

The First 125 Years of Postmarks & Postal Markings Of Hudson, New York



Whaleship Huron becalmed by Hudson 1836

Hudson, New York, named to commemorate Henry Hudson's first landing on the shores of the upper river, originated from the vision of an Association of New England Whalers. The first chartered city in independent America, Hudson became incorporated by an act of the New York State Assembly on April 22, 1785. By 1786, with a population of about 1500, Hudson had several wharves, four large warehouses, shops, barns and a distillery. The presence of twenty-five sea-going vessels made Hudson a major port.

To meet the burgeoning population's need for reliable mail service, the Hudson Post Office came into being, according to one source, on March 20, 1793.

The purpose of this exhibit is to trace the evolution of the various postmarks and postal markings (and their combinations) used in Hudson during the first 125 years of its Post Office beginning in 1794, the earliest year such is recorded. To this end, the exhibit naturally starts with the Stampless Era and runs into the Stamped Era, ending with the introduction of machine cancellation use.



Types of Markings Used:

Straight Line Cancels: many of these were typeset and came in different styles, sizes and configurations; these were the earliest postmarks used and therefore appear only on stampless covers. Non-typeset straight line handstamps exist during the stamped mail era starting c. 1895.

Circular Date Stamps: these vary, amongst other things, in diameter, color and lettering font; a 'fancy' and a rimless variety are known from the stampless era.

Additional markings: This category exhibits the greatest diversity, including a wide range of service markings, both manuscript and hand-stamped, (such as rates and prepayment indicators), and the various "killer cancels" of the stamp era, including hand-carved cork and wood obliterators and duplex cancellations.

Machine Cancellations: As the volume of mail increased exponentially near the end of the 19th Century, the need for mechanical cancellation became evident.