

Nautical Times



Newsletter of the Canadian Inland Waterways Study Group British North America Philatelic Society

Number 1

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Editor: Bob Parsons

4 Freeman Road, Markham, ON L3P 4G1

Phone: (905) 294-0984 E-mail: kparsons@sympatico.ca

Treasurer: Michael Reid

Box 283, Schomberg, ON L0G 1T0

Phone: (905) 939-7335

When Doug Lingard approached me last October to help launch a new BNAPS study group, it was to have been in the role of chairperson. Newsletter editor was going to be handled by someone else. Or so I thought. Unfortunately, for health reasons, the editor-to-be decided he could not carry out the task of producing the newsletter, and so I have volunteered (?) to give it a try. Working with me will be Michael Reid, who will take on the responsibility of Treasurer for the group.

Scope of the Study Group

The Study Group, as originally proposed, covered the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Ports/Shipping. This might possibly have eliminated some key areas in Ontario and Quebec not readily assumed from the Study Group title. These are the Ottawa River, Lake Champlain (both of which figure into most collections of steamboat mail) and the Muskoka Lakes. It would likely have removed from the scope of the study group the Lower St. Lawrence, encompassing the Quebec North Shore and the Gaspé, where the handstamps of the Clarke Steamship Company are a major study area in itself.

Over the years, Allan Steinhart and I had a number of conversations at the regularly held St. Lawrence Hall stamp show about this kind of study group. We both agreed that there was significantly more to the subject of water-borne mail transportation in Canada than was covered by the R.P.O. Study Group. But, beyond discussion, nothing occurred.

This new Study Group presents an opportunity to explore the postal aspects of all Canadian Lakes and Rivers. Study groups exist for both Transatlantic and Transpacific mails. The B.C. Coast and Newfoundland T.P.O.s have been extensively covered by the R.P.O. Study Group, but the land (or should I say lakes and rivers) in between needs a focal group. Thus, it is proposed to adopt the title of **Canadian Inland Waterways Study Group**.

Coverage would encompass all of Canada, including coastal areas not covered off in other study groups. Period would cover early to modern. All manner of vessels to be included; sail and steam, private and official, and even semi-official such as consignee mail. I am a little unsure about naval, but am sure I wouldn't mind reading about Great Lakes naval letters from the last century.

To keep the supply of articles coming in, and the newsletter interesting, all types of markings should be explored. These would include Inland Ship markings, steamboat names, including manuscripts, official steamboat datestamps, canal office datestamps, purser handstamps, and ticket stamps. One could even rationalize the inclusion of Canadian Paquebot handstamps, as a port marking. I welcome your thoughts and comments on this.

Long-term Research Projects

Some formal study activities we could undertake are as follows. This is not an all-inclusive list. Please let me know of your collecting interests, however obscure they may be.

- ♦ A study of the Steamboat Letter handstamps, to include: type, usage, EKD, LKD.
- ♦ Departure and arrival dates of the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River steamboats, 1840-1856
- ♦ Record of latter day Great Lakes handstamps
- ♦ Record of the handstamps of the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Company and its successor, Canada Steamship Lines.
- ♦ Record of Clarke Steamship Company's markings, and of its precursor companies working the Quebec & Esquimaux Point route.
- ♦ Study of the canal and other harborside markings.

Format of the Newsletter

Full credit for the style of the Newsletter must go to Gray Scrimgeour. I make no apologies for adopting the format of the Northern Canada Study Group's newsletter, as I find it works very well. When sending in material for inclusion in the newsletter, clear photocopies (full-size) are desirable. Accompanying text can be written, typed, or sent e-mail. If there is substantial text, I can use a 3½" diskette. If you make it ASCII text, we shouldn't have any compatibility problems. Material acceptable for articles would include: covers and postcards, letters, advertising corner cards, timetables, steamboat passes, photos, and bills of lading. All needed to round out the picture of postal operations and shipping on Canada's waterways. To "seed" the newsletter I have included a diverse range of topics, hopefully to illustrate the above points.

Membership Fees

Membership fees have been set at \$10 Canadian per year.

Item 1. Cross-lake Service to American Ports

Here are two letters addressed to Donald Bethune, carried privately by the steamers *America* and *Admiral*. Bethune was the proprietor of the Lake Ontario Mail Line. He also operated connecting services between Hamilton and Rochester, New York, and Oswego, New York.

The letter carried by the *America* originated at Toronto on April 26, 1842. This was the start of a new service (1842) that operated between Hamilton and Rochester. Two steamers, the *America* and the *Gore*, ran four times per week, calling at the intermediate ports of Toronto, Port Hope and Cobourg. The letter carried by the *Admiral* originated at Hamilton on June 2, 1845. This boat provided a twice weekly service between Hamilton, Toronto and Oswego. During this period, any mail carried on these routes would have been carried privately. It was not until 1846 that a formal contract was arranged for the carriage of mails from Toronto to Rochester.

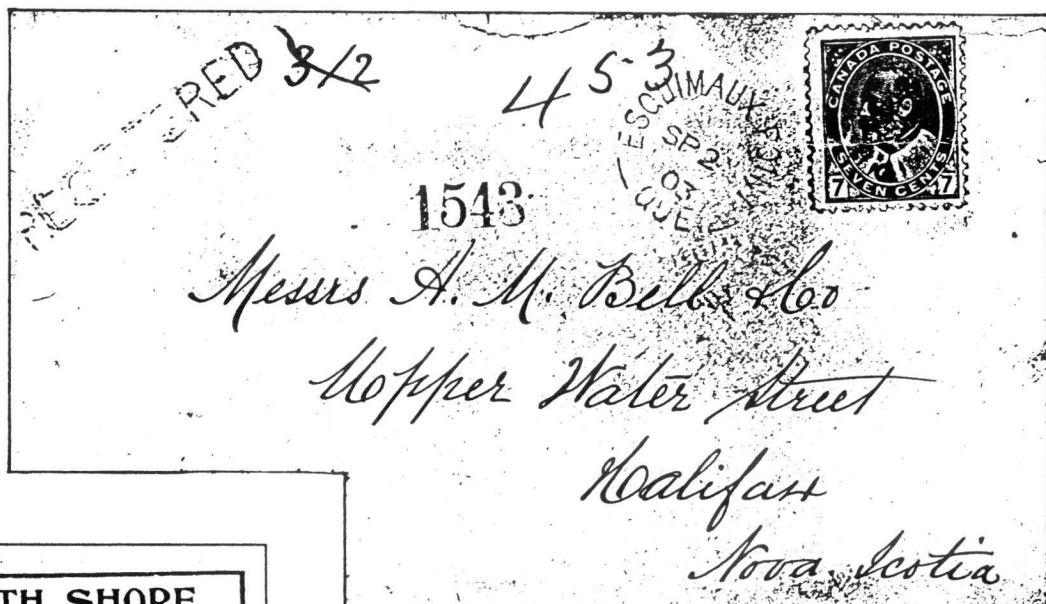
Both letters are from the Bethune Papers, National Archives, MG24 D24.

America
D. Bethune Esq.
Cobourg

Admiral
D. Bethune Esq.
Toronto

Item 2. Letter from Esquimaux Point

Shown is a cover from Esquimaux Point, on the Quebec North Shore, dated September 2, 1903. Destined for Halifax, it was first carried by boat to Quebec, arriving on September 6. Alex Fraser & Company, who had the Quebec-Esquimaux Point mail contract, provided the service with the steamer *Douro*. The *Douro* had been brought onto the route in 1901 to take the place of the *St. Olaf*, which was wrecked the prior November with a loss of 27 lives. Late in the season of 1903, the *Douro* stranded off Ste. Anne de la Pocatiere, but emerged the following season with a new name, the *St. Lawrence*, and a new owner.



**NORTH SHORE
STEAMSHIP LINE**



SS. St. Lawrence
O. C. BERNIER, Master

MAIL ROUTE
QUEBEC to

ESCOUMAINS PERTECOST SEVEN ISLANDS CLARKE CITY	THUNDER RIVER MINGAN ESQUIMAUX POINT & ALL INTERMEDIATE PORTS
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Sailings and Passenger Rates
SEASON 1904

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION APPLY TO
S. S. LESTER, Manager,
Telephone 317. 83 DALHOUSIE ST., QUEBEC

Item 3. Quebec's North Shore Steamship Line

On the left, and on the following page, is a copy of the timetable for the North Shore Steamship Line for the season of 1904, advertising the sailings of the *St. Lawrence*. Note the designation "Mail Route". The new proprietor, W.A. Marsh, operated under post office contract between Quebec and Esquimaux Point, sailing every ten days. Unfortunately, in October 1904, the *St. Lawrence* was wrecked at Pointe-aux-Anglais, and the mail contract passed into the hands of the Holliday Bros. These and subsequent services were forerunners to the Clarke Steamship Company.

North Shore Steamship Line

THE FINE IRON STEAMSHIP

ST. LAWRENCE

Under contract with the
Dominion Government.

» LEAVE QUEBEC »

TUESDAY,	May 17
FRIDAY,	" 27
MONDAY,	June 6
THURSDAY,	" 16
MONDAY,	" 27
THURSDAY,	July 7
MONDAY,	" 18
WEDNESDAY,	" 28
MONDAY,	Aug. 8
THURSDAY,	" 18
MONDAY,	" 29
THURSDAY,	Sept. 8
MONDAY,	" 19
THURSDAY,	" 29
SATURDAY,	Oct. 8
TUESDAY,	" 18
FRIDAY	" 28
MONDAY,	Nov. 7
THURSDAY,	" 17

The Steamer has first class accommodations, light and airy; modern conveniences and electric light.

PASSENGER RATES.

QUEBEC TO	Cabin.	Steerage.
Escoumains	\$4 00	\$2 50
Manicougan	9 00	3 00
Godbout	9 00	3 00
Pt. des Monts	9 00	3 00
Trinity Bay	9 50	3 00
Cariboo Island	9 50	3 00
Egg Island	9 50	3 00
English Point	9 50	3 00
Pentecost	10 00	3 50
Seven Islands	10 75	3 50
Clarke City	10 75	3 50
Moisie	11 00	3 50
Riviere au Grain	11 00	3 50
Shallup	11 00	3 50
Sheldrake	11 50	3 50
Thunder River	12 00	3 50
Magpie	13 00	3 50
St. Jean River	13 00	3 50
Longue Pointe	13 00	3 50
Mingan Harbour	15 00	3 50
Esquimaux Point	15 00	4 00

This is the route to Canada's famous Salmon fishing waters and hunting grounds.

Children under twelve years, half fare.

Cabin passage tickets, good to stop over.

Item 4. The Northwest Transportation Company

The Northwest Transportation Company got its start in 1872 when the Sarnia Board of Trade managed to obtain a postal contract to carry mails to Lake Superior. James and Henry Beatty were the proprietors of the Line. That first year they ran the 980 ton paddle steamer *Manitoba* and the *Acadia*, a smaller vessel which was replaced the following year by the *City of Montreal*. Ports of call included, Goderich, Kincardine and Southampton along the Huron shore, ports on Lake Superior between the Sault and Prince Arthur's Landing, and the American port of Duluth. Two other steamers, the *Ontario* and the *Quebec*, were added in the Fall of 1873.

Competition from Windsor interests, in the form of the steamers *Asia* and *Sovereign*, arose in 1875. By an Order-in-Council, dated March 5, 1877, the Northwest Transportation Company was incorporated. The Beattys purchased the *Asia* and the *Sovereign*, and made Windsor their southern terminus. From the mid 1870's, the Line prospered, serving and supplying C.P.R. construction activities on Lake Superior, and shipping huge loads of grain and flour from Duluth. After 1885, business began to decline, till by 1898 only two steamers were in operation. Shortly after, Northwest Transportation was absorbed by the Northern Navigation Company.

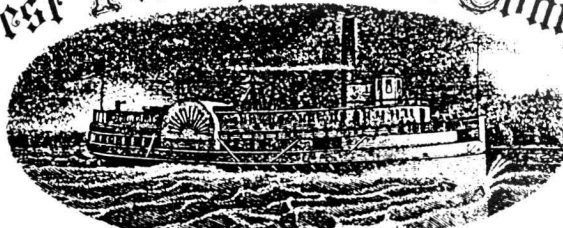
Reference: Dr. W.R. Wightman, *The Steam Packet Service of the Upper Lakes.*

"Inland Seas", *Quarterly Journal of the Great Lakes Historical Society*, Volume 46, Winter 1990.

STEAMERS
 MANITOBA, ASIA,
 ONTARIO,
 SOVEREIGN, QUEBEC

North West Transportation Company Limited

CONNECTIONS
 GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY,
 GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY,
 CANADA SOUTHERN RAILWAY.



ROYAL MAIL LINE

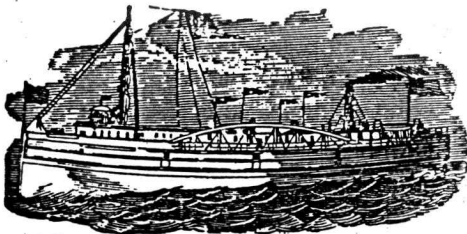
SYLVESTER NEELON, PRES
 JOHN D. BEATTY, SECY & TREAS

HENRY BEATTY, GENERAL MANAGER

Sarnia, Mo x 18th 1879

NORTH-WEST Transportation Company LIMITED.

Beatty's Sarnia Line.
 EMPIRE, CAMPANA,
 MONARCH.
1890. 1890.



THE FAST FREIGHT LINE,
 AND

Favorite Passenger Route,

BETWEEN ALL POINTS IN

Ontario, the Eastern Provinces,

AND

MANITOBA,

British Columbia and the North-Western States.

Ask any G.T.R. Agent for Freight and Passenger Rates.

JAS H. BEATTY, GENERAL MANAGER. SARNIA
 Wm. ASKIN, HANCOCK & INGLIS,
 General Agent, Port Arthur.
 69, Yonge St. Toronto. 402, W. Superior St.
 Duluth,

Sailings for AUGUST, 1890.

This cancels previous Sailing Lists.

WEST BOUND. (Weather Permitting.)

STEAMER	Sarnia 10 P.M.	God'rch 8 a.m. Kin'cdn 1:30pm	Sault P. M.	Port Arthur P. M.	Arrive at Duluth A. M.
U. Empire.	Aug. 8	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12
Campana ...	" 12	" 13	" 14	" 15	" 16
U. Empire.	" 19	" 20	" 21	" 22	" 23
Campana ...	" 22	" 23	" 24	" 25	" 26
U. Empire.	" 29	" 30	" 31	Sept. 1	Sept. 2

EAST BOUND. (Weather Permitting.)

STEAMERS.	Duluth 7:30 p m	Port Arthur 1 p m	Sault P. M.	Arrive at Sarnia A. M.
U. Empire.....	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 17
Campana	" 17	" 18	" 19	" 21
U. Empire.....	" 24	" 25	" 26	" 28
Campana	" 27	" 28	" 29	" 31
U. Empire	Sept. 3	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 7

The new Steamer "Monarch" will be placed in the Line the first of September, when a further list of sailings will be issued.

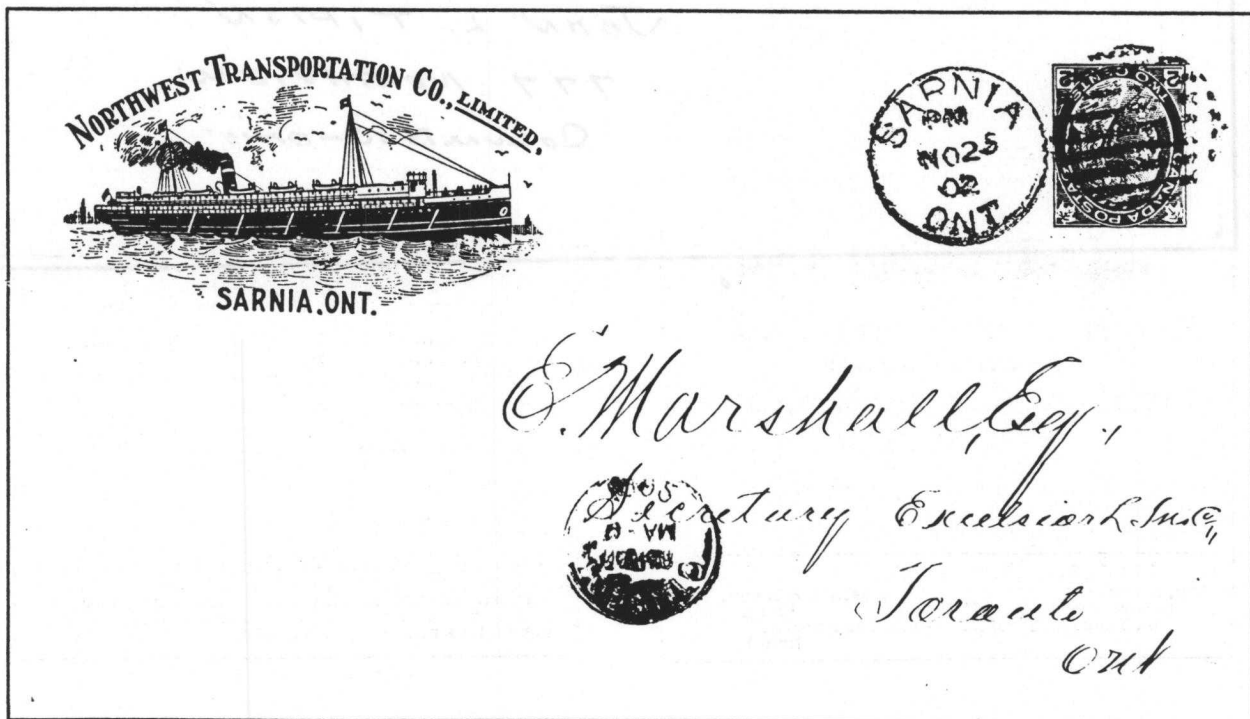
We make close connection at Sault Ste. Marie with the Duluth, S. S. and Atlantic Ry. also steamer lines for Chicago; at Port Arthur with the Canadian Pacific Ry. and at Duluth with the Northern Pacific, N. P. & M., St. Paul and Duluth, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha, and Great Northern Railways for all points on their lines, also with American Steamer Lines. In arranging excursion trips don't fail to include the N. W. T. Co.

Item 5. Northwest Transportation Company - C.C. Advertising covers

I picked up the following two items as a single lot several years ago. The steamer depicted in the upper cover appears to be the *United Empire*, built 1882. This corner card I have seen on an advertising post card also. The lower cover appears to be the *Huronic*, launched 1902.



The Excelsior Life Ins Co
Toronto
Ont

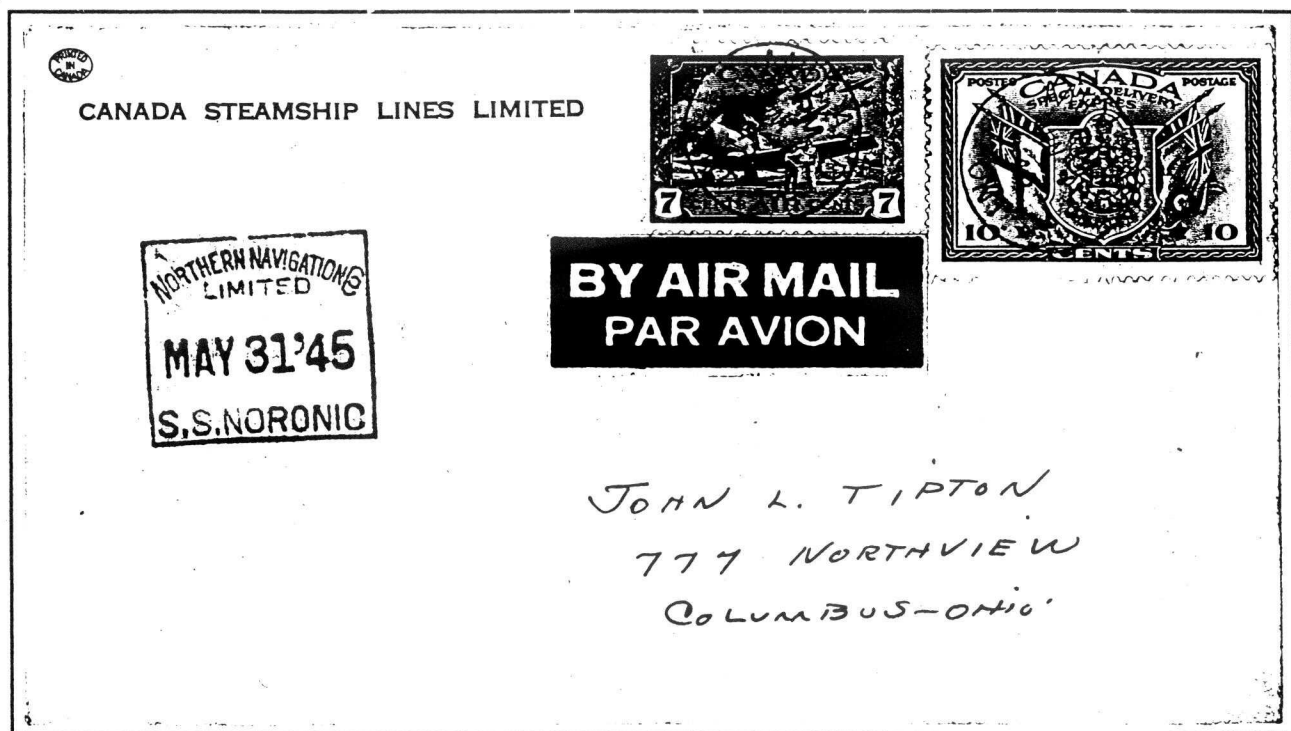


E. Marshall, Esq.,
Secretary Excelsior Life Ins Co,
Toronto
Ont

Item 6. Great Lakes Cruise ships - S.S. Noronic

By the turn of the 20th century, cruising had become an increasingly popular pastime. All of the major lakes and rivers operated excursions and cruises of one kind or another. A number of the larger steamship companies, such as Northern Navigation and Richelieu & Ontario Navigation, employed a number of vessels in this service. Letters and cards could be handed in to the ship's purser, who might then apply one of the boat's handstamps. This might simply be a boat marking, a purser handstamp, or even a trip identification. While not official postal markings, and often philatelic, they nonetheless, provide additional interest to a steamboat mail collection.

The example of the S.S. Noronic purple handstamp pictured here is one of two that Bill Longley turned up. I had never seen this marking (unrecorded) and I picked out the better copy. The postage stamps were cancelled at Midland on June 1, 1945.



Item 7. The Hamilton Steamboat Letter Handstamps

While researching the carriage of mail by steamboat in various archival institutions, I never had any luck turning up information on the Hamilton Steamboat Letter handstamps. Fred Stulberg illustrated the G.P.O. proof strikes for the large Quebec and Montreal hammers and the smaller Kingston, Montreal and Toronto City hammers in his collection, published as part of Hennok's Series of Postal History Collections (1989). There was no reference to the proof date of the Hamilton SBL markings, though Stulberg's collection contained examples with blank, 3, 5, and what appears to be an inverted 4. None of these examples, my own examples, or anything else I have seen, is dated prior to 1854.

By chance, an article by Bruce Graham on Ontario Double Broken Circles (PHSC Journal, December 1996), contained reference to a proof date for the Hamilton SBL handstamps. After calling Bruce, the trail led to Gray Scrimgeour, who kindly sent me copies of the G.P.O. proof strikes. The big surprise was the proof date; May 16, 1850. Little wonder I had no luck in the archives, as all my searching was in and around 1854. A subsequent visit to the Archives in Ottawa, turned up only the attached letter from E.S. Freer (Post Office Surveyor, C.W.) at Toronto to Gilbert Griffin at Montreal. Dated April 3, 1850, it reads:

Dear Gilbert,

As the mail steamers on the Lake between Hamilton and Kingston will immediately commence running I beg leave to request the following enumerated stores for the use of each of the Conductors Nos. 4. 5 & 6. viz.

Wrapping Paper
Writing Paper for Reports
Common Sealing wax
Fine ----- do -----
Twine
Quills
9 Monthly Sheets for No. 4
8 do " for each of Nos. 5 & 6
200 Letter Bills - Downwards for
each Conductor Nos. 4. 5. 6.
200 Letter Bills. Upwards for each
Conductor Nos. 4. 5. 6.

The additional stamps for each Conductor required for Letters mailed at Hamilton, and seals have I presume been applied for.

The stamps referred to in the closing sentence above would have been the Hamilton SBL handstamps. The proof book indicates notification was received as part of Order number 54 on May 1, 1850, and the hammers were subsequently proofed on May 16.

Correspondence in 1850 between Freer, Stayner (DPMG) and the steamboat proprietor, Donald Bethune, suggests that while the steamers now ran to Hamilton on their westbound trip, only one, the *Magnet*, remained over, in other words, used Hamilton as the western terminus. The other two, after remaining a short while, returned to Toronto, from where they would sail for Kingston the following day. Coincident with the appearance of the Hamilton SBL daters in 1854, all three boats began terminating their westbound trips at Hamilton. While the evidence suggests the Conductors may have terminated their westbound trips at Toronto during 1850-53, there is also the possibility that the short stay at Hamilton by two of the boats did not afford a convenient opportunity to hand letters in for posting. A census of the Hamilton SBL letters might shed further light on this puzzle.

Toronto 3^d April 1850

Dear Gilbert,

As the Mail Steamers on
the Lake between Hamilton and
Kingston will immediately commencing
I beg leave to request
the following enumerated stores for
the use of each of the Commodore
Nos 4, 5 & 6 viz;

Wrapping Paper

Writing Paper for Reports

Common Sealing Waxed

Sticks — do —

Twine,

Twine

9 Monthly Tickets for No 4

8 do — for each of Nos 5 & 6

200 Letter Bills — Drawn on —

Gilbert Livingston
G. N. O.
Merchant

each four into Nos 4. 5. 6.

200 Libt Post. Referend for each

Condutor. Nos 4. 5. 6.

The additional stamps for
each four into required for letters
mailed at Hamilton, and seals
have I presumed been applied
for.

I am

Dear Gilbert


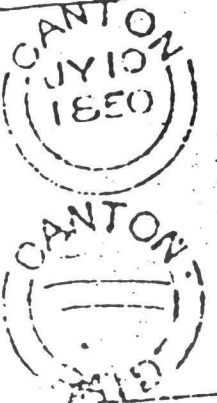
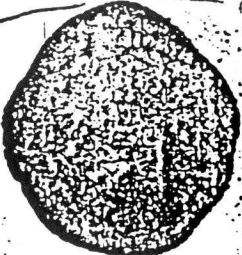
Your very truly

Serv. E. J. Beer

17 of January 18

John Brown

Item 8. G.P.O. Strikes of the Steamboat Letter Hamilton handstamps

To what Place	Date when sent	Stamps
<p><i>S. P. Page 16 Aug 1850</i> <i>Order 54 - 1 Aug 1850</i></p>		<p>8 7/6</p> 
<p><i>S. P. Page 12 July 1850</i> <i>Order 77 - 26 June 1850</i></p>		 
<p><u><i>Hamilton</i></u> <i>S. P. Page 12 July 1850</i> <i>Order 78 - 26 June 1850</i></p>		