

The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Introduction and overview

This document provides suggestions for authors who intend to submit their work for publication in *The Chronicle*. Following these guidelines will reduce an author's rework and diminish the time required of the section editors and the editor in chief in preparing a manuscript for publication.

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, but we are equally interested in 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.

The Google-era digitization of primary sources has added a new dimension to historical research. But the gear in this new 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: TEXT PREPARATION

Conventional Microsoft Word text files (xxx.doc or xxx.docx) strongly preferred, but in the past our editor has handled many other file types.

Please do not do layout work; that is the job of the editor-in-chief. 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, as every speck of it must be removed before setting type. The spacebar and the tab key are especially problematic. A lot of editorial time is wasted 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 ENDNOTES then follow instructions.)

We can handle tabular data in Excel spreadsheet format or created in Word using the Word TABLE menu. Our 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 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. Eighty characters per row is the maximum.

Return of items submitted: If you want any submissions returned (images, disks, manuscripts, etc.) please say so at the onset. We usually pitch all materials once the printed *Chronicle* is available.

SECTION 2: 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. Travel, traveled, traveling, traveler—always one L (per 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 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 very rarely used, and then only for highly specific purposes.

We say 1920s and 20s, no apostrophes. We say 19th century, using numerals and lower case. 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 necessary to set off the year by commas, thus: "The Act of March 3, 1863, specified that letters...." 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...."

Avoid symbols wherever possible. We say "95 percent" not "95%"; "Boston and Maine Railroad," not "Boston & Maine Railroad"; and "Scott 116," not "Scott #116." Exception: We use currency symbols (\$) and (¢) when discussing postal rates and stamp denominations.

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:

Columbians, Officials, Large Bank Notes, Presidentials, Postage Dues, Star Dies, etc. Iconic postmarks get similar treatment: Kicking Mule, Running Chicken, Woman in Bonnet. 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 such as 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 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 try to 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. Calif. Colo. Conn. Del. Fla. Ga. Ill. Kan. Ky. La. Md. Mass. Mich. Minn. 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.

Two-letter USPS state abbreviations are 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. Use periods and no space when an individual uses initials instead of a first name ("A.C. Nielson" not "A. C. Nielson.") This format assures that in typesetting the initials are set on the same line.

Compound adjectives. When compound adjectives precede a noun, they often require 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 entirely. The difference between a hot water bottle and a hot-water bottle is subtle; the difference between extra marital sex and extra-marital sex is profound. When there's any possible ambiguity, hyphenation is required.

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....”

Spacing. Don't hit the spacebar twice after you complete a sentence. Double spacebar after a period is a typewriter legacy 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 and time-consuming process. 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.

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

Pedantry. Philatelists sometimes say “usage” when they mean “use.” These two words are not synonyms. “Usage” implies use over an extended period of time. “Use” connotes shorter, even momentary, duration. You can discuss *usage* of the 1851 stamps in the transatlantic mails, but a stamp on a cover shows a *use* of the stamp, never a usage. For the linguistic underpinnings of this distinction see my Editors 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, unless it's absolutely necessary for clarity, do not use the word “adhesive” as a synonym for “stamp.”

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.

Provenance. Citing the ownership provenance of items illustrated and discussed in the *Chronicle* is in most cases diversionary. Provenance is appropriate for an auction catalog description, but not for a scholarly article in the *Chronicle*.

Rate versus fee. Postal rates are based on weight, fees are not. Throughout the 19th century, the registry fee was added to the postal rate. The drop-letter charge was a fee until July 1, 1863. After that it was a rate, charged on the basis of weight.

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, 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 can be brotken under exceptional circumstances.

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 on vacation.”

SECTION 3: 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 will please 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.

Our style in the *Chronicle* is to use endnotes (placed 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 lots of visuals, footnotes can cause all manner of 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 where the mention occurs.

Endnotes are certainly not necessary for every *Chronicle* article. If the information can be easily written into the text (rather than presented as an endnote), that’s the preferred route, because it avoids making the reader lose his place to consult a reference at the end of the article. The fundamental purpose of annotation is to provide documentary support to an otherwise disputable assertion, or to present 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 a 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 sufficient and much shorter. You can include a parenthetical year date if you feel the 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 (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 (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, 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) 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 4: 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.

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 in Photoshop. Don't 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. Blow-ups of fly-speck detail 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 Dropbox or burn the images onto a disk and send them to me via postal mail.

Before scanning a stamp or cover, remove it from its album page and from any transparent mounting or pochette. The item to be scanned should rest directly on the scanner bed. After scanning, don't crop the image too closely. 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, way 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 crucial component 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 to emphasize detail in a lightly-struck marking.

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 not an acceptable caption. Make sure that the file names of the scans you provide correlate to your Figure numbers.

Marriage of visuals and text: This is where philatelic writers 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 or 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 might get lost in layout. This convention, which dates from the early 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, we will always strive to place visuals close to their first mention in the text, and wherever possible, we will make sure that the visual and its text reference appear on the same spread. Ideally, authors should provide sufficient text to support such placement.