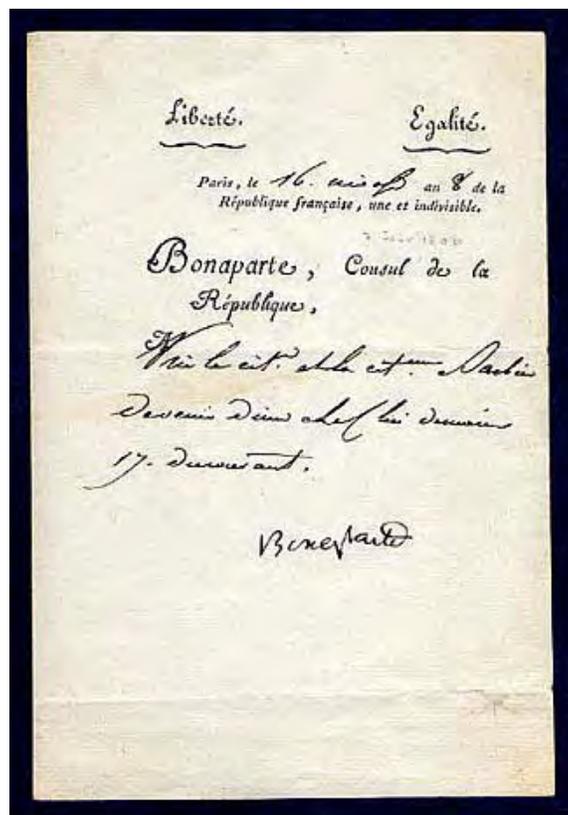

HENRY A. MEYER COLLECTION OF FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEONIC COVERS AND DOCUMENTS

FINDING GUIDE

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Letter from Consul Bonaparte on his official letterhead, January 8, 1800



Smithsonian
National Postal Museum

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COLLECTION SCOPE & CONTENT

The Henry A. Meyer Collection consists of 14 volumes of covers and documents from the French Revolution and Napoleonic eras.

PROVENANCE

Henry Albert Meyer (1894-1968) was considered one of the leading students and collectors of the postal histories of Hawaii, the Confederacy, U.S. waterways, and the French Revolution and Napoleonic eras. He wrote or co-wrote numerous scholarly works, including, *The Postal History of the Kingdom of Westphalia Under Napoleon, 1807-1814*. Co-authored by Carroll Chase, this study was largely based on Meyer's collection. In 1969, Meyer was inducted into the American Philatelic Society Hall of Fame.

Following his death in 1969, Meyer's collection of French Revolution and Napoleonic postal history was acquired by his niece, Dr. Margery W. Shaw of Houston, Texas. According to Dr. Shaw, Meyer had considered donating the collection to the Smithsonian but was unable to do so before his death. In 1978, Shaw contacted the Smithsonian and, over the next nine years, donated Meyer's complete collection.

Volumes 1 and 2 were donated in 1978 (Accession Number 1979.0098); volumes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were donated in 1981 (Accession Number 1981.0819); volumes 8 and 9 were donated in 1983 (Accession Number 1983.0780); volumes 10 and 11 were donated in 1985 (Accession Number 1985.0026); and volumes 12, 13 and 14 were donated in 1986 (Accession Number 1986.0025). A large portion of the collection was exhibited at the National Postal Museum in 1995.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

French postal markings go back a long way before the French Revolution. At the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789, postal markings had long been standardized and the Revolution soon showed itself in postal history. The Meyer Collection of Napoleon and French Revolution Covers and Documents illustrate this postal history.

The National Convention met on September 20, 1792 and firmly established the Revolution by first abolishing the Monarchy. It lost no time regarding the changing of existing royalist names of Departments, districts, cantons, and communes. On October 9, 1792, it issued a decree stating "The commune of Bar-le-Duc will carry the name in the future of Bar-sur-Ornin." The Convention got rid of town names with regal and religious bearing like chateaux, bishops, saints, dukes, queens, Louis, churches, counts, Holy Ghosts, marchionesses, monks, archbishops, and kings. The Meyer Collection includes town postmarks showing revolutionary names.

No sooner had the government been established than it changed the calendar. The Meyer Collection has two volumes with many examples of the revolutionary calendar. Other revolutionary markings such as Army postmarks, frames, etc. are shown in several volumes of the Meyer Collection.

CONTAINER INVENTORY

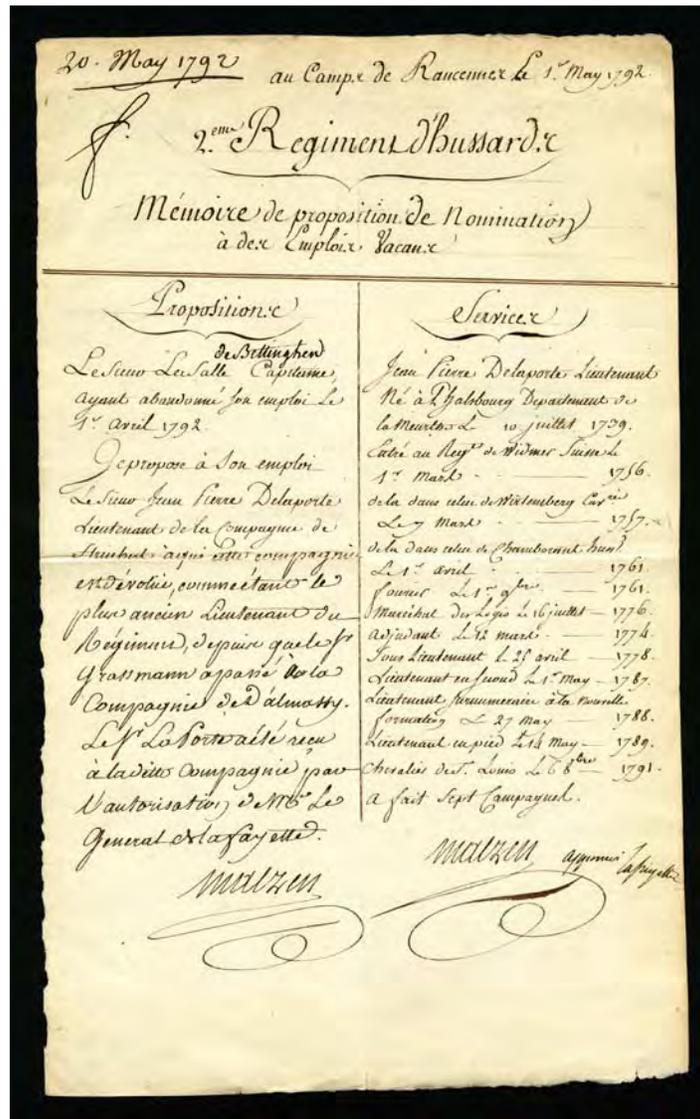
Volume 1 (1979.0098) 38 pages

- Stampless covers starting from 1775
- Revolutionary letterhead paper
- Revolutionary Society covers

- 1795 letter from the National Convention, Committee of General Security Letterhead
- 1792 Revolutionary document signed by Marquis de Lafayette
- 1792 French military discharge paper for a Swiss citizen from the Swiss regiment Salis-Samade
- Covers from France divided in 83 departments, then sub-divided again into districts, cantons and communes (earliest cover June 14, 1792)
- Revolutionary documents

Volume 2 (1979.0098) 40 pages

- Stampless Republican Calendar covers Assignats (paper monies) and Finance Documents
- Republican Slogans
- Republican Institutions such as Grande Force
- Republican Place Names



A detailed service record of a lieutenant, from his entry into military service in 1756 (at age 17) until his discharge, finally as a full lieutenant, in April 1792, signed for Gen. Lafayette. This hero, of the American Revolution, at the time commanded the Armee du Nord. A seldom-seen item in this admirable condition.

Volume 3 (1981.0819) 52 pages

- Relations between France and America
- The Republican Government: Committee of Public Safety
- Government Bureaus: Cabinet Offices and Public Services; Bureaus of Control of Public Life; Bureaus relating to the Army and War; Courts and Police; Postal Service; Semi-official Organizations
- Republican town postmarks: typical marks; peculiarities of certain marks; dated marks; backstamps

Volume 4 (1981.0819) 46 pages

- Republican receiving marks and Revolutionary date stamps
- Marks indicating prepayment and free franking
- The use of debourse marks on forwarded mail
- Special post offices attached to various government bureaus, legislative bodies, executive offices and an explanation of unusual marks
- Marks of entry into France
- The Revolution in the Low Countries, Savoy and Switzerland
- Wars of the First Coalition and formation of eight new Departments (#91 - #98)
- The Revolution in the Rhineland
- The first mention of Napoleon Bonaparte in a letter to General Dupont about the General-in-Chief (Commander of the Army of Italy – Napoleon Bonaparte)
- Republics of Northern Italy (Cisalpine Republic) and examples of their postmarks (old and new styles)
- End of the Wars of the First Coalition by the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797)

Volume 5 (1981.0819) 35 pages

- The Helvetic Republic
- The Rhineland as part of the Republic and the Imperial Triangle Now Belongs to France
- Republican place names in Germany and Italy
- Marks of certain towns through the years
- Wars of the Second Coalition
- Expedition to Egypt (letter from Cairo to Benisouef, one of six French post offices in Egypt)
- Establishment of the Consulate (letter from the Premier Consul de la Republique)
- End of the Wars of the Second Coalition (Treaty of Luneville, 1801)

Volume 6 (1981.0819) 53 pages

- Re-established French Republics and Kingdoms of Northern Italy: Cisalpine Republic; Kingdom of Etruria; Piedmontese Nation (1804 letter from the Inspector General of Public Health at Turin)
- Commerce between France and St. Domingue (Bill of Lading from the vessel *The Two Angels*)
- Napoleon's threat to invade England from May 1803 (letter from an officer of the army of England to the Citizen Minister of War in Paris with a fine wax seal inscribed "Armee D'Angleterre – Chef de L'etat Major")
- Naval War between England and France
- Establishment of the French Empire, May 1804
- The Emperor's Household (letterhead of "The House of the Emperor")
- Government Bureaus of the Empire
- Forms of Royalty replace the Republican phrases
- Town names are changed to honor Napoleon (Napoleon-Vendee, Napoleonville)

- War of the Third Coalition and the Peace of Pressburg (December 1805)
- French occupation of Northern and Western Germany

Volume 7 (1981.0819) 39 pages

- Reorganization of Northern Italy (entry mark "Etrurie et Lucques par Sarzane")
- Republic of Italy becomes the Kingdom of Italy May 1805 (watermark of Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy)
- Official machinery of the Kingdom of Italy
- Tuscany, Parma and Elba are merged into the Kingdom of Italy



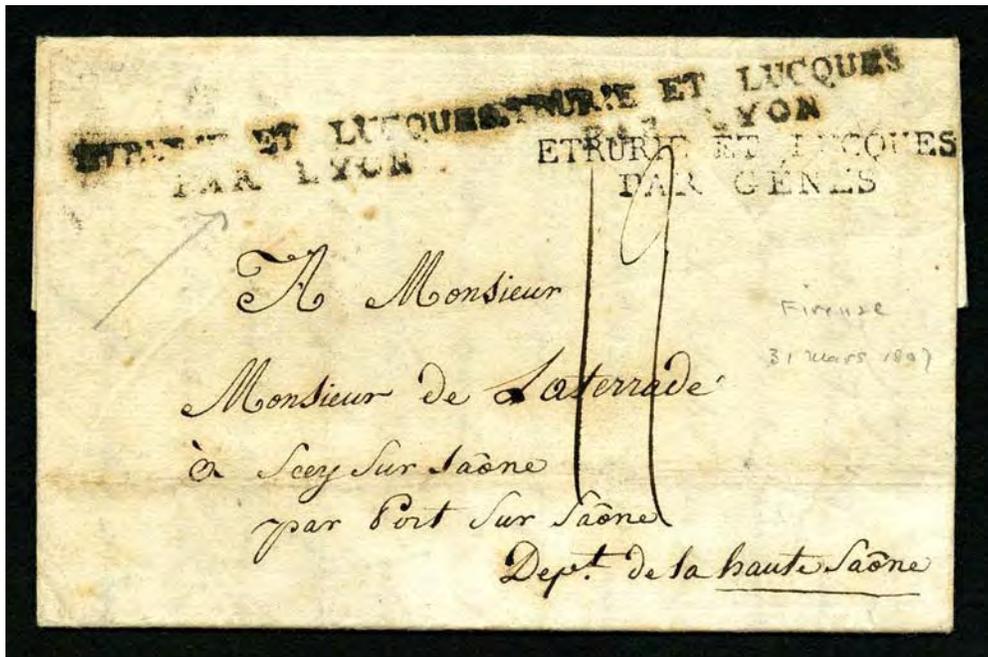
While the ALLEMAGNE / PAR GIVET is not an uncommon entry marking, this is nevertheless a very fine-condition cover whose itinerary can be readily followed: originated at Stettin (from interior) via Wesel, from which it entered France at Givet; then this 8 gm letter continued to Bordeaux where it was taxed 17 decimes, the red P.P. indicating it was prepaid only to the border. Furthermore, this 1815 cover dates not long after the Battle of Waterloo.

Volume 8 (1983.0780) 56 pages

- Postal markings of the conquered lands: German zone marks; Italian week marks; Italian receiving marks; extra-territorial offices; Italian town marks; Exchange Office marks
- Dealings with England and Portugal
- War of the Fourth Coalition and the Treaty of Tilsit, July 1807 (1807 letter from General L. Montmorency and 1809 letter with red "PAXO" marking)
- Dealings with Hamburg and Hanover
- Kingdom of Westphalia (1807-1814)
- Dealings with Prussian cities
- The Peninsular War, 1808-1814– (Draft on the Paymasters General of His Majesty's Forces, London for 2,000 pounds sterling, Cadiz, Spain, 1810)
- Dealings with England and Denmark
- War with Austria and the Treaty of Schönbrunn (October 1809)

Volume 9 (1983.0780) 58 pages

- Treatment of northern Germany – 1808 letter from Jean Baptiste Jules Bernadotte in Rendsberg
- Enlargement of the Kingdom of Italy
- Napoleon takes over Naples and Rome June 1809
- Annexation of Holland
- Occupation of Java, Malta and the Ionian Islands
- Annexation of more of Switzerland, northern Germany and part of Spain – 1812 letter from Department 133 La Segre (Puycerda)
- War of the Fifty Coalition (1812)
- Debacle in Russia and the retreat – 1812 letter with brown No. 15 Grande Armee marking
- War of the Sixth Coalition (1813)
- Battle of the Nations (1813)
- First Treaty of Paris (1814) – Bureau of the “General Director of the Liquidation of the Armies” letterhead, black imprint and circular handstamp, with red “AFFRANCHI PAR L’ETAT”
- The Hundred Days (1815)
- Second Treaty of Paris (1815)
- Results of the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)
- Restoration of Europe to pre-war status
- Postmarks of the post-war period
- Relics of the Bonapartes – 1861 letter from E. Baciocchi; 1820 letter from Joseph Bonaparte (ex-King of Naples and Spain)



This impressive 1807 cover bears two strikes. One of the very rare ETRURIE ET LUQUES / PAR LYON as well as an additional ETRURIE ET LUQUES / PAR GENES strike (uncertain which strike was applied first). It was sent unpaid to France.

Volume 10 (1985.0026) 35 pages

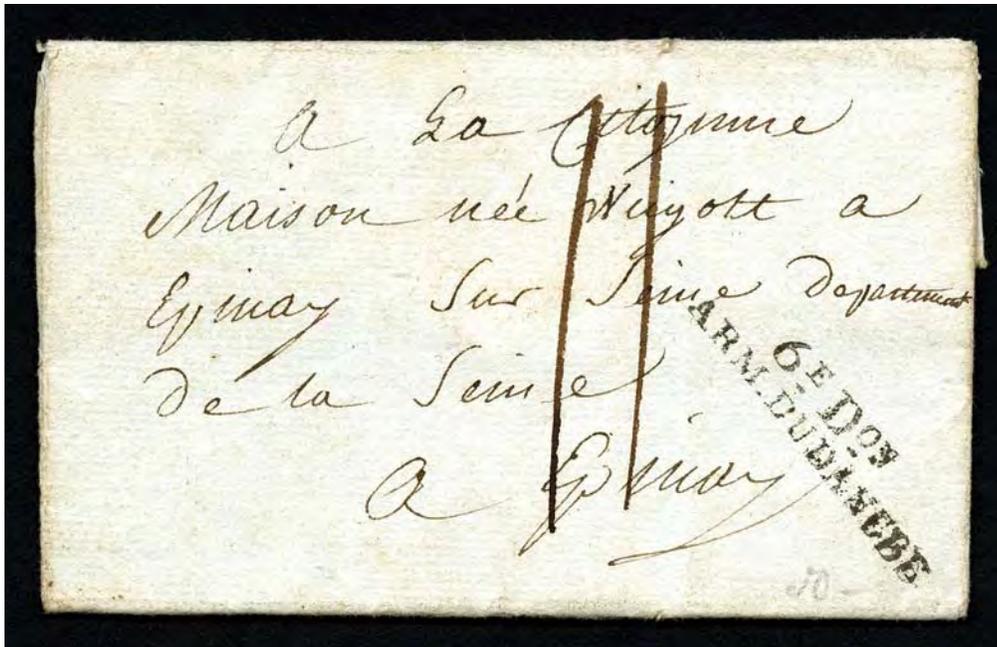
- Covers of the Armies of the Republic - Army of the Alps, Ardennes, of the Coast, Danube, England, Holland, Italy, of the North, of the West, of the Rhine, of the South to mention a few.
- Six different covers with Army franks
- Fifteen Army postmarks cut from covers
- Letter on Artillery of the Navy letterhead
 - Army Post Office marks of the Republic
 - Unusual Army Post Office procedures – “Charge” means “Registered” on 1/1/1799 letter from the army of Italy to the Ministry of War in Paris.
 - Republican Army Franks Military Division and Navy – letter from General Jean Baptiste Jourdan



This cover is from one of the small armies operating in the West of France against the rebels and possible British incursions. Actually the second such to bear the name, this I.DIV.ARMÉE/DES CÔTES DE BREST, under General Hoche dated Fructidor III (5 Sept. 1795), existed only between April 1795 and the end of that year, when it was absorbed by the Armée des Côtes de l'Océan.

Volume 11 (1985.0026) 31 pages

- Covers with Army Post Office marks of the Empire – Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, The Grande Army, Civilian Liaison Officers
- Covers with Army franks of the Empire – Military Commanders, Engineers, Inspector-in-Chief of Reviews
- Twenty-six covers with Official Mail of the French Army from the Kingdom of Italy



A very fine strike of the 6e Don/ARM. DU DANUBE marking from one of the many short-lived (1799 only) Revolutionary armies, albeit a major one under General Massena's overall command. It served mainly in Switzerland against Austria and Russia, first losing and then winning the Battles of Zurich. It became the (Fourth) Armée du Rhin in December 1799.

Volume 12 (1986.0025) 44 pages

- Covers showing the Republican months in red Paris receiving marks
- Covers showing the traditional months in black Paris receiving marks
- Covers showing the traditional months in red Angers receiving marks
- Covers showing the Republican months in Belfort receiving marks
- Covers showing the Republican months in Turin, Italy, receiving marks
- Covers showing the Julian months in Ancona, Italy, receiving marks
- Covers from the Revolutionary years: 1789-1793
- Covers showing the Republican years: (2-14)
- Covers showing the years of the Empire: 1806-1815
- Covers showing the Republican days of the week – various examples from the Committee of Public Safety
- One loose cover

Volume 13 (1986.0025) 36 pages

- Covers showing the conquered Departments, 84-133 – 27 pages
- Covers showing the Departments of the Kingdom of Italy – 9 pages

Volume 14 (1986.0025) 74 pages

- Miscellaneous official letters and documents of the Republic of the Empire, and of the Cisalpine Republic with straight-line town markings from May 14, 1720 (letter with crown above Nantes origin marking) to 1790. This assortment of loose documents was bought from the Stolow auction when the surplus of King Farouk's collection was sold several years before his abdication.

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CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stanley J. Luft was a founding member of the Académie Européenne de Philatélie in 1978, a member of the Union Marcophile since 1974, and was elected a corresponding member of the Académie de Philatélie in 2001. He edited the *France & Colonies Philatelist* 1993–2007 and served as a director of the society 1971–2007. He has received numerous national gold medals for his stamp exhibits including one grand award, three large international gold medals as well as a Prix d'Honneur at London 1990. In 2008, he was the American Philatelic Society's recipient of the 2008 Luff Award for Distinguished Philatelic Research.