

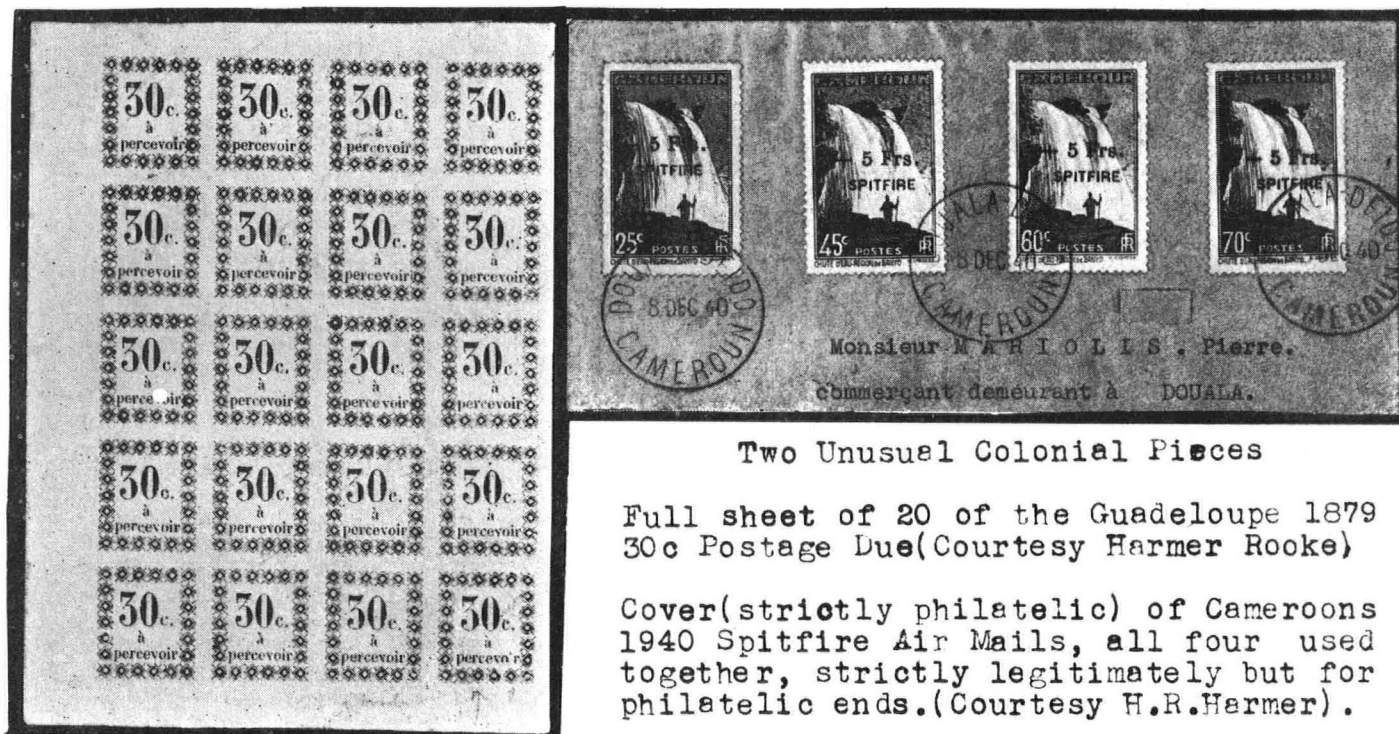
France & Colonies Philatelist



Published bi-monthly by the France and Colonies Group

Secretary: Charles Bretagne, P.O.Box 67, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Editor: Stephen G. Rich, P.O.Box B, Verona, New Jersey



Two Unusual Colonial Pieces

Full sheet of 20 of the Guadeloupe 1879 30c Postage Due (Courtesy Harmer Rooke)

Cover (strictly philatelic) of Cameroons 1940 Spitfire Air Mails, all four used together, strictly legitimately but for philatelic ends. (Courtesy H.R. Harmer).

The Guadeloupe sheet, sold in 1947, was in the early part of the printing, before the variety "c" missing after 30" had appeared by one bit of the loose type dropping out of the form. Minor flaws show on the last two stamps of bottom row.

The Cameroons cover, sold in 1951, is like all covers with this set in full, "done on purpose." 2f 10c actual postage for a local letter is much above the 1940 rate. A similar one was sold in 1947. Both have special cachets; both passed the censor and are so marked; both are large covers. However, as any used copies of any of this series are hard to get, and almost surely represent such usage, these are literally the only sort of use and cover we can find.

The great bulk of these stamps, on which extra 5f was a contribution to help buy Spitfire planes for the Free French army after the Germans took metropolitan France, went into philatelic holding unused. The total quantity was not large.

France

The G.C. Paper Issues

By W. A. PARR

In GIBBONS' STAMP MONTHLY

(Conclusion)

See table, No. 59, page 18

Tints of the G.C. paper. There is an enormous range of tones and tints involved in what are a comparatively few issues, and they proceed from a smooth near-white, almost indistinguishable from the thinner type of white paper used to-day for French stamps, to an intense yellowish-grey or rusty colour which is simplicity itself to recognize. We must not judge our G.C. by tint alone, however. Rigid adherence to this practice leads to an inclination to apply the letters G.C. to any stamp on a cream paper. Many of the Marianne-Gandons of recent years have been so called by persons who should know better. There is, in fact, a coarse look about most of the true G.C. papers which has never been seen since, even during and just after the 1939-45 War when many makeshift papers were again used. This coarse look is especially apparent on the backs of used specimens, for the colour of the gum on mint stamps may help to disguise the G.C. tint.

The usage in France is to arrange the many shades into three groups, as follows:

White: Near white, broken white, pale cream.

Grey: From grey to deep greenish grey (e.g. 30 c. orange with millésime 8).

Yellowish Grey: Yellow, deep yellow or chamois, very deep yellow or "unbleached".

In the above check list, the practice has been adopted of calling these three groups by their initial letters as they do in France, viz.: W, G, and YG. But collectors are recommended to treat these arbitrary divisions into groups of colours as a guide only, and to rely on their eyes to determine differences of shades. If possible, the better plan is to obtain as "controls" mint marginal stamps with the letters G.C. in the margin. These letters appear above stamp No. 5 and below stamp No. 45 in the case of stamps of small format, and above stamp No. 4 and below stamp No. 74 for stamps of the Merson type. The check list at the top of this page relates the millésimes

to the W, G, and YG groupings to the best of the author's ability, but he has G.C. marginal copies with the same millésime which vary among themselves to the slightest degree. Only the finest and most advanced colour photography could illustrate such differences.

Other varieties. Let us deal with varieties other than colour of paper which have so far manifested themselves upon the G.C. stamps.

The letters "G.C." in the margins are normally 9 millimetres in height, but on some sheets of the 2 c., 3 c., and 10 c., the letters are only 8 mm. high, and different in shape. One printing of the 2 c. shows the "G" of 8 mm. paired up with the "C" of 9 mm.

Booklets of the 1906 type containing either 40 stamps of 5 c. or 20 stamps of 10 c. may be found in which all the stamps are on G.C. paper. The same applies to 1910 type booklets with 20 stamps of 15 c.

The 1 f. Merson stamp appears on G.C. paper with the background omitted; a well-known failing on the normal Merson stamps, but rare on these.

In 1926, two sheets of stamps of the ½ c. on 1 c. Blanc were found at Bordeaux with the overprint inverted. In one sheet, furthermore, there was a fold across the lower left-hand corner, so that eight stamps had no overprint on the front, two had an incomplete overprint, and all ten of these were overprinted on the gummed side.

Millésimes. All stamps on G.C. paper belong to the period when the control dates on the sheets were in the form of a figure in the middle gutter of each sheet. This figure was the last one in the number of the year, e.g. 7 equals 1917, 0 equals 1920, etc. The large format or "Merson" stamps had no millésimes. In the following check list, the stamps are arranged in the three columns, W, G, and YG, according to shade of paper, and every known millésime is shown in its appropriate column. The Merson stamps have crosses instead of numbers.

(The End)



France has released a 30 franc stamp to mark the meeting of United Nations in Paris. Courtesy Gimbel's Stamp Department.



FRENCH LEVANT:
Military Air Post 1942

Madame de Sévigné

ANOTHER French woman honored in 1951 'on a 15fr blue, was the Marquise de Sévigné, otherwise Marie de Rabutin-Chantal (1626-1696), a famous letter writer and lady of fashion whose letters to her daughter, Madame de Grignan, "record in faultless French events of daily interest in her life in Paris or at her country seat in Brittany."

Born in Paris and left an orphan at the age of 7, Marie was married in 1644 to Henri, Marquis de Sévigné. He was mortally wounded in a duel over a woman seven years later; and though beautiful at 25, Marie never married again. She died of smallpox. Says an authority:

"In lively narration few writers have excelled her; and in the natural expression of domestic and maternal affection, none. She had an all-observant eye for trifles and the keenest possible appreciation for the ludicrous, together with a hearty relish for all sorts of amusements, pageants and diversions, and a deep though not voluble or over-sensitive sense of the beauties of nature.

"In purely literary criticism she was no mean expert. Her preference for Corneille [A72] over Racine [A187] has much more in it than the fact that the elder poet had been her favorite before the younger be-



Queen of Letter Writers.

gan to write; and her remarks on La Fontaine [A91] and some other authors are both judicious and independent."

--- Scott's
Monthly
Journal.

Obock and Somali Coast
A Comment

Our member, Robert G. Stone, in a letter to your editor, mentions that the evidence for the statement by Mr. Queyroy (No. 57, front page) is rather thin. Says Mr. Stone:

"Only the Dubois issue was used there, and not before 1884--the 1884 dues also. Prior to that, the mail was all ship letters on French packets or war vessels, and presumably franked with French stamps, if any. There were only a couple of Frenchmen there, and the mail small, so that I have never seen such a letter nor a record."

Inquiry of Mr. Queyroy elicited a quotation from the book of Mr. Oswald Durand, quondam director of the Agency of Colonial Stamps, "Les Timbres des Colonies Françaises", to this effect (translation):

"Up to 1891, date at which a decision..... ordered the production of special stamps for each colony..... Obock has used French stamps of the "Emperor not Laureate" type and Ceres imperforate, then the Sage and finally the Commerce."

Mr. Queyroy says: "I hesitated to write this, not having seen any cover with the early stamps of France, but I felt confident that Mr. Durand was right."

Mr. Stone, discussing this, says:

"I prefer to draw conclusions from the fact that Dr. Bouvet, the profound student of French Colonies general issues for 25 years, after examining thousands and thousands of stamps and covers could never find any from Obock before the 1880's --- likewise, great students such as Dillemann, Brun, Dr. Pistre..." (etc.). So Mr. Stone very properly asks a picture of a cover or at least auction record of prominent collection report, before he would give any credence on this usage. Your editor agrees that the burden of proof is on those who accept Mr. Durand's word."

Who will give us a sure case of an Obock use of an Eagle, Ceres Imperforate, or a Sage Imperforate, preferably as a picture? It will be a front page feature, should it come in.

THE NEW SERVICE

(Last use of this name: we shall have a not so outdated name for this section next number.)

Want and exchange notices only; members only; one or two insertions only; no charge. Those who reply will please offer only what is asked.

Wanted: France N1 to N14 used, with "Horse-shoe" type cancellation, and with the Prussian military straight lines boxed. Monica Mellish, 407 West Magnolia St., Centralia, Wash. (Member 290).

Consular covers of France, with corner cards and franked with stamps of the country wanted--from Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State, and Uruguay. Price each item, please. S.G. Rich, Verona, N.J. (Member 2).

Wanted: mint or used: send on approval, or quote price: France, Alsace-Lorraine N8, n9, N10, N11, N13, N14; also the Ionian Islands, Zante overprinted iddue. Monica Mellish, 407 West Magnolia St., Centralia, Wash. (Member 290)

Wanted: Paris start cancellations with Nos. 23, 27, 29, 31, 39. Please offer with price. Col. M.C. Walker, National War College, Fort McNair, Washington 25, D.C. (Member No. 476).

Yes: We Saw Past Secretary Stringham

The many friends of Mrs. Helen Stringham, who served us so ably and long as Secretary of this Group, will be glad to know that life is going well with her. Your Editor had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Stringham and her husband Clarence at the Cenjex stamp show at Asbury Park, N.J. on the last week-end in October.

Home duties are keeping Mrs. Stringham very busy. But she is managing to add an item every now and then to her Madagascar collection. Her interest in the Group is as keen as ever. From Secretary Bretagne, your Editor learns that a letter from Mrs. Stringham now and then comes in with material to be handled, with suggestions on how certain problems were previously handled, or with just philatelic comment.

Helen and Clarence both looked fine when at the Asbury Park show. Evidently semi-rural life the year round at Manasquan, N.J. agrees with them both. (It will be fine if many of us send her Christmas cards.)

French Numeral Cancellation Lists.

In the earlier days of this Group and of the Philatelist, there was a constant call for some list of French numeral cancellations as used prior to the 1870's and into that era. None was readily available. Our member John R. McGee, of Greenbelt, Md., volunteered to produce sheets in succession, working from the well known book by Langlois and Veneziani, to be distributed with successive numbers of this paper. His offer was gladly accepted. Beginning with Vol. 2, No. 6, of Sept.-Oct. 1943, these sheets went out with the Philatelist.

Various circumstances caused difficulty in continuing to produce them, so that sheet No 36 in late 1949 was the last to appear. This took the list of offices, with the large and small numeral cancellation of each, to Neuville-sur-Seone, in alphabetic order.

Meanwhile, several complete lists had been published. Billig's Philatelic Handbook, Vol. 3, published 1943, contained such a list. Kremer published the entire list as a small book, 1946. Portions of the list, such as the high numbers of Offices Abroad, appeared in Minnigerode and Lesgor's book of 1948.

Billig's Vol. 3, long out of print, has been issued in a revised edition, November 1951, with corrections of the typographical errors in the numeral list.

Do the members want the numeral sheets again issued, continuing from the point reached when they were discontinued? Your Editor would like to know. The production of the sheets is an additional task which he handled from the time when Mr. McGee could no longer cut the stencils or get them run. Mr. McGee's facilities to get this work done without cost for us vanished in the period around 1946. The Group paid the cost of stencils and running from then on.

The gradual "fading out" of the sheets was apparently not much noticed. We therefore have a suspicion, that may be confirmed, to the effect that the Kremer book made them no longer needed and in fact a mere duplication of effort.

Your Editor would like to know if enough of the members want the sheets continued, to make the work worth while.

Final Dates Set
for
20th Century France Exhibition, at the
Museum,
and
France & Colonies Group Convention in
Philadelphia

Please see the announcement in No. 59, page
20, about these events.
The dates have finally been set:

Exhibition: May 16 to June 14, 1952
Convention; May 17 and 18, 1952

Alan R. Fernald, President.

Reprint
of Volume 1, No. 1 of the France and
Colonies Philatelist is now available.

On instruction of the Group, Vol. 1, No. 1 of
this paper, was reprinted: an exact photograph
of each page being used as copy for reprinting
by photo-offset. Save for a slight difference
in paper, the reprints are identical with the
originals.

Only 100 copies of No. 1, published in Jan.
1942, dated Nov.-Dec 1941, were made. Files
of this paper are therefore in many cases shy
this number. We have had the smallest number
made that is practicable: the minimum below
which any smaller number costs the same. The
supply is in the Secretary's hands, and is to
be had at \$1.00 per copy, post free. We trust
that enough copies will be wanted so that the
cost of printing will be covered fully.

-----Editor, F. & C. Phil.

Handbook on Alsace-Lorraine in Offing.

Col. W.E. Byrne, Lexington, Va., sends us the
following translation of an announcement which
he received from Mr. Dominique Hornung, Stras-
bourg, France:

In 1937 the Society of Specialists of Alsace
Lorraine stamps (SPAL) published a special cat-
alog of these stamps and their cancellations of
1870-71. This 1937 edition has been out of
print for a long time.

SPAL is to publish at the beginning of 1952
a catalog entitled "Catalogue des Cachets
Alsaciens et Lorrains," covering all the known
postal cancellations used in the present French
départements of Haut-Rhin, Bas-Rhin, and Moselle
on German stamps, in the period January 1st,
1872 to the end of November 1918. Both French
and German names of the offices are given.

A sample page, as well as other information,
may be obtained by writing to Mr. S. Blum, 15 rue
Oberlin, Strasbourg, Bas-Rhin, France. The
price of the catalog is 575 French francs, plus
registered postage.

We thank our member, Col. Byrne, for giving
is this item, of likely interest to some among
us.

French consular covers, franked with stamps
of the country in which the consulate existed,
are choice items always.

Your editor, having been somewhat delayed
in getting the previous number into press, did
not ask the Secretary to prepare a report for
publication in this number. As we now catch
up to normal schedule, and the next number is
planned for as soon after January begins as is
practicable, all secretarial information since
Oct. 1 will appear in that number.

-----Editor, F. & C. Phil.

Catalog Review

Standard Postage Stamp Catalog, 1952 (108th)
Edition, New York, Scott Publications, Inc.,
Sept. and Nov. 1951, 2 volumes.

Of all stamp catalogs now published, Scott's
has been on the market the longest. It was a
contemporary of Moens, far antedates Gibbons',
and still more antedates Yvert's. It has been
a real leader in times past. But in later days
it has lagged far behind the procession. Much
to our regret, this lagging continues into the
present new edition.

As far as France is concerned, unless need
is felt for listing of recent issues, there is
no reason to buy a 1952 Scott if you have the
1951 edition. Nothing is changed save half a
dozen prices. Except for the drastic cut for
France B43, from \$1.25 to 75 cents both unused
and used, no price change is worth notice. The
changes made are raisings by 10 cents of items
previously at 30c or 40c or 50c.

But the stamps chosen for these slight "up"
changes are without exception those on which a
properly informed catalog would have not made
any change, but lowered others of the same set
instead. The change of B43 brings the price
as listed to 60% of the actual current market
at wholesale.

No corrections of mislistings, no changes of
confusing notes, no corrections of color names
that are misleading, have been done on France--
nor on any French colony. The sole good point
is that non-existent Algeria 208A has at long
last vanished.

The "hardening of the arteries" in the fine
old book continues unchanged. To put it very
bluntly, Scott Publications clearly desire to
invite competition. Their book could well
forestall any competitive attempts if it were
adequately edited; but they choose not to do
what is even "self-evident."

Personally, I bemoan this, because from 1896
to 1914 my father had much to do with the work
that kept this book a leader. I dislike seeing
his most abiding memorial destroyed.

-----S.G.R.

Chateaudun Castle

Saved by the French State from
ruin in 1950, this ancient castle
(dating from the Tenth Century) re-
tains its full interior with a large
number of furnishings of contem-
porary date. It is thus one of the
chief ancient monuments of France,
dominating the Val du Loir.

The stamp was designed and en-
graved by Pierre Gandon, and is
printed in sheets of 50 by the State
Printing Works, Paris, perf 13, format
22 x 36 mm. Day of issue was Novem-
ber 25 at the Chateaudun (Eure et
Loire) Post Office—general sale com-
menced on November 27 1950

8 Fr. bistre and brown-violet:
Chateaudun Castle.

