

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

French Packet, Local Colonial and River Services

French Packet Line N

French Packet Line N provided the principal packet service for the colony of Indochina during the period of the Group Type's use. This line traveled from Marseille to destinations in eastern China and Japan, with a stop at Saigon to serve the Indochina mails. Supplementary local colonial packet services were also provided to properly serve this colony given its large size and complexity. In addition, use was made of the extensive local rivers within the colony to support the mails.



Simple double weight letter (2 x 25c for a letter between 15 – 30 grams) posted on French Packed Line N on March 21, 1897 to France. An unusual combination of Group Types was employed to meet this rate, including the very rare variety of the 25c stamp lacking the **INDOCHINE** colony name. The letter was received in France on April 16th. This legend variety is of comparable rarity to that of the inverted **INDOCHINE** of the 75c stamp shown to introduce this exhibit.

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

French Packet Line N



Items carried by Line N from Saigon illustrating use of the octagonal datestamp at the following rates: single French community, in red (very rare); overseas and triple weight French Community. The last card shows the **YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE** name in lieu of the Line N designation.

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

Military Concession Rate of 15c

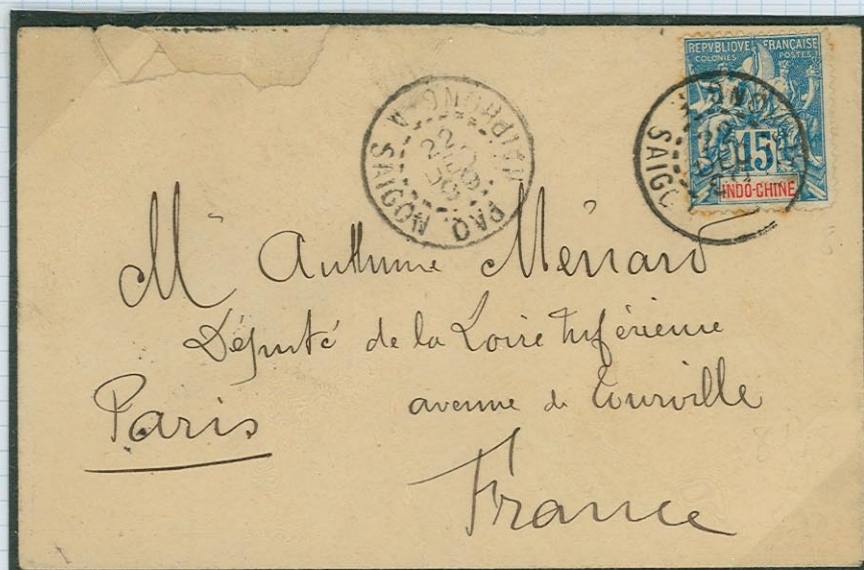
French Packet Line N



Military concession rate letters of 15c posted by members of the Marines at the dock or on board boats of French Packet Line N. Note the differing datestamps used on this line for designating military mail.

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

Local Packets



The volume of mail from the colony of Indochina and the overall size of the colony prompted the setting up of local packet services to assure more rapid mail service. There was a special line from Saigon to Haiphong which employed the datestamp: **PAQ HAIPHONG A SAIGON**, and another line from Saigon to Singapore which employed the datestamp: **LIGNE DE SAIGON A SINGAPORE**. Mail posted on both lines is shown, that from the latter showing the datestamp in blue.

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

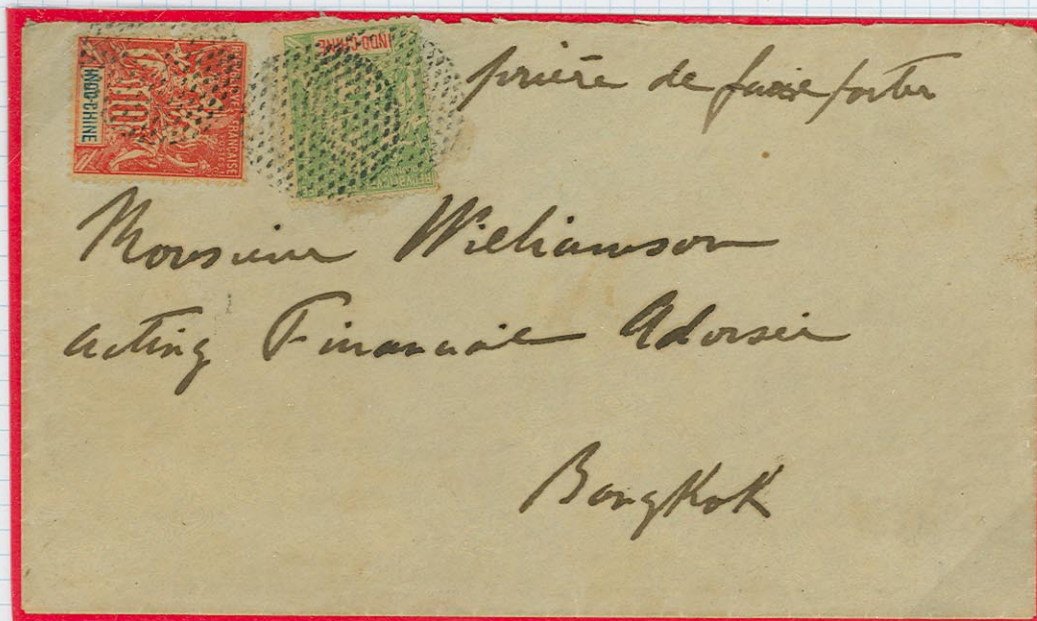
Local Mekong River Packets



In support of the mails small boats traveling local rivers carried the mail, bringing it to regular land post offices. Boats were identified by numbers and two types of datestamps were used throughout the 1890's: **VAPEUR COCHINCHINE** and **VAPEUR** with numbers and dates. Examples and rates are shown. The letter with the **VAPEUR N° 19** datestamp entered the mails at Savan-Nakhet, Laos indicating that these steamers went into the upper reaches of the Mekong.

INDOCHINA – PACKET MAIL

Unrecorded Local Packets



Unrecorded provisional cancellations most probably used on the local packets providing service to and from Bangkok. The first obliterator was created by tying a group of bamboo sticks together. No other examples of this cancellation exist. The letter was posted at the incorrect 15c local rate in lieu of the 25c international rate to Bangkok, but such was not noted, possibly due to the inexperience of the local postal crew, and the letter traveled through the mails arriving in Bangkok on October 21, 1903. The second is cancelled by an unrecorded double ring cancellation posted to and received at Corcelles, Switzerland. The city of Bangkok is mentioned twice in the text on the card.



Limited **PAQUEBOT** mail exists from Indochina because of the highly developed Packet system. Shown are three **PAQUEBOT** datestamp/handstamps used on mail carried by local east coast commercial ships, and a card arriving by local ship at Singapore enroute to Bangkok.