



EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

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## REDISCOVERING A FORGOTTEN COVER

By Glenn A. Estus

I recently stumbled on an item that I do not remember buying or, at first, why I bought it.

This 1901 cover from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Columbus, New York, lacks my usual code on the reverse to show when it was purchased and how much I paid. However, it has something on the reverse that tells me why I bought it.



According to Kay and Smith's *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980* (APS, 1982), Columbus was a post office from 1821 through 1901 when it was discontinued and became a rural station of the Sherburne post office. The rural station was closed in December 1907, although I could not find confirmation of the closure in the *Daily Postal Bulletin* printed in 1907.

The significance of this cover is that the rural station was one of the very few stations that were served by a rural free delivery route. The independent Columbus post office was discontinued on February 29, 1901, and the next day it became a postal station of Sherburne. This is very unusual as most post offices were completely discontinued when an RFD route was established. This was so unusual that a special notice was printed in the *DAILY POSTAL BULLETIN* of February 25, 1901, from Charles Emory Smith, the Postmaster General.

The bulletin of February 18, 1901, announced that the new RFD Route would have one carrier who would cover an area of sixteen square miles serving a population of nine hundred. However, it would seem that the area was too populated to be adequately served by just the carrier so the new postal station was also established.

In 1995 Harold E. Richow authored the second edition of his *Encyclopedia of R.F.D. Cancels* (La Posta Publications), a massive work of almost two-hundred-seventy-five pages of information on RFD cancels from every classification and by scarcity. The Columbus Postal Station cancel is Type 10CB and is so scarce that no illustration was provided in the catalogue. Richow gives this cancel a scarcity rating of VIII on a scale of I to X. Looking through the New York listing, I noticed that there are no other Type 10CB listings for New York state. ■