

Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon - "The Fox" of 1952 The first two stamps issued for Air Mail rates.

Saint-Pierre and Miquelon is a small French archipelago of 242Km2 located in North America, near Newfoundland (Canada). It has issued stamps since 1885.

After the Second World War, Several businessmen on the Islands of Saint-Pierre-and-Miquelon decided to import Silver Foxes to harvest their pelts. Dozens of these animals were imported into the archipelago and the first "Fox Ranches" were created.

In 1952, the French Overseas Philatelic Bureau, following the advice of local dignitaries, decided to commemorate this unusual enterprise by issuing the first two Air Mail stamps of the Islands.

The purpose of this study : to show the the two values issued on **October 10, 1952**, 8 franc and 17 franc denominations. They were important because they corresponded to the **first St. Pierre and Miquelon values issued for "Air Mail " rates to France and abroad** subsequent to the start of an air link from the Islands.



A fox in the arms of the breeder (1950).

All of the elements related to this first important Air Mail rate issue, designed and engraved by Pierre Munier, can be and are shown in this specialized « One Frame Exhibit ».

These include artist's drawings, the unique steel die and roll (auctioned in 1999), the artist's proofs including the « bon à tirer » and « bon pour la gravure », the deluxe proofs, the complete sheets, the imperforate stamps, the first day of issue on postcards, and finally very significant covers including one with the Canadian "Paquebot Posted at Sea" cancellation.



The unique pieces to date
are mentioned **in red**.

Plan :

Pages 2-4: Drawings of the artist

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Page 6: Artist's proof

Pages 7-8: "Bon à tirer" and

"Bon pour la gravure" proofs

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Unique steel roll which allowed printing on
the cylinder as many times as stamps per sheet.
Shown in box outside the frame.

The first drawing of the artist: project not accepted.

The artist **Pierre Munier** made an **initial model** that corresponded exactly to a photo of the fox taken through the cages. The Commission probably rejected this model in favor of one showing the animal « happy » in its natural environment.

A **small photo** in the initial format of the stamp had however been made and is now shown close to the drawing. **Unique piece.**



The size of the drawing: 215mm x 132mm

*Maquette retenue par
la Commission et par le directeur*
22 AVR 1952
P. le Chef du Service des Postes et
Télécommunications et p. o.
Le Directeur, Chef du 3^e Bureau

Copy of the back of
the accepted drawing.

The second drawing
of the artist:
project accepted.



In order to meet the demands of the Commission, **Pierre Munier** again drew the fox in a similar position, and added a background giving a more "natural" outdoor view.

This model was accepted for engraving. The stamp of approval of the Post Office, as well as the signature of the director, are on the back.

A **small photo** in the stamp format and the signature of Pierre Munier appear on the front of the drawing.

Unique piece.



The original steel die.

Unique, the **original mild steel die** is engraved upside down with a chisel to form the stamp matrix. Once hardened, it will be reproduced on a **unique roll** that will present the relief drawing in the place. Then, an impression of this wheel will be made on a steel ring, as many times as stamps are placed on a sheet. This engraving work signed by **Pierre Munier** shows the future stamp in its final state.



Original die of format 100mm x 70mm.



Enlarged copy of the die correctly showing the engravings of the drawing and the **second value "17F"** made upside down.

The artist's proof.

After making the die, some proofs are made on cardboard using a hand press where the most common colors are black, blue or sepia.

At the beginning of the 1950's, these "**artist**" **proofs** made it possible to check the work of the engraving and to show the stamp in the final state. A validation commission then gave its opinion. The vast majority of the proofs usually carry the signature of the engraver in pencil.

These proofs, sometimes very rare, were printed at that period according to the needs of the engraver.

Five pieces known.



The size of the proof : 162mm x 127mm.

Pierre Munier is a French artist-engraver (1889-1962).
He studied painting and engraving at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.
He drew and engraved many stamps and some banknotes for France and abroad,
including this **fox** stamp for **St. Pierre and Miquelon**.

The official artist's proof "Bon pour la gravure".

In order to validate the engraver's work, an "artist's" proof was sent to the engraving institute in Paris. If the work is considered correct, the manager puts his stamp and the words "Bon pour la gravure".

But this notation "Bon pour la gravure" is not common. In the vast majority of cases, only proofs with the words "Bon à tirer" are known (*presented on the next page*).

The manager also added his signature.

The acceptance date of May 15, 1952 is shown on the proof.



The size of the proof : 162mm x 127mm.

This proof printed in blue and with this notation is unique. It does not exist with the value at 17f.

The official artist's proofs "Bon à tirer".

At that time for St. Pierre and Miquelon, color tests showing the stamps in different shades did not exist. It was common to test colors on proofs.

For this issue, two colors are chosen, blue and sepia, with the corresponding values. These proofs, printed on a thin and laid paper, show the definitive stamps. The value of the fox in blue will change this time to 17F (instead of 8F on the proof "Bon pour la gravure").

The words "**Bon à tirer**" validate the acceptance of colors and values. A manager has also added his signature.

An official black cachet of the issuing institute and the date of June 13, 1952 are added on both proofs.

These pieces are also unique.



The "Deluxe" proofs - The unperf stamps.

- A "**Deluxe**" **proof** is a small sheet in the center of which the stamp is printed in its final colors. These proofs were carried out exceptionally on a thin laid paper - *generally cardboard* - and adding the seal of the Ministry of France Overseas.

- The **unperf stamps** came from a printed sheet without going through the perforation process.

These pieces, only a few dozen copies, were given to ministers and members of the government.



The issue of the two values.

The stamps are engraved and monochrome. The two sheets have "guillochis" in the lateral margins.
The date of issue: **October 10, 1952.**

USAGE: The 8f. franked air mail to **France**. The 17f. franked air mail to **foreign** countries.



The « First Day » postcards - The illustrated advertising card.

These postcards called precisely "photo cards" are the ancestors of the "maximum" card.

The cliché that made this postcard possible served as a model for Pierre Munier to create his first drawing.

At that time, ie 1952, the Post Office of St. Pierre and Miquelon did not yet use the "1st day" cachet.

This fox was also used to illustrate an **advertising card**. A pharmaceutical company advertised on this card produced in France. This now rare card shows the 8F stamp and the cancel of St. Pierre.

"Photo cards"
First day of issue :
October 10, 1952.



Advertising card : July 25, 1961.

Back of the card.

RENARD ARGENTÉ 133

Protéolysat d'embryon
+ facteur anti-anémique
de Castle
Transfusine
Facteur d'assimilation
anti-anémique
Dynamiseur puissant
Boîte de 10, coffret de 30 amp.
Buvables 10 cc
S.S. 8 et 23
Laboratoire Roland-Marie
17-19, rue Michelet, Mondreuil (Seine)

Pharmastim Française - Régénération inséparable



The mails.

French destinations

Two air mail covers sent to France in 1953 and 1957. The second is franked at the **double weight** level.



The mails.

Foreign destinations: Europe and Oceania

Two air mail covers sent to England and Australia in 1953.

Cover sent to London
on September 22,
1953.

Correct foreign rate
at 17f.

Only piece known
sent to England.



Cover sent to Brighton at the double rate on March 18, 1953.

The use of the two values corresponded to the foreign double weight at 25f.

Only piece known sent to Australia.

The mails.

Foreign destinations: Americas

Two covers, including one **Airmail**, sent to the **USA** and to **Canada** in 1956 and 1954. Mail to Canada is franked at the **printed matter rate**.



Cover sent to Chicago on December 1st, 1956. Correct foreign rate at 17f.



Maritime cover sent to Halifax as **printed matter** on January 18, 1954. 1954 correct foreign rate at 9f. Two pieces known with this rare rate.

The registered mails.

Foreign destinations: Americas

Two registered air mail covers sent to the USA in 1952 and 1953.

The first was sent on the **first day** of issue. The second shows the two additional stamps to make up the required postage.

Registered covers with these stamps are rare.

Administratif registered cover sent to New-York the **first day** of issue on October 10, 1952. Transit in Boston and arrival are dated on October 17, 1952. 1952 correct foreign rate at 42f. **Only registered cover known sent the first day of issue.**



Registered cover sent to Newport on March 4, 1953. Transit in Boston and arrival are dated on March 25 and 27, 1953. 1952 correct foreign rate at 42f. (42,50f on cover). A purple **customs cachet** is struck at the bottom. **Only piece known.**

The Canadian "Paquebot" Postmark.

Sometimes, **stamped mail** from Saint-Pierre was deposited directly on board ships to the Canadian port of Nova Scotia: Halifax.

This way of routing mail was called "**la boîte mobile**".

This practice, very common in the early twentieth century, was much rarer by the 1950s.

Once on board, the covers and postcards were collected and then canceled on arrival, in the transit port, with a postmark "PAQUEBOT POSTED AT SEA".

Only known piece.



Cover for Paris (France) canceled "Paquebot Posted at Sea - Halifax" dated November 30, 1953.

The sender used an 8f stamp which corresponded to the air mail rate.

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End of the study.