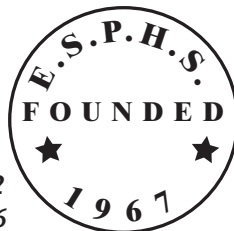


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EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
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## THE LURE OF SLOGAN CANCELLATIONS

By Heather Sweeting

Many collectors focus on collecting covers from a certain county, town, stamp issue, or type of cancel. In looking for these older issues much modern postal history is left by the wayside and can be picked up quite reasonably. One such area of interest is slogan cancellations, which first appeared in the 1930s. Their heyday was the 1960s. They started to be phased out by the 1990s.

A slogan cancellation is a type of special die used in conjunction with a machine cancellation. Most of the major machine cancellers, such as American, Universal, Barry, Columbia, and International, used slogans. The slogan is usually found to the right of the circular date stamp on the cancel and, in many cases, enclosed in a box, or between parallel lines. Slogan cancellations often had a public service message, such as *PRAY FOR PEACE*, *LOOSE DOGS WILL BITE*, and the humorous *FIGHT YOUR INSECT ENEMIES* were typical. Most slogans were limited to a maximum of three lines, with fewer than 20 letters per line.

Groups and organizations could apply for slogan cancels for events considered to be of general public interest and importance, but not for-profit undertakings. Most slogans were used for about a six-month period. Very few specialized town slogans are found on current mail with the switch to regional mail centers, and the ones that are, are now often sprayed across the face of the stamp. The John Adams *POWER OF THE LETTER* slogan appeared on mail this spring in conjunction with a television miniseries on HBO.

I have started compiling a database of slogans used in just New York State, i.e., specific to its towns, not those used nationally. For example, Poughkeepsie had a cancel for the Centennial of Vassar College in 1961. Little Falls had a cancel for its 150th anniversary. *The United States Postal Slogan Catalog* by Moe Luff is a superb reference regarding these cancels, but was last revised in 1975, so there are many modern ones that are unreported. Do you have any interesting slogan cancels in your collection?

