

Osborn Postal History

Hancock County, Maine

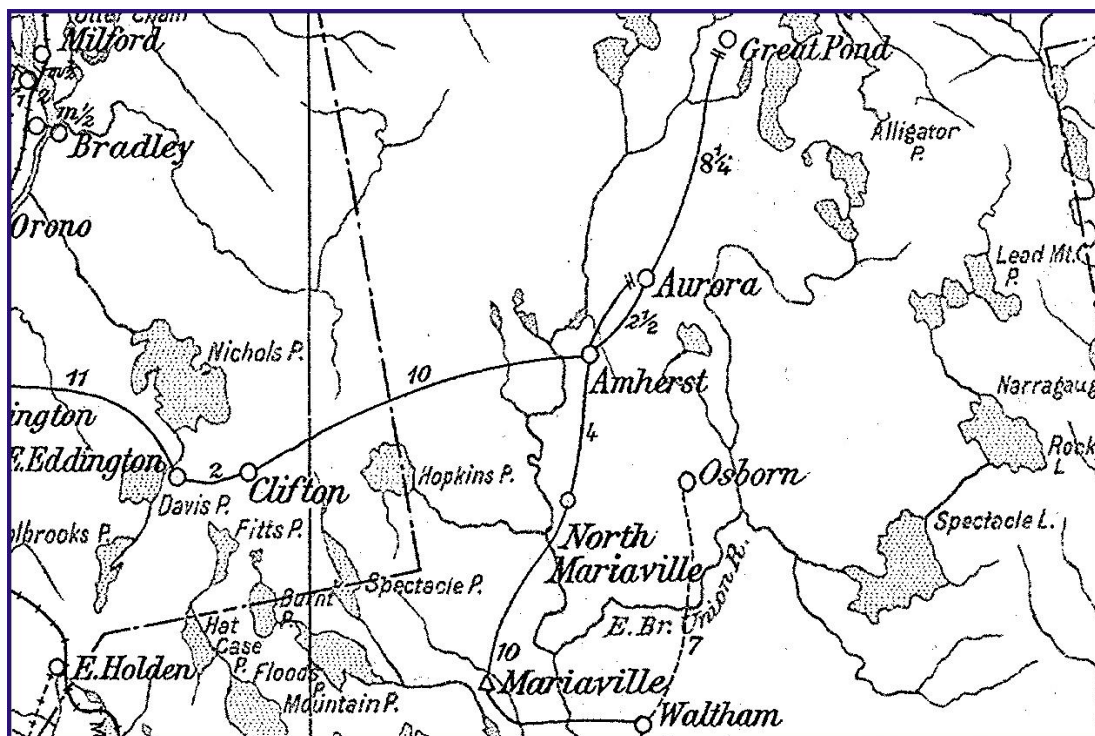
Last update for this page: 06/28/2026

This page is part of the Maine Postal History website—a project of the Maine Philatelic Society.
For more information, see <https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph>.

Osborn was organized as Plantation 21 MD BPP on March 5, 1895. The name was changed to Osborn on April 4, 1923. Osborn was incorporated as a Town on February 11, 1976.

During the history of the town of Osborn, there have been three post offices. Briefly, the history of these three is as follows:

1. [Jordan](#) Post Office was legally established on 16 November 1903 and officially discontinued on 14 May 1904. This post office never opened.
2. [Osborn](#) Post Office opened on 7 August 1913 and closed on 15 June 1915. The town was T21 MD prior to 1923.
3. [Osborn](#) Post Office re-opened on 15 March 1920 and closed on 31 December 1923. The town was T21 MD prior to 1923.

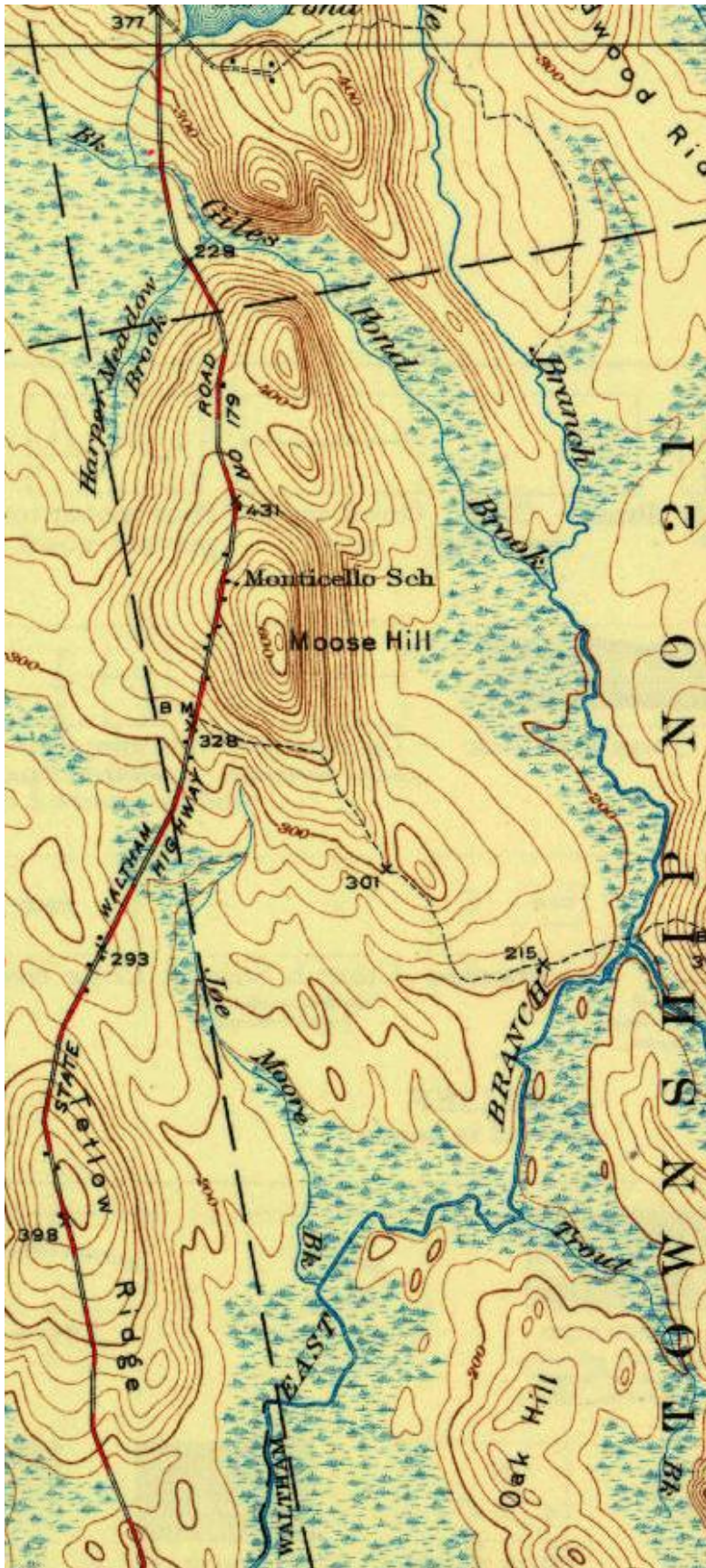


Detail from Post Route Map of the State of Maine, 1914. Source:

<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/PostRouteMaps/MainePostRouteMap1914.pdf>



Composite topographic map of Osborn, revealing the settlement area to be spread along less than two miles of the highway, now known as Maine Route 179 in the northwestern corner of town. Map digitally assembled from four separate U. S. Geological Survey Quadrangle sheets: Great Pond (upper left), Lead Mountain (upper right), Tunk Lake (lower right), and Ellsworth (lower left). Full details and links to the source maps are shown in the [list of sources](#) at the end of this document.



The settlement of Osborn is and was concentrated along less than two miles of the state highway, Maine Route 179, in the northwestern corner of town.

The post offices would have been located in the homes of the postmasters at that time. According to records found on Ancestry.com, Postmaster (1913-1915) Linnie Harper Mace was married to Watson Mace, and Postmaster (1920-1923) Carrie Richardson Mace was married to Fred Mace.

Source information for this map is shown in the [list of sources](#) at the end of this document.

One place, several names

Like many townships in rural Maine, Osborn has had a series of names since it was first surveyed and settled -- and sometimes confusing abbreviations were used in the official name. At first the township was known as Township Twenty-One, with the designation T21 MD BPP, which stands for "Township 21, Middle Division, Bingham's Penobscot Purchase," a reference to the land being owned at one point by William Bingham. In 1895 it was set up as Plantation 21, MD BPP, and retained that name until it was changed to Osborn Plantation in 1923. Finally in 1976 it was incorporated as the Town of Osborn. These varying names are used inconsistently on older maps, including the U. S. Geological Survey Topographic Quadrangle sheets.

Also please note that Osborn is recorded as Osborne in some U. S Post Office Department records.

A very useful listing of the various abbreviations like MD and BPP is found on page vii of the Maine State Archives publication, Counties, Cities, Towns and Plantations of Maine, available for download from https://digitalmaine.com/arc_publications/11/

Jordan

16 November 1903:

Jordan Post Office was legally established:

16 November 1903:

Nahum M. Jordan was appointed postmaster for the Jordan Post Office.

14 May 1904:

Jordan Post Office was officially discontinued. Jordan Post Office never opened.

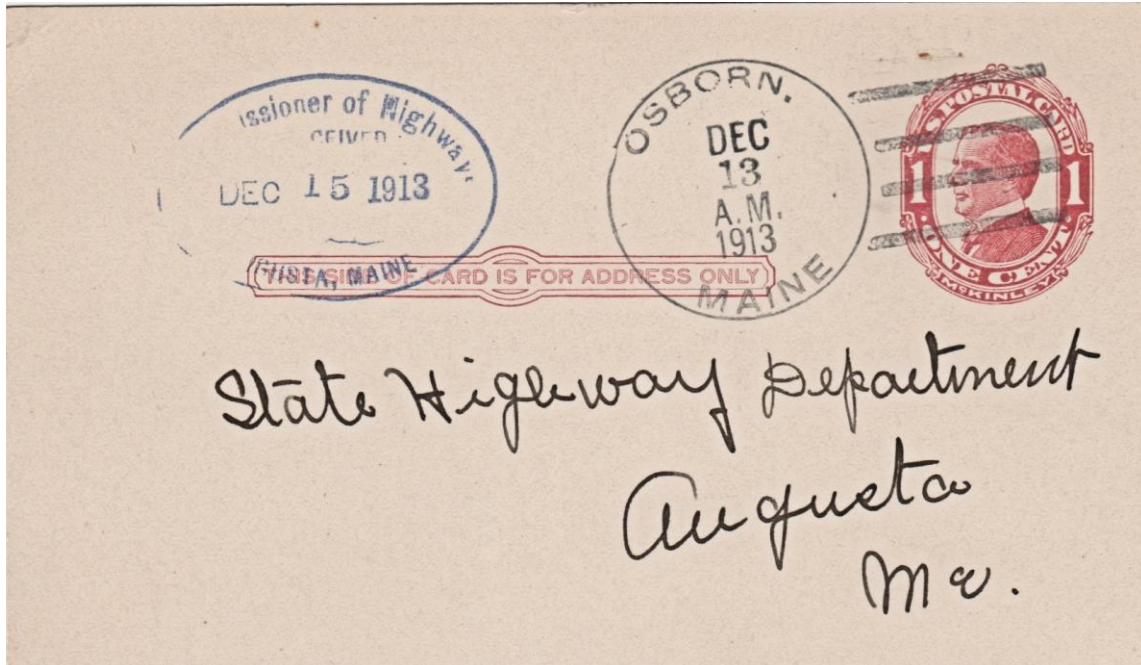
Osborn

7 August 1913:

Osborn Post Office opened. The town was T21 MD prior to 1923.

7 August 1913:

Linnie H. Mace became the Postmaster of the Osborn Post Office.



13 December 1913: classic four-bar postmark

15 June 1915:

Osborn Post Office closed with service from Waltham Post Office.

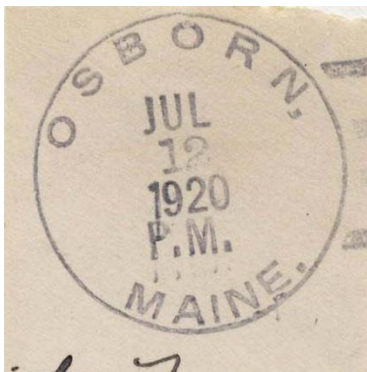
Osborn

15 March 1920:

Osborn Post Office re-opened. The town was T21 MD prior to 1923.

15 March 1920:

Carrie R. Mace became the Postmaster of the Osborn Post Office.



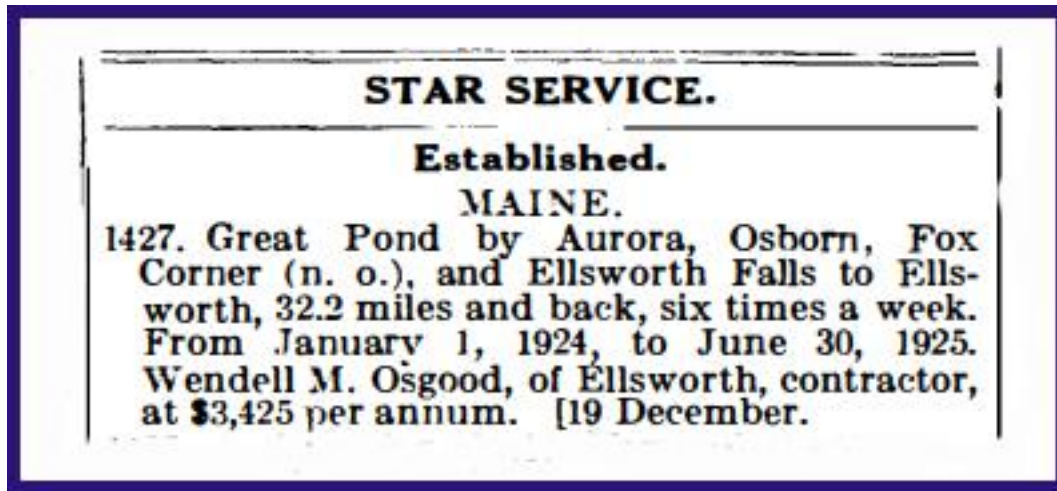
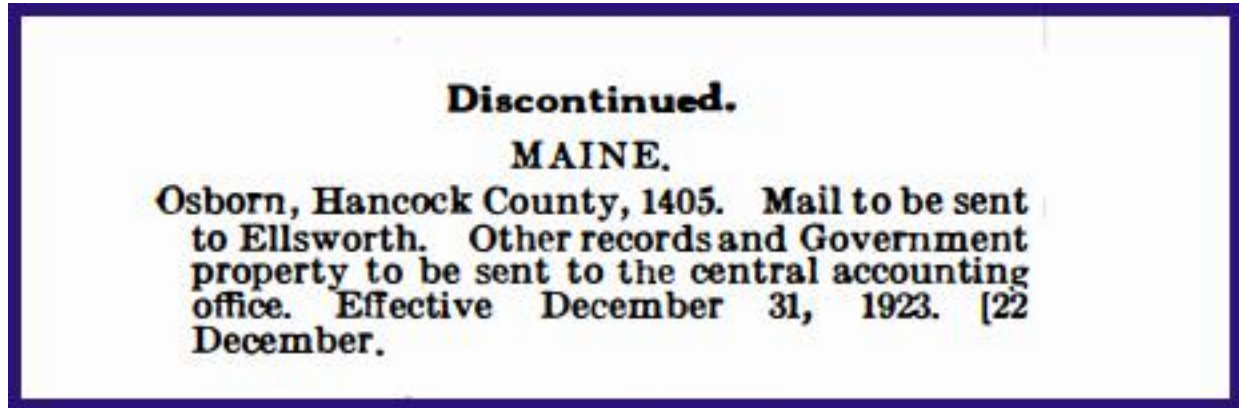
12 July 1920: The size of the circular postmark is unknown with a four-bar killer.

In many cases, surviving postmarks are only small cut pieces. While they show what the dial of the postmark looked like, **today the recognized best practice is to save the entire envelope or card that the postmark.**

Nevertheless it is good that this small cut piece has survived, and was preserved in the [Willett-Thompson collection](https://www.willett-thompson.com/), for it may be the only surviving example of a postmark from the 1920-1923 post office operating in Osborn.

31 December 1923:

Osborn Post Office closed with service from Ellsworth.



Notice of the closure of the Osborn Post Office, and the initiation of a rural route carrier, was shown in the U. S. Postal Bulletin in late 1923.

Credits:

This document is based on the original web page compiled by the V. F. Thomas Co. (2021), with revisions and additions by James Husson and Brian Damien (2024-5).

Thank you to the Waterville Stamp Club (<https://thewatervillestampclub.com>) for helping ensure this project's continuity.

Thank you for the contributions of images from the Willett/Thompson Collection at the National Postmark Museum (<https://www.postmarks.org/museum/tour.php>) and Al Tieman.

Sources:

Postal History

Maine Postal History Gateway at Maine Philatelic Society:
<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph>

The Post Offices of Maine 2022, Maine Philatelic Society:
<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/TPOOM>

Postmaster Appointments

U. S. Post Office Department. Appointments of Postmasters records, Hancock County, Maine, via Ancestry.com, or via U. S. National Archives website. Hancock County appointments are in two files. The first file has only four frames. Most of the appointments are in the second file (which as of 05/19/2026 is incorrectly labeled as Penobscot County):
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746582> (only four frames)
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746587> (incorrectly labelled as Penobscot County)

For help in researching appointments see the Finding Aid for U. S. Postmaster Appointment Records, 1789-Present,
<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/pma-findingaid.pdf>.

The Digitised U. S. Postal Bulletins and PL&Rs 1880-2013
<http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

U. S. National Archives. U. S. Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, Hancock County, Maine. Site Location Reports for the Post Offices in the Town of Osborn:
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=783> and the following four pages

→ *It is important to note that the archives of the Reports of Site Locations are incomplete, and do not represent all the sites where the various post offices were located.*

Additional material can be found at Research Resources on Maine Postal History:
<http://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/post-office-sources.pdf>.

Town of Osborn History

Maine State Archives. ***Counties, Cities, Towns and Plantations of Maine: A Handbook of Incorporations, Dissolutions, and Boundary Changes.*** 1980.

https://digitalmaine.com/arc_publications/11/

Osborn town website <https://www.osbornmaine.org/about-osborn/>

“Osborn, Maine,” article in Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osborn,_Maine. Includes historic population data.

U. S. Geological Survey. Editions of historic (as well as current) topographic maps of Osborn are available to download as digital graphic files from the USGS website.

The Town of Osborn is on four different topographic sheets. Most of Osborn is on the Great Pond sheet. Other portions are on the Lead Mountain, Ellsworth, and Tunk Lake sheets.

Great Pond, 1932:

https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=282f93c0ce4d3d310453efc20c7f1f24

Lead Mountain, 1932:

https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=eea5dfd6bec14fd5de647c2d9bab96d3

Ellsworth, 1911:

https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=851706028c0b9f9800ca0c4127962705

Tunk Lake:

https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=1b8ee55b43c6c86131dc717a518c5af8

Postmarks

Helbock, Richard W. ***Postmarks on Postcards: An Illustrated Guide to Early 20th Century U. S. Postmarks.*** Revised, Second Edition. Scappoose, Oregon: LaPosta Publications, 2002.

Sanders, Christine, The 4-Bar Postmark of the USPS, ***PMCC Bulletin*** Reprinted Article, Original Publication Date: June, July & December 2012.

http://www.postmarks.org/resources/PMCC_FourBarCancelsUSPS.pdf

Disclaimer:

As with any database of this size, occasional errors—especially typos—are inevitable. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this work and to correct any mistakes made by previous authors. We take full responsibility for any errors and encourage you to bring them to our attention so that we can make the necessary corrections.

Determining the size and type of a postmark or killer is as much an art as it is a science. Many of the cut squares originate from the digital Willett/Thompson Collection at the Post Mark Collectors Club Museum (<https://postmarks.org>). Those postmark dimensions have been estimated by comparing them to a known object, such as a stamp, and using proportional ratios. These measurements may vary by a millimeter or two. Additionally, parameters such as V

span or wBar for four-bar killers can be difficult to assess without examining the specimen firsthand. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these interpretations.