

# 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

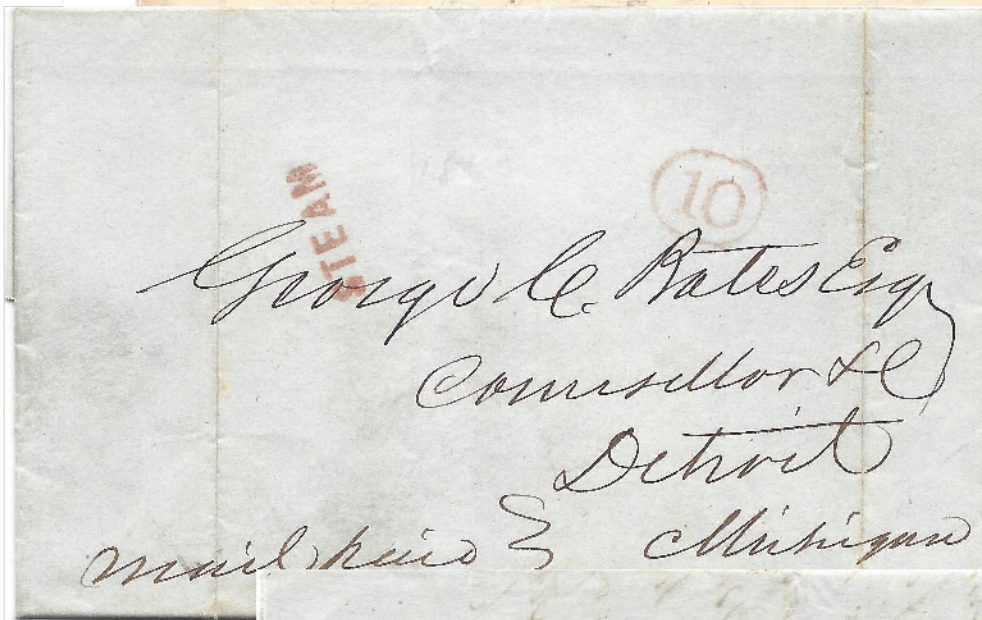


# LAKE ERIE MAIL

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***



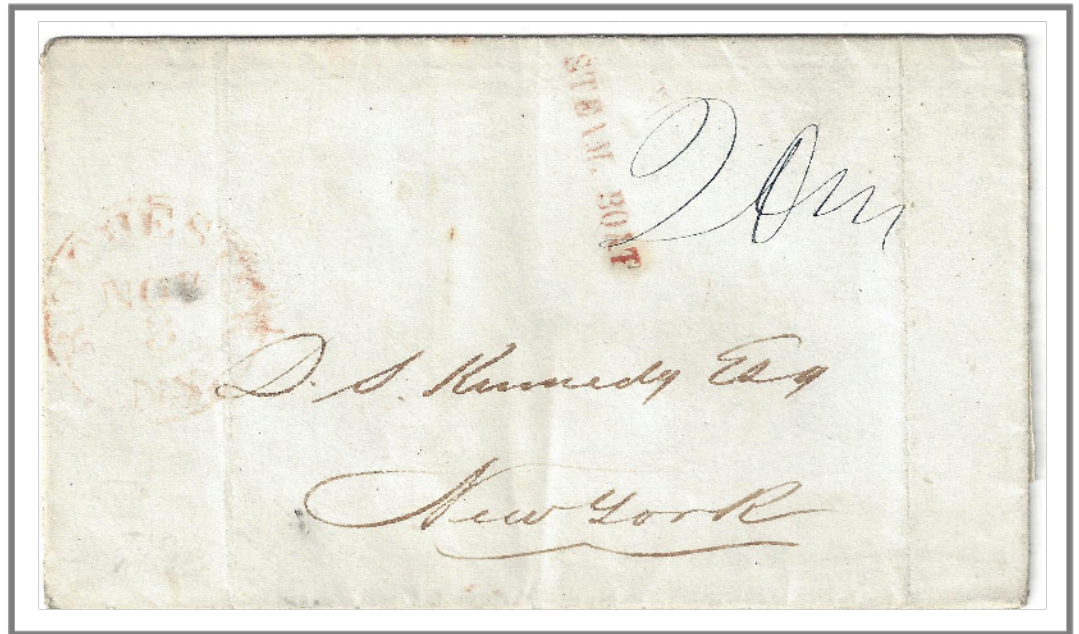
# LAKE ONTARIO MAIL

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).

*Steam Boat*



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,**

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

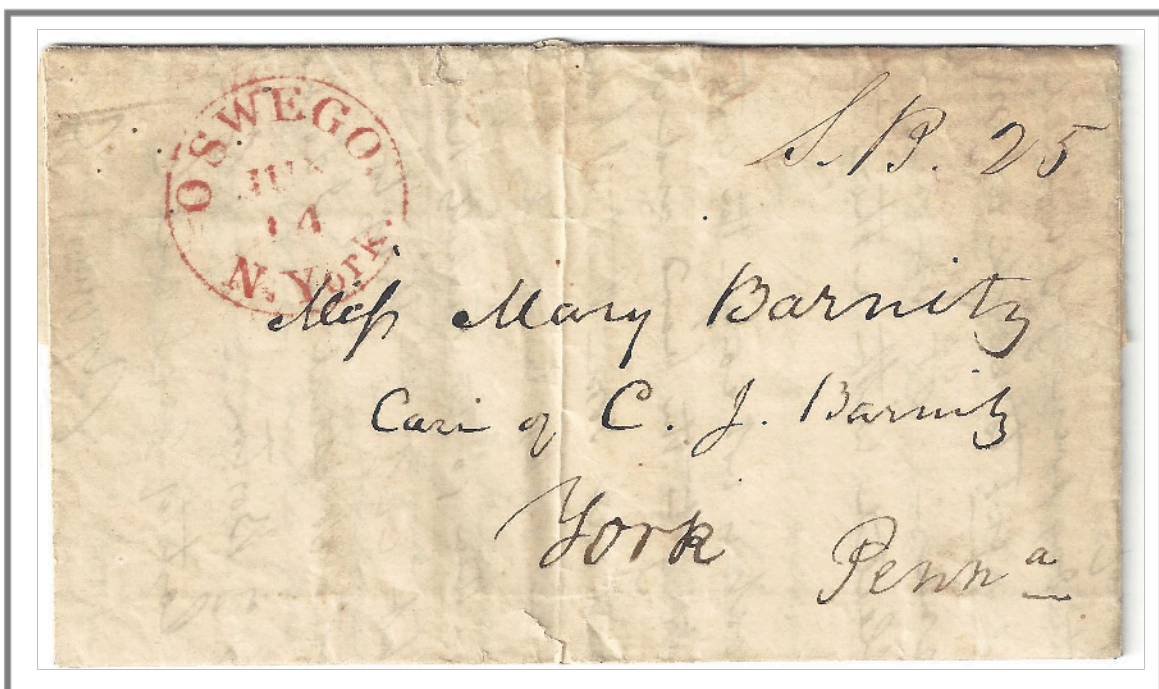
Oswego, 1842 / 1843

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** ~~steamboat~~ ~~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.; Hanford'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 8 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 Hanford'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

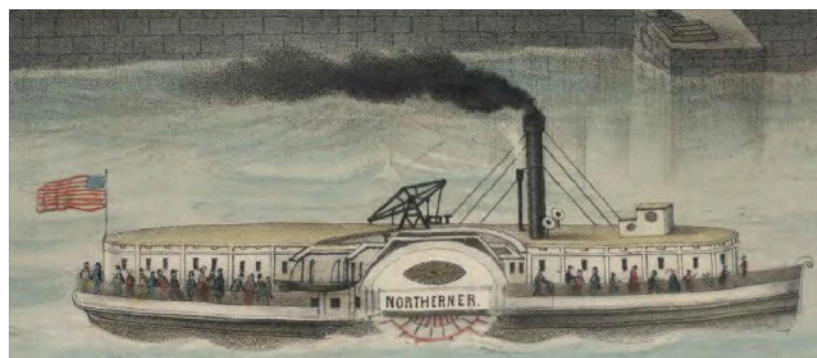
Sackets Harbor, 1850

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

Ogdensburg, 1843

ST. BOAT

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



30 July 1843 Alexandria, NY, via Kingston, **Canada** and Ogdensburg, to Waddington NY  
 2 August Ogdensburg 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 Ogdensburg***



# 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.



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 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢ 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

 **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

Steam Boat



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

~~Glen~~ 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





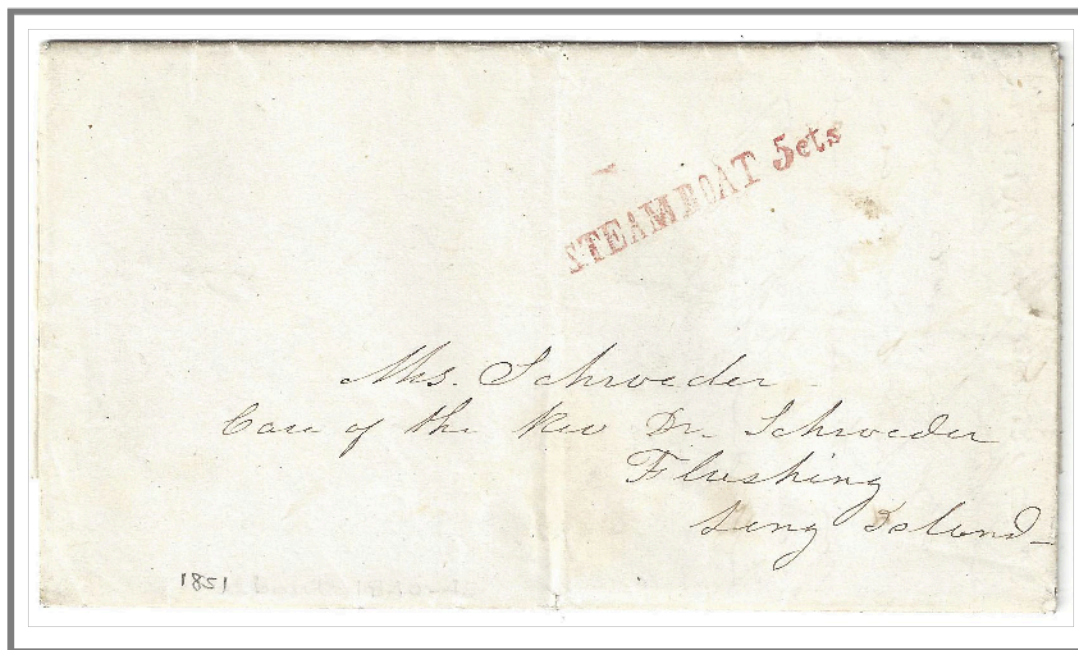
# EAST RIVER, NYC

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 12 1/2 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 8 1/2  
 P. M.  
 Returning, leaves New York for Flushing at 8 1/2 A. M.,  
 and 2 and 5 1/2 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 10 1/2 A. M. and 4 P. M.  
 Freight for Flushing taken between 11 A. M. and 2  
 P. M.  
 Stages for Bay Side, Little Neck, Manhasset and Ros-  
 lyn, will leave in connection with the Island City each  
 trip.  
 Flushing, April 29, 1851. ap30