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# *The First French Steamship: Line M (1866-1869)*

*Dr. Yamil Kouri*

*Dr. Yamil Kouri specializes in Cuban philately. Last year, the Cuban group was also one of the convening societies at our annual meeting in Denver. Although a member of the philatelic jury, Dr. Kouri showed a one-frame exhibit of French-Cuba material. I asked him if he could make a contribution for our readers, and he provided this excellent story, for which I deeply thank him. He notes that a similar version of this article was published in two separate parts in The Cuban Philatelist (Vol. XII, No. 35, Second Third, 2000, pp. 53-58; and Vol. XIII, No. 39, Last Third, 2001, pp. 94-95).*

The first two French steamship companies that attempted to provide a transatlantic service in 1847 and 1856 ended in failure. In 1854 the brothers Émile and Isaac Péreire founded the *Compagnie Générale Maritime* which gradually grew by acquiring a sailing ship company and by purchasing new steamers. In 1858 Michel V. Marziou raised enough funds to form *L'Union Maritime*, which obtained a large mail subsidy from the French government to provide a transatlantic service to New York and the West Indies. In 1860 Mr. Marziou realized that he lacked the capital for such an ambitious venture, and with the approval of Emperor Napoleon III was able to transfer his concession to the *Compagnie Générale Maritime* which in 1861 changed its name to *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique* (CGT). The CGT, which was also heavily subsidized by the French government, gradually withdrew its European lines and planned to start transatlantic sailings in the summer of 1864.

In April 1862, as a result of to the French invasion of Mexico, the CGT hastily inaugurated a transatlantic route between St. Nazaire, France, and Veracruz. This first route, known as the "Mexico Line," also had regularly scheduled stops at Martinique and Santiago de Cuba on both the eastward and westward runs. In the beginning the company was mainly in-

involved in the transport of troops and materiel for the French army in Mexico. A significant volume of correspondence, both military and civilian, was also carried on this early line. To facilitate the collection and distribution of mail, French consulates opened postal agencies in several ports, copying the successful British model which had already been operating in the West Indies for 20 years. In contrast to the British, however, French consulates offered French stamps for sale from the very beginning. The British consulates quickly followed suit, and started selling their own stamps in 1865.

By 1865 the political and military landscape in North America had changed drastically. At the end of its bloody Civil War, the United States was again determined to enforce the "Monroe Doctrine" against European intervention in the Americas. In Mexico, the ambitious French imperial expansion had been suffering a number of setbacks that ended in disaster with the execution of Emperor Maximilian in 1867. The CGT was quickly forced to shift its main focus from military to commercial service. In 1865 the company expanded and restructured its sailings in the Caribbean creating a large network of dozens of interconnecting lines named by different letters.

Line A traveled to Colon, Panama (then part of Colombia) with several stops along the way, and Line B, undoubtedly the most important one in the Caribbean, served Veracruz, Havana, and St. Thomas, the three busiest ports in the region.

By the second half of the 19th century the volume of commerce and correspondence between the United States and Cuba was so important that several American steamship companies operating with mail contracts with the U.S. Post Office were providing frequent regular sailings to Havana. The *British Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.* made a number of unsuc-

successful attempts to compete in this market beginning in the 1840s. Their failure was in part due to the obstacles placed in their way by the U.S. Post Office, but also to the much higher rates they charged in comparison to American companies, which offered a much more economical alternative.

Among all the cities in the United States, New Orleans was particularly important to France. First of all, it was a former French colony with a large population of French descent. It was also strategically located near the mouth of the Mississippi River, the natural gateway to the rapidly expanding mid-western region of the continent, which had both an enormous productive capacity and a great demand for French goods. When the U.S. Civil War ended, products from the former Confederate States again became readily available to the rest of the world. Cotton was no doubt the most important southern product shipped from New Orleans.

Although there was a British steamship line running between New Orleans and Liverpool, their trips were infrequent and most of the mail between New Orleans and France in those days was sent via New York. There were several transatlantic steamship companies making regular trips between New York and Europe at the time, and in June 1864 the *CGT* also inaugurated its own transatlantic service from Le Havre (line H). In 1866 the company saw an opportunity to exploit a more direct and faster route between New Orleans and France. This new service, designated as annex line M, of-

fered monthly sailings between New Orleans and Havana, where a connection could be made with the busy French line B that also made monthly trips to France.

The French government and the U.S. Post Office negotiated an agreement for the exchange of mails conveyed by the French packets of line M. Special postal rates were established for mail originating in New Orleans. They are listed in Table 1 below as they were published in January 1867. Based on the very limited number of surviving covers, it is evident that the interpretation of these rates by New Orleans post office employees was inconsistent. To add to the confusion, single weight letters in the U.S. were calculated on the basis of  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce, or approximately 15 grams, while the French at the time had a limit of only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  grams. Although according to this treaty the rates were calculated on the basis of  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce, this was a change in the way the French world assessed their postage fees and it is conceivable that some letters may have been treated as single weight by the Americans but as double by the French, and so on. Postage on letters from French territories to New Orleans continued to be paid in French currency, possibly at the previous rates.

Two *paquebots* were assigned to the new line M on alternating trips. They were both side-wheel steamers, the 990 metric ton *Guyane*, built in Glasgow in 1865, and the 900 metric ton *Darien*, built in Hartlepool in 1866. The former was used by the company from December 1865 until April 1878. Most of its trips were on line

Table 1. Postal Rates of Line M.

Between New Orleans and:	RATE PER $\frac{1}{2}$ OUNCE	PREPAYMENT
Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, British Guiana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Trinidad	13 cents	Optional
Dutch Guiana	14 cents	Optional
Marquesas, Low or Society Islands	37 cents	Optional
Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Venezuela and Colombia	10 cents	Required from NO Optional to N.O.
Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador	34 cents	Required
Peru	22 cents	Required
France and Algeria	15 cents	Optional



C, although it also served on lines D, E, G, and E *bis*. It made only 12 trips on line M. The latter also made 12 trips on line M, but it mainly served on lines C, D, E, and G. It was employed by the CGT from February 1867 until it burned off the coast of Cuba on October 5, 1870.

To date, only four letters carried by the steamers serving on line M have been identified. In fact, the first of these covers was not recognized and reported until 1980 by the late noted scholar Robert G. Stone. What may have led the French to open this relatively brief and apparently unsuccessful line, especially when there was already some competition from several American steamship companies? A front page article in the 16 December 1866 issue of the main New Orleans newspaper, *The Daily Picayune*, sheds some light to what might have influenced this decision. This editorial complained about the lack of regular communications with Havana. It went on to state that it was either feast or famine in terms of the frequency of sailings between these two ports and that sometimes they had to wait weeks between arrivals. Whatever the reason was for this decision, the French line M got under way on November 1866.

The initial sailing itinerary was made so that the steamers from line M could arrive in Havana in time to connect with those of line B. The ships were supposed to leave Havana on the 6th to arrive in New Orleans on the 9th of each month, and they had to return on the 13th in order to arrive in Havana on the 16th. However, there were numerous difficulties that did not allow the French to keep this schedule. The brand new steamer *Darien* did not leave France until late January 1867 and its first trip to New Orleans was on March 6th. Problems with U.S. customs in New Orleans led to the temporary seizure of this vessel by American au-

thorities. Also, in January 1868 the line B steamer *Floride* became disabled and the *Guyane* had to be pulled briefly from line M to be used on line B. During half of the year there were yellow fever precautions in New Orleans which meant that ships from areas of high prevalence had to serve a ten day quarantine, making short stays in port impossible. The Mississippi River was also very difficult and treacherous to navigate due to its shifting sand bars, lengthening the transit time between New Orleans and the river delta in the Gulf of Mexico. To make matters worse, in 1868 the Germans opened a competing line of steamers traveling directly between New Orleans and Le Havre, which avoided the disadvantage of having to transfer merchandise between ships at Havana. Surprisingly, I could not find a single advertisement for the French line in the main New Orleans newspaper while every other steamship company had many ads.

The earliest of the four covers was also the first one to be reported. It appears in Fig. 1 and is part of the collection of Fernando Iglesias. This cover was sent from Havana to New Orleans and was posted at the Havana Consular post office. It has the black octagonal consular marking "LA HAVANE" dated 26 January 1867. Since line M was designated as provisional operation, it apparently was never issued an octagonal cachet which was standard for the ships of other lines. However, the captains of



Figure 1. Earliest known "Ligne M" cover, 26 January 1867.



Figure 2. Example of unpaid letter to the U.S. in 1868.

the ships serving this line were likely provided with a set of the anchor and dots canceller to use on covers prepaid with stamps. This cover's postage was paid with a vertical strip of four five-centime stamps, which were only rarely used in Cuba, and a single forty-centime stamp. This made up the single-weight sixty centimes rate which was the so-called "inter-island" rate between two places in the Caribbean Basin or the Gulf of Mexico, excluding the same island or country. Underneath the stamps there is the manuscript notation "*per Guyane*." It also has a blue oval cachet of the well known merchant and forwarding agent firm of Vignier & Robertson of Havana. The cover arrived in New Orleans on January 30, 1867 where it received a circular date stamp (cds) and the circular "STEAMSHIP / 10" (type 1) markings. The local newspaper also recorded the arrival of the *Guyane* on the 30th under its captain Mr. Voiletis.

Normally, during this period the United States charged postage due to nearly all incoming mail from the West Indies, but according to the Franco-American postal agreement of 1866 in this case the New Orleans post office erroneously charged postage due. There was either confusion or ignorance about the new postal treaty because the prepayment with French

stamps should have been accepted. Huber and Wagner state that there was a great deal of corruption by the local postmasters at the time, and one can only speculate if this was an intentional "mistake." On the other hand, this letter was sent only a few months after the treaty came into effect, and on the same month when the rates first published.

The second cover, shown in Fig. 2, was written on 10 February 1868 in Havana, addressed to Mobile, Alabama. It was posted at the consular postal agency which ap-

plied its octagonal marking and sent it unpaid to New Orleans on board the *Guyane*. Prior to the postal treaty between the United States and France, letters from Cuba by French mail to places other than France or its possessions, and a few other places that had postal agreements with France, had to be sent prepaid. It arrived in New Orleans on 14 February, the newspaper noted, commanded by Mr. Offret. New Orleans applied its CDS and "STEAMSHIP / 10" (type 2) markings, and forwarded it to Mobile.

The next cover, presented in Fig. 3, originated in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, and was addressed to New Orleans. It was written on 25 February 1869 and was carried privately to St. Thomas. This was a very common practice at the time. Merchants from the Lesser Antilles took advantage of St. Thomas' busy shipping activity and very often sent letters there to be forwarded by the first available means. This cover was handled by the firm of J.F. Laferrière & Cie. that applied its green double oval cachet on the back. The forwarding agent posted it on March 3, and sent it prepaid by French packet via Havana. It was franked with two French stamps that made up the single weight "inter-island" rate of sixty centimes. Underneath the stamps there is the manuscript indication "*Via Havane*" in a different hand than that of the





Figure 3. Letter from Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe to New Orleans forwarded through St. Thomas, 25 February 1869.

address and may have been made by the forwarding agent. The small framed "P.P." was a French handstamp that indicated the letter was paid to the port of destination. In this case sixty *centimes* paid the postage to either Cuba or New Orleans.

The letter was carried to Cuba on board a French steamer of the line B which applied the circular steamship marking "LIGNE B / PAQ. FR. \* No 3" on the reverse, also dated 3 March. There are no transit or arrival markings, suggesting that it was sent in sealed bag that was transferred directly to the steamer *Darien* in Havana. The New Orleans post office treated it correctly and accepted prepayment with French stamps. I could not find the steamer's arrival date on *The Daily Picayune*, but the cover was received by the addressee on March 12, and the newspaper noted that the *Darien* cleared New Orleans on March 15 en route to

Havana under captain Desroques.

The last cover, shown in Fig. 4, is also the only one so far recorded carried by this line originating in the United States. It was posted in New Orleans on May 13, 1869, and was addressed to Matanzas, in the northern coast of Cuba, where it was received on May 22nd. The manuscript notation on the left upper corner indicates that it was carried by the steamer *Darien*. The *Daily Picayune* confirms the departure of the *Darien* on that date. Its captain was Mr. Desroques and its agent in New Orleans was Mr. V. Perilliat.

This envelope is a piece of postal stationery (Scott #U41) paying the single-letter rate of ten cents to Cuba. Upon arrival in Havana, it was charged the customary local postage due rate of one silver real for letters from North America, as indicated by the black oval marking "NA1". The Cuban post office charged local fees to all incoming foreign mail regardless of the means of conveyance to the is-

land, with the exception of prepaid mail from Spain or its possessions.

### Conclusion

If we take into account the very limited number of known covers carried on this line, they show a good diversity of uses. In May 1869 the French decided to cancel this line, a decision made effective in July of the same year. The last trip was made by the *Darien* in August.

There were two other subsequent French lines M. The second one was even a bigger failure than the first, lasting just over a year. It operated between Marseille and Alexandria, Egypt, from early 1869 until March 1870. The third line M was not as ephemeral as the two previous ones. It ran between Marseille and Libreville, on the west coast of Africa, from March 1889 to December 1908.



Figure 4. Letter from New Orleans to Havana, only known "Ligne M" cover originating in the U.S.

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# Lebanon: The Unissued 7.5 Pi Stamp of 1937

Rida Bazzi (FCPS 3408)

In 1937-1938, a new issue of stamps (Y&T 152-156)<sup>1</sup> was introduced by Lebanon. Several different designs were used. One value of this series was 7.5 Piastres (Maury 156Aa).<sup>2</sup> Along with the 10pi and 15pi values, the design features a Lebanese village with pine trees in the background and a running river in the foreground. The stamps were designed by Ph. Mourani and engraved by Jules Piel. They were printed by Helio Vaugirard in Paris.

The 7.5pi value, shown in Fig. 1, presumably was meant to pay the UPU (Universal Postal Union) foreign letter rate, which had not changed since the second half of the 1920's. In late 1937, the rate was increased first to 9 pi and then to 10 pi, the latter lasting a few months into 1938. Another rate change from 10 pi to 12.5 pi occurred in 1938. The change of postal rates is the most likely reason the stamp was not issued. The stock at hand, which must have been delivered from France before the rate increase, was nevertheless used in 1938 to prepare an overprinted 12.5 pi value. As shown in Fig. 2, this seems to have been done first in haste with a crude overprint (Fig. 2a), then more carefully with a sharper overprint (Fig. 2b). A definitive 12.5 pi value of the same design and color was issued in 1940 (bottom)

The number of 7.5 Pi stamps that survived is unknown, but given the extreme infrequency in



Figure 1. The unissued 7.5 pi value of 1937.

which it appears on the market, the author suspects that no more than 50 stamps (one sheet) could have escaped overprinting and probably much less have survived.

It might seem surprising that at the same time the unissued 7.5 pi stamp was overprinted with a new value, values from the 1930 views set were being overprinted 7.5 pi, as seen in Figs. 3a and 3b. The overprints are crude and many examples have ink blotches. These must have been prepared at the same time as the first overprint of the 7.5pi with 12.5 pi. These stamps paid for one weight increments: the rate for a letter sent to a foreign (non-French community) country was 12.5 pi for the first 25 grams and



2a (Y&T 162)



2b (Y&T 163)

Figure 2. The 12½ pi on 7.50 pi overprints.



3a (Y&amp;T 160)



3a (Y&amp;T 161)

Figure. 3 Provisional overprints for 7.5 Pi values introduced due to rate change.

each additional 25 grams was 7.5 pi.

One reason the unissued 7.5 pi stamp was not used to pay for one weight increment had to do with its color. In Lebanon, as in nearly all other countries, the UPU regulation that the stamp that paid the foreign letter rate be blue in color was followed. It is assumed that this is the reason why the blue 7.5 pi stamps were overprinted 12.5 and other stamps were overprinted 7.5. It is also interesting to note the relatively small number of stamps overprinted 7.5 pi because heavier letters are relatively scarcer than letters weighing 25 grams or less. This is another reason why the large stock of the unissued 7.5 pi value (around 5 millions) were overprinted 12.5) could not be used for the complementary rate of heavier letters.

As for other values and sets, a small number of

imperforate stamps (Y&T 156A, Maury 156A) were given to persons in high office and these made their way to the philatelic market. Many catalogs state that there are only 100 imperforate stamps of this value which is less than the number of imperforates of other values of the set. Ref. 2 states that the number is 300, the same as for the other values. Kaczmarczyk's argues that when the imperforate stamps were prepared, it was not known that the value would not be issued and that therefore were not treated differently from the other values of the set.<sup>3</sup> While this might have been the case, the argument is not full convincing and more research is needed to establish the correct number

French printers typically prepared deluxe presentation proofs (Fig. 4a) for government officials. The exact number of these proofs is unknown,



Figure 4a. Deluxe proof.



Figure 4b. Die proof.



but these must have been prepared before the decision to not issue the stamps. These are made after hardening the Die.

Die proofs exist in the adopted and rejected colors. The Die proofs have a design that is somewhat similar to the deluxe proof, but without the protective flap and without the inscriptions. As seen in Fig. 4b, a manuscript code in the lower right-hand corner denotes the color. These proofs were prepared from the original unhardened die having a large sinkage. They are known in a variety of colors including Blue (reported by Kaczmarczyk), Sepia and Purple (seen by the author).

These proofs are very scarce and no more than a few of a particular color could exist due to the state of the die (before hardening the steel).

## Conclusion

We have seen how a change of postal rate created one of the rarest unissued Lebanese stamps. An examination of other stamps of the period and of postal rates revealed the reasons behind the various stages that the stamp has undergone.

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Have you ever considered visiting the mysterious isles of St. Pierre et Miquelon? Well, you may just have an excuse now. There will be a philatelic exhibition in St. Pierre et Miquelon 2-4 June 2011. FCPS member **J.-J. Tiliard** is the President of the show, and member **Loïc Detcheverry** is in charge of the exhibits.

According to their prospectus, this will be a national-level show of 160 frames. They are accepting applications for multi-frame (maximum of five frames, US\$20/frame), one-frame (US\$ 30), and youth exhibits (US\$5/frame). They will have a judging panel of three or four judges depending on the final number of frames. The deadline for entries is 31 December 2010.

Four qualified international philatelic judges from the United States and Canada are invited to judge exhibits using the American Philatelic Society and Royal Philatelic Society of Canada standards. Space on the exhibit floor is limited so apply for exhibit frame space early. Frames are being brought in courtesy of the RPSC Stamp Club Chapters in Halifax and St. John's. These frames accommodate 16-pages (4 x 4) in the standard 8.5 x 11 inches or A5 page sizes.

Special philatelic oriented tours of the archipelago are planned for visitors. A special stamp, commemorating the exhibition, will be issued by the St. Pierre & Miquelon Post Office. Hotel rooms and bed and breakfast accommodation are limited in St. Pierre. Early booking is advised.

Visit their web site at:

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For more details.

# Maritime Postmarks and the Afrique

M.P. Bratzel, Jr. (FCPS 2394)

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the shipping company *Chargeurs Réunis* provided regularly scheduled steamship service along the west coast of Africa between Bordeaux, France and Matadi, Belgian Congo. Based on postmarks, Douala, Cameroun was added as a port of call in 1915.

The steamship *Afrique* (Fig. 1) sailed the west Africa route from 1908 until it sank on 12 January 1920, three days after departing Bordeaux.

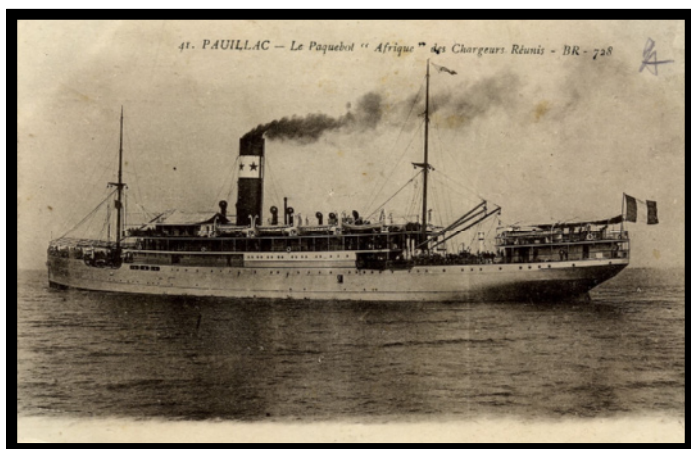


Figure 1. The Afrique.

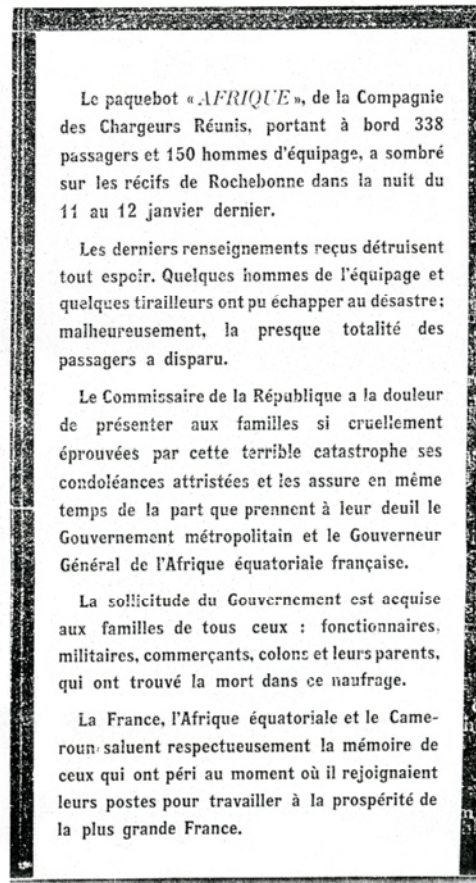


Figure 2. Notice of the sinking of the Afrique.

The notice published in the *Journal officiel du Cameroun*<sup>1</sup> is shown in Fig. 2.

When it sank, its on-board maritime post office had two postal datestamps. The first, shown in Fig. 3, was **Bordeaux a Matadi L.L. N° 1** used for the outbound voyage. The second, illustrated in Fig. 4, was **Matadi a Bordeaux L.L. N° 1** used for the return voyage.



Figure 3. Outbound Afrique Cancellation.

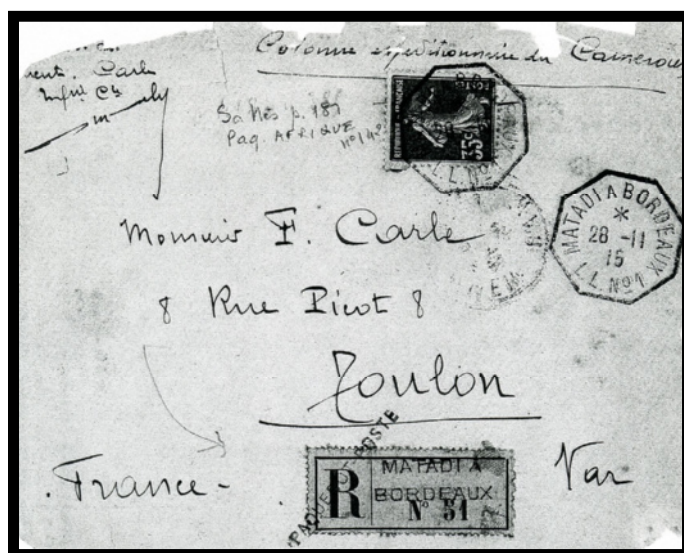


Figure 4. Inbound Afrique Cancellation.



Also aboard was an oval double circle administrative cachet inscribed

**Chargeurs Réunis**  
**C<sup>ie</sup> française de Navigation à Vapeur**  
**Afrique**

This cachet, shown in Fig. 5, was occasionally applied to mail.



Figure 5. Administrative cachet.

All three devices and the postal agent (*contrôleur postal*), M. Blay, were lost.

The steamship *Asie*, which had entered the West Africa service in 1914 and subsequently transferred to the South America service, was recalled to replace the *Afrique*. A single replacement postmark inscribed **Matadi a Bordeaux A** (Fig. 6) was prepared and used aboard the

*Tchad* between 17 November 1920 until 26 November 1921. When the French maritime post offices were closed (*suppression des contrôleurs postaux*) in November 1921, the canceller was withdrawn from service.

The **Bordeaux a Matadi** No 1 postmark is scarce as little mail was posted on the outward-bound voyages. The **Matadi a Bordeaux A** postmark is also scarce as it was used for just one year. Of additional interest, the cover in Fig. 6 was posted *Franchise Militaire* by a sailor aboard the 1,125-tonne naval vessel *Cassiopée*, then on patrol along the coast of equatorial Africa, including Cameroun.

As always, comments and additional information are welcome.

Information about maritime service was taken from Salles.<sup>2</sup>

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Figure 6. Replacement cancellation used by the steamship *Tchad*.

# French Follies

by Kees Adema

*Mr. Kees Adema is the pre-eminent scholar of Dutch philately, and the recipient of the 2009 APS Luff Award for philatelic research. The considerable interaction between Dutch and French history has led Kees to study a great deal of French philately. This particular article is reprinted from the Collectors Club Philatelist, Vol. 88, No. 2, March-April 2009, pp. 87-91. I felt it was a wonderfully illuminating, and at times humorous, description of the Republican calendar and town naming conventions. Bureaucracy run amok!*

A common misconception holds that the French Republic started immediately following the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. It was, in fact, created on 21 September 1792, when the new National Convention, controlled by the radical Jacobin Party, voted to make France a republic, thereby abolishing Louis XVI's kingdom. For good measure, a decree was passed on 4 December announcing that anyone proposing or attempting to restore the Bourbons to power would be executed. It heralded the start of a period of terror whereby tens of thousands, including many of the original revolutionaries, would receive a "Republican haircut," that is, be guillotined.<sup>1</sup>

The powerful Catholic church, which had exercised such a strong influence during the *ancien régime*<sup>2</sup> now came to be seen as an anti-revolutionary, in fact a dangerous and competing force whose power had to be severely curtailed if not eliminated. The Gregorian calendar,<sup>3</sup> with its many religious holidays, was seen as a symbol of the church and thus a prime target for reformers.

It took less than one year after the Republic was established before a new calendar, based on "rational principles," was intro-

duced by Gilbert Romme (Figure 1), a physician, mathematician and politician.<sup>4</sup> His commission had been to provide a scientific division of the year that would be more based on the heavens and the seasons. The final result was the French Revolutionary Calendar, which would be used from 1792 to 1805,<sup>5</sup> 13 years in all. It was signed into law in November of the Gregorian year 1793, but because it was dated retroactively to 1792, year II was by then already well underway. Initially on some documents and even currency like assignats<sup>6</sup> reference is made to both calendars, as seen in Fig. 2.



Figure 1.  
Charles-Gilbert Romme  
(1750–1795)

The new Republican calendar year began at the autumn equinox and had twelve months of 30 days each. The poet Fabre d'Églantine created new names for the months derived from Latin



Figure 2. Assignat showing references to Gregorian year 1792 as well as Republican Calendar Year I. (courtesy W. Ahlers)



and based on nature. Each year was divided into four seasons. Year I (*an I*), began on (Saturday) 22 September 1792. Autumn was subdivided into Vendémiaire, Brumaire and Frimaire. The names came from the Latin *vin-demia* (grape harvest) and the French *brume* (fog) and *frimas* (frost). Their winter counterparts were Nivôse, Pluviôse and Ventôse, based on the Latin *nivosus* (snow), *pluviosus* (rain) and *ventosus* (wind). Spring saw Germinal (Latin: *germen* – sprouting/germination), Floréal (Latin: *flos* – flowering) and Prairial (French: *prairie* – pasture). The final three months were Messidor<sup>7</sup> (Latin: *messis* – harvest), Thermidor (Greek: *thermos* – heat) and Fructidor (Latin: *fructus* – fruit). Table I shows the Republican years and their Gregorian counterparts.

The British made fun of the French and their newfangled calendar by referring to the autumn months as Wheaty, Heaty and Sweety, the winter as Wheezy, Sneezy and Freezy followed by Slippy, Drippy and Nippy for spring and ending with Showery, Flowery and Bowery for summer.

Each month of thirty days was subdivided into three weeks of ten days, *décades*. Days of the week were based on Latin, *primidi* (1), *duodi* (2), *tridi* (3), *quartidi* (4), *quintidi* (5), *sextidi* (6), *septidi* (7), *octidi* (8), *nonidi* (9) and *decadi* (10). Because the year thus counted only 360 days, five *jours complémentaires*<sup>8</sup> (six in leap years) were added as holidays to cover the difference with the actual sun year on which the Gregorian calendar had been based. They were named *Jour de la Vertu* (Virtue), *Génie* (Genius), *Travail* (Work), *Raison* (Reason), *Recompense* (Reward) and the Leap Day was *de Jour de la Révolution* (Revolution). Letters dating from one of the five or six annual holidays are cherished by collectors of the genre.

The letter in Fig. 3 was sent from the “Quartier Général à Utrecht” to Amiens, France, “le 2eme jour complémentaire, l’an 6eme de la République Française une & indivisible,” that is, the second complementary

Table I. The Gregorian date corresponding to the first day of the new year on the French Republican

Year I:	22 Sep 1792	Year VIII:	22 Sep 1799
Year II:	22 Sep 1793	Year IX:	22 Sep 1800
Year III:	22 Sep 1794	Year X:	22 Sep 1801
Year IV:	22 Sep 1795	Year XI:	22 Sep 1802
Year V:	22 Sep 1796	Year XII:	22 Sep 1803
Year VI:	22 Sep 1797	Year XIII:	22 Sep 1804
Year VII:	22 Sep 1798	Year XIV:	22 Sep 1805

day of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the French Republic, *le jour de Génie*. The sixth year of the French Republic started 30 Fructidor, 22 September 1797, and ended 1 Vendémiaire, 16 September 1798. Thus the five added complementary days added at the end of year VI are 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 September. Because the letter dates from the second complementary day, its correct date is 18 September 1798.

The tariff of 9 French sols, noted on the face and payable upon arrival in Amiens, conforms to the postal laws of 1796. The letter originated in Division B of the French troops stationed in the newly created Batavian Republic and received the distinctive **DON B. HOLLANDE TROUPES FOISES** departure marking.

The main obstacle to general acceptance was

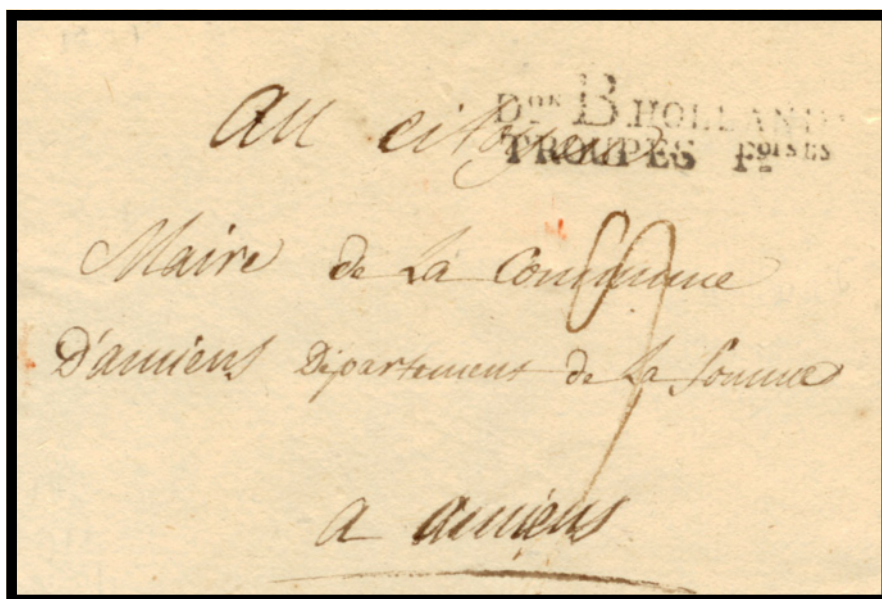


Figure 3. Letter from Utrecht to Amiens, dated 2eme jour complémentaire l’an 6eme, the second complimentary day of the sixth year of the Republic, 18 September 1798.

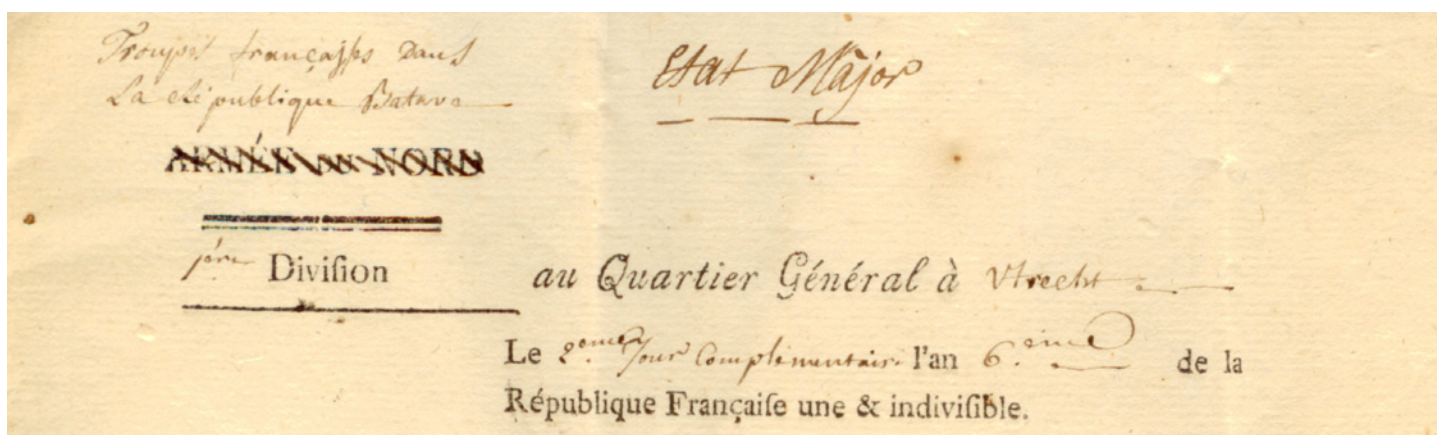


Figure 4. Heading of the letter in Figure 3.

the fact that the new system of a ten day week called for the *decadi*, a day of rest, after nine workdays which compared quite unfavorably with the Gregorian calendar which had the day of rest, the Sunday, after six workdays. Governmental organizations were obligated to use the new calendar although the postal authorities are known to have maintained both calendars for the convenience of their customers. Because of their unpopularity, *décades* were abandoned in April 1802 (Floréal an X) before Napoleon discontinued the entire experiment on 31 December 1805.

Another test awaited the French Postal Services when countless French towns and villages had their old names changed into ones that were more acceptable to the new order, again in an effort to remove all references to the aforementioned *ancien régime* especially to king, aristocracy, the Catholic church and its saints. Saint-Étienne was now Armes-Commune, letters to Havre de Grâce would henceforth go to Havre-Marat while Ville-Dieu became La Carmagnole and Pont-l'Évêque would now be Pont-Libre; the offending words were, respectively, saint, grace, God and bishop.

Town names with references to the ruling class were eliminated. Bourg-la-Reine (queen) became Bourg-Égalité, Brie-Comte-Robert (count) was now known as Brie-Libre. Mont-Dauphin referred to the eldest son of the king of France and was changed to Mont-Lion while Mont-Louis alluded to the king himself and became Mont-de-la-Liberté. Numerous town names with *roi* (king) were obvious targets: Nogent-le-Roi and Bucy-le-Roi became Nogent-la-Haute-

Marne and Bucy-la-République. Even towns with German names like Koenigsberg (the king's mountain) were targeted. It became Mont-Libre et Sarreinsberg.

As a general rule these changes followed the "wishes" of representatives of these towns and villages expressed at the National Convention, but in some cases, they were imposed as a reprisal by revolutionary troops. Such as was the case in Toulon, which was renamed Port de La-Montagne after it was conquered following a siege by the young captain Napoleon Bonaparte.

Bar-le-Duc, a community on the (River) *Meuse* in *Lorraine* had its name changed to Bar-sur-Ornin, per decree of the National Convention on 9 October 1792 (Fig. 5). In an announcement dated 11 March 1793, the second year of the Republic, the *Administrateurs du Directoire des Postes* listed the name change once again in addition to dozens of others, but this time the town's name is spelled Bar-sur-Ornain. Before the revolution, Bar-le-Duc was a center for many religious establishments, which might have been the reason it was targeted for the name change to Bar-sur-Ornain.<sup>9</sup> The offending name in this case was the word "duc," duke.

Fig. 6 shows a letter from the author's collection to Bar-Sur-Ornain dated 8 May 1804. It carries a red **DON D. HOLLANDE TROUPES FOISES** strike from the French D Division, stationed in Utrecht from 1801 to 1804. Mail to France was carried to the first French post office en route free of charge and postage was charged from there to destination. Per Postal



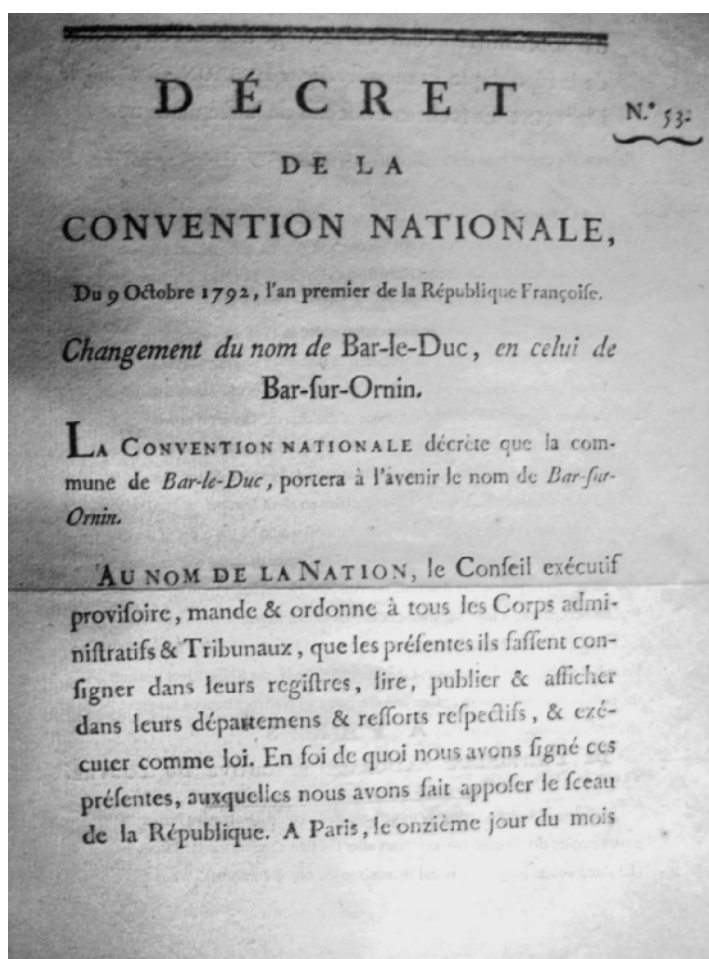


Figure 5. Decree from the National Convention announcing the name change from Bar-le-Duc to Bar-sur-Ornin(a)in.

Law of 1802, 5 *décimes* was charged on letters up to 6 grams, traveling 300 to 400 km from the French post office in Antwerp.

The return to pre-revolutionary names appears to have occurred gradually, starting in 1795, and Bar-le-Duc did so on 15 July 1815. Interestingly, the name Bar-sur-Ornain reappears briefly in 1848 after the end of the monarchy and the return of the republic. In 1850 the town requested that the name become permanent, but the government rejected the plea.<sup>10</sup>

The Republican revolutionary calendar, the altered town names, and such other changes as the designation from monsieur into citoyen (citizen) turned out to be a passing phase. One other change proved most successful, however, the introduction of the “rational” metric system

which is now used almost universally except, that is, for a few notable holdouts.

The postal service adopted the metric system on 23 September 1800. From then on, taxation on letters took place in *décimes* instead of sous, weights were expressed in grams (grammes) rather than being divided into ounces. The franc had already replaced the livre or pound in 1796. Another lasting remnant of the revolutionary era was the introduction of numbers for the individual departments of France and its conquered territories, the current day postal codes.

### Endnotes

1. It included people closely associated with the countless executions such as Robespierre, leading to the expression that “the revolution devours its own children.”
2. “Old Regime” refers to the complicated structure of government in France, political as well as social, during the three centuries that ended with the execution of Louis XVI on September 21, 1793.
3. The Gregorian calendar was decreed by Pope Gregory XIII, after whom it was named, on February 24, 1582, by papal bull. It replaced the Julian calendar.
4. Charles-Gilbert Romme was born in Riom, France, where he received an education in medicine and mathematics. After spending five years in Paris, he went to Russia to become the tutor of Paul Stroganoff but returned to Paris in 1788 to enter political life. Elected to the National Convention on September 6, 1792, he voted in favor of the death sentence for Louis XVI. During his tenure in the National Convention, Romme served on the Committee of Public Edu-

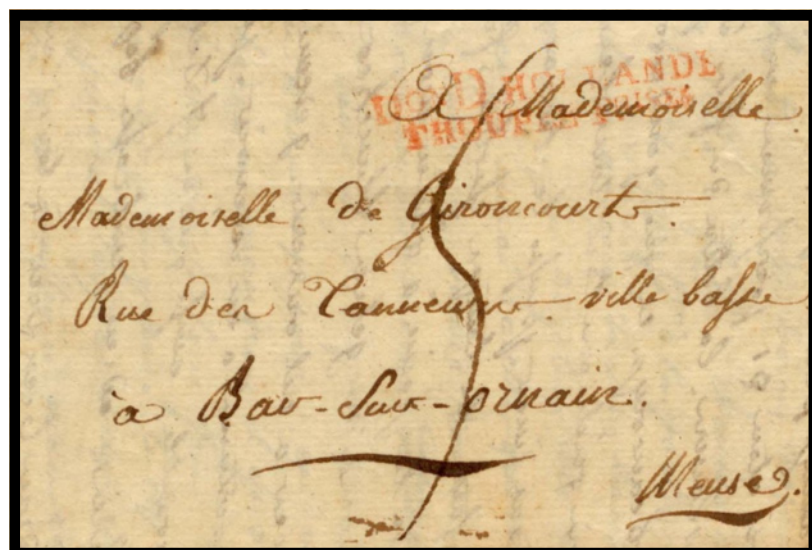


Figure 6. Utrecht to Bar-sur-Ornain, 18 Floréal an 12 (8 May 1804).

cation to which he presented his now famous calendar on September 17, 1793. On June 17, 1795, Romme was sentenced to the guillotine because of his involvement with an unsuccessful revolt but died after having repeatedly stabbed himself while leaving the courtroom.

5. One of the terms in the so-called Concordat, which Napoleon negotiated with the Pope in 1801, was that France was to return to the Gregorian calendar. Yet, Napoleon did not order the change until September 11, 1805 (to take effect January 1, 1806), by which time he had annexed the Papal States and had been excommunicated by Pius VII, who was subsequently jailed.
6. Paper money in use from 1789 to 1797.
7. On many French calendars Fervidor was used instead of Messidor during the second year of the Republic (September 22, 1793 – September 21, 1794).
8. Also called sansculottides (days of the poor).
9. An effort to change the name of 'sHertogenbosch, Dutch equivalent of Bois-le-Duc, (the Duke's Woods), to "Brutusstad" (town of Brutus) came to naught.
10. A return to the revolutionary calendar also took place during the Commune de Paris, the short-lived government that ruled Paris for about ten weeks in 1871.

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With appreciation to Robert Abensur for providing relevant decrees and circulars.

## CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2009

**Total Membership as of 1 January 2008..... 372**

New Members .....	23
Members Reinstated .....	0
Resignations Received .....	12
Members Deceased .....	1
Members Dropped 2009 .....	13
Net Membership Gain (Loss) for 2009 .....	(3)

**Total Membership as of 1 January 2010 ..... 369**

# Final Nominations for FCPS Officers

The final nominations for FCPS officers are:

President: Kenneth R. Nilsestuen (OH)  
 Vice President: Dr. Norval Rasmussen (WV)  
 Treasurer: Jeff Ward (CA)  
 Corresponding Secretary: Joel Bromberg (NY)  
 Recording Secretary: Dr. Edward Grabowski (NJ)  
 Director: Stephen T. Tucker (NV)  
 Director: Ralph DeBoard (OK)

The ballot for the election will appear in the July 2010 FCP, and results will be announced in the October 2010 FCP.

## Show Reports

### CHICAGOPEX 2009

Chicago, November 2009

Gold medals to **Larry Gardner** and **Paul Larsen**. Vermeil to Michael Bass. Literature Gold to **Steven C. Walske** (with Scott R. Trepel).

### COLOPEX 2010

Columbus, OH, February 2010

Gold medals to **Eliot Landau** for his "Classic France: Postal History of the Ceres and Napoleon Issues of 1849-75," which also won the APS pre-1900 Medal of Excellence, and **Al Kugel** who also won the Grand for his Bosnia exhibit. **Al Kugel** also received a Gold for a one-frame exhibit.

### AMERISTAMP EXPO 2010

Riverside, CA February 2010

**Eliot Landau** competed in the one-frame *Champion of Champions* competition. Members **Steve Tucker** and **Eliot Landau** competed for the Most Popular prize. In the open competition, **Al Kugel** won a Reserve Grand award for one exhibit, and a Silver for another.. Other Gold medals went to **Larry Gardner** and **Dave Herendeen**.

## Covers from Nowhere to Nowhere

David L. Herendeen (FCPS 2532)

The cover shown was mailed in September 1904 from St. John's on the British Caribbean colony of Antigua to Pointe-à-Pitre on the French colonial island of Guadeloupe. The two islands are separated by about 100 miles. As we saw here in an earlier article (Freeland and Herendeen, *FCP*, Vol. 63, No. 3, 2009, pp. 66-69), neither the French nor British packets regularly called on Antigua.

As with many Caribbean islands, Antigua was first visited by Columbus in 1498, with the first settlers arriving in 1632. The island was actually invaded by the French and held during 1666-1667. St. John's has been the administrative center of the island since the island was colonized, although English Harbour, established in 1725 as a naval dockyard, was very important to the British navy. Antigua was part of the Leeward Islands from 1890 until 1903 when the island resumed issuing its own stamps. Even today, St. John's has a population of less than 25,000. One can only speculate as to the number of literate residents in 1904!

Guadeloupe was also first visited by Columbus in 1493. The French took possession in 1635,

and colonization began in 1674. The island was taken by the British a number of times until it became French for good in 1816. Pointe-à-Pitre, while not the capital, has been the major town on the island. It was destroyed by fire (1780) and earthquake (1843). The 1999 population of the commune, or city center, was about 20,000.

The cover is franked with 1d domestic postage rather than the 2½d required for an "international" letter. It was thus 1½d short paid. This was equivalent to 15 centimes which, when doubled, results in 30 centimes postage due. This fine was paid with the 30 centime general issue postage due of 1893. The letter was probably carried by the West Indies Inter-Island Service of the Royal Mail Steam Packet. This line's fortnightly sailings followed the route Bridgetown - St Lucia - Martinique - Dominica - Guadeloupe - Montserrat - Antigua - (Nevis) - St Kitts - St Thomas - (San Juan) - (Puerto Rico) and back from 1887 to 1904. (see Rego, M., *Steamship Lines to the Caribbean Vol. 1*, The British West Indies Study Circle, UK (Printed by BWISC), 2005.)





# November is Coming! – Unusual Items From Madagascar & Dependencies

By Edward Grabowski (FCPS 1469)

I had promised our Editor and Exhibits Chair that I would have a totally revised Madagascar & Dependencies Group Type exhibit ready for the France & Colonies section of the CHICAGOPEX Show this November. I started working on it last December, and am pleased to note that it is now complete. It did a trial run at my local Westfield Stamp Show in early March, and the exhibit will receive its first national exposure at the NOJEX Show in New Jersey this May. Two of the covers in the exhibit are particularly unusual, and I believe worthy of comment in the *FCP*.

The first is a registered parcel tag from Tamatave, Madagascar posted 3 February 1915. At ROMPEX last year, Judge Elliott Landau commented to me that it would be nice to have a parcel tag or two in my Indochina exhibit. I noted that these were typically held by the French area post offices upon delivery of the parcels, and very few had made it out into the open market. In thirty years of collecting the Group Type, I had never seen one from the Indochina area. Indeed, in my entire collection of more than 2400 Group Type covers from all of the colonies, I have but three parcel tags: two from Madagascar and one from French Guinea.

Curiously, all three are registered. The most unusual of the three is that from Tamatave, noted above, and it is franked at 1F35c. Assuming the standard 25c for registration this leaves 1F10c for the parcel charges. Unfortunately, I do not have the parcel rate tables to ascertain what weight level this rate corre-



Figure 1. Front of parcel tag from Tamatave in 1915.

sponded to. But from the little that I have seen, these rates were quite modest, and served the public quite well. The address side of the tag is

shown in Fig. 1. The addressee was in Saint Pierre, Reunion. It bears a strip of five of the 05/15 1912 overprint on an Anjouan Group Type stamp prepaying the first 25c of the overall rate. US dealers often ask a premium for covers from Madagascar proper bearing stamps from the dependencies (i.e. Comoro Islands in this case). What they do not realize is that in 1911 all of these entities became part of Madagascar & Dependencies, and the Group Type stamps were provided to the various offices as needed without regard to the names of the entities printed on the stamps. So rather than being something unusual, this is a common observation. Indeed use of Group Type stamps from various different entities on a given cover is also common from this period.

The reverse of the tag is by far the more interesting side (Fig. 2). It bears a block of eighteen of the same 05/15 Anjouan stamp plus a 20c Zébu issue of Madagascar to complete the





Figure 2: Reverse of the parcel tag showing the overprint varieties created by the breaking of the plate holding the clichés for the individual overprints.

franking. During the printing of the overprint, the frame holding the type for the overprint suffered a major fault and started to break apart. A fault line can be traced across the plate, and at least eight varieties of the overprint were created. The most spectacular are the two stamps where the **05** portion of the

overprint has been split into two sections. It is unusual that this flaw was not detected during the printing process in Paris and the sheet destroyed, and even more unusual that it was used in Tamatave, apparently with no concern about the problems with the printing. With no flaw this would be a scarce item worthy of special note in any Group Type or Madagascar collection just based on the unusual rate and franking. With the flaw, it becomes a

most unusual item, and it is among the best items in the collection.

The second item which I wish to note is from Grand Comoro, one of the four Comoro Islands (Fig. 3). It is an envelope that was posted at the 15c French Community rate to Paris on 18



Figure 3: Front of the Grand Comoro shipwreck cover. Staining is due to a sheet of violet paper that was inserted into the sealed envelope to prevent the viewing of its contents.



Figure 4: Reverse of the shipwreck cover showing the special cachet created to inform those handling and receiving the letter the reason for its damaged state.

January 1905 employing the 15c blue Group Type stamp of Grand Comoro. Enroute the letter was forwarded to Cannes. The envelope has a washed-out violet shading across its entire surface and some general wear across its lower side. Overall, it doesn't seem to have the quality necessary for inclusion in an exhibit. However, a look at the reverse of the envelope suggests otherwise. It bears five handstamps.

The first is a blue handstamp: **BOBONI/18 JANV 1905**. I am uncertain as to what this is. A Google search shows Boboni to be a region in the area of the volcano located in the center of Grand Comoro. However, I think that this cachet is from the merchant firm that originated this letter. The second is the octagonal datestamp of the Reunion-Marseille Line U French Packet which called at Mayotte to the south-east on 26 January. The third and fourth handstamps are the datestamps of Paris and Cannes showing the arrival of the letter in France and its transfer to its final destination. It is the last three-line handstamp that is the most interesting:

**Lettre parvenue en mauvais état  
Naufrage d'un bouter de la  
GRAND COMORE**

(Letter received in poor condition — Shipwreck of a vessel from — Grand Comoro). In order to get from Moroni, the principal village and port of Grand Comoro, to the French Packet connection at Mayotte, letters had to travel by local sailing vessel amongst the islands. Apparently the vessel that this letter traveled on met with an accident, and the letter (and ship?) were submerged in the water. This handstamp was created at Mayotte or on the French Packet, and applied to the letters that were damaged in the wreck of the local sailing vessel coming from Grand Comoro. How rare are Group Type wreck covers? I have seen a few from the crash and burning of a postal vehicle in Guadeloupe, and this one from Grand Comoro. I would be interested in learning of others.

Both of these unusual covers bring new elements and add a bit of interest to the overall Madagascar Group Type collection. They highlight one of the aspects that makes collecting Group Type postal history so exciting — the discovery of the unexpected. So what is next for me and the Group Type? I am hoping to develop a exhibit on Senegal, French Sudan and Senegambia & Niger — possibly it too will be ready for Chicago.



## ***President's Letter***

Well, friends, it has been an interesting quarter for me, not much of it related to philately. So read on only if you want a story, not my usual "where we are headed" remarks.

I am one of the lucky ones still working in this economy. In late December my employer assigned me to an engagement in Wichita, KS, a long way from my Akron home. It was supposed to be a couple of weeks in Wichita and then mostly back at home. As of today we are expecting the Wichita part to end on May 1. Just to spice things up a little, my 95-year old mother, a life-long resident of Minneapolis, suffered a setback that required my Seattle-based sister and me to spend two weeks in Minneapolis starting the day after Christmas. So I went from a quiet family holiday celebration (and ten days of expected vacation) to two weeks in frigid Minnesota, followed by four months in Wichita.

None of this is reason for complaint. My mother is now in assisted living in Akron. My client is a delight and the project has been interesting. My client even let me take a week off in March to be at the Garfield-Perry March Party. That also meant I had several days at home all in a row, which my wife and I both appreciated very much.

Let's just say I hope the next time I write I will be paying more attention to philately and spending more nights in my own bed instead of in a hotel.

I hope you're having a great 2010. The plans continue for our meeting in Chicago, where we are expecting to see French Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian postal history all together for the first time ever (at least in the U.S.). Plan to be there!

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**Help the FCP  
write an article today!**

**?? Need Help ??  
Don't hesitate to contact  
the editor at  
FCPEditor@aol.com**

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## ***Now is the Time to Apply for Chicagopex***

*David L. Herendeen, Editor*

As noted in our President's column, the first quarter of each year is often a time of hectic activity for everyone, often culminated in the filing of our taxes. With luck, I hope to get mine in on time!

### ***Digitization Project***

The digitization project is in full swing, and I am currently reviewing the final design specifications both for the indexing features and the new web site. I expect this to be in place by the time the next *FCP* appears.

### ***Guest Authors***

You will note two new authors in this issue. The first is Dr. Yamil Kouri. Yamil is a specialist in Cuban philately, and this wonderful article is based on his collection of items carried by the *Ligne M* French packet. The second is Kees Adema. Kees advertised his new book, *Netherlands Mail in Times of Turmoil, Volume 1 1568-1795*, in our last issue. He is the recipient of an APS Luff award for research and has written many articles that concern early French postal history because of the close ties between the Netherlands and France. I chose to reprint this article, which originally appeared in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, because of its description of the hilarious machinations of trying to change to the revolutionary calendar. bureaucracy run amok!

### ***The Big Show***

Plans for the annual meeting in Chicago are in full swing. There are going to be some amazing surprises having to do with exhibits and speakers. These will be described in the next issue.

For those interested in exhibiting, now is the time to apply. See page 39 for the Chicagopex web site. Please download the application and send it to them today! Exhibits are accepted on a first-come first-served basis. If we want our wonderful showing of France and Colonies material, it is up to us to apply. Thanks.

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## We Get Letters

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I read Stephen Tucker's article on The First Issues of *Afrique Occidentale Française* (FCP, No. 298, pp.90-95) with considerable interest because this is a subject which has occupied me for many years now.

I am quite sure that Stephen is right in saying that these provisional stamps, listed in French catalogues under Sénégal and Mauritania, are indeed the first stamps of French West Africa. I demonstrated that in an article published in FCP for April 2002 - very briefly, they were the logical consequence of the 1941 decision of Marshal Petain's Vichy government to create a unified postal System for the whole of the Federation of French West Africa, which was followed in 1943, equally logically, by the formal authorization of the use of the stamps of any one colony within the Federation in any of the others. There was also a chronic shortage of stamps in the Federation, and the overprinting of large stocks of obsolescent stamps no longer corresponding with any postal tariff was an obvious solution of the problem.

On Stephen's point about use prior to the catalogue date of 1944, there were in fact two separate issues. The first, on 65c stamps of Sénégal and Mauritania, was authorized on 24 June 1943. Authorization of the second, on 2c, 15c and 90c stamps of Senegal and the solitary 90c stamp of Mauritania, followed on 5 July 1944.

Copies of the FCP for April 2002 are hopefully still available, and I believe that Stephen and other interested collectors will find my article very helpful.

I would just make one comment on Stephen's article. He illustrates (Figure 5) a France *Combattante* souvenir clearly postmarked 11 November 1943. This was a significant date, the 25th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the First World War in 1918 and the probable reason for this fund-raising effort.

**Bill Mitchell (FCPS 715)**  
London, England

*We thank Mr. Mitchell for his correspondence. Indeed, Bill's article, "French West Africa—The First (Provisional) Issue of 1943-1944," FCP,*

*Vol. 58, No. 2, April, 2002, pp. 35-38, which was, in fact, a revised version Bill's earlier article which appeared in the Journal of our sister society, the FCPS of Great Britain, in 2001. Steve's article did revisit this old ground, adding many more examples of usage. Bill's article included additional documentary citations for the issuance of these stamps. The editor accepts responsibility for repeating information. Once our new digitization project has been completed, it will be simple to check for possibly duplicated articles. This will, I hope, avoid such problems in the future.*

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Permit me an observation:

All societies complain that they need to recruit new members. IMHO, what they fail to appreciate is that older and accomplished collectors are probably already members. So, it is the newer — not the same as younger — collectors that societies need to appeal to in terms of journal articles/publications, at least in some token way.

I say this because society pubs often seem geared to the older and advanced collectors rather than newer collectors seeking to learn about a new area or topic. The Germany Philatelic Society seems to understand this and has a column aimed at newer/amateur collectors in the GPS magazine.

Some societies, e.g. the Czechs and the Ukrainians, even publish short introductory books about collecting their areas.

Perhaps the FCPS might think about this. Perhaps a review article introducing the current state of knowledge regarding railway cancels would be an example. Maybe an essay to two about collecting some area of pre-1940 French Africa, like the Sub-Saharan areas one sees marked on early 20th century maps of Africa as Military Districts/Territories. What was that stuff all about?

This kind of an article might be more beneficial than an article about some rare perforation or plate variety.

I ask this because I've only been in the hobby for about four years. I am trying to find an area or topic or two that I might focus my collecting



efforts on. I can't collect the world.

A local collector has a small collection/accumulation of pre-WW II French railway cancels that he is willing to sell. This might form the core of something that I could continue to develop, although I'm not sure how or in what manner or in what direction. I tend to find those flower-petal like crenulated round cancels appealing.

I also have an interest in pre-WW II Madagascar and Grande Comore. I also like the French issues from about 1876 to the 1920s, at least up to the Pasture issues.

I don't know how long you've been collecting or why you collect France, but what advice would you give to a new collector who was looking for an area or two of France to collect that also would not require selling one's first child?

Also, from what I've seen the actual collection of stamps themselves seems to be yielding to the collection of covers, so I don't know what that means in the long run. Anyway, let me know if you find any introductory articles on collecting these railway cancels.

**Carl Barna (FCPS 3356)**

*Carl raises some important points. However, we can only publish what members choose to contribute. Perhaps someone would consider one or more articles that address some of these issues.*

I really liked your fine article in the January 2010 (FCP, No. 299, pp.16-19) about deconstructing the catalogue numbers. This is exactly the approach I am going to take for my presentation in Chicago, so your article clinches it for me!

Two small observations. Neither detracts from your analysis and observations. First, the dates you quote for rate changes are for France, **not** A.O.F. The Study Group for Air-mail Rates in French Colonies to 1945, under the leadership of **Bob Picirilli**, has gathered information from the various *journaux officiels* and other sources. In almost every case, the effective date of a rate change in a colony or other overseas territory was **DIFFERENT** from the effective date in France. So, for a period of time, in some cases up to four months

(observed for a rate change in Cameroun), one rate in one direction, another rate in the other direction. For A.O.F., the rate changes were as follows: *[Marty was kind enough to provide all of the information. Rather than repeating it here, I'll refer readers to Bob Picirilli's forthcoming work.]*

All this information will be contained in the Study Group's book, the layout of which has now begun. Publication will be in late 2010 or 2011. One other observation — you refer to the cover in Figure 2 — Dakar to Lyon, France — as foreign. The tariff was Franco-colonial, the same as domestic, so not foreign. Keep up the good work!

**Marty Bratzel (FCPS 2394)**  
Windsor, ON, Canada

*The editor thanks Marty for his comments. I am sure we will all be pleased to meet Marty in Chicago in November. Bob's book, parts of which I have seen, and which I believe is now in production, will be a must addition to any FCPS member interested in African colonies and postal history. Marty's comment relative to the Figure 2 cover is, of course, correct.*

Received your latest issue yesterday and read your paper on *Deconstructing Catalogue Numbering* (FCP, No. 299, pp.16-19) with interest. You might care to note that the major catalogue for GB lists the Senegal Marché Indigène design as follows:

Mar 1914: 64-80  
Apr 1915-1918: 89-90  
1 Jan 1922: 91-97  
Sep 1922: 99-101  
22 Jun 1925-1933: 113-132

Of interest Bob Stone wrote in *Essay-Proof Journal* No 235 pp 111- 117; on this design. Surprisingly when I spoke to Barbara Mueller after she signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the Congress last year, she appeared not to remember Bob, but then the years have passed!

**Colin Sprong (FCPS 1605)**  
West Sussex, England

*These (SG?) listings also appear too coarse.*

# Frédéric Gadmer: *Photographer Extraordinaire*

M.P. Bratzel, Jr. (FCPS 2394)

Frédéric Gadmer, during 1916-17 photographically documented France's newly acquired territory of Cameroun. Gadmer's approximately **one thousand** pictures are in the photographic archives of the French Ministry of Culture and can be accessed through the Internet<sup>1</sup>. Only a handful of these relate to the PTT.

Fig. 1 depicts customers at the windows inside the post office at Douala, Cameroun. This photo was taken on 27 December 1916. The cover in Fig. 2 was posted on 31 December 1916, just four days after the photo was taken.

Another photo, Fig. 3, taken on 5 January 1917 shows mail bags on the dock at Douala. It is entitled *Les sacs du courrier de France*. Note that what appears to be at least 10 sacks is certainly a fair amount of mail. The ship in the background is the *Margaret Elisabeth*.

Finally, Fig. 4, entitled *Arrivée d'un courrier de l'Est*, was taken on 3 October 1917. The structure shown is the postal agency at Akonolinga, Cameroun. The French opened a postal agency at Akonolinga on 20 February 1917. It was temporarily closed between 21 May and 24 June of that year, but has been in continuous

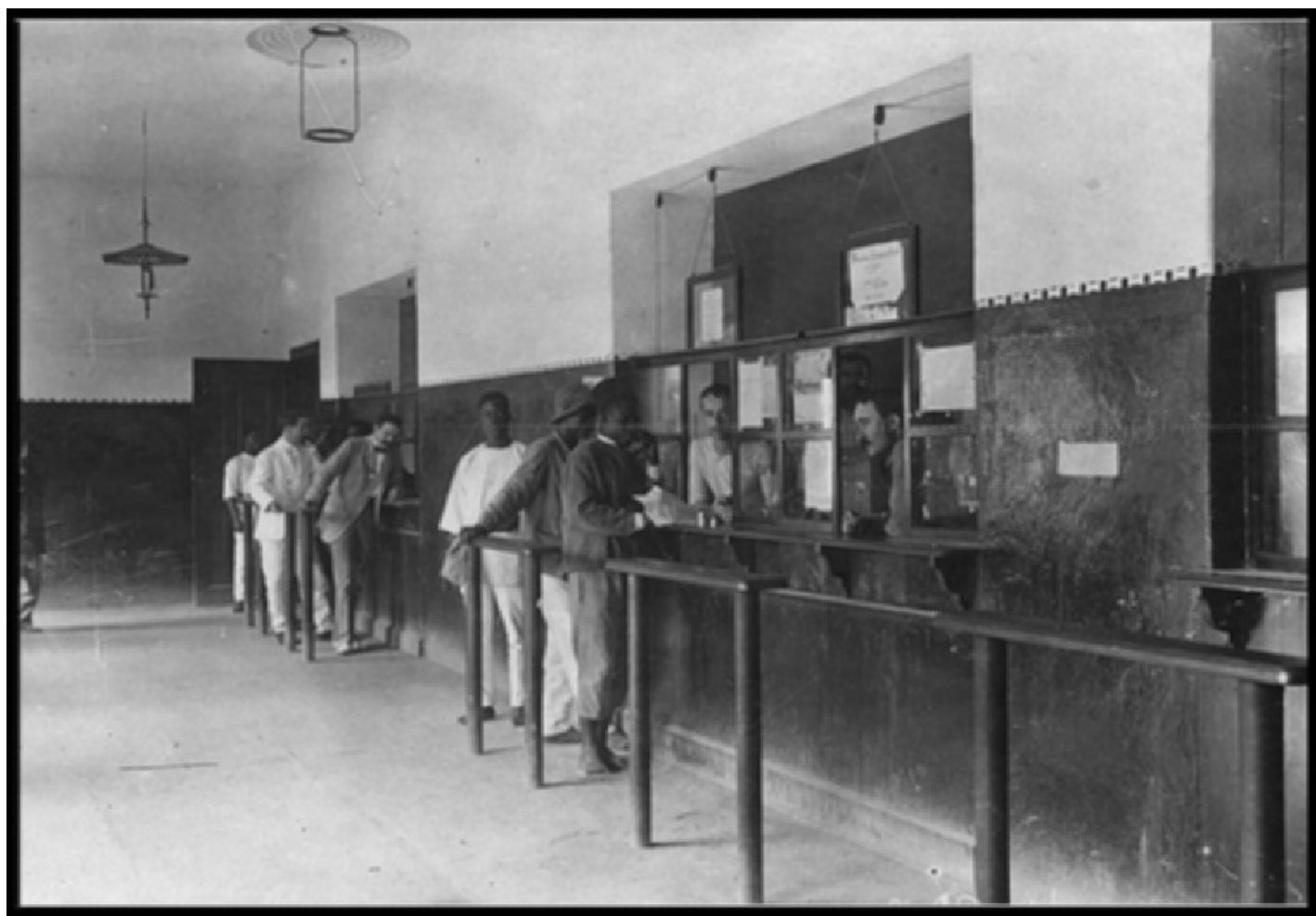


Figure 1. The postal window, Douala, Cameroun, 27 December 1916.





*Figure 3. Les sacs du courrier de France*



*Figure 4. Arrivée d'un courrier de l'Est.*

operation since, albeit in more modern buildings. The postal agency was upgraded to a post office on 1 December 1947.<sup>1</sup> The earliest postmark recorded thus far from Akonolinga is 12 January 1920 (Fig. 5).

### Acknowledgement

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### Reference

1. Bratzel, M.P. Jr., H. Kraja, and R.J. Maddocks. *Les oblitérations du Cameroun 1914-1960*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 1990. 83 pages. ISBN 0-9694026-0-0.

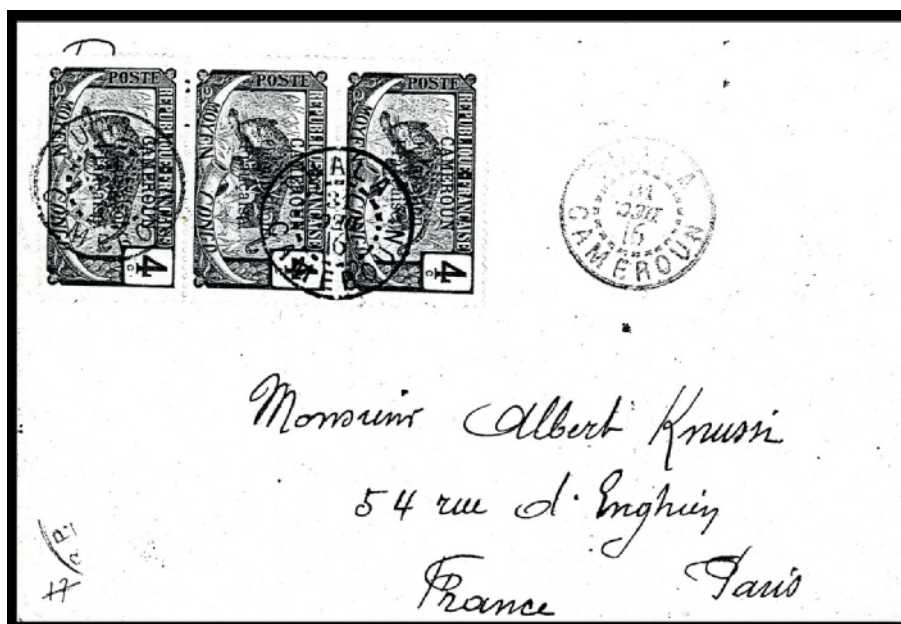


Figure 2. Letter mailed only four days after Fig. 1 photo was taken.

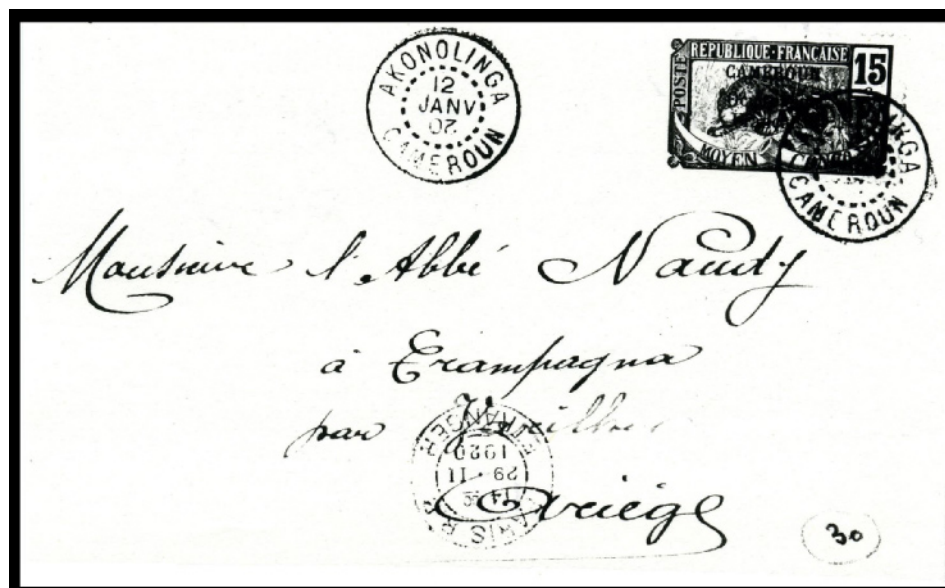


Figure 5. Earliest recorded postmark from Akonolinga.



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## Book Review

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*Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volume 2*, by Richard F. Winter, The American Philatelic Society 2009, 8½x11 inches, 574 + xxvi pages + CD-ROM, hardbound, available from The American Philatelic Society, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823 at \$76 for APS members, or \$95 for non-APS members + \$5 domestic shipping by parcel post, or \$10 shipping by priority mail. Contact the APS for foreign shipping options.

**Richard Winter** is regarded as the leading student of U.S. transatlantic mails, and he has written another formidable treatise on the subject that is destined to become the standard “bible” for present day collectors, and for a generation of enthusiasts to come. While *Volume 1* of Winter’s book dealt exclusively with mails exchanged under the first four postal conventions that the United States entered into with foreign postal administrations (Bremen, Great Britain, Prussia, and France), the present *Volume 2* deals with the five subsequent postal conventions with Hamburg, Belgium, the Netherlands, the North German Union, and Switzerland. Presumably future volumes will deal with the later postal conventions that the United States concluded prior to the formation of the General Postal Union. *Volume 2* is richly illustrated, containing hundreds of images of covers, as well as tracings of both manuscript and handstamp postal markings. While the covers within the book are shown in black and white, an accompanying CD contains scanned images of the postal history items in full color, with enough resolution to allow detailed enlargement. Another great aspect of this book is that it not only contains information on ordinary transatlantic letters, but that the author discusses and illustrates (when available) less often encountered examples of Registered mail, returned letters, and printed matter.

The introduction section of *Volume 2* gives a brief discussion of the methods used to identify and evaluate the characteristics of transatlantic mail. Those readers unfamiliar with the subject, however, should also study Chapter 1 of *Volume 1*, wherein Winter provides additional illustrated examples of how to analyze a particular letter and how make use of the visi-

ble postal markings to determine which postal organizations were involved in transporting the letter from its origin to its destination. The information and guidelines in these sections should be required reading for all postal historians, whether or not they are collectors of transatlantic mail.

The pagination, Chapter headings, and numerical listings of Tables and Figures in *Volume 2* are a continuation of those found in *Volume 1*. As a result, the *Volume 2* section on Hamburg Mail actually begins with Chapter 6, and provides a discussion of the pre-treaty mails, showing numerous examples of letters and postal markings that trace the development of the U.S.-Hamburg Convention up to 1868, when the Hamburg mails were incorporated in to the U.S.-North German Union Convention. The various rates for ordinary and transit mails, the accounting structure (credits and debits), and the complexity of the postal rate markings associated with the many German currencies circulating at that time, are clearly explained.

Chapter 7 is devoted to the Belgian mails, and begins with a discussion of pre-convention letters exchanged via the United Kingdom, via France, or by direct service to Belgium via non-contract and contract vessels. Descriptions and illustrations of the various types of mail exchanged under the 1859, 1867, 1870, and 1873 Conventions are shown, and again, the postal rates and accounting structure (credits and debits) are clearly explained. Those strictly interested in French postal history will find examples of many intriguing covers, including letters carried by the early Hérout and de Handel steamships, as well as mails exchanged with Belgium under the 1857 U.S.-French Convention.

A discussion of the mails exchanged between the United States and the Netherlands is contained in Chapter 8. Again, a discussion of pre-convention letters deals with those sent either directly to Holland, or those sent via France or the United Kingdom. The first U.S.-Dutch Convention went into effect on 1 January 1868, but many covers exchanged with the Netherlands under the 1857 U.S.-French Convention are illustrated and described prior to that date. Subsequent U.S.-Dutch Conventions of 1870

and 1874 are aptly discussed and many examples of ordinary and Registered letters, returned letters, and printed matter are presented.

Chapters 2 and 4 of *Volume 1* dealt with the mails associated with the U.S.-Bremen and U.S. Prussian Conventions respectively, and as noted above, Chapter 6 of the present Volume discusses the U.S.-Hamburg Convention mails. All of these Treaties were replaced by a Convention between the United States and the North German Union, which first went into effect on 1 January 1868, and was followed by subsequent Convention in 1870 and 1871. These mails are fully discussed in Chapter 9, and although there are few references to French postal history in this Chapter, there are illustrations and descriptions of many interesting covers and postal markings, particularly in those sections dealing with transit mail through the U.S. and/or the North German Union.

In Chapter 10, Winter devotes more than 150 pages to the description of mails exchanged between the United States and Switzerland. Since the first U.S.-Swiss Convention did not go into effect until 1 April 1868, a large portion of the Chapter is dedicated to pre-treaty mails, and the author presents very detailed descriptions of the various rate periods involved. Examples of early mail exchanged via British, American, and French service are illustrated, and the associated postal rates are explained. Later mail exchanged with Switzerland under the U.S. postal Conventions with Bremen, Prussia, France, Hamburg, Belgium, and the North German Union are described in similar detail, with appropriate discussions of the accounting (credits and debits) and associated postal markings prior to the first U.S.-Swiss Convention. Winter illustrates and describes many examples of mail exchanged under the 1868 Convention, as well as similar material from the subsequent Conventions in 1870, and 1872, plus the additional agreement of 1874, which provided for the exchange of postal cards.

Two Appendices provide a listing of the U.S. exchange offices established under each Convention, plus a guide to deciphering manuscript rate markings that are often found on

transatlantic covers. A detailed Bibliography is also included in the book, providing general references for postal regulations, rates, and markings, as well as lists of publications that are specifically related to the individual Chapters. This is followed by a very useful Index, which includes complete subject listings for both Volumes.

*Volume 2 of Understanding Transatlantic Mail* is highly recommended for any postal historian, and should be on the shelf of every serious collector of transatlantic mails. Add this book to your library now, before it is out of print, and be ready to place your order for *Volume 3*, whenever it becomes available.

— Jeffrey Bohn

*Although somewhat longer than the usual review, the editor thinks that Dick Winter's vast knowledge and this fine review by expert Jeff Bohn are well worth the space.*

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Anyone who may know the whereabouts of Mr. Donovan please contact the Corresponding Secretary.

### RESIGNATIONS RECEIVED

Henry Hespenheide III, Eric Hopper, Robert Johnson, Hartley La Duke, John Lindholm, Thomas R. Palfrey Jr., Kevin T. Rowan, Allison D. Shumsky and Florent Tricot

# DAVID C. WRIGLEY

Professional Philatelist  
Postal Historian

Specializing in Postal History of  
Indochina French Colonies Asia

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

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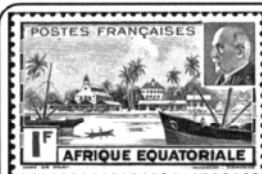
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