

## Postmarks of Saigon

The French military captured Saigon in 1859 and the city was ceded to France by the Treaty of Saigon in 1862. From this foothold, French expansionism eventually gained control of what is now Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. French politicians gave special attention to Saigon as they tried to turn Saigon into the “Pearl of the Far East” with a view to boost their colonial civilization policy.

Although the postal systems in Indochina underwent numerous reorganizations, Saigon always retained the majority of mail volume because of it was the business and financial center

This exhibit shows examples of postmarks used on everyday mail as well as postmarks for specialized services. The exhibit covers the period of French control from the 1860s until the independence of Vietnam. Examples of postmarks are presented the following order:

Central Post Office Postmarks

Postmarks from Post Offices in the Port of Saigon

Postmarks from Auxiliary Post Offices

Periodical Postmarks

Postmarks of Temporary Post Offices

Special Services Postmarks

### Examples of Postmark Formats



## CORPS EXP. CHINE BAU A

After French and British troops captured Beijing, a convention was signed with China on 31 October 1860. With the conclusion of the war in China, the French military could turn its full attention to the beleaguered French garrisons in Cochinchina. Admiral Charner with 3,000 troops captured Saigon in February 1861. Using leftover equipment from the China Expedition, he opened the first military post office at Saigon on 25 February 1861.

Stamps were canceled with the "CECA" lozenge and covers were handstamped with the dated "CORPS EXP. CHINE BAU A" postmark. Through April 1862, a postal agreement was in effect with the British that allowed letters from officers to go to France for half the regular rate of 80 centimes.



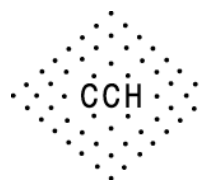
POSTAL MARKINGS  
CORPS EXP. CHINE BAU A 28 JUIL. 61  
CECA lozenge

## ETABLISSEMENTS FRANCAISE DE LA COCHINCHINE SAIGON

The first civilian postmark appeared on 1 January 1863 and was the only one to identify Indochina as "Etablissements Francaise." Stamps were canceled with the CCH lozenge. The first public post office opened on 13 January 1863. The postmark was short-lived disappearing after 1864.



POSTMARK TYPE: PR  
PERIOD OF USE: 1863-64



CCH LOZENGE



### POSTAL MARKINGS

ETABLISSEMENTS DE LA COCHINCHINE SAIGON 30 AVRIL 1864

CCH lozenge

ETAB.F.INDE PAQ. F. 3 MARS. 3 3 JUIN 64

## COCHINCHINE SAIGON

Type A postmarks were distinguished by the appearance of the name of the political unit at the top of the circular date stamp. Set off with asterisks, the city's name was positioned at the bottom.



POSTMARK TYPE: A  
PERIOD OF USE: 1864-87



POSTAL MARKINGS  
COCHINCHINE SAIGON 21 DEC. 74  
CCH lozenge  
PD in rectangle  
POS.AN.V. SUEZ P.F.AMB.MARS 10 JANV. 75



SAIGON  
COCHINCHINE

While Saigon's type B2 postmark retained the lateral asterisks, the wording is a rearrangement of the type A postmark. This was the last postmark to use the simple designation "SAIGON."



POSTMARK TYPE: B2  
PERIOD OF USE: 1877-87



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON COCHINCHINE 13 AVRIL 86  
REVERSE  
HONG-KONG AP 17 86



SAIGON CAL  
COCHINCHINE

The SAIGON CAL  
postmark was employed  
on a telegram in 1890.  
The date was presented  
in the center of the  
postmark without any  
other supporting  
information.



POSTMARK TYPE:  
D2 (fl)  
PERIOD OF USE:  
1887-1890

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE  
9 AOUT 90

Indications de service.

Le facteur doit remettre un récépissé à souche lorsqu'il est chargé de recouvrer une taxe.

pro. indique Dans le méro d'ordre

L'Etat n'est sou. la voie télégraphique

A DÉCHIRER.

condance prise par

N°

Timbre à date.

SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE 9 AOUT 90

9

16

Mols

Depôt le

9

m. du

Pour

de Longueux

prère indiquer longueur et diamètre

caicongs pour pont Anot

Caillac

N° 701 ((Fév. 1898.)) - (Grand aigle bleu 212 d'ordre.)

SAIGON CAL  
COCHINCHINE

Starting in 1888, the pickup number became part of the Saigon CAL postmark. Here the "3<sup>E</sup>" means that this was the third pickup of the day.



POSTMARK TYPE: D2 (fl)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1888-1893



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE 8 FEVR. 90  
REVERSE  
ST DENIS SEINE 7 MARS 90  
L'ISLE ST DENIS SEINE 7 MARS 90



## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

In later postmarks, the name of the main post office was written as "SAIGON-CENTRAL" with a hyphen separating the two words. For the 21.5-millimeter type B postmark, it was written "SAIGON CENTRAL" with only a space separating the words.



POSTMARK TYPE: B  
PERIOD OF USE: 1882-20



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8 AVRIL 87  
framed R with manuscript registration number  
MARSEILLE A LYON SPECIAL 3 MAI 87

### REVERSE

MARSEILLE A PARIS A 3 MAI 87  
LYON A PARIS A 3 MAI 87  
PARIS A DIJON B 4 MAI 87



## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

The type E2 postmark was 24 millimeters in diameter with an inner circle composed of 12 dashes. Many variations exist. This was the first postmark that employed the hyphen in "SAIGON-CENTRAL."



POSTMARK TYPE: E2  
PERIOD OF USE: 1889-1912



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 16 AVRIL 98

## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Although type E2 postmarks were usually struck with black ink, other colors were occasionally used. Here the postmark was struck with brownish red ink in 1902.



POSTMARK TYPE: E2  
PERIOD OF USE: 1889-1912



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 9 JUIL 02 (brown)

## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Usually, the type E2 postmark included an inner circle composed of 12 dashes. One of the many variations employed 11 dashes instead of the normal 12. The variety was in use from 1899 until 1906. This example is from the last year of use.



POSTMARK TYPE: E2 (11t)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1899-1906



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 19 OCT 06  
TUTICORIN 29 OCT 06



## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

At the turn of the century, a popular hobby was collecting picture postcards with stamps and postmarks applied to the view side. To meet the demand, dealers prepared postcards with their own canceller. The stamp at the center of this postcard was canceled by a post office in Tonkin. The purple postmarks mimic the type E2 postmark that was current in 1906. The postmark's lettering, while generally consistent in style, was smaller than the lettering employed by the post office.



SIMULATED  
POSTMARK TYPE: E2



BOGUS  
POSTMARK

Another example of a fake postmark exhibits many inconsistencies with genuine postmarks. The lettering style, circle diameters and arrangement of the date all are incorrect.

## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

This 28-millimeter diameter postmark was created by a postcard dealer to make his products appear to have traveled through the mail.



SIMULATED POSTMARK TYPE: E2 variety



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL 17 AOUT 11 (fake)



## COCHINCHINE SAIGON

This example of a double-circle postmark is another example prepared by a dealer to improve the appearance of his product to postcard collectors. It is certain that Saigon did not use this style of postmark in 1907 and there never was a 1-centime postcard rate.



POSTMARK TYPE: bogus variety  
PERIOD OF USE: c.1900-10



POSTAL MARKINGS  
COCHINCHINE SAIGON 14 FEVR 07 (fake)



## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

This version of the type E postmark includes several variations: 1) no hyphen between "SAIGON" and "CENTRAL", 2) 16 dashes for the inner circle and 3) month indicated by a numeral. This is the earliest known example of the E3(16t)(ch) postmark.



POSTMARK TYPE: E3(16t)(ch)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-23



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 13-9-22  
plain R with manuscript registration number

## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Type E3 postmarks differ from type E2 postmarks by the number of dashes that comprise the inner circle of the postmark. With this example, a total of 23 dashes made up the inner circle for the postmark on a letter from a soldier stationed at Saigon during World War I.



POSTMARK TYPE: E3 (23 t)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1917-18



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 12-8-18  
REVERSE  
PONDICHERY INDE 7 SEPT 18

SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

The maximum number of dashes recorded for the inner circle is 32. With this format variety, the month is always reported with a numeral.



POSTMARK TYPE: E3 (32t, ch)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1916-19



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-11 18



## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

The F2 postmark, a relatively rare type, is characterized by a dashed inner circle plus separators between the town name and colony name. While several postmarks with the hyphenated "SAIGON-CENTRAL" have been recorded, this is the only example of a Saigon Central F2 postmark with a space instead of a hyphen.



POSTMARK TYPE: F2 (10t)(ch)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1933-38



SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Several variations of Saigon's type F2 postmark are based on the number of dashes that made up the inner circle of the design. With this example, the inner circle was composed of twelve dashes.



POSTMARK TYPE: F2 (12t) (ch)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1920-23



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 25-2 20  
REVERSE  
CALAIS PAS-DE-CALAIS 27-3 20



## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Saigon-Central's first type G postmark appeared in 1922 and remained in service for two decades. When the type G devices were retired during World War II, "Saigon-Principal" replaced "Saigon-Central" as the name of the main post office.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-43



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 28-1 32  
rate certification handstamp  
airmail label and airmail routing instruction

### REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE BOCHES DU RHONE II • 11 1932



SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Occasionally, blue ink was used instead of black ink to apply postmarks and other postal markings.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-43



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-5 33 (blue)  
registration label

## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

A postal clerk used blue ink for applying postmarks on this picture postcard addressed to France in 1922. The first year of service for Saigon's type G postmark was 1922.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-43



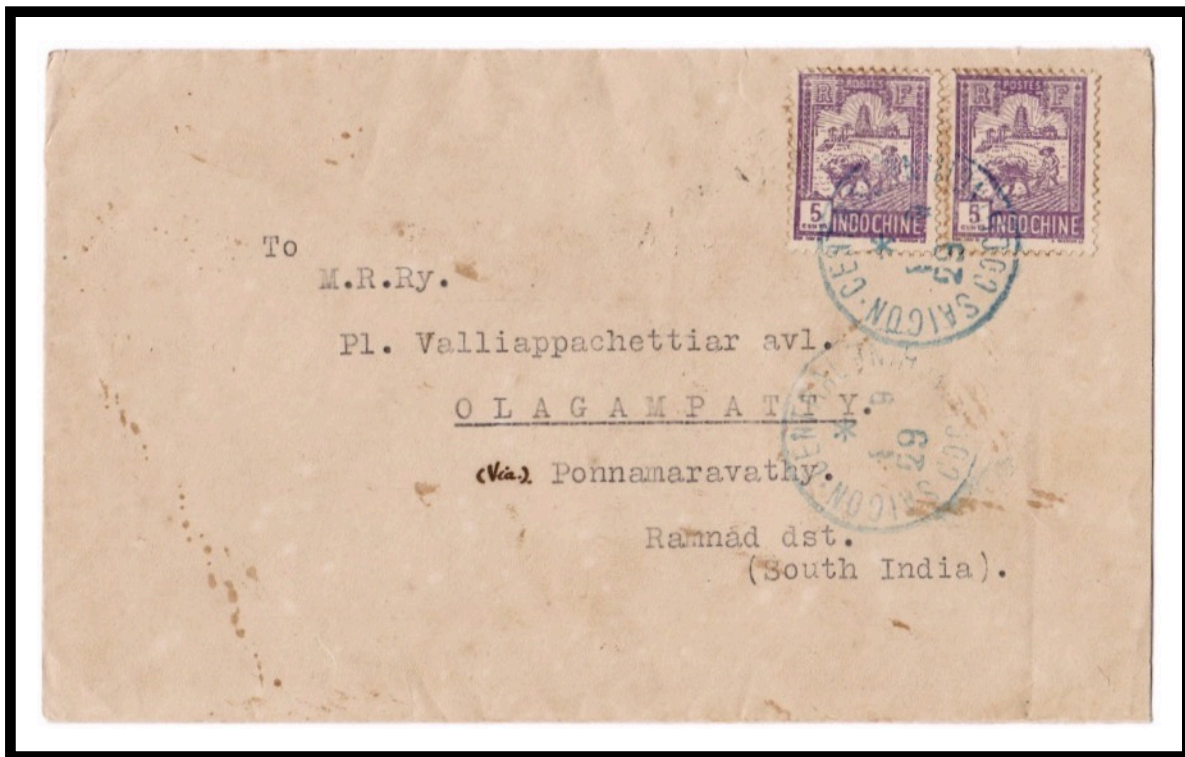
POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-12 22 (blue)

SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Normally, the wording around the outside of the type G postmark was centered. With this example, the wording is rotated such that the hyphen in "SAIGONCENTRAL" is in the 10 o'clock position.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-43



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-9 29 (blue)  
REVERSE  
ULAGAMPATTI RAMAD 13 SEP. 29



SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

In the middle of this type G postmark, there was a horizontal line that separated the year portion of the mailing date plug.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1922-43



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 22-3 24  
REVERSE  
KOTTAIYUR 11 APR. 24

## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Starting in the 1920s, single circle postmarks, of the kind used in France, were introduced in Indochina. The style with no hyphen between "SAIGON and "CENTRAL", except for this unique example, has only been reported from 1942.



POSTMARK TYPE: G  
PERIOD OF USE: 1929, 1942



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 28-10 29  
REVERSE  
HONG KONG 5 NOV 29

SAIGON CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Type G1 postmarks differed from the type G postmarks by the presence of lateral separation marks between the city and colony names in the outer circle.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1921-43



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 15-12 31  
airmail label  
REVERSE  
MARSEILLE-GARE B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 31 • XII 1931



## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

This cover, from three days before the end of 1942, exhibits late usage of the type G1 postmark. The name of the main post office changed from Saigon Central to Saigon Principal in 1943.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1921-43



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 29-12 42

## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Though usually applied with black ink, occasionally the postmark was struck in other colors. In this example, blue ink was used for the postmarks, black ink for the framed "Saigon-Marseille" route marking and red ink for the airmail rate certification mark.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1921-43



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 20-5 33 (blue)  
framed Saigon-Marseille route marking  
rate certification handstamp

### REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE B<sup>CHES</sup> DU RHONE 28 • VI 1933  
LYON-TERREAUX RHONE 29-5 33

## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Purple was an exceptional color for Saigon's postmarks. Perhaps the color was selected to commemorate the special return flight of Lallouette and Goulette to Paris after setting their speed record to Indochina.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1921-43



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 19-11-30 (purple)  
airmail and registration labels

### REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-11-30



## SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

Red ink was rarely used for postmarks. However, to commemorate the first regular Air Orient service to France, the postmarks on this cover were struck in red.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1921-43



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 20-5 33 (red)  
registration label  
airmail label and flight cachet

### REVERSE

QUIMPER FINISTERE 17-2 31

SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Roller cancellers were only used at Hanoi and Saigon. Saigon's first format, type R3, employed the familiar circular date stamp centered among five horizontal lines.



POSTMARK TYPE: R3  
PERIOD OF USE: 1933-38



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 16 MAI 36  
REVERSE  
PARIS IX RUE HIPPOLYTE LEEAS 25 • V 1936

SAIGON-CENTRAL  
COCHINCHINE

Inadequate inking at the bottom makes it appear that the type R3 roller canceller had only four lines instead of five.



POSTMARK TYPE: R3  
PERIOD OF USE: 1933-38



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 29-4 34

SAIGON CENTRAL 29 AVRIL 34

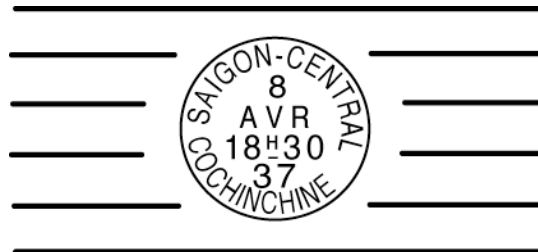
REVERSE

RACHGIA COCHINCHINE 29-4 34

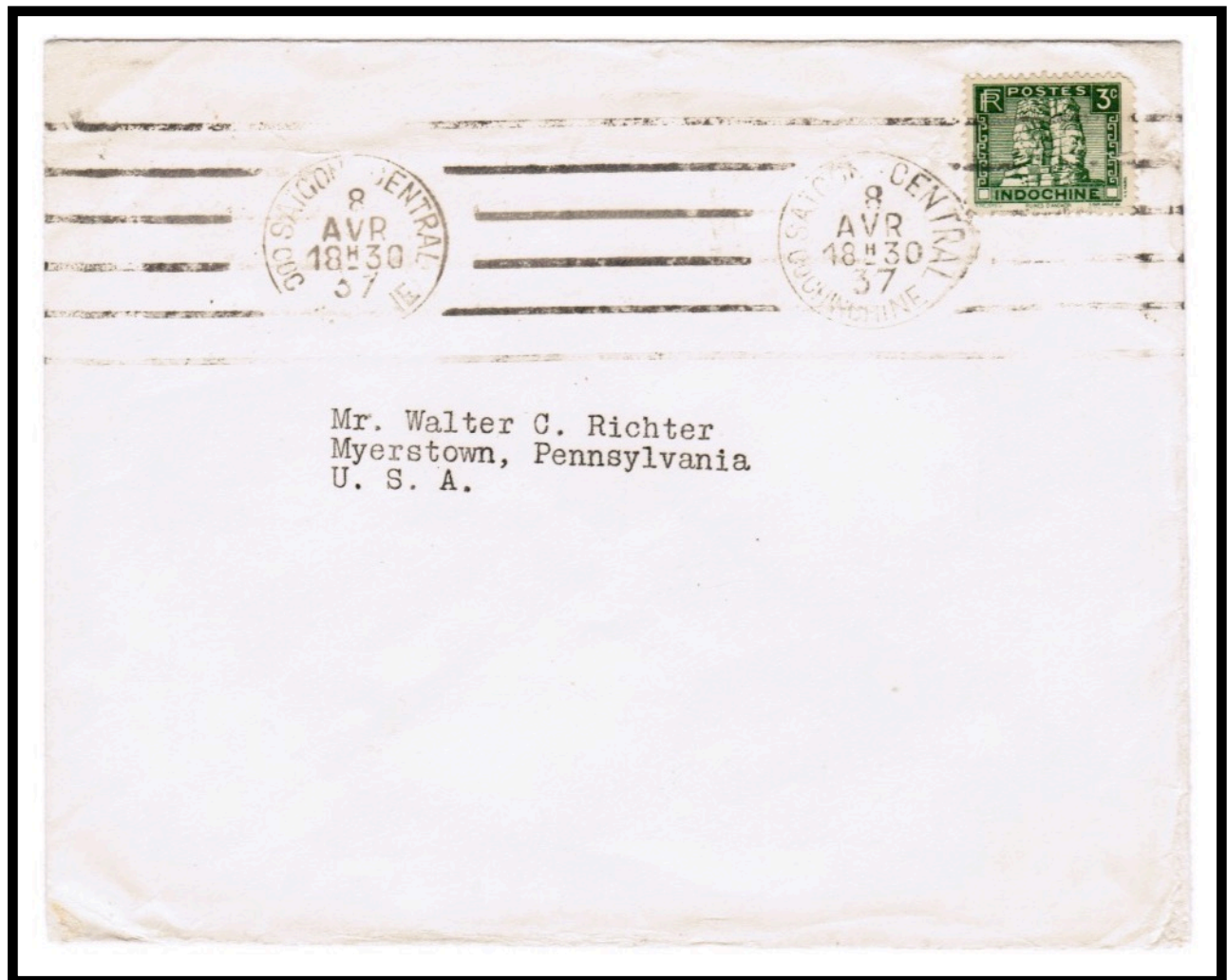


## SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

For Saigon's second roller cancel, six straight lines surrounded the same layout for the circular portion.



POSTMARK TYPE: R4  
PERIOD OF USE: 1933-38



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8 AVR 37

## SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE

In 1943, the name of the main post office changed from "SAIGON-CENTRAL" to "SAIGON-PRINCIPAL." This was to last only several years until 1947 when the name again changed.



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1943-47



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 19-10 46

SAIGON R.P.  
COCHINCHINE

In 1947, "SAIGON R.P." postmarks that reflected the new name of the main post office replaced the "SAIGON-PRINCIPAL" postmarks. The abbreviation "R.P." stood for "Recette Principal."



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1947-49



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 14-3 47



SAIGON R.P.  
COCHINCHINE

On this 1947 cover addressed to Prek-Kak Plantation near Kompong-Cham,  
Cambodia, Saigon's postmark was struck with purple ink



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1947-49



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 19-9 47 (purple)  
REVERSE  
PHNOMPENH CAMBODGE 20-9 47

## SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE

A money order receipt bears Saigon R.P.'s type G1 postmark. The postmark had been almost perfectly struck on the form's indicator circle. As a result, the combination appeared like a new style postmark with a solid inner circle.

3668-34  
COUPON  
SAIGON R.P.  
COCHINCHINE  
19-5-1949  
NOM ET ADRESSE DE  
L'EXPÉDITEUR:  
Abdoul Hamid  
62 Rue Vannier  
Saigon  
MONTANT DU MANDAT:  
60 P. 12 A.  
M  
est informé que le mandat-  
carte (1) sera tenu à sa  
disposition au bureau de :  
à partir de \_\_\_\_\_ heures.  
(Se munir du présent coupon  
et de pièces d'identité.)  
(1) sera représenté à son do-  
micile le \_\_\_\_\_  
vers \_\_\_\_\_ heures  
(1) Rayez la mention inutile.

Apparent postmark



Actual postmark



POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1947-49

POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 19-5 1949

## SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE

The Saigon R.P. type R4 roller postmark is only known from 1948. The effect of the cancelling process horizontally stretched the nominally circular central element into an oval.



POSTMARK TYPE: R4  
PERIOD OF USE: 1948



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 23 JUIL 1948



SAIGON R.P.  
COCHINCHINE

In use for only one year, the type R4 postmark was soon replaced by the type R5 postmark. In this example, the date plug was inverted when it was inserted into the roller device.



POSTMARK TYPE: R4  
PERIOD OF USE: 1948



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 4 MAI 1948

SAIGON R P  
SUD VIETNAM

Starting in 1949, the "COCHINCHINE" designation was replaced with "SUD VIETNAM." The earliest style of this postmark separated the city and country names with dashes.



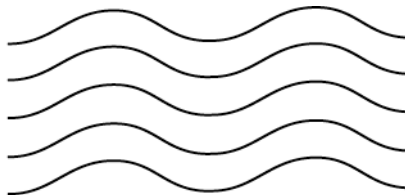
POSTMARK TYPE: V1(t)  
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-52

POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON RP SUD VIETNAM 13-6 1951  
REVERSE  
DALAT PLATEAUX-INDOCHINOIS 14-6 1951



SAIGON R.P.  
SUD VIETNAM

Indochina's first machine canceller appeared at Saigon in 1949. The layout consisted of a circular section with text indicating location and time of posting. To the right, the postmark included five wavy lines for obliterating postage stamps.



POSTMARK TYPE: R5  
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-56



POSTAL MARKINGS  
SAIGON R.P. SUD VIETNAM 18-7 1950