

E X T R A C T S

FROM

POSTAL LAWS OF THE SESSION OF 1860-'61,

WITH

INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS.

NEW RATES OF POSTAGE UNDER AN ACT ESTABLISHING CERTAIN
POST ROUTES, APPROVED FEBRUARY 27, 1861.

“**SEC. 9.** *And be it further enacted,* That every letter or packet brought into the United States, or carried from one port therein to another in any private ship or vessel, shall be charged with five cents, if delivered at the post office where the same shall arrive; and if destined to be conveyed by post to any place, with two cents added to the ordinary rates of postage: *Provided,* That upon all letters or packets conveyed in whole or in part by steamers or steamships over any route upon which, or between ports or places between which, the mail is regularly conveyed in other vessels under contract with the Post Office Department, the same charge shall be levied, with the addition of two cents a letter or packet, as would have been levied if such letter or packet had been transmitted regularly through the mail.

“**SEC. 10.** *And be it further enacted,* That all acts or parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of the preceding section of this act be, and the same are hereby, repealed.”

(1.) Under this law, ship and steamboat letters, as described in section 164 of the standing Regulations of the department, shall be charged with five cents, if delivered at the post office where the same shall arrive, (instead of six cents, as formerly;) if destined to be conveyed by post from such office, two cents in addition to the ordinary rates of inland postage. For instance, a ship letter arriving at New York, or San Francisco, for any place in the interior, and not over 3,000 miles, nor beyond the Rocky mountains, will be charged five cents; and if over 3,000 miles, or beyond the Rocky mountains, twelve cents.

The existing regulation (168) is repealed. The proviso

as to letters or packets conveyed, in whole or in part, by steamers or steamships over any route on which the mail is conveyed in other vessels under contract with the Post Office Department, must be carefully observed; so that in such cases the rates by private vessels shall not be lower than by those regularly conveying mails.

“SEC. 11. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be lawful for persons known as regular dealers in newspapers and periodicals to receive by mail such quantities of either as they may require, and to pay the postage thereon as they may be received, at the same rates as regular subscribers to such publications : *Provided*, That the Postmaster General be authorized to establish a daily or semi daily delivery of letters and newspapers by carriers, throughout a circuit of nine miles from the City Hall, in the city of New York, under the supervision of the postmaster of New York, whenever, in his judgment, the revenue from such service shall defray the expense thereof.”

(2.) The effect of this law is to entitle regular dealers in newspapers and periodicals to the same abatement of the rates of postage (without paying quarterly or yearly in advance, but upon the receipt of their packages) as is now made for regular subscribers, under section 117 of the standing Regulations.

“SEC. 12. *And be it further enacted*, That maps, engravings, lithographs, or photographic prints, on rollers or in paper covers, books, bound or unbound, phonographic paper, and letter envelopes, shall be deemed mailable matter, and charged with postage by *the weight of the package*, not in any case to exceed four pounds, at the rate of one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction of an ounce over fifteen hundred miles, to be prepaid by postage stamps.

“SEC. 13. *And be it further enacted*, That cards, blank or printed, blanks in packages weighing at least eight ounces, and seeds or cuttings in packages not exceeding eight ounces in weight, shall also be deemed mailable matter, and charged with postage at the rate of one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction of an ounce over fifteen hundred miles, to be prepaid by postage stamps.”

(3.) These sections explain themselves. Section 12 adds to the articles heretofore enumerated as mailable matter the following, viz: Maps, engravings, lithographs, or photographic prints, on rollers or in paper covers, phonographic paper, and letter envelopes. Postage is chargeable by the weight of the package, not to exceed four pounds, at one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and two cents

an ounce or fraction of an ounce over fifteen hundred miles, to be prepaid by postage stamps.

Books, bound or unbound, are embraced in this section, (changing the former laws and section 134 of the Regulations, which fixed 3,000 miles as the limit within which one cent an ounce is chargeable.)

(4.) Section 13 provides that cards, either blank or printed, and blanks in packages, weighing *not less than eight ounces*, and packages of seeds or cuttings, not more than eight ounces in weight, shall be charged with postage at the rate of one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction of an ounce over fifteen hundred miles, to be prepaid by stamps.

All packages referred to in sections 12 and 13 must be plainly marked, showing their contents, and (excepting those containing seeds) so packed that their true character may be *seen*. Cuttings must be so secured as not to endanger other packages contained in the same mails. No written or printed matter, except the address and description of the contents, can accompany packages of seeds or cuttings without separate postage thereon; and to guard against attempted fraud in this respect, postmasters shall exercise the privilege of opening and examining packages of seeds and cuttings, as provided by section 139 of the Regulations in reference to all printed matter.

"Sec. 14. *And be it further enacted*, That the act of third March, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, entitled "An act further to amend the act entitled 'An act to reduce and modify the rates of postage in the United States, and for other purposes,' " passed March third, eighteen hundred and fifty-one, be, and the same is hereby, so modified as to require the ten-cent rate of postage to be prepaid on letters conveyed in the mail from any point in the United States east of the Rocky mountains to any State or Territory on the Pacific, and from any State or Territory on the Pacific to any point in the United States east of the Rocky mountains. And all drop letters shall be prepaid by postage stamps."

(5.) This is an important law, affecting especially the rates of postage between the Atlantic and Pacific States and Territories. No letter can now be sent for less than ten cents, prepaid by stamp, whatever the distance, from any point

in the United States east of the Rocky mountains to any State or Territory on the Pacific, or from any State or Territory on the Pacific to any point in the United States east of the Rocky mountains. Heretofore the rate was three cents within the distance of three thousand miles. This provision is now repealed so far as letters between points east and west of the Rocky mountains are concerned.

(6.) Section 14 also makes the prepayment of drop letters, by postage stamps, compulsory.

Further changes are made by an act making appropriations for the service of the Post Office Department during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1862, approved March 2, 1861.

(7.) Section 1 provides that no compensation shall be paid to postmasters after June 30, 1861, for the delivery of free letters or papers to their recipients, except to the postmaster at Washington city. Therefore sections 309 and 312 of the standing Regulations of the department are repealed.

(8.) Section 2 repeals the law under which dead letters are now opened and disposed of in San Francisco, California, and provides that they shall be sent for that purpose to the department at Washington.

(9.) Section 4 prohibits any one, other than the Postmaster General or his authorized agent, to set up any foot or horse post for the conveyance of letters or packets upon post routes which have been or may hereafter be established in any town or city by the Postmaster General.

(10.) Section 9 requires the contractors for mails between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Placerville, California, in addition to the daily overland mail, to run a pony express semi-weekly at a schedule time of ten days during eight months of the year, and of twelve days during four months of the year. They are also to carry for the government on this line, free of charge, five pounds of mail matter, with the liberty of charging the public, (beyond the regular rate of

postage, to be prepaid,) for transportation of letters by said express, any sum not exceeding one dollar per half ounce.

Postmasters will therefore take notice that letters prepaid at the ten-cent rate, at any point east of the Rocky mountains, and marked to go by the pony express, must be mailed to St. Joseph; and those on the Pacific, similarly prepaid and marked, must be mailed to Placerville.

But no letter shall be forwarded by the pony express from the post offices at St. Joseph and Placerville, or from any point between the same, except (1) government mail matter, and (2) such other letters as shall bear, in addition to the prepaid United States postage, the proper authorized mark of the contractors, showing the prepayment of such sum (not exceeding one dollar per half ounce) as they shall require under said section of the law.

Such payment to the contractors is not within the duties of postmasters. Their whole duty is to see that the United States postage is in all such cases prepaid, and that no other than government letters are sent by the pony express, except they also bear the contractors' authorized mark of their own prepaid charge.

Unless the contractors' charge is thus shown to be prepaid, all such letters, although marked "*per pony express*," will be forwarded by the regular daily overland mail.

Postmasters at St. Joseph and at Placerville are instructed to deliver to the agent of the pony express, at their respective offices, all prepaid packages directed to such agent; but such packages cannot be remailed without additional postage, at the regular rate, to be prepaid at the point of remailing.

All packages marked "*per pony express*," and prepaid as aforesaid, but not thus directed for delivery "to the agent of the pony express at —," will be forwarded in the express mail pouch, under lock, between St. Joseph and Placerville, and thence forwarded by regular mail.

But the postmasters at Placerville and St. Joseph will

deliver to the agent of the contractors at those points a way-bill showing the contents of each pouch sent by pony express mail from their respective offices; blanks for which will be furnished by the contractors, to be filled up by the postmasters, and to serve the contractors as checks on its contents.

POSTAGE STAMPS AND ENVELOPES.

Act of Congress establishing certain post routes, approved February 27, 1861.

"SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the Postmaster General shall be, and he is hereby, authorized to procure and furnish letter sheets with postage stamps impressed thereon, (combining in one both a sheet and envelope,) and to adopt such other improvements as may be deemed advisable, from time to time, in connexion with postage stamps or stamped envelopes for letters or newspapers, subject to the provision that such stamps or envelopes shall be sold at the cost of procuring and furnishing the same, as near as may be, and to all other provisions of the eighth section of an act of Congress entitled 'An act to establish certain post roads, and for other purposes,' approved August 31, 1852."

(11.) The department is not yet prepared to furnish stamped letter sheets or newspaper envelopes. Letter envelopes, official size, of larger denominations than any now in use, are expected soon to be issued.

"SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the penalty of fifty dollars provided by section 8 of an act of Congress entitled 'An act to establish certain post roads, and for other purposes,' approved March 3, 1853, shall apply as well to the using of a stamp cut from a stamped letter or newspaper envelope entire."

(12.) This section imposes the same penalty for using a stamp cut from a stamped envelope as that which now attaches, under the acts of March 3, 1851, and March 3, 1853, to using a second time an ordinary postage stamp or stamped envelope.—(See sections 147 and 151 of the *Postal Laws for the use of postmasters*.) Sections 405 and 406 of the Regulations are therefore so changed as to embrace stamps cut from stamped envelopes.

DEAD LETTERS.

"SEC. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That letters which have been advertised under existing laws (*vide* section 26, act of March 3, 1825, and section 5, act of March 3, 1851) shall be returned to the Post Office Department as dead

letters if unclaimed two months after the date of the advertisement : *Provided*, That letters at seaports intended for persons on board of certain designated vessels expected to arrive, and letters specially marked to be retained a longer period, shall be excepted from the operation of this act : *And provided, further*, That said letters shall be returned, under regulations to be prescribed by the Postmaster General."

(13.) This new law now requires that all letters remaining unclaimed two months after the date of their advertisement shall be returned to the Dead Letter Office. Heretofore they have been retained in post offices three months or longer, and generally sent to this department at the end of each quarter with the quarterly returns.

In this respect the new law makes a radical change; requiring the return of dead letters without reference to the quarterly periods, and separate from the quarterly returns.

The law of March 3, 1851, requires that lists of letters remaining uncalled for shall be published once in every six weeks, and as much oftener, not exceeding once a week, as the Postmaster General may specially direct.—(*See section 56 of Postal Laws.*)

(14.) Section 181 (chap. xiii) of the Regulations requires post offices to advertise letters as follows:

1. Once in six weeks when the gross receipts do not exceed \$500 per quarter.

2. Once a month when the receipts are over \$500, and not over \$1,000 per quarter.

3. Twice a month when the receipts are over \$1,000, and not over \$7,500 per quarter.

4. Once a week when the receipts exceed \$7,500 per quarter.

(15.) Returning unclaimed letters regularly two months after the date of each advertisement, it follows that offices of the first class above named must make such returns every six weeks;

Those of the second class, every month;

Those of the third class, twice a month;

Those of the fourth class, every week.

Under this arrangement each office of the first or smaller

class will regularly, once in every six weeks, make up a package of the letters, foreign and domestic, which have been advertised and remained unclaimed for two months, with a *bill* showing the number and their rates as now required; plainly post-mark such package, and direct it to "*Dead Letter Office, Washington city, D. C. ;*" and in order to promote its security, the package should be placed under another envelope or cover, directed to the distributing office through which it must first pass on the proper route to Washington city, D. C.

At offices of the second class, making *monthly* returns, when there are two or more packages of dead letters, they must first be securely enveloped and tied, and then compacted under a canvas or strong muslin cover, carefully stitched, so as to form one single package, which must be plainly post-marked, indorsed "*MONTHLY RETURN,*" and directed to "*Dead Letter Office, Washington city, D. C.*"

At the larger offices, embraced in classes three and four, returning *twice a month* and *weekly*, particular care is to be taken to number consecutively the several packages of letters, beginning with No. 1, and to place the bill in the highest numbered package, marking the same "*Bill ;*" and also to mark on the outside of each package the description of letters contained therein.

The weekly returns must, in all cases, be made in separate locked pouches, with wooden or leather labels, marked "*WEEKLY RETURNS* from—(name of office and date of mailing,") plainly directed "*Dead Letter Office, Washington city, D. C.*"

The semi-monthly returns must be similarly bagged, unless the several packages of letters can be compacted under a strong canvas or muslin cover, properly stitched, and sealed with wax, making *one bundle*, and plainly marked "*SEMI-MONTHLY RETURNS.*" It is of the first importance to guard against the separation of the several packages belonging to the same return.

In making up the regular return of dead letters every two months after advertising, the domestic letters, the foreign letters, and registered letters, must each be put up in separate packages, and the contents of each package plainly marked outside, (the package of registered letters must be sealed, and the bill accompanying it must give the register number and address of each letter,) and the whole then be securely put up in *one bundle* or locked pouch.

Every dead letter must bear on the sealed side *the postmark or stamp* of the office by which it is returned, and *the date of its return* to the department.

Upon each dead letter returned to the department (whether advertised or not) should be plainly written or stamped *the reason for its non-delivery*, say "not called for," "person addressed deceased," or "moved away," or "held for postage," or "short paid," or "misdirected," or as the case may be.

(16.) Section 102 of the Regulations requiring notice to be given of unpaid letters is repealed, except so far as concerns letters in cities wanting the carrier's fee. Postmasters will therefore return to the Dead Letter Office, *at least once a week, all letters held for postage*, or attempted to be sent with stamps previously used, or stamps cut from stamped envelopes, and unpaid letters *for foreign countries* on which prepayment is required; and also send with same return all letters not addressed or so badly directed that their destination cannot be ascertained, and those that are misdirected; and also such as are refused or cannot be delivered. Each letter must bear, plainly written or stamped on its face, *the reason why it is returned*; and each must bear, on the sealed side, the postmark of the office by which it is returned, and the date of its return. Each description of letters should be put up in a separate envelope or parcel, and the whole then securely put up in a strong wrapper of paper, (or in a locked pouch from the larger offices,) and directed to "*Third Assistant Postmaster Gen-*

eral, Dead Letter Office, Washington city, D. C.,” postmarked and labeled “Letters held for postage, &c.” No other matter should be sent with this return.

Sections 185, 186, 187, 188, and 189 of the printed Regulations are no longer to be regarded.

QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS will be rendered as heretofore, but unaccompanied by the dead letters.

There must be carefully attached to each account current at the end of the quarter a proper dead-letter bill, showing the whole number of dead letters returned during the quarter. This bill is to be prepared from the duplicates, which postmasters must keep, of the bills sent during the quarter to the Dead Letter Office.

The originals sent with the letters will be carefully examined and errors noted, but no allowance can be made in the quarterly settlement unless the account current be accompanied by a proper dead-letter bill.

Postmasters at seaports will be careful to observe the provisions of the new law respecting letters for persons on board of designated vessels expected to arrive.

All postmasters will regard special directions which may appear on letters to retain them a specified time.

(17.) Particular attention is again called to the law of 1860 requiring “that when any person shall indorse on any letter his or her name and place of residence, as writer thereof, the same, after remaining uncalled for at the office to which it is directed thirty days, or the time the writer may direct, shall be returned by mail to said writer; and no such letter shall be advertised, nor shall the same be treated as dead letters until so returned to the post office of the writer and there remain, uncalled for, two months.”

Under this law postmasters will observe the following regulations:

A letter on which the writer has *indorsed* his or her name and place of residence, *without* direction as to time of re-

maining uncalled for, must be returned by mail to such writer after the expiration of thirty days.

When, in addition to the name and residence of the writer, the *time* for holding the letter (whether more or less than thirty days) is specified, such time must be observed.

A business card *printed* on a letter is not to be regarded, unless it embraces a request for the return of the letter to the writer, if uncalled for.

The date of receiving such letters must be carefully written or stamped on them, and also the dates when re-mailed to the writers.

A regular account must be kept of letters returned, showing the name and address of the writer, to whom sent, the date of remailing, and the name of the person to whom originally addressed, with the periods during which they remained uncalled for. A similar account should be kept of "*returned letters*" RECEIVED. In making up mails the *number* of such letters sent should be specially noted on post bills.

Send copies of the account to the Third Assistant Postmaster General at the end of each quarter.

When such letters are re-mailed to the writer, the words "*returned to the writer*" should be plainly written or stamped *across the face* of each.

Such letters are not to be advertised, either at the office to which originally addressed or at the one to which returned.

Under the regulation of July 23, 1860, no additional postage was chargeable for returning to the writer this class of letters; but as the law now requires postage on letters sent from the Dead Letter Office, postmasters will also charge the usual rates on the returned letters here alluded to, as in the case of forwarding under section 64 of the book of Regulations, to be paid by the writer on return delivery.

The eighth section of the act of 27th February, 1861, directs "that upon all letters returned from the Dead Letter

Office there shall be charged the usual rates of postage, to be collected on delivery and accounted for by postmasters in the same manner as other postages.’’

(18.) Agreeably to this law, postmasters must collect postage on all letters sent to them from the Dead Letter Office for delivery. The amount will be given in the circular accompanying the letter, or marked upon the letter, and postmasters will be held accountable for the same.

Postmasters are required by law and the instructions of this department to keep their respective offices open during the usual business hours of the place; and it is their duty always to make proper search when a letter is applied for, and generally to manifest an accommodating disposition towards the public. Neglect of these duties, or either of them, must often prevent the delivery of letters and cause them to be sent to the Dead Letter Office.

It is apprehended that if letters are at once removed from the general delivery boxes on being advertised, especially in cities, it will often prevent their delivery.

There may be various and good reasons why applicants omit to say whether their expected letters are advertised or not; and it is the duty of postmasters to see that proper search is made, both amongst the letters that are advertised and those that are not.

Postmasters are expected to give special attention to this matter, and not consider their duty to this department and the public fulfilled without the most careful attention to the delivery of letters, whatever additional labor may be involved, as this comprises a summary of all other duties.

RECAPITULATION.

[The several paragraphs are numbered for convenient reference to the foregoing full instructions, which have corresponding numbers.]

Rates of postage.

1. Charge on letters conveyed by private ships or vessels five cents, (instead of six, as heretofore,) if delivered at the post office where the same shall arrive. If forwarded by mail, two cents in addition to the domestic rates to which it would be subject if originating at such offices.

2. Regular dealers in newspapers and periodicals to pay postage by the package on newspapers and periodicals at the same rate as if paid quarterly or yearly in advance.

3. Maps, engravings, lithographs, or photographic prints, on rollers or in paper covers, books, bound or unbound, phonographic paper, and letter envelopes, in packages not exceeding in any case four pounds, one cent an ounce or fraction of an ounce to any place in the United States under fifteen hundred miles, and at the rate of two cents an ounce or fraction of an ounce over fifteen hundred miles, prepaid by postage stamps.

4. Same rates on cards, either blank or printed, and blanks in packages weighing at least eight ounces, and seeds or cuttings in packages not exceeding eight ounces.

5. Ten cents chargeable on each single letter from points in the United States east of the Rocky mountains to any State or Territory on the Pacific, and from the Pacific to points east of the Rocky mountains in the United States.

6. All drop letters must be prepaid by postage stamps.

7. No allowance in future to postmasters for delivering free letters or newspapers.

8. All dead letters for California, Oregon, and Washington to be returned to Washington city, under the general regulations herein prescribed.

9. No private post, horse or foot, to be established on any streets, lanes or alleys declared by the Postmaster General to be post roads in any city or town.

Pony express.

10. In connexion with a daily overland mail (from and after 1st of July next) between St. Joseph, Missouri, and

San Francisco, California, there will be a semi-weekly "*pony express mail*," which will convey letters prepaid at the ten-cent rate of postage, provided they are also properly marked so as to show the payment of the extra charge of *one dollar per half ounce* allowed by law to the contractor, (see foregoing particular instructions.)

Postage stamps and envelopes.

11. Letter sheets embossed with postage stamps are authorized to be issued, (combining in one both a sheet and envelope;) also stamped wrappers for newspapers.

12. The use of a stamp cut from a stamped envelope finable with fifty dollars, as well as the re-use of an ordinary postage stamp.

Dead letters.

13. Letters which have been advertised and remained unclaimed two months are to be returned to the Dead Letter Office, excepting letters at seaports intended for persons on board certain designated vessels expected to arrive, and letters specially marked to be held a longer period.

14. Postmasters are specially directed to advertise letters according to the standing Regulations of the department, under section 181, chapter 13, and to return unclaimed letters regularly two months after the date of each advertisement.

15. Thus, offices of the smallest class will return every six weeks; those of the second class, once a month; those of the third class, twice a month; those of the fourth class, every week.

16. Letters of the following descriptions are excepted from these instructions, and must be separately returned to the Dead Letter Office from all offices at least as often as once a week, viz:

a. Letters held for postage, including "Drop Letters." — (Sec. 6.)

b. Letters attempted to be sent with stamps previously used, or stamps cut from stamped envelopes.

c. Unpaid letters for foreign countries on which prepayment is required by the regulations.

d. Letters not addressed, or so badly addressed that their destination cannot be known.

e. Letters misdirected (or directed to places where there are no post offices.)

f. Refused letters and such as cannot be delivered, (as when the parties addressed are known to be deceased or moved away.)

Sections 185, 186, 187, 180, 189, 309, and 312 of the standing Regulations are not hereafter to be regarded.

Section 134 is modified so as to limit the one-cent rate chargeable per ounce on books to distances under fifteen hundred miles, (instead of three thousand.)

17. Writers of letters can have them returned, if uncalled for within any given period, by indorsing such request with their address on the letters.

18. Postage is chargeable on all letters returned from the Dead Letter Office.

Postmasters will carefully observe the foregoing laws and instructions.

M. BLAIR,

Postmaster General.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *May* 1, 1861.

