

APS UNIT 28

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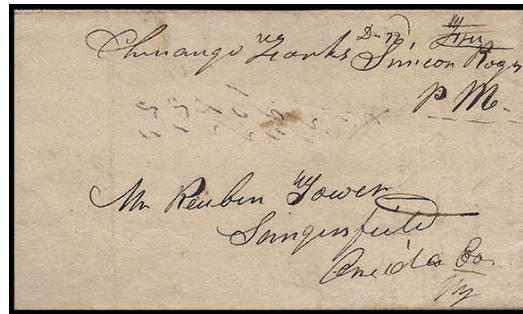


EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

LOOK INSIDE FLS FOR HIDDEN TREASURE

By David E. Williams

A postmaster's free FLS has several interesting features that at first may not seem obvious. It bears a manuscript town marking of Chenango Forks, a date mark of D-22, and a manuscript Free / Simeon Rogers / PM. Nothing too unusual until one opens the folded letter and finds the dateline of Chenango Forks December 22, 1821. The letter is signed by John B. Rogers, son of Simeon.



The elder Rogers was the first postmaster at Lisle, New York, having been appointed in 1802, when it was part of Tioga County. According to Kay and Smith's *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980*, the Chenango Forks post office was not established until September 1, 1825, with John B. Rogers as its first postmaster. The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* lists a manuscript town mark from Chenango Forks dated 1821 (probably this cover, which is ex-Calvet Hahn).

The Town of Lisle (or State of Lisle, as its residents referred to it) was very large. I believe the Lisle post office was located near the area referred to as Chenango Forks, which is also where the Rogers family lived and where Simeon had established the first store in 1795.

It is probable that Simeon wrote the commonly used name, Chenango Forks, rather than the official post office name of Lisle. In 1825, the letter writer entered the mercantile business for himself. This coincides with his being named postmaster of the "official" Chenango Forks post office. Most likely the new post office was located in John's new store. It is believed that at that time the Lisle post office was moved to Lisle Village ten miles upstream from Chenango Forks on the Tioughnioga River. I have two covers with manuscript Lisle Village town marks from October 1825 that seem to substantiate this.

Simeon Rogers eventually became the postmaster of Chenango Forks. In *The National Intelligencer* newspaper abstracts, 1852 by Joan M. Dixon, it states:

Simeon Rogers, now Postmaster at Chenango Forks, NY, has held the ofc (sic) of Postmaster for 50 years. The commission with the bold signature of Gideon Granger, then Postmaster Gen, is a curiosity at this day. Mr. Rogers was originally appointed Postmaster of Lisle, and was the only Postmaster in all the country, embracing the original State of Lisle, which has since been divided into so many towns. Mr. Rogers is over 90 years of age. ■