

APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

ADDING UP THE PLUSES

By Glenn A. Estus

The embossed corner card on this cover from the Northern Ogdensburg Railway's OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT in the early 1850s alone would make it a good addition to a collection. However, a number of pluses make it a fantastic cover.

The PAID and "3" handstamps show the rate that went into effect on July 1, 1851. This cover was probably used between 1852 and 1855 when the requirement that postage stamps be used went into effect. The domestic three-cent postage paid rate for mail under three thousand miles adopted in 1851 basically remained in effect until September 30, 1883. After April 1, 1855, prepayment of postage was made compulsory.

The red circular date stamp from Ogdensburgh was used from 1831 to 1852 according to the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (1997). Based on this listing we now can be certain that cover was mailed on April 14, 1852. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The "h" in Ogdensburgh was dropped when the city was incorporated in 1868.] The one hundred eighteen-mile rail line connected the village with Rouses Point at the north end of Lake Champlain.

THE PLUSES

The cover originally was rated as going to Canada. The "10" handstamp indicates the ten-cent cross-border rate. But, it was going to Boston, Massachusetts, instead and apparently the postal clerk realized this and invalidated the "10" marking with the seven-bar circle in black.

One of the provisions under the postal agreement between the US and Province of Canada beginning April 6, 1851, was for Exchange Offices to mark the name of the originating country on mail to the other. The clerk probably saw no reason to cross out the U. STATES marking. In this case the clerk used a red foliate U. STATES ribbon marking that was in service from 1851-1855. Ogdensburgh exchanged mail with Prescott, Upper Canada, across the St. Lawrence River.

Companies, such as the railway, that sent a large amount mail sometimes had accounts with the post office even though postmasters were not supposed to carry such accounts. That is the reason for "Charge N. RR" manuscript at the upper right. ■

