



EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

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THE STORY OF A COVER

By George McGowan

I have heard ESPHS member Maris Tirums say many times that “every cover has a story” and this is the story of one of those covers.

While sorting through a small pile of stampless folded letters, I discovered the 1842 free frank signed “Rufus King, Adj. Genl.” I was not sure who Rufus King was but I was sure that I had heard that name before, so off to the computer.

I learned that his grandfather, Rufus King (1755–1827), was a US Senator from New York. In 1804 and 1808 he was the Federalist candidate for vice president of the United States. In 1816 he was their candidate for president, losing to James Monroe 183 electoral votes to 34.

The grandson (1814–1876) was a graduate of West Point before becoming Adjutant General of New York. During the Civil War, he commanded a division in I Corps, Army of the Potomac. Some time during the year 1862 he began to experience epileptic seizures, and had to resign his commission. Soon after, he was appointed Minister to the Roman Papal States.

Getting back to this letter, it was sent from Albany and addressed to Major General Marshall, Commander, 30th Division Infantry, Wheeler, Steuben County, New York. The printed contents of that letter is illustrated.

Incidentally, the commander who replaced Rufus King was Abner Doubleday, ancestor of ESPHS member Elwyn Doubleday. ■

