



EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

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COLLECTING POSTMASTER/COUNTY CANCELS

By Glenn A. Estus

One of the areas of New York State postal history that I find most interesting and rewarding is the collecting of postmaster/county cancels. These are townmarks that contain either the county name as well as the town name or the postmaster's name and the town name, or both the county name and the postmaster's name.

In New York State, these types of cancel are found as early as the 1810s from Coopers-town and as late as the early 1900s from Wells. They range from simple circular datestamps to ornate ovals and straight lines. At the current time there are more than 600 post offices known to have used this type of cancellation.

While most of the post offices used ordinary bullseye killers in conjunction with the townmarks, some post offices used extremely decorative killers to deface the stamps.

A few cropped examples of these decorative killers are shown above. The majority of decorative killers are stars such as these from Clifton, Millers, Forest Glen, and Hotel Champlain. Also, if you look closely at the Forest Glen example, you can see a star within a star design. Other designs include Wheels of Fortune (Castleton Corners), geometrics (Dalton), and monograms (Footprints and Hume). The Footprints example shows "US Mail" and the Hume shows a stylized "H." Webster Station has a Maltese cross. ■