

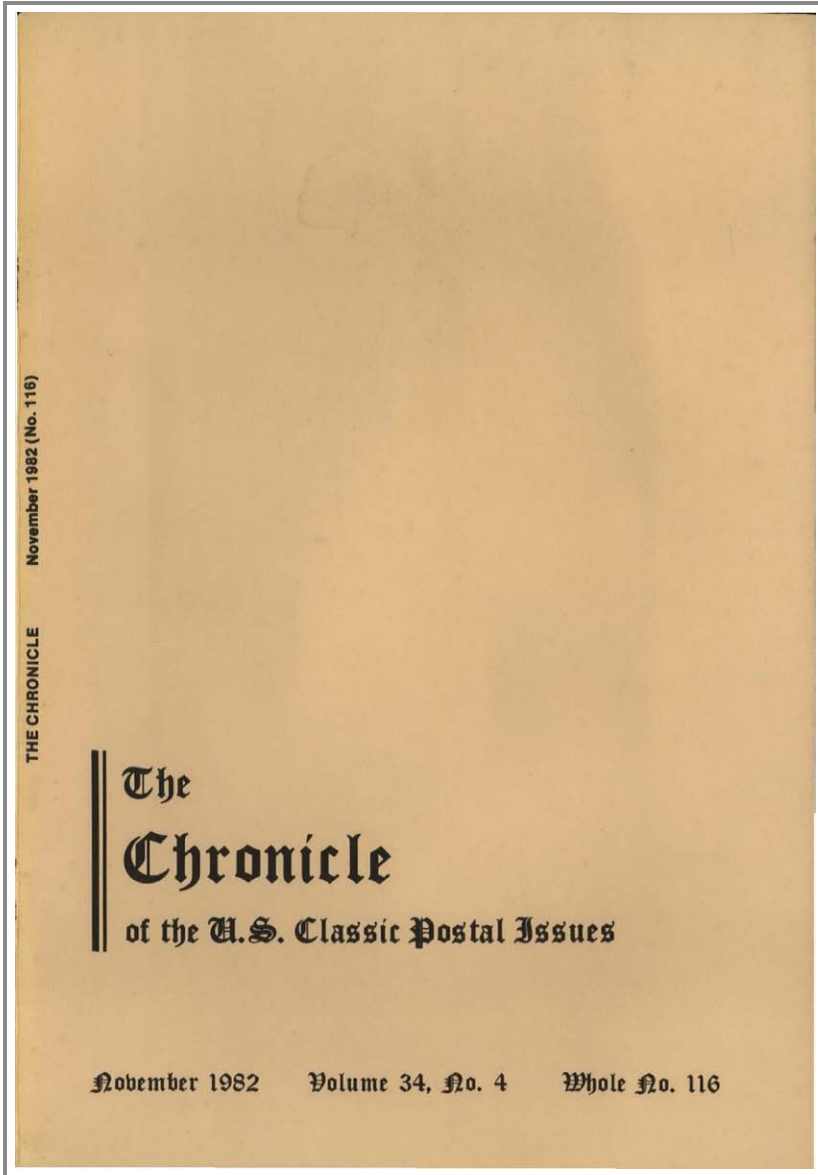


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“ship’s letter” was used on these covers far more frequently than the term “naval letter.” The writer does not recall seeing any example of this situation where the difference in terminology made any difference in the handling of a cover.

Figure 3 shows a properly certified naval letter from aboard the U.S. Steamer *Hunchback* (the strange name stems from the fact the vessel was a converted New York ferryboat operating in the shallow waters of the North Carolina sounds). The cover entered the mails at the Federal occupation post office at New Bern, North Carolina, on December 23, 1862. The certifying signature is that of an Acting Master (equivalent to today’s Lieutenant, j.g.) who signed as executive officer rather than as “First Lieutenant” or “Lieutenant.”

(To be continued)

## THE 24c BLACKISH VIOLETS WILLIAM K. HERZOG

One of the scarcest shades on the 24c 1861 stamps is the blackish violet (*Scott 78c*). Unfortunately, this scarcity makes it one of the most misrepresented and misunderstood 1861 shades by both dealers and collectors. Your writer has been offered dark brown lilacs, dark lilacs, and dark grayish lilacs as blackish violets. The buyer of a 24c blackish violet who is unfamiliar with the true shade should have it expertized, or buy a previously expertized example.

The following is a preliminary list of the known and believed unquestionable 24c blackish violet covers:

?tee, Ind.	May 3 (1863)	Siegel 575, lot 617. D. Anderson.
New York, N.Y.	Apr. 20 (1864)	P. F. 86114. D. Anderson.
?	Apr. 26 (1864)*	per C. Friend (8/24/74 list).
New York, N.Y.	Aug. 2 (1864)	see Figure 1. C. Starnes.
Wilmington, Del.	Sep. 29 (1864)	Siegel 590, lot 319. ex-Hubbard.
St. Louis, Mo.	Oct. 7 (1864)	Brookman II, Fig. 88. R. Rustad.
?	Nov. 23 (1864)	L. Hyzen.
?	Nov. 26 (1864)*	Robbins 4, lot 843. ex-dos Passos.
New Orleans, La.	Jan. 21 '65	L. Hyzen.
Cincinnati, O.	Jan. 17 (1866)	P. F. 88627. Siegel 587, lot 391.
Cincinnati, O.	May 20 (1866)	P. F. 84939. H. Warm.
Cincinnati, O.	June 21 (1866)	P. F. 24476. E. Lawrence.
Plymouth, Mass.	June 29 (1866)*	Robbins 4, lot 842. ex-dos Passos.
New York, N.Y.	July 11 (1866)	see Figure 2. ex-Herzog.
Cincinnati, O.	Feb. 22 (1867)	P. F. 79819. D. Anderson.
?	July 19 (1867)*	per C. Friend (8/24/74 list).
Baltimore, Md.	Aug. ? (64 or 7)*	Harmer 4/18/61, lot 548. ex-Gore.

\* Not personally viewed by this writer.

These seventeen dates of use indicate the blackish violets came from a post-1861 printing or printings, rather than from the initial 1861 printing of violet stamps. Hence, the *Scott Specialized Catalogue* lists the 24c blackish violet stamps as No. 78c under the 24c lilacs. Three uses are listed from New York City, and four from Cincinnati, Ohio. The primary period of use appears to be mid-1864 through mid-1867. The May 3, (1863) use, which bears a 24c blackish violet in the opinion of William Herzog, Charles Starnes, and Daven Anderson, is an enigma in the absence of another 1863 example. If the stamp was used genuinely on its cover in 1863, it pushes the period of use back another year.

The name “blackish violet” probably was given to this shade by some early philatelist who believed it belonged with the violets. It should be stated, however, that this shade lacks the bluish cast of the early violets. In fact, the shade is not even near Ridgway’s “Blackish Violet” (Plate x, 59, m), which somewhat resembles the 24c blue violets. The *philatelic* name “blackish lilac”, in this writer’s opinion, would be much more realistic, as the shade appears to go beyond dark lilac. The true blackish violet stamps are definitely beautiful and distinctive.