

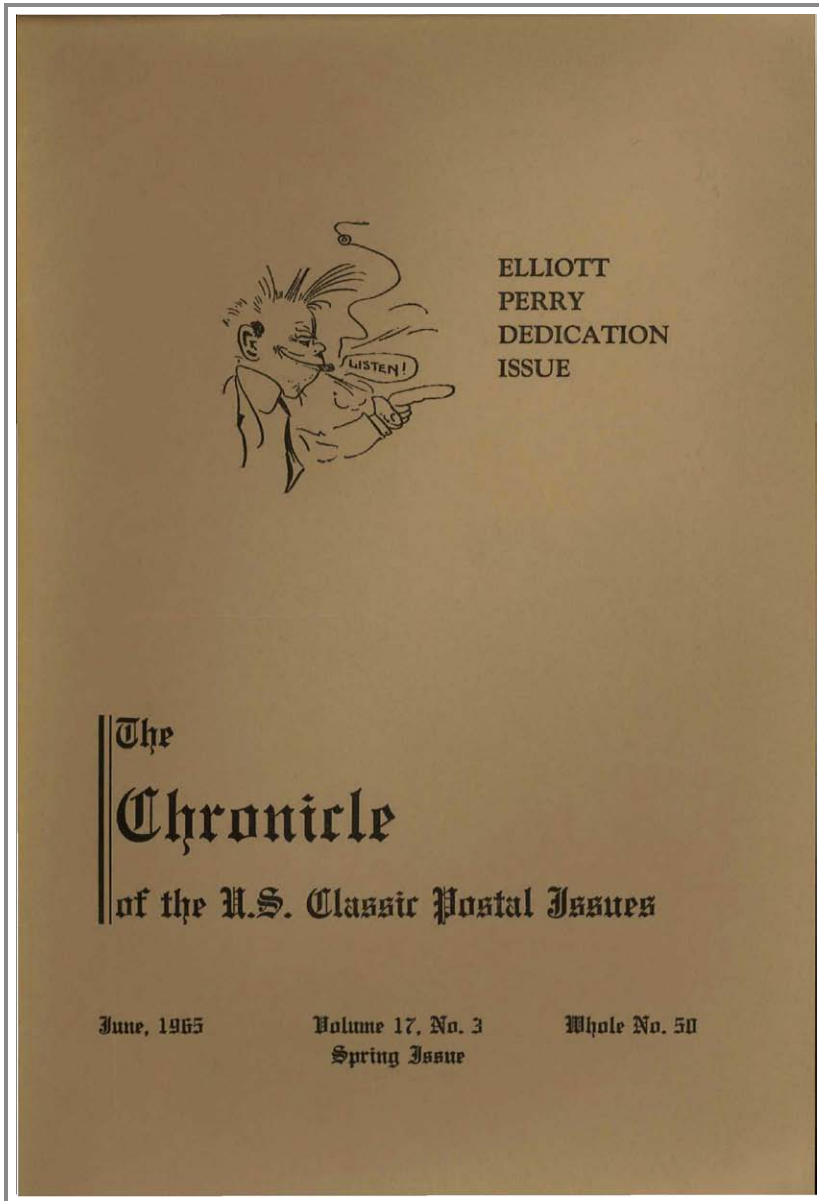


# U.S. Philatelic Classics Society

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in the service of the United States, and certified to be such by any field or staff officer in the United States service. At hospitals or detached posts this certificate may be made by the chaplain or surgeon stationed thereat. . . .

The remainder of the regulations repeat in substance, all heretofore reviewed, including naval letter regulations.

The 1862 *List of Post Offices* makes considerable reference to the 1859 P.L. & R.'s. This emphasizes the fact that there was no issue of the P.L. & R. during the war, nor until 1866, in fact. This in spite of the sweeping changes set forth in the Act of March 3, 1863. While we believe the act was summarized in a pamphlet issued to postmasters, we have not seen a copy. However, with respect to the regulations concerning soldiers' and sailors' letters, Mr. Clifton O. Smith reports the following from the 1866 P.L. & R.'s:

Chapter 16, "Soldiers' and Sailors' Letters, Section 146, Under the law of July 1, 1863, authorizing the transmission of unpaid letters of soldiers, sailors and marines—

Paragraph 1. Letters written by commissioned officers in the military or naval service cannot be certified as soldiers' or naval letters.

Paragraph 2 defines soldiers' and Naval letters and outlines certification requirements exactly as previously.

Paragraph 3.—If any military or naval letters not thus duly certified shall be deposited at any postoffice or mailing, they shall nevertheless be mailed but rated up with postage, to be collected on delivery.

In other words, if a letter was obviously that of a soldier, sailor or marine, and unpaid, it would be sent collect without further penalty whether certified as such correctly or not!

There is also indication that the 1866 P.L. & R., as reported by Mr. Smith, clarified the question of forwarding of letters addressed to sailors and marines whose ships had moved. Apparently the 1863 law had provided for this, but there had either been no announcement or many postmasters did not realize the fact.

This seems a rather long discussion for a seemingly mundane fact. However, considering the long search made by the writer (and others) for the details of the mailing of what is a very large block of Civil War postal history, it seems very worthwhile to make this a matter of record in the best possible place.

In *Chronicle* No. 47, mention is made of a soldier's letter certification on the very unusual cover belonging to Mr. Melvin W. Schuh which was illustrated as Figure 5 on page 22. The soldier's letter certification mentioned in the accompanying article does not show well in the illustration. It is in very faint pencil and is beneath the Thompson, Conn. and Washington, D.C. postmarks, reading vertically on the left edge of the cover. The actual wording is so faint as to be almost unreadable, but is probably, "Soldier letter, certified by Lt. Col. Nichols/18 C.V."

The "C.V." stands for "18th Connecticut Volunteers."

## Letters Rated Due 6, Due 9, and Due 12

We are frequently asked to comment upon unpaid or partially paid domestic covers of the Civil War era with due markings. The subject is somewhat complex, and actually, each cover analyzed must be judged individually. Many covers have more than one possible answer. We make the following assumptions:

1. The marking "ship" must appear on the cover to assume that ship postage was charged.
2. The marking "U.S. Ship" means that no additional ship fee was

charged; letters bearing this marking being rated by weight as domestic letters.

3. Prior to July 1, 1863, letters rated Due 6, Due 9 or Due 12 were simply double, triple or quadruple weight letters, with postage due.
4. After July 1, 1863, the situation becomes much more confusing. Two separate portions of the Act of March 3, 1863 (12 Stat. 704-707) required double postage. These were:

a) Ship letters were to be rated double postage. While we have not seen the exact wording of the act, this was apparently true whether postage was wholly or partly prepaid. We would appreciate someone checking this statement, however. If true, then, a ship letter addressed to the port of delivery would be rated at twice the drop letter rate. A double weight "local" ship letter could be rated 8¢, for example. However the most common ship letter postage would be 6¢ or 12¢. In all cases, however, the letter should be marked "ship" and the total postage must be an even number, being double.

b) As quoted by the pamphlet *United States Domestic Postage Rates, 1799-1956*, page 57, the Act of March 3, 1863 provided "If any matter on which by law the postage is required to be prepaid at the mailing office shall reach its destination without prepayment, *double* (our italics) the prepaid rates shall be charged and collected on delivery."

In all cases where more than, but a multiple of single letter postage has been charged as due, the probability is simply an overweight letter. After all, with postage rated per ½ ounce single letter, and recalling that Civil War letters tended to be more than one page, overweight is the first thing to consider. We believe that when stamps of insufficient value were affixed to either ship or domestic letters, the value of the stamp was recognized as a partial payment, at least as far as regulations are concerned.

Generally speaking, it also should be recognized that Civil War postmasters were not very well informed as to regulations. Furthermore, the new postal laws effective July 1, 1863 were possibly somewhat ambiguously worded. For example, the writer owns a cover, with a single 3¢ 1861 stamp tied by a New York double circle "ship" marking. The marking is struck so that the denomination therein does not appear on the cover, but it was probably four cents. However, the cover is marked "Due 6." So, the total postage is 9¢ and the marking "ship" shows clearly. The date of the New York marking is July 31(?), and when acquired, the cover contained three letters, two written at Palermo, Italy on May 25 and May 26, 1863 and the other on May 6, 1864 from La Spezia. With the two 1863 letters, the cover weighs just over ½ ounce and with the other letter, weighs less than ½ ounce. As we see it, the rate is wrong in either case. If a single letter, the cover should have been rated as a ship letter at 6¢ postage, with 3¢ paid and 3¢ due. If a double letter, total postage should have been 12¢ with but 9¢ due. Whether the actual ratemarking of Due 6 is based upon non-recognition of the 3¢ 1861 stamp, certainly unheard of, particularly at New York, or double postage due of the unpaid amount, we shall never know.

Again, here is food for thought and some original research in such as the *U.S. Mail and Post Office Assistant*, or similar sources, for those fortunate enough to have them available.

## **U.S. Railroad Postmarks 1861-1886**

by **CHARLES L. TOWLE**

A word of explanation is due our readers who wondered why no installment under the above title appeared in *Chronicle* No. 49. Our Society