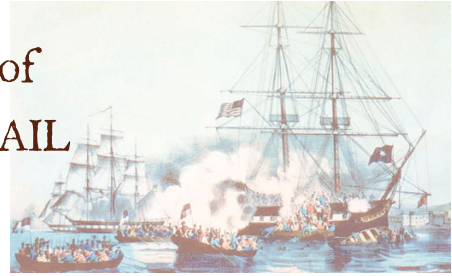


The STEVEN WALSKE Collection of NORTH AMERICAN *Blockade Run* MAIL and FRENCH *Royal Packet* MAIL



INTRODUCTION

The postal history of conflict—what Steve Walske terms “mail systems under stress”—provides some of the rarest and most fascinating artifacts for collectors, and it poses many of the most challenging questions for researchers. For the past three or four decades, Steve has been a dedicated collector and prolific researcher-writer in the postal history of conflict. His work has led to profoundly deeper understanding of how the mails operated during times of war, including the eighteenth and nineteenth century conflicts involving France, the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the American Civil War. Steve’s collecting activity invariably results in the publication of numerous articles and books, which present revelatory information and analysis of the methods, routes, rates and markings associated with the subject.

Steve has also been an active participant in exhibitions, both in the United States and in other countries. In recent years, his interest has shifted from winning awards to the more rewarding goal of educating the general collecting community in the various subjects he collects and researches. While accumulating material is an essential part of Steve’s methodology, once he has studied the subject and organized the material in a logical historical arrangement, he distills the collection down to a concise “one-frame” exhibit arrangement and returns the duplicative items to the market.

The material presented in this catalogue is what Steve no longer feels compelled to retain from his collections of North American Blockade Run Mail and French Royal Packet Mail. The former comprises three separate sections of his award-winning exhibit—the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the American Civil War. Steve will continue exhibiting one frame of each. The French Royal Packet Mail collection is offered in its entirety, which represents the most comprehensive offering of these rare transatlantic mail artifacts ever made.



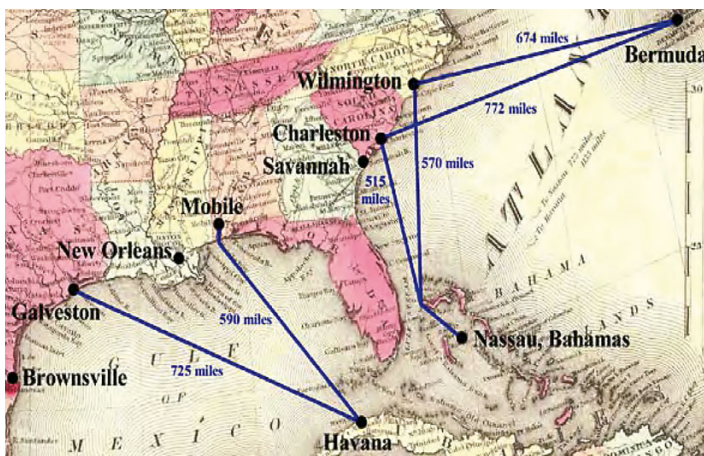
Principal ports of the United States. The red line indicates the coastal area affected by blockades during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. The blue line indicates the coastal area affected by the Union blockade during the Civil War.

The **Revolutionary War** section of this sale is dominated by items that were carried through the American blockade of British enclaves. Until Steve analyzed the sailing data, using information gleaned from newspaper records by John Olenkiewicz, the significance of blockade-run mail through the American blockade was poorly understood. The inbound letters are especially interesting, as in certain cases they had to cross the lines of war to get from one British-held city to another.

The **French Royal Packet Mail** section begins with two extremely rare Spanish Royal Packet letters to France posted at New Orleans. One is dated 1784 and has the “YNDIAS” straightline handstamp struck in New Orleans (lot 2327)—the earliest example of a handstamped marking applied in New Orleans. The other is dated 1792 and has the “NUEVA/ORLEANS” laureated oval handstamp (lot 2326)—it is one of only three recorded examples and the finer of two in private hands.

In the field of *Prèmière*, *Seconde* and *Troisième Régie* packet letters, Steve has succeeded in assembling a collection of unparalleled importance. No less than seven of the ten recorded *Prèmière Régie* letters with ship-name markings are contained in the collection (lots 2330-2336). In addition, there is an example of the “PAQ.NEWYORK” straightline on a *Prèmière Régie* letter (lot 2337), as well as six westbound letters from the *Prèmière Régie* period (lots 2338-2343), of which only nineteen are recorded. The Second *Régie* period features both of the two recorded westbound letters into the United States (lots 2344-2345) and a third westbound letter to Martinique (lot 2346). Two of the five recorded “PAQ.NEWYORK” Second *Régie* letters are offered (lots 2347-2348). Among the eleven lots of letters from the *Troisième Régie* period (lots 2349-2359) are examples of the rare “AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE” double-circle entry marking and the “Paq. de New York” straightline. These are followed by a small but interesting group of private ship letters between the United States and France.

Another area in which Steve’s research transformed understanding and appreciation of the items is the War of 1812, during which naval and privateering activity by the British and Americans on both sides of the Atlantic greatly impacted the mails. The letters offered in this section have been categorized as Pre-Blockade, Mid-Atlantic Blockade, New York Blockade and New England Blockade. Within each group are sub-classifications for Cartel Ship, Blockade Run and Around the Blockade. Several truly historical items are offered, including a letter carried on a prisoner-of-war cartel ship (lot 2381), examples of the short-lived War Surcharge rates, and a fantastic group of Prize Court letters (lot 2431).



Major blockade-running routes of the Civil War, showing the principal Southern ports and the ports in Cuba, the Bahamas and Bermuda.

Finally, there is the **American Civil War**. This is a further offering of material from the massive collection assembled by Steve over the past twenty years. This section is arranged by the principal blockade-running ports within the Confederate States, and then by inbound and outbound routes via the Bahamas and Bermuda. The other routes through Cuba, Nova Scotia and Mexico follow. The sale concludes with sections of Civil War Prize Court mail and Union Blockading Squadron covers.

In each subject area of this sale and for every item, Steve has compiled extensive historical data to support his analysis. Those notes are often penciled on the back of the item, and his exhibits with descriptive captions are available online. Please go to siegelauctions.com and “Exhibits and Mounted Collections” to find the various Walske exhibits in PDF format.

As we go to press with this catalogue, we have just learned that Steve has been asked to sign Great Britain’s Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (RDP) in 2017. The RDP is administered by the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain and recognizes achievement, research, publication and service. Established in 1920, the RDP was first signed by King George V in 1921. We congratulate Steve on this great honor, recognizing the extraordinary contributions he has made through his research and publication.

—SCOTT R. TREPEL