



**EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
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A NEW MEANING FOR HOLIDAY SPRAY

By Heather Sweeting

When one thinks of postal history, one very often thinks in terms of old letters and covers. Hundred-year-old covers with mixed frankings and interesting postmarks are fascinating, but so is a lot of mail from the last 10 years. I confess I am a *modern* postal history fanatic. Going through dollar boxes for the philatelic gems of the future is something I love to do.

Holiday Spray markings are one modern topic that I find fascinating. For those of you unfamiliar with spray markings they are ink jet sprayed markings that are printed in a straight line either across or through the postmark at the top of a cover. They often contain the date, city, time, zip code, etc. from the cover's city of origin.

Many spray markings are just informational. The ones I find most interesting contain additional text. Fun holiday messages are often

the subject of the text. For example, *Happy New Year 1993*, *First Night Pittsburgh*, *Have a Safe Halloween Boo!*, *Happy Thanksgiving from Dayton OH*, and *Happy Holidays* are just a few of the interesting markings that can be found in sprays.

My favorite and most unusual example comes from Hawaii. What makes it so is that it contains a spelling error: *Sasons Greetings Honolulu*. Are there other mistyped greetings?

Spray markings also exist on Canadian covers. In fact some of the Canadian sprays are quite amusing. Such as this *Santa Ho Ho Ho Père Noel* spray that adorns this recently used cover.

Do any holiday spray markings exist on covers from New York towns? I have yet to find one. Keep your eyes peeled.

