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 in 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 Cochin-China. 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
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

Monsieur
le Consul de France à
Hong-Kong

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
SAIGON CAL
COCHINCHINE

Starting in 1888, the pickup number became part of the Saigon CAL postmark. Here the "3E" 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
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)
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
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

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
PONDICHERRY 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
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

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-3 19
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 (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 BAHES DU RHONE II • 11 1932
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 BCHES 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 BChES 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

PAR AVION
BY AIR MAIL

Messrs. NEW PROCESS METALS Co.

46-50 Center Street

NEWARK, N. J.

Etats-Unis.

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.

Apparent postmark

Actual postmark

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1947-49
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 JUL 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
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.

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

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

The first postmark for the Saigon Port post office was in the type D2 style. It was replaced in 1891 with type E2 postmarks.

POSTMARK TYPE: D2(fl)
PERIOD OF USE: 1887-91

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON PORT COCHINCHINE 30 DEC 87
LIGNE N PAQ. FR. № 8 31 DEC. 87
REVERSE
MALAGA 30) 31 ENE.88
SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

Saigon-Port’s undulated type T2 postmark was normally employed on telegrams in the 1880s.

POSTMARK TYPE: T2
PERIOD OF USE: 1882-87

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE
31 MAI 84
SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

Like the central post office, the Saigon-Port post office began using the type E2 postmark well before the turn of the century. This example bears the type E2 postmark from its last year of use.

POSTMARK TYPE: E2
PERIOD OF USE: 1891-1912
SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

At the same time that Saigon-Port was phasing out the type E2 postmark, it began introducing the type E2(ch) variant in 1912. This registered postmark letter to France is from the postmark’s first year of service. It remained in use for over a decade and a half.

POSTMARK TYPE: E2(ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1912-28

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 6-12 12
framed R with manuscript registration number
REVERSE
RODEZ AVAYRON 31-12 12
SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

Prior to 1912, Saigon Port’s type E2 postmark used abbreviations to indicate the month. After 1912, the type E2(ch) postmark for Saigon Port used numerals to indicate the month.

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE 27-II.27
framed R with manuscript registration number
REVERSE
LUZERN 2 BRIEFAUSGABE 24.XII.27

POSTMARK TYPE: E2(ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1912-28
In 1924, Saigon-Port's type E2 (ch) postmark was struck with blue ink on this internal postcard sent to Quinhone, Annam.

POSTMARK TYPE: E2 (ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1912-28
SAIGON KHANHHOI
COCHINCHINE

Opened near Saigon’s port on 16 January 1923, Saigon–Khanhhoi was a major post office. Although the post office was renamed Saigon Messageries Maritimes in 1927, the postmark continued to be used for some years afterward.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1925-30

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON KHANHHOI COCHINCHINE 21-11 25
SAIGON KHANHHOI
COCHINCHINE

The final year of the type G1 Saigon-Khanhhoi postmark was 1930. Here the postmark was applied after a letter posted on 23 December was held until after the New Year awaiting the airmail connection.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1925-30

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 23-12 30
airmail label and framed route handstamp
SAIGON KHANHHOI COCHINCHINE 2-1 30
SAIGON-TANDINH
COCHINCHINE

Saigon-Tandinh was a primary post office that closed and reopened several times. The type E2(ch) postmark was utilized during the initial period of service, which lasted from 1907 to 1934.

POSTMARK TYPE: E2(ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1914-25

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-TANDINH COCHINCHINE 14-12 26
framed R with manuscript registration number
SAIGON-TANDINH
COCHINCHINE

Saigon-Tandinh’s type G postmark was used during each of its periods of operation. Its last reported usage was in 1948.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1928-48

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-TANDINH COCHINCHINE 15-4 38
SAIGON TANDINH
SUD VIET-NAM

For the type V1(t) postmark, the spelling “SAIGON TANDINH” dropped the hyphen for the first time. The short-lived postmark was in service for only two years.

POSTMARK TYPE: V1(t)
PERIOD OF USE: 1950-51

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON TANDINH SUD VIET-NAM 28-12 1951
registration label
REVERSE
SAIGON TANDINH SUD VIET-NAM 28-12 1951
SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 29-12 1951
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
COCHINCHINE

In 1923, new postmarks appeared with the name “SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES. The first version of the type F1 format expressed the month with an abbreviation. This postmark is only known from a single year, 1923. It is likely that wear of the very thin lettering resulted in short lifetimes of these postmark devices.

POSTMARK TYPE: F1
PERIOD OF USE: 1923

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES COCHINCHINE 20 OCT 23
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
COCHINCHINE

In a variation from the F1 format, numerals rather than letters indicated the month for the type F1(ch) postmark device.

POSTMARK TYPE: F1(ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1923-24
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES
COCHINCHINE

The type F1 format crammed 37 letters’ worth of text into the available space. For this example, a horizontal line separates the time of day from the date.

POSTMARK TYPE: F1(ch)
PERIOD OF USE: 1923-24

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES COCHINCHINE 21-3 24
REVERSE
WATTWYL 16.IV.24
SAIGON-MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

One postmark deviated from the usual practice of identifying the colony’s name and placed “MARITIMES” at the base of the circular date stamp. The first reported year of use of this postmark was in 1935. Despite having been posted at the port, this mailing was marked for airmail delivery to France.

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON MESSAGERIES MARITIMES 16-5 35
Saigon-Marseille route handstamp
REVERSE
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BChEs DU RHONE
26 • V 1935

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1935-44
With this variety of postmark wording, “MARITIMES” was abbreviated as “MMES.” The style was utilized for nearly a decade from 1936 to 1944. The Saigon Messageries Maritimes post office was classified as a principal post office meaning that it was authorized to provide all postal services.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1936-44

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-MESSAGERIES-MMES COCHINCHINE 4-3 37
REVERSE
CANTON 13.3.26
SAIGON-MESSAGERIES-MMES
COCHINCHINE

Use of the type G “MMES” postmark continued into World War II. In the case of this registered local letter, the registration label was handstamped with another abbreviation “SAIGON M. MARITIMES” that identified the originating post office.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1936-44

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-MESSAGERIES-MMES COCHINCHINE 2-3 43
registration label
manuscript “franked by sender”
REVERSE
SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 2-3 43
SAIGON COMMERCE
COCHINCHINE

Saigon Commerce was a principal post office created around 1927. The type G1 postmark was used over most of the period that the post office served the public.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1928-41

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON COMMERCE COCHINCHINE 18-1 36
SAIGON A
COCHINCHINE

Each auxiliary post office was assigned its own letter of the alphabet. The first auxiliary post office, Saigon A, opened in 1906. Saigon A used distinctive hexagonal postmarks. With this example, the postmark was struck on a picture postcard in its first year of use.

POSTMARK TYPE: H
PERIOD OF USE: 1906-26

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON A COCHINCHINE 5 SEPT 06
REVERSE
NAVE CALABRIA 5 OT 06
SAIGON A.
COCHINCHINE

With is variety of the hexagonal SAIGON A type H postmark, there is a period after the “A.” In most other cases, a period is not present.

POSTMARK TYPE: H
PERIOD OF USE: 1906-26

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON A. COCHINCHINE 3 MAI 12
framed R with manuscript registration number
REVERSE
LYON RHONE 6 VI 12
SAIGON A
COCHINCHINE

The hexagonal Saigon A postmark was in use for 20 years. The final year of use was 1926.

POSTMARK TYPE: H
PERIOD OF USE: 1906-26

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON A COCHINCHINE 29 MARS 26
REVERSE
KOTTAIYUR 14 APR 26
SAIGON A
COCHINCHINE

Long after it introduced the hexagonal postmark, auxiliary post office A put a type G postmark into service. This is the first recorded example of this postmark.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1922

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON A COCHINCHINE 3-4 22
framed R with manuscript registration number
SAIGON.A
COCHINCHINE

The type G1 SAIGON A postmark is known in two forms: “SAIGON.A” and “SAIGON-A”. An example of the former is shown here.

For auxiliary post office, the postmark was relatively long-lived remaining in service for a decade and a half.
SAIGON - A
COCHINCHINE

The Saigon A post office used the type G2 postmark for a short period during World War II. The type G2 postmark, with its characteristic dashed outer border, was one of Indochina’s least used formats.

POSTMARK TYPE: G2
PERIOD OF USE: 1942-43

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-A COCHINCHINE 13-7 43
registration label
REVERSE
SAIGON-PRINCIPAL COCHINCHINE 13-7 43
PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 14-7 43
SAIGON A
COCHINCHINE

The hexagonal postmark was resurrected for auxiliary post office A in 1949. With type H2, the border is dashed as opposed to the earlier hexagonal postmark, which was outlined with a solid line.

POSTMARK TYPE: H2
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-A COCHINCHINE 13-9 1949
REVERSE
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 14-9 1949
Like other post offices, the auxiliary Saigon A post office switched from “COCHINCHINE” to “SUD VIET-NAM.” The last year of use for the circular type V1(t) postmark was 1951.

POSTMARK TYPE: V1(t)
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-51
SAIGON-A
SUD VIET-NAM

With the new name for the country, the hexagonal postmark was altered in 1949, replacing “COCHINCHINE” with “SUD VIET-NAM.” This postmark remained in use until 1952.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON–A COCHINCHINE 23-5 1950
SAIGON A
SUD VIET-NAM

By 1951, the short dashers in the outer boundary of the Saigon A postmark had merged to form long dashes almost giving the boundary the appearance of being solid rather than interrupted.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-A SUD VIET-NAM 21-6 1951
REVERSE
SAIGON-A SUD VIET-NAM 21-6 1951
SAIGON B
COCHINCHINE

Following establishment of the Saigon A post office in 1906 by one year was the Saigon B auxiliary post office. Its first postmark was the hexagonal type H format.

POSTMARK TYPE: H
PERIOD OF USE: 1907-25

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON B COCHINCHINE 20 JUIN 12
SAIGON B
COCHINCHINE

The second auxiliary post office’s type G1 postmark was used to favor cancel the low value stamp on this picture postcard.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1929-32/48
SAIGON-B
COCHINCHINE

In this variety of the “SAIGON-B” postmarks, a hyphen is between “SAIGON” and “B.” It is only known from 1929.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1929

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-B COCHINCHINE 5-2 29
registration label
REVERSE
YOKOHAMA A MARSEILLE No 10 5-2 29
SAIGON.B.
COCHINCHINE

The second and last hexagonal postmark for Saigon B was a type H1 device. Its use has only been recorded from the year 1949.

POSTMARK TYPE: H1
PERIOD OF USE: 1949

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON.B. COCHINCHINE 30-8 1949
"C" was the last letter in the alphabet that appeared in Saigon's type H postmark. Later, the "C" reappeared in different postmark formats.

POSTMARK TYPE; H
PERIOD OF USE: 1906-16

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON C COCHINCHINE 25 FEVR 16
large plain "R" with manuscript registration number
SAIGON C
COCHINCHINE

The third auxiliary post office, given the letter “C”, opened after World War I. Like its counterparts, it employed the type G1 postmark in the 1930s.

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON C COCHINCHINE 2-5 29
registration label
REVERSE
ST ETIENNE LOIRE 31-5 29

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1929-30
SAIGON C
COCHINCHINE

The hexagonal “SAIGON C” postmark is only recorded for the year 1949. Soon thereafter “SUD VIET-NAM” replaced “COCHINCHINE” on all postmarks.

POSTMARK TYPE: H1
PERIOD OF USE: 1949

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON C COCHINCHINE  1-7 1949
SAIGON C
SUD VIET-NAM

With the Saigon C type V1(t) postmark, there is no space between the words “SUD” and “VIET-NAM.”

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

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON C SUD VIET-NAM 1-12 1949
registration label
REVERSE
CANTHO SUD VIET-NAM 2-12 1949
SAIGON C
SUD VIET-NAM

The dashed hexagonal type VH2 postmark appeared at Saigon in 1950 and remained in service for two years.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1950-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON C SUD VIET-NAM 12-8 1950
REVERSE
CAMPILE CORSE 17-8 1950
SAIGON D
COCHINCHINE

The type H2 postmark for the Saigon D auxiliary post office is only known from 1949. In 1950, “SUD VIET-NAM” replaced “COCHINCHINE” in these postmarks.

POSTMARK TYPE: H2
PERIOD OF USE: 1949

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON D COCHINCHINE 21-4 1949
REVERSE
SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 21-4 1949
SAIGON D
SUD VIET-NAM

The type V1(t) postmark from the Saigon D auxiliary post office is known to have been in service for only two years.

POSTMARK TYPE: V1(t)
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-50

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON D SUD VIET-NAM 9-3 1950
SAIGON D
SUD VIET-NAM

Auxiliary post office Saigon D was opened in 1947 to replace the former “SAIGON-COMMERCE” post office. The dashed hexagonal type VH2 postmark was in service for only a few years.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1950-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON D SUD VIET-NAM  3-5 1950
SAIGON-D
SUD VIET-NAM

Auxiliary post office Saigon D was opened in 1947 to replace the former “SAIGON-COMMERCE” post office. The dashed hexagonal type VH2 postmark was in service for only a few years. The postmark’s last year of use was 1952.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1950-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON D SUD VIET-NAM 17-1 1952
SAIGON E
COCHINCHINE

The Messageries Maritimes post office was replaced by post office E around 1947. Its first postmark employed the solid line hexagonal type H1 style.

POSTMARK TYPE: H1
PERIOD OF USE: 1948-50

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-E COCHINCHINE 20-12 48
SAIGON F
SUD VIET-NAM

The only postmark known from the Saigon F auxiliary post office is of the type VH2 format.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH2
PERIOD OF USE: 1951-52

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-F SUD VIET-NAM 6-9 1951
SAIGON H
SUD VIET-NAM

The only recorded postmark style for auxiliary post office H was type VH1, which was used from 1951 through 1955.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH1
PERIOD OF USE: 1951-55

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON-H SUD VIET-NAM 5-2 1952
REVERSE
SAIGON-H SUD VIET-NAM 5-2 1952
Auxiliary post offices were assigned identifying letters in alphabetical order. The very last letter used for Saigon’s auxiliary offices was the letter “I.” Post Office I’s only postmark was in the VH1 format from the years 1950-51.

POSTMARK TYPE: VH1
PERIOD OF USE: 1950-51
COCHINCHINE ET CAMBODGE
DIRECTION

Like many bureaucratic institutions, the Indochinese postal service underwent a number of reorganizations. At the turn of the century, the North and South had separate postal administrations. This previously unrecorded postmark is from the Cochinchina and Cambodia Postal Administration in Saigon. Effective 1 January 1902, all postal and telegraph services were placed under a single Director,

POSTMARK TYPE: D1
PERIOD OF USE: 1901
JOURNAUX P.P.  
SAIGON

The JOURNAUX P.P. postmark was used for sending periodicals through the mails. The type G1 format was in service for only two years.

Here the JOURNAUX P.P. postmark was applied to a Saigon Sports Club wrapper in 1927.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1  
PERIOD OF USE: 1927-28
Nominally, the JOURNAUX P.P. postmark was used for sending periodicals through the mails. Here the postmark was applied to a picture postcard mailed to Paris. The type G1 format was in service for only two years.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1927-28
The JOURNAUX P.P. SAIGON postmark was the very last French postmark that saw service in Indochina. Used for mailing bands on periodicals, the last year for the type G1 postmark was 1959.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1925-59

POSTAL MARKINGS
JOURNAUX P.P. SAIGON 31-10 1959
SAIGON PP.
COCHINCHINE

The “SAIGON PP.” postmark was a variation of the newspaper postmarks. Here it was applied to a wrapper addressed to Marseilles in 1930.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1930-33
SAIGON FOIRE

A temporary post office operated during the Saigon Fair in 1928. Previously unrecorded, the type G1 postmarks were struck with blue ink on this envelope.

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1928

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON FOIRE COCHINCHINE 16-1 28
SAIGON
FOIRE-EXPOSITION

A temporary post office at the Saigon Fair operated for 3 months from 20 December 1942 until 20 February 1943. The slogan marking accompanying the postmark shows that the fair was open for the first two months of this period.

VISITEZ LA
FOIRE
EXPOSITION
DE SAIGON
20 DEC. 1942
20 JANV. 1943

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1942-43

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON - FOIRE-EXPOSITION 10-12 42
slogan handstamp
SAIGON
FOIRE–EXPOSITION

During its three months of operation, the postmark of the temporary post office was usually used in combination with the slogan marking. Occasionally, it was used like a simple postmark.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1942-43

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON - FOIRE-EXPOSITION 2-1 43
REVERSE
PNOMPNH CAMBODGE 3-1 43
RECOUVREMENt SAIGON R.P.
COCHINChINE

POSTMARK TYPE: G1
PERIOD OF USE: 1948

POSTAL MARKINGS
RECOUVREMENt SAIGON
R.P. COCHINChINE 4-4 48
CONSEIL ADMINISTRATION DÉCIDÉ DE DEVELOPPER MAXIMUM TRAVAUX
PLANTATIONS SELON VOS MOYENS PROGRAMME MINIMUM MILLE DOUZE
CENTS HECTARES POUR CAMPAGNE PROCHAINE AUGMENTATIONS PROGRESSIVES
CAMPAGNES SUIVANTES ADMINISTRATEUR DELEGUE- ARRETERA DEFINITIVEMENT
PROGRAMME ARRIVEE SAIGON STOP OCCUPONS RECRUTEMENT PERSONNEL
NOTAMMENT DALLOZ PROBABLEMENT BERTRAND ASSISTANT PLANTATION
COMMUNIQUEZ COMITE CONTROLE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indications conventionnelles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accord de réception par PCP
Rappel TF à faire savoir GR

Indications de service

23h47 à 23h57

Yannoulaos

limited

Mission

No CB3 Nuits 7

Depôt le 23h47 a 23h57 m.cl.
The “Saigon Philatelic” postmark deviated from the norm as it was the first to employ “INDOCHINE” to designate the “region.” The earliest known use of this postmark is from 1949.

POSTMARK TYPE: G
PERIOD OF USE: 1949-51
The first version of the Saigon Philatelic postmark was unusual because "INDOCHINE" was at the base instead of "COCHINCHINE." Also, the outer ring was rotated clockwise with respect to the date information at the center.

POSTMARK TYPE: W2
PERIOD OF USE: 1951-55

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON PHILATELIE INDOCHINE 24-3 1950
SAIGON PHILATELIE
VIETNAM

The format for Saigon Philatelie's type W2 postmark differs from the norm in that it lacks separators between the city and country names. Posted in July 1952, the Indochinese stamp had been demonetized in April.

POSTMARK TYPE: W2
PERIOD OF USE: 1951-54