

N Line

The N Line was an outgrowth of the Indochina Line (Suez-Indochina service). It evolved under a series of conventions. First in 1866, Hong Kong became the terminus in the east. Marseille became the western terminus, and the eastern terminus moved from Hong Kong to Shanghai and eventually to Yokohama. In the beginning, the number of voyages was 12 per year, which rose to 26 per year. The Franco-Prussian War disrupted sailing schedules but after hostilities ceased the line resumed its biweekly schedule in July 1871.

A number of feeder (e.g., Galle-to-Calcutta) routes were established to support the main line. Regular Mediterranean service between Marseilles and Alexandria (M Line) provided an essential link that joined France to the Far East. Once the Suez Canal was open to commercial traffic in April 1870, the N Line absorbed these routes. At the same time, departures from Marseilles increased to every fortnight. In July 1871, Messageries Maritimes extended the line to Shanghai, creating greater efficiencies by avoiding the transshipment of goods, mail and passengers at Hong Kong.

Under the Convention of 3 June 1886, the main line became the Marseilles to Shanghai, Kobe and Yokohama Line (bypassing Hong Kong). In August 1877, the N Line was extended to Yokohama. Starting in 1895, the intermediate stops alternated every other voyage.

From June 1903, the N Line service from Marseille to Shanghai resumed regular biweekly departures with stopovers either in Djibouti or Aden.



COL. F. V. SUEZ PAQ. F.
DONNAI

Although marked "voie Française, par l'Imperatrice." both postmarks were struck at Saigon when the *Donnai* departed on 3 March 1863.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.818
PERIOD OF USE: 1862-66

POSTMARK TYPE: 1.848
PERIOD OF USE: 1863-66



POSTAL MARKINGS

COL. F, V, SUEZ PAQ. F. DONNAI 3 MARS 63 (red)
COR. D. ARMEES INDO-CHINE 3 MARS 63 (red)

REVERSE

MARSEILLE 3 (12) 2 AVRIL 63
ALBI (77) 3 AVRIL 63

COL. F.V. SUEZ PAQ. F.
3 MARS. 3

A postmark reading "COL. F. V. SUEZ PAQ. F. 3 MARS. 3" was applied to mail offloaded from ships arriving at Marseilles from the Far East. The abbreviation stood for "Colonies Françaises Voie de Suez Paquebot Français." This maritime postmark was always struck with blue ink. This example is from the postmark's final year of use.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.857
PERIOD OF USE: 1868-77



POSTAL MARKINGS

COCHINCHINE SAIGON 4 FEVR. 77
COL. F.V. SUEZ PAQ. F. 3 MARS. 3 16 MARS 77 (blue)

REVERSE

NEW YORK MAR 28 PAID ALL F

INDO-CHINE
PAQ. FR. MODANE

Modane, a small French village in the Savoy Alps, is situated at the western side of Mount Cenis. A tunnel through the mountain was completed in 1870 allowing a rail connection between Modane and Italy. It was not until 1879 that French ships from the Orient could discharge mail in Italy. This was done at Naples—but only for items going to Paris or northern France. Letters traveling this route received the distinctive entry marking at Modane struck with red ink. This early example is from August 1879, a few months after the service began. With the creation of the Universal Postal Union, this marking fell into disuse and it completely disappeared after January 1881.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.897
PERIOD OF USE: 1879-81



POSTAL MARKINGS

CORR. D. ARMEES SAIGON 12 JUL 79
INDO-CHINE PAQ. FR. MODANE 15 AOUT 79 (red)

REVERSE

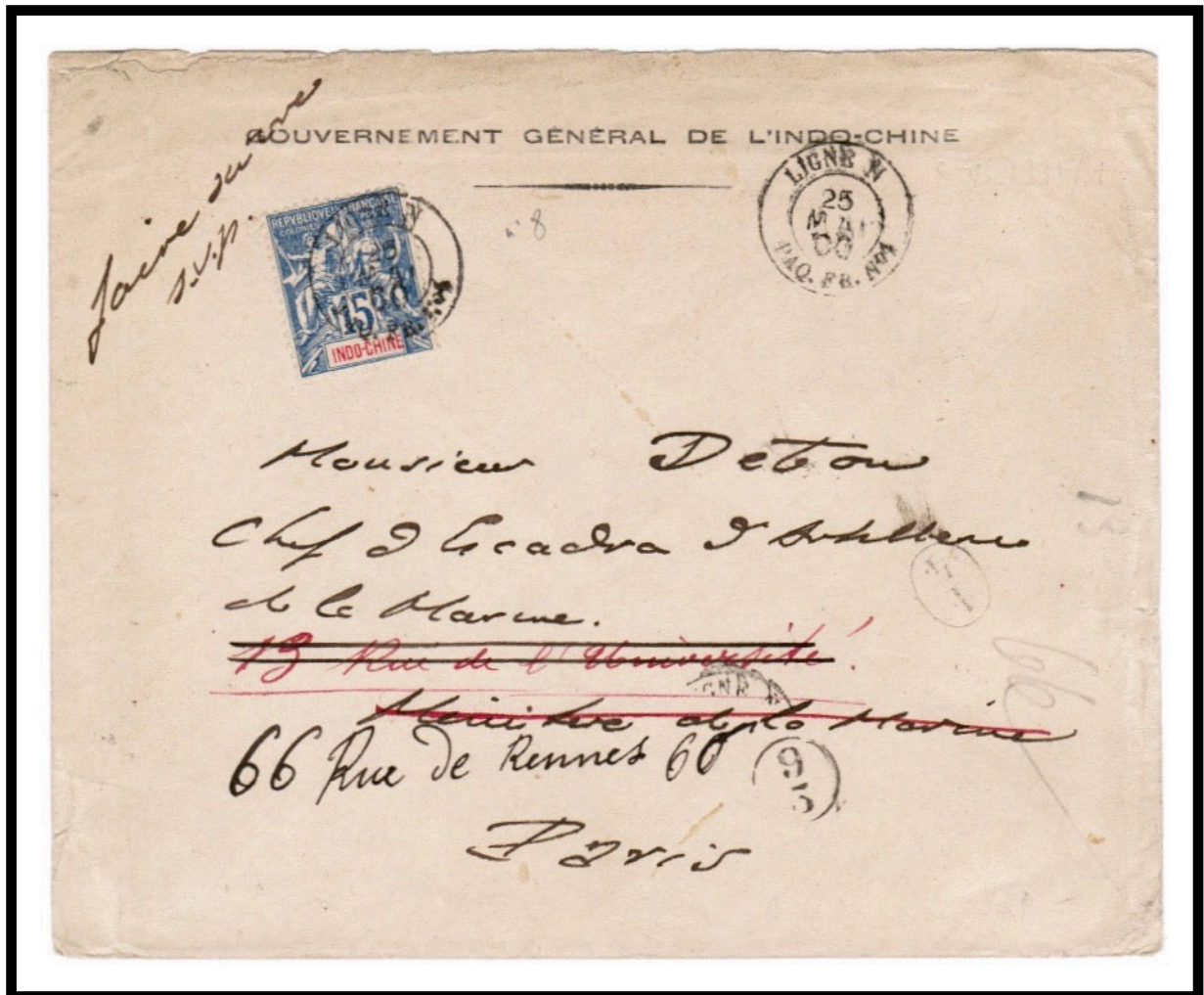
VILLERS-COTTERATS AISNE 16 SEPT 79

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 1

In 1866, France prescribed that new dated postmarks would be used by postal agents aboard the ships of the major sea lines. On each voyage, the postal agent was to be given a circular format device with an identifying code number. The individual sea lines were given letter codes – the code letter for the France-Indochina line was “N.” The first format for the maritime postmarks was a double circle. Code numbers ranged from 1 to 10.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1866-1901



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 1 25 MAI 00

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 1

The *Océanien* departed Saigon on 25 May 1900, the day this letter was postmarked aboard the ship. She returned to Marseilles on 27 May 1900.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1866-1901



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 1 25 MAI 00
REVERSE
PARIS 75 30 JUIN 00

LIGNE N.
PAQ. FR. N° 2
Final Voyage

The circular postmarks remained in use for many decades. By far the number 2 device was the longest swerving. The *Océanien* was the ship that last used the number 2 canceller. She departed Saigon on 10 October 1909 and reached Marseilles on 9 November 1909.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/2
PERIOD OF USE: 1866-1909



POSTAL MARKINGS
HONGAY TONKIN 10 OCT 09
HAIPHONG TONKIN 11 OCT 09
LIGNE N. PAQ. FR. N° 2 20 OCT 09
REVERSE
HONGAY TONKIN 10 OCT 09

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 3

This mailing was on the return leg of the last voyage that used the type 1.921/3 postmark. The *Océanien* departed Saigon on 21 March 1897.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/3
PERIOD OF USE: 1867-97



POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 9 MARS 97
LIGNE N PAQ.FR. N° 3

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 4

In 1895, a mailing from Shanghai to Finland went via Hong Kong. Rather than a British ship, the letter travelled on the French steamer *Ernst Simons* to Marseille.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/4
PERIOD OF USE: 1867-1897



POSTAL MARKINGS
SHANGHAI JY 5 95
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 4 10 JUL 95
REVERSE
HONG KONG JY 9 95
ABO TURKU A50 11.VIII.95

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 7

The *Saghalién* had circular date stamp number 7 when she departed Saigon on 28 July 1895. The ship arrived at Marseilles on 24 August 1895. From there the letter went by ship and land to the destination in Scotland.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/7
PERIOD OF USE: 1870-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 27JUIL 95
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 7 28 JUIL 95

REVERSE

SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 27JUIL 95

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 7

Occasionally, as in the case of this letter addressed to Rome, the postal agent on board used red ink instead of black ink for postal markings. The letter was postmarked two days before the *Saghaien* departed Saigon on 28 August 1882.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/7
PERIOD OF USE: 1870-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 7 26 AOUT 82 (red)

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 8

As noted at the top of the envelope, this postmark was used aboard the S. S. *Calédonian* on its voyage to the Far East in 1897. The ship departed Saigon on 11 July 1897.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1870-1899



POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 10 JUIL 97
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 8 11 JUIL 97

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 10

The highest number used on the circular postmarks was 10. Postmarks 1, 6, 8 and 10 were gradually displaced by octagonal postmarks beginning in 1898. This letter to England was posted at the port of Saigon. It was carried aboard the *Salazie*, which departed Saigon on 27 August and reached Marseilles a month later on 24 September 1893.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.921/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 25 AOUT 93
LIGNE PAQ. FR. N° 10 27 AOUT 93

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26 AOUT 93
RICHMOND SURREY SP 25 93

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 1

In 1887, the N Line, along with the other major French sea lines, introduced octagonal postmarks. Each postmark had a number beginning with the number "1." The N Line's number 1 postmark only stayed in service until 1901, while most of the other numbers were used through 1910.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1901



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 1 12 AOÛT 94
REVERSE
AUBIYNAN VAUCLUSE 9 SEPT 94

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 2

The 25-centime Grasset stamp was affixed to this cover to pay the foreign letter rate to Germany. The mailing went by the *Caledonien*, which left Saigon on 1 June 1906 and arrived at Marseille on 26 June 1906. The letter arrived at Hamburg on 28 June spending only 27 days in transit.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/2
PERIOD OF USE: 1888-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

CHOLON-BINHAY COCHINCHINE 1 JUIN 06
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 2 2 JUIN 06

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1 JUIN 06
HAMBURG 28.6.06

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 3

This envelope was carried aboard the *Océanien*, which departed Saigon on 26 April 1899 for its return voyage to France. At Singapore, the letter was offloaded for onward transmission to Kuala Lumpur by local British mail boats.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/3
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26 AVRIL 99
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 3 26 AVRIL 99

REVERSE

SINGAPORE AP 20 99
KUALA LUMPUR AP 30 1899
KLANG AP 30 99

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 4

This postcard demonstrates how mails from northern Indochina to Europe were handled. Posted at Dason, the postcard went by road and perhaps rail to Haiphong. From there it went by the coastal packet boat to Saigon where it came aboard the French steamer Tonkin on 3 August 1900. After arriving in Marseilles on 27 August, it again went by rail and mail wagon to the destination, Rudolstadt in Germany.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/4
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

DASON TONKIN 27 JUIL 1900
HAIPHONG TONKIN 27 JUIL 1900
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 4 3 AOUT 00
RUDOLSTADT 29.8.00

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 4
Final Voyage

In 1910, the 22-millimeter maritime postmarks were phased out after nearly a quarter of a century of usage. The last use of the number 4 postmark from Saigon was on 12 November 1910 when the *Dumbea* left Saigon for the return trip to Marseilles.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/4
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N. PAQ. FR. N° 4 12 NOV 10
REVERSE
TUTICORIN 20 NO. 10
ATTANGUDI MADRAS 24 NO. 10

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 5

A 10-centime Commerce postal card, mailed at Saigon on 27 December 1899, connected with the *Salazie* outbound to Yokohama, Japan. The postal card reached Kobe, Japan in only 12 days on 8 January 1900.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/5
PERIOD OF USE: 1888-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 27 DE 99
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 5 2 DEC 99
KOBÉ JAPAN 8 JAN 00

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 6

This postcard, franked with a 5-centime French postage stamp, was mailed aboard the *Polynésien*, outbound from France, while in port at Saigon. According to Universal Postal Union rules, stamps from the country of the ship's registry were to be recognized at port cities. The card was handed over to the local post office (dated postmark on the same day). The postcard was then transported by the first returning ship, the *Sydney*, which arrived at Marseilles on 20 September 1905.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 6 17 AOUT 05
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 17 AOUT 05
SAINTE FLORINE H^{TE} LOIRE 21 SEPT 05
LE PUY EN VELAY H^{TE} LOIRE 21 SEPT 05

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 6

This postcard was posted aboard the *Polynésien* on its return trip to France. After passing through the Suez Canal, the postcard was offloaded at Port Said. From there, it was transferred to the *Océanien* going in the opposite direction reaching Saigon on 15 June 1907. The total transit time was 5 weeks.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 6 7 MAI 07
PORT SAID EGYPT 8-5 07
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 15 JUIN 07

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 6

Occasionally, postal agents used red ink to apply maritime postmarks. This letter was postmarked aboard the *Natal*, which departed Saigon on 21 April 1888. Perhaps because this letter was free military mail, the agent opted for red ink.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
THANH-HOA ANNAM 19 AVRIL 88
CORPS EXPRE ANNAM-TONKIN
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. T N° 6 24 AVRIL 88 (red)
REVERSE
PARIS PASSY r 18 MAI 88

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 7

Posted aboard the *Tourane* on 10 July 1909, the day after the ship had left Saigon, the postcard reached Marseilles on 2 August 1909. A single 10-centime Grasset stamp paid for international delivery from Indochina to Germany.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/7
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 7 10 JUL 09

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 8

The *Melbourne* left Saigon on 18 August 1890. A letter posted at Saigon on the previous day, was struck with a N Line transit marking with red ink two days into the return voyage to France.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 17 AOUT 90
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 8 20 AOUT 90 (red)

REVERSE

COLOMBO PAID AU 25 90
TUTICORIN 27 AU 90

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 9

The number 9 device disappeared from service in 1890 but reappeared in 1896. Departing from Saigon on 9 February 1896, this postcard traveled aboard the *Natal*, which used both number 6 and number 9 devices. This was the first voyage that the number 9 device returned to service.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/9
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-90, 1896-97



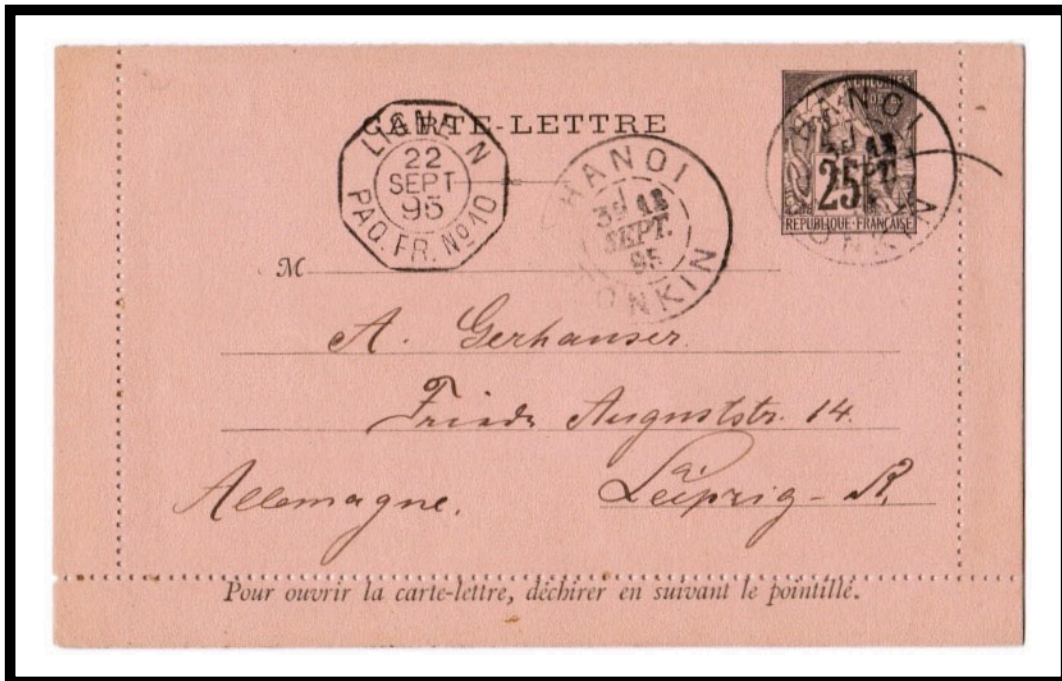
POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 9 FEVR 96
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 9 9 FEVR 96
BASEL BRE. DISTR. 5.III.96

LIGNE N
PAQ. FR. N° 10

The highest number used in the octagonal "LIGNE N" postmarks was "10." In this case, the postal agent on the *Sydney* applied the number "10" postmark to a Commerce lettercard when it departed Saigon on 22 September 1895.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.924/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 18 SEPT. 95
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. N° 10 22 SEPT 16

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L. N. N° 1

Starting in 1898, new octagonal style postmarks were introduced for four numbers (1, 6, 8 and 10). Instead of simply identifying the name of the N Line, the terminuses of the voyage were indicated at the top of the postmark. The port of departure was identified first followed by the destination port .

Here a picture postcard from Ceylon was posted aboard the *Tonkin* on her outbound voyage from France. She departed Marseilles on 19 January 1908.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1902-10



POSTAL MARKINGS
MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 1 20 FEVR 08

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L. N. N° 1

Following past practice, separate postmarks were created for each direction – outbound from France and inbound to France. In the case of this postcard, the number 1 outbound postmark was applied to a picture postcard aboard the *Salazie*, which had departed Marseilles on 21 February 1904. On her return trip, she departed Yokohama on 8 April and Saigon on 23 April 1904.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1902-10



POSTAL MARKINGS
MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 1 17 MARS 04

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 1

With the new format instead of simply identifying the N Line, postmarks indicated the direction of the voyage at the top (e.g., "YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE"). In this case a letter posted at Pursat, Cambodia was routed to Saigon via Phnompenh. The letter was carried to France on the *Tonkin*, which departed Saigon on 27 June 1908.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1902-10



POSTAL MARKINGS

PURSAT CAMBODGE 19 JUN 08
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 1 27 JUN 08

REVERSE

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 22 JUN 08

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 1

A Messageries Maritimes picture postcard was mailed aboard the *Ville de la Ciotat* on 1 October 1910 to an employee of the Post Office in Hanoi. The *Ville de la Ciotat* only made four Far East voyages between 1907 and 1910. Originally, she had been constructed under the name *Malaysien*.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/1
PERIOD OF USE: 1902-10



POSTAL MARKINGS
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 1 1 OCT 10
HANOI TONKIN 25 OCT. 10

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 6

The number 6 postmark was the second that employed the octagonal “YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE” format. The *Polynésien* used the number 6 postmark on her return trip to Marseille, departing Saigon on 20 February 1909.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 12 FEVR 09
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L.N. N° 6 19 FEVR 09

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L.N. N° 6

As compared to the other numbers of this style (1, 8 and 10), the number 6 postmark saw service on a fewer number of voyages. Consequently, it is seen less frequently than the others.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 6 14 AOUT 04
LODEVE HERAULT 9-10 04

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 6

This postcard addressed to Berlin was originally posted at Nagasaki, Japan. En route, the card received a number 6 transit postmark aboard the *Sydney*, which had departed Yokohama on 6 July 1900.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/6
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 6 9 JUIL 00
NAGASAKI JAPAN

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 8

For his mailing, the sender used a 10-centime black Navigation and Commerce postal card for French Settlements in India. Posted at Pondicherry, India the card received a number 8 transit postmark aboard the *Ernest Simons*, which had departed Saigon on 12 January 1906.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
PONDICHERY 16 JANV 06
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 8 20 JANV 06

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 8

The *Ernest Simons* used the number 8 device for its voyage at the end of 1905. She departed Saigon on 12 January 1906, the day before the maritime transit postmark was applied to this postcard.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1899-1910



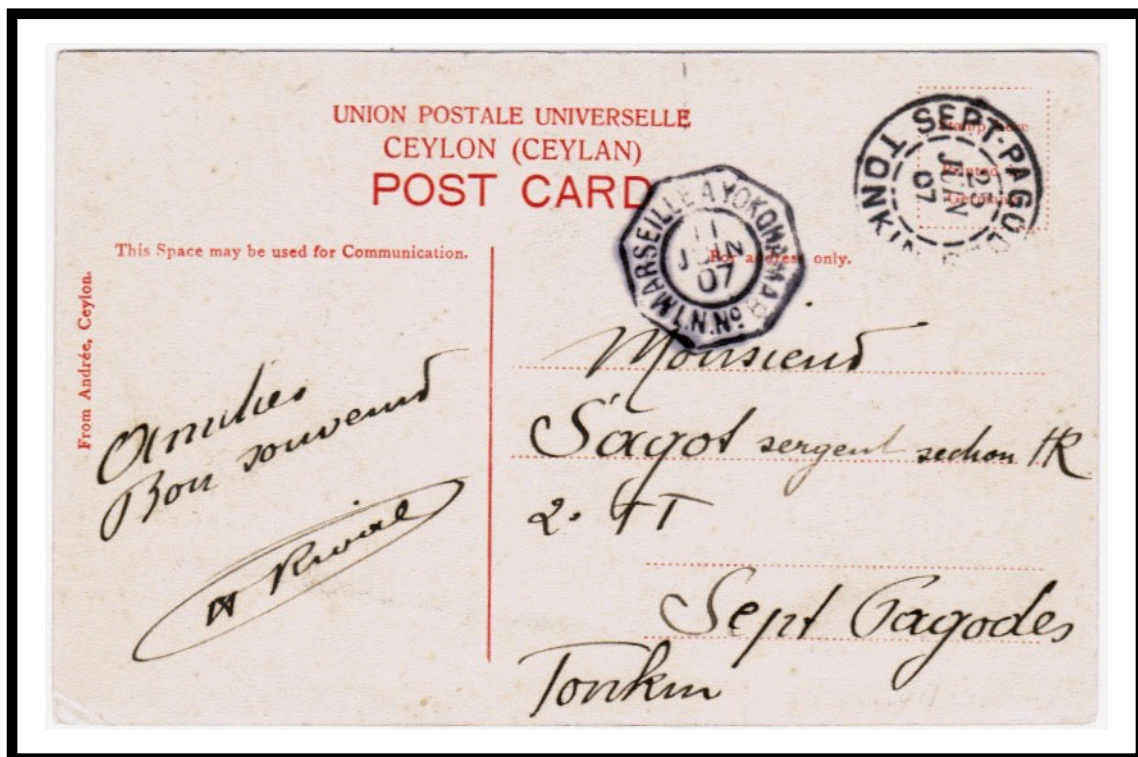
POSTAL MARKINGS
HANOI TONKIN 5 JANV 06
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 8 13 JANV 06

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L. N. N° 8

Posted from Ceylon, this inbound picture postcard, was postmarked with the N Line's number 8 postmark. The postcard was transported aboard the *Ernest Simons*, which had departed Marseilles on 26 May 1907.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1899-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 8 11 JUIN 07
SEPT PAGODES TONKIN 25 JUIN 07
REVERSE
COLOMBO CEYLON MY 9 07

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 8

This picture postcard was mailed aboard the *Ernest Simons* on her return trip to France. The *Ernest Simons*, which had departed Yokohama on 13 July 1907, used number 8 postmarks on this voyage.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1899-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 8 19 JUIL 07

REVERSE

SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 4 AOUT 43
SADEC COCHINCHINE 6-8 43

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L. N. N° 8

A picture postcard depicting the *Sydney* was mailed aboard the ship on 13 December 1902. She had departed Saigon a few days earlier on 5 December and reached Marseilles on the third of January 1903.

In this case, a lengthy message on the reverse datelined "Saigon" required 10 centimes postage to conform with France's internal postcard rates.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/8
PERIOD OF USE: 1899-1910



POSTAL MARKINGS
MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 8 13 DEC 02

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 10

The highest number employed with the octagon & circle postmarks was "10." The number 10 postmark was used by the Laos, which departed Saigon on 15 February 1901. Interestingly, here it was applied to a Russian picture postcard mailed from Indochina to England.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 10 15 FEVR 01
WHITBY MR 14 01

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 10

Interestingly, the *Laos*, which departed Saigon on 15 February, used both number 9 and number 10 cancellers. She arrived at Marseilles on 12 March 1901 and this picture postcard reached Bavaria, Germany the next day.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 10 15 FEVR 01
BAYREUTH 2. 13 MAR 01

YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE
L. N. N° 10

A picture postcard depicting the Pyramids was posted with an Egyptian stamp when the *Laos* transited the Suez Canal. The postmark is dated 14 November shortly before the *Laos* arrived at Marseilles on 18 November 1901.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.926/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE L. N. N° 10 14 NOV 01

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA
L. N. N° 10

This picture postcard depicting the paquebot *Laos* was mailed aboard the ship on her outbound voyage from Marseilles to the Far East. Interestingly, the *Laos* carried both number 9 and number 10 postmarking devices on this voyage. The number 10 postmark was applied to the postcard after she departed Marseilles on 25 August 1901.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.925/10
PERIOD OF USE: 1898-1907



POSTAL MARKINGS

MARSEILLE A YOKOHAMA L. N. N° 10 30 AOUT 01

COL. FR.
PAQ. FR. N N° 2

This style of octagonal postmarks with an internal circle were almost exclusively struck during return voyage stopovers at Saigon. First appearing in the winter of 1866-67, the French Post Office abolished them along with all other stopover and origin postmarks indicating specific locations in 1887. For the first four numbers, the line number "N" was the same size as the other text.



Paid through Destination

POSTMARK TYPE: 1.927/2
PERIOD OF USE: 1867-87



POSTAL MARKINGS

Lozenge with anchor at center
COL.FR. PAQ. FR. N N° 2 18 JANV. 75
framed PD (black)

REVERSE

MARSEILLE A LYON SPECIAL 16 FEVR. 75
LA ROCHE-BERNARD (54) 18 FEVR. 75

COL. FR. PAQ.FR. N N°5

Known from the period 1876 through 1887, the combination octagon-circle postmarks were nearly always applied at Saigon. The *Sindh* departed Saigon with the number 5 device on 17 May 1879. She returned to Marseilles on 18 June 1879.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.929/5
PERIOD OF USE: 1876-87



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON COCHINCHINE 17 MAI 79
COL. FR. PAQ. FR. N N°5 17 MAI 79

COL. FR.
PAQ. FR. N° 7

On the night of 17-18 June 1877, the *Meikong* ran aground on rocks in the Gulf of Aden. Although passengers and cargo were saved, all mail and postal equipment including postmarking devices were totally lost. The new postmark bears a circular outer boundary unlike the octagonal boundary of the lost postmarks. (The Salles catalog mistakenly presents the replacement with octagonal boundary.)



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.930
PERIOD OF USE: 1877-87



POSTAL MARKINGS

CORR. D. ARMEES HA-NOI 26 JUIN 79
COL. FR. PAQ. FR N° 7 8 JUIL. 79 (red)

REVERSE

TONQUIN HAI-PHONG 28 JUIN 79
MARSEILLE A LYON SPECIAL 15 AOUT 79
ORANGE VACLUSE 15 AOUT 79

MARSEILLE
PAQ. FR. N N° 4

This style postmark, characterized by the oversize "N," was introduced in 1870 when Line N service was extended to Hong Kong. The letter was posted at the port of Marseilles and then put aboard the *Anadyr* on 11 July 1880, the day she departed for her Far East voyage. The letter was addressed to a boatswain aboard *L'Amazone* located at Saigon.



POSTMARK TYPE: 1.943/4
PERIOD OF USE: 1870-87



POSTAL MARKINGS
MARSEILLE PAQ. FR. N N° 4 11 JUIL. 80
REVERSE
SAIGON COCHINCHINE 10 AOUT 80

MARSEILLE
PAQ. FR. N N° 4
Letter

adresses en France ce papier comme moi
Samedi à 4 heures. 10 juillet

Cher Epoux

Je me leve du lit pour faire ta chere lettre
quelle est si precieuse pour toi, je te dirais
premierement que j'ai reste 8 jour couché
encore pour ces maudites douleurs cela ma
prid que j'étais toute seule la douleur
à être si forte sur mes reins que je suis tombé
sans connaissances, et personne pour me soulever
quand l'ébourdissement est calmé je me suis
trainé par terre comme un crapaud pour
appeller ma soeur avec la chaise je frappais
personne répondait, te dire les tortures est
souffrances que j'ai enduré impossible,
à force tonin était couché, il se redressé
et me crie ce que je veux impossible
de lui répondre j'avait la vue trouble les
oreilles me sifflait, j'avait toute une
jambe paralysé je ne pouvait remuer
et tonin qui ne monte pas à force de
toyer. il est monté. et quand il ma vue

*Je n'ai pas eu le
temps, et j'ai
te reproche que
je n'ai recommencé
à partir de toi, mon
cœur en est malade
et j'espère te me
combien j'ai souffert
de toi, dans ton
cœur.*

*Je t'embrasse
de moi je suis bien
à l'instant je
ta lettre qui ne
contente; et le
n'est pas bon.
passé. quel petit
ta lettre ne rejoint
chance t'embrasse*