Article: Two Hundred Years of Postal Communications: the Netherlands - United States of America
Author(s): Cornelis Muys, Jan Giphart
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"The cause of this important commerce can easily be understood in that a large part of the population of New York state, which in turn supplies a large part of New Jersey state, being from Dutch origin and having a natural attachment to their forefathers' country, gives preference to Dutch goods. Convenient correspondence with Holland enlivens her family connections and gives rise to mutual commerce." (From a letter written by Jan Hendrik Heineken, the Dutch consul in Philadelphia, sent to the Clerk of the States General Fagel on November 16, 1791.)

In 1982 it was two hundred years ago that The Netherlands and the United States of America (USA) entered into diplomatic relations followed by a treaty of friendship and commerce. On April 19, 1782, diplomatic relations were officially entered upon. The States General of the Republic of the Netherlands on this date accepted the credentials of John Adams and recognized him as the first envoy of the USA. On October 8, 1782, a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce was signed which made The Netherlands the second country, after France, to have a formal relationship with the USA. After signing of the treaty in 1782, efforts were immediately made in our country to realize a regular postal connection between the new Commonwealth and Europe. In 1784 the establishment of a regular connection between Boston and Amsterdam was considered. In 1791, Jan Hendrik Heineken, the Dutch consul in Philadelphia, sent the government in Amsterdam a proposal to organize a safe postal service between North America and continental Europe — namely Germany and the north — via the Republic. The plan was never accepted nor agreed upon, probably because of political reasons. On April 30, 1800, a plan was again submitted by Mr. Heineken, who now was the Commissioner of Commerce of the Republic with the USA, but this also came no further. Consequently there never was a direct postal service established between the Republic and the United States of America.

While researching old overseas postal connections, one comes across the fact that in the beginning mail transport almost always took place by private vessel, while as time passed, mail transport per packetboat became more dominant. In the first case each ship that came into harbour could be requested to carry mail to other countries or overseas areas. In the second, it refers to a regular sailing service which transported mail for a fixed tariff. The ships or packetboats that were used could be totally at the expense of a certain postal authority or an arrangement could be made concerning the transport of mail only.

Sometimes it happened, as in the last decades of the V.O.C. (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie — United East India Co.) that both methods of mail transport were performed by one organization.

The transport per packetboat was more expensive than transport by private vessel; however, it did have the advantage of a regular sailing service.

It stands to reason that in the 18th century England carried on the greater part of the postal traffic between North America and Europe. In this traffic the Falmouth-New York
Line from 1755 till about 1827, with an interruption of two years between 1782 and 1784 and during the War of 1812, held the lion’s share.

Meanwhile, Louis XVI of France decided to establish a packetboat service between France and New York. Earlier France had helped the former English colonies in their battle of independence against England and wanted to see itself taking over the role of the great European power, which once had been England’s.

The new packetboats would be limited to transporting only mail, people, and goods that
could afford a high seafare. This was done so that not too many protests would be heard from the Chambers of Commerce, in particular where one now had to pay sea postage for letters which in the past had been transported by private vessel and mostly free of charge. But understandably the protests came.

Five corvettes of the Royal French Navy, three of which the French had captured from the English, were converted into packetboats in L'Orient whereby the artillery of 18 to 50 cannons was reduced to four. The boats were also furnished with good passenger accommodations.

Between September 12 and 17, 1783, the ships were rechristened as follows:

- *Le Serin* became *Courier de l'Europe*.
- *L'Ecureuil* became *Courier de l'Amérique*.
- *The Harriot* became *Courier de Port Louis*.
- *The Alligator* became *Courier de New York*.
- *The Fortune I* became *Courier de L'Orient*.

The first ship that would sail was the *Courier de l'Europe*. This was the largest ship in this series and this was done so that a good impression would be made when arriving in New York. September 17, 1783, was decided upon as date of departure.

On this voyage, which was delayed a couple of days because of unfavourable winds, travelled, among others, Mr. Thatcher, secretary of Samuel Adams, one of the foremost men of the American independence movement. He carried with him the definitive text of the treaty between England and France that was signed on September 3, 1783, in Versailles, whereby the thirteen colonies in North America were granted their independence: The United States of America.

### RÉGIE DES PAQUEBOTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALLER</th>
<th>RETOUR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Courier de l'Europe</em></td>
<td>18, 26 sept. 83</td>
<td>déc. 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Courier de l'Amérique</em></td>
<td>15 oct. 83</td>
<td>27 janv. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Courier de Port-Louis</em></td>
<td>22 nov. 83</td>
<td>21 févr. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Courier de New York</em></td>
<td>17 déc. 83</td>
<td>25 mars 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Cougue de L'Orient</em></td>
<td>20 janv. 84</td>
<td>20 mars 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>Warwick</em></td>
<td>17 févr. 84</td>
<td>16 avr. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1° <em>La Sylphe</em></td>
<td>16 mars 84</td>
<td>27 mai 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2° <em>Courier de l'Europe</em></td>
<td>29 avr. 84</td>
<td>17 juin 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2° <em>Courier de l'Amérique</em></td>
<td>18 mai 84</td>
<td>14 juil. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2° <em>Courier de New York</em></td>
<td>29 juin 84</td>
<td>24 mars 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2° <em>Courier de L'Orient</em></td>
<td>31 juil. 84</td>
<td>17 juil. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2° <em>Warwick</em></td>
<td>17 août 84</td>
<td>17 août 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3° <em>Courier de l'Europe</em></td>
<td>30 sept. 84</td>
<td>16 sept. 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3° <em>La Martinique</em></td>
<td>20 oct. 84</td>
<td>17 oct. 84</td>
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<tr>
<td>3° <em>Courier de l'Amérique</em></td>
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<td>3° <em>Courier de New York</em></td>
<td>22 déc. 84</td>
<td>27 nov. 84</td>
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<td>3° <em>Cougue de L'Orient</em></td>
<td>28 déc. 84</td>
<td>24 mars 85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Est parti de Port-Louis.

Table 1

Between the middle of September 1783 and the middle of January 1784, all five boats sailed for New York of which the *Courier de Port Louis* was shipwrecked in sight of the American harbour because of heavy ice drift.

The crossings varied from 30 to 63 days (Table 1).

Besides the ships already mentioned, the *Warwick*, *the Sylphe, La Martinique* and *Le Maréchal de Castries* were also used on this route. These ships sailed under the "Régie des Paquebots" between 1783 and the beginning of 1785.

Overvoorde writes about this in *Geschiedenis van het Postwezen in Nederland voor 1795*, (Leiden: 1902) on pages 285 & 286:
As soon as France had concluded a contract with America for a monthly mail service via L’Orient to New York, she offered to transport Dutch mail for 11 sol above the packetboat charge of 20 sol, which was later reduced to 6 sol above the 20 sol. The commissioners decided to accept this offer for a period and at the same time requested an offer from the English postal authorities for mail transport via London. The English made a bid of one shilling per letter. Although this last offer was higher than the French charge, the commissioners decided to contract with both bidders so that they could have two routes and in case of stoppages they might use either route.

In 1784 the Courier de l’Amérique arrived in France as the first packetboat from New York with mail on board for Holland, viz:

- Amsterdam: 131 single, 12 double letters and 32 ounce letters
- Rotterdam: 25 single, 1 double letter and 2 ounce letters

From the first of June to the 19th of November there arrived for:

- Amsterdam: 68 single, 4 double letters and 5½ ounce letters
- Rotterdam: 8 single, 1 double letter and 4 ounce letters

France charged for the American postage 20 sol and from L’Orient 6 sol, while for envelopes the charge was 21 sol, double letters 38 sol and for ounces 40 sol. In Holland the commissioners set the postage at 20 stuiver hollandsch for mail on arrival and 14 stuiver Dutch for letters that were to be sent. The tariffs were purposely set higher than postage that had to be paid to France because they were afraid that Brabant would also charge transit postage.

In 1792 Hamburg and Holland proposed that mail for America should be sent directly by private vessel.

According to an announcement in the “Maandelijkse Nederlandsche Mercurius” of March 1785 the public of Rotterdam were informed of the following:

Rotterdam, March 11th: At the Post Office here the following notice has been put up:

"By order of the most highly esteemed College of the Lords Commissioners of the Postal Authorities of Holland and West Friesland, the following is announced:

That the regular monthly packetboat from New York in North America to L’Orient in France will be arriving and has on board among other things mail from the XIII Colonies.

Letters from the North American States for Holland will be sent via France whereby for a single letter 20 stuiver Dutch will be charged, for one with envelope or in cover 21 stuiver Dutch, for a double letter weighing more than half an ounce 32 stuiver Dutch will be charged, while for a letter weighing one ounce 38 stuiver Dutch will be charged.

Furthermore, on every third Tuesday of each month it will be possible to send mail to the XIII North American States by packetboat via L’Orient for New York by paying the following postal charges:
- a single letter: 14 stuivers Dutch
- a letter with envelope or in cover: 15 stuivers Dutch
- a double letter heavier than half an ounce: 24 stuivers Dutch
- a letter weighing 1 ounce: 28 stuivers Dutch

NB. To make sure that letters arrive on time in L’Orient, those letters must be delivered to the post office 11 to 12 days prior to the third Tuesday of each month."

In America the “Régie des Paquebots” was represented by the French consul in New York, Mr. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. He had two sets of stamps per ship made in New York with the name of the ship plus the date of departure or arrival on them. One set was sent to L’Orient with the request that these be used, but this never happened.

The interesting study by L. Dubus that underlies this information, “Les trois premières régies de paquebots-poste pour New York sous Louis XVI” (Philatélie, Paris, 1970), notes that three letters exist that have the red departure stamp “Le Courier de l’Amérique/New York + date” (1784).
In a publication of the "Deutscher Altbriebsammler-Verein" of 1974 the following marking (Figure 3) was published showing a handstamp on a letter sent from Philadelphia in 1784.

![Paid Stamp]

*PAID*

*Courier de L'Orient*

*New York*

**Figure 3. The datestamp on this letter could fill the gap in the list of the "Régie des Paquebots" (Table 1).**

Lastly, Herlant mentions in his "La Poste aux Lettres et les Marques Postales en Belgique de 1648 à 1849" (Bruges, 1946) the marking (Figure 4), "Le Courier de l'Europe/New York, June 16 1785."

![Le Courier del'Europe Stamp]

**Le Courier del'EUROPE.**

*New York* 16 juin 1785

**Figure 4. Markings of Courier de l'Europe.**

Meanwhile, the stamps "Le Courier de New York" and "Le Courier la Martinique" — all on letters sent from the USA — have been found.

In the spring of 1785 the sailings became irregular and the earning capacity of the business became extremely doubtful.

1786

At this stage Louis XVI decided to exploit these boats at his own expense. Table 2 throws some light on the sailings in 1785 and 1786.

Meanwhile protests from commercial circles kept arising and it is stated that, in 1786, 679 merchant vessels sailed from French harbours, then "what are a couple of packetboats in comparison?" The tariff of 20 sols was found to be very expensive since, if one looked to the dangers at sea, one was obliged to send duplicate copies of letters if not triplicate with other ships.

It should be understood, however, that after 1783 letters mailed anywhere in France,
addressed to North America, were sent preferably by state packetboat. Most of the commercial houses worked with Forwarding Agents in New York and Boston. These agents paid the postage due on this mail, but did put it on the bill of their French principals. Before the use of packetboats, the merchant marine and the navy received in general nothing or very little in the way of compensation for mail transport.

The French government then decided to form a second “Régie des Paquebots” by which the French colonies in the Caribbean area should also be included in the service. On December 14, 1786, the king decided to start this new venture which would be larger in scope than the previous one with 24 packetboats. Instead of L'Orient as departure harbour, Le Havre would now be used for ships sailing to New York. From the original enterprise three ships were left: the Courier de l'Europe, the Courier de New York and the Courier de L'Orient. The ships were now numbered so that the use of ship names in handstamps was discontinued. The first sailing date set under the new service was February 10, 1787, later changed to February 17, 1787. Other data can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No d'attribution</th>
<th>ALLER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Départ prévu</td>
<td>Départ réel du Havre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Les Deux Frères</td>
<td>10- 2-87</td>
<td>17- 2-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Le Courrier de L'Orient</td>
<td>25- 3-87</td>
<td>27- 3-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Le Courrier de l'Europe</td>
<td>10- 5-87</td>
<td>10- 5-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Le Courrier de New York</td>
<td>25- 6-87</td>
<td>27- 6-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Marquis de Castries</td>
<td>10- 8-87</td>
<td>10- 8-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Le Courrier de l'Europe</td>
<td>29- 9-87</td>
<td>25-9-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Paquebot neuf</td>
<td>10-11-87</td>
<td>11-11-87</td>
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<tr>
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<td>25-12-87</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10- 2-88</td>
<td>27- 2-88</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Le Courrier de New York</td>
<td>25- 3-88</td>
<td>8- 4-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10- 5-88</td>
<td>6-88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On July 5, 1788, the Conseil d'Etat resolved to end this money-devouring operation and the ships were sold.

Examples of handstamps used in the period of “La deuxième Régie des Paquebots” are as follows (Figure 5):

PAQ·L'ORIENT
PAQ·NEW YORK
PAR LE HAVRE

Figure 5. Markings of the Second Régie.

These markings can be found on letters transported by the above-mentioned ships as well as on letters that were carried by private ships in this period.

A third attempt to establish a regular packet service between France and New York was made by Mr. Benjamin Dubois. He stipulated a payment of 12,000 livres per trip, pre-payment of domestic and sea postage and freedom to carry whatever freight he wished. One trip was made with the ship Jean Jacques, departing from Bordeaux May 15, 1789, after which this attempt was also put to an end by government intervention.

1811

An announcement in the “Courier van Amsterdam” of 1811, announced that letters and
packages for the USA were subject to compulsory prepaid postage.

1818

The first notice to make mention of the fact that mail was now being sent to foreign colonies (and overseas areas) via the French Postal Administration can be found in the instructions (Art. XXX and LXX) attached to Circular nr. 125 of August 26, 1818, from the Dutch Postal Administration. Hereby prepaid postage to Bordeaux was compulsory. For a single letter (in this case max. 6 grams) from Amsterdam one had to prepay the following:

- Amsterdam-Bergen: 7 stuivers
- Bergen-Bordeaux: 9 stuivers or in total 16 stuivers.

The same amount was charged to a recipient for an incoming letter.

A few months earlier in March 1818 we find mention of mail transport to the States of North America in the resolutions — Circular nr. 112 — from the Postmaster General of the Dutch Postal Administration, in which no mention is made of the French or English postal services.

Special Instruction

for postmasters, concerning the handling of mail from and to the colonies and other overseas countries (excluding England for which other instructions apply)

Article 1

The postmasters are obliged to take for dispatch all letters, without any distinction, which are to be sent to the Dutch or other colonies and also those for the States of North America.

Figure 6. Letter from New York 31 July 1824; arrived 26 Oct. Vlissingen ship letter handstamp; rated 12 stuivers due.
Figure 7. Extract from the table attached to Circular No. 112. In 1818 a “lood” equalled 154 grams.

Article 4

Letters handed in at the post offices and which are to be sent per private vessel to foreign colonies and overseas countries and also those for the States of North America shall not be accepted other than against a compulsory prepaid postage which amounts to a third of the already mentioned tariff, hence a charge of 20 cents (4 stuivers or 4 décimes) per single letter and the heavier letters according to the special progressive tariffs included in this resolution. For this postage the letters will be delivered aboard the vessels departing for foreign colonies.

Figure 8. Letter from Boston 10 Apr. 1843 by private ship and received at Den Helder as ship letter, rated 60c Dutch due. Original sent by Cunard Line.
The next announcement on behalf of the General French Post Office dates from February 1826. In Circular nr. 205 it was announced that “regularly, three times a month, to wit each time on the 1st, the 15th and the 25th, packetboats will leave from Havre to the USA.” Letters to be sent with these boats should arrive in Paris three days prior to the boat’s departure. Compulsory prepaid postage remained equal to he postage for letters sent via Bordeaux, while on letters sent from America via France to The Netherlands the same postage was to be levied.

Article 2
The regulations of the preceding article will be brought to the attention of the public through an announcement of the following contents, which will be placed in both official gazettes and a copy of which each postmaster should hang outside his office:

The Privy Councillor, Administrator of Postal Services and other Means of Transport announces to the public that according to information from the French Postal Administration a packetboat will depart regularly for the USA from Havre three times each month and then on the 1st, 15th and 25th. All letters that are to be sent thither should arrive in Paris three days before sailing so that these can be sent on the first opportunity.

Those wishing to make use of this service are invited to write on the address-side of their letters the words “Over Havre” and to deliver these letters to the post office of their domicile and to pay a compulsory postal charge through French territory, otherwise no forwarding will be possible.

The Privy Councillor, the Administrator
(signed) van Roijen.

Letters sent via this service with destination The Netherlands, often showed in the 1830s the following types of handstamps (Figure 9):

![Figure 9. Markings associated with the Havre route.](image)

![Figure 10. Letter from Philadelphia to Amsterdam with TF (Transit France) marking. Rated 215c Dutch due — an overweight letter.](image)
At the end of March 1839 the new types of "Outre-Mer" datestamps were introduced, among them "Outre-Mer/Le Havre" (Figure 11).

In many instances, the services of Forwarding Agents were used to send these letters.

Figure 12. Letter in 1846 from New York to Rotterdam via Havre by St. Nicolas. Due 80c.

(To be continued)

HIRAM E. DEATS: THE PHILATELIC FARMER FROM FLEMINGTON

STANLEY M. BIERMAN, M.D.

(Continued from Chronicle 125:17)

Hiram Deats is best known to the philatelic community for his superb library, and it is generally acknowledged that his own assemblage of rare books, periodicals and auction catalogues was second only to that of John K. Tiffany. Deats had quite early established himself as a bibliophile-historian and at age 22 was the editor and publisher of The Jerseyman, a quarterly magazine devoted to the local history of his county. A photograph in Mekeel's Weekly of 1892 shows a youthful Deats sitting at a desk amongst piles and piles of periodicals including some 20,000 duplicates. Deats had subscribed to almost every known philatelic periodical published since 1885 and his New Jersey farmhouse or the St. Louis residence of John K. Tiffany became the repository of most of the obscure, if not evanescent, publications of this era. When Tiffany