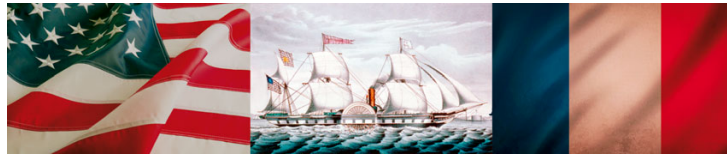# THE STEVEN WALSKE COLLECTION OF
UNITED STATES-FRANCE TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

STEVEN WALSKE'S COLLECTION OF TRANSATLANTIC MAIL BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES and France may be characterized as one of his earliest and most accomplished collecting pursuits. He began focusing on the subject at an early stage of his development as a postal historian, and working in concert with leading scholars and professionals on both sides of the Atlantic, Steve has helped unravel many of the mysterious and misunderstood aspects of pre-UPU mail exchange between the U.S. and France. His articles have made valuable contributions to our knowledge of the subject, and his willingness to exhibit his collection has raised the collecting community's awareness and appreciation of the many scarce and rare covers.

The mail exchanged between the U.S. and France was subject to numerous postal arrangements and conventions. Steve set out to create a comprehensive survey collection of the postal rates, routes and markings on steamship packet mail during the period from July 1840 to December 1875. He also acquired noteworthy covers from the UPU period and a group of unusual private ship letters, which were not subject to the same conditions that governed packet mail.

Prior to the first U.S.-France postal treaty in April 1857, packet mail between the two countries was exchanged principally via Great Britain (G.B.), and was facilitated by the 1836, 1843 and 1856 postal treaties between G.B. and France. U.S.-G.B. treaties and changing inland postages also affected rates. On packet mail carried directly between France and the U.S. before 1857, each country was required to collect its share of the postage on each letter. However, the 1857 U.S.-France Treaty governed packet mail on all routes between the two countries. When it expired in 1870, rates were again determined by a series of G.B.-France and U.S.-G.B. postal treaties until the August 1874 U.S.-France Treaty.

Steve arranged his collection and exhibit according to the seven major categories listed below, which generally follow a chronological order. These categories may be further divided into sub-periods, which are defined by changing rates and/or routes. A detailed table of these rate periods is presented in the Appendix to this catalogue.

- Mail exchanged under the 1836 G.B.-France Treaty (July 1840-May 1843)
- Mail exchanged under the 1843 G.B.-France Treaty (June 1843-December 1856)
- Mail exchanged under the 1856 G.B.-France Treaty (January-March 1857)
- 1847-57 direct packet mail
- Mail exchanged under the 1857 U.S.-France Treaty (April 1857-December 1869)
- 1870-74 interim non-treaty mail
- Mail exchanged under the 1874 U.S.-France Treaty (August 1874-December 1875), followed by UPU period

Steve's exhibit won an International Large Gold Medal at Italia '97. Having completed all possible rate/route combinations—the only time this has been achieved—Steve feels the time has come to sell.

For the purpose of offering Steve's collection, we have divided it into two different auctions. This catalogue presents the covers that have dominant United States collector appeal. In May, in conjunction with World Stamp Show-NY 2016, we will offer the second part, comprising covers with greater French appeal. In most cases the division was simple; the covers with rare United States or French frankings neatly fall into Part One or Two, respectively. However, certain covers have markings or elements that have strong cross-over appeal. We will be coordinating our marketing efforts with the prestigious firm of Roumet in Paris to ensure that content of both sales receives proper attention.

A further division of covers was made in this sale. The most significant items—particularly the covers with rare stamp frankings—are offered first, followed by the covers that generally have lesser monetary value, but nonetheless have scarce markings and elements that will excite specialists. Many of the covers have multifaceted signficance and appeal, and we urge prospective bidders to carefully read the descriptions to learn about each item.

— SCOTT R. TREPEL