)  
T1 (Tonkin) 1870s (blue)



16

8 x 8  
Mahé (India)  
1870s  
(red)  
(rare)



17

8 x 8  
CCH is 8 mm.  
Saigon  
1863-65  
(1862-3 on  
Fr. stamps)



18

8 x 8  
CCH 7 mm or 7 3/4 mm  
Cochinchina: (blue):  
Saigon 1864-76  
Bentre 1872-3  
Cholen 1876  
Go-Cong 1872-3  
Hatien 1874-6  
Mocai 1870  
Mytho 1873-4  
Sadec 1875  
Tan-an 1868-75  
Tayninh 1874  
Thaudumot 1868  
Vinh-Long 1870-76  
Cambodia:  
Pnum-Penh 1868-  
(all but Saigon v. r.)



19

8 x 8  
CCH 6 mm or 9 mm  
Bogus,  
common on Eagles



20

8 x 8  
Cochinchina: (v. r.)—  
CCN2 Bien-Hoa 1863-74  
Tay-Ninh 1866-76  
CCN3 Mytho 1864-70, 72-5  
Sadec 1867-70s  
CCN4 Baria 1864-75  
Cho-Len 1864-76  
CCN5 Go-Cong 1864-73  
CCN6 Tay-Ninh 1866-7  
Travinh 1868-72  
CCN7 Tong-Keou 1864-76  
Chau-Doc 1867-76  
CCN8 Trang-Bang 1865-68? #s 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13,  
Tanan 1866-? 14, 20, 21, 22  
(blue)



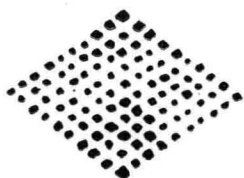
21

8 x 8  
Cochinchina:—  
C2 Baria?  
C5 Bienhoa?  
C8 Gocong?  
C11 Mytho 1876  
C12 Tayninh  
(def. CCN2)  
C16 Tayninh 1876  
C18 Tongkeou?  
1870s  
(extr. r.)  
(seen off-cover  
(blue)



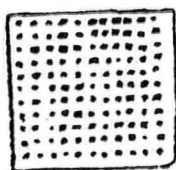
**22**

9 x 9  
Pondichéry  
1860-76  
(blue)



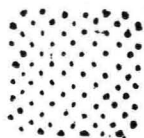
**23**

10 x 10  
Pondichéry  
1863-64;  
Yanaon (finer pts)  
1870s  
(extr. r.)



**24**

11 x 11  
Chandernagore  
1871-78 (blue);  
(a diff. loz. in  
frame used in 1860s? ?)



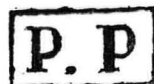
**25**

84 points  
Gorée  
1860-64  
(blue)



**26**

Reunion 1860-80s:—  
15 mm diam.  
St. Denis (blue, red)  
St. Pierre (blue, red)  
Ste. Rose (blue)  
St. Joseph  
St. Phillippe  
Also 13 mm diam.  
inscribed PP 1880s



**27**

Frames of  
several sizes.  
Reunion 1860-80s:  
St. Denis  
St. Pierre (2 types)  
St. Paul (blue)

**28**

Frames of  
var. sizes.  
Guadeloupe,  
all p.o.s  
1862-76  
(blue, red)



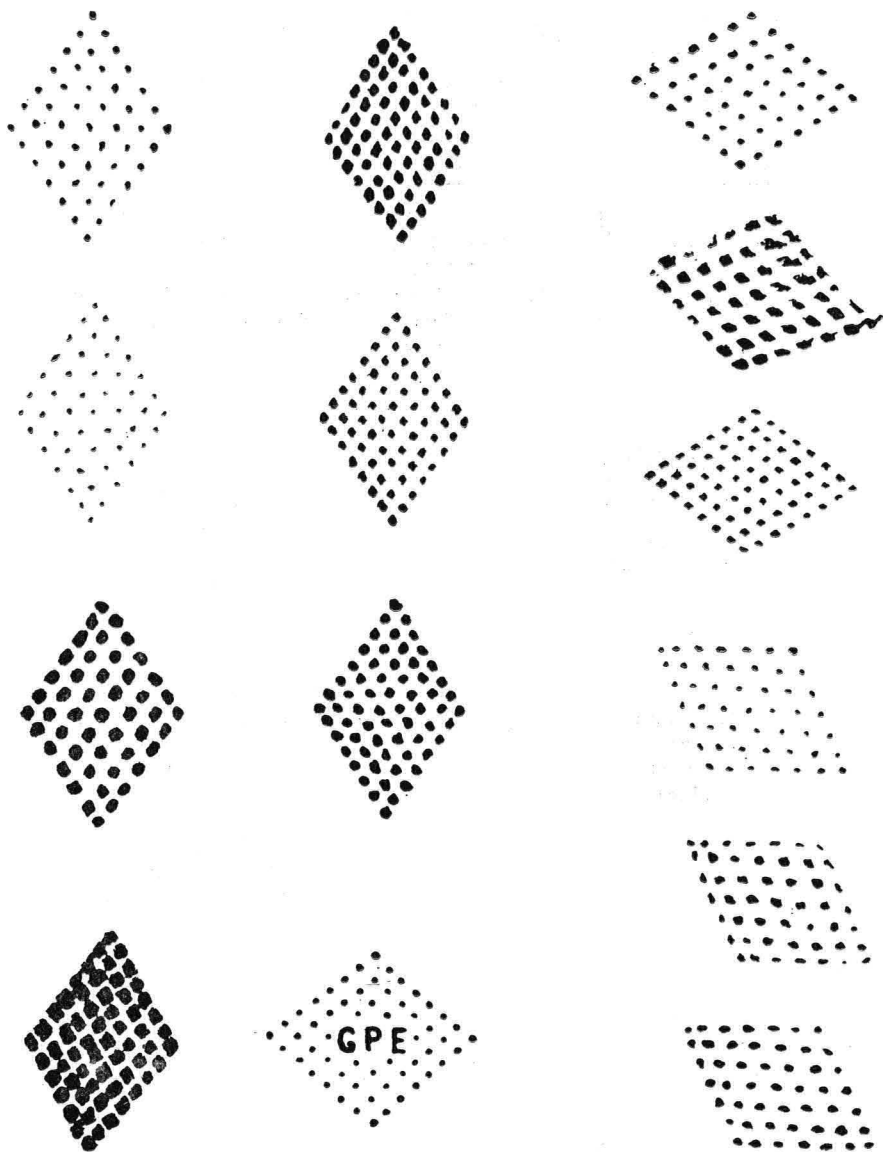


Fig. A. Some strikes of Guadeloupe large offices:—  
 Left col. (top to bottom): Pointe-à-Pitre 1860, 1863, 1865, 1870  
 Center col.: Pointe-à-Pitre 1865, 1872, 1875, 1872-77  
 Right col.: Basse-Terre 1860, 1865, 1870; Moule 1867, 1869, 1871

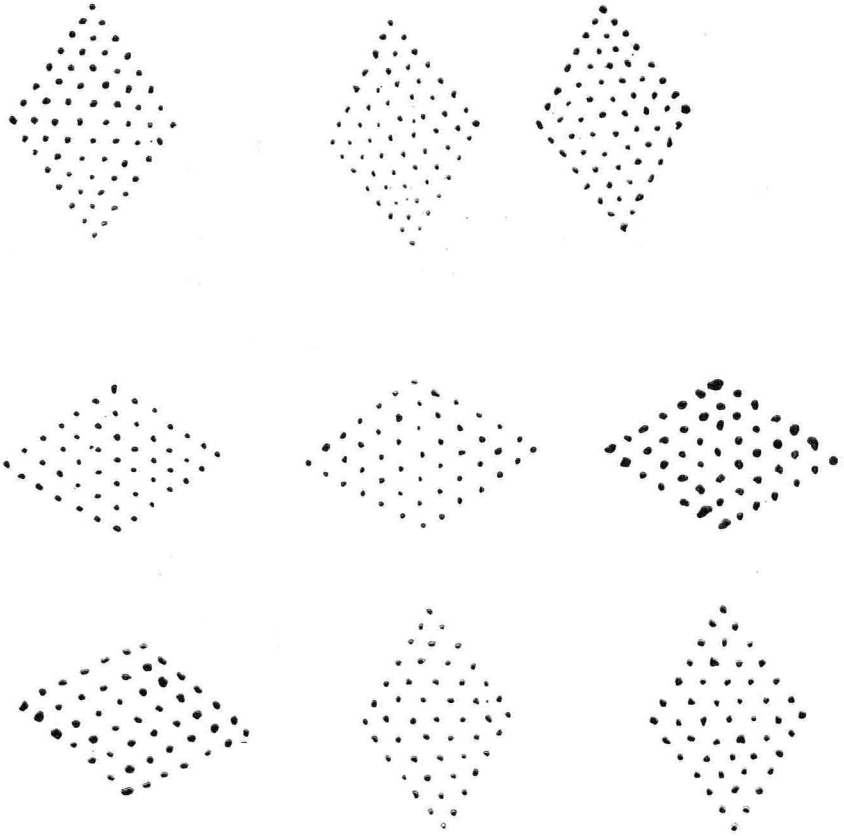


Fig. B. Some strikes of Guadeloupe small offices:—  
Top row: (8 x 8s) Morne-à-l'Eau, two of Port-Louis  
Middle: St.-Martin, St.-Francois, Grand-Bourg  
Bottom: Pointe-Noire, unknown, unknown.



