

1857 Treaty Mail to France Carried by the French Line

The 1857 mail treaty between the United and France became effective on April 1, 1857 and remained in effect until December 31, 1869. The treaty provided for mail carried by French packet. Although the Havre Line operated directly to France, it operated as an American Packet. Regular French mail packet service was only commenced when the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, or the French Line, began operations on June 15, 1864. In March 1866 the line was designated as "Ligne H" by the French and a postal agent, responsible for processing the mail, accompanied each trip. A map of routes is shown below.

Blue Line - Route from July 6, 1864
to May 26, 1865

Red Line - Route from June 23, 1864
to after December 25, 1869

Green Lines - Railway connections
Brest to Paris completed in May 1864



A total of 118 trips from New York to France were made by the French Line during the period of the 1857 treaty. This number compares to more than 2,000 trips by British or American contract steamers. This exhibit illustrates the diverse markings associated with mail carried by the French Line during the period of the 1857 treaty.

Four sets of new devices were issued in March 1866 that include the "Ligne H" designation. Each set was numbered and the agent apparently kept his set in his possession. The table below shows the usage by ship.

Table of French Line H Trips and Postmark Numbers Set Used				
Handstamp Set	Ship	First Trip	Last Trip	Trips
No. 1	<i>Washington</i>	April 7, 1866	same	1
	<i>Ville de Paris</i>	June 27, 1866	February 8, 1868	12
	<i>Europe</i>	April 4, 1868	July 25, 1868	3
	<i>Napoleon III</i>	September 19, 1868	same	1
No. 2	<i>Pereire</i>	October 31, 1868	December 11, 1869	9
	<i>Pereire</i>	April 7, 1866	September 5, 1868	17
	<i>Europe</i>	January 9, 1869	April 13, 1869	2
No. 3	<i>Lafayette</i>	May 15, 1869	November 17, 1869	5
	<i>Lafayette</i>	May 5, 1866	August 25, 1866	3
	<i>Europe</i>	October 20, 1866	November 16, 1867	8
	<i>Napoleon III</i>	January 11, 1868	March 7, 1868	2
No. 4	<i>Ville de Paris</i>	May 16, 1868	December 25, 1869	13
	<i>Napoleon III</i>	May 19, 1866	September 8, 1866	3
	<i>St. Laurent</i>	November 3, 1866	September 18, 1869	19

French Line - Prior to Ligne H Designation
From Cuba: N.Y. French Packet Exchange

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2



from Cuba, 10 November 1865 "N.Y. FRENCH PKT" exchange datestamp, steamer *Europe* to Brest (arv. 11.22)
ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2 entry applied in Paris on mail laded in Brest

The ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2 French entry was applied in Paris on mail which had been landed at Brest. Brest was added as a stop by the French Line steamers on the June 23, 1865 trip from New York. The marking was replaced by the PAQ. H arrival markings after the French Line was designated Ligne H in March 1866.

French Line - Prior to Ligne H Designation

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2

From Cuba: Brest entry postmark in red / blue



Cuba, via New York, 13 October 1865 New York, steamer *Lafayette* to Brest (arr. 10.25)
red ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2 arrival applied in Paris the next day



Cuba, via New York, 5 January 1866 New York, steamer *Europe* to Cherbourg (arr. 1.19)
blue ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. 2 BREST 2 arrival applied in Paris the next day

On this trip the Europe was forced to land at Cherbourg, under sail, rather than Brest because her main shaft had been damaged in a gale.

French Line - PAQ. No. 1
Paid / Unpaid



ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N° 1



4 April 1868 New York, prepaid with 15¢ 1866 issue, steamer *Europe* to Brest (arv. 4.16)



11 December 1869, double rate unpaid, steamer *Pereire* to Brest (arv. 12.22)



6 October 1866 New York, prepaid with 12¢ and 3¢ 1861 issue, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 10.18)



26 January 1867, single rate unpaid, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 2.4)

French Line - Same Trip, Different Entry Marks
Mexico to Havre / New York to Switzerland

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. LE HAVRE
ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N° 1



Mexico, via New York to Havre, 18 May 1867 New York, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Havre (arr. 5.29)
red ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. LE HAVRE arrival applied at Havre with arrival date



18 May 1867 New York to Switzerland, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 5.28)
normal ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N° 1 applied by postal agent on board, double rate with boxed "T/30"

Both covers were carried on the same trip of the *Ville de Paris*. They were sorted onboard. The lower cover postmarked by the agent prior to landing at Brest. The top cover was carried onward to Havre where it was marked on delivery.



21 March 1868 New York, prepaid with 15¢ 1866 issue, steamer *Pereire* to Brest (arr. 3.31)



4 May 1867 New York, double rate unpaid, steamer *Pereire* to Brest (arr. 5.14)

French Line - PAQ. No. 2

Paid / Unpaid (same trip)



ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N⁰ 2



3 April 1869 New Orleans, double prepaid with 30¢ Grill issue, steamer *Europe* to Brest (arr. 4.15)



4 May 1867 New York, quintuple rate unpaid, steamer *Europe* to Brest (arr. 4.15)



7 August 1869 New Orleans, prepaid with 15¢ Grill issue, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arv. 8.16)



23 January 1869 New Orleans, single rate unpaid, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arv. 1.1)

French Line - PAQ. No. 3

Paid / Unpaid (same trip)



ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N° 3



12 December 1866 New Orleans, prepaid with 10¢ and 5¢ 1861 issue, steamer *Europe* to Brest (arr. 12.27)



27 June 1868 New York, single rate unpaid, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 7.7)

**French Line - Circular Datestamp
Loose Mail Datestamp Used in Error**

Ligne H PAQ. FR. N° 3



6 March 1869 New York, prepaid with pair 15¢ Grill issue, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 3.16)

The circular style Ligne H marking found on this cover generally appears only on loose letters posted to the agent, not on bagged mail such as this example. As two covers exist from this trip with the error marking, it seems likely that it was used on at least several letters in error.

Red / Black



29 May 1869 New York, prepaid with 15¢ 1869 issue, type I, steamer *St. Laurent* to Brest (arr. 6.8)



8 August 1868 New York, single rate unpaid, steamer *St. Laurent* to Brest (arr. 8.18)

There doesn't seem to be any rationale behind the choice of black or red ink in the marking of covers by the Line H postal agents. All markings from a particular trip are in the same color. Black and red postmarks are found almost equally.

French Line - French Due Markings

Unpaid - single, double and triple rates

PAQ. FR. H N° 2 or 3



8 decimes due
handstamp
single rate
(15¢)



16 decimes due
handstamp
double rate
(30¢)



24 decimes due
handstamp
single rate
(45¢)

French Line - French Due Markings
Unpaid - quadruple, quintuple and septuple rates

PAQ. FR. H N^o 1, 2 or 3



32 decimes due
handstamp
4x rate
(60¢)

40 decimes due
manuscript
5x rate
(75¢)



56 decimes due
pencil
7x rate
(\$1.05)

French Line - French Due Markings
From Cuba Steamship: Single and Double Rates

PAQ. FR. H N^o 1 and 4



Cuba, via New York, 6 October 1866 New York "10" debit, PAQ. No. 1, steamer *Ville de Paris* to Brest (arr. 10.18)
steamship rate of 10¢ replaced the normal 3¢ debit on unpaid single letter resulting in a total of 12 decimes due



Cuba, via New York, 3 November 1866 New York "20" debit, PAQ. No. 4, steamer *St. Laurent* to Brest (arr. 11.13)
steamship rate of 20¢ replaced the normal 6¢ debit on unpaid double letter resulting in a total of 24 decimes due

French Line - Transit Mail
Printed Circular From Cuba

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N⁰ 2



printed circular from Cuba, 12 January 1867 New York per steamer *Pereire* to Brest (arr. 1.22)
New York Am Pkt exchange in error, debit "16" handstamp for American packet letter
changed to correct "2" debit for printed circular by French packet
incorrectly rated at "12" decimes due in France as a letter from Cuba