



**EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

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## LABEL OFFERS THE ‘STRAIT’ TRUTH

By Joseph T. Rowbottom III

Postal history is generally thought of as stampless covers, folded letters, envelopes, and other covers collected for their markings showing the movement of the item through the mail. There are other types of items that are also collected as postal history, such as wrappers, mailing tags, and mailing labels. As the years go on, I seem to be attracted more and more to items that in addition to adhering to postal history principles are also humorous.



A mailing label, whose origin was the Industrial Department of Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, NY, lists the package contents as *strait jackets*. It seems that Sing Sing was making strait jackets as one of its manufactured products. I bet they made a pretty good one, having the research and development facility right on site.

The label is addressed to Twin Elms on West Onondaga Street in Syracuse in care of Eugene N. Boudreau, MD. Twin Elms was a psychiatric hospital in the 1930s. It later became the Benjamin Rush Center. Dr. Boudreau was a well-respected psychiatrist of the time and was the Medical Director at Twin Elms.

To me the most enjoyable thing about collecting postal history is the detective game that ensues after the acquisition of an item in attempting to glean as much information as possible from the cover. I knew none of this before I bought this label and now I do. I guess that's better than synapses dying from disuse as we get older.

Joseph T. Rowbottom III Collection