

The French Royal Packets of the New York Line

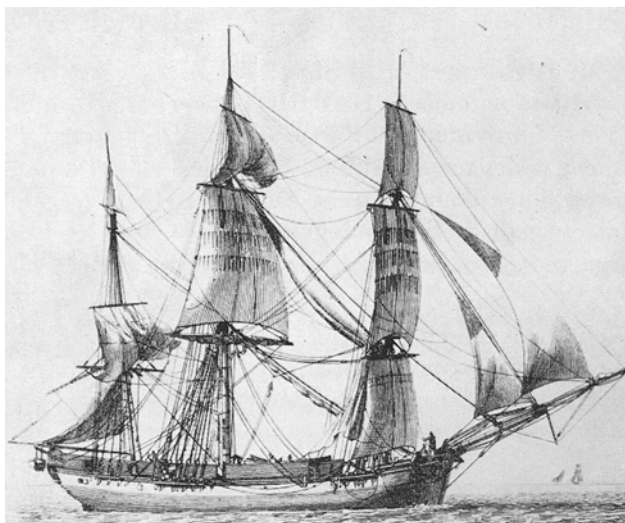
Analysis of Letters Carried, 1783-1793

By Steven Walske and Robert Abensur (English version of an article published in the January 2011 *Documents Philatéliques*)

Background

The signing of the Preliminary Articles of Peace on November 30, 1782 brought an end to the American Revolution and an end to the century-old British monopoly on trade with the former North American Colonies. For France, this represented a long-awaited opportunity to develop strong commercial relations with its new American ally. Accordingly, the French moved quickly to establish a Royal packet line between France and the United States, and a decree establishing a State-sponsored transatlantic mail service was issued on June 28, 1783.

The risk and amount of capital required to maintain a line of packets were high, so government subsidies were essential. England had long given monetary concessions to the independent operators of its packet lines, but the French treasury was too depleted for direct subsidies. Instead, Louis XVI established a series of Régies (agencies), which were state-owned but privately operated companies, to manage the sailing packets. In addition, he loaned French naval ships and their crews to the Régie. The Régie would provision and manage the ships and receive the revenue associated with each trip in return.



Type of sailing ship used for the Royal packets

Packet Postal Rates

Louis XVI decreed that all correspondence with the United States was subject to Royal packet charges, whether carried by a packet or by a private ship. All westbound mail was ordered to be carried by the Royal packets, and was required to be fully prepaid to New York after June 30, 1784. Eastbound mail could be carried by private ships or the Royal packets, but packet postage was collected, regardless of which type of ship carried it, along with French domestic postage. This meant that French or European correspondents paid the packet postage in either direction, except in the very unusual circumstance when packet postage was prepaid to the French consul in New York by an American correspondent (as in Figures 10 and 11). The United States recognized this packet service by not assessing private ship fees on incoming mail. The absence of U.S. ship postage (16 grains until May 31, 1792 and 4 cents after that) added to inland postage is a key identifying characteristic for westbound packet mail.

Packet postage was set at 20 sols (about 10½ pence) per single sheet folded letter up to one ounce. A letter with envelope was charged 21 sols and double sheet letters were charged 38 sols, both up to one ounce. Each additional ounce over one ounce cost 40 sols.

Packet rates were simplified by Royal Decree on December 28, 1786. A letter up to one ounce still cost 20 sols, but multiple rates were charged at 10 sols per additional ounce. The type of letter (double-sheet or with an envelope) was no longer factored into the packet rate. Initially, this rate was also charged on mail carried by private ships, but many port cities, principally Bordeaux and Nantes, protested and assessed sea postage of only 4 sols (the 1759 private ship rate) on all incoming mail during 1787-88, as illustrated by the letter illustrated in Figure 13. In March 1789, the exclusivity accorded to the packets was eliminated. After that point, private ships were permitted to carry mail from France to the United States, and packet postage was charged only on letters carried by the packets.

French Domestic Postal Rates

French domestic postage, as applied to the Royal packet letters, was set by a July 8, 1759 Royal Decree, and varied by distance (in lieues of imprecise definition, but equivalent to about 4 kilometers), type of letter (i.e. single or double) and weight. A single rate was for a single-sheet folded letter weighing less than ¼ ounce. Each ounce (equivalent to 30.59 grams) was divided into eight gros, so the single rate was up to two gros. A single-sheet folded letter weighing between two gros and four gros was rated at 1.5 times the single rate. Such letters were usually marked with an elongated “g” or a check mark to indicate the higher weight class. Double letters were those with two sheets or which contained another letter, and weighed up to a half-ounce. A single-sheet letter in an envelope which weighed no more than two gros cost an additional sol above the single rate. The table below shows these rates.

French Domestic Rates of 1780-1791

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Single Rate</u>	<u>2-4 Gros Rate</u>	<u>Double Rate</u>
Up to 20 lieues (80km)	4 sols	6 sols	7 sols
21 to 40 lieues (80 – 160km)	6 sols	9 sols	10 sols
41 to 60 lieues (160 – 240km)	7 sols	11 sols	12 sols
61 to 80 lieues (240 – 320km)	8 sols	12 sols	14 sols
81 to 100 lieues (320 – 400km)	9 sols	14 sols	16 sols
101 to 120 lieues (400 – 480km)	10 sols	15 sols	18 sols
121 to 150 lieues (480 – 600km)	12 sols	18 sols	22 sols
Over 150 lieues	14 sols	21 sols	26 sols

Typically, the distances were calculated on the basis of a letter passing via Paris, and the actual rates between Paris and all French towns were published by the post office for this purpose. Thus, a single rate letter from Lorient to Lyon would be rated for 10 sols (Lorient to Paris) plus 8 sols (Paris to Lyon) for a total of 18 sols, even though the 165 lieues direct distance between Lorient and Lyon would call for only 14 sols. Published rates between Paris and some of the towns relevant to this study are listed below.

1759 Published French Domestic Single Letter Rates to Paris

<u>City</u>	<u>Single Rate</u>	<u>2-4 Gros Rate</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Single Rate</u>	<u>2-4 Gros Rate</u>
Lorient	10 sols	15 sols	Le Havre	7 sols	10 sols
Bordeaux	10 sols	15 sols	Lyon	8 sols	12 sols
Cognac	10 sols	15 sols	Marseille	10 sols	15 sols
Dunkerque	8 sols	12 sols	Nantes	8 sols	12 sols
Epernay	6 sols	9 sols	St Quentin	6 sols	9 sols
Grenoble	10 sols	15 sols			

Routing a letter via Paris was occasionally too much of a detour, so a letter could be sent more directly via a nearby transfer office (bureau de passe). Some of these were located in Avignon, Bordeaux, Dijon, Grenoble, La Rochelle, Limoges, Lyon, Nantes, Poitiers, Rennes, Rouen and Toulouse. In these cases, postage was calculated from the origin point to the transfer office and then from the transfer office to the destination. As a practical matter, postmasters used the tables provided by the central post office to compute the rates. Thus, a single letter from Toulouse to Lorient passed through Bordeaux, for a total distance of over 150 lieues and a postal cost of 18 sols, per the rate table sent to Toulouse around 1782. This table also specified that a single letter to the United States via Lorient was to be prepaid 38 sols.

The 1759 rates were superseded on January 1, 1792. Starting in 1792, distances (in lieues equivalent to 4.45 km) were calculated on a straight line from an arbitrary central point in the originating Department to a central point in the destination Department. A table showing the rates between all of the French Departments was published by the post office, so postmasters did not have to make the actual distance calculations. Michèle Chauvet published all of these rates in her indispensable book, *Introduction à L'Histoire Postale des Origines à 1849, Tome 2 – Les Tarifs Postaux* (2002).

French Domestic Rates of January 1, 1792

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Single Rate</u>	<u>2-4 Gros Rate</u>
Within the same Department	4 sous	6 sous
Up to 20 lieues (90km)	5 sous	7 sous
21 to 30 lieues (90 – 140km)	6 sous	9 sous
31 to 40 lieues (140 – 180km)	7 sous	10 sous
41 to 50 lieues (180 – 230km)	8 sous	12 sous
51 to 60 lieues (230 – 360km)	9 sous	13 sous
61 to 80 lieues (270 – 360km)	10 sous	15 sous
81 to 100 lieues (360 – 450km)	11 sous	16 sous
101 to 120 lieues (450 – 540km)	12 sous	18 sous
121 to 150 lieues (540 – 680km)	13 sous	19 sous
151 to 180 lieues (680 – 800km)	14 sous	21 sous
Over 180 lieues	15 sous	22 sous

Note: For a letter in an envelope, the rates were increased one sou. One sou was equal to one sol.

United States Domestic Postal Rates

On October 18, 1782, The U.S. Congress established a unified “Confederation Post” and established domestic postal rates. Until 1792, domestic postage was expressed in silver pennyweights (dwts) and grains (one dwt is equal to 24 grains). The October 18, 1782 single-sheet folded letter rates are denoted in the table below, along with the slightly reduced rates of April 5, 1788. Double sheet letters cost double postage, triple sheets cost triple, and so on.

U.S. Domestic Rates from October 28, 1782 to May 31, 1792

<u>Distance in Miles</u>	<u>Rates of October 18, 1782</u>	<u>Reduced Rates of April 5, 1788</u>
	<u>Pennyweights</u>	<u>Pennyweights</u>
Up to 60	1 dwt 8 grains	1 dwt
61 to 100	2 dwt	1 dwt 8 grains
101 to 200	2 dwt 16 grains	2 dwt
201 to 300	3 dwt 8 grains	2 dwt 16 grains
301 to 400	4 dwt	3 dwt
Each additional 100	16 grains	8 grains

Pennyweights and grains were a “currency of account” only, so the amounts to be paid were converted into local currencies of shillings and pence. The local currency rate was arrived at by applying a statutory rate of three pence sterling (British) per silver pennyweight. A factor based on the difference in value between the British pence and the local currency was then applied to account for the lower value of the currency in circulation. This conversion factor was 1.667 in the mid-Atlantic states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. It was 1.333 in the New England states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The same 1.333 factor was apparently used in the southern states of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. New York used a 2.0 factor.

Conversion of Pennyweight Rates into Local Currencies

<u>Pennyweight</u> Factor	<u>Pence Sterling</u> <u>(Great Britain)</u>	<u>Local United States Currencies (Pence and Shillings)</u>		
		<u>Mid-Atlantic</u>	<u>New England & South</u>	<u>New York</u>
	3X	1.667	1.333	2.0
8 grains	1d	2d	2d	2d
16 grains	2d	3d	3d	4d
1 dwt	3d	5d	4d	6d
1 dwt 8 grains	4d	7d	6d	8d
1 dwt 16 grains	5d	8d	7d	10d
2 dwt	6d	10d	8d	1 shilling
2 dwt 8 grains	7d	1 shilling	10d	1 shilling 2d
2 dwt 16 grains	8d	1 shilling 2d	1 shilling	1 shilling 4d
3 dwt	9d	1 shilling 3d	1 shilling 1d	1 shilling 6d
3 dwt 8 grains	10d	1 shilling 5d	1 shilling 2d	1 shilling 8d
3 dwt 16 grains	11d	1 shilling 6d	1 shilling 3d	1 shilling 10d
4 dwt	12d	1 shilling 8d	1 shilling 4d	2 shillings
4 dwt 8 grains	13d	1 shilling 10d	1 shilling 6d	2 shillings 2d
4 dwt 16 grains	14d	2 shillings	1 shilling 7d	2 shillings 4d
5 dwt	15d	2 shillings 1d	1 shilling 8d	2 shillings 6d
5 dwt 8 grains	16d	2 shillings 3d	1 shilling 10d	2 shillings 8d
5 dwt 16 grains	17d	2 shillings 4d	1 shilling 11d	2 shillings 10d
6 dwt	18d	2 shillings 6d	2 shillings	3 shillings
6 dwt 8 grains	19d	2 shillings 8d	2 shillings 2d	3 shillings 2d
6 dwt 16 grains	20d	2 shillings 10d	2 shillings 3d	3 shillings 4d

The pennyweight rate was always marked on letters at the office of origin, and occasionally the local rate was marked at the office of receipt. Philadelphia (in the mid-Atlantic state of Pennsylvania) often added 2d to the local currency rate to account for local carrier service.

This rate structure was superseded on June 1, 1792 when U.S. Congress created the General Post Office and changed the currency to dollars and cents. The 1792 rates are shown in the table below. Single letters were defined as single-sheet folded letters, and multiple sheet letters called for multiple rates.

U.S. Domestic Rates of June 1, 1792

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Single Letter</u>	<u>Distance</u>	<u>Single Letter</u>
Up to 30 miles	6 cents	201 to 250 miles	17 cents
31 to 60 miles	8 cents	251 to 350 miles	20 cents
61 to 100 miles	10 cents	351 to 450 miles	22 cents
101 to 150 miles	12½ cents	Over 450 miles	25 cents
151 to 200 miles	15 cents		

The Première Régie (September 1783 to March 1787)

The Première Régie, initially under the direction of Le Couteulx & Compagnie, operated 31 round-trip voyages between Lorient and New York from September 1783 until March 1787. A sailing table of the French Royal packets is appended to this article, with data drawn from Henri Tristant's comprehensive work on the Royal packets, *Les Premiers Paquebots Français* (1985), and from U.S. newspaper research by John Olenkiewicz (<http://www.rfajola.com/mercury/jofrenchpacketschedule.pdf>). The newspaper clippings illustrated in this article are also provided through the courtesy of John Olenkiewicz.

Although the sailing table indicates that roughly 8,000 westbound and 9,500 eastbound letters were carried by the Première Régie, surviving letters carried by this Régie are rare. A recent census of Première Régie covers includes 14 eastbound and 23 westbound examples.

Première Régie Mail from France to the United States

Westbound mail was transferred from the Lorient post office to the agent for the Régie, who created the "PAQ.L'ORIENT" (packet via Lorient) marking for mail to the United States.

PAQ.L'ORIENT

Figure 1 illustrates an October 1786 single-weight folded letter from Dunkerque to Philadelphia, prepaid 38 sols per a manuscript "38" on the reverse. This represented 18 sols domestic postage (8 sols from Dunkerque to Paris plus 10 sols from Paris to Lorient) and 20 sols packet postage. It received a faint straight-line "DUNKERQUE" postmark and then was marked "PAQ.L'ORIENT" by the agent for the Régie at Lorient. It was carried by *Le Courier de New York*, which left on November 6 and arrived on December 27 in New York, where it was assessed 2 dwt postage due for the 100 miles from New York to Philadelphia per the manuscript "2" in the upper right corner. It was docketed as received on December 29 in Philadelphia, where the postage due was translated into one shilling local postage (mid-Atlantic) per the manuscript "1/" (10d plus a 2d carrier fee) in the upper left corner. This was the last westbound sailing of the Première Régie.

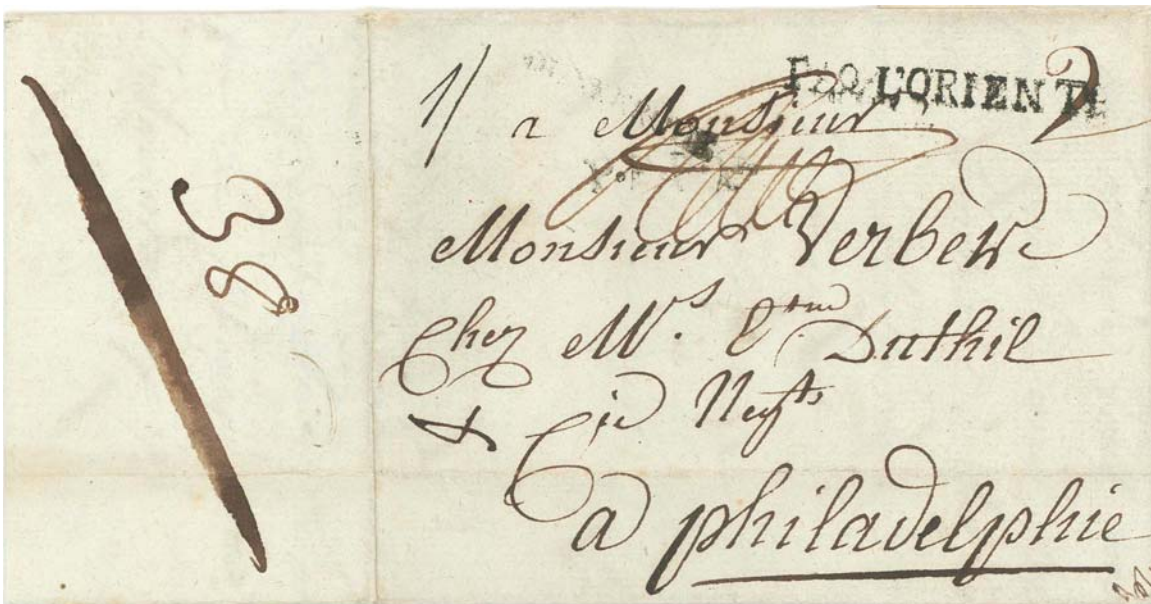


Figure 1 – October 1786 letter from Dunkerque to Philadelphia, carried by *Le Courier de New York* of the Première Régie.

Initially, letters addressed to New York were not subject to any U.S. postage. Sometime in 1785, New York began assessing 2 pence for local delivery. Figure 2 illustrates an August 2, 1786 single-weight folded letter from Marseille to New York, prepaid 40 sols per a manuscript “40” on the reverse, representing 20 sols domestic postage (10 sols from Marseille to Paris plus 10 sols from Paris to Lorient) and 20 sols packet postage. It received a manuscript Marseille postmark, a Marseille “P.PAYE” marking, a “P.P.P.P.” marking in transit at Paris, and then was marked “PAQ.L’ORIENT” by the agent for the Régie at Lorient. It was carried by *Le Courier de l’Europe*, which left on September 24 and arrived on October 22 in New York, where it was assessed 2d postage due per the manuscript “2D.”



Figure 2 – August 2, 1786 letter from Marseille to New York, carried by *Le Courier de l’Europe* of the Première Régie.

Most westbound letters received the “PAQ.L’ORIENT” marking, but not all. The unmarked letters can be identified by correlation with sailing dates, and by the absence of a 16 grains ship fee added to the U.S. domestic postage due. Figure 3 illustrates an unmarked packet letter.



New-York, April 17.
Yesterday arrived His Most Christian Majesty's packet *Courier de l'Orient* Capt. Coetnemprem, in 60 days from l'Orient, with a Foreign Mail.

Figure 3 - November 7, 1785 letter from the free city of Hamburg to Baltimore via Lorient, carried by *Le Courier de l'Orient* of the Première Régie.

This letter was written on November 7, 1785 in the free city of Hamburg and directed to go “via l’Orient.” No postal rates were indicated on the letter, but were prepaid to the U.S. border under an agreement between France and Hamburg. The agent for the Régie at Lorient did not apply the usual

“PAQ.L’ORIENT” marking, but did forward the letter on the *Courier de l’Orient*, which left on February 15, 1786 (this was the first sailing since November 11, 1785), and arrived in New York on April 16. New York marked the letter for 3 dwt 8 grains due (per the manuscript “3.8”), which was the domestic postage for the 202 miles to Baltimore. It was docketed as received in Baltimore on April 20, which was two days after the death of the addressee, a prominent Revolutionary War officer.

Première Régie Mail from the United States to France

The French consul in New York, in his capacity as agent for the Régie, received eastbound mail from the New York post office and applied departure markings. Eight ship-name markings are known:

**LeCourierdel’Amerique
NewYork**

Second sailing from New York on February 21, 1784.
Two examples known; in red and in black.

LeCourierdeNewYork

Fourth sailing from New York on March 20, 1784.
Two examples known in black.

**CourierdeL’Orient
NewYork**

Fifth sailing from New York on April 29, 1784.
One example known in black.

LeWarwick. NewYork.

Sixth sailing from New York on June 16, 1784.
One example known in black.

**LeCourierdel’Amerique
*-NewYork.***

Ninth sailing from New York on August 17, 1784.
One example known in black.

**P.LeCourierdel’Europe.
capt:CORnic:New.York.**

13th sailing from New York on December 21, 1784.
One example known in black.

**LeCourierLaMartinique
New York.15 Jan.1785.**

4th sailing from New York on January 15, 1785
One example known in black.

**LeCourierdel’EUROPE.
NewYork*16 juin 1785**

19th sailing from New York on June 17, 1785.
One example known in black)

According to the instructions given by the French consul in 1783, each sailing was to have a departure marking in red with the name of the ship and date of departure. None of the surviving marks fully conform to these instructions.

Figure 4 shows a March 15, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to Cognac with a ship-name cachet prepared for the first return sailing by *Le Courier de New York*. No U.S. postage is reflected on this letter, so it was sent under cover to an agent in New York. It left New York on March 20 and arrived in Lorient on April 17. This single folded letter was then carried directly from Lorient to Cognac via Nantes, and charged 6 sols from Lorient to Nantes plus 6 sols from Nantes to Cognac. The 20 sols packet postage was added to the 12 sols domestic postage, for a total of 32 sols due.



As the British Pacquet is still in this Port, for the convenience of the Merchants here as well as at Philadelphia, it is thought necessary to postpone the sailing of the French Pacquet *Le Courier de New-York* until the 19th instant, when her Mail will be closed at the Post Office in this city.
Wm. SETON, Agent.
New-York, March 11, 1784.

Figure 4 – March 15, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to Cognac, carried by *Le Courier de New York* of the Première Régie.

The Royal packet service was certainly broadly advertised throughout Europe, and letters to or from the Austrian Low Countries (today's Belgium), the German States, the Italian States, the United Provinces (today's Netherlands) and the Swiss Cantons are known. Cornelius Muys and Jan Giphart published an extract from a 1785 Rotterdam newspaper which announced that the post office was accepting letters to or from the United States by French packet, per an agreement between France and the United Provinces.

The Dutch have made the following arrangement with France with regard to the postage of letters. Single letters from Holland to Port L'Orient for America to pay one florin, letters under cover 21 sous, those which weigh more than half an ounce, 32 sous, and those weighing an ounce 38 sous Dutch. From L'Orient to any part of America, the postage is to be for single letters 14 sous, those under cover 15 sous, those above half an ounce 24 sous, and those of one ounce 28 sous. The letters are to be p.^d in the post office 10 or 12 days before the third Tuesday of every month.

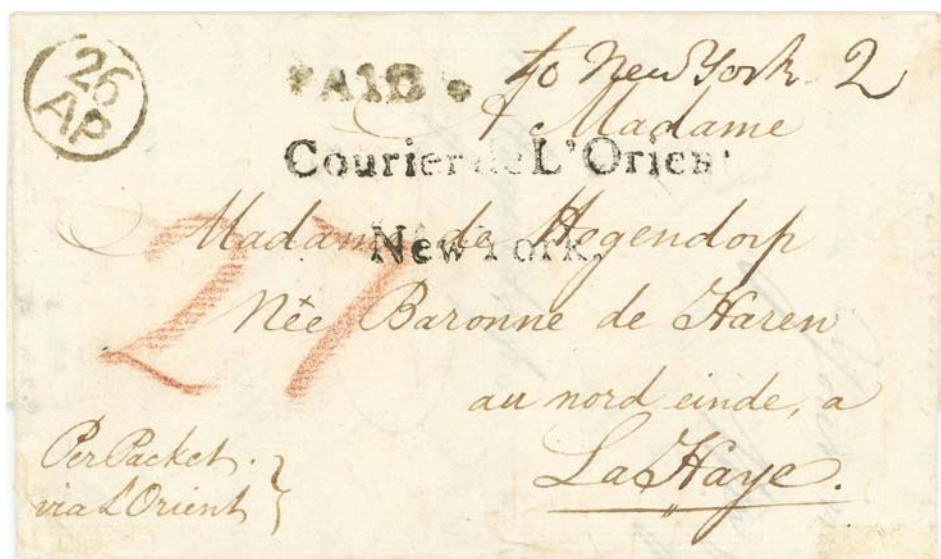


Figure 5 – April 26, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to La Haye, carried by *Le Courier de l'Orient* of the Première Régie.

Figure 5 shows an April 26, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to The Hague, United Provinces with a “Courier de L’Orient New York” ship-name marking and a Philadelphia “26 AP” Franklin mark. It was posted in Philadelphia, where it was prepaid 2 dwt postage for the 100 miles to New York and marked “PAID.” This sailing left New York on April 29 and arrived in Lorient on May 27. Per the red manuscript marking, 27 stuivers was collected from the recipient in the Netherlands. Claude Delbeke explained this rate in his 2002 book on the Netherlands maritime post, using an exchange rate of 1 stuiver per 2 sols. Twenty sols packet postage plus 10 sols French domestic postage from Lorient to Paris were equal to 15 stuivers, to which was added the 12 stuivers rate from Paris to The Hague per the Thurn and Taxis rates of January 16, 1729.

Figure 6 illustrates the “Le Courier de l’Amerique *-New York*” ship-name marking on a July 1, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to St Quentin. It was carried by *Le Courier de l’Amérique*, which left New York on August 17 and arrived in Lorient on September 19. It was assessed 44 sols due at Paris. This letter weighed between 2 and 4 gros (per the small manuscript “g”) and was carried from Lorient to St Quentin via Paris (15 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 9 sols from Paris to St Quentin), so it was rated for 24 sols domestic postage plus 20 sols packet postage.

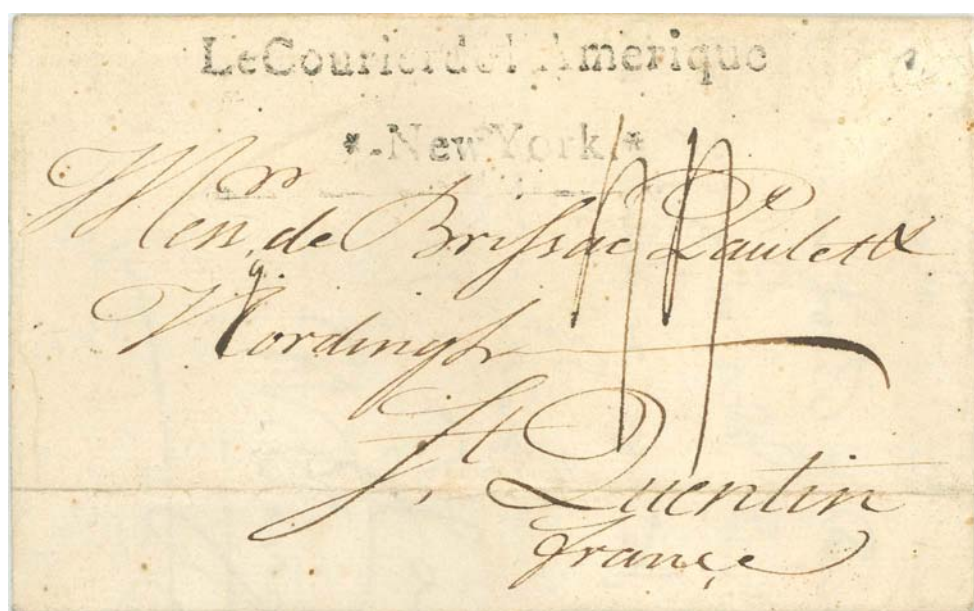
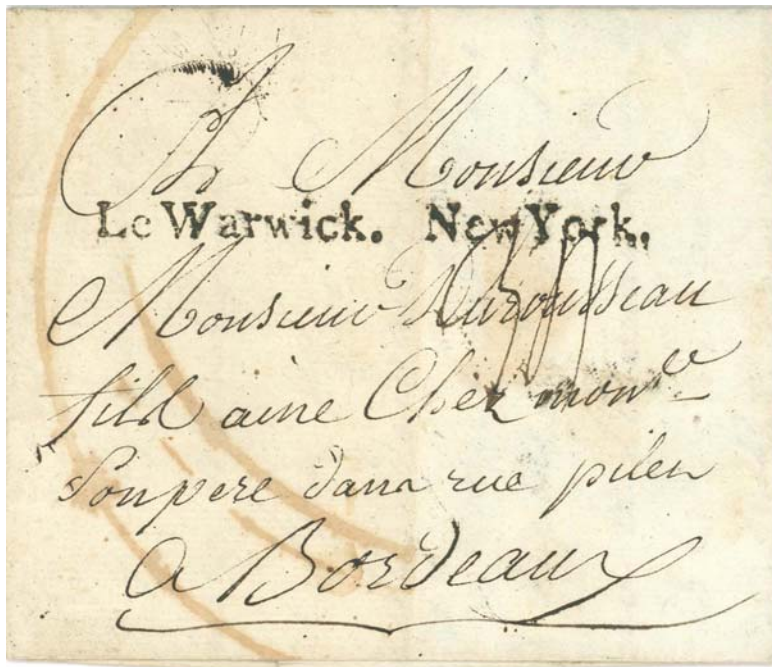


Figure 6 – July 1, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to St. Quentin, carried by *Le Courier de l’Amérique* of the Première Régie.

Figure 7 shows a June 8, 1784 single letter from Philadelphia to Bordeaux with a ship-name cachet prepared for the first return sailing by *Le Warwick*. No U.S. postage is reflected on this letter, so it was sent under cover to an agent in New York. *Le Warwick* left New York on June 16 and arrived in Lorient on July 14. The letter was carried directly from Lorient to Bordeaux via Nantes, so it was rated for 14 sols domestic postage (6 sols from Lorient to Nantes plus 8 sols from Nantes to Bordeaux) plus 20 sols packet postage, for a total of 34 sols due.



Yesterday the French Packet Warwick, Capt. Sionville, failed for Port l'Orient, with the foreign mail.

Figure 7 – June 8, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to Bordeaux, carried by *Le Warwick* of the Première Régie.

NEW-YORK, December 22.
Yesterday, at ten o'clock, the Right Honourable the Marquis de la Fayette, embarked on board the *Nymphé's* barge, — The Packet *Le Courier de Europe*, failed at the same time with the November mail for Port l'Orient.

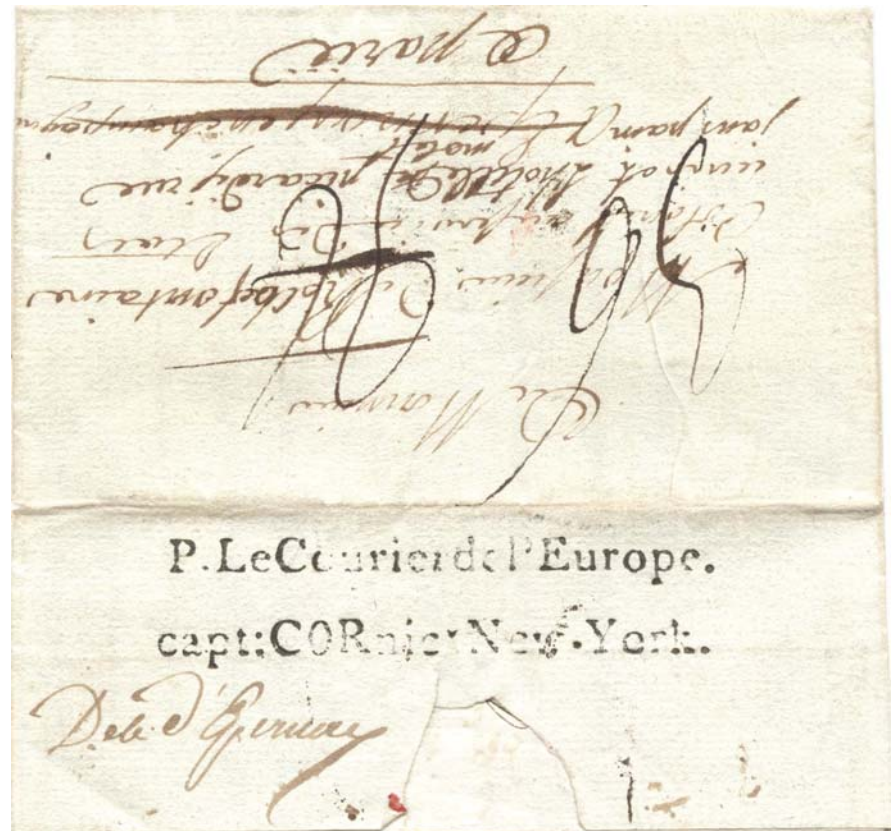
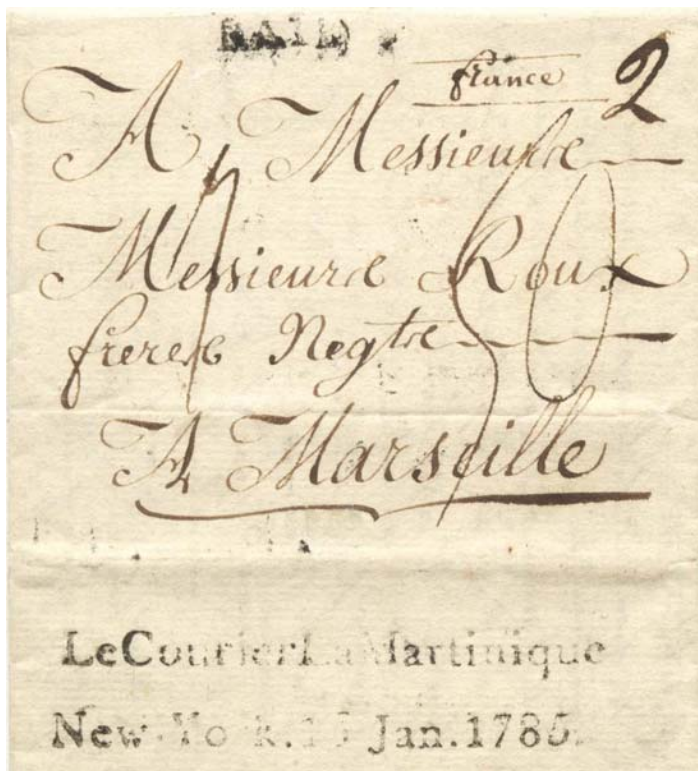


Figure 8 – December 13, 1784 letter from Philadelphia to Epernay, carried by *Le Courier de l'Europe* of the Première Régie.

Figure 8 shows a December 13, 1784 single-weight folded letter from Philadelphia to Epernay with a “P. Le Courier de l'Europe. capt: CORNIC New-York” ship-name marking. No U.S. postage is reflected on this letter, so it was sent under cover to an agent in New York. The New York post office then transferred it to the consul, who added the departure marking and placed it aboard *Le Courier de l'Europe*, which left New York on December 21, and arrived in Lorient on January 19. It was assessed 36 sols due at Paris, representing the 16 sols domestic postage from Lorient to Epernay via Paris (10 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 6 sols from Paris to Epernay) plus 20 sols packet postage. The letter was then

forwarded from Epernay back to Paris, where it arrived on February 7 per an internal docket. No additional forwarding postage was charged.



S H I P N E W S.
His Most Christian Majesty's packet the *Martini-
co*, Capt. Tuvache, will sail from New-York for
l'Orient, with the mail for France, on the 15th inst.

Figure 9 – January 12, 1785 letter from Philadelphia to Marseille, carried by *La Martinique* of the Première Régie.

Figure 9 shows a January 12, 1785 letter from Philadelphia to Marseille with a “Le Courier La Martinique New York 15 Jan. 1785” ship-name marking. It was posted in Philadelphia, where it was prepaid 2 dwt postage for the 100 miles to New York and marked “PAID.” This sailing left New York on January 15 and arrived in Lorient on February 26. The letter weighed between 2 and 4 gros (per the manuscript “g”) and was carried from Lorient to Marseille via Paris, so it was rated for 30 sols domestic postage (15 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 15 sols from Paris to Marseille) plus 20 sols packet postage.

His Most Christian Majesty's
Packet *Le Courier de l'Europe*,
Monf. Cornic du Moulin, Comman-
der, will sail with the Mail from this
Port for l'Orient, on the 15th of
June next.



Figure 10 – June 6, 1785 letter from Philadelphia to Gand, carried by *Le Courier de l'Europe* of the Première Régie. (Image courtesy of Claude Delbeke).

Figure 10 illustrates a June 6, 1785 letter from Philadelphia to Gand (Austrian Low Countries, or today's Belgium) with a "Le Courier de l'EUROPE New York * 16 juin 1785" ship-name marking. No U.S. postage is reflected, so this single-weight folded letter was sent under cover to an agent in New York. It left on June 17 and arrived in Lorient on July 9. The letter was rated for 11 Brabant sols due, which was the rate for a single letter from Paris to Gand, per the Thurn and Taxis rates of January 16, 1729. This means that the recipient did not pay the packet postage, so it must have been prepaid by the sender in Philadelphia – one of two known eastbound letters which were prepaid to France. Although there was no postal convention between the United States and France which might have provided for prepayment of packet postage, it was still possible to pay for eastbound packet postage by remitting 20 sols or 10½ pence to the French consul in New York. Some of consul's reports to the Lorient post office (reproduced in Tristant's book) refer to letters franked to Lorient, and a May 1784 notice published in Boston by the consul (reproduced in Marc Martin's 1975 article) publicized the service and indicated that the packet postage for a single letter was one French livre (20 sols) or 10½ pence.

The French consul in New York, St Jean de Crèvecoeur, returned to France on this sailing of *Le Courier de l'Europe* from New York on June 17, 1785, and ship-name postmarks were not used after that date. In total, only ten covers are known with these ship-name postmarks, all used in the February 1784 to June 1785 period.

Figure 11 illustrates a cover from the first eastbound sailing of the Première Régie, but which does not bear a ship-name postmark.



Figure 11 – December 18, 1783 letter from New York to Grenoble, carried by *Le Courier de l'Europe* of the Première Régie.

This letter was dated at New York on December 18, 1783 and apparently confided to the French consul, since there are no U.S. postal markings. Perhaps because it was the first eastbound sailing and the markings had not yet been prepared, the letter did not receive a ship-name postmark in New York. It was carried by *Le Courier de l'Europe*, which left New York on December 19, and arrived in Brest on January 27. Since it did not enter at Lorient, the letter was rated and handled differently from other Première Régie letters. It was carried to Paris, where it entered the mails (per the "P" in a triangle marking) with only 10 sols due for the single letter postage from Paris to Grenoble. Although there are no markings to confirm this, it is likely that the 20 sols packet postage was prepaid by the sender to the French consul in New York (as in Figure 10), so there was no need to collect that amount in France.

The new French Chargé d’Affaires, Louis-Guillaume Otto, arrived in New York on August 25, 1785, and assumed his duties as agent for the Régie. He apparently replaced the dramatic but cumbersome ship name departure markings with a simpler “PAQ.NEWYORK” marking, starting with the 22nd sailing from New York on September 18, 1785.

PAQ·NEWYORK

Figure 12 – January 10, 1786 letter from Philadelphia to Lyon, carried by *Le Courier de l’Europe* of the Première Régie.

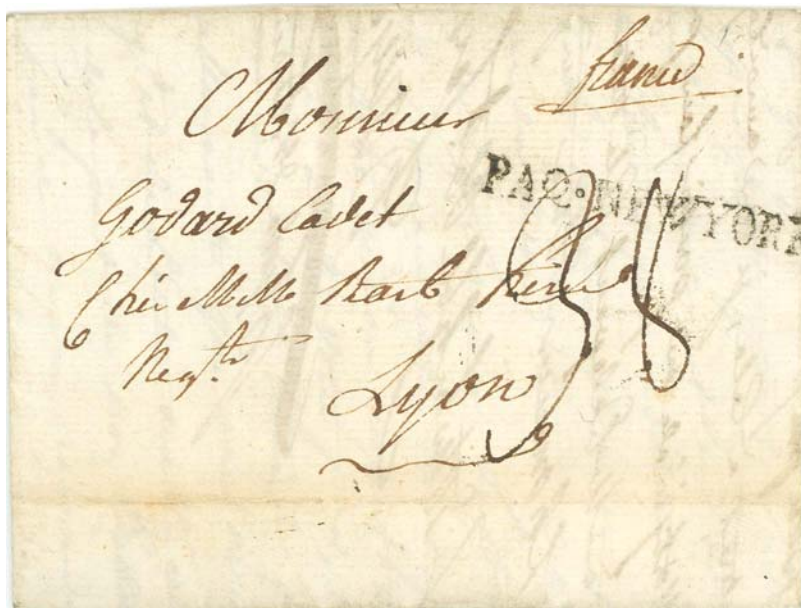


Figure 12 illustrates a January 10, 1786 letter from Philadelphia to Lyon with this marking used on the 24th eastbound sailing of the Première Régie by *Le Courier de l’Europe*. No U.S. postage is reflected, so this single folded letter was sent under cover to an agent in New York. It left on January 23 and arrived in Lorient on February 18. In Paris, the letter was assessed 38 sols due, representing 18 sols domestic postage (10 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 8 sols from Paris to Lyon), and 20 sols packet postage.

The Seconde Régie (February 1787 to July 1788)

By the end of 1784, the Première Régie had run out of money, and Louis XVI was forced to financially subsidize the line during 1785-86. In view of the continuing State financial crisis, the King dissolved the Première Régie and replaced it in February 1787 with the Seconde Régie, which he surprisingly entrusted again to Le Couteulx & Cie. The scheduled number of sailings to the United States per year was reduced from twelve to eight, so the Seconde Régie only operated a total of ten round-trip voyages from February 1787 until July 1788. For the greater convenience to passengers and because of revolutionary disturbances in Brittany, the French terminus was moved from Lorient to Le Havre, although all other operating aspects of the line remained the same. Packet rates were simplified on December 28, 1786, as explained above.

Fewer than ten surviving letters from this Régie are known due to the short period of operation. Departure markings were the same as at the end of the Première Régie: “PAQ.L’ORIENT” and “PAQ.NEWYORK.” Although the French terminus had been moved, the continued use of the “PAQ.L’ORIENT” handstamp by the Seconde Régie suggests that it was transferred to Le Havre along with the ships and crews. However, the French post office prepared a red entry marking for eastbound mail (“NEW-YORCK PAR LE HAVRE”), which correctly reflected the terminus for the line.

NEW-YORCK PAR LE HAVRE



His Most Christian Majesty's Packet, No. 3, ——— DE COET-NEMPRUN, Lsq; Commander, will sail the 10th of June next, with the Mail for HAVRE. For freight, passage, or any demands against said Packet, apply to M. MANTEL, Hannover Square, No. 3.

Figure 13 – May 26, 1787 letter from New York to Nantes, carried by *Le Courier de l'Orient* of the Seconde Régie.

Figure 13 shows a May 26, 1787 single folded letter from New York to Nantes which was marked "PAQ. NEWYORK" for the Seconde Régie sailing by *Le Courier de l'Orient*. It left New York on June 10 and arrived in Le Havre on July 9, where it received the red entry marking and a red manuscript "20" on the reverse, reflecting 20 sols packet postage due. It was rated for 30 sols due at Paris, even though the correct amount due was 35 sols, consisting of 15 sols domestic postage to Nantes (7 sols from Le Havre to Paris plus 8 sols from Paris to Nantes) and 20 sols packet postage. However, this was during a brief resistance, based mainly in Nantes and Bordeaux, against the mandatory 20 sols packet charge on all incoming mail from the United States. Thus, the 30 sols postage assessed at Paris was corrected at Nantes to 14 sols, reflecting the (incorrect) 10 sols domestic postage plus the 4 sols incoming ship fee.

Mail addressed to Le Havre did not receive the Le Havre entry mark, as shown in Figure 14.



New-York, December 25.
On Friday last sailed, his Most Christian Majesty's Packet De la Europe, Captain Fournier, with the mail for Havre de Grace: This Packet, at her departure, was manned, armed, and appointed as in time of war.

Figure 14 – November 22, 1787 letter from Philadelphia to Le Havre, carried by *Le Courier de l'Europe* of the Seconde Régie.

This is a November 22, 1787 single folded letter from Philadelphia to Le Havre which was posted in New York on December 5 and marked “PAQ.NEWYORK.” *Le Courier de l’Europe* left New York on December 21 and arrived in Le Havre on January 19, where it was rated for 20 sols due, consisting only of the packet postage.

NEW-YORK, September 27.
On Friday last arrived here his most
Christian Majesty's packet, No. 2. Cap:
Couridouc, in 36 days, from Havre de
Grace.

Figure 15 – July 1787 letter
from Le Havre to Baltimore,
carried by *Le Maréchal de
Castries* of the *Seconde Régie*.

2/10
PAQ.L'ORIENT
6.16
Messieur Zolli Koffer
Messouier p. remettre
s. d. p. à m. de Galateau
capitaine
à Baltimore
nouvelle ang le terre

A July 1787 westbound letter (no dateline) to Baltimore is illustrated in Figure 15. This heavy letter must have weighed over one ounce, so it was prepaid 30 sols per a manuscript “30” on the reverse, representing 1-2 ounces packet postage. No domestic postage was required from the departure port, so the letter originated in Le Havre. It was marked “PAQ.L’ORIENT” and sailed on the *Seconde Régie* packet *Le Maréchal de Castries*, which left Le Havre on August 10 and arrived in New York on September 21. New York assessed double-sheet 6 dwt 16 grains postage for the 202 miles to Baltimore per the manuscript “6.16” marking. The manuscript “2/10” is a 2 shillings 10 pence local postage (mid-Atlantic) re-statement of the amount due. There is an internal docket of October 22, 1787.

Sometime in late 1787, the *Régie* apparently stopped using the “PAQ.L’ORIENT” marking on westbound mail. With no such distinctive markings, this mail can only be recognized by correlation with sailing dates, and by the absence of a ship fee added to the U.S. domestic postage due.

Figure 16 illustrates a February 2, 1788 single-weight folded letter from Paris to Philadelphia, prepaid 27 sols per a red Paris “P.PAYE PARIS” marking and manuscript “20” and “7” markings on the reverse, representing 7 sols domestic postage from Paris to Le Havre plus 20 sols packet postage. It was carried by *Le Courier de l’Orient*, which left on February 27 and arrived on April 17 in New York, where it was assessed 1 dwt 8 grains postage (April 1788 rate) for the 100 miles to Philadelphia per the manuscript “18” marking. The manuscript “9d” is a local postage (mid-Atlantic) re-statement of the amount due (7d postage plus 2d carrier fee), and there is an internal receipt docket of April 18, 1788.



New-York, April 18.
 YESTERDAY arrived here the schooner Coufins, Old Road, from Charlestown; brig Nymph, Conkling, from Demarara; Packet Fortune, Rolland, from Havre de Grace,

Figure 16 – February 2, 1788 letter from Paris to Philadelphia, carried by *Le Courier de l'Orient* of the Seconde Régie. (Image courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries)

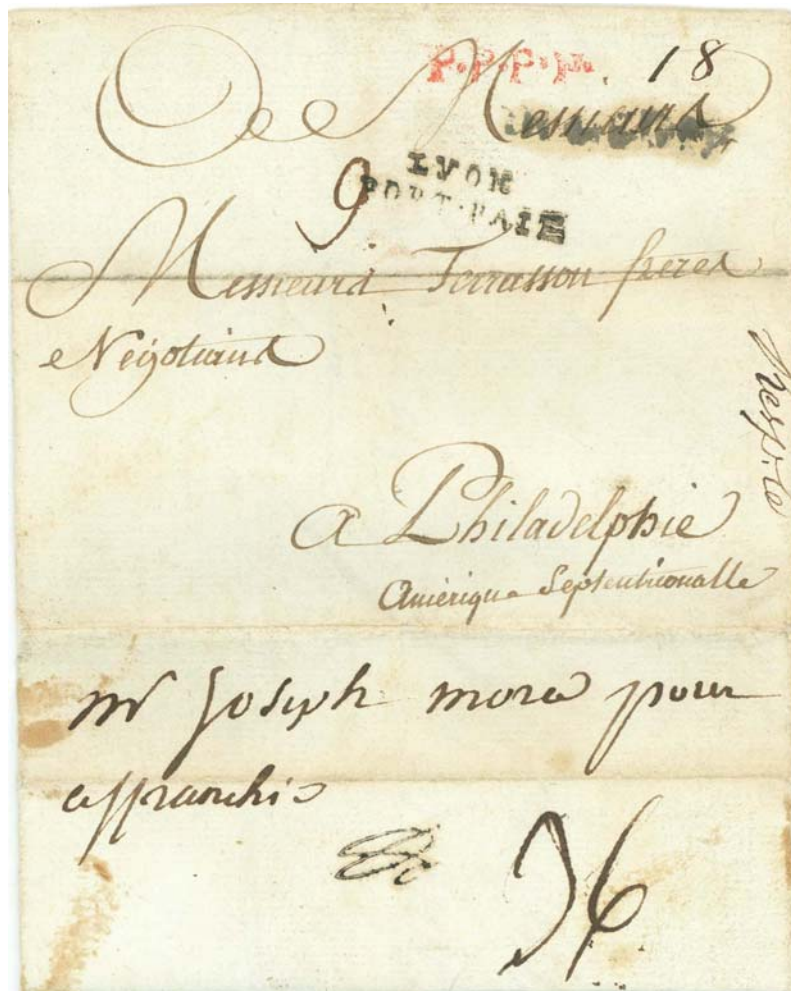
The Troisième Régie (March 1789 to May 1793)

The French State's deepening financial crisis and the consequent political unrest led Louis XVI to discontinue all State-sponsored packets on July 5, 1788. Nonetheless, on March 1, 1789 he accepted a proposal by Benjamin Dubois & Compagnie to operate a bi-monthly packet service between Bordeaux or Lorient and New York in exchange for a State subsidy of 6,000 livres per successful round-trip voyage. Dubois constructed six ships for this service, which made 21 round-trip voyages between March 1789 and May 1793. The 20 sols packet rate of 1786 continued to be charged on letters carried by these packets, but was no longer applied to other private ships carrying transatlantic mail.

Troisième Régie Mail from France to the United States

Since no distinctive markings were utilized on westbound mail, letters can only be recognized by correlation with sailing dates, and by the absence of a ship fee added to the U.S. domestic postage due. The first six voyages left from Bordeaux and, in one instance, from St Malo. The departure port was moved to Lorient starting May 16, 1790. Fewer than ten surviving westbound letters are known.

Figure 17 shows a letter sent from Lyon to Philadelphia, unfolded to show markings on the reverse. When this letter was posted unpaid in Lyon on January 29, 1789, there was no packet service and the sender did not include routing directions. It was held until prepayment of domestic and packet postage was made by the sender, M. Joseph Mora. When he finally paid 36 sols on May 26, the Troisième Régie packets had started, so the letter was marked "LYON PORT PAIE" and routed prepaid via Paris per the red "P.P.P.P." The postage from Lyon to Paris was 8 sols, and the postage from Paris to Bordeaux was 10 sols, so this letter was underpaid by 2 sols. It was carried by the *Franklin*, which left Bordeaux on July 29 and arrived in New York on September 19. New York assessed 1 dwt 8 grains (1788 rates) for the 100 miles to Philadelphia, which was converted to 9d in local currency (7d for the 1.8 dwt plus 2d local delivery) per the manuscript "9." The letter was docketed as received on September 25.



ARRIVALS.—NEWYORK.

Saturday,	Sloop Corinna,	Sacket,	St. Martins,	24 days.
Sunday,	Sloop Brothers,	Walton,	Digby,	12 do.
Monday,	Brig Nancy,	Carberry,	Kingston,	40 do.
	Ship Favorite,	Willson,	Hull,	56 do.
	Brig Betty,	Motlev,	Charleston,	18 do.
	Ship Wm. Pitt,	White,	Kingston,	35 do.
	Brig Columbia,	Paddock,	Port au Prince,	25 do.
	Sloop N. Y. Packet,	Albertson,	Philadelphia,	9 do.
	Sloop Nancy,	Price,	Philadelphia,	7 do.
	Packet Franklin,	Vourottois,	Bordeaux,	52 do.
	Ship Britannia,	Renwick,	Yarmouth,	56 do.
	Sloop Polly,	Painter,	Bermuda,	12 do.
Tuesday,	Ship Merchant,	Bunker,	Havre de Grace,	— do.
	Ship St. Phillip,	Harrison,	Bonnaville,	— do.
	Sloop Lady-Hammond,	—	Grenada,	— do.
	Brig Charlotte,	Woodruff,	Aux Cayes,	— do.

Figure 17 – January 29, 1789 letter from Lyon to Philadelphia, carried by *Le Franklin* of the Troisième Régie.

Mail from other countries was also routed to the Troisième Régie packets, as shown in Figure 18.



Yesterday arrived the brig Atlanta, Moore, from Lisbon; ship Merchant, Bunker, Havre de Grace; French Packet, Le General Washington, Dänloen, St. Maloes, 59 days, very leaky;

Figure 18 – December 3, 1789 letter from Anvers, Belgium to Philadelphia, carried by *Le Washington* of the Troisième Régie.

This is a December 3, 1789 letter sent from Anvers, Belgium (under Austrian control) to Philadelphia. It was prepaid packet and transit postage per the “franco nieuw Yorck” at the lower left, marked

“D’HOLLANDE,” and routed to Bordeaux. At this time, packets were still departing from Bordeaux, but there were no sailings scheduled before February 1790. The February packet was a newly-constructed ship based at St Malo, so its mail was transferred from Bordeaux to St Malo on January 22, 1790. *Le Washington* left St Malo on February 4 and arrived in New York on April 4. New York rated this letter for 1 dwt 8 grains due (1788 rates) for the 100 miles to Philadelphia, which was converted to 9d in local currency (7d for the 1.8 dwt plus 2d local delivery) due per the manuscript “9d.”

Figure 19 shows a September 12, 1789 double letter from Amsterdam (United Provinces) to Philadelphia. It was prepaid packet and transit postage per the “franco New York” at the lower left, marked “D’HOLLANDE,” and routed to Bordeaux. It just missed the September 30 sailing of the *Télémaque* and left Bordeaux on December 15 aboard the *Franklin*, which was de-masted in a storm and forced to return to Brest. The letter then caught the first Troisième Régie sailing from Lorient by *La Sophie* on May 16, 1790. This packet successfully arrived in New York on August 11, where it was marked “doub” (for a double letter) and assessed double 2 dwt 16 grains postage (1788 rates) for the 100 miles to Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, the 2.16 dwt was converted to 1 shilling 4d local postage (including an extra 2d for local delivery). The letter was docketed as received on August 13.



Figure 19 – September 12, 1789 letter from Amsterdam, Dutch Republic to Philadelphia, carried by the *La Sophie* of the Troisième Régie.

Figure 20 illustrates a February 1, 1792 letter from St Quentin to Boston. This letter is addressed to a French Colonel in service to the United States, and was prepaid per the faint “P2P S. QUENTIN” marking and the Paris red “P.P.P.P.” marking. It was carried by *Le Washington* which left Lorient on April 10 and arrived in New York on June 7. No postal rate markings are on the letter, but the French prepayment would have been 32 sous, representing 12 sous domestic postage (111 lieues between the Aisne Department and the Morbihan Department per the January 1792 rates) plus 20 sous packet postage. No ship fee was assessed in the United States, confirming carriage by a packet, and the absence of any U.S. domestic postage due indicates that the French consul arranged for private delivery to Boston.



ARRIVED.
Packet Washington, ———, L'Orient

Figure 20 – February 1, 1792 letter from St. Quentin to Boston, carried by *Le Washington* of the Troisième Régie.

Troisième Régie Mail from the United States to France

The census includes only eleven surviving eastbound Troisième Régie letters to France. In 1789, the Régie's French agent in New York introduced a new "P.F. DE NEW YORK" departure marking which was marked in red. This same postmark, marked in black ink, would be used again in 1792-93.

P.F. DE NEW YORK

Dubois used Bordeaux as his departure and arrival port for the first six voyages from March 1789 until March 1790, although four of the six failed to return to Bordeaux due to sailing difficulties. A special two-ring "AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE B" Bordeaux entry postmark was created by the French post office for this service. Only two examples are known; one in red and one in black.



Figure 21 shows a June 12, 1789 letter in an envelope sent from Albany, New York to Mulhouse which bears the red "P.F. DE NEW YORK" departure marking and the red Bordeaux entry marking. It was sent under cover to New York City, where it received a "N. York June 20" straight-line postmark. It was charged no U.S. postage, as was normal for letters from the departure port, and then carried by the *Télémaque*, which left New York on July 1 and arrived in Bordeaux on August 19. From 1648 to 1798, Mulhouse (or Mulhausen) was an independent republic, so it was not in the French postal system. The 41 sols assessed represented 21 sols domestic postage (10 sols from Bordeaux to Paris plus 10 sols from Paris to the frontier town of Habsheim plus one sol for an envelope) and 20 sols packet postage. The letter was then carried from Habsheim to Mulhouse for an additional 2 sols, so 43 sols were collected from the recipient per the manuscript "43" in the upper left corner. This was the first return sailing of the Troisième Régie, and one of only two voyages which received the Bordeaux entry marking.

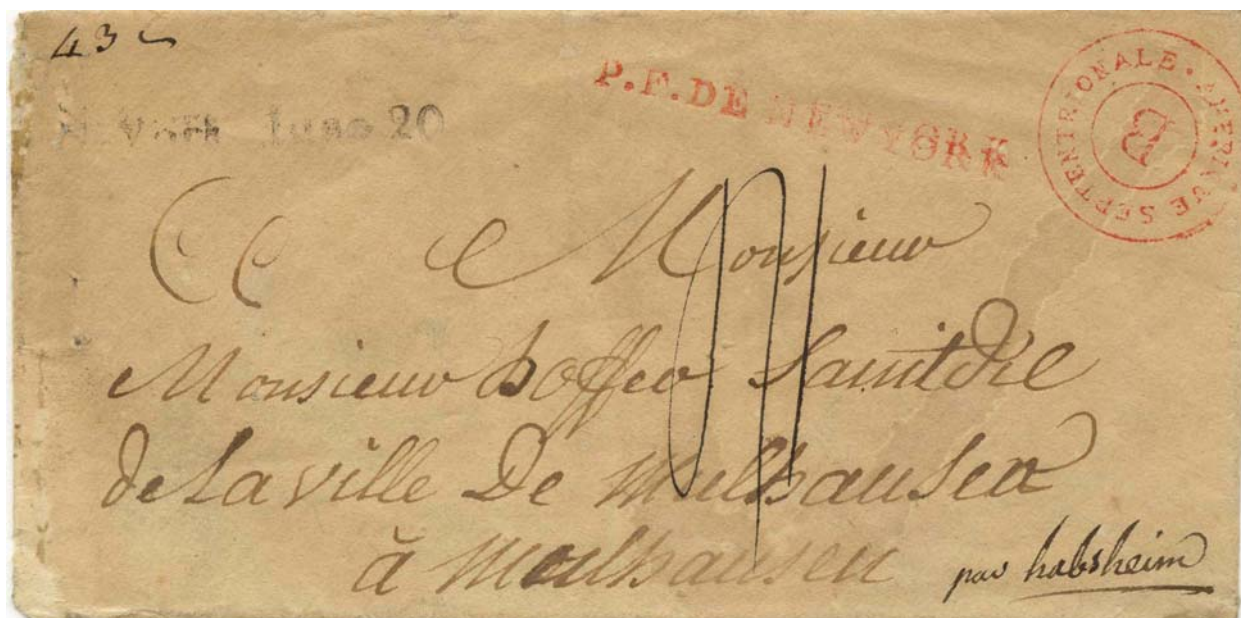


Figure 21 – June 12, 1789 letter from Albany, New York to the Republic of Mulhouse, carried by the *Télémaque* of the Troisième Régie.

Figure 22 shows a December 30, 1789 letter from Philadelphia to Paris which bears the red “P.F. DE NEW YORK” departure marking and a black Bordeaux entry marking.



Figure 22 – December 31, 1789 letter from Philadelphia to Paris, carried by the *Télémaque* of the Troisième Régie.

It was postmarked in Philadelphia on December 31 per the “31 DE” Franklin mark, and prepaid 4 dwt for a triple-sheet letter (three times the April 1788 one dwt 8 grains rate for 100 miles) to New York. It was carried by the *Télémaque*, which left New York on January 4 and arrived in Bordeaux on February 20. This letter weighed between 2 and 4 gros per the manuscript check mark, so 35 sols postage due was assessed, representing 15 sols domestic postage from Bordeaux to Paris plus 20 sols packet postage. This was the second of only two voyages which received the Bordeaux entry marking.

A new series of black straight-line New York departure markings, which incorporated the expected sailing dates, was introduced by the agent for the Régie in 1791. The first variety read “Paq. F. de New-York” (French Packet from New York) and is known with a July 10, 1791 sailing date.

Paq.F.de NewYork 10 Juil.

Dubois shifted his base of operations from Bordeaux to Lorient in May 1790, and the remaining fifteen voyages returned to Lorient. Accordingly, the new red two-ring French entry mark “AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE P L'ORIENT” was introduced by the French post office.




For L'ORIENT,
 HIS Most Chrstian Majesty's
 Packet, Le Washington,
 Monsieur Galliot, commander;
 will sail with the Mail on the
 10th of July. Has good accommodations for
 passengers. Letters will be received at the Post
 Office, and the Mail made up the preceding
 evening at the office of M. Chevallier, No. 32,
 Beekman street. For freight or passage apply
 to the Capt. on board, at Moores wharf, or
 to AARON VAIL, No 156, Water street.



Figure 23 – April 24, 1791 letter from Gallipolis, Ohio to Le Havre, carried by *Le Washington* of the Troisième Régie.

Figure 23 illustrates an April 24, 1791 letter from Gallipolis, Ohio to Le Havre which shows the new departure marking and the new red Lorient entry marking. No U.S. postage is shown on the letter, so it was sent under cover to New York, where the agent for the Régie marked it “Paq. F. de New York 10 Juil” on the reverse. It was carried by *Le Washington*, which left New York on July 10 and arrived in Lorient in August 1791. This letter weighed between 2 and 4 gros per the manuscript check mark, so 45 sols postage due was assessed, representing 25 sols domestic postage (15 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 10 sols from Paris to Le Havre) and 20 sols packet postage.

The second variety of New York departure markings read “Paq. de New York” (packet from New York – no “F”) and is known with 1791 sailing dates of May 13, September 14 and October 14. The latter two were used on the same sailing.

Paq. de New York 14 Octob

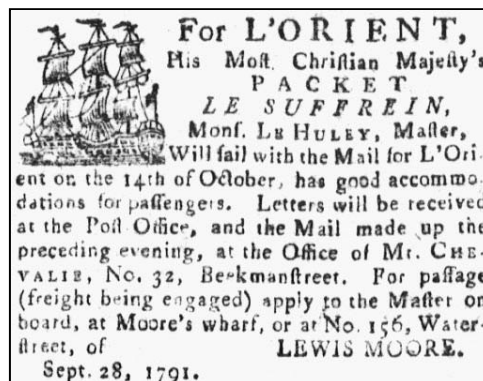
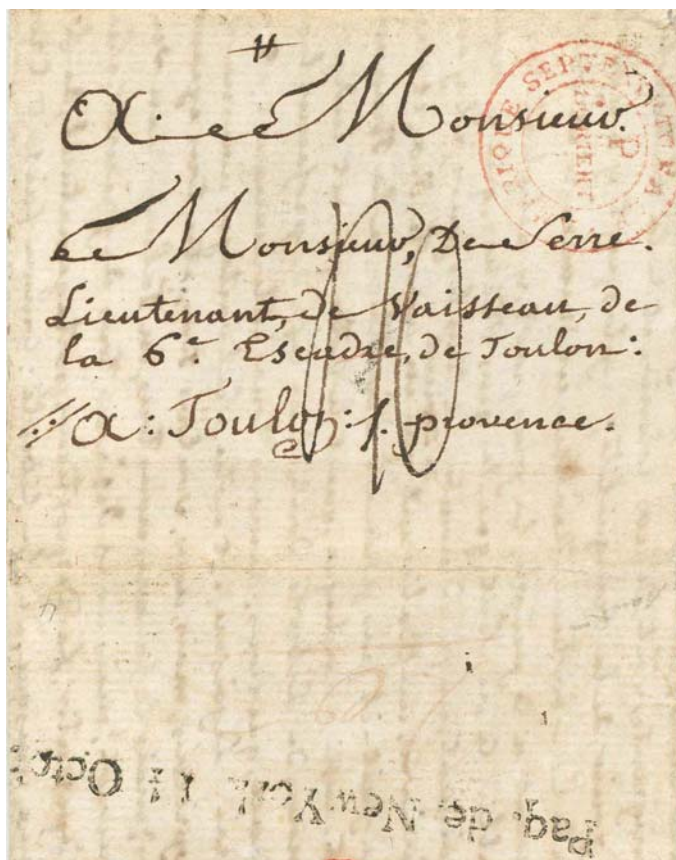
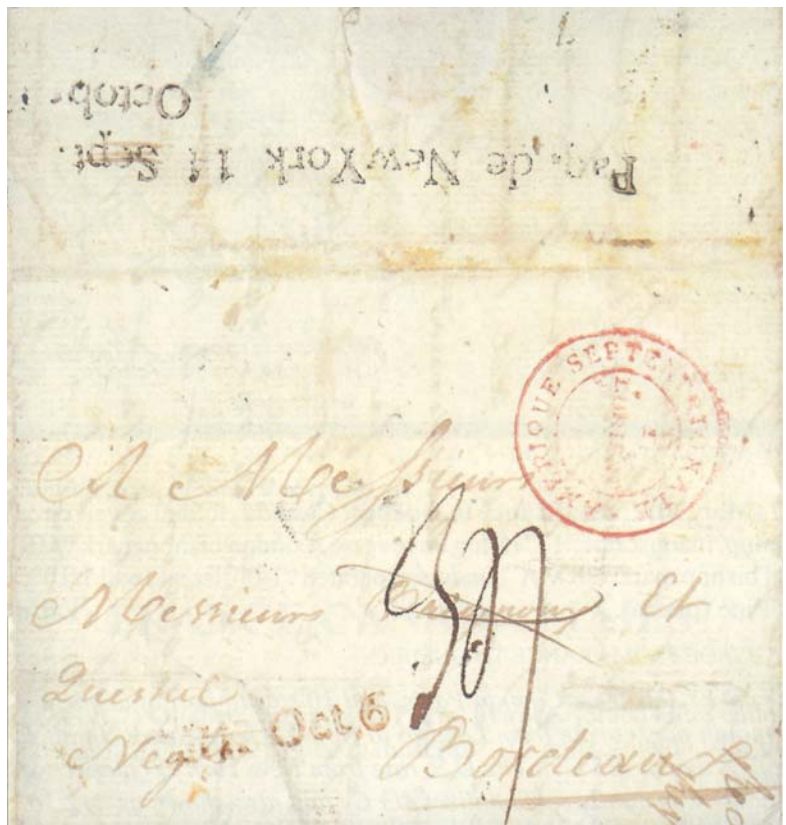


Figure 24 – October 2, 1791 letter from New York to Toulon, carried by *Le Suffren* of the Troisième Régie.

Figure 24 illustrates an October 2, 1791 letter from New York to Toulon which shows this New York departure marking and the red Lorient entry marking. No postage was collected in New York, and the letter was marked “Paq. de New York 14 Octob” by the agent for the Régie. It was carried by *Le Suffren*, which left New York on October 14 and arrived in Lorient on November 22. This single letter was rated for 40 sols due, consisting of 20 sols domestic postage (10 sols from Lorient to Paris plus 10 sols from Paris to Toulon) and 20 sols packet postage.

Figure 25 illustrates a September 22, 1791 letter from Montreal, Canada to Bordeaux which was carried on the same voyage of *Le Suffren* to Lorient on November 22. It was sent under cover to New York, where it was postmarked on October 6, but assessed no U.S. postage as was normal for letters from New York. The agent for the Régie initially marked it for a September 14 departure, but corrected the September to October. In Lorient, it received the red two-ring entry marking. This single folded letter was carried from Lorient to Bordeaux via Nantes, so it was rated for 14 sols domestic postage (6 sols from Lorient to Nantes plus 8 sols from Nantes to Bordeaux) and 20 sols packet postage, for a total of 34 sols.

Figure 25 – September 22, 1791 letter from Montreal, Canada to Bordeaux, carried by *Le Suffren* of the Troisième Régie. (Image courtesy of Harmers Auctions SA, May 28, 2005 Allan Steinhart Collection, lot 1152)



Sometime in 1792, the agent for the Régie in New York began re-using the 1789 “P.F. DE NEW YORK” departure markings. These are known only in black ink during this period.

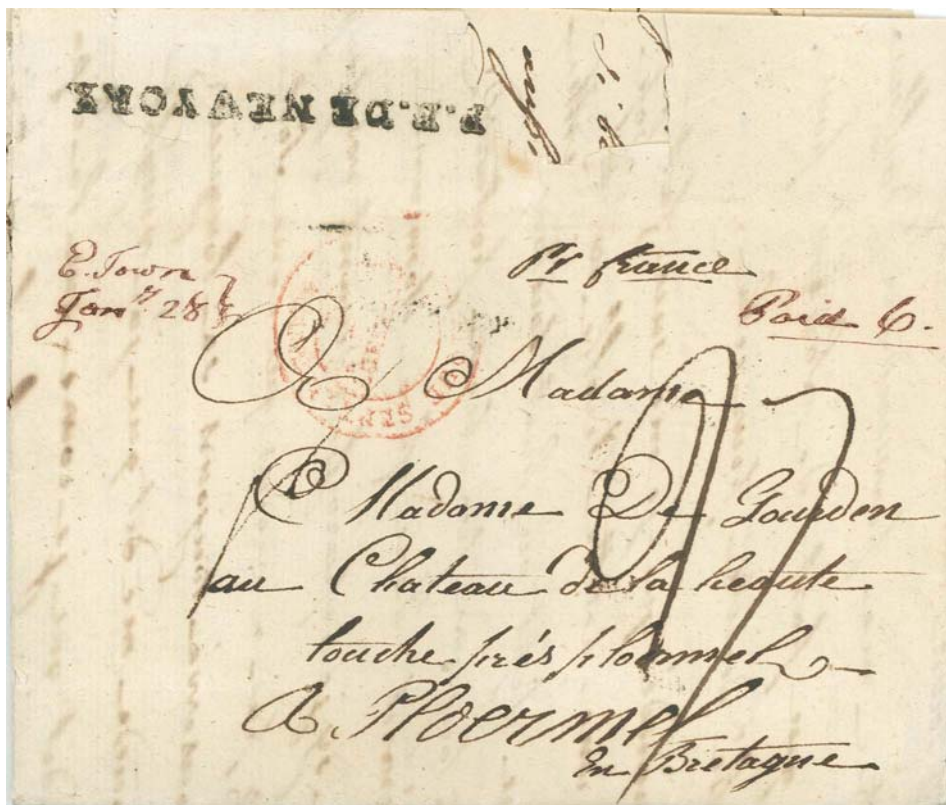


Figure 26 – January 28, 1793 letter from New Jersey to Ploërmel, carried by *Le Washington* of the Troisième Régie.

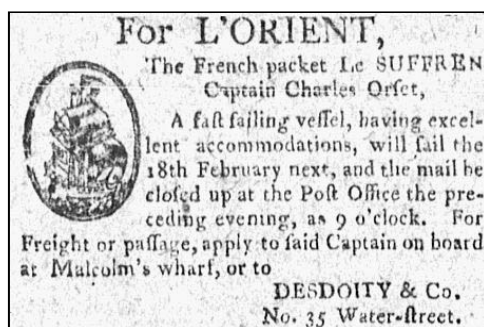
Figure 26 illustrates a January 28, 1793 letter from Elizabethtown, New Jersey to Ploërmel which shows the re-use of the “P.F. DE NEW YORK” departure marking on the reverse. Six cents postage for the 15 miles to New York (June 1792 rate) was prepaid, and it was carried by *Le Washington*, which left New York on February 3 and arrived in Lorient on April 8, where it received the red two-ring entry marking. This letter weighed between 2 and 4 gros per the manuscript check mark, so the domestic postage was 7 sous (January 1792 inter-Departmental rate for up to 20 lieues) plus the packet postage of 20 sous, for a total of 27 sous. However, since Lorient and Morbihan were in the same Department, the domestic postage should have been 6 sous. The postmaster at Lorient mistakenly chose the inter-Departmental rate for the distance to be travelled.

Figure 27 illustrates a February 12, 1793 letter from New York to Caen which was handed directly to the Captain of *Le Suffren*, as described by the letter contents. It was not marked “P.F. DE NEW YORK” since it was not handled by the agent for the Régie. *Le Suffren* left New York on February 18 and arrived in Lorient on May 14, where it received the red two-ring entry marking. It was rated for 28 sous due, representing 8 sous domestic postage (for the 49 lieues between the Morbihan Department and the Calvados Department per the January 1792 rate tables) plus 20 sous packet postage. This was the last sailing of the Troisième Régie.



Figure 27 – February 12, 1793 letter from New York to Caen, carried by *Le Suffren* of the Troisième Régie, in the last sailing of the French packets.

By February 1793, the execution of Louis XVI and the outbreak of war with England ended the operations of the Troisième Régie. No further French packet services with the United States would be attempted until 1847.



Bibliography

1. Robert Abensur, "Les tarifs postaux en Lorraine au XVIII^e siècle (1704-1791). Application à l'étude de la taxation des lettres pesantes en France," *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, supplément au No. 299, 1999.
2. American Stampless Cover Catalog, Volume I, Fifth Edition, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Miami, 1997. Pages xvii-xviii.
3. Matthew Bennett International, October 7, 2005 auction of the "Ed and Jean Siskin Collection." Pages v-vi and 203-209.
4. J. Bergier & V. Pothion, "France Poste Maritime Préphilatelique," *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, supplément au No. 263, Paris 1990. Pricing guide in supplément au No. 269, Paris 1992.
5. Michèle Chauvet, Introduction à L'Histoire Postale des Origines à 1849. Tome 2 – Les Tarifs Postaux, 2^e Édition, Brun et Fils, Paris, 2002.
6. Claude Delbeke, De Nederlandse Schepspost, II. Nederland Enhet Westen, 1690-1900, published by the author, 2002.
7. Léon Dubus, "Les Trois Premières Régies de Paquebot-Poste sous Louis XVI," *Documents Philatéliques*, Académie de Philatélie, July/October 1967, No. 33/34, pp. 193-239.
8. Marc W. Martin, "The French Transatlantic Packet Service", in The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America 1628-1790, American Philatelic Research Library, State College PA, 1975. Pages G-1 to G-37.
9. Cornelius Muys and Jan Giphart, "Two Hundred Years of Postal Communication: The Netherlands-United States of America," *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*, Volume 58, No. 4, Whole No. 212 (May 1985). Pages 81-85.
10. John Olenkiewicz, "French Packet Sailings between New York and France 1783-1793," newspaper research from the archives of the American Antiquarian Society and NewsBank published on the PhilaMercury website, May 2010.
<http://www.rfrajola.com/mercury/jofrenchpacketschedule.pdf>
11. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, October 24, 2007 auction of "Postal History from the Archives of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania." Pages 170-171.
12. Henri Tristant, Les Premiers Paquebots Français de la Ligne de New-York 1783-1793, published by the author, Paris, 1985.
13. Steven Walske, "The French Royal Packet Service between France and the United States, 1783-1793," *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 89, No. 6 (November-December 2010). Pages 375-383.
14. Steven Walske and Robert Abensur, "Les Paquebots-Poste Royaux de la Ligne de New York – Analyse des lettres 1783-1793," *Documents Philatéliques*, Académie de Philatélie, No. 207, 15 January 2011, pages 10-36.
15. Website: <http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCurrency/CurrencyIntros/IntroValue.html> which details the American currency equivalencies in the 1782-1792 period.

French Royal Régie Packets Sailing Table – 1783-1793

#	Trans-Atlantic Sailing Ship	# of Ltrs	Depart Lorient	# of Days	Arrive NY	Depart NY	# of Days	Arrive Lorient	# of Ltrs	Known Departure Postmarks (in Quotes) and Notes
<i>June 28, 1783 Louis XVI Royal Decree established Royal packet line – monthly service</i>										
1783 – First Régie										
1	Courier de l'Europe (Le Serin)	138	26-Sep	54	19-Nov	19-Dec	39	27-Jan	250	Brought Peace Treaty to U.S. - returned to Brest
<i>November 25, 1783 British evacuation of New York – New York post office opened three days later</i>										
2	Courier de l'Amérique (Ecureuil)	123	15-Oct	61	15-Dec	21-Feb	32	25-Mar	?	Red "Courierdel' Amerique New York"
3	Courier de Port Louis (Le Hariot)	193	22-Nov	58	19-Jan					Sank off Long Island on January 19, 1784 – mail lost
4	Courier de New York (Alligator)	213	17-Dec	50	5-Feb	20-Mar	28	17-Apr	250	"LeCourierde New York"
1784 – First Régie										
5	Courier de l'Orient (La Fortune)	253	20-Jan	74	3-Apr	29-Apr	28	27-May	354	"CourierdeL'Orient New York"
6	Le Warwick (1 st trip)	149	17-Feb	76	3-May	16-Jun	28	14-Jul	357	"Le Warwick. New York."
7	Le Silphe (1 st trip)	244	16-Mar	43	28-Apr	20-May	22	11-Jun	202	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
8	Courier de l'Europe (2 nd trip)	340	29-Apr	37	5-Jun	17-Jul	26	12-Aug	213	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
9	Courier de l'Amérique (2 nd trip)	276	18-May	45	2-Jul	17-Aug	33	19-Sep	?	"Le Courier de l'Amerique *New York*"
10	Courier de New York (2 nd trip)	472	30-Jun	35	4-Aug	20-Sep	31	21-Oct	306	"PAQ.L'ORIENT" – carried Marquis de Lafayette to U.S.
11	Courier de l'Orient (2 nd trip)	218	31-Jul	40	9-Sep	17-Oct	28	14-Nov	230	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
12	Le Warwick (2 nd trip)	139	17-Aug	52	8-Oct	26-Nov	38	3-Jan	291	
13	Courier de l'Europe (3 rd trip)	366	1-Oct	44	14-Nov	21-Dec	29	19-Jan	362	"PAQ.L'OR." & "P.LeCourierde l'Europe. capt:CORnic: New.York"
14	La Martinique (1 st trip)	168	20-Oct	70	29-Dec	15-Jan	42	26-Feb	345	"LeCourierLaMartinique New.York 15 Jan. 1785"
15	Courier de l'Amérique (3 rd trip)	284	21-Nov	58	18-Jan	22-Feb	44	7-Apr	314	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
16	Courier de l'Orient (3 rd trip)	319	29-Dec	61	28-Feb	24-Mar	29	22-Apr	372	
1785 – First Régie										
17	Courier de New York (3 rd trip)	192	28-Jan	62	31-Mar	29-Apr	32	31-May	372	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
18	Le Warwick (3 rd trip)	274	27-Feb	66	4-May	19-May	43	1-Jul	317	"PAQ.L'ORIENT" - official dispatches arrived in Paris on July 8
19	Courier de l'Europe (4 th trip)	281	23-Mar	37	29-Apr	17-Jun	22	9-Jul	355	"PAQ.L'OR." & "LeCourierdel'EUROPE. New York*16 juin 1785"
<i>French consul in New York, St Jean de Crèvecoeur, returned to France on July 9, 1785 – end of New York ship name departure postmarks</i>										
20	La Martinique (2 nd trip)	192	3-May	27	30-May	16-Jul	30	15-Aug	244	"PAQ.L'ORIENT"
21	Courier de l'Amérique (4 th trip)	204	22-May	56	17-Jul	14-Aug	29	12-Sep	306	
<i>Louis XVI takes over control of Régie from Le Couteux & Cie. – reduction in service to bi-monthly</i>										
22	Courier de l'Orient (4 th trip)		4-Jul	52	25-Aug	18-Sep	21	9-Oct		"PAQ.L'ORIENT" - official dispatches arrived in Paris on October 15
<i>New French Chargé d'Affaires in New York, Louis-Guillaume Otto, arrived August 25, 1785 – introduced "PAQ.NEWYORK" departure postmark for September 18, 1785 sailing</i>										
23	Courier de New York (4 th trip)		29-Sep	45	13-Nov	12-Dec	29	10-Jan		"PAQ.L'ORIENT" & "PAQ.NEWYORK" – mail to Paris January 16
24	Courier de l'Europe (5 th trip)		11-Nov	33	14-Dec	23-Jan	26	18-Feb		"PAQ.NEWYORK" – dispatches arrived in Paris on February 24
1786 – First Régie										
25	Courier de l'Orient (5 th trip)		15-Feb	60	16-Apr	10-May	38	17-Jun		"PAQ.L'ORIENT" & "PAQ.NEWYORK" – mail to Paris on June 23
26	Courier de l'Europe (6 th trip)		18-Apr	30	18-May	17-Jun	39	26-Jul		
27	Marechal de Castries (1 st trip)					15-Jul	21	5-Aug		New ship launched in U.S. April 1786 – dispatches to Paris on Aug. 11
28	Courier de New York (5 th trip)		1-Jun	48	19-Jul	20-Aug	32	21-Sep		Official dispatches arrived in Paris on September 27
29	Courier de l'Orient (6 th trip)		16-Jul	40	25-Aug	15-Oct	51	5-Dec		
30	Courier de l'Europe (7 th trip)		24-Sep	28	22-Oct	18-Dec	31	18-Jan		"PAQ.L'ORIENT" - official dispatches arrived in Paris on January 24
31	Courier de New York (6 th trip)		6-Nov	51	27-Dec	16-Feb	29	17-Mar		"PAQ.L'ORIENT"

Italics indicate an estimated arrival date (from known arrivals of official dispatches or mail at Paris) or a scheduled or announced departure date – actual departure dates often varied considerably from scheduled dates.

Dates are drawn from Henri Tristant, *Les Premiers Paquebots Français* (1985), and from U.S. newspaper research (in the archives of the American Antiquarian Society and NewsBank) by John S. Olenkiewicz, which was published in May 2010 on the PhilaMercury website.

French Royal Régie Packets Sailing Table – 1783-1793

#	<u>Trans-Atlantic Sailing Ship</u>	<u>Depart Havre</u>	<u># of Days</u>	<u>Arrive NY</u>	<u>Depart NY</u>	<u># of Days</u>	<u>Arrive Havre</u>	<u>Dispatches @ Paris</u>	<u>Known Postmarks (in Quotes) and Notes</u>
<i>All ten voyages of 2nd Régie left from and returned to Le Havre – red “NEW-YORCK PAR LE HAVRE” entry marking – “PAQ.L’ORIENT” & “PAQ.NEWYORK” departure markings</i>									

1787 – Second Régie

32	Les Deux Freres/No. 1 (1 st trip)	17-Feb	50	8-Apr	25-Apr	31	26-May	28-May	
33	Courier de l’Orient/No. 3 (7 th trip)	27-Mar	52	18-May	10-Jun	29	9-Jul	11-Jul	“PAQ.NEWYORK” & red “NEW YORCK PAR LE HAVRE”
34	Courier de l’Europe /No. 7 (8 th trip)	10-May	47	26-Jun	25-Jul	36	30-Aug	1-Sep	“PAQ.NEWYORK” & red “NEW YORCK PAR LE HAVRE”
35	Courier de New York/No. 9 (7 th trip)	27-Jun	62	28-Aug	10-Sep	30	10-Oct	12-Oct	
36	Marechal de Castries/No. 2 (2 nd trip)	10-Aug	42	21-Sep	25-Oct	45	9-Dec	11-Dec	“PAQ.L’ORIENT”
37	Courier de l’Europe /No. 7 (9 th trip)	25-Sep	51	15-Nov	21-Dec	29	19-Jan	21-Jan	“PAQ.NEWYORK”
38	“Paquebot Neuf”/No. 1 (1 st trip)	11-Nov	80	30-Jan	21-Feb	28	20-Mar		
39	Marechal de Castries/No. 2 (3 rd trip)	29-Dec	98	5-Apr	26-Apr	25	21-May		26-day delay for repairs at Lorient enroute to U.S.

1788 – Second Régie

40	Courier de l’Orient/No. 3 (8 th trip)	27-Feb	50	17-Apr	25-May	30	24-Jun		
41	Courier de New York/No. 9 (8 th trip)	8-Apr	47	25-May	10-Jun	27	7-Jul		

#	<u>Trans-Atlantic Sailing Ship</u>	<u>Depart France</u>	<u># of Days</u>	<u>Arrive NY</u>	<u>Depart NY</u>	<u># of Days</u>	<u>Arrive France</u>	<u>Dispatches @ Paris</u>	<u>Known Postmarks (in Quotes) and Notes</u>
<i>First six voyages of 3rd Régie left from Bordeaux (except #46), and trips #42 and #45 returned to Bordeaux - “AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE B” entry marking</i>									

1789 – Third Régie

42	Télémaque (1 st trip)	29-Mar	80	17-Jun	1-Jul	49	19-Aug	23-Aug	Red “P.F. DE NEW YORK” & red “AMERIQUE...B”
43	Jean-Jacques (1 st trip)	15-May	106	29-Aug	19-Sep	58	16-Nov	20-Nov	Returned to La Rochelle
44	Le Franklin (1 st trip)	29-Jul	52	19-Sep	12-Oct	38	19-Nov		Returned to St Martin en Ré
45	Télémaque (2 nd trip)	30-Sep	75	14-Dec	4-Jan	47	20-Feb	24-Feb	Red “P.F. DE NEW YORK” & “AMERIQUE...B”

1790 – Third Régie

46	Le Washington (1 st trip)	4-Feb	59	4-Apr	20-May	39	28-Jun	2-Jul	Left St Malo & returned to Lorient – mail taken to St Malo Jan. 22
47	Le Suffren (1 st trip)	16-Mar	60	15-May	9-Jun	29	8-Jul		Returned to Lorient

Remaining fifteen voyages of 3rd Régie (except #58) left from and returned to Lorient - “AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE P L’ORIENT” entry marking

48	La Sophie (1 st trip)	16-May	87	11-Aug	1-Sep	29	30-Sep		Carried mail from failed December 15, 1789 “Franklin” sailing
49	Le Suffren (2 nd trip)	23-Jul	62	23-Sep	13-Oct	38	20-Nov	26-Nov	
50	Le Franklin (2 nd trip)	29-Sep	101	8-Jan	29-Jan	42	12-Mar	18-Mar	
51	Le Washington (2 nd trip)	15-Nov	61	15-Jan	7-Feb	60	8-Apr		

1791 – Third Régie

52	Le Suffren (3 rd trip)	1-Mar	52	22-Apr	13-May	47	29-Jun	7-Jul	“Paq.F.de.New York 13 Mai” & red “AMERIQUE...P L’ORIENT”
53	Le Washington (3 rd trip)	15-Apr	56	10-Jun	10-Jul		?-Aug		“Paq.F.de.New York 10 Juil.” & red “AMERIQUE...P L’ORIENT”
54	Le Franklin (3 rd trip)	15-May	60	14-Jul	4-Aug	49	22-Sep	28-Sep	
55	Le Suffren (4 th trip)	24-Jul	63	25-Sep	14-Oct	39	22-Nov	28-Nov	“Paq.F.de.New York 14 Octb.” & red “AMERIQUE...P L’ORIENT”
56	Le Washington (4 th trip)	15-Sep	70	24-Nov	18-Dec		?-Jan		
57	Le Franklin (4 th trip)	15-Dec	71	24-Feb	18-Mar	34	21-Apr	27-Apr	

1792 – Third Régie

58	Le Suffren (5 th trip)	5-Feb	56	1-Apr	1-May	29	30-May	5-Jun	Left from St Malo
59	Le Washington (5 th trip)	10-Apr	58	7-Jun	27-Jun	81	16-Sep		
60	Le Suffren (6 th trip)	20-Jun	48	7-Aug	1-Sep	35	6-Oct	12-Oct	
61	Le Washington (6 th trip)	15-Oct	83	6-Jan	3-Feb	65	8-Apr	14-Apr	“P.F. DE NEW YORK” & red “AMERIQUE...P L’ORIENT”
62	Le Suffren (7 th trip)	26-Nov	63	28-Jan	18-Feb	86	14-May	20-May	“P.F. DE NEW YORK” & red “AMERIQUE...P L’ORIENT”

Louis XVI was executed on January 21, 1793 and war with England was declared on February 7, 1793 – this marked the end of the Royal packets