

# The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

## STYLE GUIDE FOR SECTION EDITORS AND PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS

### Introduction and overview

This document originated as a job description for the Section Editors of the *Chronicle*. (Note that we say the *Chronicle*, not *The Chronicle*.) The first draft was created in 2005, in anticipation of my taking over the general editorship of the *Chronicle* in early 2006 (upon Charlie Peterson's retirement). The style guide grew gradually from that beginning, mostly with the addition of responses to questions posed by Section Editors or outside authors. As the years passed, the accumulation of material became disorganized and unwieldy. In 2014, I rearranged and rewrote it, and this document is the result.

It is still primarily intended to inform the Section Editors of the *Chronicle*. But since many of our authors have requested the information, this revised version was created with them in mind too. The material is organized into five categories: Deadlines, Text Preparation, Stylistic Matters, Annotation and Visuals.

The focus of the *Chronicle* is on 19th century United States postage stamps and postal history. We interpret this scope broadly. Our primary interest is in new discoveries, new insights and new information—or articles of any length that shed new light on old information. In addition to providing new information or insight, the ideal *Chronicle* article should be enjoyable, well illustrated and easy to read. Our mission is to support and promote the collecting of classic United States stamps and covers.

In the era of Google, digitization of primary sources has added powerful new tools for historical research. But the gear in this toolbox can lead would-be contributors down roads that are inappropriate to our pages. Without drawing hard-and-fast lines, a good rule of thumb is that any *Chronicle* article must be largely devoted to philatelic matters, rather than conventional history. Our focus in the *Chronicle* is steadfastly on collectible objects: the stamps, markings and covers that our collector readers can accumulate in their albums, or at least, fantasize about accumulating. That's the grist for our mill.

## SECTION 1: DEADLINES

### Deadlines for Authors

Internal deadlines are for our advertisers and for our Section Editors, not for our authors. Section Editors should tell our authors that we meet a rigorous quarterly schedule, so that if we want to publish their article, we'll have four issues in the next 12 months in which to do it.

We avoid sharing our internal deadlines with outside writers because we have learned from bitter experience that giving an author a firm deadline can lead him to expect that we'll publish his work immediately if the deadline is met.

Of course, that's not necessarily the case. As editor-in-chief, I cannot commit to publishing an as-yet-unseen manuscript in a specific issue, because I don't know whether it's publishable until I've seen it, and even after it is deemed publishable, it might not work in a given issue because of space limitations or pacing problems (too much postal history, too much single-stamp focus, that sort of thing) of which the contributor cannot be aware.

### **Deadlines for Section Editors**

The editorial deadline for Section Editors is the first day of the month two months prior to the cover date. In other words, I must have all editorial materials for the May *Chronicle* no later than March 1; for the August *Chronicle* by June 1; for the November *Chronicle* by September 1; and for the February *Chronicle* by December 1. This builds in time for editing as well as for layout and pagination work, all of which can be very labor-intensive.

Submissions well in advance of deadline are encouraged. The earlier the Section Editor sends me his material, the more likely there will be space for it, and there might be time for the Section Editor to see page proofs. As deadline approaches, space diminishes, time constraints reduce the likelihood of sending page proofs back and forth, and I get crankier.

Our most successful Section Editors work without regard to deadline. They send me material as they create it, they keep the pipeline full, and they provide more features than I can use in any given issue, creating a backlog I can draw upon as needed. This enables the creation of a better-balanced *Chronicle*—and in return for this abundance I will always try to accommodate specific Section Editor scheduling requests.

At any given moment, I'm actually working on two or even three *Chronicle* issues simultaneously. I work on material at my own pace, but more or less constantly throughout the quarter. In order to achieve this pace, I need a continuing flow of articles to work on. If everything were to arrive on deadline day, I couldn't handle the work.

The Section Editors understand (but our authors often don't) that deadline day is the last day I can receive material, intended for the immediate forthcoming issue, that requires no further editorial work by the author, by the Section Editor, or by me. Not much makes that cut on the first try.

### **Deadlines for advertisers**

Our Advertising deadline is weeks later than our editorial deadline: the Friday closest to the 5th of the month prior to cover date. This is the last day on which we can accept finished, press-ready ads to be dropped into locations previously reserved and paid for.

## SECTION 2: TEXT PREPARATION

Conventional Microsoft Word text files (xxx.doc or xxx.docx) are preferred, but in the past I have handled many other file types.

Please don't try to do the layout. Page design is my job. Do not insert visuals, tables or anything else into your text file. Each of these items should be sent as a separate file, appropriately referenced in the text. ("Figure 1 shows..." "Table 2 presents..." etc.)

Avoid embedded formatting of any sort. I must remove every speck of it before setting type. The spacebar and the tab key are especially problematic. I spend a lot of time removing extraneous spacing inserted by unknowledgeable authors in well-intentioned but misguided attempts to create pleasing-looking manuscript pages.

One exception: the footnote/endnote feature in Word works well for the *Chronicle*. If your material involves reference notes (we use endnotes, not footnotes, see Section 4) learn to use it. (On the INSERT menu, punch REFERENCE or FOOTNOTE then check ENDNOTES and follow instructions.)

But again: **Please do not embed photos or anything else into your text file. Send photos and tables as separate, individual files.**

I can handle tabular data in Excel spreadsheet format or created in Word using the Word TABLE menu. My strong preference is to receive tabular data in Excel: that's the easiest to work with and it imports handily into InDesign, our pagination software. But I repeat again: Don't embed the tables into your text. Create and send each table separately, with internal references in the text enumerating the tables and explaining what they represent. "Table 1 shows..." etc.

Note that the narrow *Chronicle* page format restricts the amount of data we can present in tabular format. For a table the width of a Chronicle page, 80 characters per row is about the maximum.

Return of items submitted: If you want any submissions returned (images, disks, manuscripts, etc.) please say so. Living in a small Manhattan apartment, my routine is to pitch all materials once the printed Chronicle is available. Of course, I maintain a digital archive of previously published material.

## SECTION 3: STYLISTIC DETAILS (SPELLING, GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, CAPITALIZATION, ETC.)

**Spelling.** Bill Gates notwithstanding, datestamp is one word. Say "circular datestamp" the first time, then "CDS" is OK but not mandatory. Bank Note stamps were printed by Bank Note companies who all spell out "Bank Note" as two words in their marginal inscriptions, the style we follow. Transatlantic is one word. Straightline is one word. Canceled and canceling are spelled with one "L", but cancellation and canceller have

two. But we say travel, traveled, traveling, traveler—always one L (this per the AP stylebook, which is our default style reference). When there’s a British and an American style, we go American. Thus we say catalog, not catalogue (but the past tense of the verb “to catalog” is “catalogued”).

**Punctuation.** Here too we use American style: Punctuation (usually comma or period) goes within closed quotes, unless to do so would confuse. In American English, all conventional quotations are set off in double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are rarely used, and then only for highly specific purposes, most notably as a quote within a quote.

We say 1920s and 20s, no apostrophes. We say 19th century, using numerals and lower case without superscription (more on superscription below). We say 1:30 p.m.—lower case, with space between 1:30 and p.m.

In a month-day-year date sequence, it’s grammatically appropriate to set off the year by commas, thus: “The Act of March 3, 1863, specified that letters be....” Because these requisite commas can slow things down, it’s often preferable to invert the date, eliminating the commas, thus: “The Act of 3 March 1863 specified that letters be....”

We use currency symbols (\$) and ¢ wherever we can, and always when discussing postal rates and stamp denominations. But we avoid other symbols. Thus, we say “95 percent” not “95%”; and “Scott 116,” not “Scott #116.” For years we tried to suppress the ampersand as well, but we have pretty much given up on that. While it’s still to be avoided in prose exposition, its use is acceptable when referring to businesses that used it themselves: Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co., Boston & Maine Railroad, etc.

**Capitalization:** When in doubt, don’t capitalize. But we say India paper, Figure 3, Endnote 5, Plate 1 Early and Position 19. Lower case when the discussion is general: “Many positions in various plates have no distinguishing characteristics, but Position 6 from Plate 2 is identifiable.” Names of stamps and stamp series are also capitalized: Black Jack (two words), Columbians, Large Bank Notes, Officials, 1869 Pictorials, Presidentials, Postage Dues, Reissues, Special Printings, Star Dies, etc. Iconic postmarks get similar treatment: Kicking Mule, Running Chicken, Woman in Bonnet, Rockford Bluebird. The specific government entity known as the Post Office Department is capitalized, but the local post office is not. Member of Congress, U.S. Congress, Congressman, always with caps. The generic typefaces described as italic or roman are lower cased; specific faces that are proper names (Times Roman) are capitalized.

**Font selection:** We are conservative in our design, and that includes our selection of type fonts. We never use underscoring or colored type, and we avoid using italics (or exclamation points!) for emphasis. We italicize book titles, magazine titles, vessel names and foreign words, including adopted Latin words such as *circa* and *ibidem* (usually abbreviated *ibid.*) On the subject of vessel names, we have no preference about the article before the ship’s name. It can be “the *Robert Fulton*” or just “*Robert Fulton*.” When editing a manuscript, I choose the form that sounds best in context.

**Abbreviations:** Spell out the state name completely or abbreviate it following the AP stylebook, thus: Ala. Ariz. Ark. Cal. Colo. Conn. Del. Fla. Ga. Ill. Ind. Kan. Ky. La. Md. Mass. Mich. Minn. Miss. Mo. Mont. Neb. Nev. N.H. N.J. N.M. N.Y. N.D. Okla. Ore. Pa. R.I. S.C. S.D. Tenn. Vt. Va. Wash. W.Va. Wis. In AP style eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. We don't care whether you spell out state names or abbreviate them per AP style, so long as you are consistent throughout your article.

Avoid two-letter USPS state abbreviations. They are to be used ONLY in full postal addresses that include ZIP codes.

Never abbreviate United States when it's used as a noun. Use of "U.S." as an adjective is acceptable but not mandatory. Abbreviations require periods. Thus we say "U.P.U." rather than "UPU." When an individual uses initials instead of a first name, use periods and no space ("A.C. Nielson" not "A. C. Nielson.") This assures that in typesetting the initials will appear on the same line.

**Compound adjectives.** This is a grammatical subtlety that many writers don't grasp. When a compound adjective precedes a noun, it often requires a hyphen for clarity. Consider this sentence: "The 5¢ 1847 plate was entered from a single-relief roll." Failure to include the hyphen changes the meaning profoundly. The difference between a hot water bottle and a hot-water bottle is perhaps unimportant; but the distinction between extra marital sex and extra-marital sex is vast. When there's any possible ambiguity, hyphenation is required.

**Names and honorifics.** In a hobby where kings and schoolboys come together as equals, we avoid titles or honorifics of any sort. When writing about individuals, both sexes, use full name on the first reference and last name only thereafter. Two exceptions. 1. Use of "Mr." is permitted (but not required) when referencing the decedent in an obituary. 2. In a by-line, we will reluctantly designate as "Dr." or "M.D." those few valued contributors who insist on it.

**Measurement and numerals.** In the first reference spell out 22½ millimeters, thereafter say 22½ mm (abbreviated with no period, no space between numeral and fraction, and one en space between the number and mm). For measurements use 45x55 mm. In tabular presentation where space is precious, show "mm" in the first reference only. We ordinarily spell out numbers one through ten, then use numerals for 11 on up. This rule is flexible according to context; use common sense. Numbers bigger than three places get a comma: 1,015, 11,478. We never begin a sentence with a numeral. Spell it out or rewrite. Thus, instead of "1851 is a logical starting point..." we must say "The year 1851 is a logical starting point..."

**Ordinal numbers in subscript or superscript.** Subscripts and superscripts are visually jarring and almost always unnecessary. Except to designate endnotes, or where required in chemical equations and mathematical formulas (both of which have little place in the

*Chronicle*), we do not allow subscripts and superscripts. Thus we say 19th century, never 19<sup>th</sup> century and August 3-6, never August 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Superscript ordinals persist because they are the default setting in Microsoft Word, buried so deeply in the software that many Word users are incapable of changing the setting. Don't be a zombie superscripter. In Word, select TOOLS, then AUTO-CORRECT, then AUTOFORMAT AS YOU TYPE. On the resultant menu, uncheck "Ordinals (1st) with Superscript."

**Pedantry.** Philatelists sometimes say "usage" when they mean "use"—a regrettable misuse (or should we say misusage) that continues to be broadcast on Philatelic Foundation certificates. But "use" and "usage" are not synonyms. "Usage" implies use over an extended period of time. "Use" connotes shorter, even momentary, duration. You can discuss **usage** of the 1869 stamps in the transpacific mails, but a cover with a stamp on it represents a **use** of the stamp, never a usage. For the linguistic underpinnings of this distinction see my Editor Page essay in *Chronicle* 211. Other pseudo-scholarly pitfalls: Don't say "issue" when you mean stamp. "Issue" can refer to a stamp series ("the 1861 issue") but not to an individual stamp within the series. And please, please, unless it's absolutely necessary for prose clarity, do not use the word "adhesive" as a synonym for "stamp."

**Plating nomenclature.** After much deliberation and considerable discussion with the plating community, we decided to present plating symbols in the upper case (as in 7R1E), because that's most familiar to ordinary collectors. One exception to this rule: We abbreviate the intermediate state of 1851 plates with a lower-case "i." Yes, this is inconsistent. But it eliminates any possible ambiguity, a real problem in our sans-serif (Ariel) caption face, in which the capital-letter "I" and the numeral "1" are indistinguishable.

**Postmark vs. cancellation.** Colloquial prose admits exceptions, but we strive to maintain the distinction between a postmark and a cancellation. A postmark can be any postal marking. A cancellation is a postal marking used to cancel a stamp.

**Powerpoint paraphernalia.** The *Chronicle* is a conservatively-edited prose journal. We favor paragraphs constructed of full sentences. Avoid bullet points and other non-verbal symbols or gimmickry employed in album-page write-ups or Powerpoint presentations.

**Provenance.** Citing the ownership provenance of items illustrated and discussed in the *Chronicle* is in most cases diversionary. Provenance may be appropriate for an auction catalog description, but it has no place in a scholarly article in the *Chronicle*.

**Rate versus fee.** By definition, a postal rate is ratable: it varies according to weight or distance. Postal charges that do not vary are not rates; they are usually better described as fees. This is a semantic point that many *Chronicle* writers struggle with, partly because of the way U.S. postal practices evolved during the 19th century. The charge for carrier delivery, whether to or from the post office, was always a fee, never a rate. The drop-letter charge was a fee from the earliest days until July 1, 1863. After that it became a rate, assessed on the basis of weight. Throughout the 19th century, the registry fee was

added to the postal rate. Rates for registration, based on weight, value or both, were not imposed until the 20th century. I try to maintain this distinction in the pages of the *Chronicle*, but I sometimes feel I am fighting a losing battle.

**Scott numbers.** It's our policy to include Scott numbers where appropriate, as a definitive and economical identifier—especially if the stamp is a foreign item that readers might not be familiar with. On first mention of a stamp, you may (if you wish) include both a description and the Scott number. “The U.S. 10¢ stamp of 1869 (Scott 116). . . .” Thereafter, refer to the stamp by its name (“the 10¢ 1869 stamp”), not by its Scott number. This rule may be broken under exceptional circumstances.

**Slashes in postmark description.** Avoid using slashes to depict line breaks in postmarks. In other words, write “PAID ONLY TO ENGLAND” rather than “PAID ONLY/TO ENGLAND.” Slashes showing line breaks in postmarks are a legacy of the days when photography was so expensive that markings had to be quoted rather than illustrated. In *Chronicle* presentation, if the marking being discussed is accompanied by an illustration (as it should be), slashes are not needed and should be avoided.

**Spacing.** Don't hit the spacebar twice after you complete a sentence. Double spacebar after a period is a typewriter artifact not operative in the internet age. Otherwise, before I import your copy into our pagination software, I must find and delete each of those extra spaces manually, a tedious task. In fact, every speck of embedded formatting must be removed before a text can be imported into our pagination software. This includes the “Track Changes” feature in Word, which please avoid.

**That vs. which:** Use “that” with restrictive clauses and “which” with non-restrictive clauses: “The cover **that** was in my desk drawer, **which** I purchased from Herst in 1974, disappeared while I was away.”

#### **SECTION 4: ANNOTATION (FOOTNOTES, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY)**

The purpose of annotation in the *Chronicle* is to cite reference sources, not to make points of amplification or clarification. This is an important distinction that is not well understood. Sometimes outside contributors attempt to use footnotes/endnotes for amplification or clarification. Section Editors must discourage this. Either the information is necessary, in which case it should be written into the text, or it's unnecessary, in which case it should be left out altogether.

Endnote superscripts are to be placed only in the text of an article, usually at the end of a sentence, immediately after the period. Endnote superscription is not permitted in headlines, subheads or captions.

Our style in the *Chronicle* is to use endnotes (appearing sequentially at the conclusion of the article) rather than footnotes (placed at the bottom of each page). Given the small *Chronicle* page format and our desire to have abundant visuals, footnotes can cause pernicious layout problems. And since the purpose of annotation in the *Chronicle* is to

provide reference information only, there's no compelling need for the note to appear on the page on which the mention occurs.

Endnotes are certainly not necessary for every *Chronicle* article and as a general rule I try to discourage them. If the information can be easily written into the text (rather than presented as an endnote), that's the preferred route, because it avoids disrupting narrative flow by making the reader seek out a reference several pages away. **The fundamental purpose of annotation is to provide documentary support to an otherwise disputable assertion, or to call attention to a source that readers might not be familiar with.** Again, endnotes are not necessary for every *Chronicle* article, but if you feel they are appropriate to your specific article, here are some style guidelines to follow:

Per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the proper elements of a footnote/endnote are: "author (or editor, compiler, or translator standing in place of the author), title (and usually subtitle), and date of publication. For books, the place and publisher are also given; for articles, the journal name, volume or whole number [we prefer whole number], year of publication and page number(s). For online works, retrieval information and date of access are included." (More on on-line citation below.)

We present the title of an article in quotes, and we italicize the title of the publication in which it appears, thus:

Alan C. Campbell, "Postscript to Design Evolution," *Chronicle* 148, pg. 116." Note that we don't include volume information when citing the *Chronicle*. The whole number ("Chronicle 148") is convenient, sufficient and much shorter. You can include a parenthetical year date if year information is important.

If the reference is to a stand-alone publication (usually a book or pamphlet), the title gets italicized, thus:

W. V. Combs, *U. S. Departmental Specimen Stamps* (State College, Pa.: American Philatelic Society, 1965), pg. 32.

Here are some endnote examples, based on past *Chronicle* material:

1. Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter, *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75* (Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988), pg. 225.
2. *Ibid.*, pg. 236.
3. Robert G. Stone, "Ship Letters from St. Pierre," *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (May 1975), pg. 145.
4. Hubbard and Winter, *op. cit.*, pg. 146.
5. Richard Frajola and Floyd Risvold, "Deconstructing the Jackass Mail Route," *Chronicle* 220 (2008), pp. 275-82.
6. U.S. Regulars Archive, "History of the 3rd U.S. Artillery," [www.usregulars.com/usartillery/3us\\_art.html](http://www.usregulars.com/usartillery/3us_art.html) (last viewed November 17, 2008).

“*Ibid.*” (*ibidem*) refers to a single work cited in the note immediately preceding. “*Op. cit.*” (*opera citato*) is used with the author’s last name and in place of a previously cited title. Italicization is necessary because these abbreviations are foreign words.

Here are some sample newspaper references:

1. *New York Times*, April 20, 1843.
2. Editorial, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 4, 1850.
3. Obituary of Roger Smith, *Boston Globe*, May 8, 1920.

**Bibliography:** A bibliography is not necessary for most *Chronicle* articles.

Bibliographical listing is most appropriate in a scholarly article that employs sources that *Chronicle* readers might not be familiar with. If you want to include a bibliography in a *Chronicle* article, here are some guidelines.

Elements of a bibliographical listing: Same as footnotes, but arranged slightly differently. Citations are listed in alphabetical order by the author’s last name and include all sources (books, articles, dissertations, papers, etc.). If no author or editor is given, use the title or a keyword most likely to be sought.

Examples of bibliographic listing from recent *Chronicles*:

Frajola, Richard and Risvold, Floyd. “Deconstructing the Jackass Mail Route.” *Chronicle* 220 (November 2008): pp. 275–82.

Hubbard, Walter, and Winter, Richard F. *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75*. Canton, Ohio: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988.

McDonald, Susan M. “Cunard Packet Mail Between Nova Scotia and the United States.” *Postal History Journal*, Whole No. 29 (September 1971): pp. 2–14.

———. “Cunard Packet Mail Between Nova Scotia and the United States.” *Postal History Journal*, Whole No. 30 (January 1972): pp. 27–40.

U.S. Regulars Archive. “3rd U.S. Artillery.” [www.usregulars.com/3us\\_art.html](http://www.usregulars.com/3us_art.html) (last viewed 22 May 2008).

**Internet citations:** To state it charitably, standards for online citation are still evolving. As they do, best practice is to avoid on-line citation if a hard-copy reference can be cited instead. That’s the standard we follow in the *Chronicle*. The Internet is a powerful research tool, but it is not yet a red-check source. Its evanescent nature does not provide the enduring reviewability of print.

According to a 2014 Harvard Law School study, “more than 70 percent of the URLs in the *Harvard Law Review* and other journals, and more than 50 percent of URLs in U.S.

Supreme Court opinions, do not link to the originally-cited information.” A study conducted at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in 2014 searched almost four million scholarly scientific articles published between 1997 and 2012. It found that 20 percent of the links provided were useless. The cited pages no longer exist (this is called “link rot”) or the cited page had been moved or changed (“content drift”).

Clearly, an internet citation is no substitute for a footnoted reference to a printed source. If there's no hard-copy alternative and the writer must quote a website as the source of his information, then he must provide the full URL (locating the specific reference quoted, not just the home page under which the citation is buried) along with information revealing the date on which this specific page was last viewed. Here's an example copied from *Chronicle* 220:

**Website:** [http://www.banking-history.com/02\\_02.html](http://www.banking-history.com/02_02.html), Historical Association of Deutsche Bank (last viewed 8-27-2008).

The ongoing tension between on-line information and good bibliographic practice has three principal sources: (1) The specific URL reference, essential to proper citation, is sometimes so lengthy and so cryptic that it's hard to read, difficult to copy and greatly subject to transcription error; (2) a URL reference may be so lengthy as to require a hyphenated line break when presented in a print publication, which unless the hyphen is carefully removed will make the citation inaccessible; and (3) unlike reference books, websites and their content change frequently (thus the “last viewed” requirement).

When citing a website, we must not only lead the reader to the specific location, but we must also define it at a point in time, because when the reader goes to check it out, it may have changed. That's why best-practice scholarly annotation favors print-on-paper sources: They don't change.

A non-profit group called the Internet Archive ([archive.org](http://archive.org)) stores websites as they exist at different points in time. But this activity, while commendable, is incomplete. The archive is very far from comprehensive. Only when (or if) such storage becomes universal will the Internet replace the printed page as a red-check source of verifiable information. Until then, **sound research practice suggests we should avoid internet citation wherever possible**. If you have any thoughts on this, I'd be happy to receive them. (For much more on this fascinating and highly disturbing subject, see “The Cobweb” by Jill Lepore in *The New Yorker* of January 26, 2015.)

## SECTION 5: VISUALS

**Technical requirements for images:** Scans are strongly preferred. If you don't have a scanner, you should buy one and learn how to use it. For a decade I used an Epson printer-scanner purchased from Walmart for under \$100 that produced perfectly acceptable results. Remember, all digits are alike and a flat-bed scanner has no lenses. Printing professionals affirm that even the cheapest scanners nowadays provide quality output.

**Image format:** JPEG images will work, but quality will be diminished because JPEG images degrade every time they are opened. **For best results we prefer full (lifesized) TIFF images with final image size 300 DPI or better. Stamps should be scanned against a black background, covers on black or paper white.**

With covers, make sure the background color is very different from the envelope color—to make it easy for me to remove the background using the Magic Wand tool in Photoshop. **Do not crop into the cover image to square it up or eliminate nicks.** I need ample contrasting margin all around to enable proper cropping using the Photoshop toolkit.

If the image is to be enlarged for publication, then the resolution must be appropriately higher. If blow-ups of fly-speck detail are desired, the object should be scanned at much higher resolution: 1,200 dpi is not too large. High-resolution images are often too data-intensive to be transmitted as email attachments (that's why they print so well). In such cases, use a file transfer service such as Dropbox, or copy the images to a disk or memory stick and send it to me via letter post.

Before scanning a stamp or cover, remove it from its album page and from any transparent pochettes or corner mounts. The item to be scanned should rest directly on the scanner bed. After scanning, don't crop the image. Let me do that in Photoshop. Cover images cropped razor sharp look unnatural. We prefer realism in the *Chronicle*, and that includes showing covers with dinged edges and blunted corners.

Scans plucked from Internet websites are typically 72 DPI, far below our minimum standard. I would rather run no images at all, than publish grainy, low-resolution internet-sourced images that print unattractively and thus diminish the overall quality of reproduction that makes the *Chronicle* the special publication that it is.

If an inferior image is absolutely critical to a point an author is making, then yes, we can run it reluctantly, so long as we explain specifically **in each instance** what we're doing and why—so the reader is clearly informed that we are aware of the likelihood of inferior reproduction, but have decided to accept it anyway as the lesser of evils. (IE: "The image in Figure X, created from a scan downloaded from the Internet, is not up to *Chronicle* standards, but it's the best image currently available...")

When presented with an article for which a substantial number of images are below our quality standards, no matter how good the article is otherwise, our response must be to reject it as inappropriate to the *Chronicle*. The quest for quality images is a key element of the research process. An article that lacks quality images has not been adequately researched.

**Color:** Our current printer contract does not provide for press proofs. That's one way our Society has been able to afford quality color printing and still keep our dues low. Without proofs, there's no way to do post-plate color correction. Where necessary, I correct color up front as best I can, using Photoshop during the layout process. This basically involves

making the images accurate and pleasing to view. If the image shows an object whose colors readers are familiar with (a 10¢ green 1861 stamp, for instance), I try to assure that the printed result will accurately depict the familiar color.

For stampless covers with obscure postal markings, I don't strive slavishly for color accuracy but instead look for a pleasing presentation. This sometimes involves boosting contrast or saturation to emphasize detail in a lightly-struck marking.

Section Editors who send me their materials well in advance of deadline are usually rewarded with page proofs in PDF form. The resolution in these PDFs is low (for email transmission), but we have found that the color they depict is a fairly accurate representation of what will ultimately appear in the printed *Chronicle*. If upon inspecting the PDF page proofs I send you, you encounter individual items whose color is inaccurate, by all means point them out to me and I'll try to make appropriate correction. No guarantees, but I'll certainly try.

**Captions:** Please provide photo captions in a separate file, not embedded into your text. Number captions Figure 1, Figure 2 etc. and provide detail in the caption that will help explain what's in the picture. "Figure 1" by itself is never an acceptable caption. Make sure the names of your image scans are keyed to the caption numbers. As explained in detail below, new information cannot be introduced in a caption. The caption repeats information presented in the text.

**Marriage of visuals and text:** This is where philatelic writers most frequently stumble. Simply stated, the visuals must support the text and the text must explain the visuals. The easiest way to accomplish this is for the author to have the visuals in front of him when he sits down to write his article. Then he can write about the visuals. "Figure 1 shows..." etc.

**The function of captioning:** The primary purpose of a caption is to identify what's in the photo and to tie it to the accompanying text. Anything unusual in a photo, or anything that's likely to catch the eye of the casual page-turner, must to be identified and explained, *even if it's not germane to the substance of the text*. Such explanatory identification is consistent with our educational mission. It sparks interest in the material illustrated and perhaps will induce the casual browser to read more. In addition, either individually or collectively, captions can help support the accompanying story.

Every image that we publish must be identified and explained, both in the text and in the accompanying caption. The caption and text material need not be identical, but **it's a well-established convention in print journalism that new information should never be introduced in a caption. The caption repeats (though not necessarily in the same words) information contained in the text.**

The reason for this is simple: Captions often require adjustment in the page-layout process to accommodate the illustration or to fit available space. If the caption contains important information that's not repeated in the text, this information could get lost in

layout. This convention, which dates from the earliest days of moveable type, remains operative in the digital world.

Frequently the exigencies of page layout prevent a visual from being placed in precisely the location the author might desire it. Identifying it by name in the text (“Figure 1 shows...”, “Table 2 presents ...” etc.) permits make-up flexibility and helps the reader to locate the visual when he reads about it. In page make-up, I will always strive to place visuals close to their first mention in the text, and I strive mightily to make sure that the visual and its text reference appear on the same spread. Authors who are concerned about this should make sure they provide sufficient text to support such placement.

**Non-photographic images.** Drawings, tracings, charts, maps and other supporting illustrations (when appropriate) are welcome and encouraged, because they add variety to our visual mix, which is for the most part stamps and covers. But before spending a lot of time creating non-photographic images, please consult with the editor in chief. Our desire to assure stylistic consistency in the pages of the *Chronicle* extends to the non-photographic visuals. We want to control the typography and the color palette throughout our pages, including non-photographic visuals. We always publish tracings of postal markings in black, never in color, leaving it to the text or captions to indicate if the color is other than black.

## CONCLUSION

This style memo is not holy writ but a continuing work in progress. Suggestions for addition, clarification or improvement are always welcome.—ML, 01-02-2020