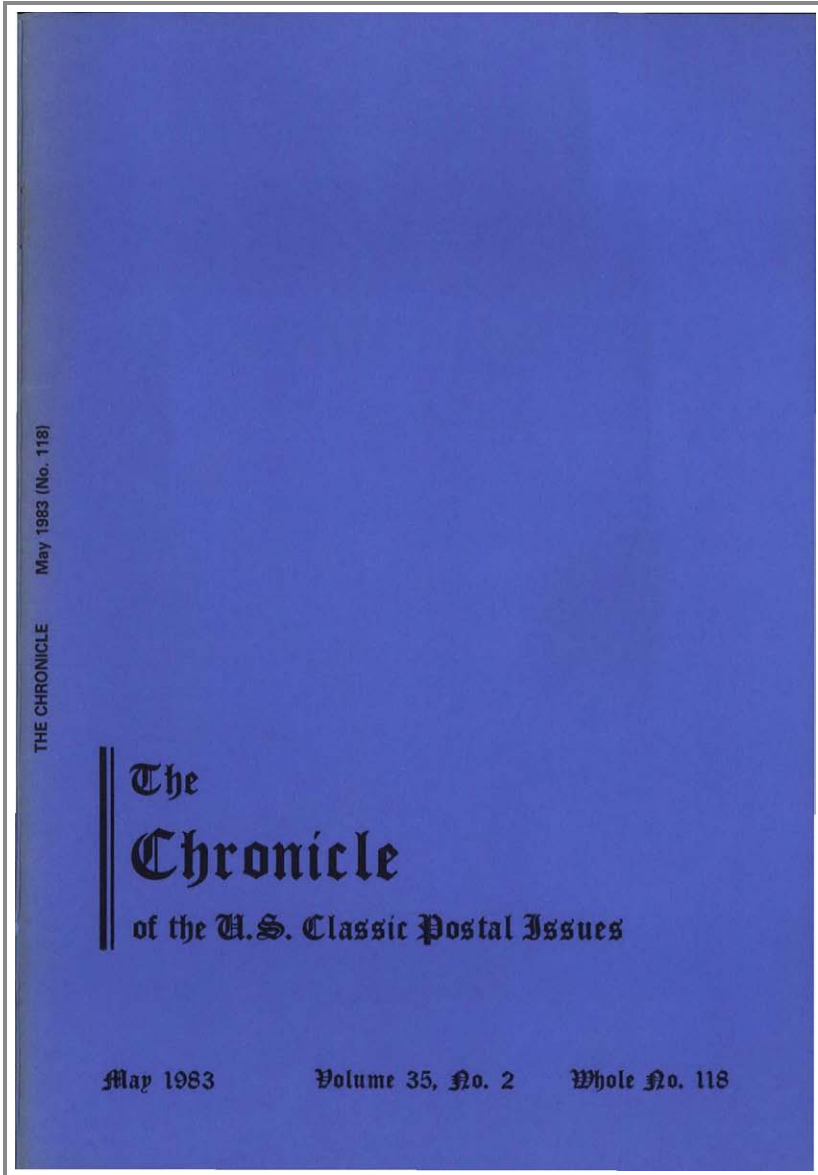




# U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

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Author(s): Robert B. Meyersburg



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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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