

HUDSON RIVER MAIL

Route Agent Service, 1842/1845

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.



30 September 1842 northbound use from New York to Albany, NY
type 2A route agent postmark illustrating the "K" of "York" close to the "S"
*the earliest reported use of the N. York Express Mail marking and the earliest known of any steamboat
route agent marking in the United States*



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



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

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.

5



5

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 / 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, 1849

Hudson Riv. Mail N.Y.

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



PFC

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



PFC

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, 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



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, 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 wharfbox in New York for their 2¢ adhesive
type 3B postmark, large numeral "5" rate handstamp which is redundant in this instance



PFC

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, 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, 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



PFC

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

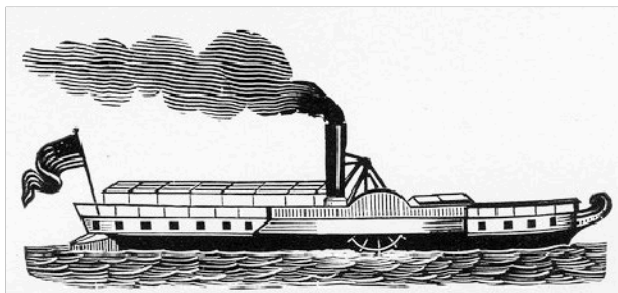
Whitehall, 1818

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



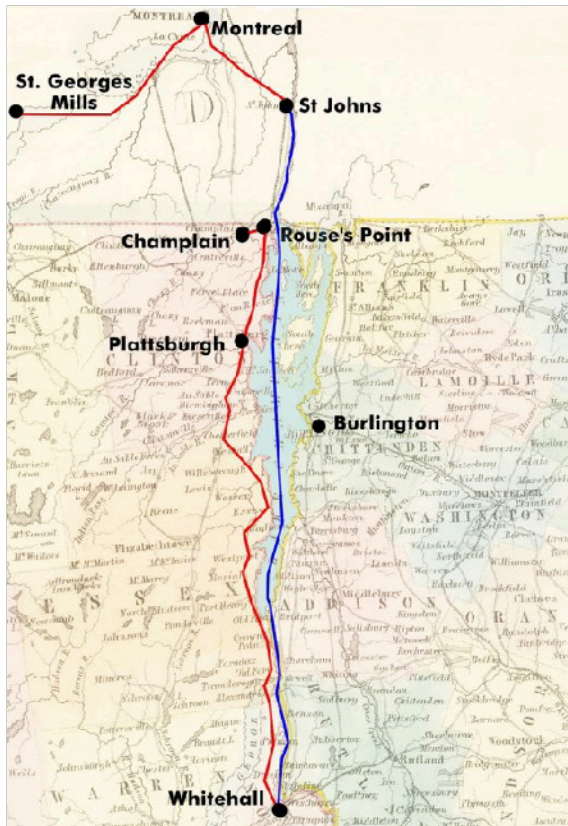
During the 1817 season, steamboats Phoenix and Champlain operated between St. Johns, Canada and Whitehall, NY. After the Champlain was destroyed by a fire in her first season, she was replaced by the Congress for the 1818 season.

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

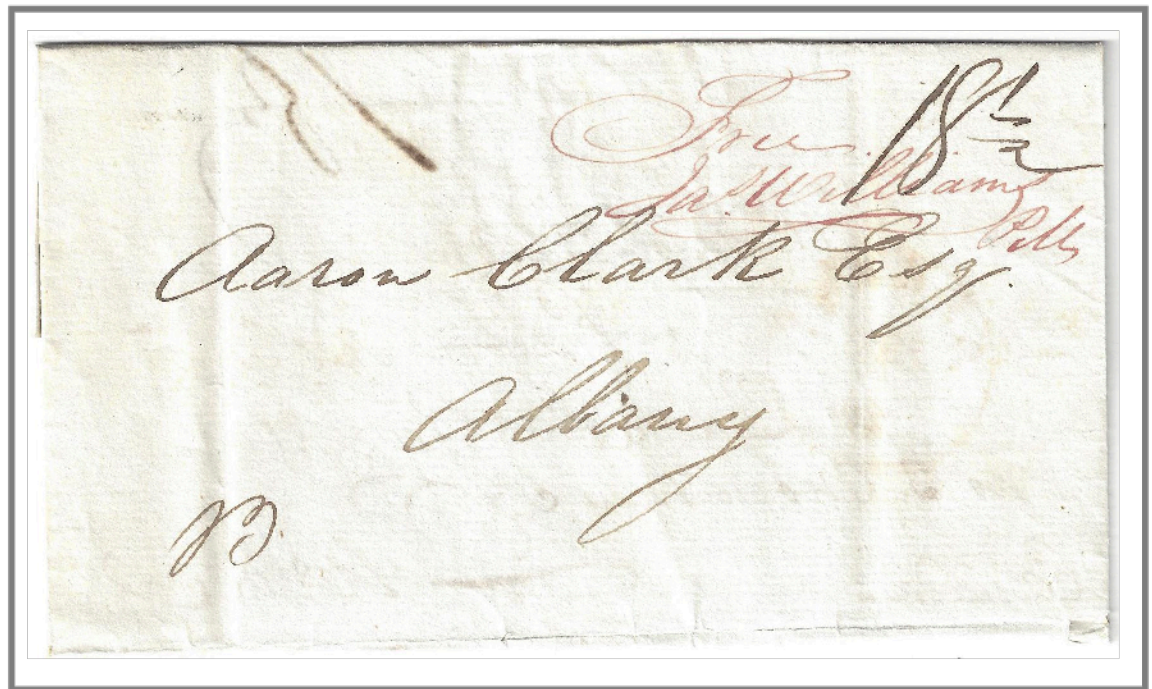
LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Whitehall, 1818

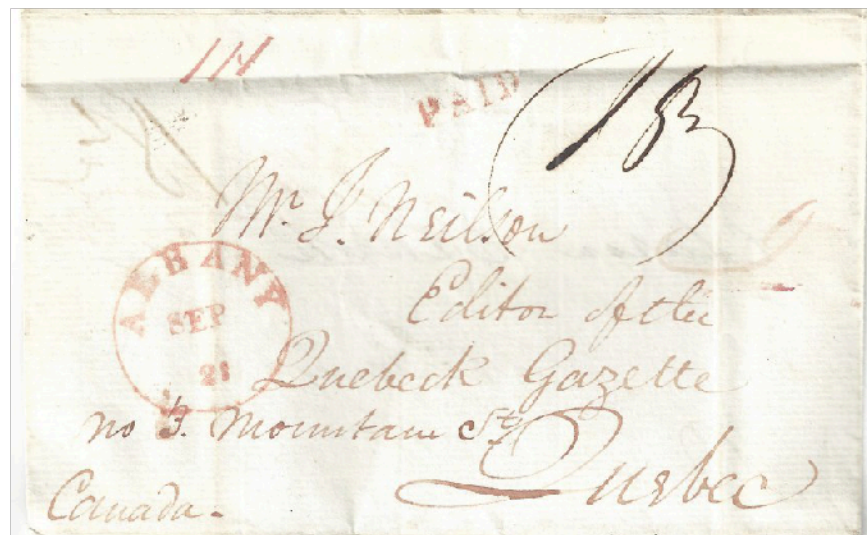
Whitehall B

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. ..."

