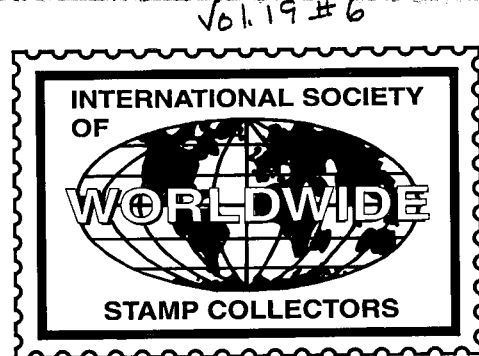


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The Circular Date Stamp

by Napoleon
Part 4 of 5 in a Series

France began to use postage stamps in 1849 with the first imperforate Head of Ceres issue. Postal authorities decided to cancel the stamps with something other than the circular date stamp (CDS) that already marked the origin of the piece of mail. The first two articles in this series, "The Masking Stranger" and "Losange" discussed and illustrated the grill and the diamond-of-dots cancels commonly used at different times during this period. This article covers the circular date stamps which inadvertently or intentionally canceled some of the first twenty-six years of French postage stamps.

On the first imperforate Head of Ceres issue, a grill is the common stamp cancellation, although the grill cancels were not available at most post offices until January 13-15. For the first two weeks of January 1849, and occasionally later, a CDS is the cancel, as in Figure 1. At this time, the CDS came in large, medium, and small sizes. This appears to be the medium size. The flower petal shape in the annulus of a double concentric circle (Figure 2) marks a mail boat cancel. The mail boat CDS is used on both Emperor Louis Napoleon issues and on the emperor-with-laurel-wreath issue.

Figure 3 is a rail route cancel, for the Bordeaux-to-Toulouse route. Those with copies of the *Losange* article can find its *losange* converse there, a TB in the center for the

EDITOR'S NOTE: Part 3 in this series will be featured in the Jan/Feb 2002 issue of *The Circuit*.

Toulouse-to-Bordeaux route.

Figure 4 shows the more common circular date stamps used in this time period. On the far left is the small double-circular Type 15. AFFRANCHISSEMENTS in the bottom of the annulus denoted payment for a special mail service. Next is Type 16, the only single-circle CDS used for regular mail in the 19th century. In the center is the larger double-circular Type 17, with "(49)" at the bottom to identify the *département* (region) in which the stamp was mailed. The Type 17 *bis* is next; in the bottom of the annulus is the name of the street where the post office was located. This format was called the "Streets of Paris" cancel. Type 17 *bis* also existed with the name of the *département* or specifics such as *gare* (train station) *affranchissements*, *départ*, and *étranger*, at the bottom. (The Ceres™ catalog calls this Type 18.) The last cancel in Figure 4 is Type 24 from Port Said, Egypt. Type 24 had three concentric circles with the outer one dotted.

As mail volume increased, cancellations changed to increase information, legibility, and service life. For example, the Type 16 is merely a Type 15 without the inner circle. This allowed insertion of a marker identifying which of the day's mail sortings processed a given piece of mail. Type 17 was a larger cancel created to improve legibility and service life. All classes of post office always had the same general format of cancel at



Fig 1: CDS on first Ceres



Fig 3: Rail route CDS



Fig 2: Mail boat cancel

Continued on page 4

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President's Column

by **Tony Zollo (#856)** – President and Executive Director, ISWSC

This will be my last column as ISWSC's President. As I write this, our election is underway. However, since the Presidential race is uncontested, it is fairly certain the Randy Smith will begin as the new President in January 2002. I want to thank him for stepping forward as a candidate and wish him success. I will remain as the ISWSC Executive Director and I look forward to working with Randy.

It has truly been a pleasure serving as the ISWSC President. I have had the pleasure of working with some truly outstanding people, all of whom volunteer their time and talents to support the ISWSC, its programs and its members. To all of you who have given so much in the past four years, I thank you!

One person stands out above all and deserves special

Continued on next page

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Please remember that the Editor does not mail out The Circuit. If you have any questions about your Circuit mail service, please contact Tom Fortunato or Tony Zollo. Thank you!

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE:
NOVEMBER 20, 2001**

President's Column

Continued from page 2

recognition. Our Past President and Webmaster, Tom Fortunato has been a tremendous help to me. He was always available for advice and assistance with any pressing issues and I wish to offer him my personal thanks and gratitude. He has also done a wonderful job creating and maintaining our web page and our official roster. He will continue on as our Webmaster and is running uncontested for the Vice President for Public Relations position, so we will continue to benefit from his talents.

One event has been consuming a great deal of time and energy on the part of several of your officers and managers. It is a very strange and complex story that I will try to shorten, but the story needs to be told...

One of the most popular programs offered by the ISWSC is our catalog basis exchange of stamps called the OMNI Exchange. It operates several Circuits including the "Blue" circuit consisting of material valued at 50 cents and up. In late April 2001, the manager of that portion of the OMNI Exchange, Jerry Foster, suddenly and unexpectedly past away. He lived alone in South Carolina so we immediately contacted his daughter who was settling his affairs. In early May 2001, Jerry's daughter traveled from her Texas home to her late father's home, packed up what was believed to be his holdings of ISWSC members' material and shipped it to our new OMNI Manager, Jim Millette. In reviewing the documentation of ISWSC OMNI inventory, it was clear to Jim that much was still missing.

Jerry's daughter was made aware of the discrepancy, but could not return to her late father's South Carolina home until early August 2001. So we waited patiently until she traveled back and completely finished cleaning out his possessions. On 8/10/01 we received a shipment of more books. However the total still missing was 380 books with a total catalog value of over \$41,000.

The following day, August 31, 2001, what looked like the complete stock of missing books appeared on eBay for auction by a man in Orlando Florida. I immediately had emails sent to the lot's owner, eBay management and all bidders requesting that the lot be removed from the auction. After sending several emails to the seller, I received a phone call from a man named Cyril. Cyril is apparently a dealer who obtained the OMNI books as part of a bigger lot from a buyer (called the Browse House in Florida). He says he was unaware the books were misappropriated. He was suspicious of the ISWSC

Continued on page 5

Dues/Advertising Policy

Dues Information:

Single/Dealer/Club membership: \$12.00*

Youth membership (under 18): \$10.00*

Family membership (up to 4 persons in one residence): \$19.00*

*Plus 250 large commemoratives for the Youth Program or equiv. donation in US\$. Dues above are for one year and include six newsletters per year. You may sign up for three years at a time. For an application or further information send SASE or IRC to: ISWSC, P.O. Box 150407, Lufkin TX 75915-0407, USA. *There will be a \$2 per year discount if the renewal is received at least one month prior to the current expiration date.*

Advertising Policy:

For reasons of accountability, only members of the ISWSC, APS or ASDA may place ads. All ads dealing with philatelic concerns are acceptable. We reserve the right to edit out objectionable language. Advertisers are expected to respond to all inquiries, so be sure you can handle the responses before you offer to trade, buy or sell. If you have a bad result from answering an ad, contact the Editor. We will try to resolve the conflict.

Display Rates (Camera Ready*) per insertion:

Full page: \$75.00**

Half page: \$40.00**

Quarter page: \$20.00**

Per column inch: \$5.00

Six repeat insertions of the same ad for the cost of five ads (one free). We will also offer a two-sided insertion for \$125 per issue.

*Camera Ready means ready to paste up or scan and print. Reductions and typesetting extra.

** Discounts for three or more insertions of same ad. Yearly display rates available. Write to ISWSC past president Tom Fortunato (see p. 2) for special rates.

Classified Rates per insertion:

First 30 words, including name, address, and ZIP code are \$3. Additional words are 20 for \$1.

NOTE: State abbreviations = one word; "P.O. Box 1234" = two words; ZIP code = one word.

Make all checks payable to ISWSC in U.S. funds. Send text and payment for ads to the Editor. All addresses can be found on page 2.

The Circular Date Stamp

Continued
from page 1



Fig 4: Types 15, 16, 17, 17 bis, & 24 CDS formats

the same time. Thus a full-service office always had a cancel with a solid outer circle, although Types 15, 16, and 17 were in service at the same time. Offices offering fewer services always had a cancel with a dotted outer circle, although the dots often were dirty enough to leave short dashes on a piece of mail.

Cancels came in both blue and red. The most common red cancels were the *cachet à date des Imprimés*, for printed matter and *journaux*, for newspapers.

The CDS became the intended cancel in 1876, perhaps as a result of France joining the Universal Postal Union that year.

French Colonies General Issues

Now let's take a look at the general issues for France's colonies (Figure 5). Many cancels were very similar to metropolitan French cancels. The *losange* with "MQE" was used in Martinique. The circle-in-octagon was the mail boat cancel mentioned in the "Sage" article. Of special interest is the CDS on the right-hand stamp. The inner circle of dots in the St. Pierre et Miquelon cancel was a typical colonial format. As was true in metropolitan France, dots became short dashes as dirt built up on the handstamp. No cancel from metropolitan France had an inner ring of dots or short dashes.

Detective Case

Is the stamp in Figure 6 a colonial or a metropolitan stamp? A dealer had it priced a French 1850 imperforate 25c blue Head of Ceres. Background:

- The date appears to be 1854 (or 1834!)
- There are small blue dots in the flower petals in the upper left and right corners when the stamp is upright*
- The cancellation is not a metropolitan form



Fig 5: French Colonies General: MQE in losange, paquetbot, CDS

but rather a common colonial form

- The city name at the bottom is "Point.."
- A CDS on France's 25c of 1850 is quite uncommon, being catalogued 1300% above the usual grill cancel

The blue dots* suggest the 25c Head of Ceres stamp of 1873. It has such dots in the least expensive of the three types. But that stamp is not listed imperforate, and its date should be between 1871 and 1875. The same blue dots appear on the French Colonies 25c blue Head of Ceres (imperforate) stamp, but the cancellation year would be 1872-1877. Even if it were the 1850 stamp, the date should be 1850-1852.

The key is the ring of short, closely spaced dots forming the inner circle. This typical colonial cancel makes it very likely that the stamp is from the French Colonies general issue. The city probably is Pointe-a-Pitre, capital of Guadeloupe. The date probably is a smeared or altered 1874.

*The blue dots in the upper corner flower petals can't be seen at this resolution, but five-power magnification is adequate to reveal them.



About the Author

Napoleon is 60 years old and is a member of his local stamp club, having served as treasurer, secretary, vice-president, and president. He also belongs to the local chapter of the Germany Philatelic Society, to the France and Colonies Philatelic Society (U.K.), and to the APS.

The articles on early French cancellations are an English-language introduction to the topic. The "Varieties" article shares information not easily available in English. A future article on identifying early French stamps is a summary of information given to interested Internet auction sellers who have trouble differentiating between the various Ceres-head issues. As one Internet newsgroup poster proclaims, "Share what you know. Learn what you don't."

Questions or comments? Contact the author at: napoleon@voyager.net.

New Regional Secretaries Appointed

Western Europe

Alan Horwedel -- Germany

I grew up in Ohio and joined the Army in 1947. Went to West Point from the Army and then spent the next 22 years in the Army with tours around the states, two in Germany, three in Vietnam and one in the Dominican Republic.

I started collecting during WWII and have collected ever since, although I didn't do all that much for a number of years between about 1960 and 1984.

I retired from the Army in 1975 and enrolled in the University of Puget Sound Law School. I received my degree in 1978 and then moved to Germany to work for the Army. I retired from Civil Service in late 1984 and have been doing volunteer work with the military retirees ever since. I have been the President of the Army Retiree Council for Southern Germany for the past 12 years.

I currently live in Bietigheim-Bissingen which is a 1000 year old town just outside of Stuttgart.

Australasia

Noel Routley -- Australia

Let me first introduce myself. I am a retired builder, aged 67. I collect worldwide and have done so for most of my life, except for a time during Korean Army Service.

I have been a member of the ISWSC for four years. I have also been a member of the PFEC of USA for four years. My goal as Regional Secretary is to work on a membership drive in the Australasian areas. Also, youth programs will not be forgotten.

I am at present using a friend's computer, so please be patient with return of emails.

For a complete listing of all Regional Secretaries, turn to the listings on page 2.

President's Column

Continued from page 3

claim, but after giving numbers, contents and values of some of the missing books, took the lot off the auction block.

Once the OMNI Exchange books were removed from sale we went to work to begin the process of recovery. This included filing a police report with the North Augusta Police Department, discussions with Mr. Ephraim Day of the APS Stamp Theft Committee and Dan Walker, our insurance agent with Collectibles Insurance Agency. At one point it looked as if, in order to file the report, someone would have to travel to North Augusta and appear in person. I am happy to say that several of the members in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas volunteered to make long journeys in order to make the report. Fortunately, with Mr. Day's, assistance this was not needed. However, I was very proud to see all the volunteers step forward (including former OMNI manager Jerry Gross).

On 9/5/01, I spoke over the telephone with Dan Walker of Collectibles Insurance Agency (CIA). He stated he had called Cyril and The Browse House. He was told that the lot of OMNI Books, housed in two boxes, was part of the collection sold to them by Jerry Fosters' daughter. They said they removed about 20 books, took out the stamps from those books and the stamps are now irretrievable. They also removed some stamps from some of the remaining

books, which are also irretrievable). The remainder of the books was sold to Cyril as part of a larger lot. The investigation is now in the hands of an insurance adjuster working for our insurance company.

I am now fairly confident that we will eventually get back all the material in Cyril's possession and that we will obtain financial compensation for the members who have submitted material that is now irretrievable. We have notified the participants in the OMNI Blue Circuit and requested their patience, as this investigation will take some time before it is concluded.

The ISWSC is committed to safeguarding the members' stamps submitted to all of our programs. This incident has taught us that we need to do better. I have requested that all officers and managers designate a family member or friend as an emergency contact and have compiled a list of these contacts. I have further requested that each officer or manager in possession of ISWSC property or that of its members explain to their contact what they have and where it is located in case something happens to them and we have to recover our property or records. Of course, we will maintain insurance coverage adequate to compensate for a total loss of material from any one ISWSC site.

And so ends my last (and most interesting) column as President!

Till next time...

