



“FIRE ON THE WATER” STEAMBOAT MAIL IN NEW YORK STATE: 1808 TO 1855



EXHIBIT FOCUS: This exhibit presents the mechanisms employed by the Post Office in handling loose letters received from steamboats. The scope is limited to the critical period starting with the earliest known letter carried by steamboat in 1808 and ending in 1855 when the Postmaster General noted in his annual report that mail service by steamboat had decreased by thirty percent in the previous fiscal year, primarily as a result of the buildout of the railroads which were more reliable and efficient. The area of study is confined to the waterways of New York because this geography served as the post office proving grounds. The new mechanisms first introduced by the Post Office include the first markings applied to designate mail received from steamboats (the manuscript "B"), the first contract mail route by steamboat (in 1815) and the first route agent service (introduced in 1842).

Loose letters that were carried privately by steamboats before entering the mails at a post office mandated the adoption of new accounting procedures. This class of mail also required new regulations and new methods of calculating postal rates. These loose letters represent a small percentage of the letters carried by water, most of which were carried in closed bags and therefore lack distinguishing markings. This exhibit is the first to present a comprehensive interpretation of the post office operations, and it presents new information not previously known to collectors about the postal laws and instructions that governed the rating of early steamboat mail. These new discoveries reflect intensive study of the original postal artifacts, census mining and extensive use of new resources available via the internet.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The *North River*, launched on the Hudson River in 1807, became the first commercially successful steamboat in the United States. The owners were awarded a contract to carry mail in 1815, and by 1842 the number of loose letters carried by steamboat on the Hudson River reached a point that route agents were needed. The route agents processed and sorted for onward transmission the loose letters picked up from wharf boxes along the route. These loose letters were essentially “late mails” that could be dropped at the dock after the post office mail bags had been sealed.

THE POST OFFICE BLUEPRINT: Although there are occasional anomalies and special exceptions that are noted throughout the exhibit, the overall scheme for handling loose steamboat letters on New York waterways was established by the Post Office Acts of 1810 and 1815. The key provisions were:

Postmasters receiving loose letters of domestic origin from steamboats were to pay the steamboat master two cents per letter. This applied to steamboats without a mail carrying contract as well as for loose letters carried by contract carrier outside locked mail bags. Postal charges were determined in the same manner as if conveyed by land and did not reflect the boat fee, but rather were based on the distance between the point the letter was picked up by the steamboat and the final destination. The port of entry postmaster had to account for the boat fee paid and reconcile his quarterly accounts with certifications filed by the steamboat masters. These practices evolved over time, as illustrated throughout the exhibit.

EXHIBIT STRUCTURE: The waterways are ordered as shown at right.

- The waterway is listed at the top of each page. Each waterway section is organized by port of entry and further by date. Route Agent service, if applicable, is at the end of each chapter.
- Lined boxes of text at the top of certain pages explain the significance of the markings and uses shown.
- The bold sub-headers at upper left identify the port of entry and the dates. Those at right indicate the type of markings shown.
- Boldface statements describe important items, such as the degree of rarity based on the exhibitor’s census records and experience.
- Italicized text explains key postal laws and instructions issued by local postmasters and the Postmaster General.

<p>Hudson River Lake Champlain Long Island Sound Lake Erie Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Oswegatchie River Seneca Lake Skaneateles Lake New York's East River</p>
--



HUDSON RIVER MAIL



New York led the world in the development of commercially viable steamboats and the Hudson River served as the proving ground. The North River (enrolled by Livingston and Fulton as North River Steamboat of Clermont) was launched in 1807. She was partially rebuilt for the 1808 season when she commenced a regular operating schedule between New York and Albany. The commercial success of North River led Livingston and Fulton to commission three additional steamboats in 1809.

The Post Office Acts of 1810 and 1815 established the overall scheme for handling loose letters (mail not received in closed bags under contract with the Post Office) received from steamboats, and the 1823 Post Office Act was the first to declare inland waterways to be postal routes. The first contract to carry mail by steamboat was awarded to Livingston and Fulton in 1815, and this signaled the beginning of a systematic effort to replace stage coach routes with those using steamboats.

Steamboat Mail

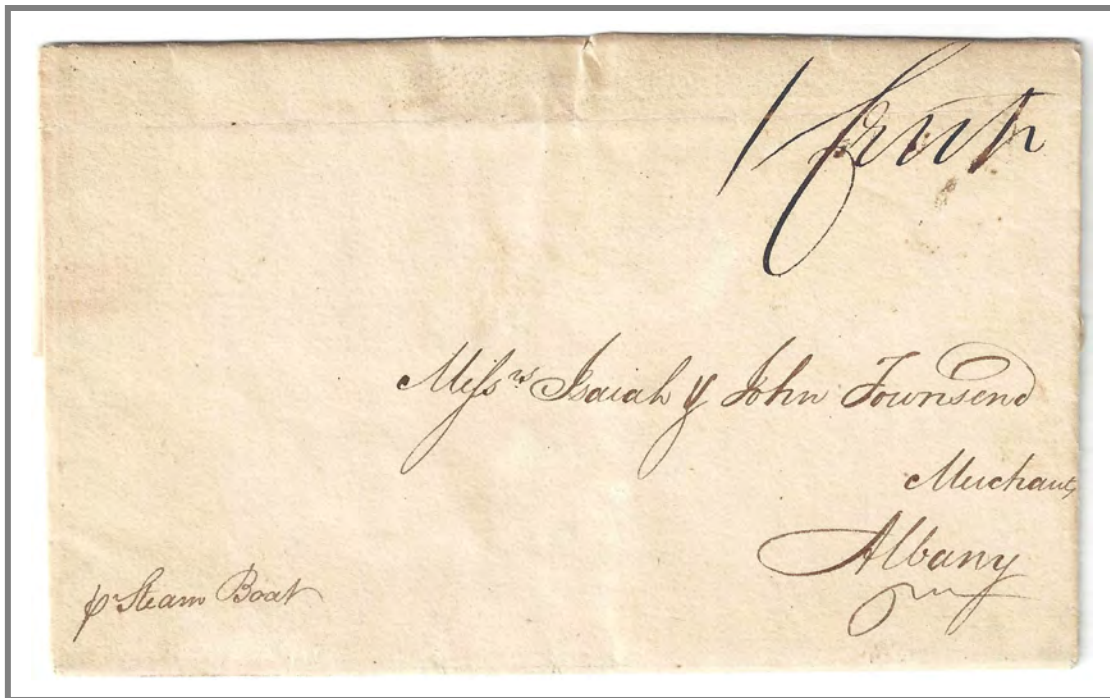
to Albany

Earliest Letter Carried by Steamboat in the United States

New York 1st Oct. 1808



*The North River
Steam-Boat,
SAMUEL WISWALL, MASTER*



(Saturday) 1 October 1808 New York City to Albany, NY, endorsed "pr Steam Boat" carried on the steamboat North River, the world's first steam-powered, commercial vessel entered mails at Albany as a drop letter with "1 Cent" postage due the earliest reported letter carried by steamboat on the Hudson River

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1811

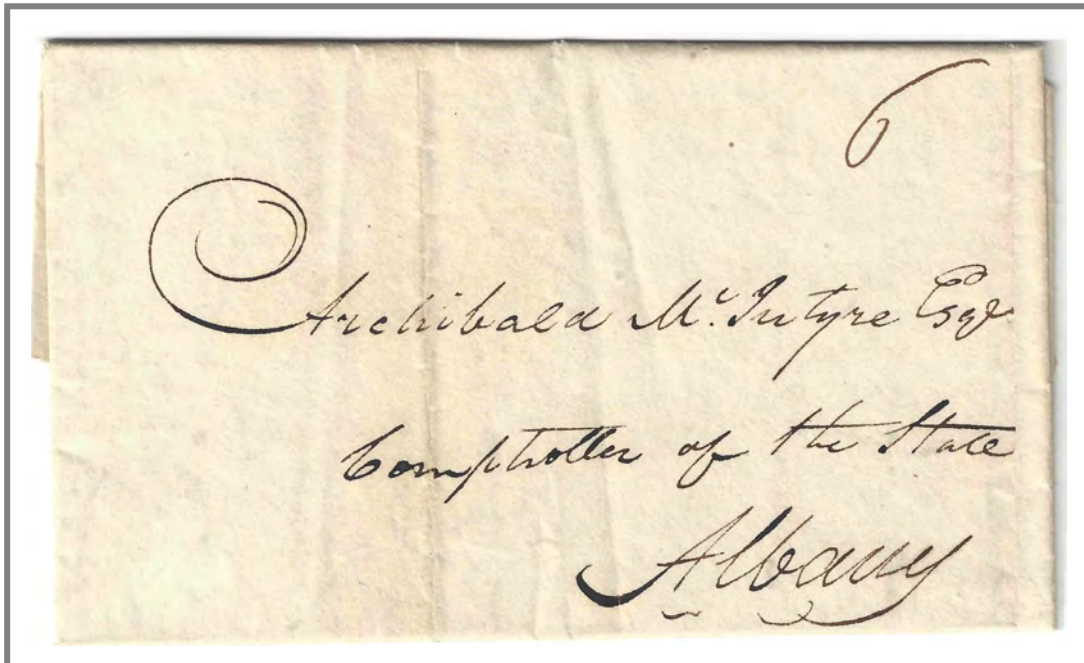
Entry as Ship Letter

Under the Postal Act of 2 March 1799, letters carried by ship to a seaport were to be assessed postage at the rate of 6¢ for local delivery at the port of entry or, if addressed beyond the port, the regular postage from the port of entry to the destination plus a 2¢ ship fee. Both New York City and Albany, by nature of their water being tidal, were seaports. The earliest letters carried by steamboat were therefore subject to the ship letter rules under the 1799 Act.

(Saturday) 27 April 1811 New York City to Albany carried by steamboat Car of Neptune entered mails at Albany with 6¢ due as a ship letter for port of entry delivery

Letter of Benj. De Witt suggests a steamboat jaunt from Albany to New York and includes:

If you come down by next Wednesday's Steam Boat, you may no doubt transact the business before Saturday so as to return to Albany in five days after you leave it. This will not occupy much of your time and it will be a very pleasant jaunt.



STEAM BOAT NOTICE.

THE public are informed that the Steam Boat **CAR OF NEPTUNE**, captain *Roorbach*, will leave New York for Albany on Saturday the 23d instant at 5 o'clock in the afternoon precisely.

Arrangement for the season will be as follows, until a third boat is completed which is now building, viz.

The Car of Neptune will leave New York every Saturday afternoon at 5 o'clock, and Albany every Wednesday morning at half past 8 o'clock.

The North River Steam Boat will leave New York every Tuesday afternoon at 5 o'clock, and Albany every Saturday morning at half past 8 o'clock.

N B A letter box will in future be kept at Mr VANDERVOORT'S corner of Courtland & Greenwich streets, for the reception of letters during the absence of the boats

March 15--2w

This 1811 season advertisement identifies the Car of Neptune as the regular Saturday steamer.

The last paragraph notes a letter box:

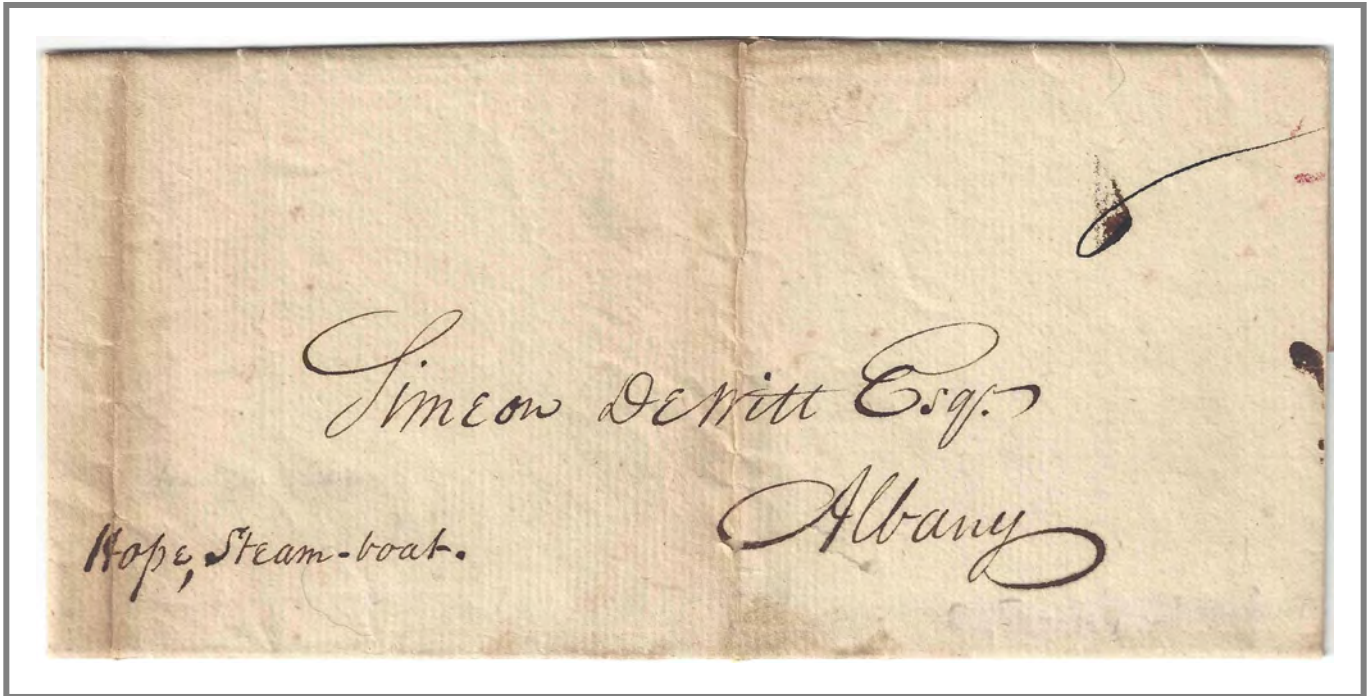
NB - A letter box will in future be kept at Mr. Vandervoort's corner of Courtland & Greenwich streets, for the reception of letters during the absence of the boats.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

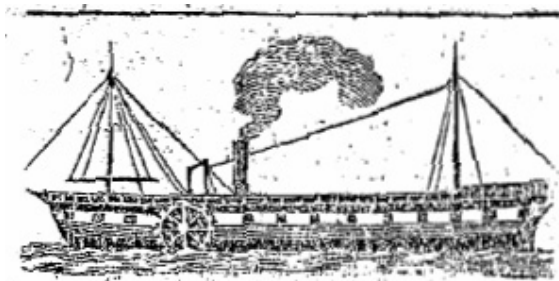
Albany, 1811

Entry as Ship Letter

Opposition Line Steamboat Hope



(Wednesday) 18 September 1811 New York City to Albany, endorsed "Hope, Steam Boat"
carried by Albany Co. steamboat Hope
entered mails at Albany with 6¢ due as a ship letter for port of entry delivery
the only reported example



THE ALBANY STEAMBOATS Hope and Perseverance.

THE Hope, capt. BUNKER, leaves New-York every Wednesday morning, at 9 o'clock, and Albany every Saturday morning at the same hour.

The PERSEVERANCE, capt. SHERMAN, will leave New-York every Saturday morning at 9 o'clock, and Albany every Wednesday morning at the same hour, through the season.

The boats will lie at the foot of Liberty-street in New-York, and in front of the Eagle tavern at Albany.

August 21, 1811. tf

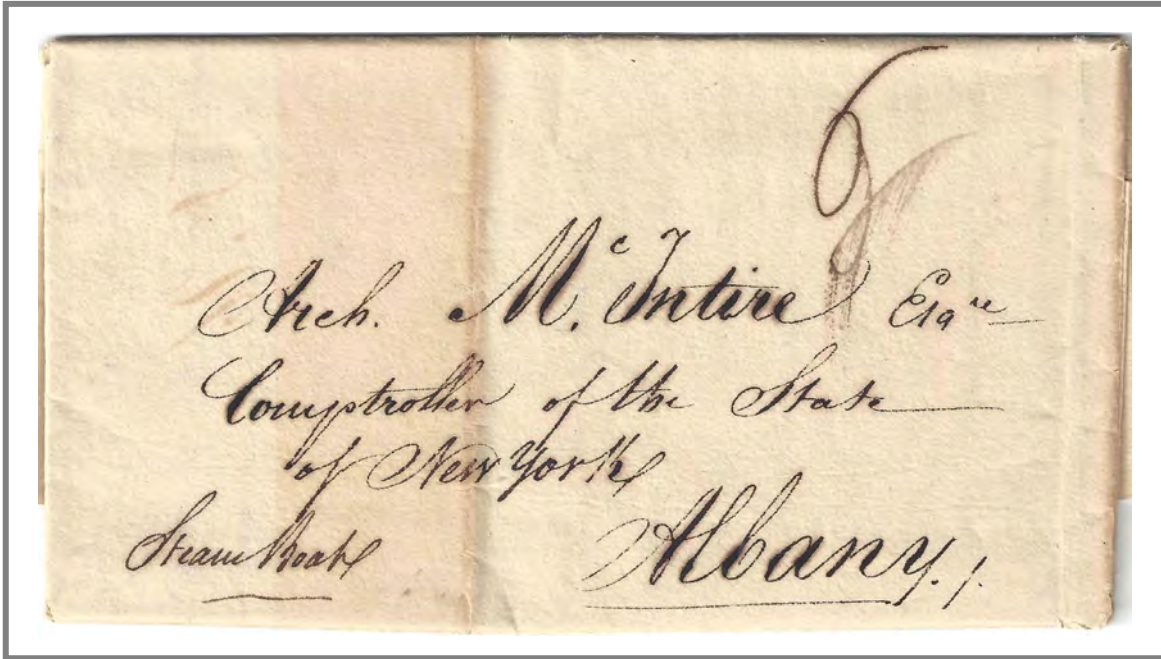
The Albany Company commenced running their opposition line steamboat Hope on the Hudson River in June 1811. This August 1811 advertisement includes both of their new steamboats, Hope and Perseverance. They only operated this one season as Fulton's North River Line quickly brought a successful suit against them.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1811

Entry as Ship Letter

A letter carried by Fulton's steamboat Car of Neptune.



(Saturday) 28 October 1811 New York City to Albany, endorsed "Steam Boat" by sender carried by steamboat Car of Neptune entered mails at Albany with 6¢ due as a ship letter for port of entry delivery

STEAM BOATS.
North River steam boat, lies at Courtlandt street wharf.*
Car of Neptune, steam boat lies at Courtlandt street wharf.*
Hope, steam boat, lies at the foot of Liberty street.
Perseverance, steam boat lies at the foot of Liberty street.
Raritan steam boat, for Amboy and New Brunswick lies at steam boat wharf Battery.

* These are the Boats of Mr. Fulton, the inventor, and first who introduced the use of Steam in Nautical purposes. Ed. P.

This 1811 notice lists the two opposition line steamers, Hope and Perseverance, as well as the North River Line steamers, North River and Car of Neptune (denoted with asterisks).

* These are the Boats of Mr. Fulton, the inventor, and first who introduced the use of Steam in Nautical purposes.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1812 / 1813

Ship Handstamps



(Monday) 6 July 1812 New York City, via Albany, to Vergennes, VT, endorsed "pr Steam"
9 July entered mails at Albany with "SHIP" and 14½¢ due (12½¢ rate plus 2¢ ship fee)
carried on the steamboat Car of Neptune



(Friday) 26 November 1813 New York City, via Albany, to Cooperstown, NY
30 November entered mails at Albany with "SHIP" and 12¢ due (10¢ rate plus 2¢ ship fee)
carried on the steamboat Paragon

For the 1812 and 1813 seasons, with the North River Line monopoly re-established, the scheduled departures from New York City were: Paragon (Saturdays), Car of Neptune (Tuesdays), and the North River (Thursdays).

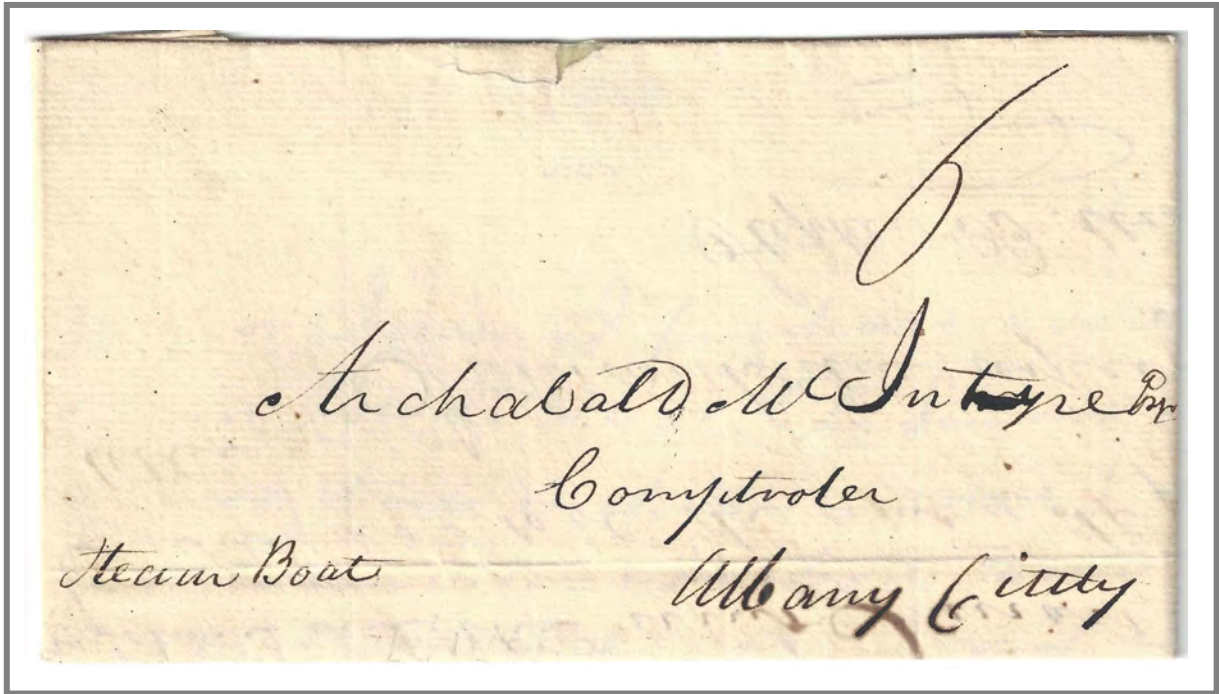
HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1814

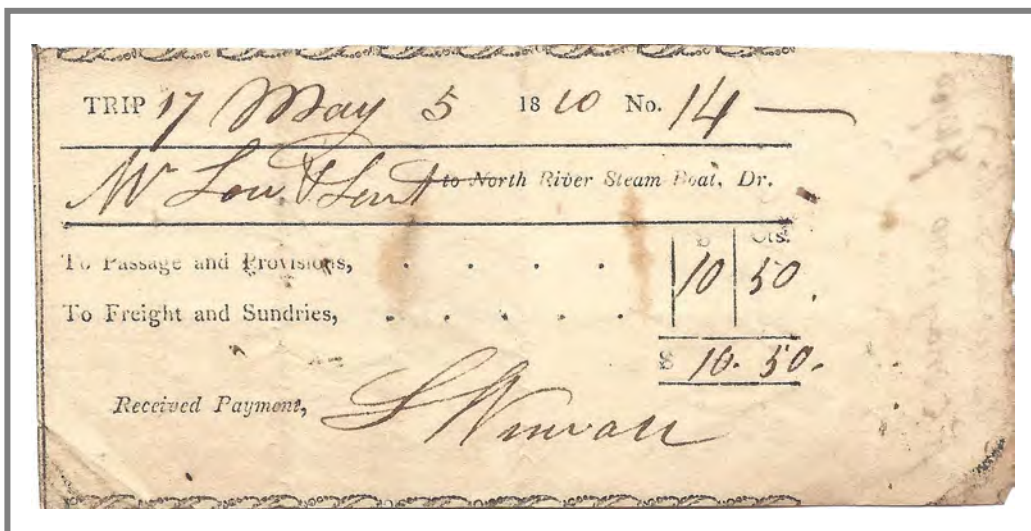
Entry as Ship Letter

Fulton's first commercially successful steamer, The North River, was retired without publicity after the 14 July 1814 trip to Albany.

New York 14 July 1814



(Thursday) 14 July 1814 New York City to Albany, endorsed "Steam Boat" by sender entered mails at Albany with 6¢ due as a ship letter for port of entry delivery carried on the last trip of the steamboat North River



5 May ticket for passage and provisions for trip #17, in 1810 on the North River steamboat ticket for Mr. Louis Hunt is signed by Captain Samuel Wiswall

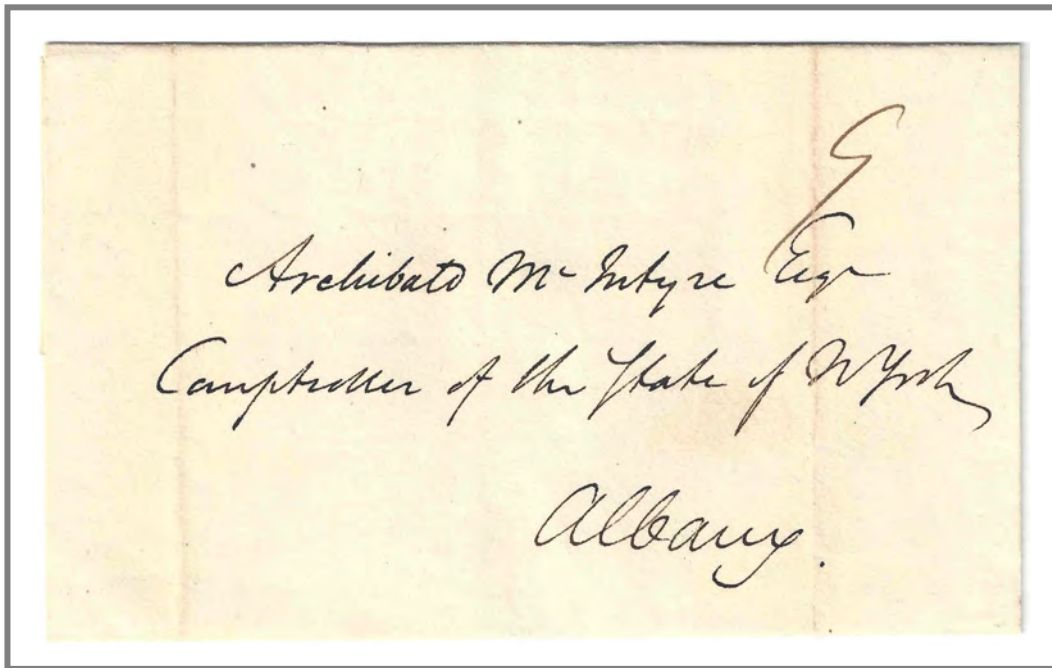
HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1815

Last Day Ship Letter

The period of ship mail usages on the Hudson River ended on 15 April 1815. A post office contract was awarded to The North River Steamboat Company (The Fulton Line) and on 15 April 1815 contract mail service by steamers between Albany and New York City commenced.

Last Day Non-Contract Steamboat Service
Last Day Ship Rate on the Hudson River



(Friday) 14 April 1815 New York City to Albany
entered mails at Albany with 9¢ War surcharge rate due for port of entry delivery

Messrs. Websters and Skimmers,

A subscriber wishes to be informed, through the medium of your paper, whether the late law laying an additional postage on letters, &c. extends to Ship Letters; if not under what authority the Post Master exacts 50 per cent advance upon all letters brought by the Steam Boat, which come under the denomination of Ship Letters, and are so marked at the Post-Office. C. K.

This 23 March 1815 notice published in the *Albany Gazette* questions why the postmaster is exacting a surcharge on letters received from steamboats that the post office treats the same as ship letters.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

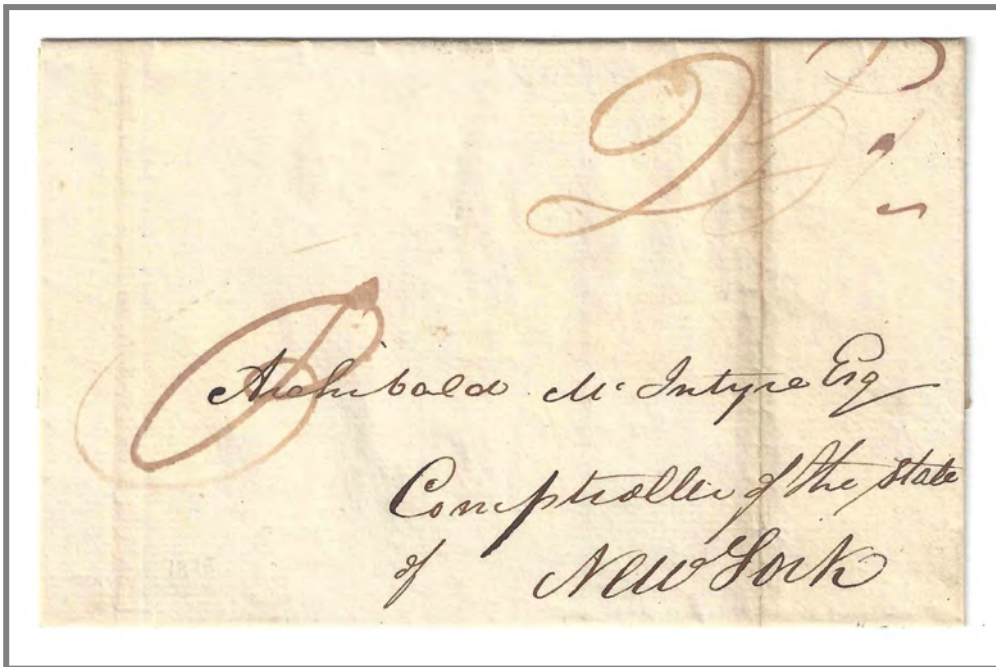
Albany, 1815

Earliest Albany B

The Post Office Act of 30 April 1810 specified how loose letters received from steamboats were to be rated and stated that the postmaster was to pay the master 2¢ for each such letter or packet delivered. It distinguished between letters of domestic and non-domestic origin by specifying that the “commanders of foreign packets,” which were covered under laws applicable to ship mail incoming from other countries, were not to be paid the 2¢ fee.

Instructions issued by Postmaster General Granger on 12 July 1810 specified that letters carried on steamboats were “to be rated in the same manner as if conveyed by land.” As a result, postal charges on steamboat letters were to reflect the distance from the point the letter was picked up and destination. This “origin to destination” standard was intended to mitigate the losses that the Post Office suffered due to application of more favorable ship rates.

Notwithstanding the 1810 Act, letters received from steamboats continued to be rated as incoming ship letters until 1815. The Post Office Act of 27 February 1815 reiterated the requirements of the 1810 Act, and on 15 April 1815, Fulton and Livingston were awarded the first contract to carry mail by steamboat.



After 15 April 1815, all loose letters delivered from steamboats to the Albany post office received the manuscript “B” notation, which served as the postmaster’s mark of accounting and evidence of the “origin to destination” postal rate.

The Earliest Reported Letter with “B” (Boat) Postal Marking and The Earliest Reported Letter Rated Based on Origin to Destination Land Rate

(Wednesday) 24 May 1815 New York City to Albany, carried on the Car of Neptune entered mails at Albany with “B” and correct 25½¢ War surcharge rate based on the full distance rate between New York and Albany, not as a drop rate

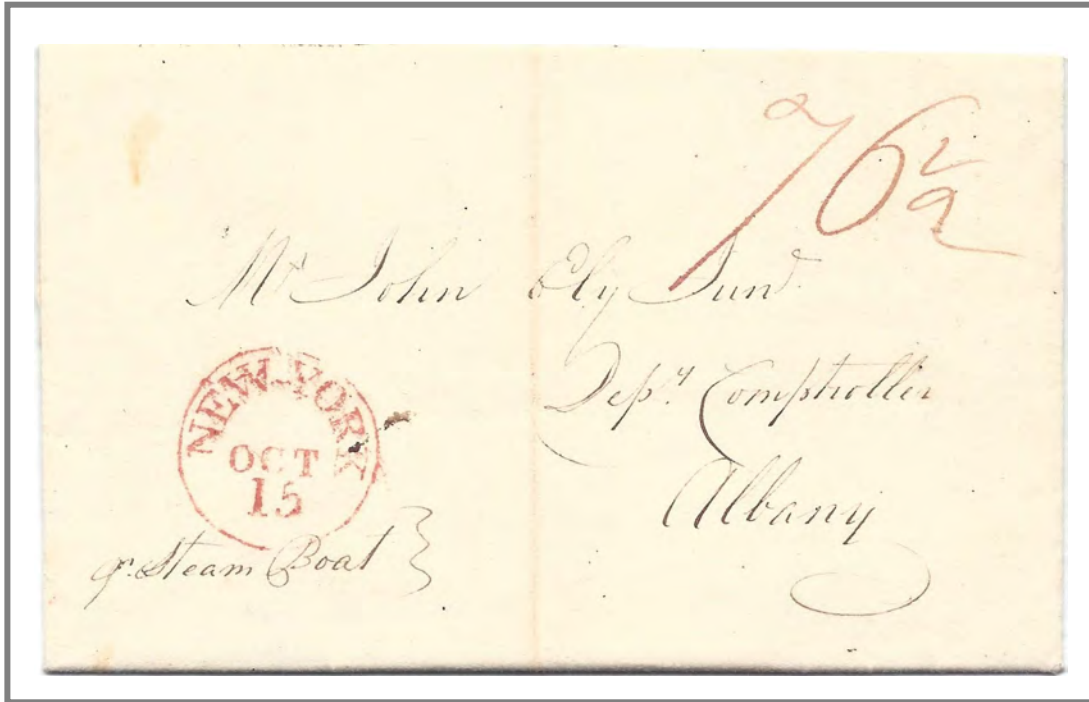
For the 1815 season, three of Fulton’s steamboats made four weekly trips from New York to Albany. The steamers used were the Paragon, Car of Neptune and the Richmond. Departures from New York were on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

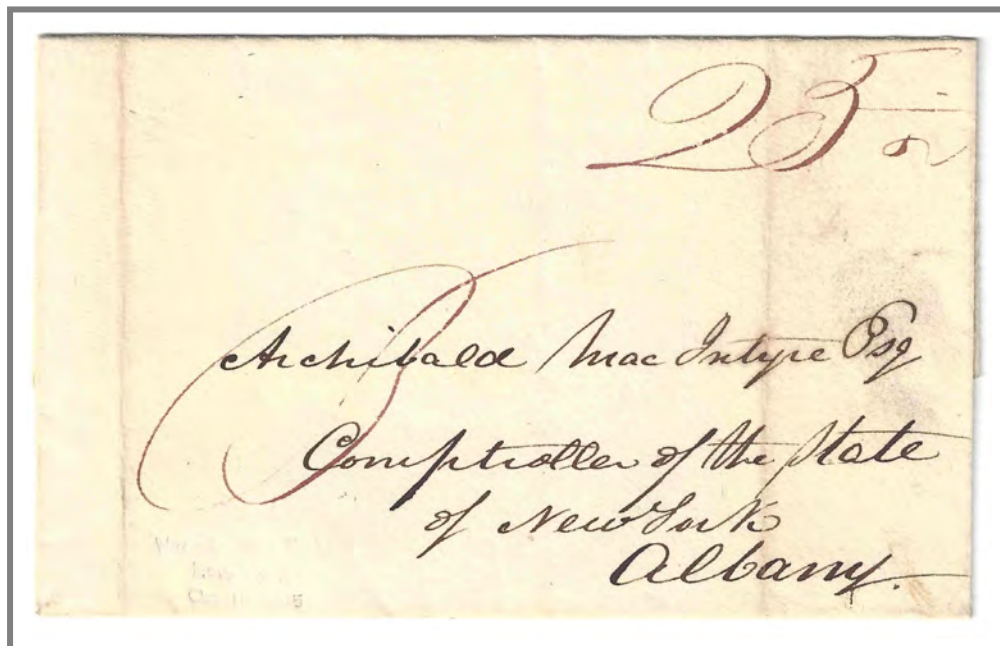
Albany, 1815

Contract Mail / Albany B

Contract mails and loose letters were handled differently. The top letter was delivered into the New York post office with endorsement to be carried by steamboat to Albany. It was postmarked and bagged for carriage as contract mail. The lower cover was delivered directly to the steamboat, probably by a wharf agent, and was carried on a contract steamboat but as a loose letter.



15 October 1815 New York City to Albany, triple letter endorsed for contract steamboat mail entered mails at New York with triple rate 76½¢ due War surcharge rate (150 to 300 miles)



11 October 1815 New York City to Albany, single letter entered mails at Albany with "B" and 25½¢ due War surcharge rate (150 to 300 miles)

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1818

Newburgh Agent

The manuscript "NewBurgh" endorsement was applied by the wharf agent at Newburgh to indicate where the loose letter was given to the master of the steamboat. When letter arrived at Albany, postage was based on land distance from Newburgh.

NewBurgh



(Saturday) 12 September 1818 Newburgh, NY to Albany, by steamboat *Fire Fly*
manuscript "NewBurgh" applied by wharf agent
entered mails at Albany with "B" and 12½¢ due (80 to 150 miles)
two known examples of Newburgh wharf agent endorsement

postscript to the letter, "The team is drawing up the plank from the dock"



HUDSON RIVER MAIL

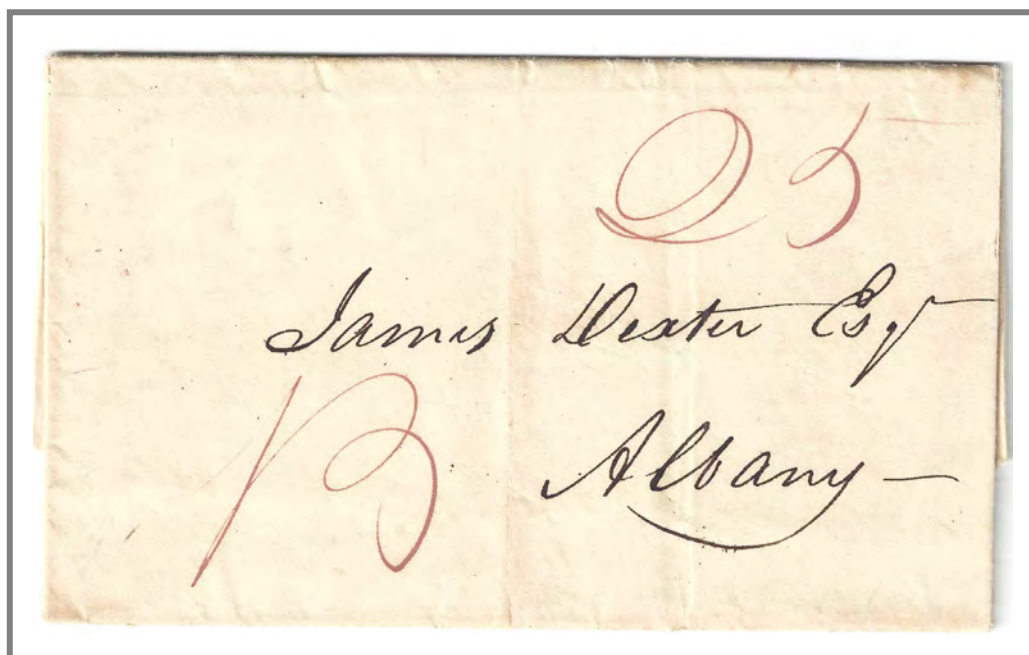
Albany, 1823 / 1824

Albany B

On 22 January 1821 Postmaster General Meigs announced that the mail distance between New York and Albany had been recalculated and found to be under 150 miles and that postage hereinafter be reduced. This resulted in the reduction of the postal rate from 18½ cents to 12½ cents for a single sheet letter.



30 June 1824 New York City, single letter to Albany
entered mails at Albany with "B" and 12½¢ due (80 to 150 miles)

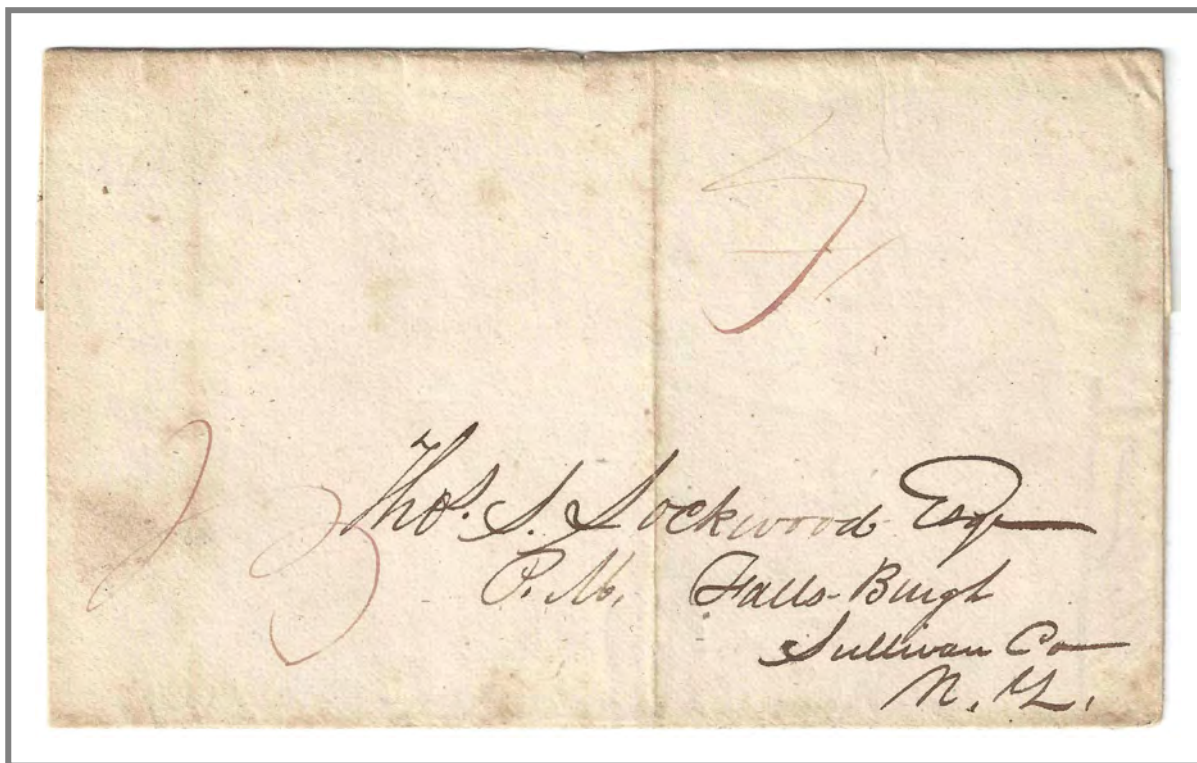


11 September 1823 New York City, letter plus enclosure to Albany
entered mails at Albany with "B" and double rate postage 25¢ due (80 to 150 miles)

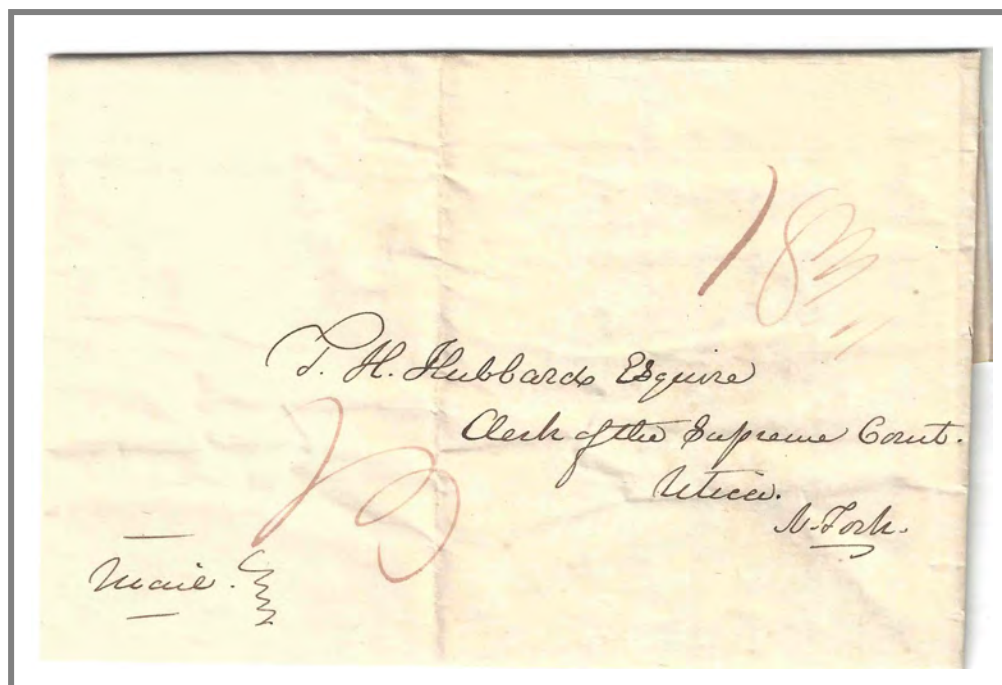
HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1827

Albany B



30 November 1827 New York City to the Postmaster at Fallsburgh, NY
entered mails at Albany with "B" and "F" (free of postage for a single letter to a postmaster)



24 May 1827 New York City single letter to Utica, NY
entered mails at Albany with "B" and single rate postage 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ due (150 to 400 miles)

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1829 / 1832

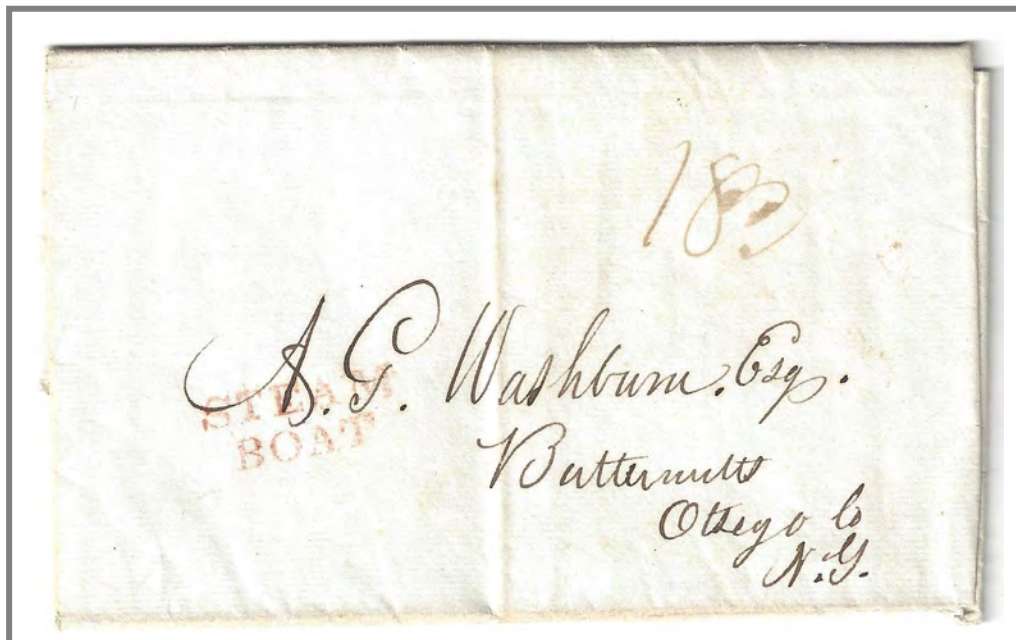
STEAM BOAT

The "STEAM BOAT" handstamp was introduced in 1829 at Albany to replace the manuscript "B" marking. The earliest reported use is 8 May 1829 and it is known used into the 1860s.

STEAM
BOAT



25 July 1829 New York City single letter to Albany
entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 12½¢ (80 to 150 miles)



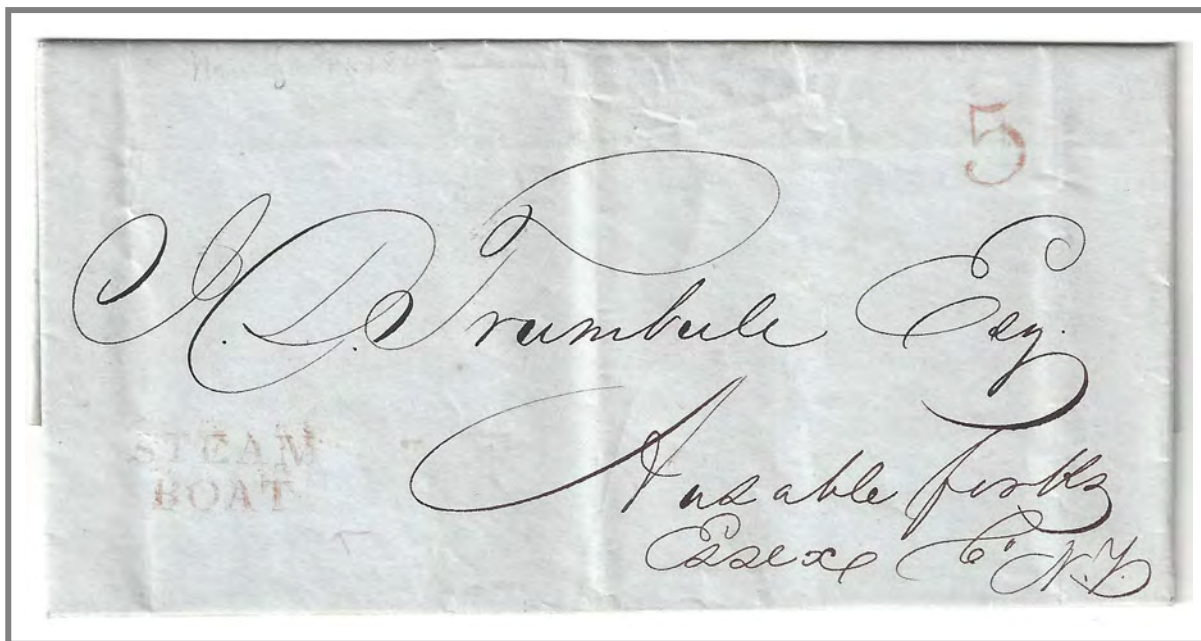
12 October 1832 New York City single letter to Butternutts, NY
entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 18¾¢ due (150 to 400 miles)

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

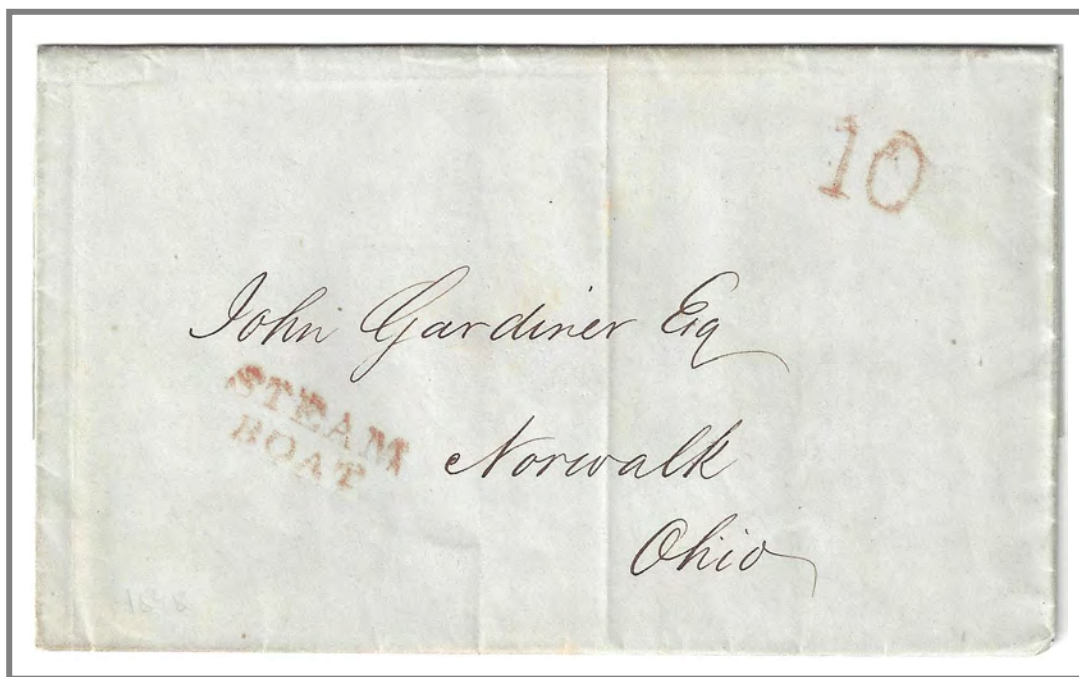
Albany, 1848

STEAM BOAT

From 1 July 1845 the postal rates from single weight letters, to one-half ounce, were reduced to five cents for distance under 300 miles, and to ten cents if over 300 miles.



19 August 1848 New York City, via Albany, to Ausable Forks, NY
entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 5¢ due rate (under 300 miles)



13 April 1848 New York City, via Albany, to Norwalk, OH
entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 10¢ due rate (over 300 miles)

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Albany, 1850s

STEAM BOAT

From 1 July 1851 the postal rates from single weight letters, to one-half ounce, were reduced to three cents for distance under 3,000 miles.



14 August 1851 New York City, via Albany, to Aurora, NY, prepaid 3¢ orange brown 1851 issue entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, prepaid 3¢ rate (under 3,000 miles)



ca. 1853 New York City to Albany, prepaid 3¢ 1851 issue entered mails at Albany with "STEAM BOAT" handstamps in black

embossed corner card of H. M. Cool, Glens Falls Line (&) Cool's Six Day Line Canal Boats

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

New York, 1814

Steam Boat

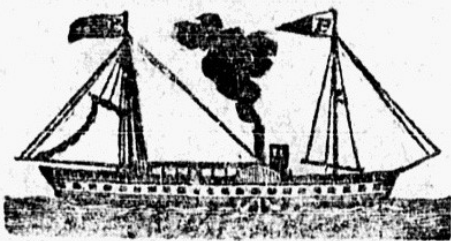
Early Steamboat Post Office Entry

Steam Boat

This earliest manuscript "Steam Boat" marking used at New York City is known in two examples. Both are 1814 uses and were treated as ship letters.



ca. 1814 Poughkeepsie, NY, via New York City, to Fort Richmond, Staten Island entered US mails at New York as a steamboat letter with manuscript "Steam Boat" red manuscript 6¢ due as ship rate for port of entry delivery
two known examples used in 1814



Hudson River Steam-Boats.

For the information of the Public.
The PARAGON, Capt. Wiswall, will leave New-York every Saturday afternoon, at 5 o'clock.
The CAR OF NEPTUNE, Capt. Roorbach, will leave New-York every Tuesday afternoon, at 5 o'clock.
The NORTH RIVER, Capt. Bartholomew, will leave New-York every Thursday afternoon, at 5 o'clock.

The 1814 advertisement at left lists the three Hudson River steamboats in operation during the 1814 season, The Paragon, the Car of Neptune, and the North River.

At this date near the end of the War of 1812, a young Cornelius Vanderbilt was ferrying goods between the dock at Fort Richmond, Staten Island, and New York City. The letter-paper has a patriotic "eagle and shield" watermark.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

New York, 1823

Earliest STEAM BOAT

The Post Office Act of 3 March 1823 formally established that all waters on which steamboats regularly pass from port to port, including coastal waterways, were to be considered post roads. Immediately following the 1823 Act, Postmaster General Meigs issued instructions that specified how to handle mails received from steamboats, referencing and reinforcing the importance of enforcing the provisions set forth in the 1815 Act.

STEAM BOAT



13 May 1823 Albany to New York City
entered mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, 12½¢ postage due
the earliest reported use of any steamboat handstamp in the United States

BY THE MAILS.
Charleston, May 6.—The following letter has been received by the Post Master of this city, from the Post Master General:
General Post Office, March 4, 1823.
Sir—The public having made arrangements for transmitting correspondence along the sea coast, as well as through the country, at great expense, found itself a loser on that account, in consequence of the numerous establishments of steam boats.
To prevent these losses and to subject all letters and packets of letters conveyed by steam boats, to the regular postage, Congress, by an act passed on the 3d inst. have established all routes on which those boats pass, as post roads.
You will therefore charge all letters which you receive or send by steam boats, with postage according to the distance they are conveyed, at the same rate as if sent through the mail by land.
The account of steam boat letters should be kept by itself, and may be kept on the common blanks for ship letters received, merely substituting the words 'steam boat,' for ship.
It is important particularly on account of the state of the receipts and expenditures of the department, that the act of Feb. 27, 1815, be duly enforced and carried into effect, (see pages 23 and 24 of the Post Office laws) and I hope you will not fail to prosecute should the law be violated.
Yours, respectfully,
RETURN J. MEIGS,
Post Master General.

This 4 March 1823 circular from the General Post Office was published in Charleston, SC on 6 May. It states in part:

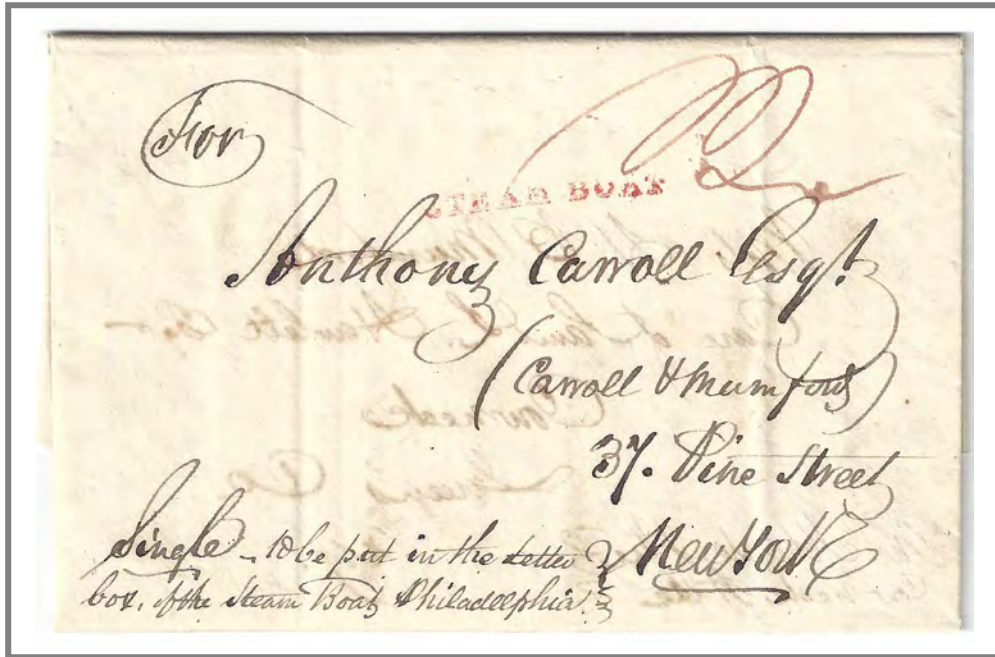
.... [Congress have] established all routes on which those boats [steamboats] pass as post routes. You will therefore charge all letters which you receive or send by steam boats, with postage according to the distance they are conveyed, at the same rates as if sent through the mail by land. The account of steam boat letters should be kept by itself.

Handstamp steamboat markings began to be used almost immediately after the 1823 Act.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

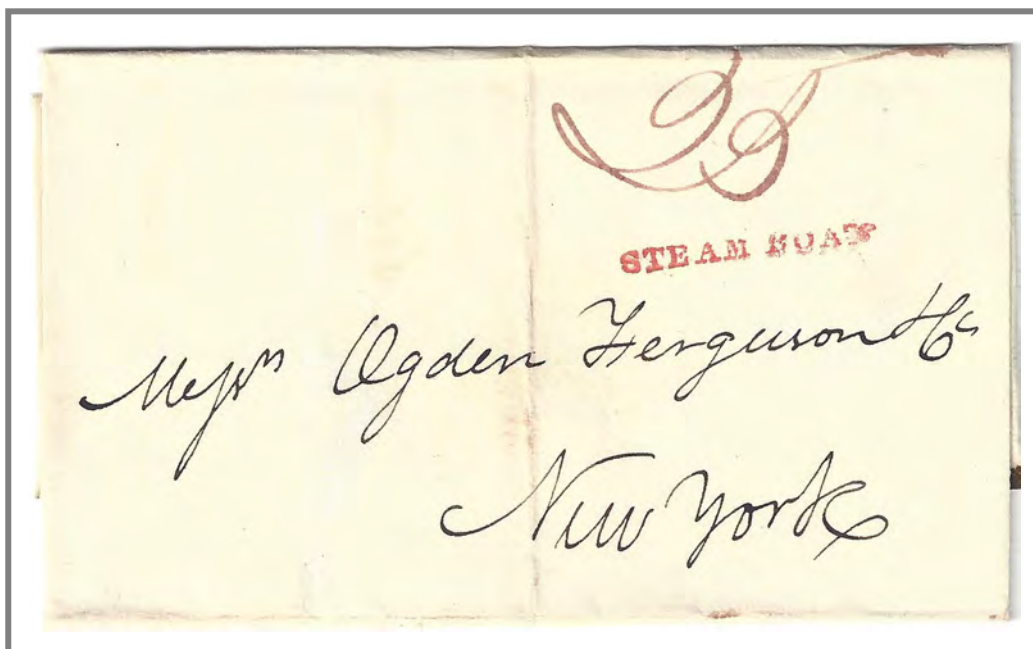
New York, 1830 / 1828

STEAM BOAT



25 August 1830 Schenectady, NY, privately carried to Albany, then to New York City
"to be put in the letter box of the Steam Boat (New) Philadelphia" endorsement
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, 12½¢ postage due

Letter mentions: *I have this day sent onboard the Steam Boat Philadelphia, Capt. George E. Seymour, two baskets of plums for my daughter on Cowneck, Long Island. Immediately on receipt hereof I will thank you to send for them, onboard the Philadelphia, and hand them over to Mr Schenck, the owner and driver of the Hempstead Harbor Stage which leaves New York tomorrow ...*



5 May 1828 Albany double letter to New York City
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, 25¢ postage due

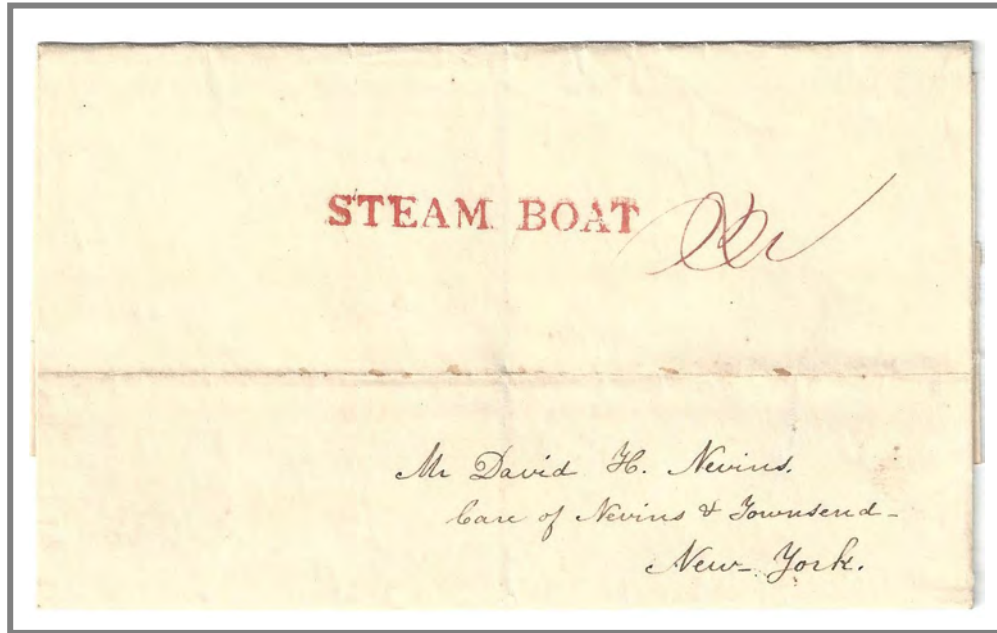
HUDSON RIVER MAIL

New York, 1830 / 1833

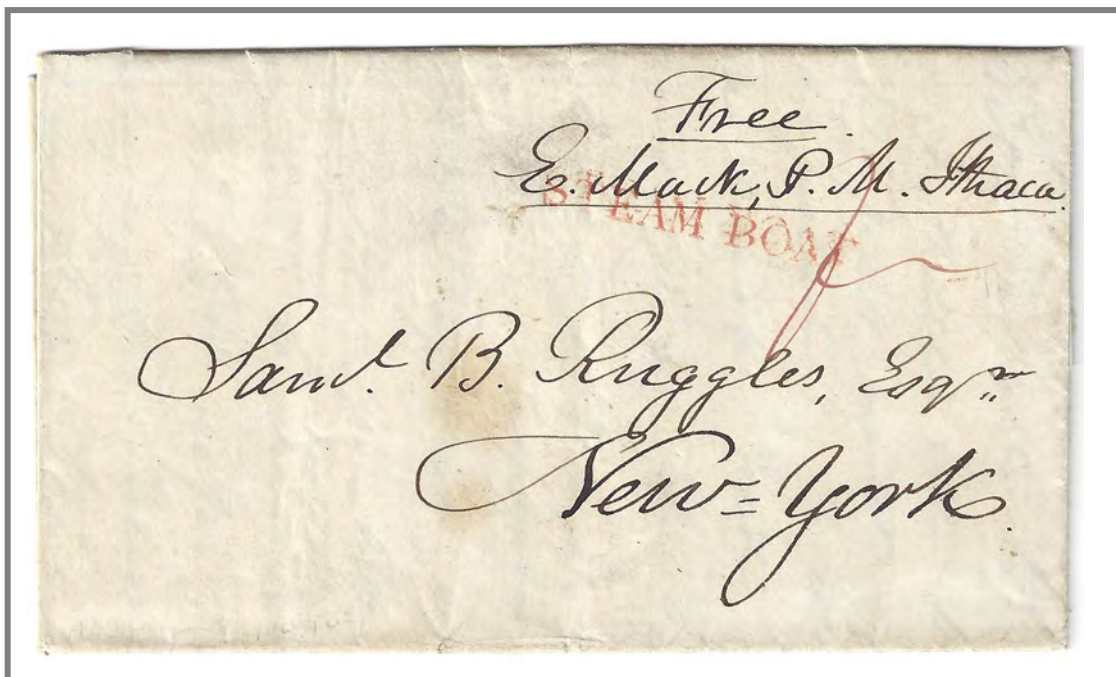
STEAM BOAT

A larger "STEAM BOAT" handstamp was introduced in 1833. Like the earlier marking, it is also known used on mail received from coastal steamers on Long Island Sound.

STEAM BOAT



11 April 1833 Albany to New York City
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, 12½¢ postage due



16 May 1836 Albany to New York City, free frank of Edward Mack, Postmaster of Ithaca, NY
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and manuscript "f"(ree)

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

New York, 1850s

STEAM BOAT

The larger "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, struck in black, continued to be used well into the 1860s. Postal stationery was issued in 1853 to assist in the collection of postage on private mails.

STEAM BOAT

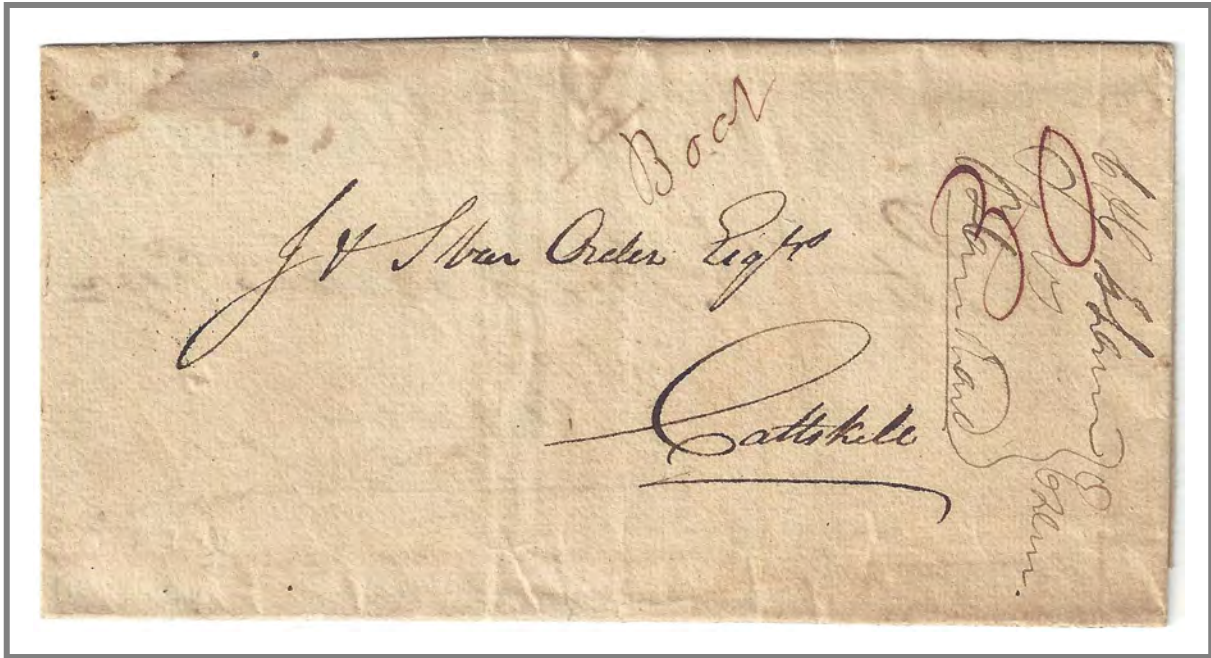


1855 Hudson, NY to New York City, prepaid 3¢ 1851 issue (yellow rose red, pos 17L4)
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp



ca. 1855 Troy to New York City, prepaid 3¢ postal entire
entered the mails at New York with their "STEAM BOAT" handstamp

Boat



ca. 1819 Albany to Catskill, a turned cover that enclosed multiple letters for triple 10¢ rate entered mails at Catskill with their manuscript "Boat" and 30¢ due cover had been turned by addressee, Peter Beekman of Albany the only reported Catskill "Boat" entry marking

Law Agent's Notice.

1st. The gentlemen of the law will furnish their agent, the subscriber, with money to pay their postage, otherwise their letters will be left unopened and unattended to, with the post master in this city.

2d. They will also write their names on the outside of their letters, so that the agent may know whether he has been furnished with means for the above purpose.

To Post Masters.

3d. Post masters will be careful to take postage sufficient for all letters delivered to them for the subscriber, so as not to have them inspected in this office, or weighed, and additional postage thereon added, as the agent will not receive them where any postage is to pay, and the post master in Albany will be compelled to dispose of them as he is directed by law.

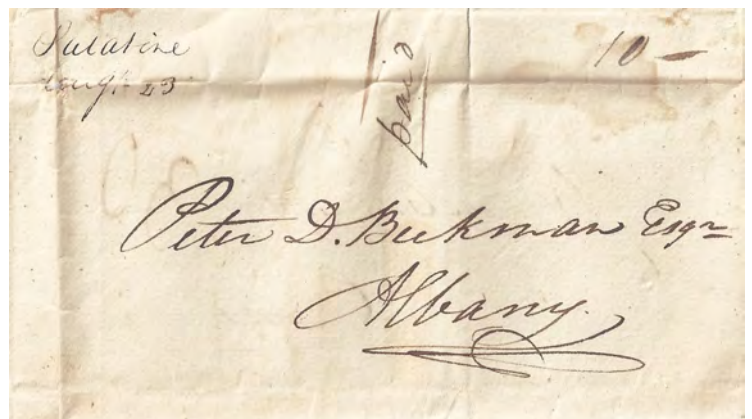
PETER DW. BEEKMAN.

N. B. A letter arrived at the post-office on Sunday evening last, said by the clerks in the office to have come by the steam boat. It has no post office mark—the postage, 3 oz. \$2 22. It is directed to "Peter Dowe Beekman, Esq." Albany The gentleman that has sent it, will be pleased to send money, to enable the agent to take it out, as no credit is allowed at the post office in this city.

Printers throughout the state, will doubtless confer a particular favor on their law customers by inserting the above notice in their respective newspapers.

Albany, Nov. 10, 1819.

N15 d&c1



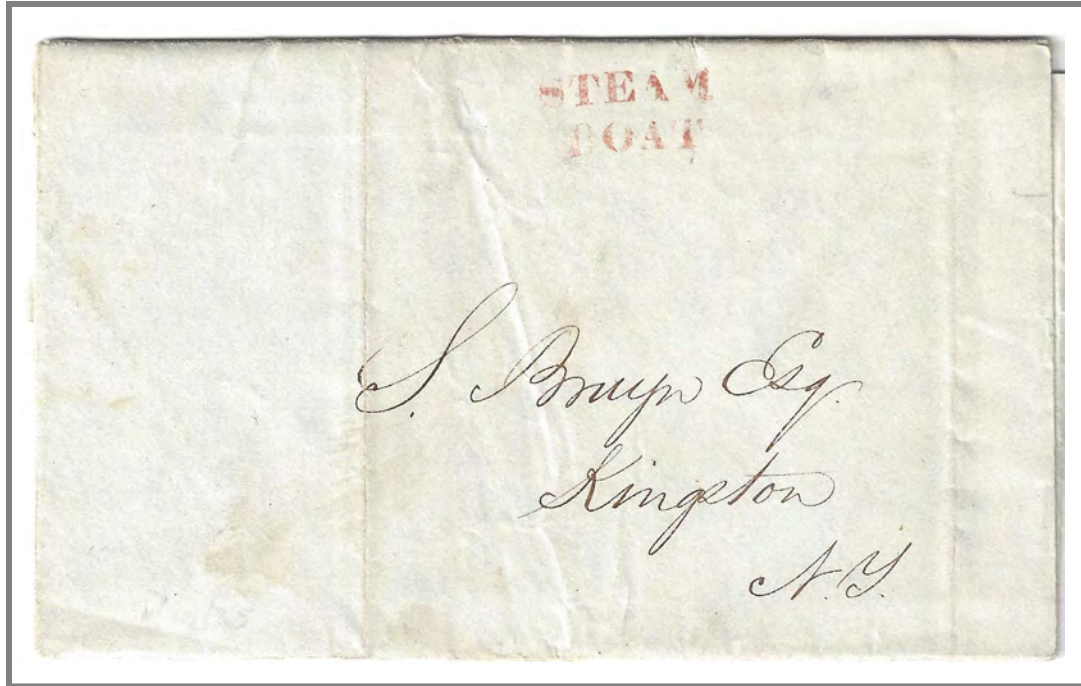
The interior use is addressed to Beekman at Albany. He submitted the "Law Agent's Notice" shown at left to the *Albany Gazette*, in 1819. It complains of letters received by steamboat, with no sender indication, sent with excessive amounts of postage due.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Kingston, 1835 / 1840

STEAM BOAT / St. Boat

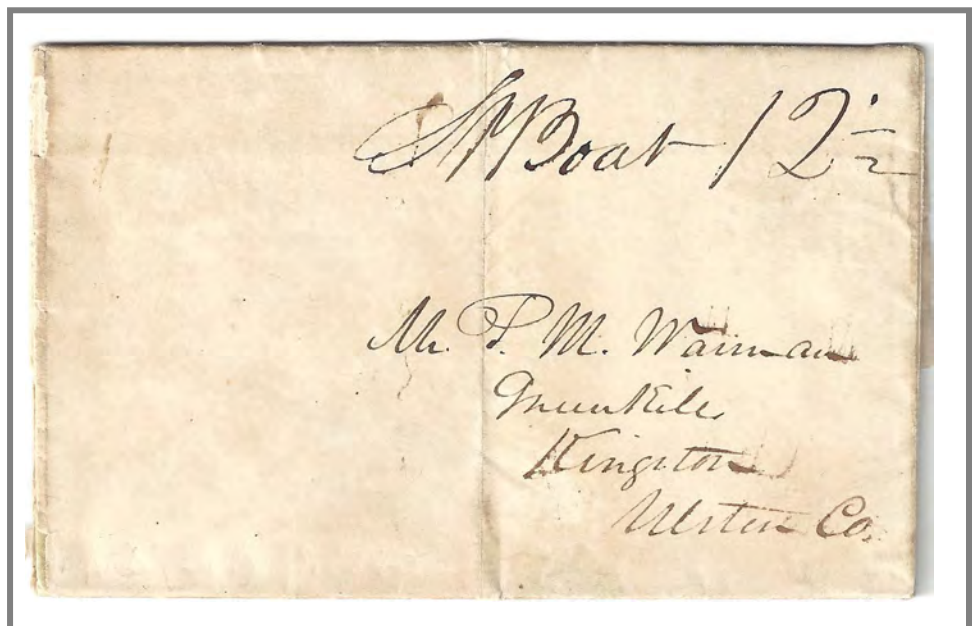
Kingston, New York used several handstamped markings on mail arriving from steamboats prior to 1850. Manuscript markings are known used concurrently.



**STEAM
BOAT**

23 November 1835 New York City to Kingston, "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, not rated
two reported examples of this handstamp

St Boat

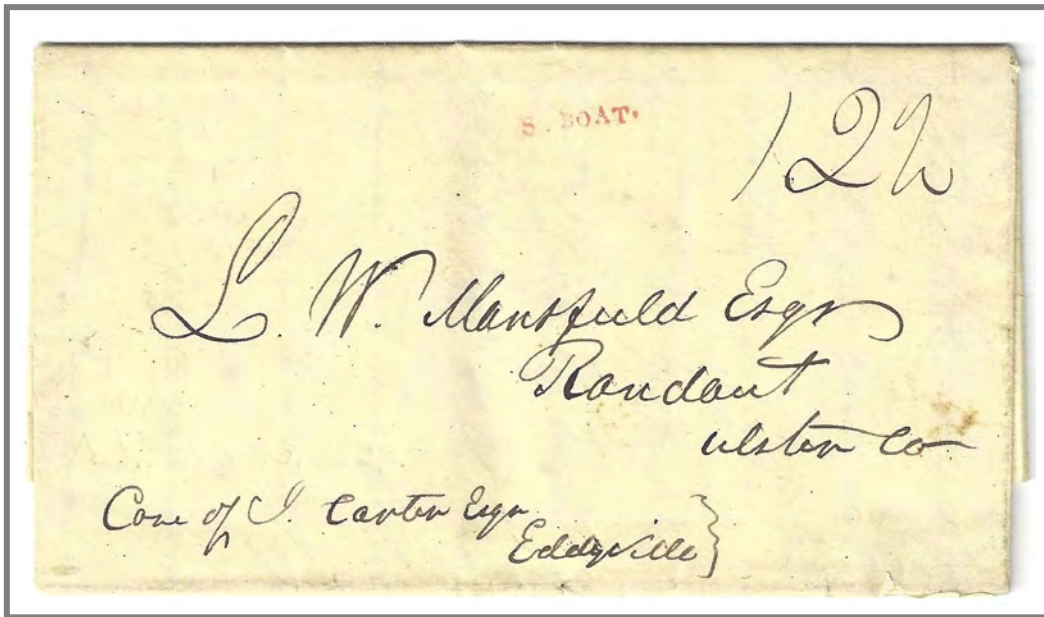


3 July 1840 New York City to Greenkill, Kingston, NY
entered mails at Kingston with their manuscript "St Boat" and 12½¢ due rate (80 to 150 miles)
four reported examples of the Kingston "St Boat" entry marking

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Kingston, 1837 / 1839

S. BOAT



S. BOAT.

13 July 1837 New York City, via Kingston, to Rondout, NY
entered the mails at Kingston with their "S. BOAT" short (2mm) handstamp, 12½¢ due rate
two reported examples of this handstamp

S. BOAT



4 May 1839 New York City to Kingston, NY
entered the mails at Kingston with their "S. BOAT" taller (3mm) handstamp, 12½¢ due rate
fewer than five reported examples of this handstamp

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Kingston, 1842

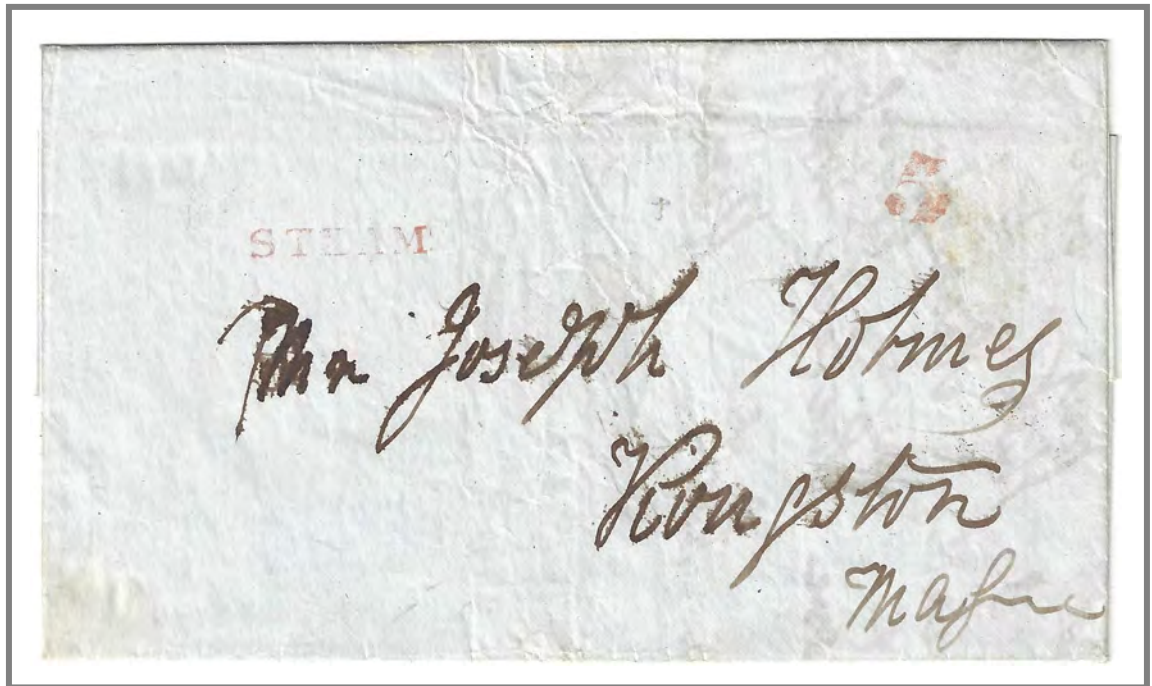
S. BOAT / STEAM



S. BOAT

27 April 1842 New York City to Kingston, NY
entered the mails at Kingston with their "S. BOAT" taller (3mm) handstamp, 12½¢ due rate
fewer than five reported examples of this handstamp

STEAM



14 May 1846 New York City to Kingston, NY
entered the mails at Kingston with their "STEAM" handstamp, 5¢ due rate
two reported examples of this handstamp

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Poughkeepsie, 1839

Poughkeepsie SB

SB 10



18 May 1839 New York City, via Poughkeepsie, to Kingston, NY
entered mails at Poughkeepsie with their manuscript "SB" and 12½¢ due rate (80 to 150 miles)
paid at Kingston with "Ch" charge box notation at foot and 12½ inked out
forwarded to Cohoes, NY with additional 10¢ due (30 to 80 miles)
fewer than four reported examples of the Poughkeepsie "SB" entry marking

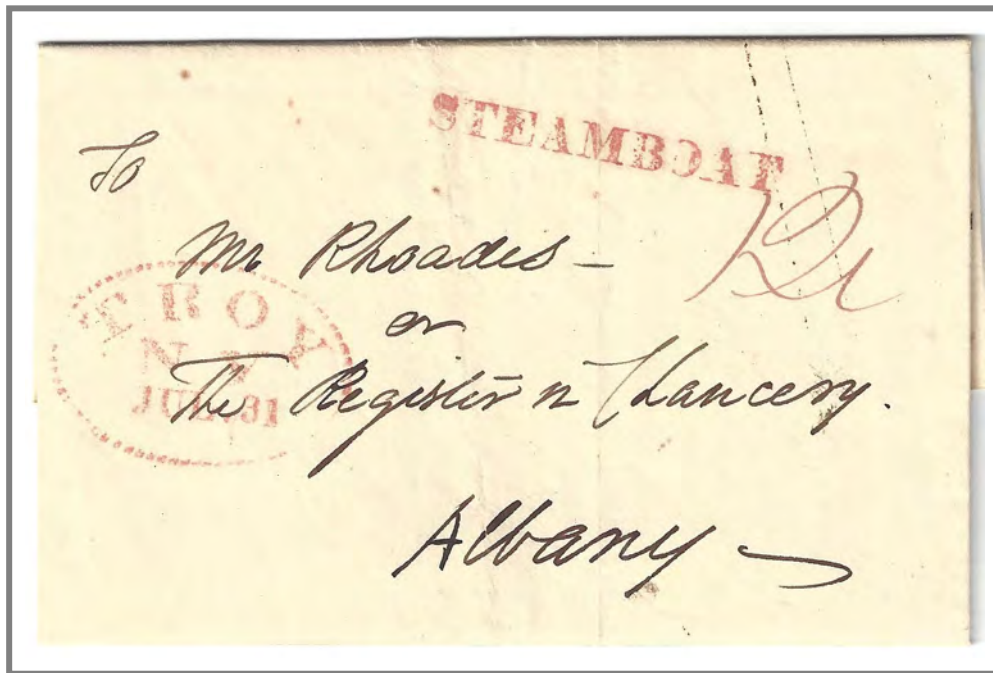
HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Troy, 1842

STEAM BOAT

Prior to the introduction of the boxed "TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT" marking in late 1848, Troy used two different handstamped markings on mail arriving from steamboats. No manuscript markings are reported.

STEAMBOAT



31 July 1842 West Point, NY, via Troy, to Albany entered the mails at Troy with their "STEAMBOAT" handstamp, a postmark and 12½¢ due rate carried on the Morning Line steamboat *Albany* fewer than five reported examples of this handstamp

**MORNING LINE FOR ALBANY, TROY,
AND INTERMEDIATE LANDINGS.**
From the Steamboat Pier, foot of Barclay street.
The new low pressure steamboat TROY,
Captain Gorham, TUESDAY MORNING,
August 2d, at 7 o'clock.
The low pressure steamboat ALBANY, Captain J. G.
Jenkins, MONDAY MORNING, August 1st, at 7 o'clock.
For passage, apply at the Office, foot of Barclay street, or
on board.
Notice—All goods, freight, baggage, bank bills, specie,
or any other kind of property, taken, shipped, or put on
board this boat, must be at the risk of the owners of such
goods, freight, baggage, &c. Jy30

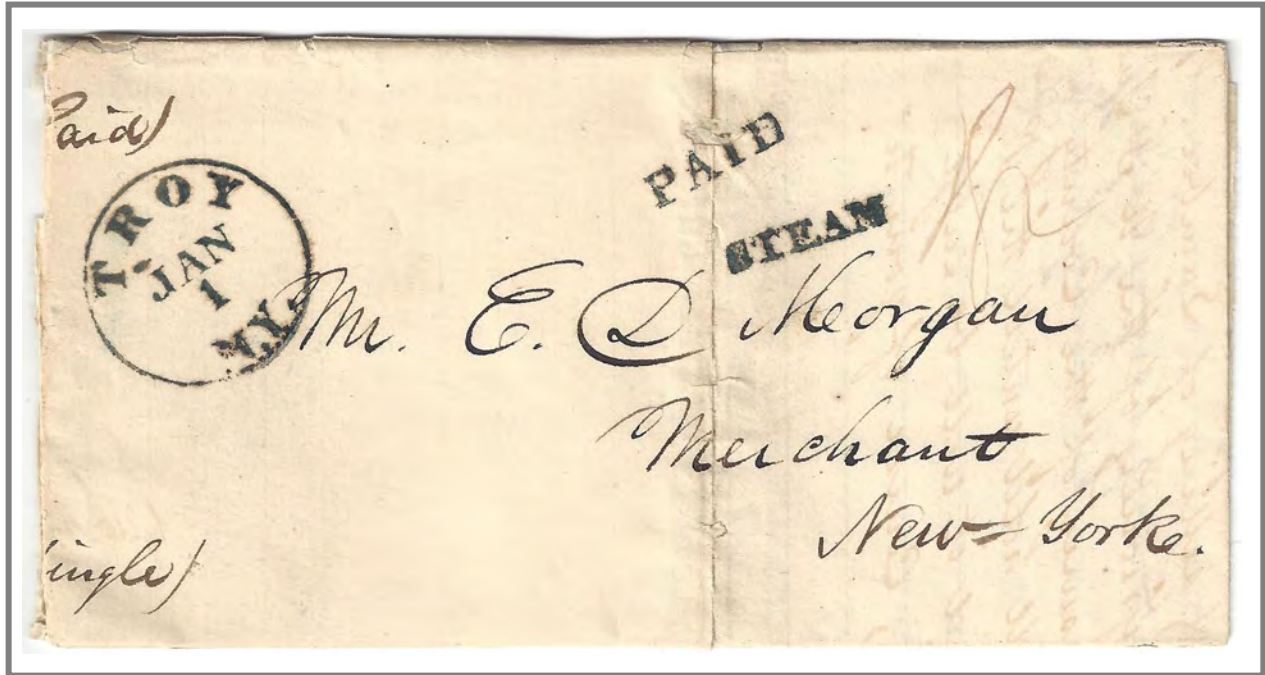
30 July 1842 advertisement listing departure of the steamboat *Albany* from New York to Troy with intermediate stops which included West Point.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Troy, 1840 to 1843

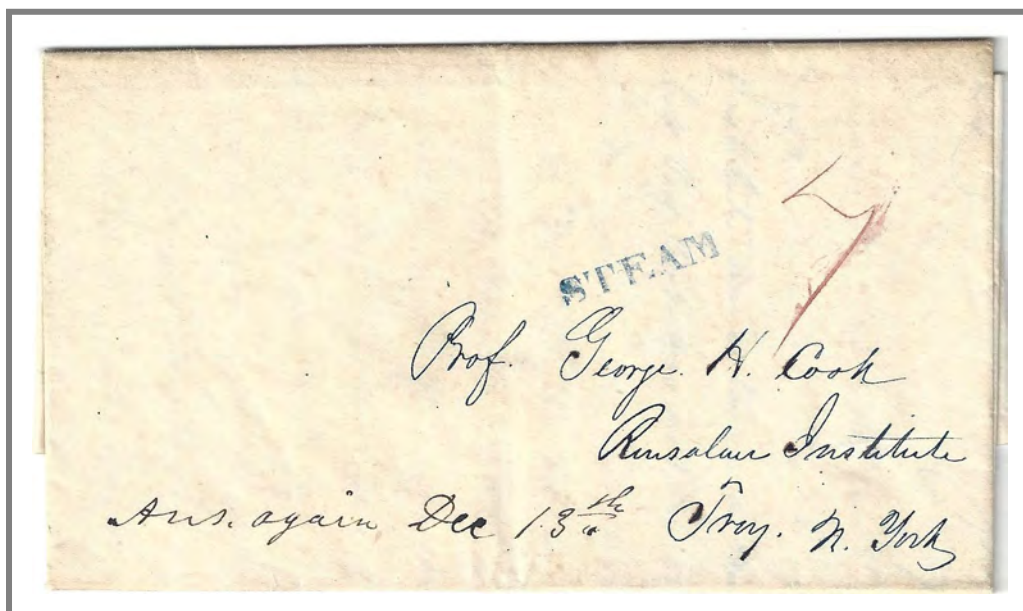
STEAM

STEAM



1 January 1840 Troy to New York City, contract mail use from Troy
Troy postmark, "PAID" handstamp and their "STEAM" handstamp all struck in very dark green
18¾¢ due rate, apparently the "STEAM" handstamp was here used inadvertently on contract mail
only reported example of this handstamp in dark green

STEAM



3 November 1845 New York City to Troy
entered the mails at Troy with their "STEAMBOAT" handstamp (as above example but in blue)
manuscript 7¢ due rate, 5¢ rate for under 300 miles but with a 2¢ fee added

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

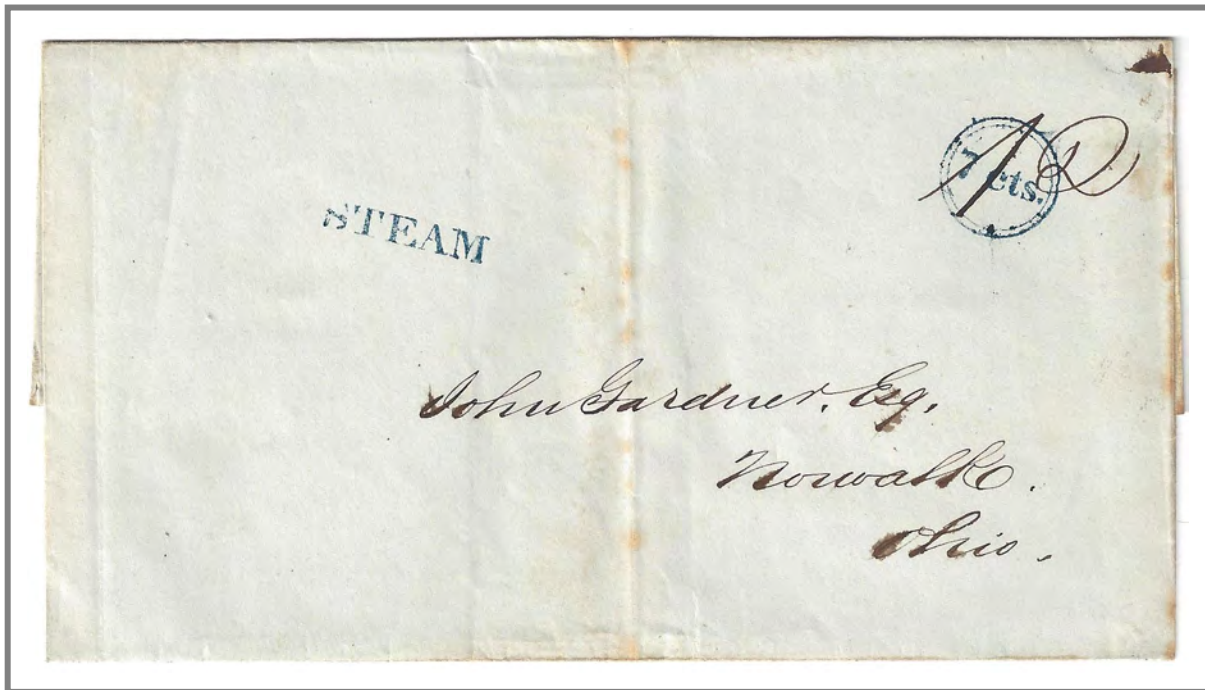
Troy, 1847 - 1848

STEAM

Both covers on this page show that the Troy postmaster added a two cent fee to the postage on both letters received from steamboats for transmission as well as for office of entry delivery. An authorization for adding the fee has not been found.



13 November 1847 New York City to Troy
entered the mails at Troy with "STEAM" and due 7¢ handstamp, rate includes 2¢ fee



30 March 1848 New York City, via Troy, to Norwalk, OH
entered the mails at Troy with "STEAM" and due 7¢ handstamp corrected to 12¢
rate includes 10¢ distance postage for over 300 miles plus 2¢ fee

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Troy, 1850 / 1849

TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT

TROY & NEW YORK
STEAM BOAT



3 July 1850 New York City to Troy
entered the mails at Troy with "TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT" and due 7¢ handstamps



1849 New York City, via Troy, to Ravenna, OH
entered the mails at Troy with "TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT" handstamp and due 12¢ rate

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Troy, 1851

TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT

The domestic use shown at top shows an additional two cents fee charged as postage due. The use to Canada was treated under the terms of the 1851 Treaty with Canada that became effective just three days prior to arrival in Montreal and was not charged a fee.



19 June 1851 letter addressed to Schenectady, prepaid with 5¢ 1847 issue stamp entered the mails at Troy with "TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT" and due 2¢ handstamps



7 April 1851 New York City, via Troy, to Quebec, **Canada**, prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue stamp entered the mails at Troy with "TROY & NEW YORK STEAM BOAT" handstamp, no fee charged

9 April 1851 Montreal exchange office transit

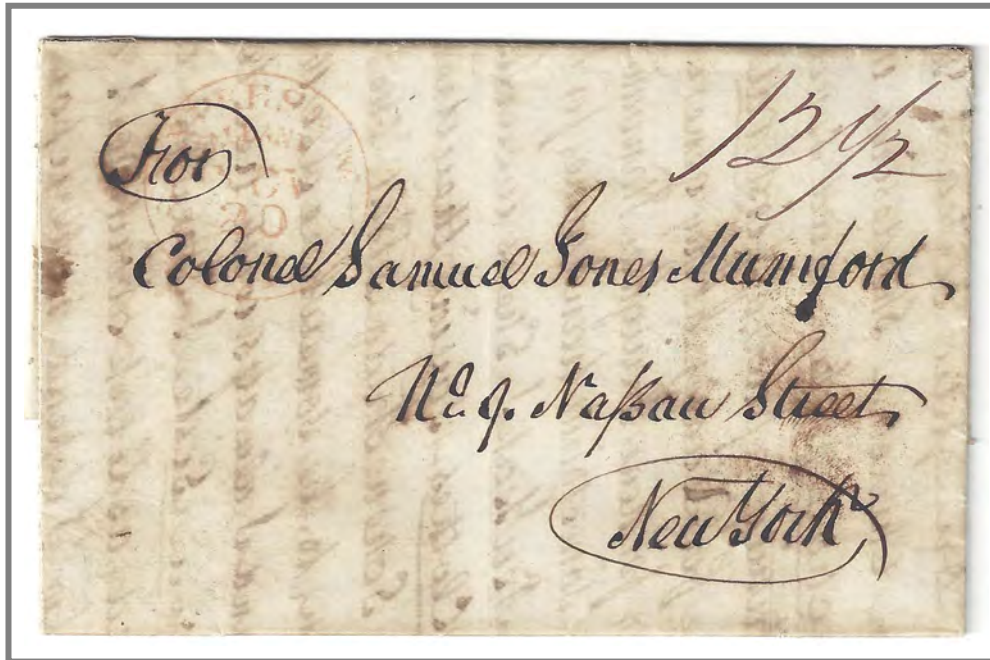
**two reported examples of ten cents 1847 issue uses with this marking
second day Treaty use to Canada**

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1842

U.S. Express Mail

Route agent service on the Hudson River steamboats began in August 1842. Two agents (arbitrarily labeled A and B) were assigned to the route. Each was supplied with two postmarks, one for use on southbound mail with "ALBANY" at the top, and one with "N. YORK" at the top for use on northbound mail. The two sets of postmarks can be identified by minor differences resulting in types 1A and B and types 2A and B.



Type 1A (used by agent A)
("Y" of "ALBANY" near "S")

20 November 1842 southbound use from Albany to New York City
type 1A route agent postmark and manuscript 12½¢ due
the earliest reported use of the Albany Express Mail marking

Post Office, New York, July 15, 1842.
U.S. UNITED STATES EXPRESS MAIL, BETWEEN NEW YORK, ALBANY AND BUFFALO.—
The Postmaster General, with a view to the accommodation of the public, and to increased despatch and security, has established an Express Mail, to expedite which, messengers will be employed under the immediate superintendence of Mr. F. Jerome Humphrey, for carrying the Mails between this City, Albany, and Buffalo and the intermediate places, (including Troy) with directions to cause the delivery at the earliest possible time.
Letters will be received on board the 5 o'clock steamboats, which carry the Mails to Albany, Troy, and intermediate places, from 4½ o'clock, P. M. until the time of departure, during which time postage can be paid.
Letters will also be received on board the boat carrying the Mail direct to Albany, which leaves at 7 o'clock, P. M., from 6½ o'clock, P. M. until the time of departure, a letter box being placed on board said boat, under the lock of the department.
The Messengers will go through to Buffalo, and are instructed to exert the greatest diligence in the performance of these duties. The arrangement will commence on the 20th instant.
After the 20th instant, letters by the 5 o'clock steam boat will be received at this office up to 4 o'clock, P. M., and letters for the 7 o'clock boat until 6 o'clock, P. M.
jy18 2wis JOHN LORIMER GRAHAM, P. M.

July 1842 New York Post Office newspaper notice announcing the first Express Mail Service with messengers (route agents) onboard steamboats between New York, Albany and Troy and onward to Buffalo. Notice mentions "letters will be received onboard" as well as "(for 30 minutes prior to departure) a letter box being placed on board said boat, under the lock of the department".

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1845

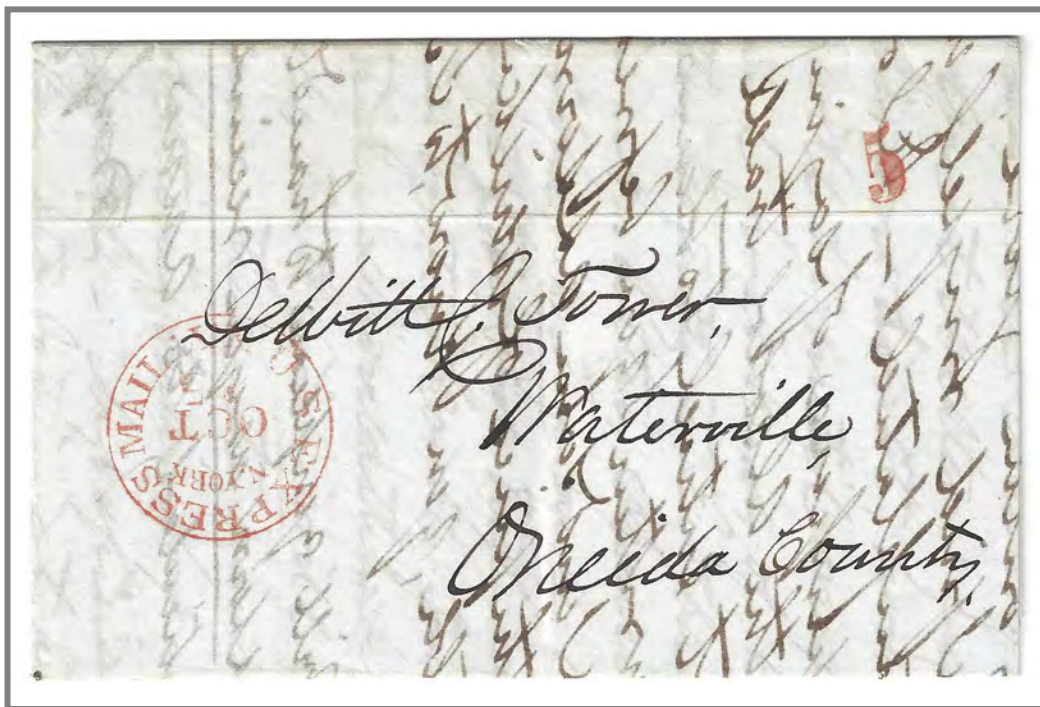
U.S. Express Mail

After the lowering of postal rates on 1 July 1845, additional sets of handstamps with rating numerals were used by most route agents. The different forms of the rate handstamps are useful in differentiating markings associated with a given agent.



Type 2A (used by agent A)
("K" of "YORK" close to the "S")

5



25 October 1845 northbound use from New York to Waterville, NY
type 2A route agent postmark with numeral "5" rate handstamp
fewer than five reported examples

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1846

U.S. Express Mail

The U. S Express mail markings used by agent "B" and his successor agents are shown below. The town names at top are placed further away from the word above. Note that on the pair of letters below the same handstamp was used for the rate. This confirms that both of the postmarks were applied by the same agent (agent B).



Types 1B & 2B



1846 uses southbound Albany to New York and northbound from New York to Mohawk type A and B route agent postmarks with identical numeral "5" rate handstamps

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1847

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

For the 1847 season, the two route agents serving on the Hudson River steamboats were supplied with new postal devices with "HUDSON RIV. MAIL N.Y." text. The type 3A device has the letters "HUD" evenly spaced while the type 3B device has the "U" closer to the "H." The agents serving the route during the 1847 to 1849 seasons were: Jacob Clark who was replaced by Provost Vesey on May 21, 1850 and Solomon Brown.



Type 3A



4 June 1847 New York City to Canterbury, NY
Type 3A postmark
small numeral "5" rate
used only into June 1847



14 June 1847 New York City to Rhinebeck, NY
type 3A route agent postmark and larger numeral "5" rate handstamp

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1849

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

The distinctive fine grid cancel device was used by the agent carrying the type 3A postmark devices.



29 May 1849 New York City to Cooperstown, NY
prepaid with 5¢ 1847 issue stamp, type 3A postmark with distinctive fine grid cancel



2 July 1849 letter from New York City to Montreal, **Canada**, 4½d. due on arrival
prepaid with 10¢ 1847 issue stamp, type 3A postmark with distinctive 17-bar grid cancel
4½d. due at destination

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1849

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

A grid of wide bars was employed as a cancel device by the agent carrying the type 3B postmark devices.



29 5 October 1849 New York City to Toronto, Canada, prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue stamp
"HUDSON RIV. MAIL N.Y." type 3B route agent postmark, Queenstown transit
4½d. due at destination



28 November 1849 New York City to Toronto, Canada, prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue stamp
"HUDSON RIV. MAIL N.Y." type 3B route agent postmark, Queenstown transit
4½d. due at destination

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1847

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

Two agents were employed on the route during the 1847, 1848 and 1849 seasons. One used the type 3A set of markings while the other used the type 3B set.



Type 3B



8 August 1847 New York to Mohawk, NY
type 3B postmark, large numeral "5" rate correcting the "10" rate

5

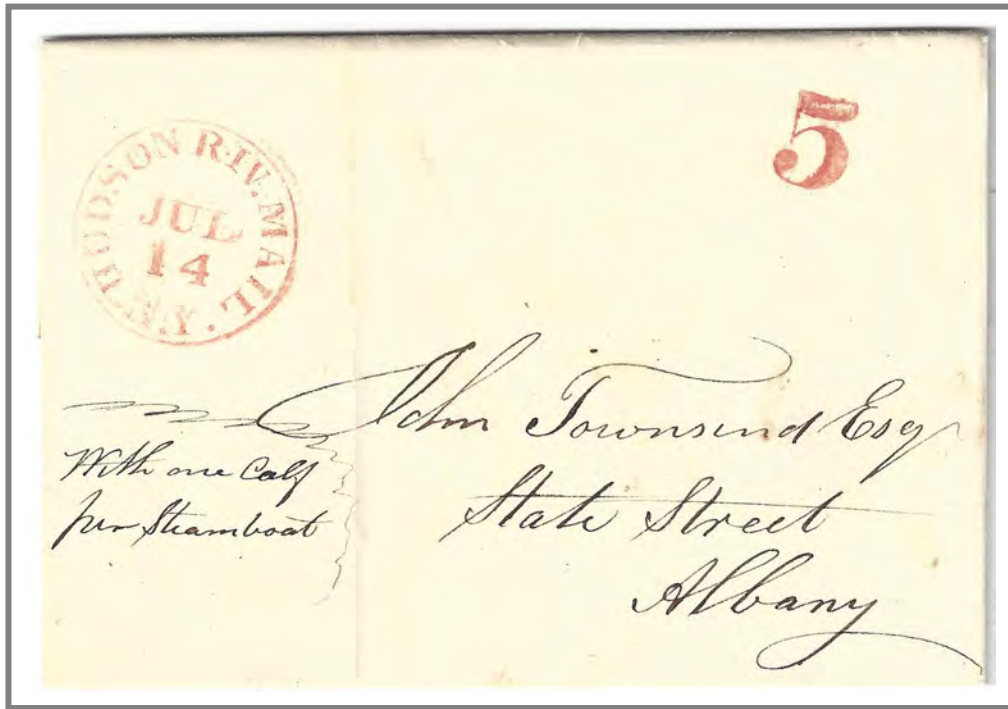
This style large numeral "5" with ball of "5" further away from vertical stroke is uniquely associated with the type 3B agent postmark.

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1849 / 1848

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

Type 3A postmarks used in 1848 and 1849 seasons.



14 July 1849 New York City to Albany
type 3A postmark, large numeral "5" rate handstamp



15 September 1848 double weight letter to Dunkirk, NY
type 3A postmark, numeral "10" due rate handstamp

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1848 / 1849

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

Type 3B postmarks used in 1848 and 1849 seasons. The agents did not sell postage stamps so any prepaid mail received had to have stamps applied by sender. The agent who used the type 3B device usually applied additional rate handstamp without cause.



3 July 1848 New York City to Albany, prepaid with 5¢ 1847 issue adhesive Boyd's City Express took letter to the wharf box in New York for their 2¢ adhesive type 3B postmark, large numeral "5" rate handstamp which is redundant in this instance



17 July 1849 New York City to Pontiac, Michigan, prepaid with pair 5¢ 1847 issue adhesives type 3B postmark, numeral "10" rate handstamp which is redundant in this instance

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1850

Hudson River Mail N.Y.

For the 1850 season, the two route agents serving on the Hudson River steamers were supplied with new postal devices with "HUDSON RIVER MAIL N.Y." text.

The type 4A device has the letters "HUD" evenly spaced while the type 4B device has the "U" closer to the "D" (covers shown on next page). The agents serving the route during the 1850 season were: Provost Vesey from May 21, 1850 and Solomon Brown. Markings only known used in 1850 which was the last year of route agents onboard Hudson River steamboats.



Type 4A



Type 4B



17 July 1850 New York to Auburn, NY, prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue
type 4A postmark

the only reported example of a "RIVER MAIL" device prepaid by an adhesive

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1850

Hudson River Mail N.Y.

Route agents were reassigned to the Hudson Railroad effective 15 October 1851.



8 November 1850 use to Castleton, NY
type 4B route agent postmark, numeral "5" rate handstamp

there are fewer than ten reported examples of the "RIVER MAIL" device known



8 November 1850 New York City to Detroit, MI
type 4B route agent postmark and italic numeral "10" rate handstamp



LAKE CHAMPLAIN



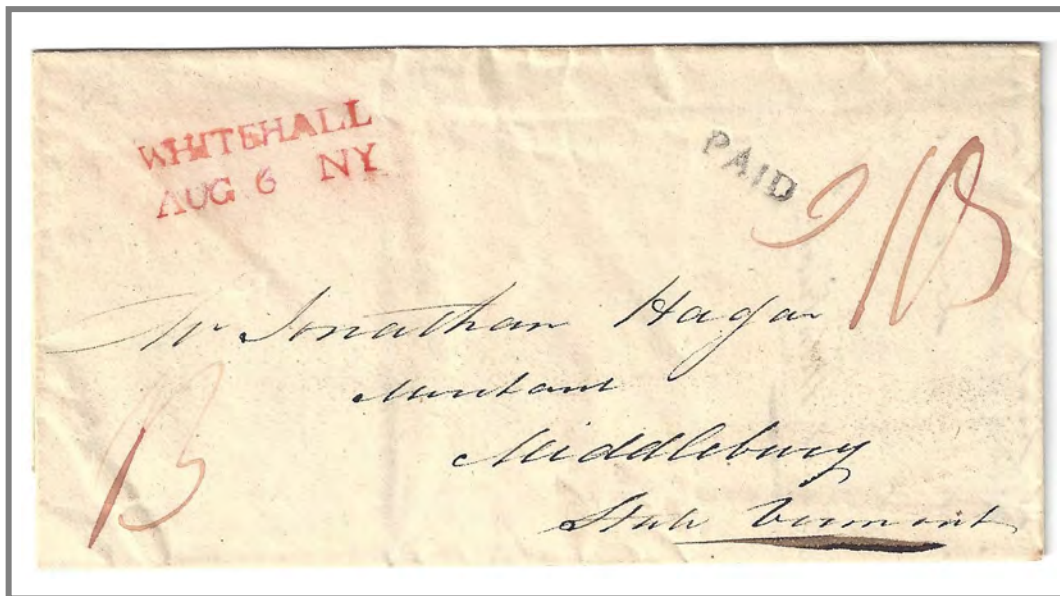
Lake Champlain served as the major communication link between Montreal, Canada and the eastern United States. Although an overland mail route between Albany, NY and Champlain, NY (near Rouses Point) was completed in 1823, it was used primarily during the brief period each year when the lake was closed to navigation.

The first steamboat to operate on Lake Champlain, the Vermont, was built in 1809 by James and John Winans. In 1815, Captain Jahaziel Sherman and the Lake Champlain Steamboat Company (LCSC) built the first commercially successful steamer on the lake, the steamer Phoenix. Captain Sherman obtained from the Fulton - Livingston group the exclusive right to operate steamboats on Lake Champlain. The LCSC continued to dominate steamboat transportation on Lake Champlain long after the monopoly was nullified by the courts.

Mail steamers on Lake Champlain operated as ferries, on local routes with numerous stops, as well as on long through-routes over the entire 150 mile length of the lake. *The earliest known steamboat use on Champlain is 28 July 1817, more than two years after the ship letter period ended in New York State as a result of the Post Office Act of 1815 and the awarding of the first mail contract to Fulton and Livingston on the Hudson.* The post office first employed route agents to handle and assort mail on the contract steamboat routes in 1849.

Whitehall, 1817

WHITEHALL B



A manuscript "B" was used to identify letters from steamboats.

28 July 1817 Montreal, Canada via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Middlebury, VT
Montreal postmark on reverse, "PAID" and 9d rate to the border, carried on steamer Phoenix
6 August entered US mails at Whitehall as a steamboat letter with manuscript "B"
Whitehall postmark and 10¢ due for 30 to 80 mile distance rate

earliest reported steamboat use on Lake Champlain

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

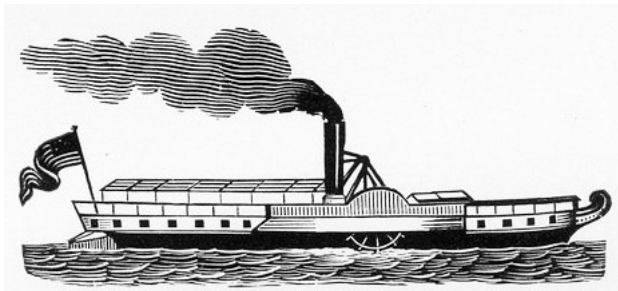
Whitehall, 1818

Whitehall B

The Whitehall postmaster paid the steamboat captain 2¢ for each letter received and entered the totals in his quarterly report to the post office for credit.



5 June 1818 Quebec, **Canada** via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Albany, NY
Quebec fleuron postmark on reverse, Quebec Paid with 1/- rate for carriage to the border
10 June 1818 entered US mails at Whitehall as a steamboat letter with manuscript "B"
carried on steamboat Congress, Whitehall postmark and 18½¢ due for 150 to 400 mile rate



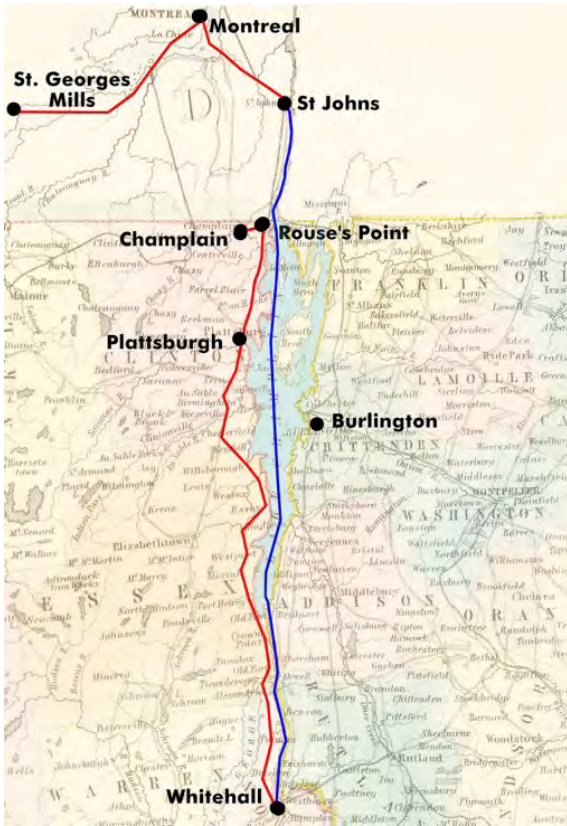
During the 1817 season, steamboats Phoenix and Champlain operated between St. Johns, Canada and Whitehall, NY. After the Champlain was destroyed by a fire in her first season, she was replaced by the Congress for the 1818 season.

steamboat Congress

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1818

Whitehall B



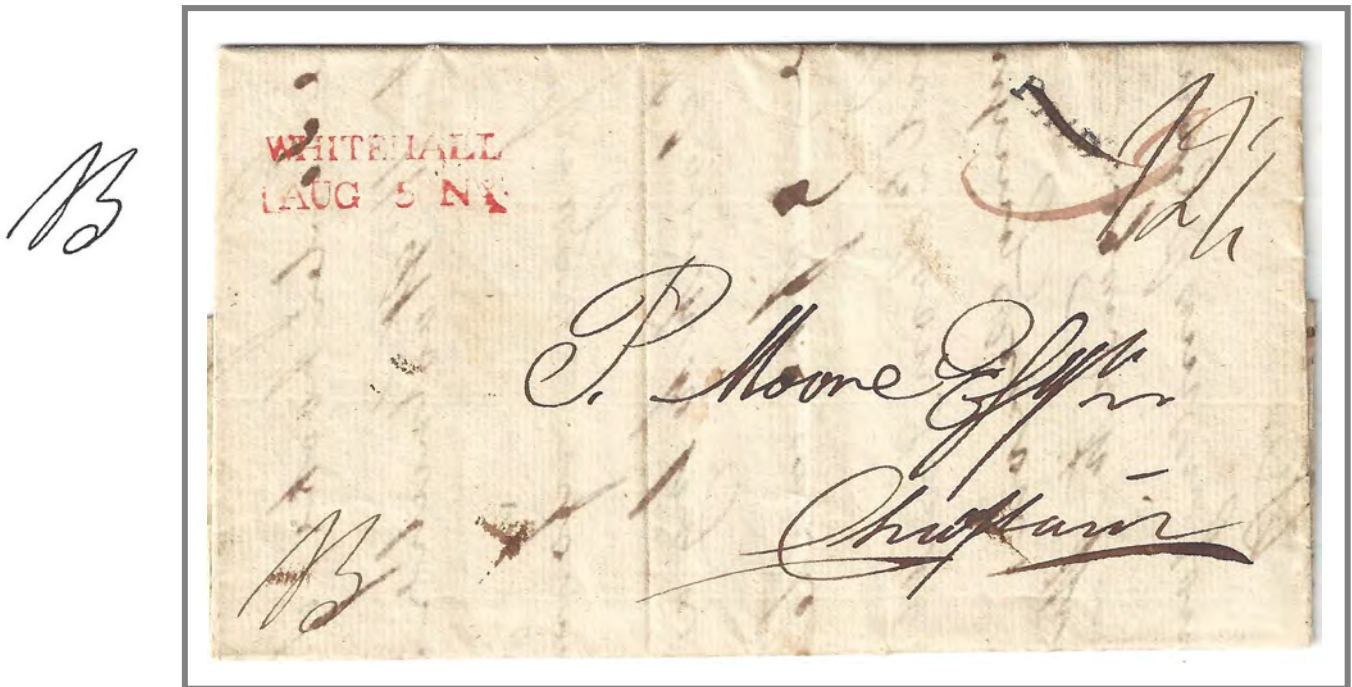
Letter carried south by water
and then north by land

This letter illustrates an anomaly in the way steamboat letters were carried on through-trips on the lake and the way they were rated at Whitehall.

Stage 1. Letter was carried from St. Johns to Whitehall direct by private steamboat with no stops at US ports on the Lake that would have required the Captain to break bulk and turn over any letters. A distance of roughly 150 miles.

Stage 2. After entering at Whitehall the letter was sent north to Champlain by a land route, a distance of roughly 120 miles. Cover rated for the 120 mile distance instead of the 250 total mile distance traveled since origin crossing of the border.

land routes in red, water in blue



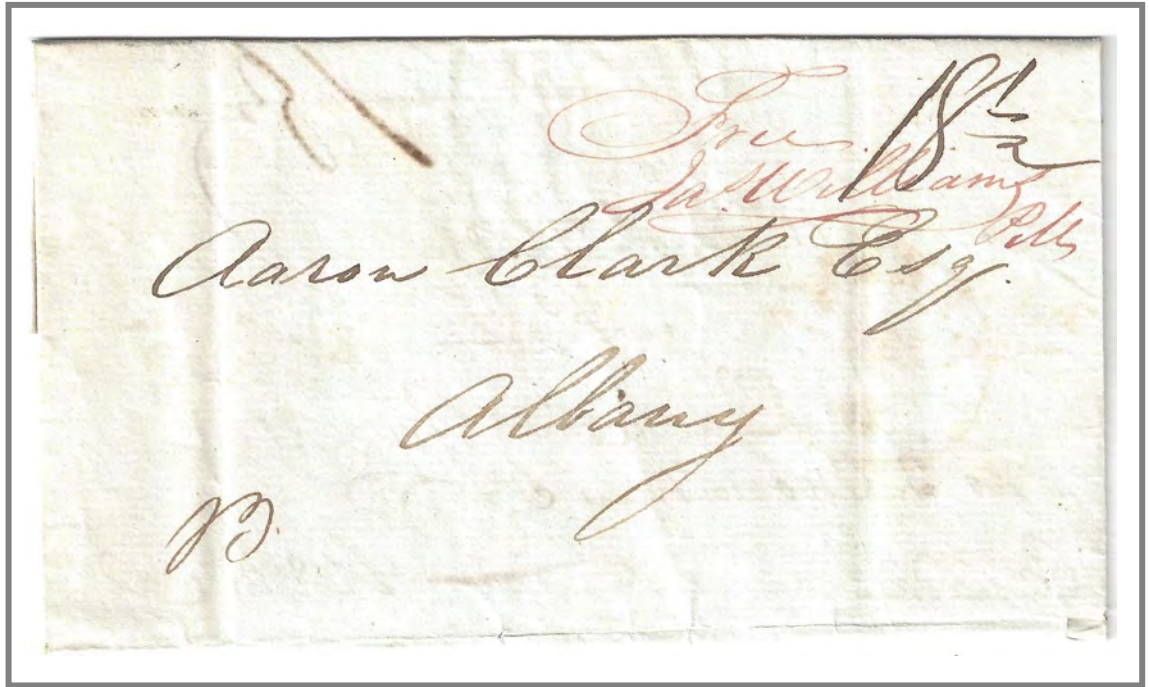
- 1 August 1818 by favor to Montreal, **Canada** via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Champlain, NY
Montreal "PAID" and 9d rate for carriage to the border
- 5 August 1818 Whitehall postmark and "B" (atypically in black ink) as steamboat letter
Whitehall postmark and 12½¢ due for 80 to 150 mile distance rate

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

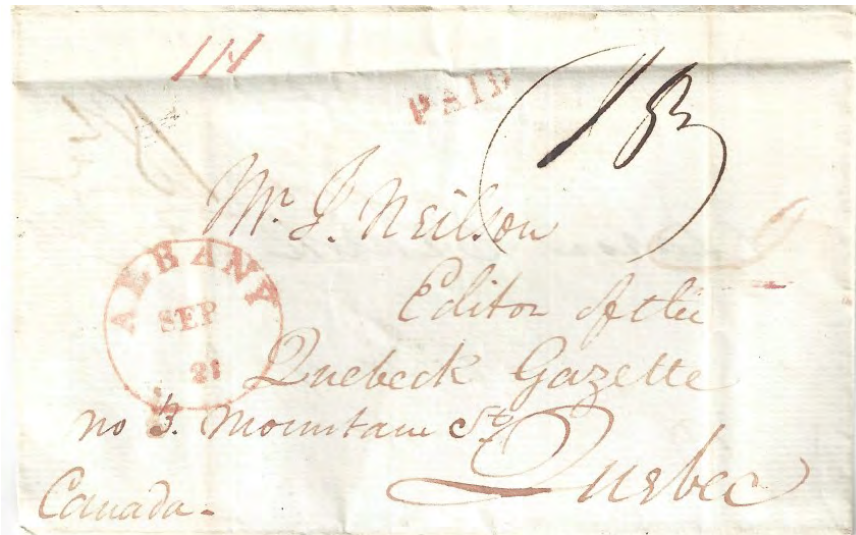
Whitehall, 1818

Whitehall B

B
in black



17 September 1818 Postmaster Montreal, Canada via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Albany, NY
Montreal Postmaster James Williams free frank, Montreal two line postmark on back
black "B" of Whitehall as steamboat letter, 18½¢ due for US distance rate



cover turned and forwarded (image 75% of original), to Quebec, Canada for publication
21 September 1818 Albany postmark, "PAID" 18½¢ for distance to border
manuscript "1/-" Canadian postage due in manuscript

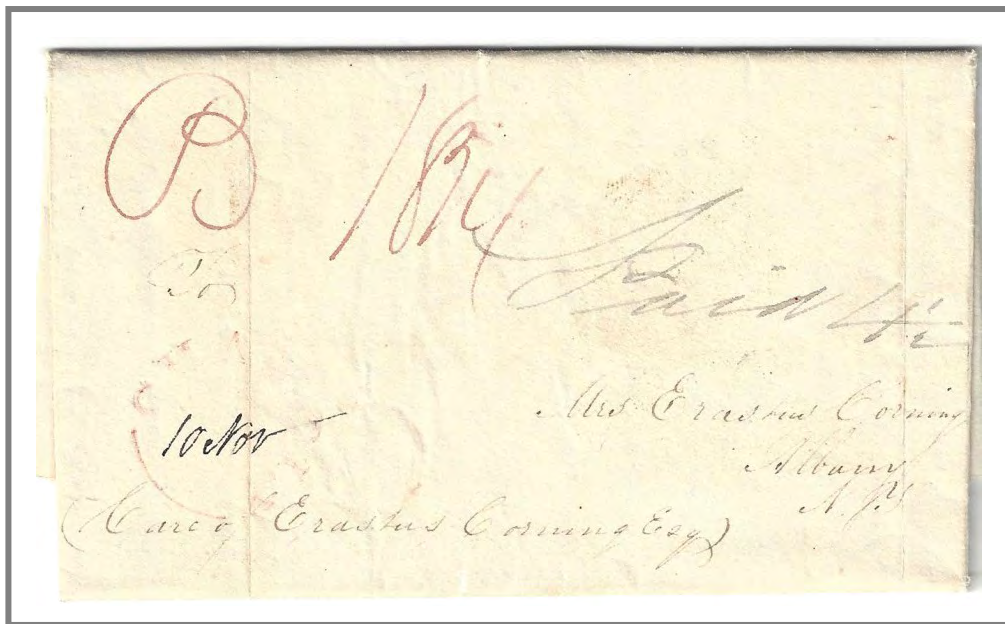
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1826 / 1832

Whitehall B



26 November 1826 Montreal, **Canada** via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Albany, NY
Montreal postmark, "PAID" handstamp and 1sh double rate postage to border
entered US mails at Whitehall, NY with red manuscript "B" and 37½¢ due rate



10 November 1832 Chamblly, **Canada** via St. Johns and Whitehall, to Albany, NY
Chamblly postmark and manuscript "Paid 4½" (d) rate to border
entered US mails at Whitehall, NY with red manuscript "B" and 18¾¢ due rate

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1831

Captain's Mail

Captain Lathrop's letter below was written onboard the steamboat Phoenix. It was entered into the mails at Whitehall without the "B" marking. This indicates that the customary two cents Captain's payment was not made.

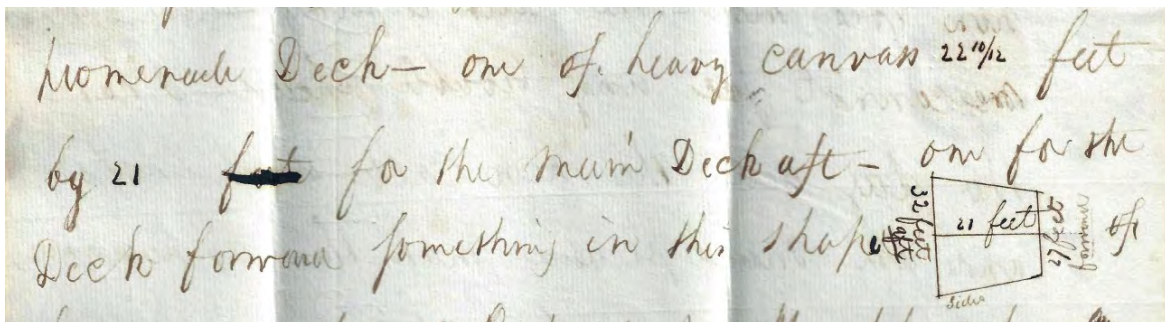
Steam Boat Phoenix
10th May 1831



12 May 1831 letter of Capt. Lathrop dated "Steam Boat Phoenix" via Whitehall to Albany entered US mails at Whitehall, NY with their postmark, "PAID" handstamp and 10¢ rate

Capt. Gideon Lathrop's letter includes:

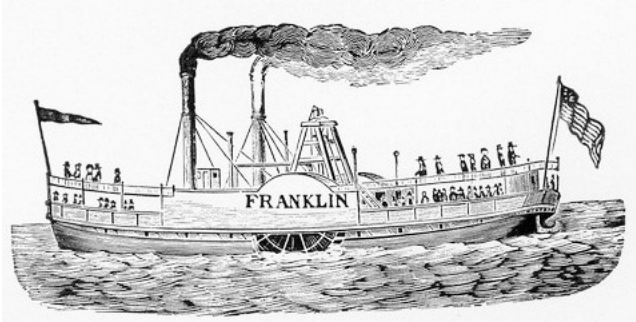
"Mr. Townsend, our good boat is destitute of awnings .. I should be extremely glad to get the following, one of light canvas 44 feet by 15 for the front promenade deck - one of heavy canvas 22 feet by 21 for the main deck aft - one for the deck forward something in the shape (see illustration below) of heavy canvas. ..."



LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall B free

Steam-Packet Franklin



The "Steam-Packet Franklin, Captain R.W. Sherman, Lake Champlain" packet marking illustrated below is known used on letters dated between 25 October 1831 (this earliest known use is shown with the port of Burlington material herein) and 24 October 1835. It is a private marking intended to serve as advertising and it is the first Name-of-Boat marking used on an inland waterway in the United States.



R W Sherman



7 November 1831, Port Kent, VT, via Whitehall, to Auburn, NY
Free, C.B. Watson, P.M., Port Kent frank, steam-Packet Franklin packet handstamp
"B free" in manuscript applied at Whitehall, NY when it entered the US mails
earliest reported use of the Packet Franklin handstamp on letter via Whitehall

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1832

Steam-Packet Franklin



5 March 1832, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, **England** carried privately to Montreal, **Canada** via St. Johns, then on Steam-Packet Franklin to Whitehall, NY and to Wilmington, NC (May 1832) manuscript "B" of Whitehall, manuscript 25¢ due for over 400 miles distance only reported Packet Franklin handstamp on inbound trans-Atlantic mail



(August 1832) Lake Champlain to **Glasgow, Scotland**, endorsed "per pkt from New York" Steam-Packet Franklin handstamp, via Whitehall, NY and to New York City "New York to Liverpool, 1 September 1832" directive, Ship Letter Liverpool backstamp only reported Packet Franklin handstamp on outbound trans-Atlantic mail

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1832 / 1835

Onboard Franklin



16 October 1832, onboard the Franklin at Whitehall to Hartford, CT
Steam-Packet Franklin handstamp, posted without fee paid to the Captain
16 October 1832 Whitehall postmark, "PAID" handstamp and 18¾¢ due rate



24 October 1835, Rouses Point, NY, bootlegged via St. Johns, to **Montreal, Canada**
Steam-Packet Franklin packet handstamp, entered Canada mails at Montreal with "1d" due
latest reported use of the Packet Franklin handstamp

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1835

STEAM•BOAT

This "STEAM•BOAT" entry marking was used at the Whitehall post office from 1835 until 1851. Atypically, Whitehall did not postmark transit mail received from steamers. The 1851 use shown later in this exhibit proves that the marking was applied at Whitehall.

STEAM•BOAT



3 September 1835 Rouses Point, NY to Little Falls, NY
entered the mails at Whitehall, NY with their "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp, 18¾¢ due rate
earliest reported use of a steamboat handstamp at Whitehall

LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEAM BOATS.—The beautiful boats on this far-famed lake, were thoroughly overhauled and repaired during the winter, and at the commencement of navigation the present season, exhibited all the freshness and neatness of new vessels. They ply regularly every day between Whitehall and St. Johns; though we have seen no handbill of any sort or advertisement in any newspaper, from which we could learn the regular days of the boats leaving either place.

The *Franklin* is still commanded by the gallant Admiral of the lake, R. W. Sherman, and besides being one of the most popular, has been one of the most fortunate steamers on the American waters. She has a low pressure engine from Allaire's establishment; and has made her passages daily for seven years; during which time she has never lost a trip, nor met with an accident nor had a man injured on board. Her passages during this period number more than 1500. It is superfluous to say

one word in commendation of Com. Sherman; his praise is in the mouth of hundreds who have made the fashionable tour of the lakes and the Canadas. We know not whether he be single or married; but the ladies are captivated with his urbanity and politeness, and the matter of his present engagement must be kept a profound secret.

The *Phoenix* is a first rate boat, built under the direction of Harrington, of the Eagle Hotel, Buffalo, one of the three most princely landlords in the country. It is fitted up in first rate style, and can furnish every thing for the comfort and gratification of the passengers; but has had the ill luck to lose her former commander, our friend Lathrop. Report says, however, that in the person of Capt. Dan Lyon, the public have as nearly a fac similis of his predecessor as could easily be found.

Newspaper account at start of the 1835 steamboat season on Lake Champlain. It mentions daily service from St. Johns to Whitehall utilizing two steamboats, the *Franklin* and the *Phoenix*.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1837 / 1838

STEAM•BOAT



19 May 1837 Riviere Du Luc, Canada, prepaid 9d, via Whitehall, to South Berwick, ME
22 May 1837 Montreal transit, Whitehall "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp, 18¾¢ due rate



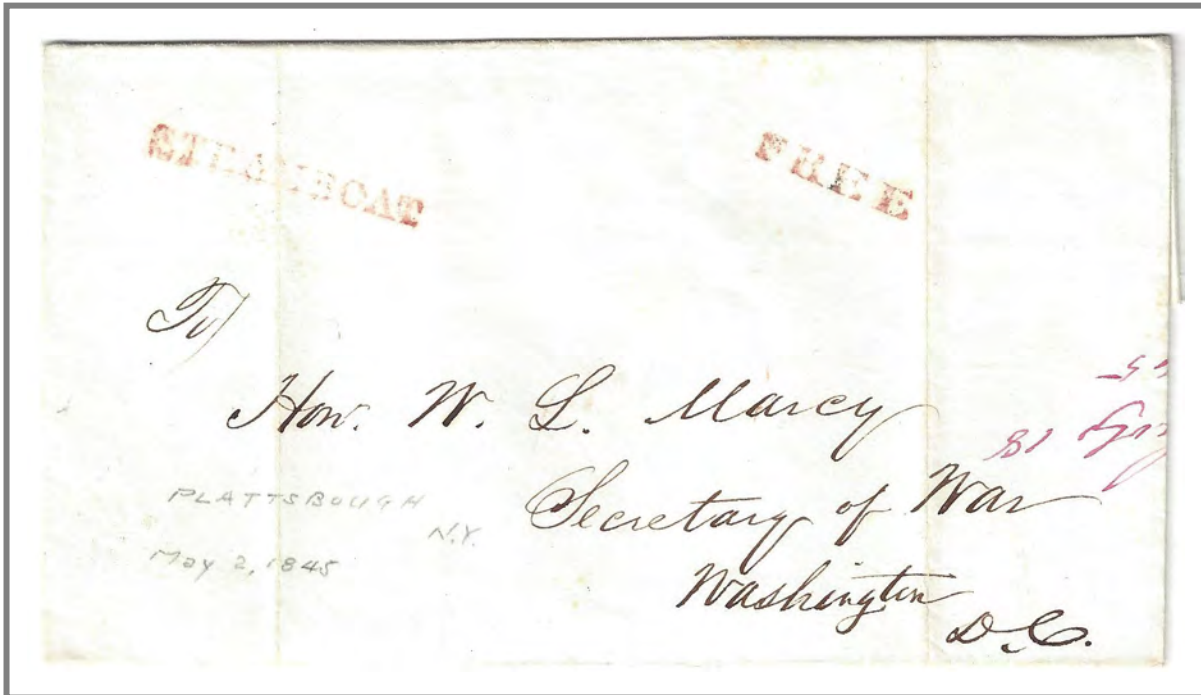
Letter to Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, the pioneer educator of the deaf in America.

3 September 1838 Quebec, Canada, prepaid 11d, via Whitehall, to Hartford, CT
endorsed "To be paid through," Whitehall "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp, "PAID" and 18¾¢ rate

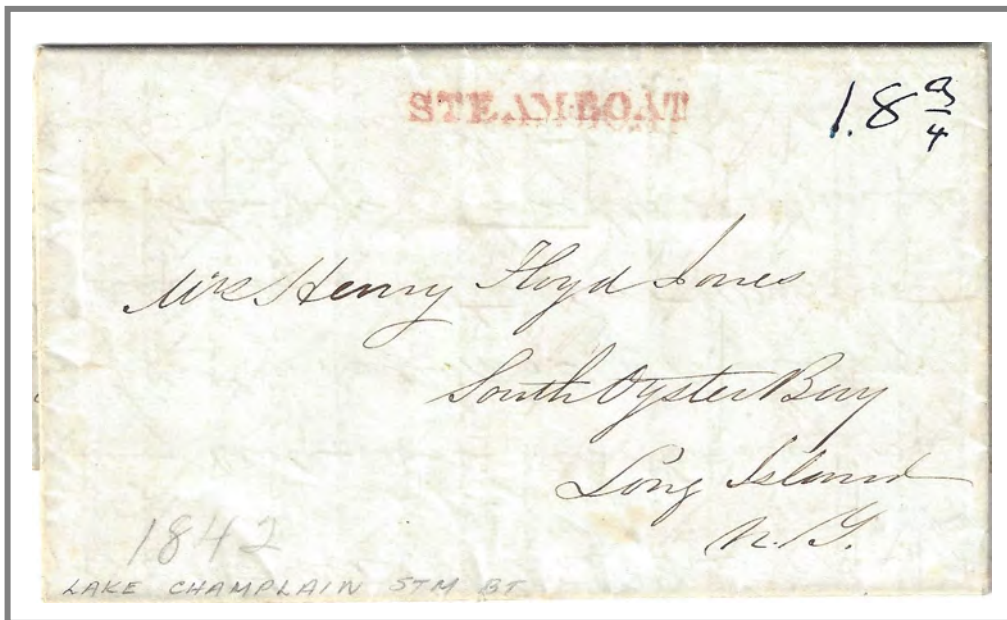
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1845 / 1842

STEAM•BOAT



2 May 1845 Plattsburgh, NY to Sec. of War W.L. Marcy, Washington, DC
Whitehall "STEAM-BOAT" and "FREE" handstamp



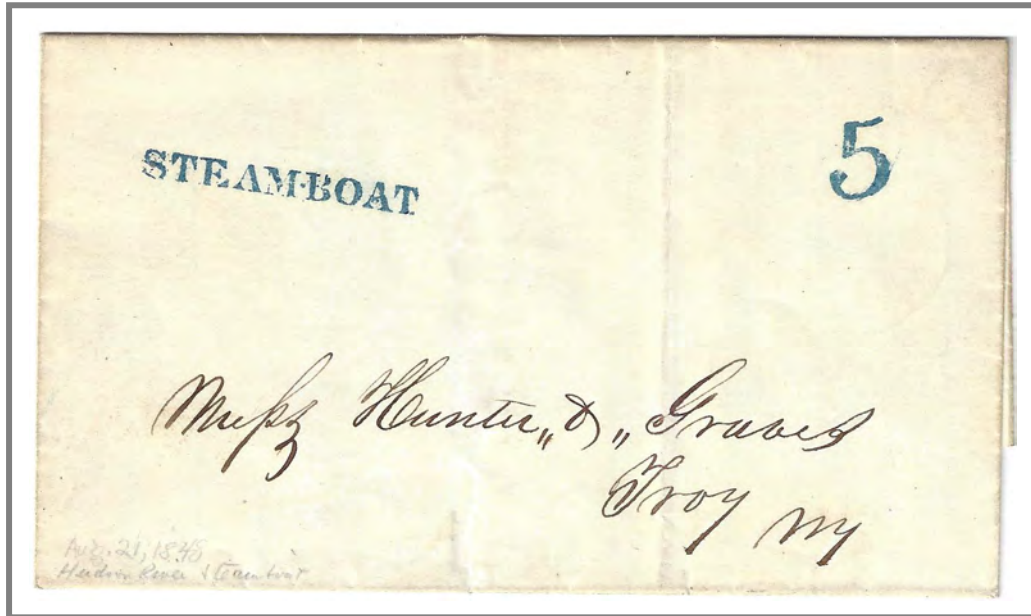
18 September 1842 onboard "Steamer Burlington" to South Oyster bay, NY
Whitehall "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp, and manuscript 18³/₄¢ due rate

Steamer
Burlington
Friday, Sept. - New weather is so cold that
you may write me by Tuesday mail. J.S.

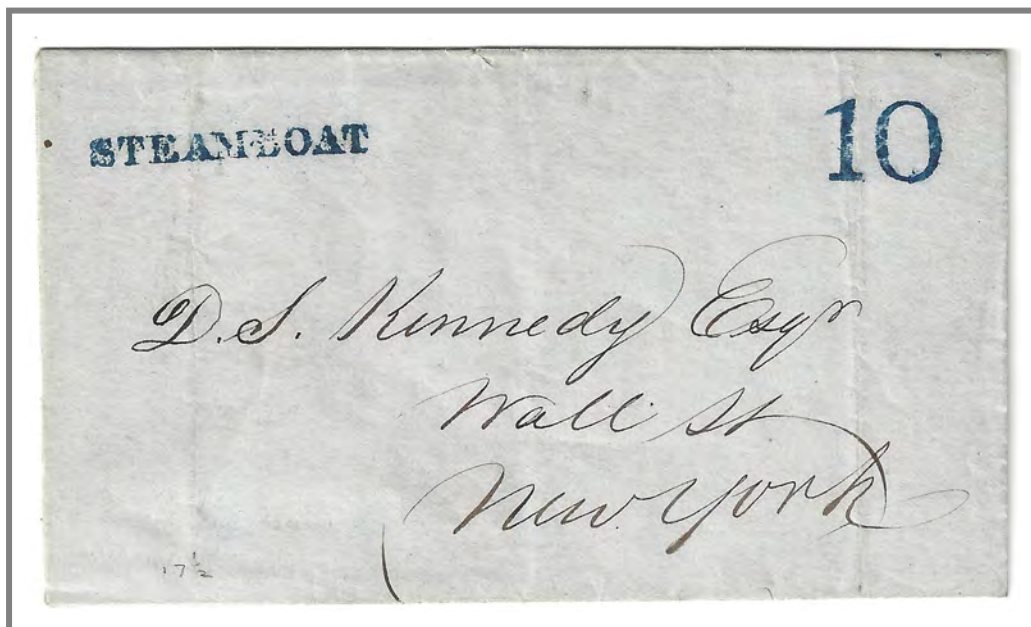
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1848

STEAM•BOAT



26 August 1848 unknown origin point, via Whitehall, to Troy, NY
Whitehall "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp, 5¢ due rate for distance under 300 miles



18 October 1848 Montreal, **Canada**, via Whitehall, to New York City
Whitehall "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp, 10¢ due rate for over 300 miles

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1851 / 1856

STEAM•BOAT



5 September 1851 St. Albans, VT, via Whitehall, to New York City
6 September 1851 Whitehall postmark, "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp, prepaid 3¢ 1851 issue
this letter "proves" that the "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp was applied at Whitehall

*Steamer Canada
Plattsburgh May 7 1856*



7 May 1856 onboard "Steamer Canada" at Plattsburgh, via Whitehall, to Fairhaven, VT delivered
8 May 1856 Whitehall postmark received directly to Whitehall post office, prepaid 3¢ 1851 issue

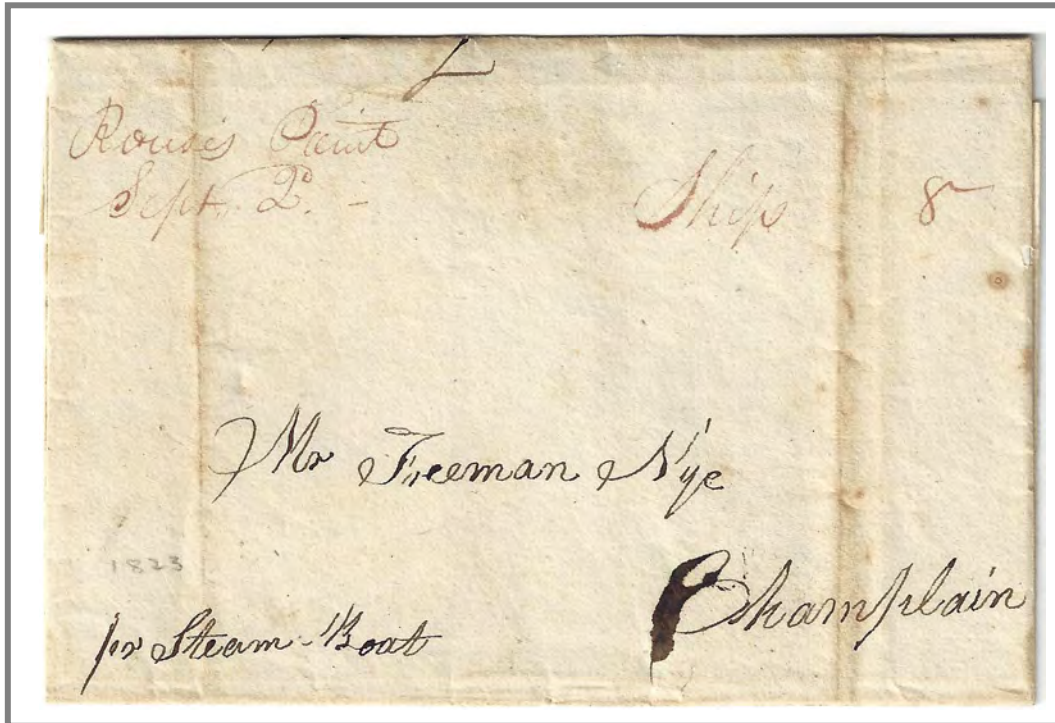
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Rouses Point, 1823

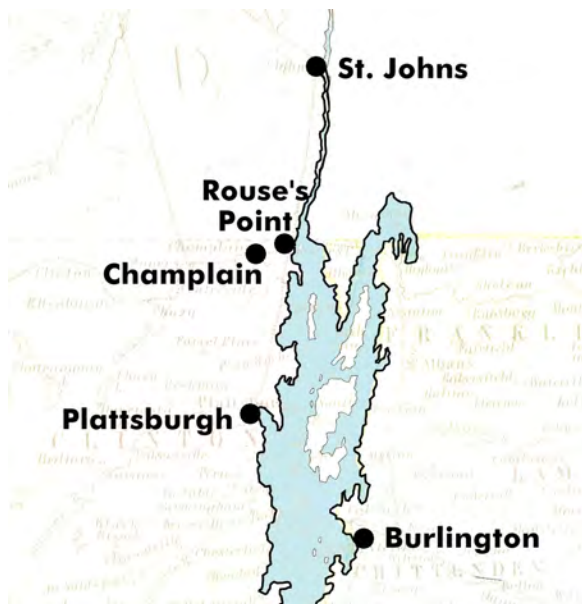
Rouses Point Ship

*Rouses Point
Sept. 2^o -*

Ship 8



24 August 1823 Burlington, VT by steamer to Rouses Point and then by land to Champlain, NY
2 September 1823 Rouses Point manuscript postmark and "Ship 8" due rate
rate was calculated as 6¢ distance to 30 miles + 2¢ ship fee
the earliest reported ship postmark on Lake Champlain
the only reported ship postmark of Rouses Point



At this date, Lake Champlain steamboats offered two types of service. The local feeder routes and the main non-stop daily route from St. Johns, Canada to Whitehall.

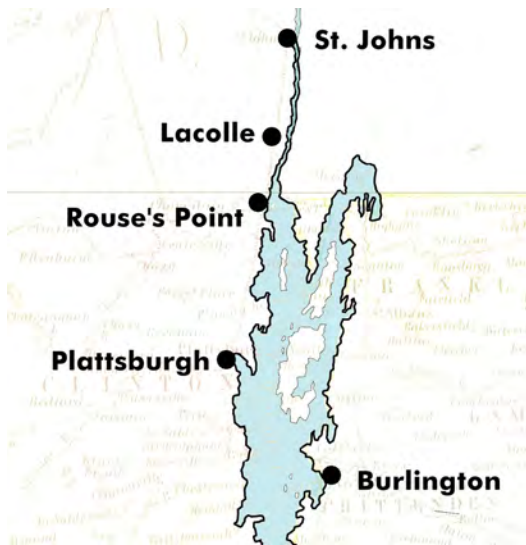
The letter above would have been carried from Burlington, via Plattsburgh to Rouses Point and may have included additional stops along the way. This could account for the delay between date of letter and date of Rouses Point postmark.

Rating as a ship letter is incorrect under the Post Office Acts of 1810 and 1815 because the letter is of domestic origin.

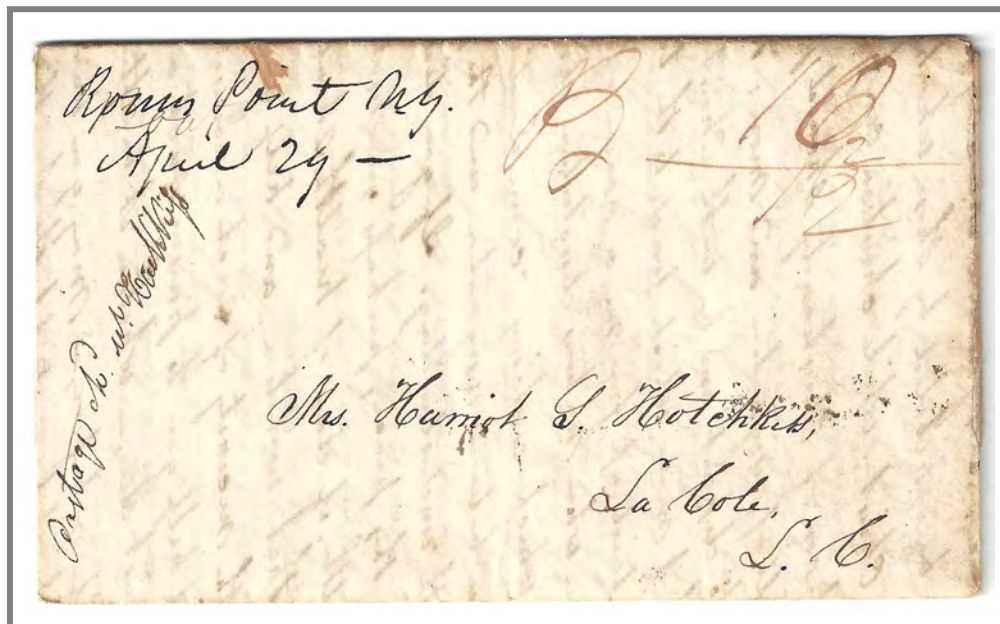
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Rouses Point, 1833

Rouses Point Boat



Boat
B $\frac{10}{12}$



25 April 1833 Burlington, VT, via Rouses Point, VT, to Lacolle, Canada
manuscript "Boat" endorsement of Rouses Point and "B 10 + 2 = 12" due at right
29 April 1833 Rouses Point, NY manuscript postmark overwrites the "Boat" endorsement
charge box notation, 12¢ total (10¢ distance rate [corrected from 6] plus 2¢ captain fee)
evidently the recipient and had arranged to have mail picked up at the Rouses Point office

the earliest reported manuscript "Boat" marking on Lake Champlain

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Rouses Point, 1834

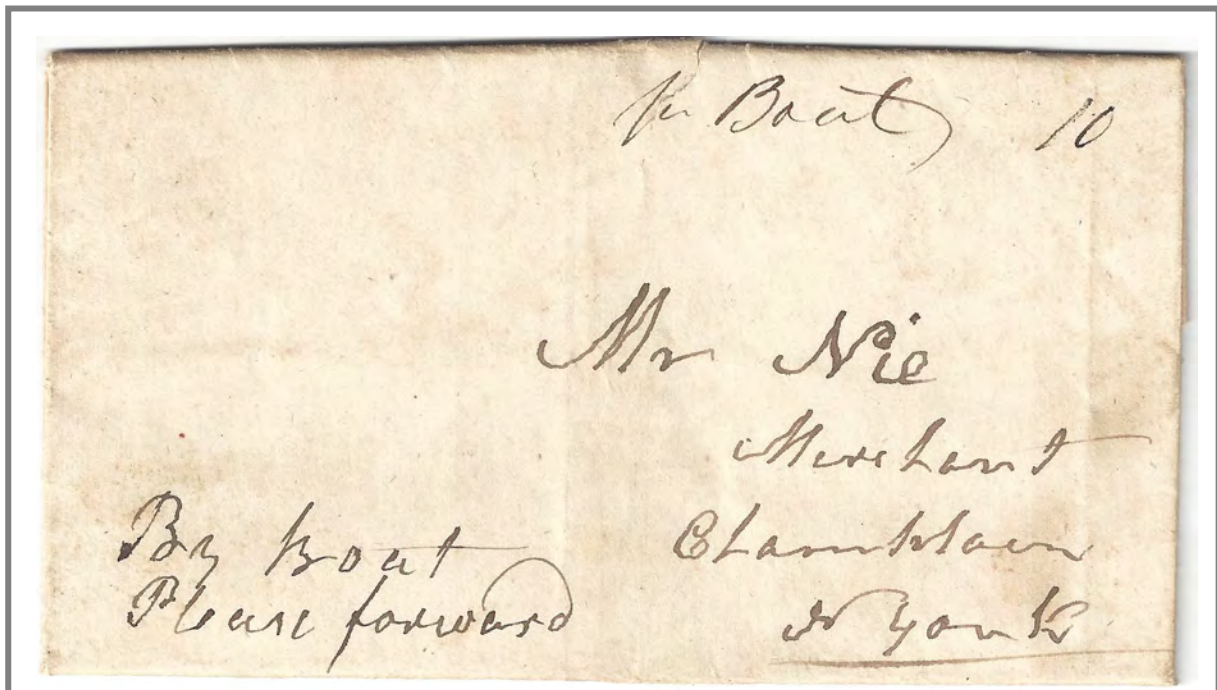
Rouses Point Boat



5 November 1834 Charlotte, VT, via Rouses Point, to Chazy, NY
endorsed per "Capt. Lyon, St. Bt. Winooski" at left

7 November 1834 "Rouses Pt Bt NY" postmark and Boat endorsement, 10¢ due land rate

In 1834 the steamer Winooski began ferry service between Burlington and Port Kent, NY.



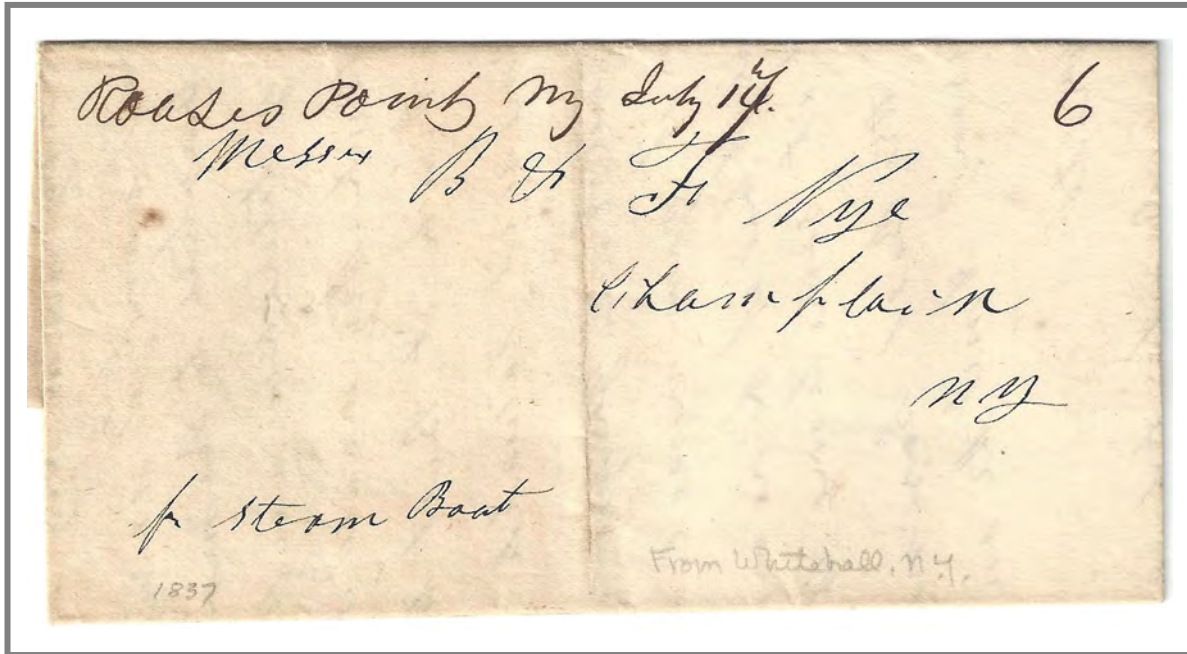
17 May 1834 Grand Isle, VT, via Rouses Point, to Champlain, NY
Rouses Point post office "Per Boat" entry endorsement and 10¢ due rate

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Rouses Point, 1837 / 1840

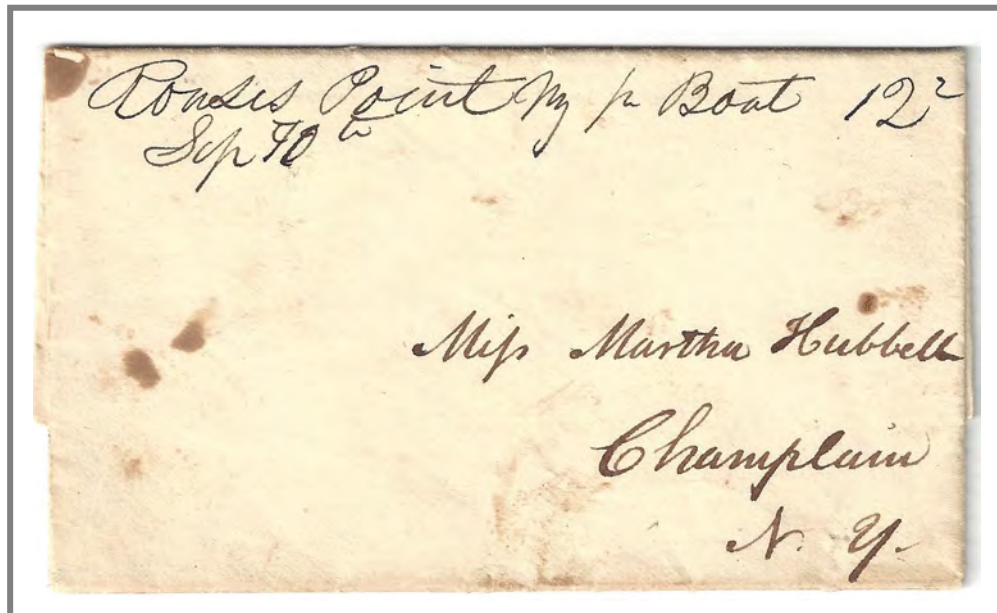
Rouses Point Boat

This pair of single weight letters entered at Rouses Point for delivery in Champlain but were rated differently. The first entered as having originated onboard a steamer and was rated for distance from entry to Champlain. The lower letter entered as having originated at Burlington and was rated for distance between Burlington and Champlain.



14 July 1837 Whitehall, NY via Rouses Point, to Champlain, NY
sender endorsed per "Steam Boat" at left

14 July 1837 Rouses Point, NY postmark and 6¢ due under 30 miles rate to Champlain



8 September 1840 Burlington, VT via Rouses Point, to Champlain, NY

10 September 1840 Rouses Point, NY "Pr Boat" combination postmark and boat endorsement
postmark and 12½¢ due, water + land distance rate to Champlain

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Rouses Point, 1844 / 1845

Rouses Point Steamboat



22 October 1844 Peru, NY, via Rouses Point, to Champlain, NY
22 October 1844 Rouses Point, NY postmark, "Steam Boat" endorsement and "12½" due rate
correctly rated 12½¢ due for 80 to 150 mile distance



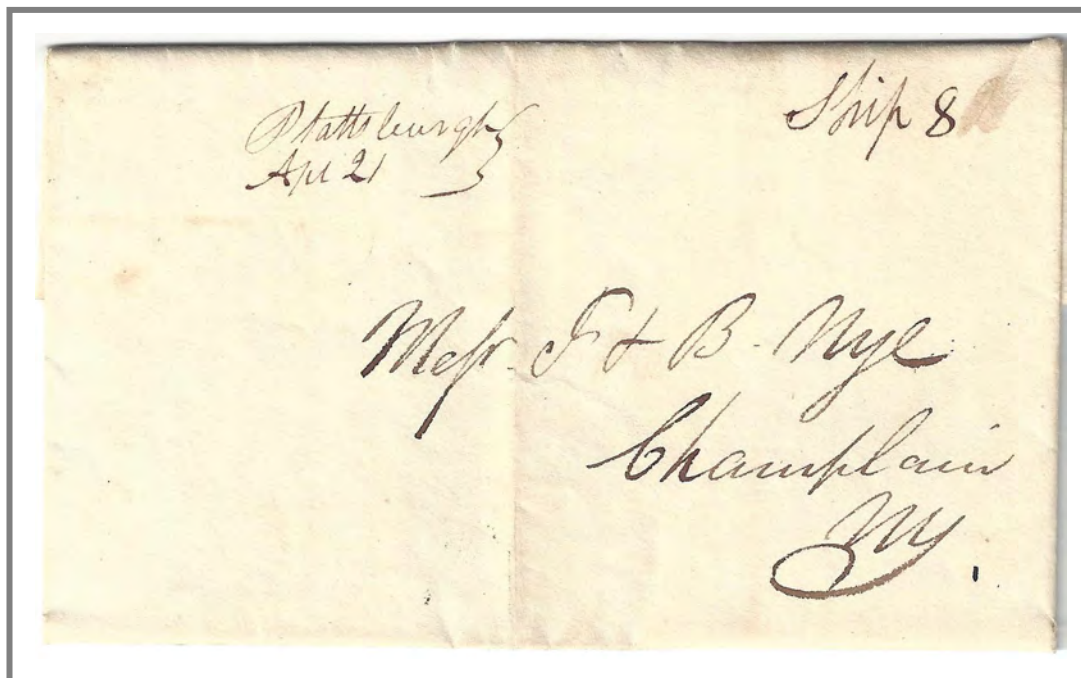
30 April 1845 Whitehall, NY, "via Rouses Point" to Champlain, NY
Rouses Point "Steam Boat" endorsement and "10" due rate
10¢ due rate would be correct for 30 to 80 mile distance from Rouses Point to Champlain

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1825

Plattsburgh Ship

*Plattsburgh Ship 8
Apr 21*



15 April 1825 Montreal, **Canada**, printed circular by steamer to Plattsburgh
21 April 1825 Plattsburgh manuscript postmark and "Ship 8" due overland rate to Champlain
rate was calculated as 6¢ distance to 30 miles + 2¢ ship fee
the earlier of two reported printed circulars from Canada that entered as ship letters

MONTREAL, APRIL 15th, 1825.

SIR,

WE have never in the course of a twenty years business, had occasion to address you so often during a few weeks as for eight weeks past; our last printed Circular was dated the 9th inst. and gave English dates to the 20th Febr. in three days afterwards we had newspaper advices from England to the 5th March, and on the 13th inst. we wrote a few lines to many of our country customers, mentioning that ASHES had again rather improved in England, but we had not so correctly ascertained the extent of speculations in that and many other articles, as we now have, by our numerous English letters received this day: by the extracts of the subjoined letters you will notice a most unaccountable rise in Ashes in London, which had in some measure extended itself to Liverpool; the very latest dates however from London mention that the fever had in some measure subsided, and Ashes had declined and very dull: altho' all the late news combined does not seem to have any very sensible effect here; yet we are induced to hold more firmly, and at higher prices—two days ago we anxiously exerted ourselves to sell 500 Brls. Pots and Pearls, the former at 32s. and the latter at 34s. but we could not succeed—to day we should be inclined to hold Pots at 32s. 6d. a 33s. and Pearls 34s. 6d. a 35. and at these rates, if we can find purchasers, we think it prudent to sell, as the quantity already accumulating is large and will be immense by the month of June, if we can believe what many of our country friends say. The Grain market wore rather a more favourable aspect, and we are not without hopes that the Ports would open for Colonial Grain and Flour in May.....Our navigation is now clear to Quebec, and we hope to see ere long business more animated than at present.

Yours,
HORATIO GATES & Co.

This circular was carried privately from Montreal to catch a steamer at St. Johns that operated direct to Plattsburgh. The local service steamer did not stop at Rouses Point or the mail would have been entered at that port.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1827

SHIP



SHIP

7 May 1827 Montreal, **Canada**, printed circular by steamboat to Plattsburgh
19 May 1827 Plattsburgh handstamped postmark and "SHIP" handstamp
8¢ due overland rate to Champlain, (6¢ rate under 30 miles + 2¢ ship fee)
two reported printed circulars from Canada that entered as ship letters

SIR,
Our last printed Circular was dated the 10th March, with a postscript of the 15th, and we have now, via Quebec, received numerous letters from the great commercial cities of the United Kingdom, of various dates from the 14th March down to the 13th April, and we are therefore induced again to issue a circular to apprise you as nearly as possible of any changes likely to affect country produce in the Canada markets.

MONTREAL, May 7th, 1827.



29 July 1827 letter dated Rouses Point by steamer to Plattsburgh
Plattsburgh "SHIP" handstamp and 6¢ due for port of entry delivery

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1832 / 1834

Plattsburgh Ship



14 August 1832 St. Johns, **Canada** by steamer to Plattsburgh, by land to Grand Isle, VT
23 August 1832 Plattsburgh handstamped postmark and manuscript "Ship 12" due
(10¢ distance rate for 30 to 80 miles + 2¢ ship fee)



10 June 1834 Grand Isle, VT by steamer to Plattsburgh, then overland to Champlain
16 June 1834 Plattsburgh handstamped postmark and manuscript "Ship 8" due
(6¢ distance rate for under 30 miles + 2¢ ship fee)

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1832 / 1834

BOAT / SHIP



BOAT

12 October 1832 Montreal, **Canada**, via St. Johns and Plattsburgh, to Grand Isle, VT
endorsed "Via Plattsburgh"

16 October 1832 Plattsburgh, NY postmark and "BOAT" handstamp
manuscript 12¢ due for 30 to 80 mile distance + 2¢ ship fee
the only reported example of Plattsburgh "BOAT" handstamp



**STEAM-
BOAT**

27 June 1834 Whitehall, via Plattsburgh, to Grand Isle, VT
1 July 1834 Plattsburgh, NY postmark and "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp
manuscript 12¢ due for 30 to 80 mile distance + 2¢ ship fee
fewer than five reported examples of Plattsburgh "STEAM•BOAT" handstamp

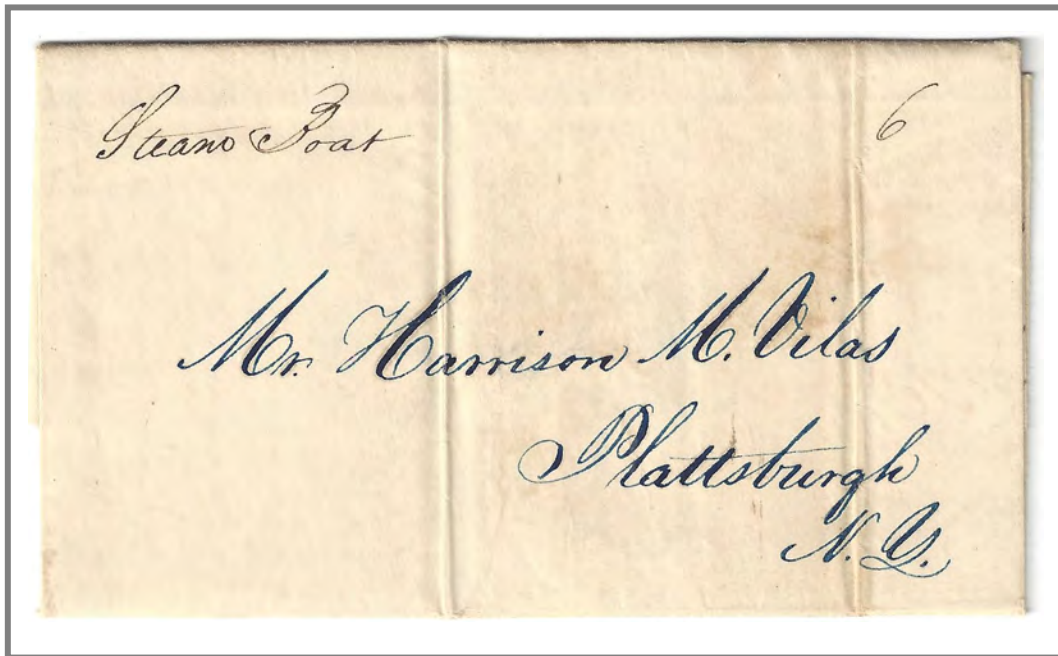
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1841

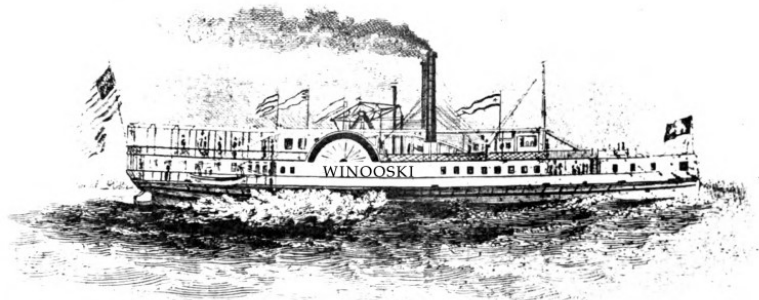
Plattsburgh Steam Boat

Steam Boat

"Steam Boat" endorsement applied by Ephraim Mills, postmaster of Burlington, Vermont as an entry and accounting marking.



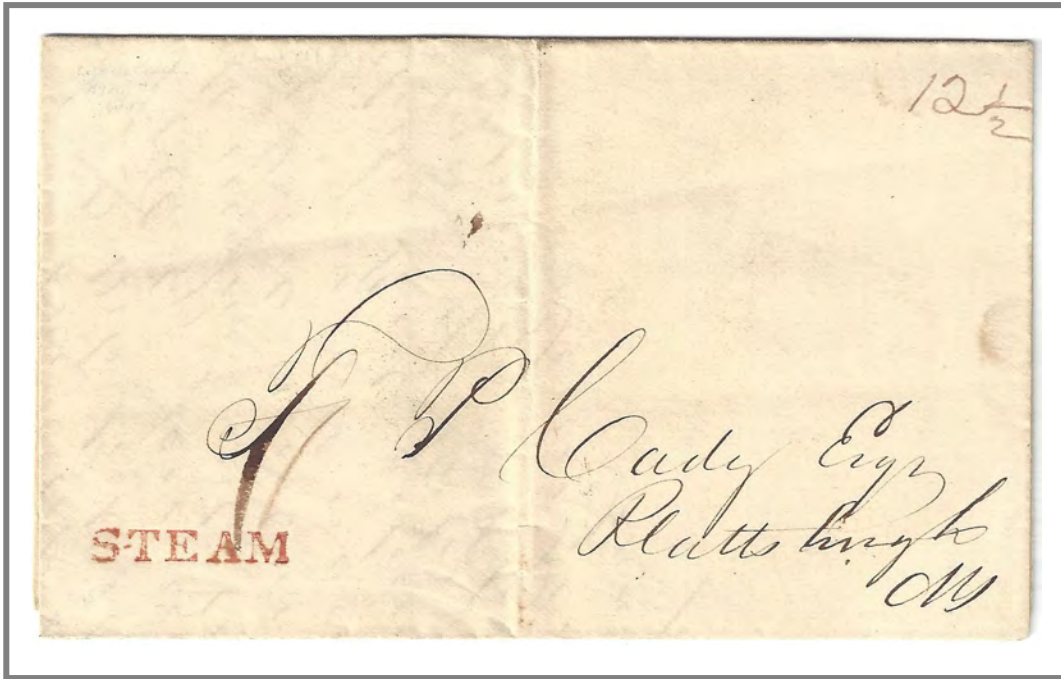
6 July 1841 Burlington, VT to Plattsburgh, NY
manuscript "Steam Boat" endorsement entry and due 6¢ rate for port of entry delivery
steam-ferry Winooski made daily trips between Burlington and Plattsburgh at this date
the only reported example



LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Plattsburgh, 1844

STEAM



7 May 1844 Whitehall, NY to Plattsburgh, NY, Plattsburgh "STEAM" handstamp correctly rated 12½¢ for 80 to 150 miles distance by water between Whitehall and Plattsburgh



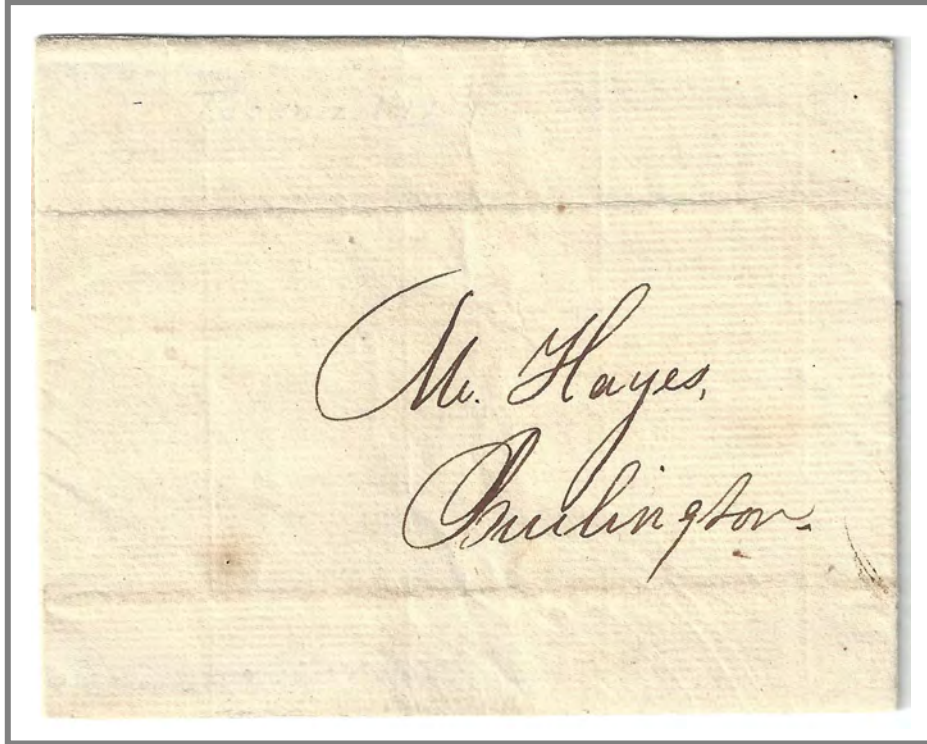
16 October 1844 Whitehall, NY to Plattsburgh, NY, Whitehall Postmaster's free frank via non-contract mail steamer, Plattsburgh "STEAM" handstamp applied on arrival the contract route between Whitehall and Plattsburgh in 1844 was by land December 1844 letter from same correspondence, carried by land, does not bear the "STEAM"

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

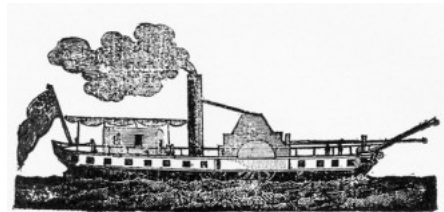
Burlington, 1819

Onboard the Phoenix

Steam boat, Phoenix, 27 July 1819



27 July 1819 letter dated "Steamboat Phoenix" carried outside the mails to Burlington, VT letter of John Clapp requesting a recipe for Parmesan cheese to be sent to him at Boston **earliest reported letter written aboard a steamboat on Lake Champlain**



The Phoenix was a side-wheel paddle steamer built in 1815 by the Lake Champlain Steamboat Company at Vergennes, VT, under the direction of Jahaziel Sherman. The 146' long vessel reached a speed of 8 miles per hour. She was the second steamer to sail on Lake Champlain, after the Vermont (launched in 1808), which was the first regularly operated steamship anywhere. She ran for four seasons between Whitehall, NY and St. Johns, Canada. In 1817, she carried President James Monroe from Burlington, VT to Plattsburgh, NY.

On 4 September 1819 she caught fire after departing Burlington when she grounded and burned to the waterline. Although most of the passengers and crew survived, six died. The company was able to salvage the steam engine from the wreck.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Burlington, 1831

Steam-Packet Franklin



25 October 1831 St. Johns, **Canada**, via Burlington, to Weybridge, VT
Steam-Packet Franklin packet handstamp

28 October 1831 Burlington, VT postmark, manuscript 10¢ due for 30 to 80 mile distance
earliest reported use of the Packet Franklin handstamp
Earliest known use of a Name-of-Boat inland waterway marking in the United States

The Franklin was the first steamboat built by the Champlain Transportation Company (CTC). She commenced her trips between Whitehall and St. Johns under command of Capt. J. Sherman in 1827. Capt. Richard W. Sherman succeeded him the next season and served on the lake until 1847. In 1834, the CTC was awarded the first contract for mail service by steamboat on Lake Champlain. The marking is only known on non-contract mail.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Burlington, 1841

Burlington Ship



25 April 1841 "Onboard Steam Boat" via Burlington, to Milton, VT
26 April 1841 Burlington, VT postmark and manuscript "Ship 8"
8¢ due (6¢ for 30 to 80 miles distance plus 2¢ captains fee)



28 July 1841 Plattsburgh, NY to Burlington, VT
manuscript "Ship 6" entry, 6¢ due (ship letter for port of entry delivery)

letter includes: "Please drop me a line by the (Burlington - Plattsburgh) Ferry Boat"

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

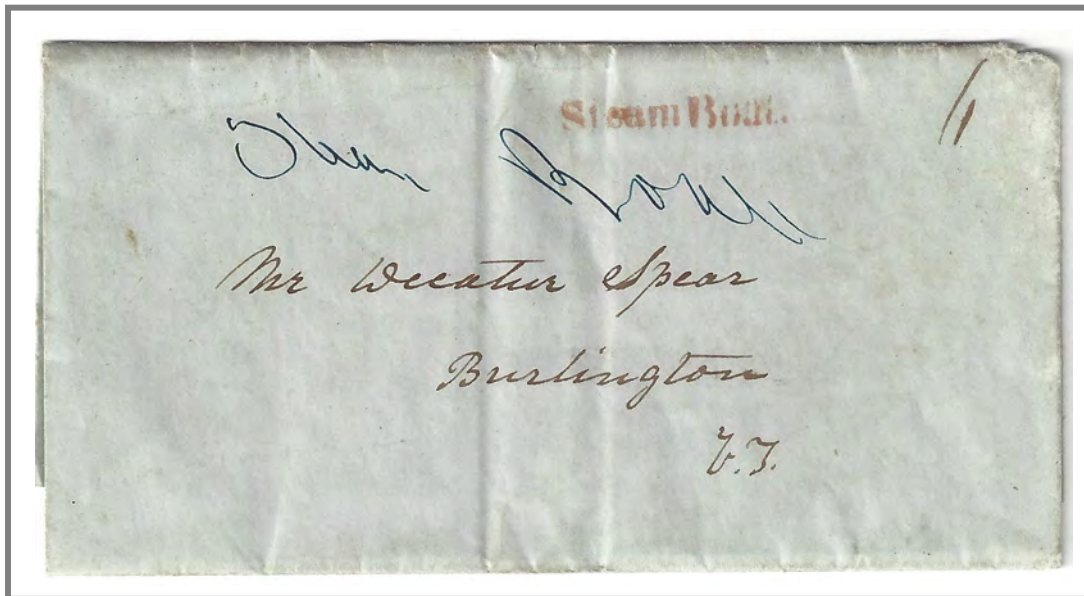
Burlington, 1845

Steam Boat.

The "Steam Boat." handstamp used at Burlington is the only handstamped steam marking used on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain. It is reported known used in 1845 and 1846.



27 April 1845 Plattsburgh, NY, via Burlington, to Rochester, VT
30 April 1845 Burlington postmark, handstamped 'Steam Boat' and 12¢ due rate
(10¢ for 30 to 80 miles distance plus 2¢ captains fee improperly added)
the earliest reported use of the Burlington "Steam Boat." handstamp



14 November 1845 Rouses Point, NY to Burlington, "Steam Boat." handstamp
manuscript "Steam Boat" and 6¢ due (ship letter for port of entry delivery)

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service, 1849 to 1870

Route Agent service on Lake Champlain steamboats was inaugurated on 1 August 1849 when daily service by steamboat commenced from Whitehall, NY to Saint Johns, Canada. The daily service over the 150 mile mail route #943 required two post office agents. Initially, Edwin S. Collamer (arbitrarily named agent "A") and William H. Turner served (agent "B").

Manuscript Postmarks

1849

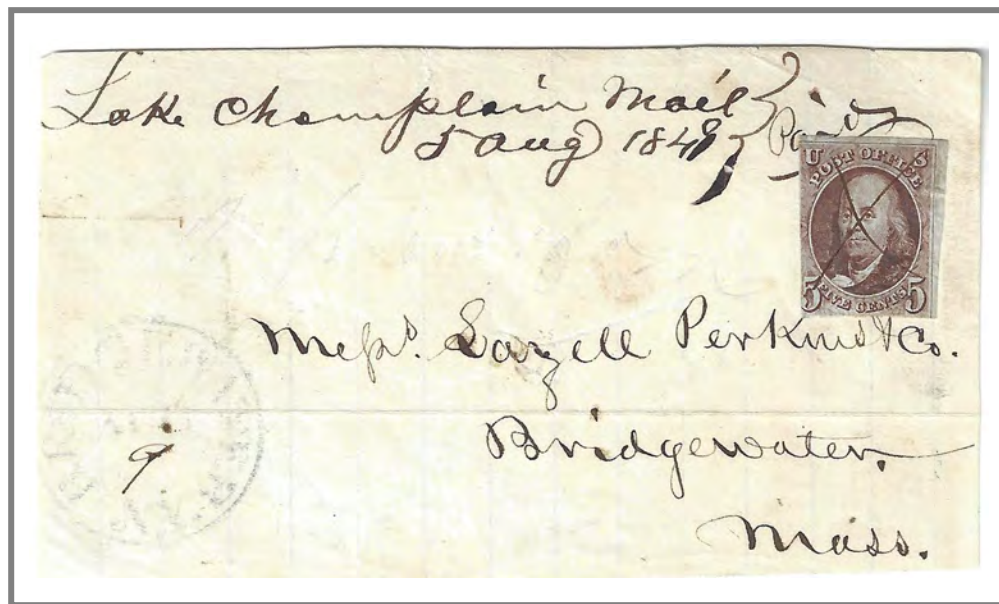
*Lake Champlain Mail
do Aug 1849*

*Lake Champlain
Mail Aug 8*

Type 1A (used by Agent A, Turner)
earliest use August 5, 1849
latest use Aug 20, 1849

Type 1B (used by Agent B, Collamer)
earliest use August 8, 1849
is also latest use

The manuscript postal markings used by the two agents can be differentiated by their handwriting. Later in 1849, the agents where each supplied with their own devices for stamping postmarks. The devices were handed off to their successor agents.

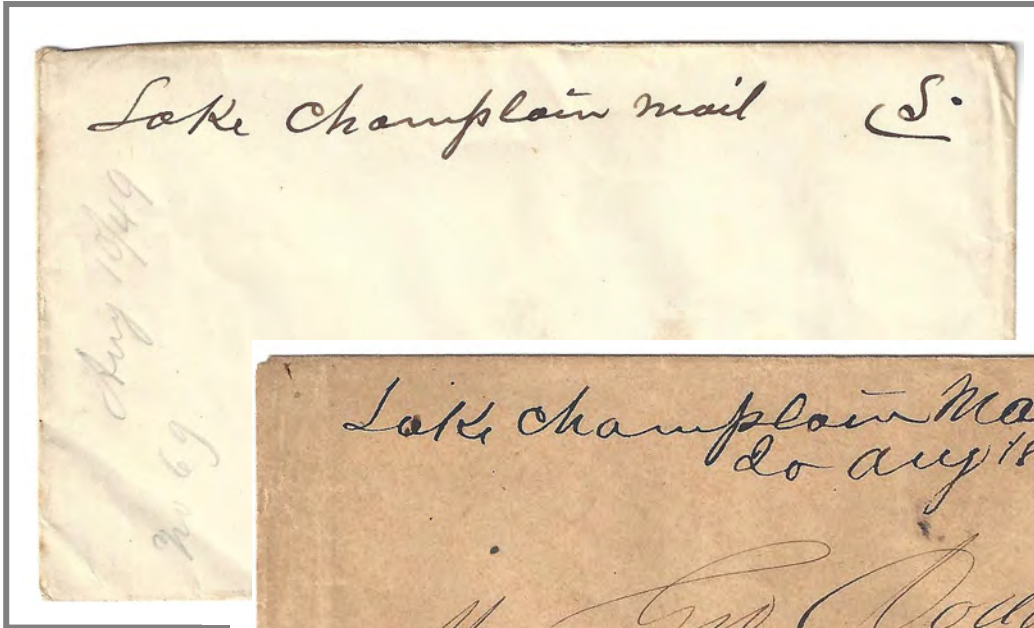


5 August 1849 manuscript "Lake Champlain Mail" route agent Turner postmark (type 1A) first week of service use, letter front used to Bridgewater, MA, missent to Bridgewater, NY prepaid with 5¢ 1847 adhesive, southbound steamer to Whitehall earliest reported use of a Lake Champlain steamboat route agent marking

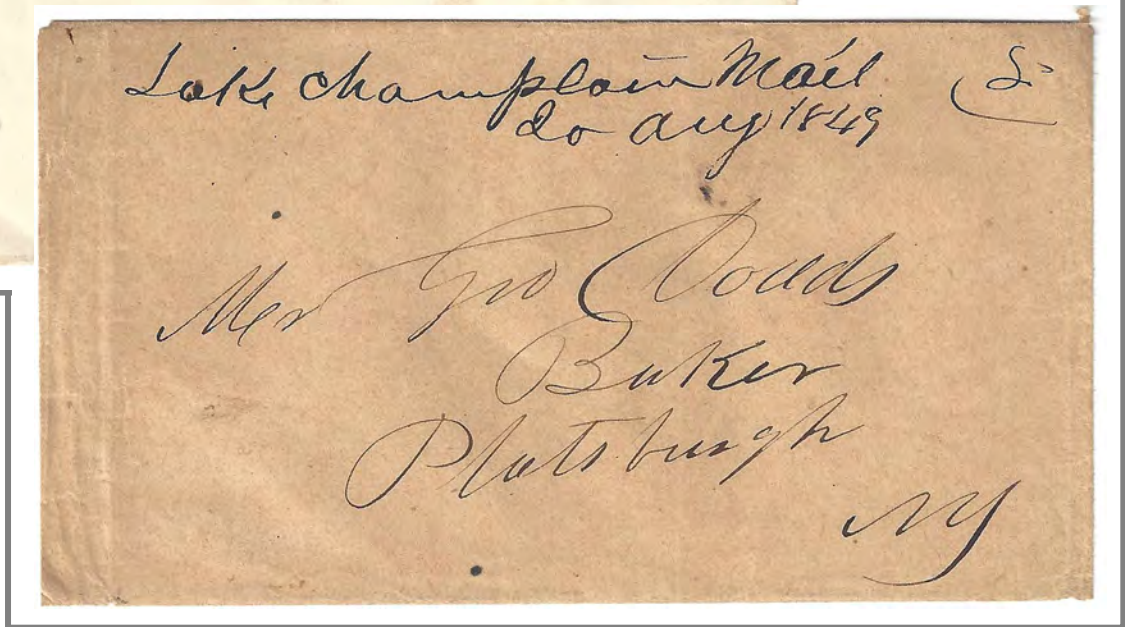
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service

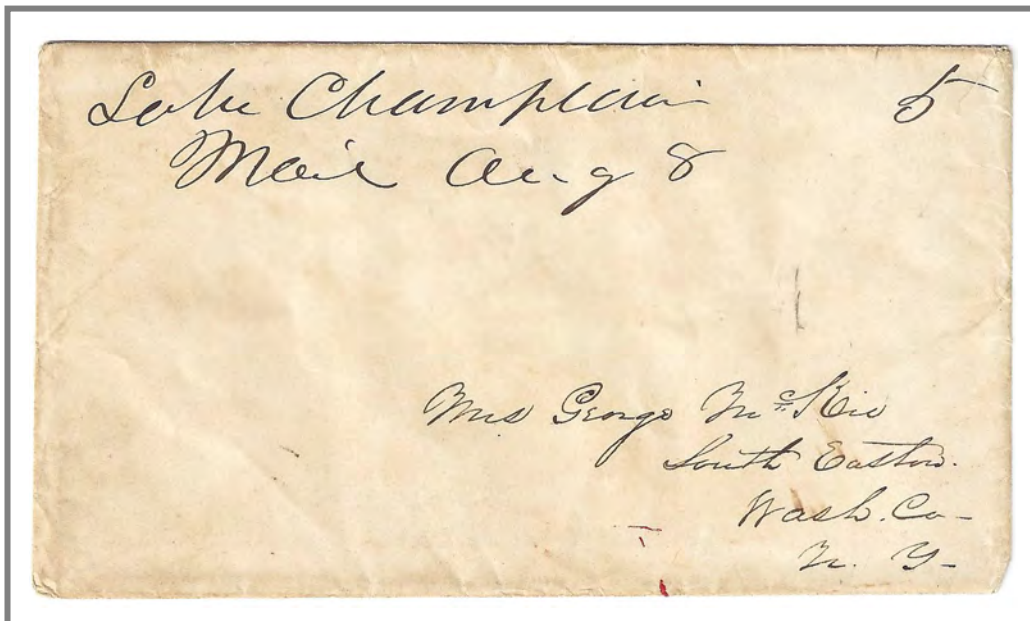
1849, First Month



Type 1A postmarks
(Agent Turner)



10 and 20 August 1849 "Lake Champlain Mail" route agent William H. Turner postmarks
both rated 5¢ due for under 300 mile distance, earlier with undated postmark



Type 1B postmarks
(Agent Collamer)

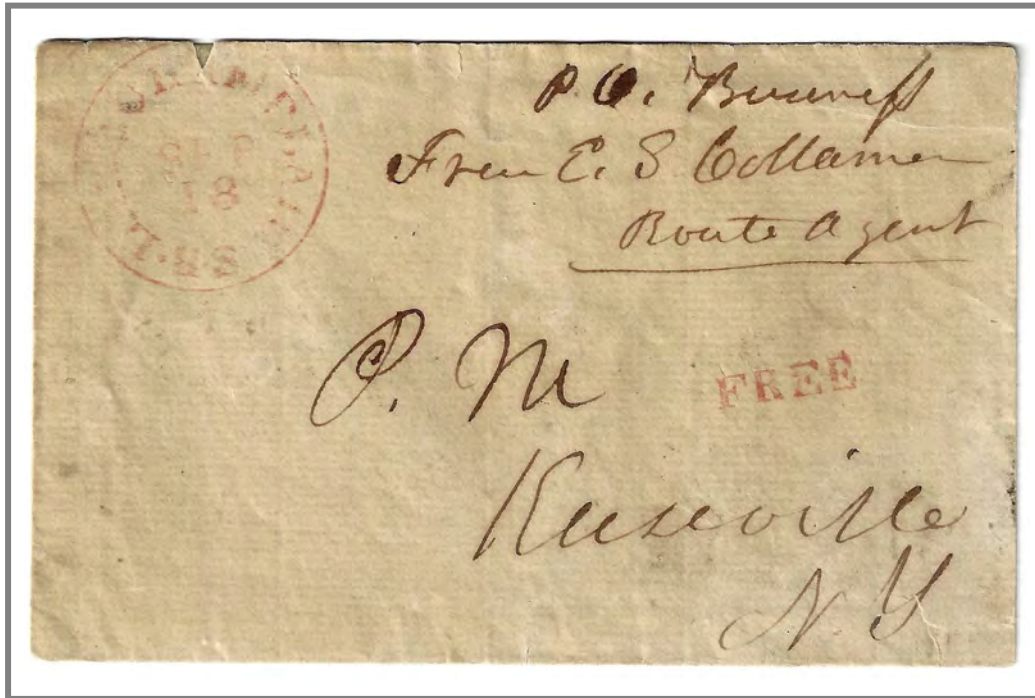
8 August 1849 "Lake Champlain Mail" route agent E. S. Collamer postmark
5¢ due rate for under 300 mile distance

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service

Postmark Types

Late in 1849, the agents were each supplied with their own devices for stamping postmarks. The handstamps vary in the letter-spacing which allows them to also be differentiated. The devices were handed off to their successor agents. In 1860, a smaller device replaced one of the original large devices. The other large device continued in use.



Collamer's handwriting on this cover establishes that the manuscript postmark (type 1B) and handstamped postmark (type 2B) were both applied the same agent. This fact, when coupled with appointment dates of new agents, allows for a correct pairing of device and agents including the succession chain.

18 September 1849 "Lake Champlain S.B." route agent type 4 postmark and "FREE" handstamp endorsed "P.O. Business / Free E. S. Collamer / Route Agent" and to postmaster at Keeseville
the only reported waterway route agent free frank



Type 2A



Type 2B



Type 3A

Postmark Types

Route Agent names with dates of service

Type 2A:
 Nov 2 1849 to Nov 11 1849 in blue
 Jun 13 1850 to Aug 19 1856 in black

Agent Turner: Jul 1 1849 to Apr 30 1851
 Agent F.D. Meacham: May 1 1851 to May 31 1853
 Agent Jesse Carpenter: Jun 1 1853 to Aug 8 1858

Type 2B:
 Sep 17 1849 to Jun 17 1850 in red
 Sep 18 1851 to Sep 2 1869 in black

Agent Edwin S. Collamer: Jul 1 1849 to 30 May 1853
 Agent M.S. Hoffnagle: May 31 1853 to Apr 10 1861
 Agent Curtis Allen: Apr 11 1861 to Sep 30 1865+?

Type 3A:
 Jul 18 1860 to 1874

Agent Henry B. Hine: Aug 9 1858 to Mar 28 1861
 Agent William Viele: Mar 29 1861 to Sep 30 1861+?

The type 2A postmark, which shows a wider space between the "E" and the "C," was used by route agent William H. Turner. Only two examples are known in blue. The other, bearing a bisected 10¢ 1847 issue, was used on 2 November 1849.



Type 2A



11 November 1849 letter dated "Montreal" to New York City
route agent type 2A postmark and "10" due rate handstamp for distance over 300 miles
two reported uses of postmark in blue

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service

1849

The type 2B postmark, which shows a smaller space between the "E" and the "C," was used by route agent Collamer and his successor agents. It is reported used in red by Collamer between 17 September 1849 and 17 June 1850.



Type 2B



17 September 1849 letter dated "Lake Champlain" to New York City route agent type 2B postmark and "5" due rate handstamp for distance to 300 miles **earliest reported use of this postmark**



26 November 1849 letter dated "Saint Johns, Quebec" to New York City route agent type 2B postmark and "10" due rate handstamp for distance over 300 miles

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service

1850



17 June 1850 Lake Champlain route agent postmark (type 2B, agent Collamer) folded entire to Burlington, VT, prepaid 5¢ 1847 issue with matching cancel under 300 mile distance



13 June 1850 letter from **Canada**, via St. Johns, to New York City
15 June 1850 Lake Champlain route agent postmark (type 2A, agent Turner), manuscript cancel prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue for over 300 mile distance, redundant "PAID" and "10" handstamps

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Route Agent Service

1850

The type 2A marking is known in black from 13 June 1850 until 19 August 1856. The device was used by agent Turner until 1 May 1851 when he was replaced by agent F.D. Meacham who used the device until he was replaced by Jesse Carpenter on 1 June 1853.



Type 2A



11 October 1850 Quebec, Canada, via St. Johns to Burlington, their 16 October backstamp
17 October route agent type 2A postmark (agent Turner), "5" due rate handstamps



16 October 1850 Plattsburgh, NY to Fremont, Ohio
17 October route agent type 2A postmark (agent Turner) and "10" due rate for over 300 miles

Both covers are postmarked on the same date. The upper cover posted from east side of the lake in Vermont and the lower cover from the west side of the lake in New York.



LONG ISLAND SOUND



The Long Island Sound served as a gateway to interstate commerce during the steamboat era with mail routes proliferating. Direct steamboat routes connected New York City with ports on the Sound including New Haven, New London and Stonington. Steamboats also directly reached ports on the Connecticut River north to Hartford and the Thames River to Norwich. After the completion of the Long Island Railroad between Brooklyn and Greenport in July 1844, an additional combination train and steamboat route was available. During the period between 1840 and 1860 most of these routes were served by mail line steamboats.

New York, 1825

STEAM BOAT

The "STEAM BOAT" handstamp on letter below is the same marking introduced in 1823 that is shown in the Hudson River Mail section. The 1823 Act made all coastal waterways postal routes and letters entering from steamboats were subject to the same domestic postal charges as if carried by land.

STEAM BOAT



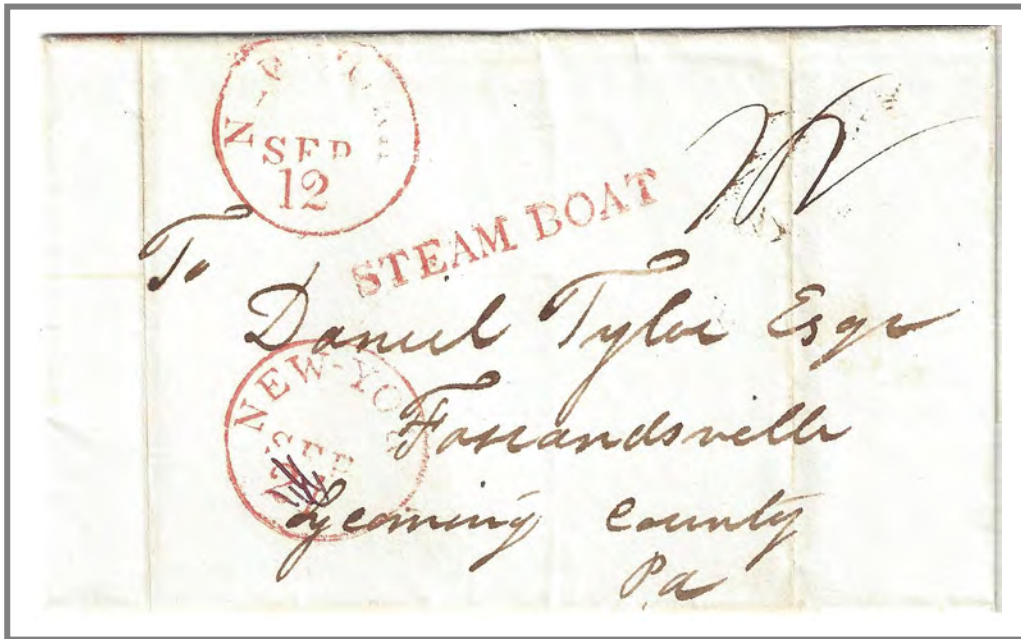
8 November 1825 Providence, RI, per steamer Fulton via New York City, to Petersburg, VA entered at New York with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 25¢ due

LONG ISLAND SOUND

New York, 1838

STEAM BOAT

STEAM BOAT



12 September 1838 New London, CT via New York City to Farrandsville, PA entered at New York with larger style "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and manuscript 18¾¢ due



27 November 1834 Newport, RI via New York City to Sec. of Treasury, Washington, DC entered at New York with larger style "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and manuscript "f(ree)"

LONG ISLAND SOUND

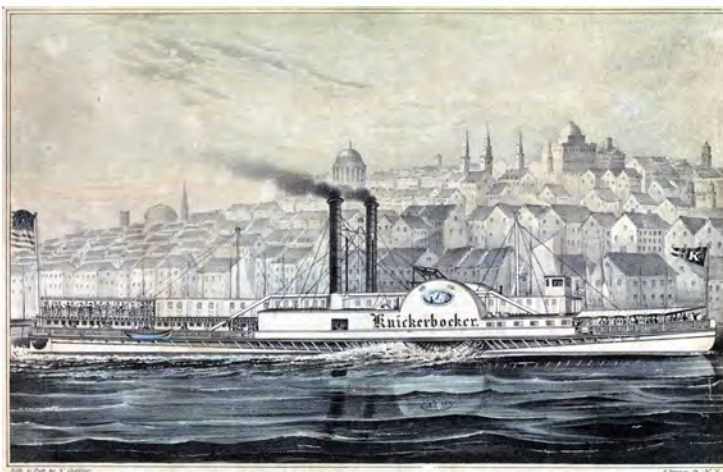
New York, 1846

STEAM BOAT
(Father) Knickerbocker

A handstamp with an image of "Father Knickerbocker" was used briefly in May 1846 on loose letters carried by the steamer Knickerbocker. There are two known examples, the one below dated 18 May and another dated 22 May.



18 May 1846 letter to Defiance, OH
entered at New York with larger style "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and manuscript 10¢ due
two reported examples of the "Father Knickerbocker" handstamp



**REGULAR MAIL LINE BE
TWEEN BOSTON & NEW YORK,**
by the fast and splendid steamers OREGON
and KNICKERBOCKER.
The steamer OREGON, commanded by Capt. A. P. St. John, and KNICKERBOCKER, commanded by Capt. S. Thayer, will run throughout the season, from the first day of April, in connection with the Stonington and Providence and Boston and Providence Railroads, leaving New York daily, Sundays excepted, from pier No. 3 North River, at 5 o'clock, P.M. and Stonington at 9 o'clock P.M. or upon the arrival of the mail train from Boston.
The OREGON will leave New York—Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
Leave Stonington—Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
The KNICKERBOCKER will leave New York—Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Leave Stonington—Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
For passage or freight inquire on board of the boat at pier No. 3 N. R. or of
GEO. E. FAIRCHILD, No. 19 West st.

This 16 May 1846 advertisement includes the schedule of the "mail line" steamers Knickerbocker and Oregon on the route between New York and Stonington. It is significant that Seth Thayer is listed as captain of the Knickerbocker. On 6 July 1846, when the Knickerbocker was replaced on the route, Thayer was transferred to captain the steamer Oregon. The following month a "STEAMER OREGON" marking was introduced on that vessel.

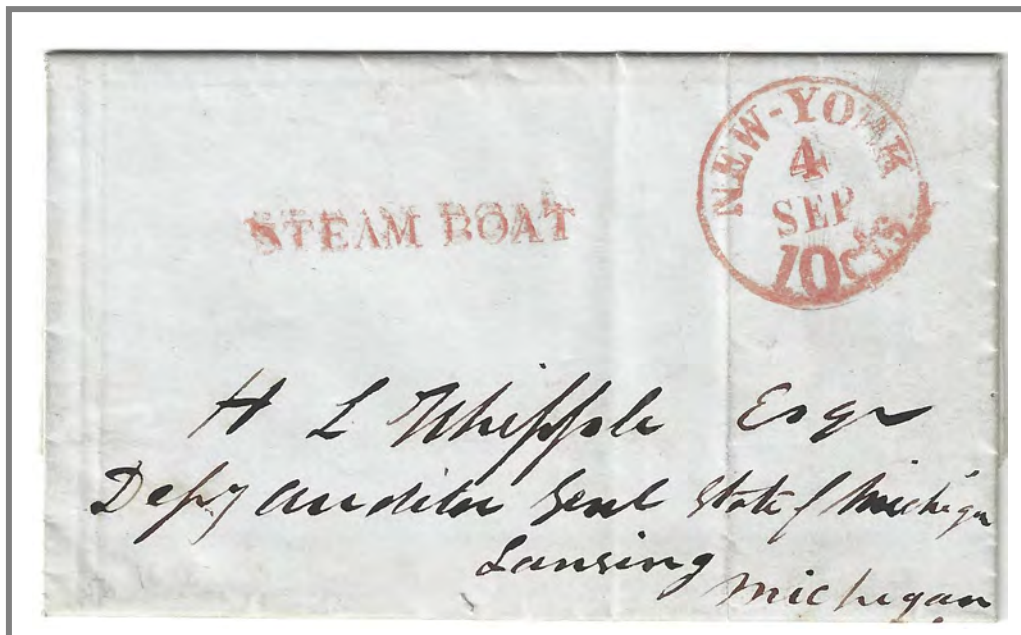
LONG ISLAND SOUND

New York, 1849 / 1848

STEAM BOAT



13 September 1849 St. Johns, New Brunswick to New York City entered at New York with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 5¢ due rate



2 September 1848 New London, CT via New York City to Lansing, MI entered at New York with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 10¢ due rate

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Hartford, 1827

STEAMBOAT

In 1827 Hartford, Connecticut introduced their "STEAMBOAT" handstamp. In the same year, the New York & Boston Line, via Hartford, began advertising steamers Oliver Ellsworth and Macdonough departing from New York to Hartford. Steamers operated across the Sound and up the Connecticut River to Hartford.



2 November 1827 New York City, via Hartford, CT, to Waterbury, CT on 3 November entered at Hartford with "STEAMBOAT" handstamp and 12(½)¢ due carried on the Oliver Ellsworth on her regularly scheduled Friday departure



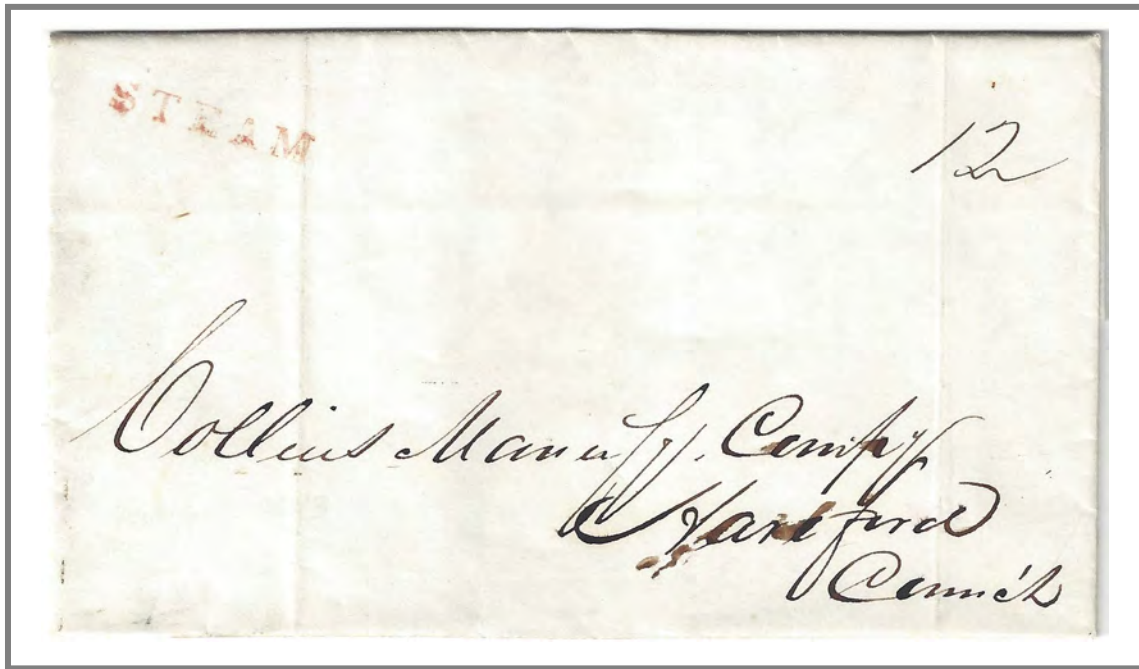
21 May 1839 New York City, via Hartford, CT, to Springfield, MA entered at Hartford with "STEAMBOAT" handstamp and 12½¢ due

LONG ISLAND SOUND

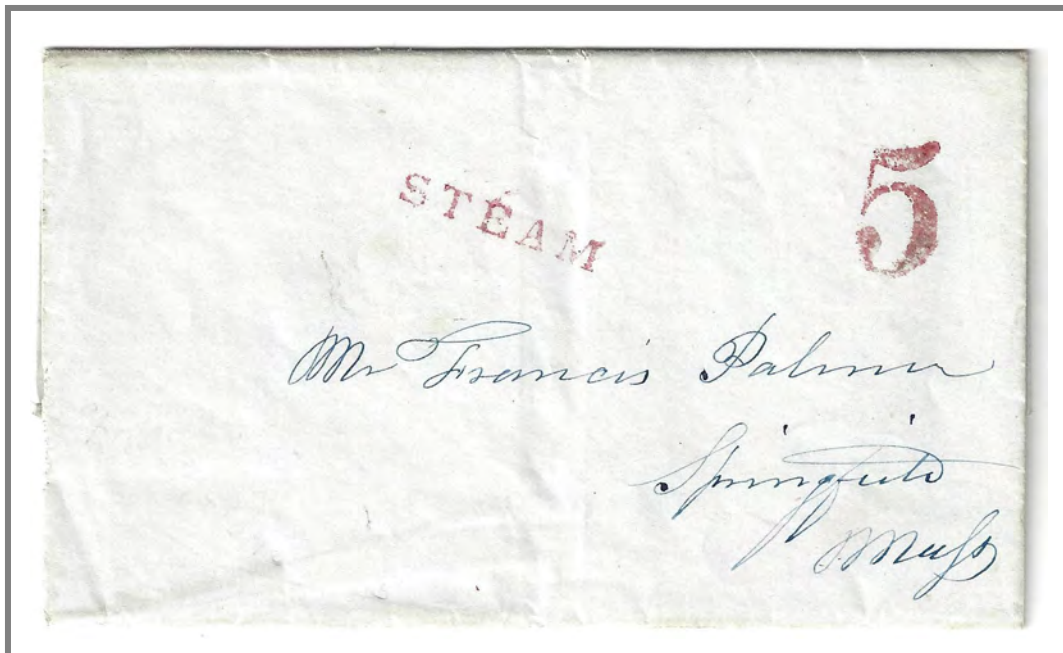
Hartford, 1843 / 1848

STEAM

STEAM



27 May 1843 New York City to Hartford, CT
entered at Hartford with "STEAM" handstamp and 12½¢ due



7 April 1848 New York City, via Hartford, CT, to Springfield, MA
entered at Hartford with "STEAM" handstamp and 5¢ due

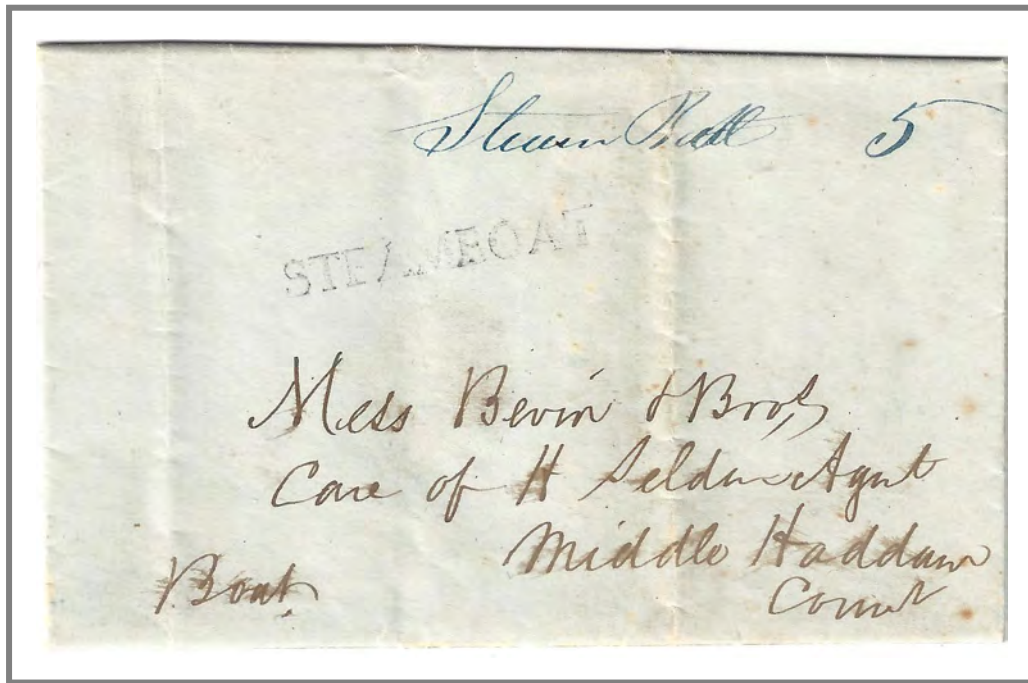
LONG ISLAND SOUND

Middle Haddam, 1847

STEAMBOAT

Middle Haddam is located on the Connecticut River south of Middletown and Hartford. The letter below is evidence that the steamboats delivered loose letters that are addressed to intermediate ports on their trips to Hartford.

STEAMBOAT



16 April 1847 New York City to Middle Haddam, CT
entered at Middle Haddam for local delivery with "STEAMBOAT"
manuscript "Steam Boat 5" due
the only reported example

The 24 March 1847 issue of the Hartford Courant included the following notice regarding early season ice on the Connecticut River:

NAVIGATION RESUMED - The Steam Propeller Uncas arrived here from New York, on Sunday - We understand the river is still filled with ice at Haddam, but that the water has made a channel through the meadows for a considerable distance connecting with the river again at a point below the obstruction. The opening is some fifty of sixty feet in width.

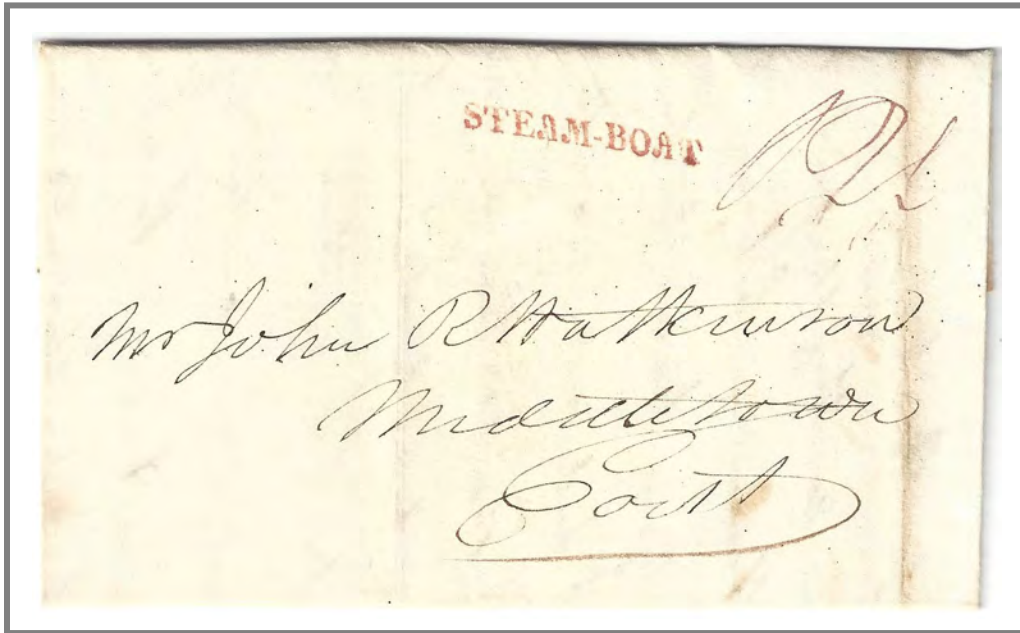
LONG ISLAND SOUND

Middletown, 1827 / 1845

STEAM(-)BOAT

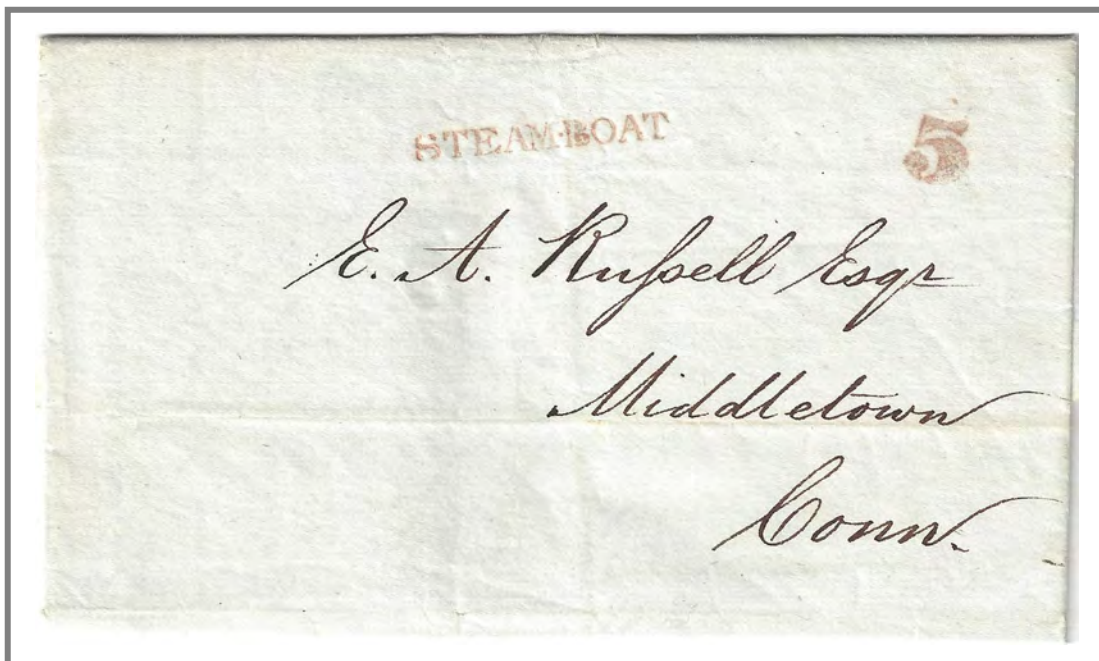
Two different handstamps were used on loose letters delivered from steamboats and addressed to Middletown. The first, with slanted letters, is reported between 1827 and 1832 and the second type is known used between 1837 and 1848.

STEAM-BOAT



2 July 1827 New York City to Middletown, CT
entered at Middletown with "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and 12½¢ due

STEAMBOAT



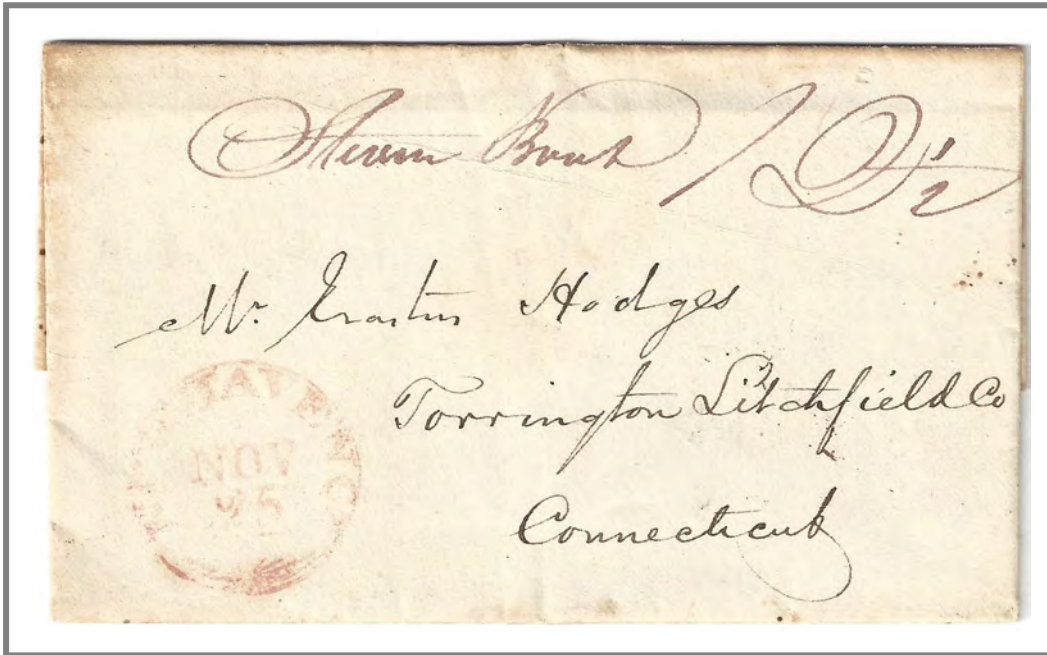
2 November 1845 New York City to Middletown, CT
entered at Middletown with "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and 5¢ due

LONG ISLAND SOUND

New Haven, 1828 / 1831

Steam Boat / B

As a terminal port, steamboat mail was entered at New Haven for the port city as well as destinations beyond the port. Various manuscript endorsements are known used from 1827 and a handstamp was introduced in 1836 and is known used to 1848.



25 November 1828 New York City, via New Haven, CT, to Torrington, CT entered at New Haven with manuscript "Steam Boat" handstamp and 12½¢ due



3 June 1831 New York City to New Haven, CT entered at New Haven with manuscript "B" and 10¢ due, delivered and postage paid 4 June re-mailed from New Haven back to New York City with postmark and 10¢ due the only reported "B" marking used at a Long Island Sound port

LONG ISLAND SOUND

New Haven, 1836 / 1842

STEAM-BOAT

STEAM-BOAT

Both the letters below bear New Haven postmarks. Port postmarks typically appear only on letters being transmitted beyond the port and the postmarks are dated with the date the letters are to be transmitted.



18 December 1836 New York City, via New Haven, to Hartford, CT entered at New Haven with dark green "STEAM-BOAT" arch handstamp and 12½¢ due



22 January 1842 New York City, via New Haven, to Hartford, CT entered at New Haven with "STEAM-BOAT" arch handstamp and 12½¢ due

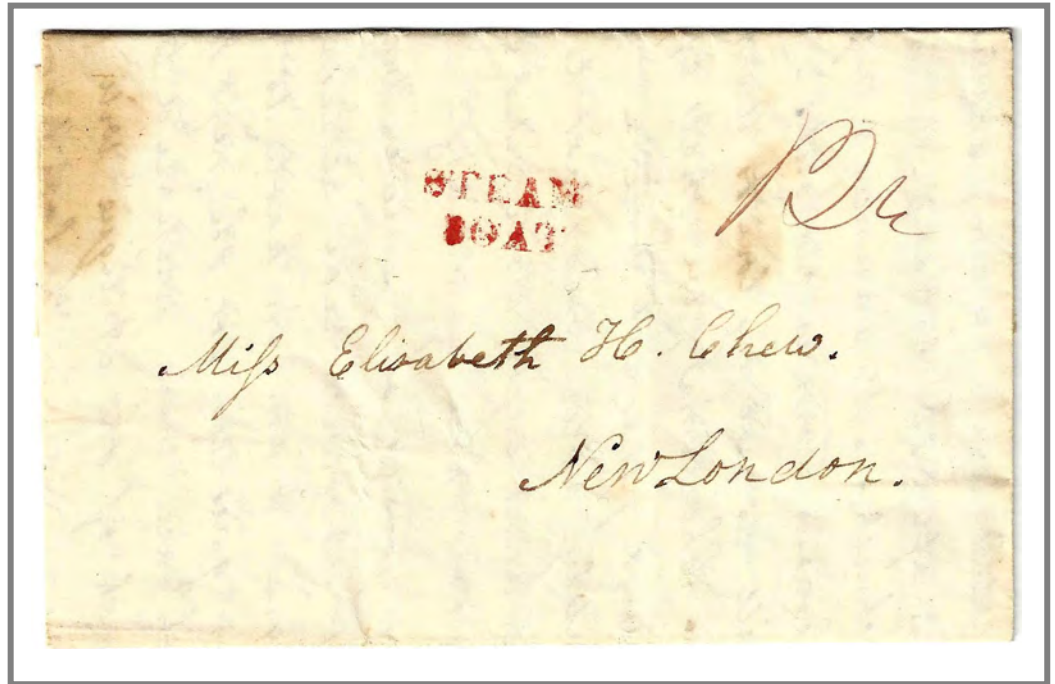
LONG ISLAND SOUND

New London, 1842 / 1850

STEAM BOAT

New London used two different "STEAM BOAT" handstamps. The larger device (21mm long) is known used between 1827 and 1840 and the smaller device (17mm long) is reported used from 1837 to 1851.

STEAM
BOAT



1842 New York City to New London, CT
entered with larger style "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and 12½¢ due

STEAM
BOAT



26 August 1850 Rockville, NY (on Long Island) to New London, CT
entered with smaller style "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and 5¢ due handstamp
carried outside the mails, via Long Island RR, to Greenport and on steamer Alice to New London

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Norwich, 1848 / 1850

STEAMBOAT 5

Contract mail and loose steamboat letters were handled differently. The Post Office contracted with the Long Island Railway (June 1845 to June 1849, Route #806) for service from New York City, via rail to Greenport, and then via steamer to Norwich. Closed bags of mail were postmarked at origin and delivered at Norwich. The loose letter at foot was deposited in a wharf box for a steamer to take directly from New York City to Norwich.



1 June 1848 New York City in closed bag, via Norwich, to Windham, CT endorsed for, and carried by, steamer *Knickerbocker* from New York to Norwich few mails that entered at the post office include name of steamer endorsements



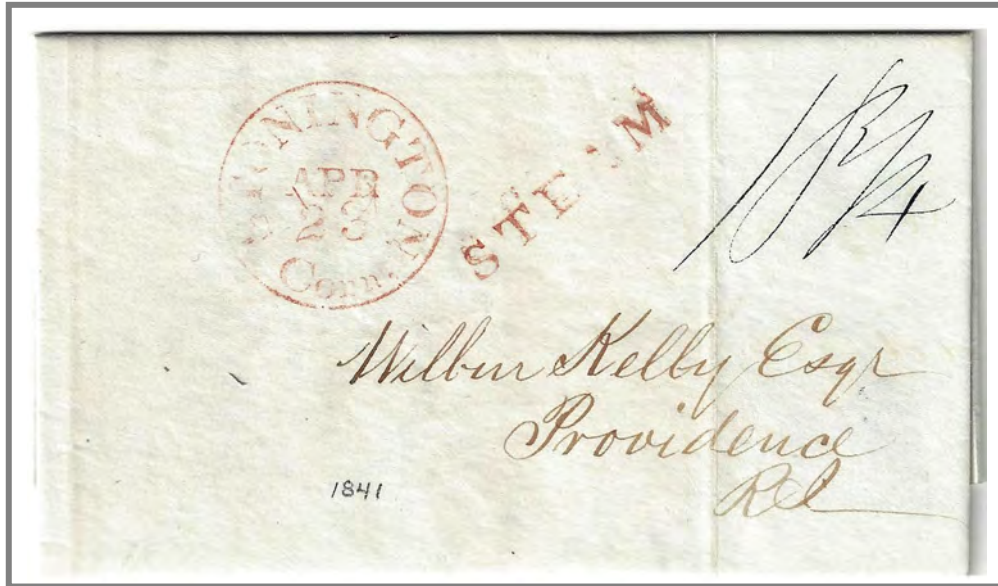
20 March 1850 New York City, via Norwich, to Windham, CT, "STEAM BOAT 5" integral 5¢ due

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Stonington, 1841

STEAM

Loose letters carried on contract route #801 are shown below. The New Jersey Steam Navigation Co. held a post office contract to carry mail six days a week between New York City and Stonington by steamboat. These letters were carried outside the contract mails and were deposited into a wharf letter box instead of the post office.



22 April 1841 New York City, via Stonington, to Providence, RI
by steamer Massachusetts, entered at Stonington with "STEAM" handstamp and 18¾¢ due
23 April postmark for onward transmission



16 August 1841 New York City, by steamer Narragansett to Stonington, then to Providence, RI
entered at Stonington with "STEAM" handstamp and 18¾¢ due, 17 April postmark

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Providence, 1825

STEAM BOAT

STEAM BOAT



(Saturday) 19 March 1825 New York City, by steamboat *Connecticut* direct to Providence entered at Providence with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 6¢ due an early use of this marking on a letter carried on this route

RHODE ISLAND STEAM BOAT LINE.
The **FULTON**, capt. Robert S. Bunker, will depart for Providence on Wednesdays, at 3 o'clock, P. M. and the **CONNECTICUT**, capt. Comstock, on Saturdays, at 3, P. M.

FROM PROVIDENCE.
The **Connecticut** will be despatched every Wednesday, at 3 o'clock, P. M. and the **Fulton** every Saturday at the same hour.

After the 1st of April the line will be formed so that a boat will leave New-York every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 3 o'clock, P. M. and one from Providence on the same days and the same hour.

m15.

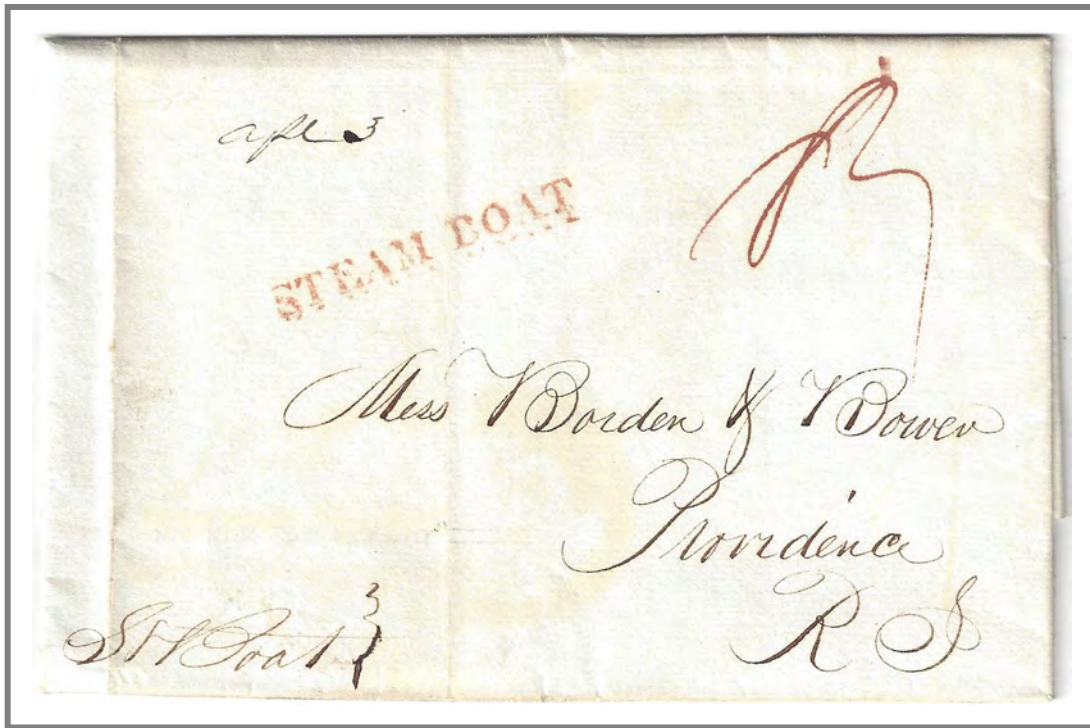
March 1825 advertisement for the Rhode Island Steam Boat Line and Saturday steamboat *Connecticut*.

LONG ISLAND SOUND

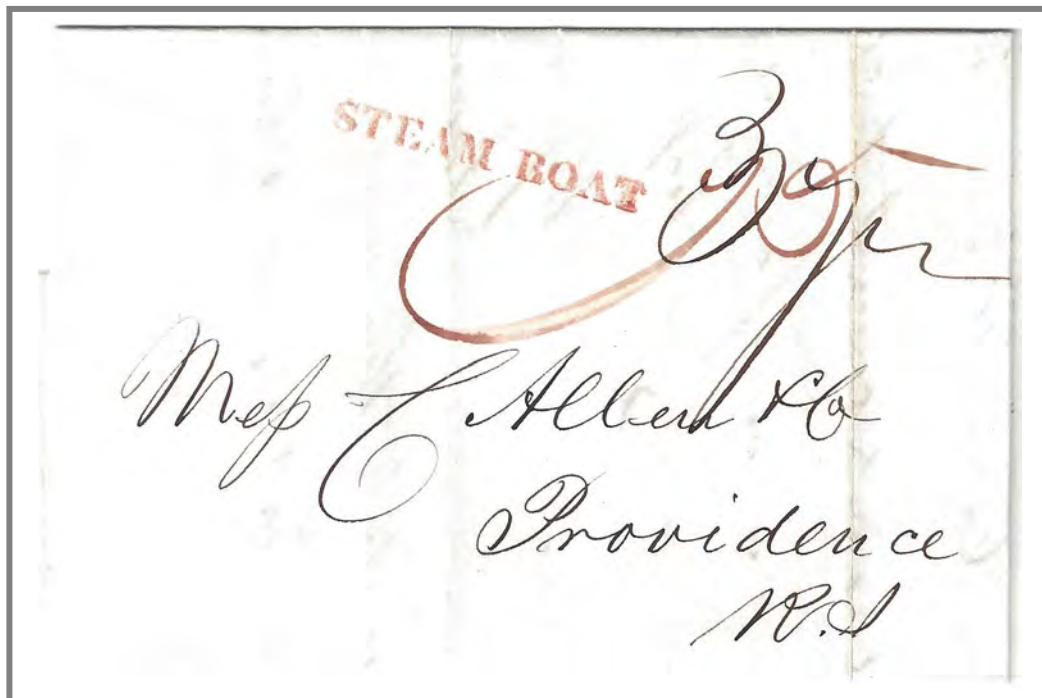
Providence, 1836 / 1841

STEAM BOAT

The direct route by steamboat between New York City to Providence did not have a mail contract at any point during the period. The route was used for freight and passengers.



2 April 1836 New York City direct by steamer to Providence, RI entered at Providence with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 18¾¢ due rate



3 October 1839 New York City double rate letter by steamer to Providence, RI entered at Providence with "STEAM BOAT" handstamp and 37½¢ due for double rate

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail

In 1843, both agents on the route (arbitrarily labeled agent A and agent B), were supplied with two postmarks, one with "N. YORK" at top for northbound mail and the other with "BOSTON" at top for use on southbound mail. The two different New York markings are shown below, the type 1A was used by agent A and the type 1B by agent B. The two different Boston postmarks are shown on the following page.



Type 1A



Type 1B

New York type A has the "N" below the "PR" while type B shows the "N" below the "P."



(top letter) 7 October 1843 New York to North Andover, MA, type 1A postmark
(lower letter) 23 October 1846 New York City to Taunton, MA, type 1B postmark

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail

The two different Boston markings, used on southbound mail, are shown below. The type 2A was used by agent A and the type 2B by agent B. The two different New York postmarks used on northbound mail are shown on the previous page.



Type 2A



Type 2B

Boston type A has the "B" below the "XP" while type B shows the "B" below the "P."



(top letter) 25 September 1851 Providence, RI to New York City, type 2A postmark
(lower letter) 11 July 1848 Boston to New York City, type 2B postmark

LONG ISLAND SOUND

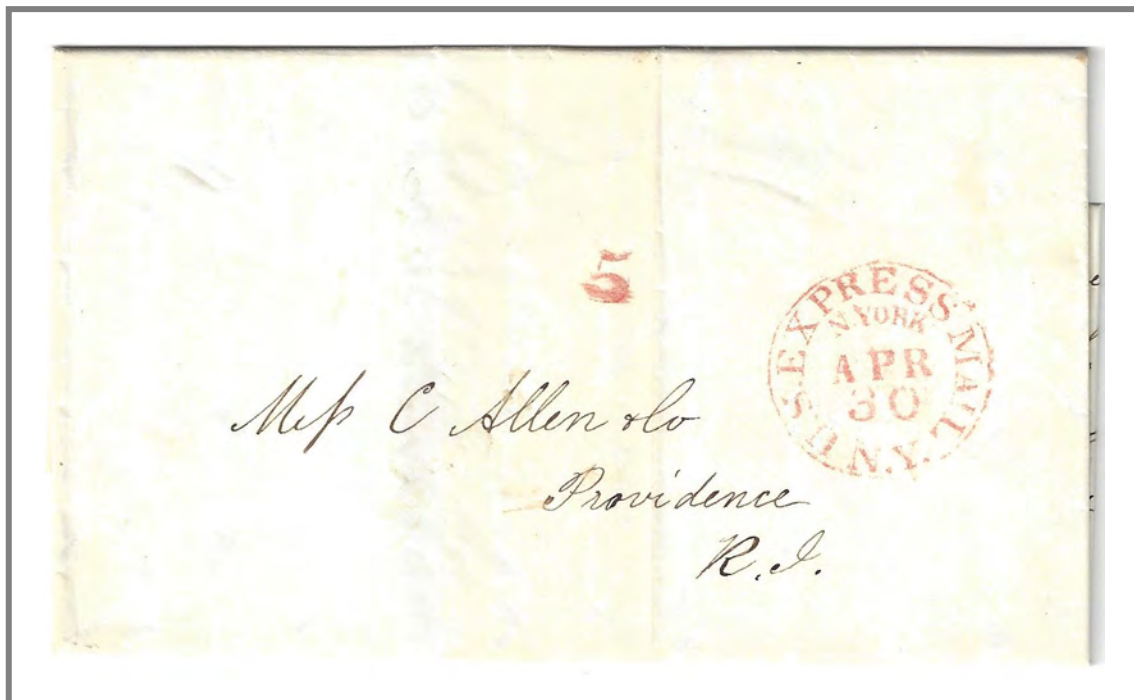
Route Agent Service

US Express Mail

A single set of rating handstamps was used by each agent after the 1845 postage reduction. Note the "5" rate stamp of agent "A" (top) and that of agent "B" (below).



21 April 1849 New York to Providence, RI, type 1A postmark and large "5" rate mark



30 April 1851 New York to Providence, RI, type 1B postmark and small "5" rate mark

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail

Route agents were not allowed to accept payments in cash. Both of the letters below have "PAID" handstamps and represent payment by charge box accounts. Top example is mute while lower example is explicit.



17 August 1843 New York to Southampton, MA, type 1A postmark and manuscript 18¾¢ rate
"PAID" handstamp applied at destination (mute but payment to a recipient charge box)



25 April 1848 Boston to Philadelphia, "US EXPRESS MAIL BOSTON" type 2A postmark
prepaid double rate with pair 10¢ 1847 issue adhesives

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail

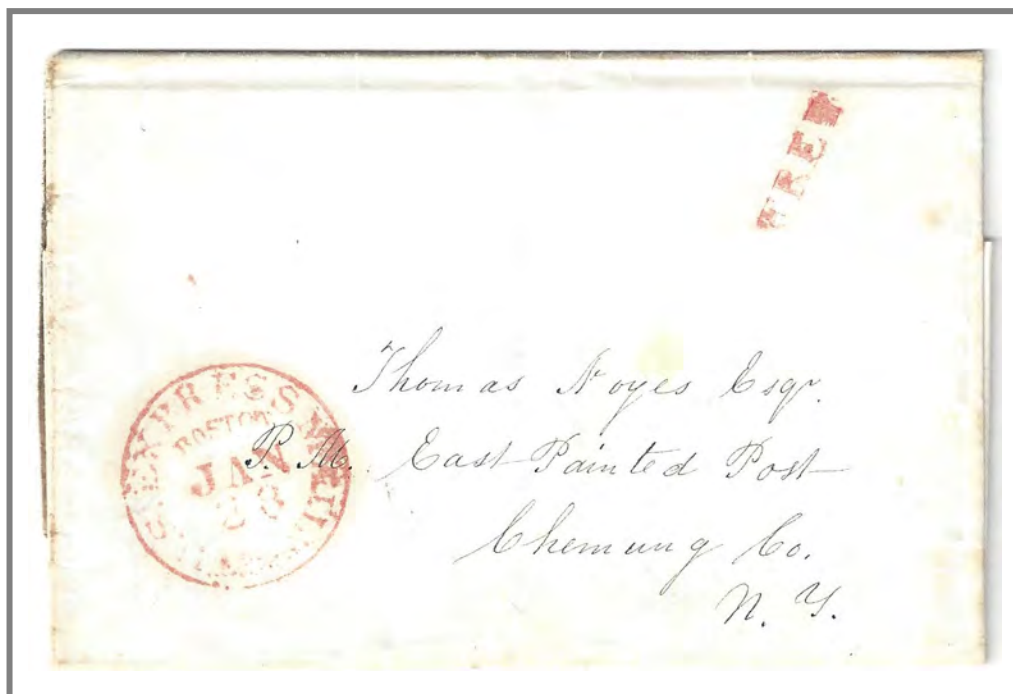
Pair of letters from same correspondence below show different handling by two different agents. One agent corrected the "Boston" portion of his type 1B device in manuscript to "Stonington Ct." for use on letters picked up at that port. The other agent on the route did not.

Stonington

Ct.



18 August 1844 Stonington, CT to the PM at East Painted Post, NY, "FREE" handstamp "US EXPRESS MAIL BOSTON" route agent postmark, type 1A with "Stonington CT" over-wright three known examples of the Stonington overwrite



28 January 1845 Stonington, CT to the PM at East Painted Post, NY, "FREE" handstamp "US EXPRESS MAIL BOSTON" route agent postmark, type 1B without manuscript overwrite

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail



22 September 1851 New York to Bristol, RI, type 1B postmark in red
prepaid 3¢ orange brown shade 1851 issue, red grid cancel

By 1853 both route agents had switched to using black ink for postmarks.



8 March 1853 New York to New Bedford, MA, type 1A postmark struck in black, prepaid 3¢
16 November 1853 New York to Richmond, ME, type 1B postmark struck in black, prepaid 3¢

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

US Express Mail



two different postmarks applied by same agent to 3¢ postal stationery issue to Boston
31 July 1854 type 2B "BOSTON" postmark applied in error when leaving New York City
1 August type 1B "NEW YORK" postmark correctly applied to northbound mail
a proving cover showing that a single agent (agent B) held both devices



19 June 1855 use to San Francisco, CA, type 2A postmark, prepaid 6¢, "Due 4" handstamp
via New York City, type 2A agent postmark and manuscript "4 cts due" applied by agent
the postal rate to California had been increased to 10¢ effective 1 April 1855

LONG ISLAND SOUND

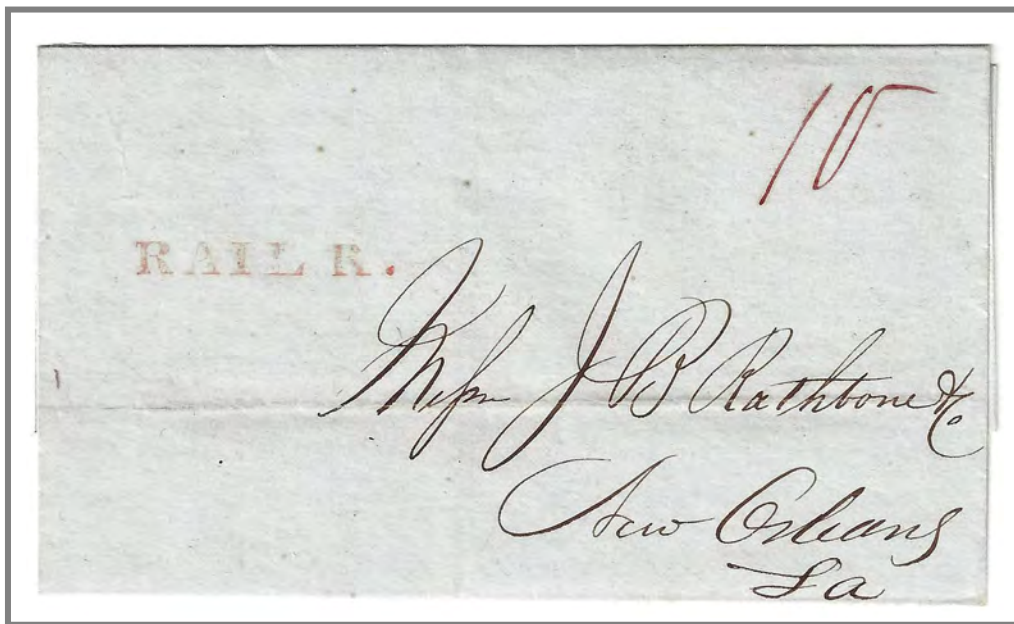
Route Agent Service

Long Island Railroad

In 1845, route agent service that provided an "extra" late mail on contract route #806 was initiated. The contract for this combination rail and steamboat route was awarded to the Long Island Rail Road Company. Service was by ferry between New York and Brooklyn, by rail to Greenport, by steamboat between Greenport and Stonington, CT and then by rail to Boston. The letter below is the only example carried westbound over the entire route.



Map of contract mail route #806. Steamboat service in blue, railroad service in red.



11 April 1846 Boston, via Stonington, Greenport and New York, to New Orleans
"RAIL R." route agent postmark and due 10¢ rate for over 300 miles
the only reported westbound use

LONG ISLAND SOUND

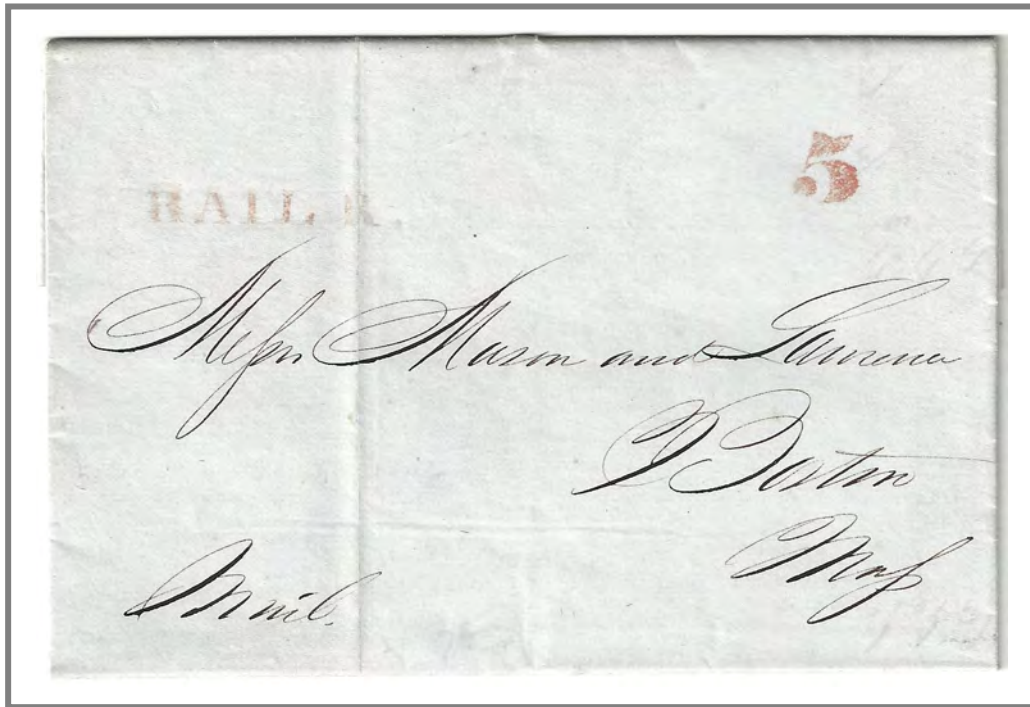
Route Agent Service

Long Island Railroad

Route agent postmark and "5" rate handstamp was used by agent George W. Smith on the rail and steam boat route #806. The markings are reported only between 26 February and 5 May 1846.

RAIL R.

5



19 March 1846 New York City to Boston
"RAIL R." route agent postmark and due 5¢ rate handstamp



24 April 1846 New York City to Boston
"RAIL R." route agent postmark and due 5¢ rate handstamp

LONG ISLAND SOUND

Route Agent Service

Steamer Oregon

From August 1846 until it was withdrawn from the line on 18 November 1847, the Steamer Oregon carried a route agent on the portion of the express mail route #801 between New York City and Stonington, CT. The first style of the "STEAMER OREGON" oval handstamps bears the steamer name at foot. It is reported used between 6 August 1846 and 14 November 1846.



Type 1



7 November 1846 New York City to Providence, RI

"STEAMER 5 OREGON." handstamp with integral rate, "PAID" handstamp (charged to box on arrival)



11 November 1846 New York City to Boston, MA

"STEAMER 5 OREGON." agent handstamp with integral due rate

LONG ISLAND SOUND

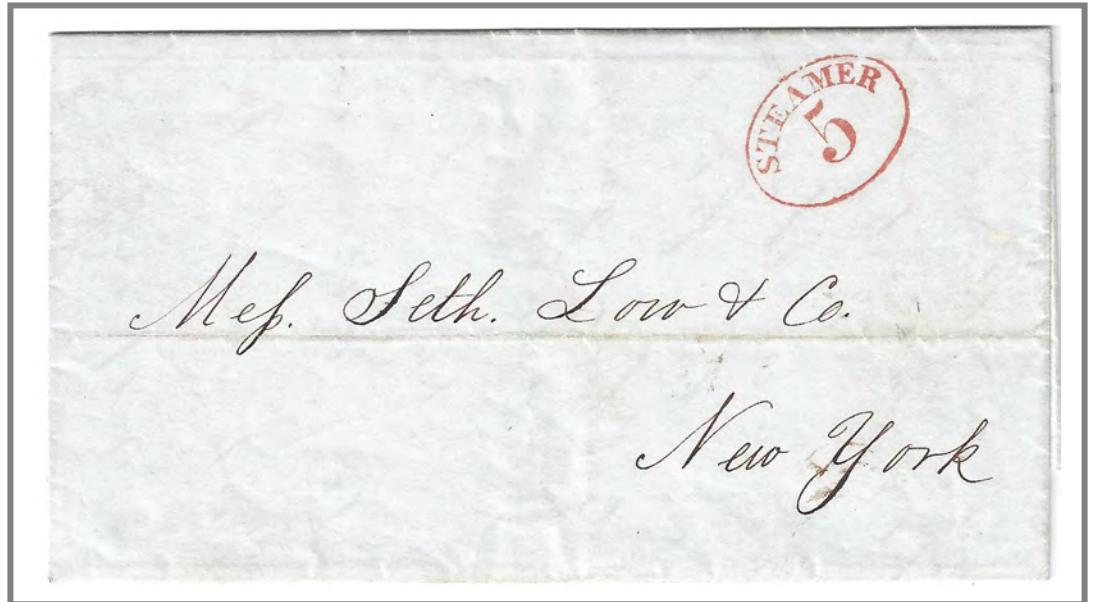
Route Agent Service

Steamer Oregon

The second and third style of the oval marking simply states "STEAMER" and the amount due. The "5" marking is known used from 21 November 1846 to 27 October 1847 while the much rarer "10" marking is known from 16 April 1847 to 30 September 1847. These markings were only used by the agent onboard the steamer Oregon, which departed New York on Tuesday, Thursdays and Saturdays.



Type 2



4 June 1847 Boston to New York City
"STEAMER 5" route agent handstamp with integral 5¢ due rate



Type 3

3 May 1847 Providence, RI, via New York City, to Troy, NY
"STEAMER 10" route agent handstamp, and struck over "5" handstamp correcting the due rate
the earliest reported example of the "STEAMER 10" marking



LAKE ERIE MAIL



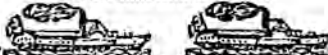
Although Buffalo became the dominant New York port for steam boats operating on Lake Erie, Black Rock, located just north on the Niagara River, was its equal before the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. By 1845, Buffalo had become one of the most active harbors in the country.

Black Rock, 1826

Black Rock B Free

The June 1826 advertisement shows the schedule of the Lake Erie steamboats. It shows departure and arrival dates of the steam boat Henry Clay operating between Black Rock and Detroit as well as the steam boat Superior between Detroit and Buffalo.

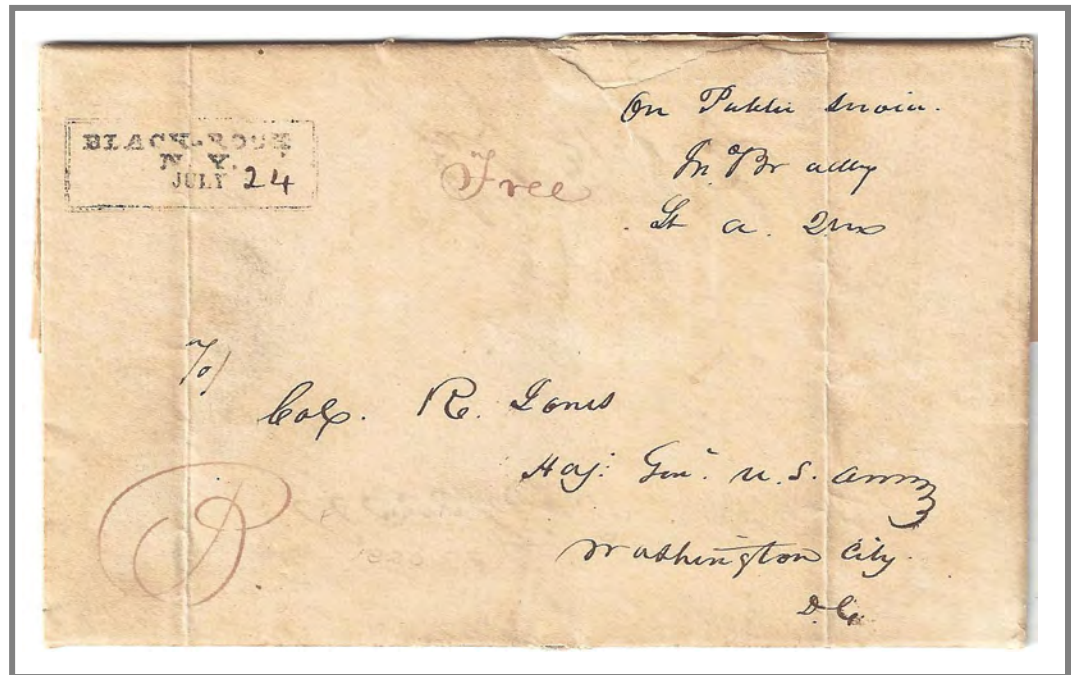
LAKE ERIE STEAMBOATS.



THE large, firm built, and elegant steamboats SUPERIOR, J. SHERMAN, Jr. master, and HENRY CLAY, W. Norton, master, will ply in concert the ensuing season—the former from Buffalo, and the latter from Black Rock, to Detroit, for the exclusive accommodation of passengers and their baggage, furniture, and farming implements. One of these will leave Buffalo or Black Rock every fourth day, touching on her way up, at Dunkirk or Portland, Erie, Grand River, Cleveland, and Sandusky; and on the same days the other will leave Detroit, touching at the same places on her passage down. The following are the dates upon which the boats will respectively sail:

SUPERIOR.	
From Buffalo at 9 A. M.	From Detroit at 4 P. M.
May 16, 24	May 20
June 10, 19, 27	June 6, 14, 23
July 5, 14, 22, 31	July 1, 10, 18, 26
August 6, 16, 25	August 4, 12, 21, 29
September 2, 11, 19, 27	September 6, 15, 23
October 6, 14, 23, 31	October 2, 10, 18, 27
November 3	November 4, 12
HENRY CLAY.	
From B. Rock at 8 A. M.	From Detroit at 4 P. M.
May 20, 29	May 24
June 6, 14, 23	June 2, 10, 19, 27
July 1, 10, 18, 26	July 5, 14, 22, 31
August 4, 12, 21, 29	August 2, 16, 25
September 6, 15, 23	September 2, 11, 19, 27
October 2, 10, 18, 27	October 6, 14, 23, 31
November 4	November 3

At Buffalo, for passage, &c. apply to Capt. SHERMAN. At Black Rock, to Capt. NORTON, or J. L. BARTON, agent for the Henry Clay. May 15, 1826. June 29—1826



6 July 1826 Fort Howard, Green Bay, WI (while Michigan Territory) to Detroit and via Lake Erie steam boat Henry Clay to Black Rock, NY, and on to Washington, DC
24 July Black Rock with manuscript "B" and "Free"
the only reported steamboat letter entering mails at Black Rock

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1820

Buffalo B

The *Walk-in-the Water* was the first steam boat on Lake Erie. It was built at Black Rock, below Buffalo, and launched on May 28, 1818. She ran successfully through the seasons of 1819 and 1820. In November 1821, a gale overtook her near Buffalo and she was wrecked.



B.



19 September 1820 Sandusky, OH, via Buffalo, to New Haven, CT
carried by steam boat *Walk-in-the-Water* to Buffalo (the only steamer on the Lake in 1820)
manuscript "B" of Buffalo and 25¢ due for distance rate
the earliest reported "B" entry from a Lake Erie steamboat

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1820

Buffalo B

On board the Penn

1828.
LAKE ERIE
STEAM BOAT LINE.

THE STEAM BOAT ENTERPRISE having been thoroughly repaired, and put in good condition, has been placed in line with the Boats already running on the Lake. In consequence of this addition to the Line, the following arrangements will be observed during the remainder of the season for running.

THE WILLIAM PENN,

John F. Wight, Master,

Leaves **BUFFALO** at 9 A. M.

July	1	9	17	25
August	2	10	18	26
September	3	11	19	27
October	5	13	21	29
November	6			

Leaves **DETROIT** at 9 A. M.

July	5	13	21	29
August	6	14	22	30
September	7	15	23	
October	1	9	17	25
November	2	10		

B 25

Honorable S. Watkins
in Senate
Albany

In his absence
J. J. Townsend

9 September 1828 "Onboard the (William) Penn, two miles out of Sandusky Bay" to Albany manuscript "B" of Buffalo and 25¢ due for distance rate letter regards the steamer being under sail with a broken piston

B Whiting - 25

70/ Mrs. Isabella Bloomfield

Detroit Burlington
Or. S.

ca. 1828 Detroit, Michigan Territory, via Buffalo, to Burlington, NJ manuscript "B" of Buffalo and 25¢ due for distance rate joint letter of Capt. Henry Whiting and his wife, Eliza (né Macomb)

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1829 / 1835

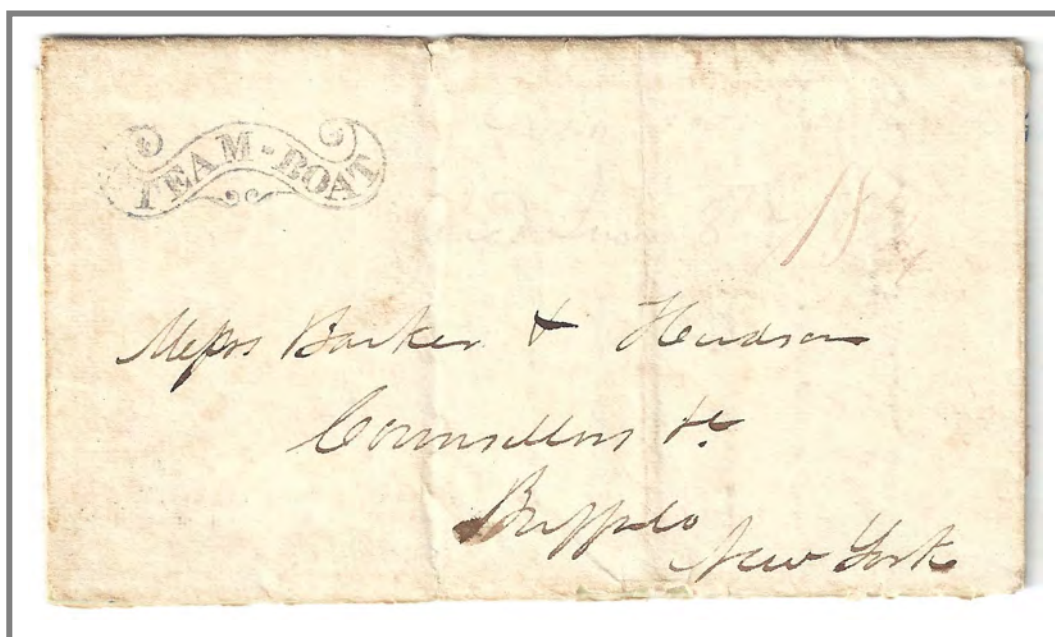
STEAM-BOAT

Buffalo introduced their fancy scroll handstamp for use on inbound steam boat letters in 1829. It was generally struck in red during the 1829 through 1834 seasons. It was struck in black in 1835. It was then struck in blue well into the 1850s.



1 November 1829 Sandusky, OH, via Buffalo, to New Haven, CT

2 November Buffalo postmark, "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and manuscript 25¢ due distance rate
earliest reported use of the handstamp



5 June 1835 Cleveland, OH to Buffalo

black "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and manuscript 18¾¢ due for distance origin to destination
fewer than four reported uses of handstamp in black

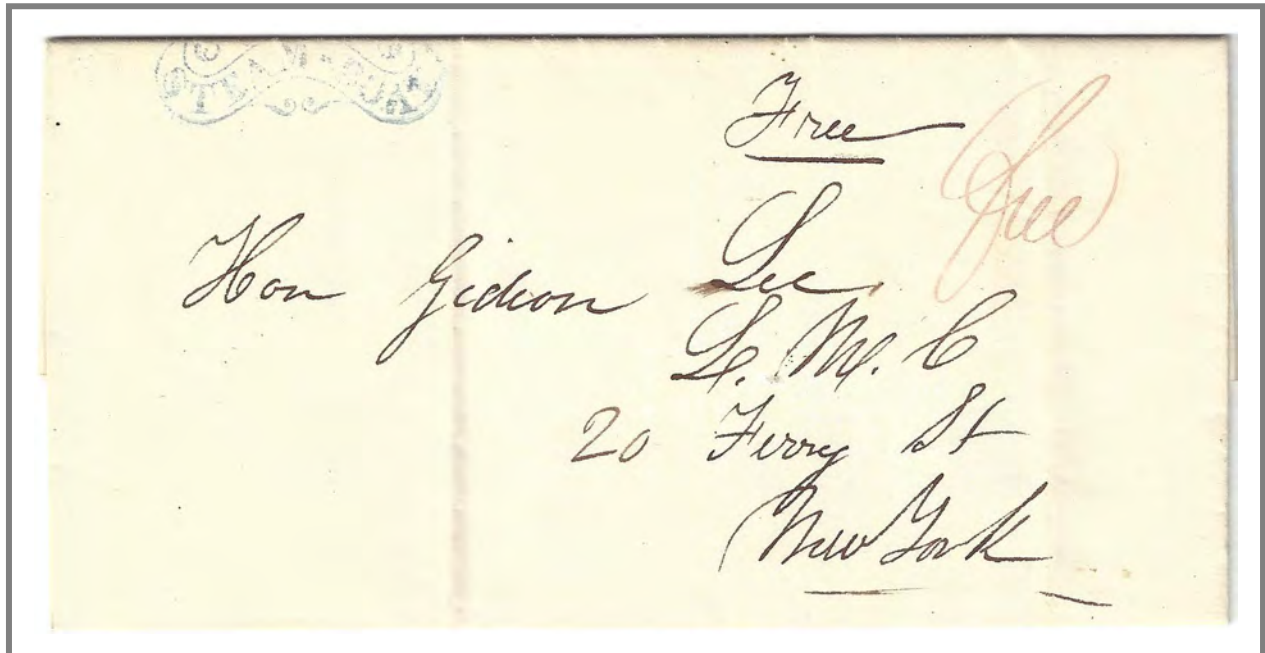
LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1832 / 1835

STEAM-BOAT



1 July 1832 Detroit, Michigan Territory, via Buffalo, to Washington, DC
 4 July Buffalo postmark, red "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and scroll "FREE" handstamp



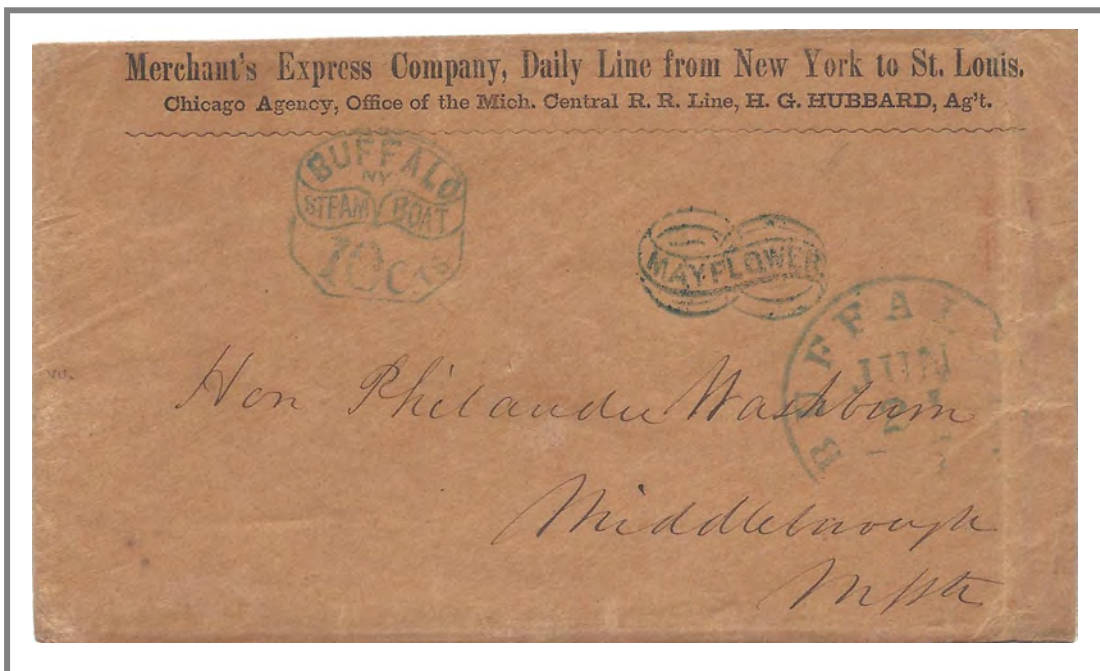
24 June 1835 Toledo, OH, via Buffalo, to New York City
 blue "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and manuscript "free"

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1850

STEAM-BOAT

The four covers shown on this and the following page are all uses from 1850 that show unusual rating practices at the Buffalo post office. The single weight rate for the over 300 miles distance between origin and destination was ten cents.



June 1850 Detroit, MI, per steamer *Mayflower*, via Buffalo, to Middleborough, NY
"MAYFLOWER" packet handstamp, 24 June Buffalo entry postmark with integral "10" due
redundant ornate "STEAM-BOAT 10 Cts" due handstamp for the over 300 miles rate



25 September 1850 Detroit, MI, via Buffalo with "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp, to Lockport, NY
26 September Buffalo postmark with internal "10" due overstruck with "20" due rate
letter mentions enclosed draft accounting for double weight due rate

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1850

STEAM-BOAT



9 September 1850 Cleveland, OH, via Buffalo to Naugatuck, CT
10 September Buffalo postmark with internal 10¢ due rate, no evidence of being overweight
ornate "STEAM-BOAT 5 Cts" due handstamp incorrectly struck
correct distance rate should have been 10¢



25 September 1850 Detroit, MI, via Buffalo, to Auburn, NY, prepaid with 5¢ adhesive
27 September Buffalo postmark, "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp
additional scroll "DUE 5 Cts" and scroll "FREE" handstamps applied at Buffalo
correct distance rate should have been 10¢ so the additional due 5¢ was correct

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Buffalo, 1850

STEAM-BOAT



July 1850 letter, via Buffalo to New York City, fully prepaid 10¢ 1847 issue stamp
23 July Buffalo postmark with internal 10¢ rate, fancy "STEAM-BOAT 10 Cts" handstamp
**One of two known examples of this marking used in
conjunction with the 1847 10¢ adhesive**



September 1850 letter, via Buffalo, to Poughkeepsie, NY, prepaid with 10¢ 1847 issue adhesive
9 September Buffalo postmark and scroll "STEAM-BOAT" handstamp

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Cleveland, 1840s

STEAM-BOAT



pre July 1845 letters from Buffalo, via Cleveland, to Dixon's Ferry, Illinois and Ashtabula, Ohio
"STEAM-BOAT" handstamp manuscript 25¢ and 18¾¢ distance rates



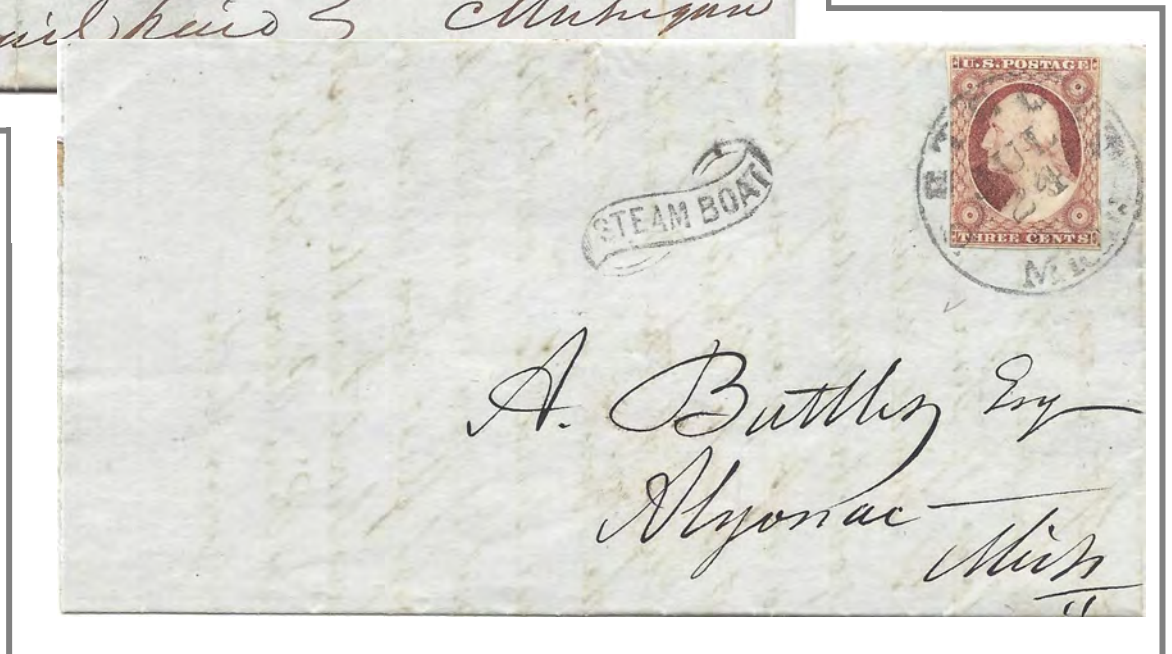
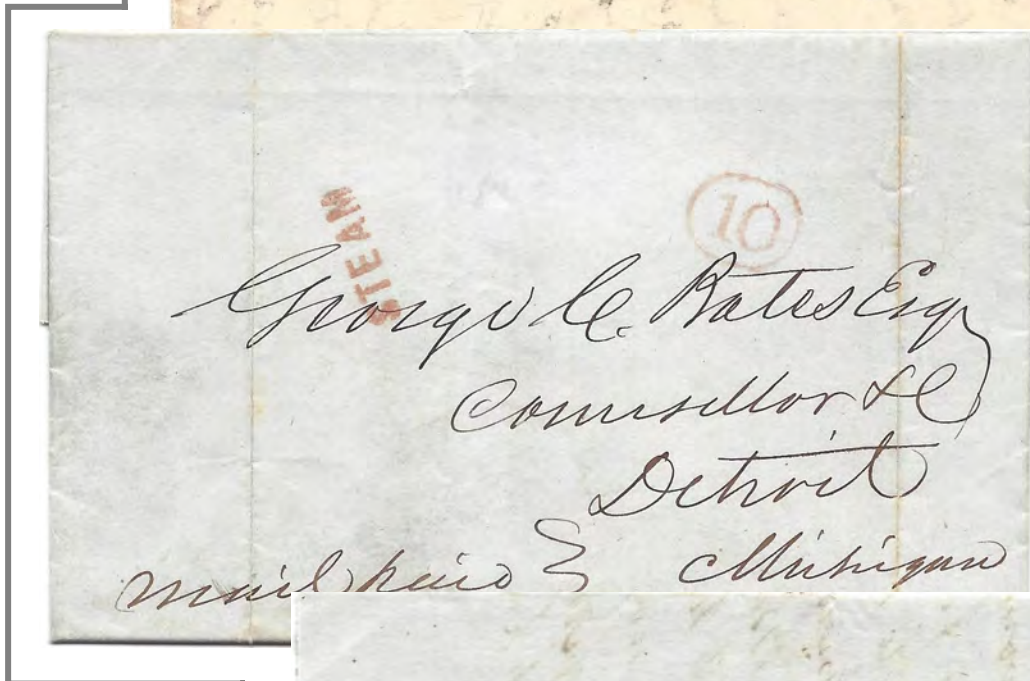
1 October 1844 Buffalo, via Cleveland, to Mansfield, OH
"STEAM-BOAT" handstamp and manuscript 12½¢ distance rate from origin to Mansfield

LAKE ERIE MAIL

Detroit, 1840 / 1845

STEAM BOAT

These three uses, all sent from Buffalo by steamboat, entered the mails at Detroit. Each bears a different steam or steamboat entry handstamp. The dates are 1840, 1848 and 1855.



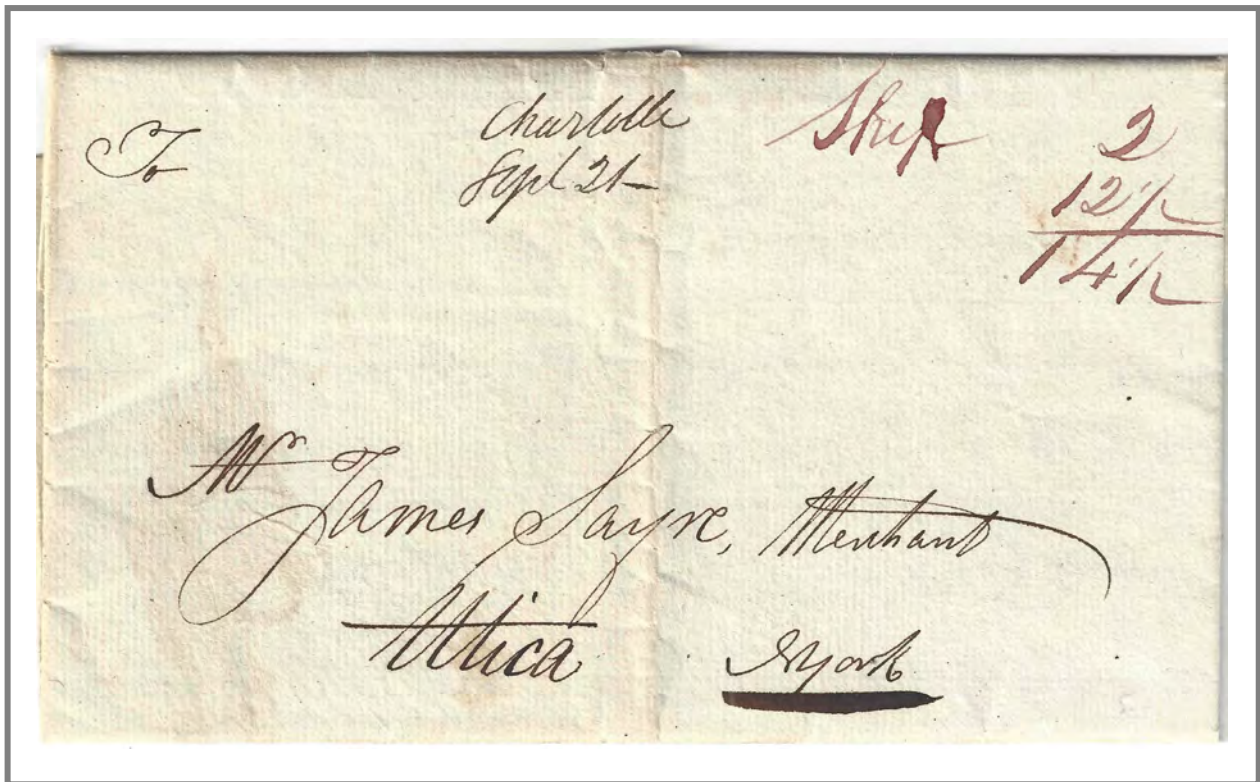


The first commercial steamboats began operations on Lake Ontario in 1816 with the launching of the Frontenac from the Canadian shore and the Ontario from the American side. There are few surviving postal artifacts carried by steamboat prior to the July 1845 start of contract service.

Charlotte, 1826

Charlotte Ship

The post office of Charlotte served briefly as the port of entry for Canadian mails destined for Rochester. In 1826 the steamer Ontario made regular stops and sailing vessels made occasional stops. In either case, the two cents ship fee was the proper charge.



12 September 1826 Hillier, Canada, via Charlotte, NY, to Utica, NY
21 September 1826 Charlotte postmark, entered US mails as a ship letter
Ship 2¢ plus 12½¢ = 14½¢ total due for 80 to 150 mile distance from Charlotte to Utica
the only reported ship letter entering mails at Charlotte

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

Rochester, 1838

SB / STEAM-BOAT

The 1810 and 1815 Post Office Acts specified how postage charges on letters received from steamboats were calculated. But as they only applied to "steamboats which shall pass from one port or place to another port or place in the United States," letters from Canada to the United States were excluded. The Lake Ontario ports correctly rated letters from Canada as ship letters.



24 April 1838 Coburg, **Canada**, endorsed for steam boat *Traveler* to Rochester, NY
26 April 1838 Rochester datestamp and manuscript "SB 6" due for port of entry delivery
the only reported example of their manuscript steamboat entry
the earliest reported use on Lake Ontario that entered mails as from a steamboat



15 May 1838 Hamilton, **Canada** via Rochester, NY, to Rensselaerville, NY
26 May Rochester datestamp, "STEAM BOAT" handstamp (less than a month after cover above)
39½¢ due rate (double 18¾¢ distance rate plus 2¢ captain's fee)
the earliest reported steamboat handstamp use from Lake Ontario

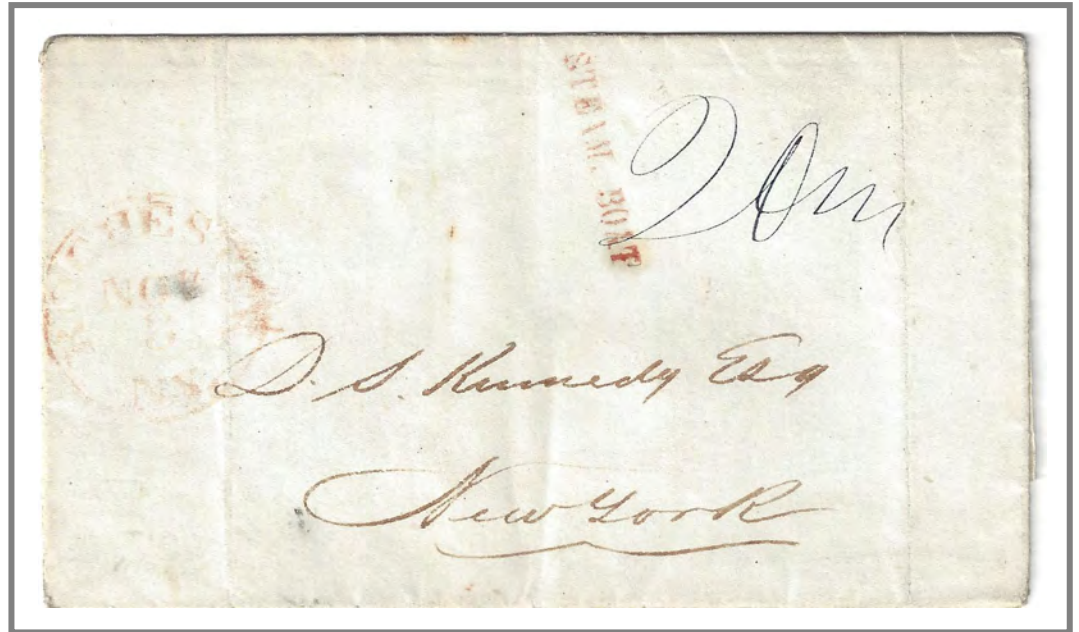
LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

Rochester, 1838

STEAM. BOAT

The top letter was treated as a ship letter originating in Canada and the lower letter was treated as having originated in the United States. When a steamboat master delivered letters to a port post office, he was required to attest to the origin of letters. However, if the boat had a drop box the captain could truthfully attest that they originated onboard, in America.

STEAM. BOAT



2 November 1842 Toronto, **Canada**, via Rochester, to New York City
3 November Rochester datestamp, smaller "STEAM. BOAT" handstamp
correctly rated as a ship letter, 20¾¢ due rate (18¾¢ distance rate plus 2¢ captain's fee)



28 May 1844 via Rochester, to Patent Office Washington, DC
29 May 1844 Rochester datestamp and smaller "STEAM. BOAT" handstamp
sender's "Free" endorsement accepted at Rochester but corrected to 25¢ due upon arrival
no ship fee charged indicating that this was treated as a letter originating from US port

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

Rochester, 1838

STEAM BOAT

STEAM BOAT



22 October 1850 Coburg, **Canada**, via Rochester, to New York City
25 October Rochester datestamp, larger "STEAM BOAT" handstamp
correctly rated as a ship letter, 12¢ due rate (10¢ distance rate plus 2¢ captain's fee)

STEAM BOAT



30 April 1852 Coburg, **Canada**, to Rochester
29 May 1852 Rochester datestamp, "STEAM BOAT" handstamp, 6¢ due ship rate for port delivery

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

Lewiston, 1840


Lewiston Steam Boat

The Lewiston post office correctly rated the loose letter below for the entire distance between the location where it was placed on the steamboat (Oswego) and the destination (Buffalo).



14 April 1840 Oswego, NY, endorsed to steam boat St. Lawrence, via Lewiston, to Buffalo, NY
manuscript "Steam Boat" entry and 18¾¢ distance from Oswego to Buffalo due rate
17 April Lewiston postmark, carried by land route around Niagara Falls to Buffalo
only reported steamboat letter entering at Lewiston

TO NEW YORK, VIA OSWEGO.



The steamboats **UNITED STATES**, **GREAT BRITAIN** and **ST. LAWRENCE** will form a daily line between Lewiston and Oswego, for the present season, commencing on the 1st of April, or on the opening of navigation on Lake Ontario.

One of the above steamers will leave Lewiston every afternoon on the arrival of the cars from Buffalo.

Stages and packets will be in readiness at Oswego, on the arrival of the steamboat from Lewiston, to convey passengers with despatch to the rail road at Syracuse, (only 36 miles) thereby saving time, money, and the fatigue of the overland route from Buffalo to Syracuse.

Reference, Railroad Office, Buffalo.

BRONSON & CROCKER,
JOHN HAMILTON,
H. FITZHUGH, } Proprietors.

Lake Ontario Steamboat Office, }
Oswego, Feb. 1, 1840. }

mar 30

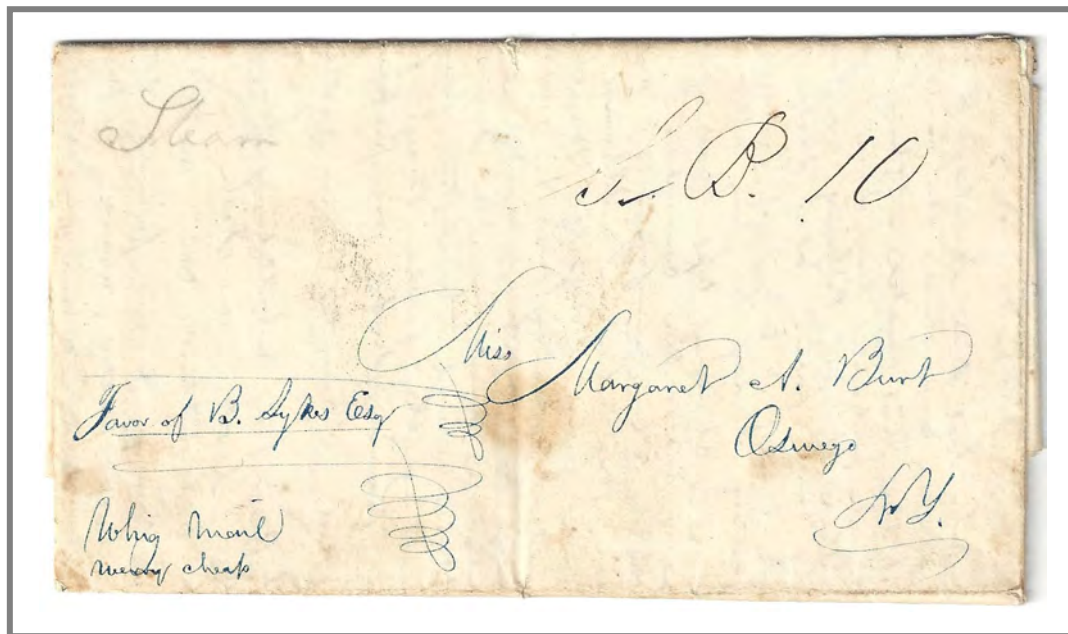
This Lake Ontario Steamboat Office April 1840 advertisement lists three steam boats, including the St. Lawrence, that will begin operations for the season between Oswego and Lewiston. It also mentions the rail connections between Lewiston and Buffalo and between Oswego to Syracuse.

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

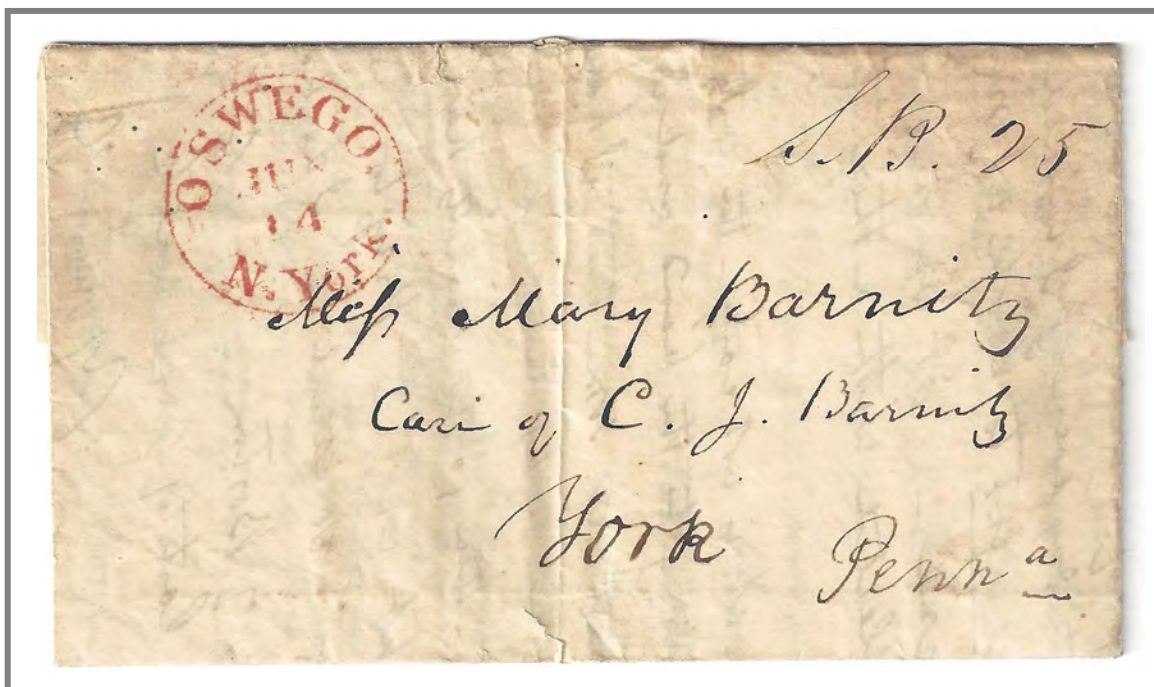
Oswego, 1842 / 1843

Oswego SB

Both letters on this page were treated as having originated in the United States. The top letter may have been collected by the steamboat from a wharf box at Sackets Harbor while the lower letter was most likely dropped into a letter box onboard the steamer.



13 June 1842 Brooklyn, MI to Oswego, endorsed with "Favor of" notation
manuscript "S.B. 10" (Steam Boat, 10¢ due for distance rate)
treated as a letter originating from US point 30 to 80 miles distant



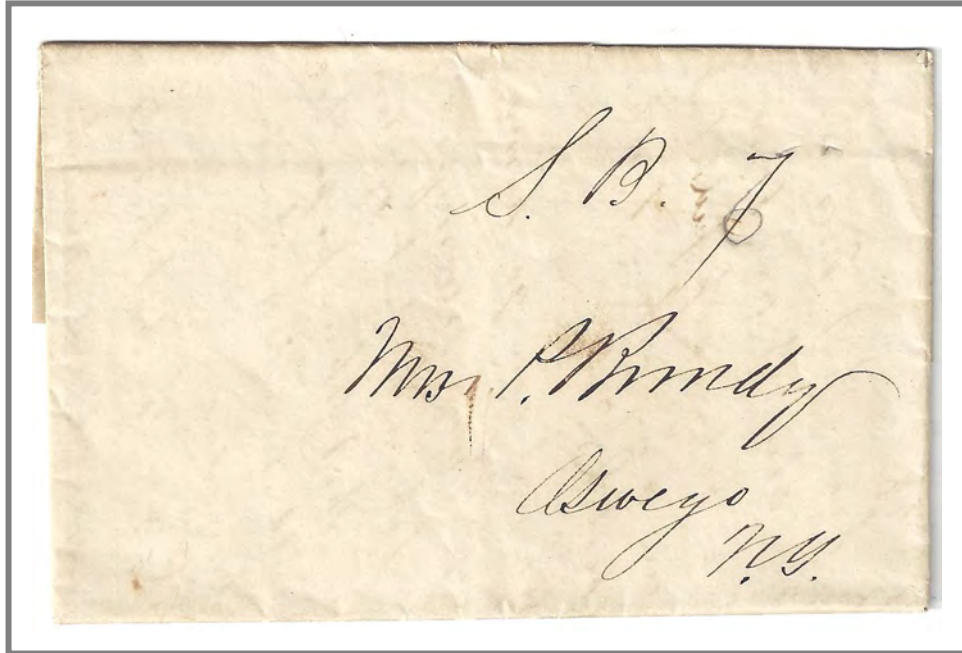
13 June 1843 dated "On Lake Ontario," via Oswego, to York, PA
14 June Oswego datestamp, manuscript "S.B. 25" (Steam Boat, 25¢ distance rate due)
treated as a letter originating from the US

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

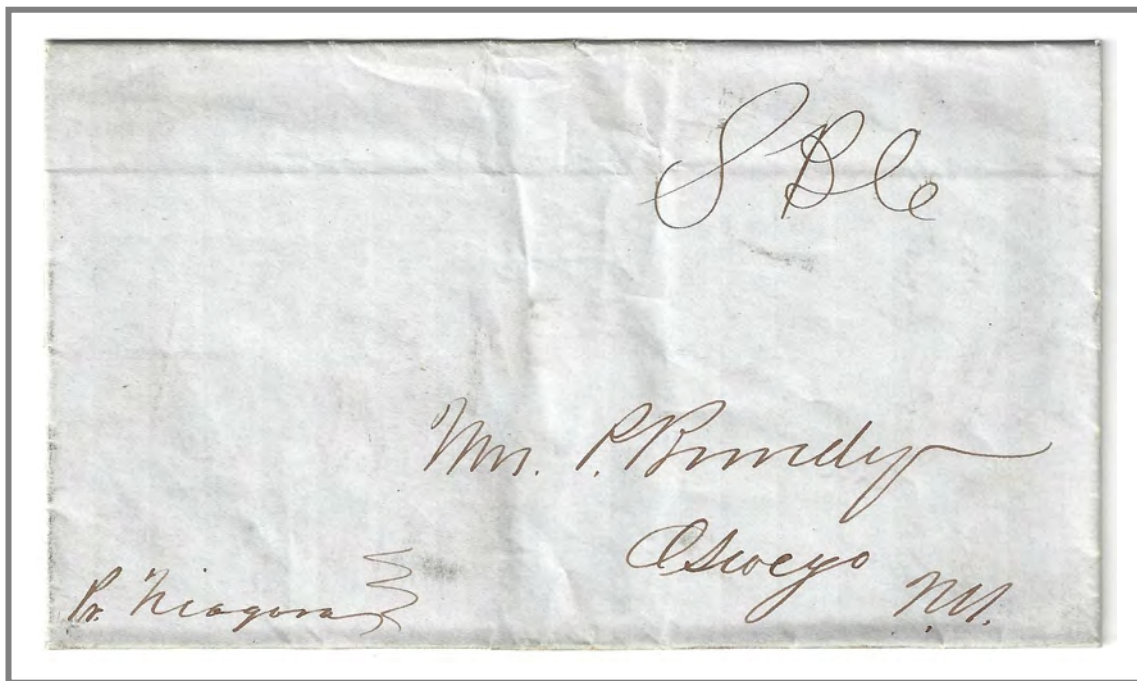
Oswego, 1850

Oswego SB

Letters on this page, from the same correspondence, were correctly rated as ship letters originating outside the US. The top letter was originally rated for distance under 300 miles plus ship fee and then corrected.



23 April, 1850 Toronto, **Canada** to Oswego
manuscript "S.B. 7" corrected in pencil to 6 (Steam Boat, 6¢ rate for delivery at port of entry)
originally rated as a ship letter addressed beyond the port, then corrected



30 April, 1850 Toronto, **Canada** to Oswego
manuscript "S.B. 6" (Steam Boat, 6¢ due rate for delivery at port of entry)
rated as a ship letter arriving from outside the United States

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

Sackets Harbor, 1821

Ship Rate

There are fewer than six reported steamboat letters carried via Sackets Harbor. In 1821 the sole steamboat operating on Lake Ontario was the steamboat Ontario.

Ship 20 1/2



13 August 1821 Kingston, **Canada**, via Sackets Harbor, to New York City
14 August Sackets Harbor postmark, "Ship 20½¢" (18½¢ postage plus 2¢ ship fee) due
letter carried by steamboat correctly rated as a ship letter from a foreign port



THE LAKE ONTARIO STEAM-BOAT ONTARIO,

WILLIAM VAUGHAN, Master.

This ~~boat~~ ~~will~~ ~~run~~ ~~as~~ follows, from the last Thursday in May, until the 15th October, wind and weather permitting:

Going up the Lake—She will leave Ogdensburgh every Thursday, at 3 P. M.; Sacket's every Friday, at 3 P. M.; Hansford's Landing, Genesee, every Saturday, at 3 P. M.; and arrive at Lewistown on Sunday, about 9 A. M.

Going down the Lake—She will leave Lewistown every Monday, at 3 P. M.; Genesee River every Tuesday, at 3 P. M.; Sacket's Harbor every Wednesday, at 3 P. M. and arrive at Ogdensburgh with all possible expedition.

Agents for receiving and delivering property At Lewistown, Porter, Barton & Co.; at Hansford's Landing, Genesee River, C. A. Van Slyck; at Sacket's Harbor, Albert Crane; at Ogdensburgh, Levi Sexton.

WILLIAM WARING,
Managing Owner.
C. A. VAN SLICK,
LEVI SEXTON.

LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

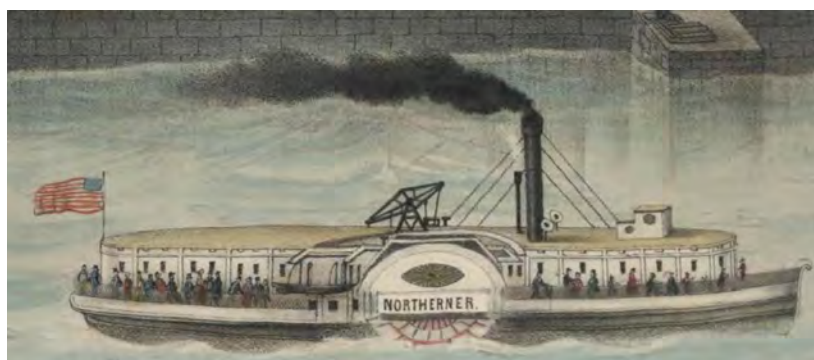
Sackets Harbor, 1821

Contract Mail

This cover was carried by steamer on an exceptional US mail contract route (route 1216) as it started in US, stopped in Canada and ended back in the US. In 1850 the Ontario & St. Lawrence St. Bt. Co. held the contract for service from Ogdensburg, NY (on the St. Lawrence River) via Kingston, Canada and Sackets Harbor to Lewiston, NY on the Niagara River. The steam boat Northerner, shown below, was the second largest mail steamer on the route in 1850.



4 May 1850 Kingston, **Canada**, via Sackets Harbor, to New York City
Canadian postage charged to sender's box at Kingston, contract service by steamboat
7 May Sackets Harbor transit, obliterated "Paid" and "10" due for over 300 miles distance





ST. LAWRENCE RIVER



map showing St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie River ports

Ogdensburgh, 1843

ST. BOAT

The letter below originated in Alexandria, NY but as the steamer had stopped at Kingston, Canada before arriving at Ogdensburgh, it was entered in the US mails as being from Canada. It was then sent overland to Waddington.

ST BOAT P



30 July 1843 Alexandria, NY, via Kingston, **Canada** and Ogdensburgh, to Waddington NY
2 August Ogdensburgh postmark, boxed "ST. BOAT" handstamp
rated as having originated in Canada, manuscript 8¢ due rate (6¢ distance rate plus 2¢ ship fee)
the 30 to 80 mile distance between Alexandria and Waddington, NY should be a 10¢ rate
the only reported example of Steamboat entry at Ogdensburgh



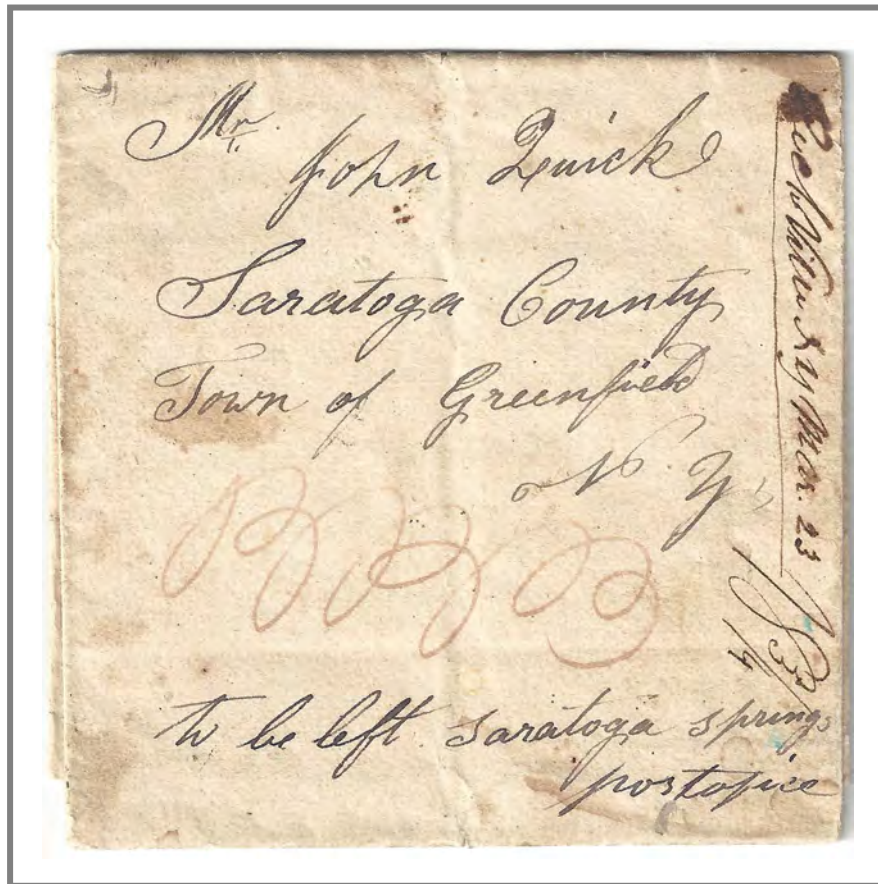
OSWEGATCHIE RIVER

Richville, 1831

Richville BBB

The letter below confirms the accounting nature of the "B" endorsements found on letters entered from steam boats. The postmaster was required to keep a careful record of such letters and he paid the master of the steamer two cents for each letter. He then claimed the credit in his quarterly accounts with the Post Office. In this case, he probably made his account notation for three letters received from the steam boat on a single letter to save time.

BBB



22 March 1831 De Kalb, NY, via Richville, to Saratoga Springs, NY
 triple "B" steamboat entry endorsement of Richville (an accounting for three separate letters)
 23 March Richville manuscript postmark and 18¾¢ due distance rate
the only reported steam boat use on the Oswegatchie River
the only example of multiple "B" markings on a letter




SENECA LAKE



map showing Seneca Lake and Skaneateles Lake ports

Geneva, 1840

Steam Boat

 **SENECA LAKE**—The steam-packet RICHARD STEVENS, Capt. George Dakin, makes regular trips every day, leaving Geneva at 6 in the morning, and Jefferson, (head of Seneca Lake,) at 11 A. M., connecting with Elmira, Blossburgh and Corning rail-road, and Williamsport and Elmira do. affording a pleasant and expedition route to Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c. JOHN R. JOHNSTON & CO. Geneva, August 15, 1840. aug 19



16 June 1840 Havanna, NY, per steamer Richard Stevens via Geneva, to Utica, NY
16 June Geneva postmark, "Steam Boat" manuscript endorsement and 52¢ (25¢ x 2) due rate
a 2¢ fee was added to the rate for a double weight letter
the only reported example

Letter of C. B. Evans discusses his new design for a canal lock and describes an enclosed drawing: *About the head and to seven feet below the upper gates it is intended to be of*



SKANEATELES LAKE

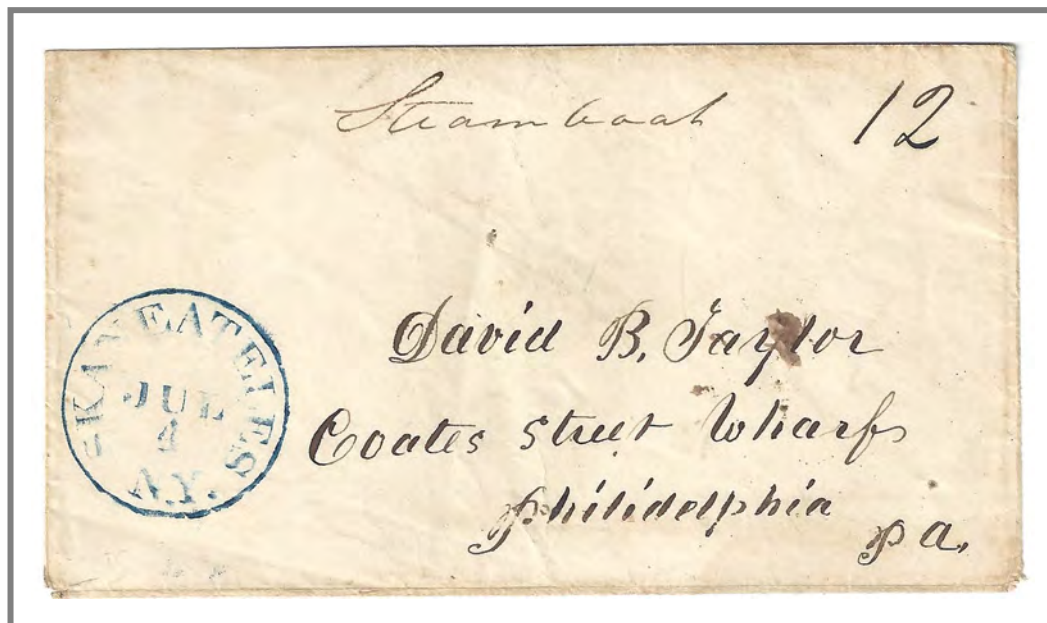
Skaneateles, 1849

Steamboat



29 June 1849 Glen Haven, NY, steam boat Homer via Skaneateles, to Lockport, NY
30 June Skaneateles postmark, "Steam Boat" endorsement and 7¢ due rate stamp
a 2¢ fee was added to the 5¢ distance rate

~~03~~ Glen Haven is becoming a place of resort both for invalids and pleasure seekers.--
The Steamboat Homer is always ready to set down its freight at the head of the lake.



ca. 1849 via Skaneateles, to Philadelphia, PA
4 July Skaneateles postmark, "Steam Boat" manuscript endorsement and 12¢ due rate
a 2¢ fee added to the 10¢ distance rate



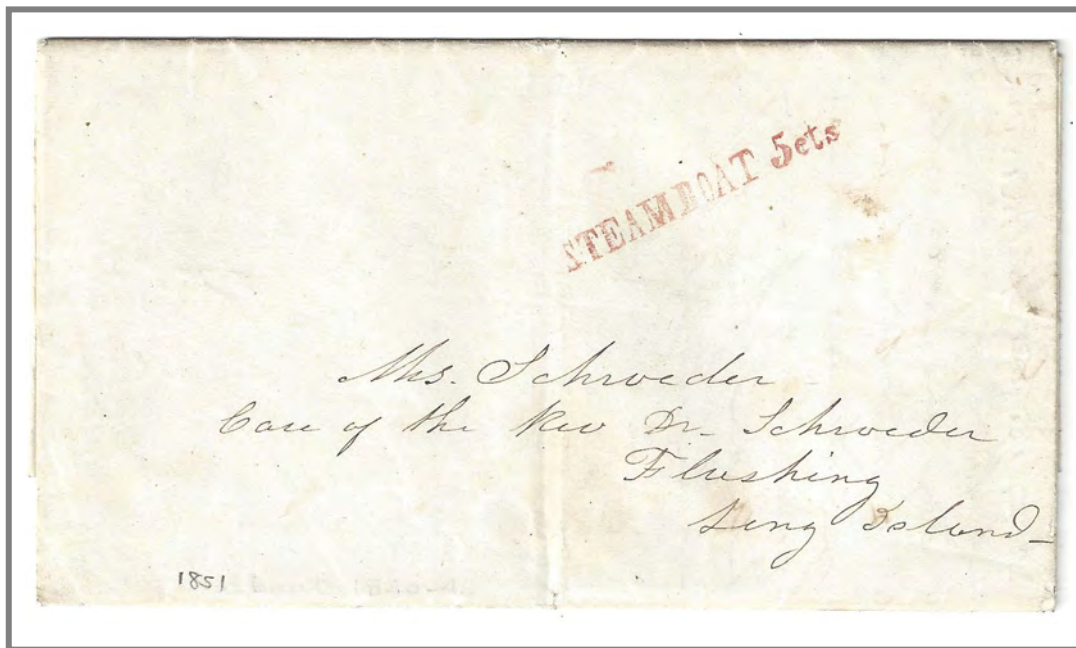
EAST RIVER, NYC

Flushing, 1851

STEAM BOAT 5cts



STEAMBOAT 5cts



May 1851 St. Clements Church (Manhattan) per steamer *Island City* to Flushing, NY letter mentions that it will be delivered direct to the steamer "STEAM BOAT 5 cts" entry handstamp applied at Flushing addressed to Mrs. Schroeder (né Boardman) care Rev. Schroeder (Rector at St, Ann's Hall) the only reported example of the handstamp

SUMMER ARRANGEMENT.
FOR FLUSHING, NEW YORK, ASTORIA AND RAVENSWOOD.
 Three trips a day (Sundays excepted) to Flushing.
 Fare Reduced to 12½ CENTS.
 On and after Monday, May 6th, 1851, the new and beautiful Steamer ISLAND CITY, Capt. Silas Reynolds, will leave Flushing for New York at 7 and 10 o'clock, A. M., and 3½ P. M.
 Returning, leaves New York for Flushing at 8½ A. M., and 2 and 5½ P. M., stopping at Astoria and Ravenswood on the trip from New York, at 2 o'clock P. M., and to New York at about 10½ A. M. and 4 P. M.
 (Q) Freight for Flushing taken between 11 A. M. and 2 P. M.
 Stages for Bay Side, Little Neck, Manhasset and Roelvn, will leave in connection with the Island City each trip.
 Flushing, April 29, 1851. atSO