



EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

www.esphs.org

Meets twice annually

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THE MYSTERIOUS FORM 29

By Drew A. Nicholson

Occasionally an item appears that requires research into the many forms used by the U.S. Post Office Department and other government agencies. The cover depicted here required such research.

When I acquired the Millerton cover, I sent inquiries to several postal historians as well as the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, PA, to learn what Form 29 required to

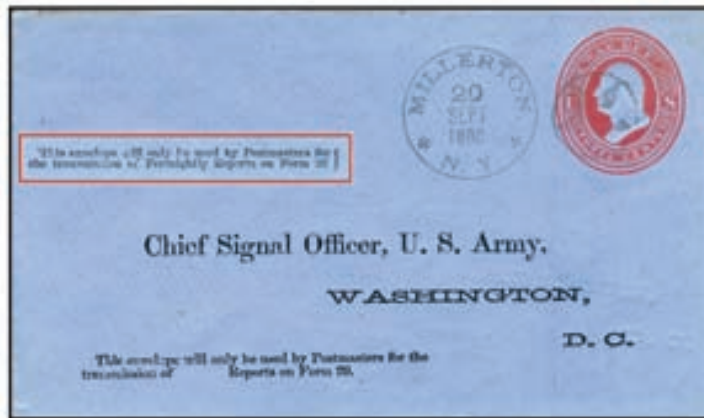
be reported by a postmaster. Responses ranged from none to a guess that the envelope contained weather or crop reports from a rural, agricultural community. Millerton in 1880 certainly would have fit that criteria as it was in the rural northeastern portion of Dutchess County known for its corn and vegetable crops and dairy products.

The use of official government postal stationery pre-addressed to the “Chief Signal Officer, U.S. Army,” made sense considering that the Signal Service most likely was the agency best equipped to receive, organize, and disseminate large amounts of statistics.

The response from the APRL included a photocopy of pages 322–323 from Thorp & Bartels’ *Catalog of Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers*:

At this time the Weather Bureau was under the War Department, and prior to this date [1882 (1884?)] reports from a far-flung line of observers were mailed to Washington in 3c. envelopes or 1c. wrappers, both of the War Department. When the penalty clause was made mandatory, in 1879, there must have been millions of such envelopes & wrappers in the offices of thousands of weather observers.

I believed my Millerton cover was such an example. Shortly thereafter, I purchased an unused example of a similar envelope bearing a slight variant of the admonition, which included *Fortnightly* in the location where there previously had been a small space



Cover for Form 29

Scott No. UO54 cancelled MILLERTON, 20 SEPT 1880, star in circle duplex. Note: There were variations in the admonition (inset from another UO54).