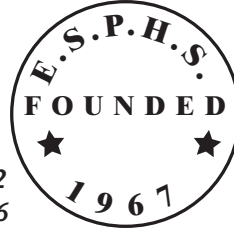


APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY



The Matildaville cover, left, was penned by Jesse Colton Higley, a prominent land owner in the area. It was assessed the five-cent rate, as the distance was less than 300 miles. The Colton cover, right, was mailed circa 1860.

COLTON'S NAMESAKE WAS A MOVER

By Gerald F. Wiley

The village now called Colton, located on the Raquette River in Saint Lawrence County, originally was named Matildaville. The Matildaville post office was established in 1837 with William P. Stark as postmaster.

One of the early settlers was Jesse C. Higley, who arrived in the area in 1824. It was through his influence that the name of the town, formed from Parishville in 1843, was called Colton which was Jesse C. Higley's middle name and his mother's maiden name. Supposedly his promise to furnish fireworks for the July 4th celebration had something to do with that decision.

In a letter dated March 1847 with manuscript postmark Matildaville, illustrated here, Higley gave advice on healthy living. He wrote: "I have within last 3 or 4 years seen so wonderful effects from bathing or washing that I think every invalid should resort to the experiment and give it a trial. Try washing Rollin before it is too late and let nothing prevent your giving it a thorough trial." He also mentioned G. R. Phelps Tomato Pills and the Graham diet.

The recipient was in Shoreham, VT, where Higley had been a constable in 1825. Higley was born in Salisbury, CT in 1795, migrated first to Becket, MA, then to Shoreham, VT, and later to New London, Ontario, before he bought a large tract of land along the Racket River and built a sawmill at Higley's falls. He died in 1865, four days after migrating to Michigan.

The name of the Matildaville post office was changed to Colton in 1851. A post office was also established at South Colton in 1854 with Thomas McGarry as postmaster.