

France & Colonies Philatelist



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'Free French Africa' Semipostal of 1941 Honored de Brazza and Caused a Stir

By BEN HAMILTON

IN November, French Equatorial Africa issued a 15fr airmail and a 10fr postage stamp to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Savorgnan de Brazza, chief 19th century French explorer of Gabon. These are the first F.E.A. stamps picturing de Brazza in 10 years.

The last one created a stir when it appeared in London. It was sold there by the Free French Committee in 1941 though it had not been officially placed on sale in F.E.A. The Committee sold the 3fr semipostal for a shilling a copy to get money to help the Free French soldiers in different parts of the world. At that time, F.E.A. was practically all that made up what General de Gaulle called *Afrique Française Libre*, and this in turn was almost the entire extent of Free French territory.

At first stamp catalogues wanted to ignore this de Brazza semipostal. There were three objections: 1. Only 1fr was for postage, while 2fr was for non-postal purposes. 2. The charge of a shilling exceeded the face value. (What happened to the difference?) 3. The stamp was only available in London and not in the colony. So for some time neither Scott's nor Gibbon's listed the stamp.

I heard rumors that the stamp was placed on sale in F.E.A., but could not verify this.



Released first in London, later in Brazzaville.

A query to Editor Hugh M. Clark of Scott's Catalogue brought the answer that the stamp was not being recognized because of certain "irregularities" in its sale in London by Free French officials.

In January, 1942, Mrs. Hamilton was in Brazzaville en route to the United States on furlough. The first supply of the de Brazza semipostal went on sale at the Brazzaville post office while she was there. Mrs. Hamilton bought some and mailed me a letter with the stamp on it. The letter arrived satisfactorily, postmarked at Brazzaville on Jan. 11. That was the first day of sale in F.E.A.

I showed this cover to Editor Clark. In the meantime he had secured enough evidence to convince him that the stamp should be listed. So it settled down in the catalogue as F.E.A. No. B9, a respectable stamp which is not too well known.

Two Capitals at Stanley Pool

LIKE the 1951 airmail, the 1941 semipostal shows not only Savorgnan de Brazza, but also Stanley Pool, which separates F.E.A. from Belgian Congo. Brazzaville, capital of F.E.A., is on the northern banks of Stanley Pool and Léopoldville, capital of the Congo, lies on the southern banks.

Stanley Pool is really a widening of the Congo River. It is dotted with islands overgrown with verdant tropical vegetation. West of Brazzaville and the Léopoldville suburb of Kinshassa, Stanley Pool becomes a series of rapids that prevent river-boat travel from Brazzaville to the Atlantic. The island shown on No. B9 is the largest and easternmost of those in the Pool.

Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza was born on a ship in Rio de Janeiro harbor in 1852. His parents were Italian. While he was in Paris, shortly after the Franco-Prussian



The 15fr airmail stamp of 1951 also shows the explorer beside Stanley Pool. Engraver Serres omitted the usual accent on the first E of Equatoriale, and the cedilla on the C of Francaise.

Stanley, among others, assumed that the Ogooué, which empties into the Atlantic through the Gabon Estuary at Libreville and is the largest of the Gabonese rivers, had its headwaters near the mighty Congo. De Brazza carefully explored the Ogooué in successive journeys in 1881-1884 and confirmed Stanley's theory. The Ogooué was not directly connected with the Congo, but, with its divers tributaries, made up a part of the so-called Congo Basin.

Stanley a Friendly Rival

THERE was friendly rivalry between de Brazza and Stanley, though the French government saw nothing friendly in it. De Brazza at one point sent a Senegalese sergeant to the banks of Stanley Pool to keep the ambitious Stanley from crossing and surrounding it with Belgian sovereignty. In that move de Brazza saved for France the future site of the capital and nerve center of F.E.A.

De Brazza returned to Paris at the end of the 19th century after serving as the first French high commissioner of French Congo. In 1904 the French had trouble over the practices used in working the native Africans. The government sent de Brazza to Libreville to arbitrate the issues involved. After successful negotiations, de Brazza was on the way home to Paris when he died at Algiers in 1905. He was buried there.

Another feature of the design of No. B9, which is by G. Cretelle, is the vermillion Cross of Lorraine which was used by the French chevaliers in ancient times. This became the official de Gaulle symbol for the Free French movement.

B9 is the only F.E.A. stamp inscribed AFRIQUE FRANCAISE LIBRE. It was issued in sheets of 50 (10x5). There are wide sheet margins on four sides. In the margin below the third stamp in the bottom row is the inscription HARRISON & SONS LTD., LONDON. Above the two upper corner stamps and below the two lower ones are registry marks consisting of a hairline cross in vermillion with a sepia cross superimposed.

The surtax collected from the sale of these stamps in F.E.A. post offices was used, according to the government, to build a monument to de Brazza. Whether the dignified de Brazza monument on the banks of the Congo west of Brazzaville and near General de Gaulle's residence, was built from this surtax cannot be proved definitely. All I know is that when I saw the monument in 1946 it was simple and attractive. I smiled as I looked at it, remembering the furor in 1941 when the Free French sold the stamp for a shilling in London.

"Temporary Toronto Chapter."

During the Capex show, last September, your editor had the pleasure of meeting, for the first time, our member Mr. Louis Lamouroux. We had several sessions on French stamps, on the show floor. As President Frenald of the Group also was at the show, we had to all intents a real chapter meeting.

Mr. Lamouroux, long a Toronto resident, talks like an Englishman rather than a Frenchman, as he lived in London during his school days. But he has French esprit; he loves French stamps. He admits they call him "The Cockney Frenchman."

Our other members who were at Capex did not happen to be on the floor the days that we held the "Temporary Toronto Chapter" gatherings.

Mr. and Mrs.
Louis Lamouroux



Port de La Rochelle Variety.

Our member, Dr. Douglas H. Wells, calls to our attention that he has seen on the Port de la Rochelle stamp, 1930 printing, die or type 2, breaks in the bounding lines of the numerals of value. This stamp was given extensive coverage in Vol. 3, No. 5 of this paper, July-Sept., 1944. Those interested in the varieties are referred to that article for excellent treatment, which includes mention of this variety. That article is the work of our member, Henry Jervis.

French Philatelic Facts. Vol. 3, No. 1, 20 pp., Feb. 1951; No. 2, 28 pp., June 1951. By Brainerd Kremer. \$1.00 each, from Gimbel's Stamp Dept., New York 1, N.Y. or from the author, 18 Plymouth St., Montclair, N.J.

Kremer's ambitious project has slowed down a little, but still continues to present us with useful volumes of the same comprehensive nature as since its start in 1949. No. 1 of the volume finishes the stamps of the Empire and covers the Siege of Paris issue. The treatment is much the same in method and scope as for earlier issues.

A few verbal infelicities persist to cause continued confusion, such as not yet translating the word for "electrotype". Recently-discovered varieties are not always included. The 20c is specialized in strictly the accepted treatment, with the standard pictures reproduced. Some of the half-tone cuts are conspicuously poor.

No. 2, on the Balloon Posts, Pigeon Post, and other siege mail services, is a much better job in every way. For the first time the essential information is all assembled into one treatment in our language. We regret that what Mr. Arnold reported as identification marks for covers of particular balloons in this journal, Jan.-Feb. 1944, was not included in the detailed listings. He took these facts from the same sources which Mr. Kremer has and has used.

Some slight confusion might come in the part on Pigeon Post: the term "microfilm" could give an impression that the process was modern micro-filming. This photographic work was done with collodion emulsions, which were stripped from their glass supports after developing and fixing, to be rolled up tightly for insertion into a quill or tube. To project them after arrival at Paris, the films were put between two plates of glass, 9 x 12 cm.

Illustrations in this number are plentiful, relevant, and good.

---S.G.R.

Catalogue des Variétés de France du type Blanc a nos jours, 1900-1949. By Wanos and de Belleville. Paris, 1949, Office Philatelique de Paris, 37-38 Galerie Montpensier, 228 pp., 5 f, in paper. (2nd Edition)

This is the book that every student of 20th Century stamps of France in their detail specialization has to have. It is not a "perfect" job in the sense that the terminology is not consistent throughout; the choice of varieties, through the issue is often not the same as for another; the same variety is at times named as if of wholly different nature or origin on two issues. The American user will find that the glossary of terms at the start is insufficient, as for example on the frequently-found variety "piquage a cheval," listed for at least half of the stamps covered. Color-naming is by no means consistent; nor do French color names correspond, as a rule, to American terms of similar spelling or sound.

Having said all this, the book must be given large, fulsome praise. It is definitely a very useful book, listing sometimes 50 varieties for one stamp. Illustrations are plentiful -- also good. Your reviewer has used it: "it works."

Any and all defects are far outweighed for us by this treatment of 20th Century varieties, with full respect for them, in the same manner as has long ago been done for those before 1876. The France 20th century collector who tries to get along without Wanos & de Belleville, is just hobbling himself.

--- S.G.R.

The Lesgor Contest, for best showings of 20th Century French and Colonial issues or stamps, came to its climax at the Parent Chapter meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 8th, 1952. Then the showing of the entries was held at the Collectors Club, and the judging took place. All the wall frames of the meeting room were put to use, with 11 exhibits (including one non-competitive showing).

The judges, Messrs. Harry M. Konwiser, Paul P. Lindenberg and Malcolm G. O'Reilly, all of the Collectors Club, all skilled in stamps from various countries, but none collecting in any French field or members of F. & C.G., found their task agreeable, and apparently not too onerous. In announcing the awards, they commented on the fine caliber of the material shown.

In the Group for "One Stamps," Miss Agnes Burlingame took first award with a specialized showing of the 1929 Jeanne d'Arc 50c (France). To a full showing of "philatelic" aspects in a usual sense, Miss Burlingame added historical information bearing on the occasion for this stamp being issued.

Dr. Robert L. Wood's compact showing of the 6 francs Marianne, 1945-51, easily took second place in this group, by its adequate coverage in varieties.

Miss Elena Wheeler, not yet a member of the Group, showed as our guest and took third in this division, with the varieties of the Pont du Gard stamp.

In the Group for "One Issue," the Four Hassan 1943-44 issue of French Morocco, shown by Mr. Charles Neidorf, was easily the most carefully and fully worked-out exhibit in the whole contest. The printing, lithographic stone position, and intermediate transfer varieties, etc., the distinguishing characteristics of the several printings, and so forth, were all shown fully, with necessary diagrams. The first award was here conspicuously justified.

Miss Louise Clemenson's Reunion 1907-33 issue, the Map-St. Denis-St. Pierre types, took second award for a clean-cut treatment of the same nature as that collector has given to her well-known and much appreciated Reunion 19th Century material.

Mr. C.G. Sullivan won third prize in this division with the large Type Merson stamps of France, adequately specialized, with excellent discretion as to which items to include.

Other exhibits were:

Dr. R.L. Wood: Braille stamp of France.

John J. Britt: The Vichy Children's Issue of France.

Dr. Douglas B. Remsen: Pasteur Type of France in its varieties....this intrigued your editor for its real understanding show of the problems involved.

Mr. A. Rapicault: Petain issue, with shades and dated covers.

Anonymous, non-competing ("Hors concours" as the owner put it in French): Sower Type, Solid Background; the Flat Plate printings highly specialized.

At the conclusion of the evening, Mr. Lesgor presented the awards to the winners, with the suave grace that the occasion required. Awards were all philatelic material, chosen to fit the likings of the winners or to plug gaps in what they had shown.

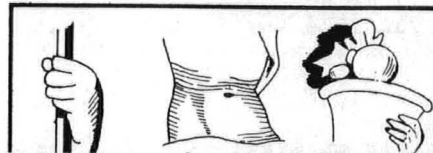
All the material on display was treated with the same full respect usually given only to the finest 19th Century material, by the collectors who had arranged it.

Several members have requested that we run again the pictures published in No. 23(1945) but not since then, which enable anyone to decide surely whether he has the genuine or a forgery of any of the colonial issues of 1892 to 1907.

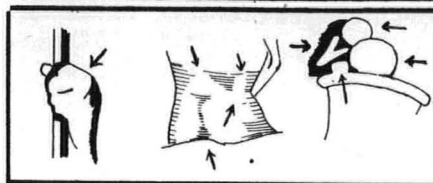
The key characters are three. The one at the right, the shape of the leaf above left corner of the cornucopia at right of stamp, can be seen without a magnifying glass in most cases except when hidden by a cancellation. The absence of fingers on the hand grasping the flagstaff may well be the surest feature on which to know a forgery. I do not find the absence of navel a good characteristic for ready recognition when a bad one is suspected.

--S.G.R.

Genuine



Forgeries



That Book on Siege of Paris Aerial Mail.

Members have perhaps seen advertisements by a New York dealer of Mr. Paul Maincent's book, "Genese de la Poste Aerienne du Siege de Paris" published in October 1951. Our member, John Weere, 457 West 57 St., New York 19, N.Y. tells us that he secured a quantity of them, which he is disposing of to Group members at cost. The price he charges is \$5.00 plus postage (12 cents) so that there is a considerable saving over the dealer's price.

We thank Mr. Weere for tying up his money, voluntarily, to do us this favor, and we urge members to take advantage of this service.

Articles in the Stamp Journals

Our secretary, Mr. Charles Bretagne, wrote on the Printed Cancellations of France. the "Annulation pour les Imprimés," found on France issues from 1869 to 1905 including remainders of earlier issues thus used in 1869, in "Stamps" of Oct. 6, 1951. We regret having had to crowd out this mention from the previous number.

Your editor published "Fascinations of French Stamps" in "Gossip" of Feb. 16, 1952.

An article on the current Marianne of Dulac type of France as a field for specialization is to appear during the spring, in the "Western Stamp Collector," written by a Group member. The most likely time is May or June.

The February number of the A.P.S.'s official journal, the "American Philatelist," carries the well documented study of the Sage Issue, Types 1 and 2, of France, by our member and well known authority in England, Henry Jervis. Precedence of the two types and time of issue of each, have long been in dispute. This article might well clear this all up. It is informative to read.

---A.R.F. and S.G.R.

WE'RE TELLING YOU

F. & C.G. Dinner

Planned for March or April in New York

At the regular monthly meeting in January, there was an almost unanimous request that we arrange an informal French dinner, similar to the one held in 1950, for some time in the near future, preferably in March or just after Lent ends.

If this is done, we should now set the date and make the necessary arrangements.

A Friday night seemed favored, as it is difficult to get reservations of this sort on Saturdays.

Before going ahead, we shall have to find out how many of our members are interested.

If you like the idea, and would like to take part, drop a line (a postal card will do) at once, to S.G. Rich, P.O. Box B, Verona, New Jersey. Please state the number of reservations you would desire.

Whether we shall have the dinner or not, is dependent on your prompt response.

A.R. Fernald, President.

Coming: 20th Century French and Colonial Show
At National Philatelic Museum.

This is to remind all our members that now is the time to plan our entries for the French 20th Century Exhibition, announced by the National Philatelic Museum for the month of May. Each display frame will hold 16 standard album pages. France, French Colonies, Monaco and Andorra are to be included: 20th Century issues only.

All particulars are to be had by addressing the Museum, Broad and Diamond Sts., Philadelphia 22, Pa.

Presumably entry forms will be ready by the time you first read this.

A.R. Fernald, President.

Group Convention ---- In May.

Plans are under way for the Group to hold a Convention in Philadelphia during May, while the Museum show is on: Saturday and Sunday, May 17 and 18, 1952. We have never had a chance for the members from various centers to get together in this way. We desire to promote our mutual friendship by this gathering.

Probably the awards in the Museum showing will be bestowed at the dinner which will form part of the convention doings. Our hope is to make it the same sort of affair as the Three Cents 1851 U.S. group held last summer--- with business sessions minor or missing, with the philatelic forum sessions as the feature.

A.R. Fernald, President.

Catalogue des Obliterations Francaises Gros Chiffres, 1863-76. By J. Bothion. Paris, August 1951, 72 pp., boards; Editions de Baufond, 300 francs.

This is a valuable tool for those collecting covers with these cancellations, because it evaluates the rarity of the various numbers, and gives price coefficients at the rate of 350 francs per dollar. The author points out that many a small collection may include a number of unusual value.

-----John Weare

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Oct. 1 through Dec. 31,
1951

RESIGNATION RECEIVED:

433 Keester, Comdr. Geo. B., Annapolis, Md.

APPLICATIONS PENDING:

Castaing, Capt. Kean E., Privada de la 33 Poniente, 311, Puebla, Pue., Mexico.
Stevens, Marjorie E., 305 South Lang Ave., Pittsburgh, Penna.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

19 Clemenson, Louise, to 36 Monroe St., DPH, New York 2, N.Y.

DUES FOR 1952: are now payable. Come in before we have to bill you.

Resident members' dues, \$2.00

Non-resident members' dues, \$1.00

BACK NUMBERS OF THE PHILATELIST are available.

Vol. 1 complete, \$2.00

Each later volume, \$1.00 each (Vols 2 to 10)

Single copies: No. 1 of Vol. 1, \$1.00

All others, 25c each.

Your Secretary is not worried at the small number of applicants, as every stamp society tells the same story for these same months. We have lost a smaller proportion through lapsing than has any other stamp club or society known to us anywhere.

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

MEMBERS' APPEALS

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 by the member who first suggested what used to be the "New Service": Precancel POSTES FRANCE on no. 139; Newsprint cancellations on Nos. 12, 13, 23, 40, 42, 53, 67, 89, 90 (also some later); anchor and colored cancellations on 19th century France and general issues of colonies (do not send stamps but ask for a specific want list. Carl Stephenson, Boardman Hall, Ithaca, N. Y. (Member 45)

Wish to exchange mint or used France and Colonies for mint France and Colonies needed for my collection, on an even Scott catalog basis.

H.L. Hunter, Box 541, Clemson, S.C. (Member 395)

I will buy some of your duplicates: fine used only, of Chad, Mauritania, Ubangi, Upper Volta. Write if interested. (Dealers please abstain !!) Leon E. Arnal, 4301 Linden Hills Blvd., Minneapolis 10, Minn. (Member 23)

Still hunting for the elusive covers with 5f Type Sage properly used on them and formula card with 20c rate paid by a single 20c Type Sage. S.G. Rich, Verona, N.J. (Member 2)

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)

These numerals in circles, usually 14 to 16 mm. diameter, cancelling stamps of France, are known as Facteur Marks. They were used on mail picked up along a carrier's route and delivered on the same route without necessarily going through the post office. Usually they are choice items.