
APS UNIT 28

www.esphs.org
Meets twice annually

Membership info: George McGowan
P. O. Box 482, E. Schodack, NY 12063-0482
geolotus2003@nycap.rr.com, 518-479-4396



EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

ADDRESSEE ADDS INTEREST

By Maris Tirums

A trip to *STAMPSHOW '08*, the annual APS philatelic exhibition in Hartford, CT last August, led to the acquisition of the illustrated stampless cover. Among my New York State collections is postal history of the City of Fulton (Oswego County).



The address reads Hon J. S. Morrill M.C. and "Strafford Orange Co" on the second and third lines. The envelope originally was addressed to N.Y., but was crossed out and "Vermont" written in its place. The envelope had probably been sent to Orange County, N.Y. (Newburgh?) from where it was forwarded. There has never been a Strafford in New York State.

"M.C." following Morrill's name means Member of Congress. Mail both from and to a Congressman required no payment of postage, so the FREE hand-stamp is correct.

An internet search for Morrill elevated my interest. I learned he was a prominent American from Vermont, who is honored on a U.S. postage stamp. Justin S. Morrill was born April 10, 1810 and died December 28, 1898. He was elected to Congress as a Whig in 1852, serving six terms. In 1866, he was elected Senator from Vermont, serving five terms. His greatest accomplishment was the Land Grant College Act of 1862 which he authored. This law provided federal funding for institutions of higher education in every state. The act was signed into law by President Lincoln during the Civil War. Ironically, Morrill never attended college.

An interesting law that Morrill also was responsible for enacting was the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862 which targeted the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). Bigamy was a controversial topic of that period. The law was challenged on legal grounds, but was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1879. Utah was only permitted to become a state after it outlawed bigamy and complied with the federal ban on the practice.

In 1999, the U.S. Postal Service issued a 55-cent Famous Americans definitive stamp honoring Morrill (Scott No. 2941). In 1955, the Post Office Department issued a three cent commemorative (Scott No. 1065) for the land grant colleges, but Morrill is not mentioned on this stamp.

I certainly value my inexpensive cover more now that I know the rest of the story.