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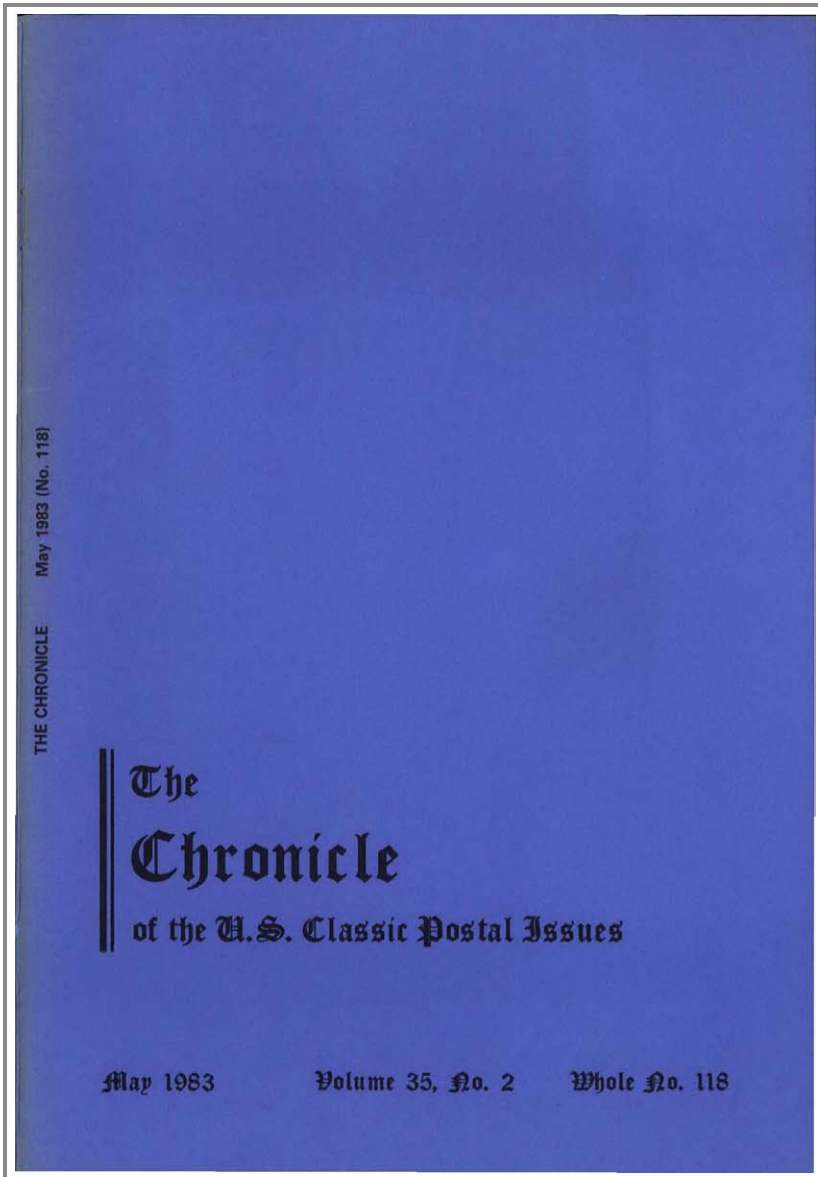


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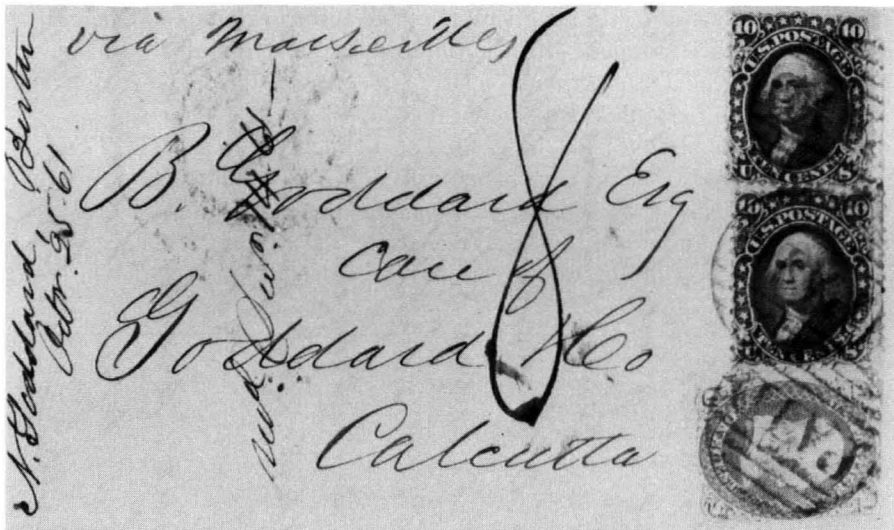


Figure 3. Two Type I 10¢ and a 1¢ used on an open mail cover by American packet to Calcutta in 1861.

several covers to this listing. Correspondence and comments are invited.

TRANSIENT PRINTED MATTER RATES, 1860-63; THE STAR DIE WRAPPERS
RICHARD B. GRAHAM

The transient rate for printed matter is probably one of the least understood rates of U.S. classic postal history. It is readily confused with carrier, drop letter, and circular rates and the fact that covers reflecting it were seldom saved, being essentially newspaper wrappers, makes those covers both interesting and scarce.

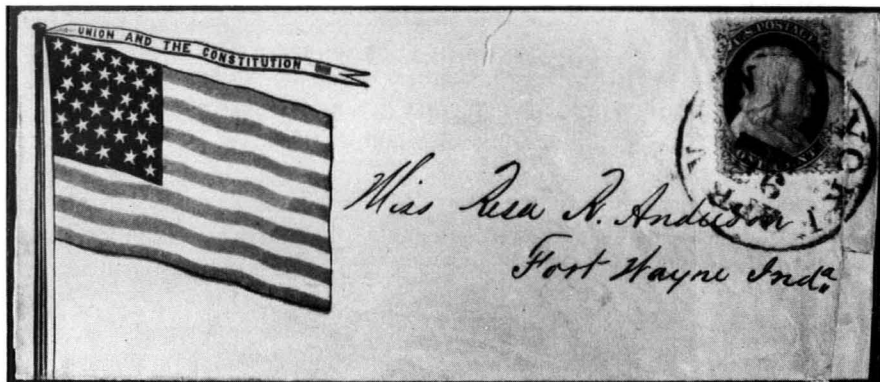


Figure 1. A patriotic envelope used as a wrapper, apparently to mail a newspaper from New York to Fort Wayne in April of 1861.

The rate was intended to apply to periodical printed matter "not sent from or by the office of publication." Which is to say, during the Civil War, the rate was used by many to mail the home newspapers to those away from home in the service. Apparently the first mention of the rate was in the Act of March 3, 1847, which contained a phrase concerning newspapers "not sent from the office of publication" and set the rate for such at 3¢ each. Without attempting an exhaustive review of the transient printed matter rates and requirements for such between then and 1860, it should be noted the basic requirement was that the material had to be sent in an open-ended wrapper so that it could be inspected. The inspection was for the purpose of detecting any written letters or other "first class" material. The only writing permitted on such printed matter was that paragraphs, to which a sender wished to call a recipient's attention, could be marked off.

Entering the 1860s, the rate, as given in a table at the beginning of Chapter 10 of the 1859 Regulations, was grouped with the circular rate, but for up to 3000 miles, was essentially 1¢ for unsealed printed matter up to 3 ounces, with 1¢ added for each ounce over that. For over 3000 miles, such rates were doubled.

Figure 1 shows a patriotic envelope, used as a wrapper with a 1¢ 1857 type V stamp paying the transient rate to carry a newspaper from New York to Fort Wayne, Indiana. From the use of the patriotic envelope with the 1857 stamp, and the April 26th date, the year has to have been 1861. Thus, this cover illustrates the normal way to prepay transient matter (other than in cash, over the post office counter) prior to the issuance of the 1¢ Star Die wrappers in October 1861.

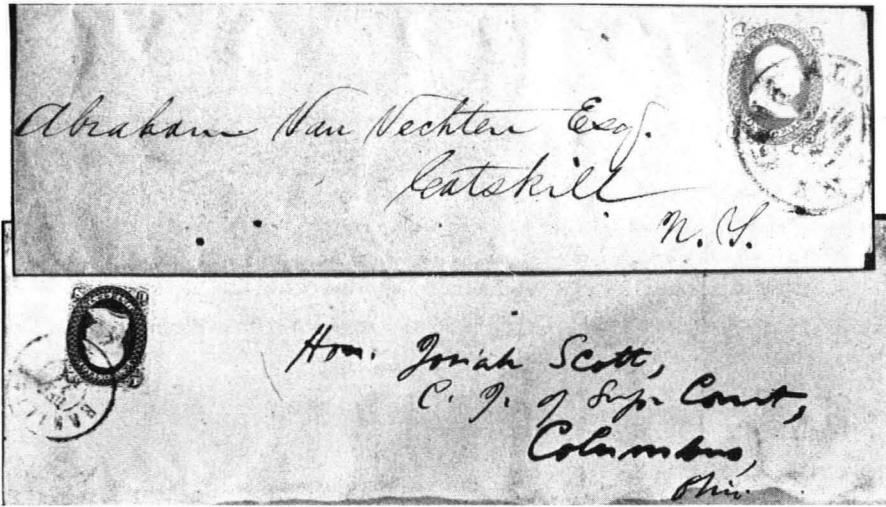


Figure 2. A pair of wrappers with 1¢ 1861 stamps, to mail newspapers, 1861-63. Upper photo is courtesy David L. Jarrett.

Figure 2 shows a pair of covers — again, open-ended wrappers — bearing 1¢ 1861 stamps prepaying the transient printed matter rate. The top item is a photo sent to the editor by David L. Jarrett some time ago, and the lower item is one of the four or five more similar items in the editor's files.

The upper wrapper is postmarked West Albany (Albany county), New York; date uncertain, but addressed to Catskill (Green county), New York. The lower item is from Hamilton (Butler county), Ohio to Columbus (Franklin county), Ohio in December of, probably, 1862.

These covers prepaid by stamps and carrying transient newspapers, are open-ended wrappers. They could otherwise be confused with circulars, also sent unsealed so they could be inspected. From 1852-1863, rates were essentially the same, but the difference was between wrapper and unsealed envelope that made the different classes of mail. Transient matter could be addressed to any city; drop letters were always local, by definition. During the period being discussed, it is only the wrappers with 1¢ that are likely to be confused with the other classes of mail.

THE ISSUANCE AND USE OF THE STAR DIE WRAPPERS

The Star Die wrapper was the first bit of postal stationery issued intended for use with the transient printed matter rate. There are several factors which make this wrapper's appearance rather in a class by itself:

1. The Star Die wrappers were issued in time to be announced in the October 1861 issue of the *United States Mail & Post Office Assistant*, as follows: "(pointing hand) — The new government wrappers for newspapers, with penny stamp affixed, are now for sale at most of the large post offices." (see second column, bottom, page 54 of *Collectors Club of Chicago*)

reprint.) Thus, the Star Die wrappers were just being issued at the time that the envelopes bearing *the same embossed stamp* were being demonetized. This would seemingly be the source of much confusion, although the fact the new wrappers had no counterparts in either the previous or the succeeding issue of 1861 probably greatly simplified the problem.

The only other exception to the demonetization of the Star Die postal stationery was the combined 1¢ plus 3¢ envelope intended for carrier service. The 1¢ plus 3¢ design was continued in service because none had been issued to the post offices in the seceded states, and, of course, the 1¢ wrapper was issued some months after the Confederacy had taken over their own postal system. Authorization for the wrappers was included in the act of February 1861.

2. The fact that no 1¢ head was provided in the new Nesbitt issue of 1861 probably indicates the retention of the Star Die 1¢ wrapper was planned and also that the wrappers had been printed long before they were issued. The fact that no wrappers were issued of 1¢ value until 1870 probably reflects the rate change of 1863, when "transient printed matter" was redefined as third class mail and the rates changed so that the minimum was two cents. The next new 1¢ wrapper was that of 1870.

3. Continued statements in the "standing" section of *U.S.M. & P.O.A.* clearly require "all transient matter must be prepaid by stamps," although, of course, the term covered the embossed die stamps as well as the adhesives.



Figure 3. A Star Die 1¢ wrapper used to send a newspaper from Lancaster, Mass. to a soldier at the siege of Port Hudson, Miss., in June of 1863. The soldier reused the wrapper to return something to Massachusetts with a 3¢ stamp.

Figure 3 shows use of a Star Die 1¢ wrapper from Lancaster, Mass., on June 12, 1863—just a short time before the rate vanished. The wrapper is addressed to a soldier of the 53rd Massachusetts Volunteers, who were then engaged in the siege of the Confederate stronghold at Port Hudson, La. The recipient made the item much more interesting by reusing it back to the sender. Whether it contained a letter or a paper with writing, or whether the writer simply didn't have a one cent stamp, we have no way of knowing. But in any case, the wrapper was transported to New Orleans by the military and postmarked there on June 30, 1863.

The change in rate to 2¢ for each four ounces of transient mail matter which was

reclassified to second class mail, as of July 1, 1863, did not preclude further usage of the 1¢ Star Die wrappers, but it did mean that at least one 1¢ stamp had to be added. Does anyone have an example showing their use after July 1, 1863?

THE 1861 3¢ LAKE ROBERT B. MEYERSBURG

For many years, the three cent stamp of the 1861 issue in a lake shade (Scott #66) has been retained in the catalog as a "not regularly issued" stamp of the series. It has frequently been referred to as a trial color proof, but it is not so listed in the major catalogs.

For not quite as many years, I have noticed occasional used copies of the three cent 1861 that approximated in color my recollection of the color of the lake proof in my collection; but since it was not a regularly issued stamp I never took the trouble to compare any of these copies to the proof. Then, about five years ago, I acquired a three cent stamp on cover the shade of which was so striking that it ordered the comparison made forthwith. Result: I could see no difference in color, even under controlled light conditions, including selective filtration. This coincidence started me keeping records — and in the intervening five years I have seen another half-dozen copies that could pass for lake.

During the past year I became aware of the technological capabilities of x-ray fluorescence analysis (XRFA) of stamps in order to learn the chemical composition of the ink through its x-ray reemissions. The stamp and proof in question were subjected to such an examination. Result: both revealed the presence of substantial levels of mercury as a soluble salt, which does not appear in any of the other red shades of the three cent stamp, iron oxide being the prime colorant in them.

This set of events leads me to the natural conclusion that there is a three cent lake (Scott #66) which was regularly issued, but in limited quantity. It would be interesting and possibly educational if readers would examine their holdings of the three cent 1861, and compare any lake candidates with either a copy of #66 or a proof thereof, under controlled light conditions, and advise me of the results, which I will summarize in a future note. We just might have a new stamp in gestation.

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