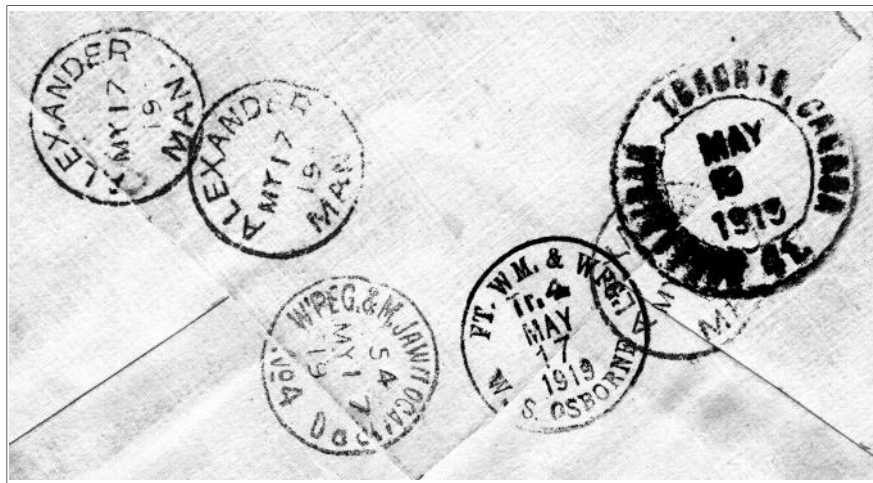


We are pleased to devote most of this issue to a very well researched article from **Brian Stalker**, entitled, "St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario Steam-Boat Hand-stamps and Date-stamps, 1841-1856, an Overview and Initial Hammer Analysis".

It is hoped that readers will be able to expand our data on these scarce postmarks, which were used for a relatively short period, only during the navigation season.

.....
A New Early Date for ON-118 from Ross Gray



This new early date for ON-118, FT. WM. & WPG. / W. S. OSBORNE , Tr. 4, MAY, 17, 1919 , with a **previously unreported train number** is found as a transit backstamp, struck in violet, on a registered cover addressed to Toronto. It originated at Alexander, Manitoba on May 17. Previously the only reported date was July 22, 1925 on train 2. The RF will now change to F from G.

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St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario Steam-Boat Hand-stamps and Date-stamps, 1841-1856, an Overview and Initial Hammer Analysis.

By Brian T Stalker

Preamble: This initial analysis is based on examination of over 150 hand-stamp and date-stamp strikes, about 30 from my own collection, the remainder from illustrations in:-

1. **'Upper and Lower Canada Steam-Boat Mail to the 1860's'** by Dr Fred G Stulberg, published as volume 7 in Hennok's Series of Postal History Collections;
2. **'The Steamboat Mails of Eastern Canada'** by Robert Parsons, published by Longley Auctions; an excellent reference volume which includes historical documentation, photographs and mail contract details.

In addition, copies of proof strikes from various volumes of the 'Date Stamp Impressions (Steel)' held in the British Post Office Archives are illustrated. These copies have been cleaned and improved to enhance their appearance.

Introduction:

On April 22nd 1821 the following notice was published by the General Post Office for British North America, Quebec:

'The Deputy Post-Master General, having placed a box for the conveyance of letters on board of each of the Steam-Boats in Upper and Lower Canada, which are carried to the Post Offices, immediately on their arrival, be given this notice to Passengers and others on board, that he has orders from His Majesty's Post-Master General, to prosecute such persons as shall convey and deliver letters, to the prejudice of His Majesty's Revenue.'

Mail from the on-board letter boxes was usually marked 'STEAMBOAT' either in manuscript or by hand-stamp at the receiving office. However, despite the threat of prosecution, a considerable amount of mail continued to be carried privately on the steam-boats until in **1841 Mail Conductors C W Hayden and M H Sanborn, appointed by the Post Office, were placed on two steamers plying between Montreal and Quebec. They were Canada's first travelling post office mail clerks, and their hand-stamps and date-stamps can be regarded as Canada's earliest TPO postmark hammers.**

The Hand-Stamps: Each conductor was provided with two hand-stamps in the form of a double triangle with letters 'M' (Montreal) and 'Q' (Quebec) with space for the date to be written in, as shown in **Figure 1**. One was to be used out-bound and the other on the return journey, showing the port of origin.



Figure 1

Illustrations courtesy of Robert Parsons

These hand-stamps were used during the navigable season of 1841 only and are thought to have been lost when Quebec GPO was destroyed by fire on November 29th 1841. Although two 'M' and 'Q' hand-stamps were produced, we have insufficient data to identify individual hammers. For the 1842 season, oval brass hand-stamps were produced (**Figure 2**) and used between 1842-1845, with at least one pair being used again for a few weeks in 1850.

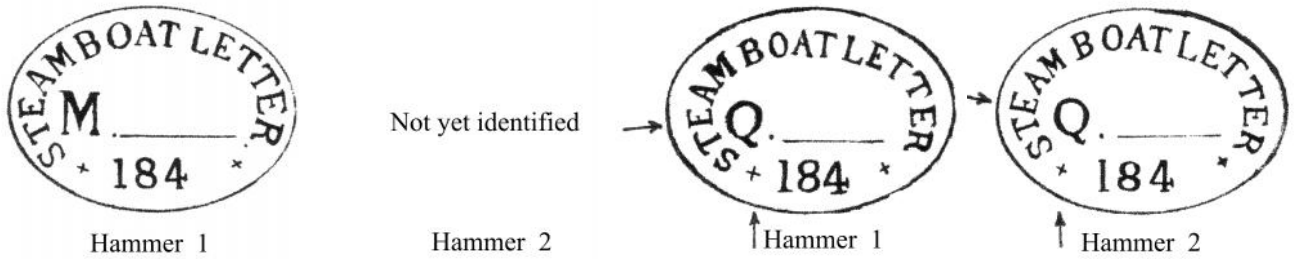


Figure 2

It is possible to identify the two Quebec hammers by examining the orientation of the 'E' of 'STEAM-BOAT' relative to the 'Q', the positioning of the '+' below the 'Q', and the space between the lettering and the frame of the oval as indicated in **Figure 2**. As yet, we have insufficient data to identify the two Montreal hammers.

The Date-Stamps: the first steel circular date-stamps for use on the Montreal – Quebec Steam Boats were produced in 1845, proof strikes of two hammers for each terminus being found in the British Post Office Archives (**Figure 3**):-

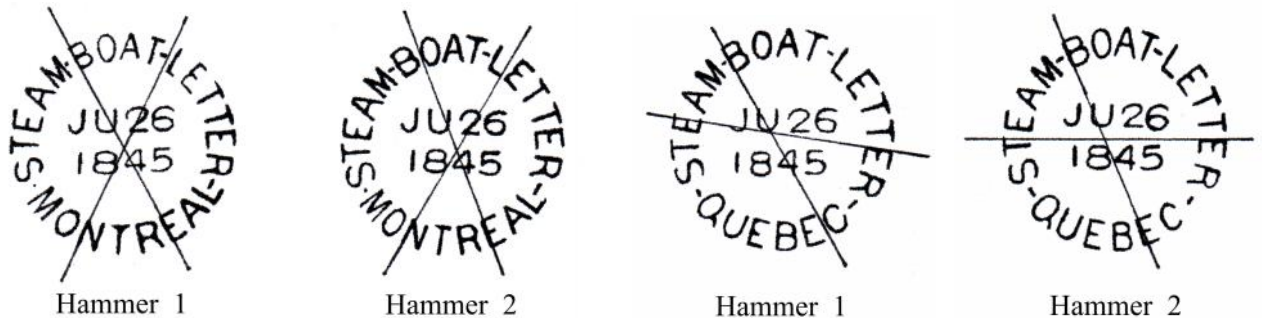


Figure 3

Significant spacing differences facilitate identification of the individual hammers by direct observation, as illustrated.

In 1847 three Mail Conductors were appointed to the River service between Kingston and Montreal, and another three on the Lake service between Toronto and Kingston. Twelve date-stamps were ordered, three for each of Montreal and Toronto City, and six for Kingston, their use being described by Deputy PMG General Stayner as follows:-

'I propose to distinguish the Conductors by numbers 1 to 6. It would be of considerable advantage if the stamps were cut with corresponding (numbers), so that on viewing a Steam Boat letter it would be known at a glance which conductor had handled it. To attain this object, all that appears to be necessary is to have the three Stamps for Toronto-City cut with the figures 4,5,6 respectively immediately under the date. The three for Montreal to have the figures 1,2,3 ...and the six for Kingston to be marked 1,2,3,4,5,6 as the Conductors above and below Kingston will each use one of them, this will give to each Conductor two stamps of the same number, for example:

*No 1 for Kingston and No 1 for Montreal
No 2 for Kingston and No 2 for Montreal
No 3 for Kingston and No 3 for Montreal*

*No 4 for Kingston and No 4 for Toronto
No 5 for Kingston and No 5 for Toronto
No 6 for Kingston and No 6 for Toronto'*

The Montreal - Kingston conductors commenced on 17th, 18th and 19th September, those between Kingston and Toronto on 20th, 21st and 22nd September 1847. Pending receipt of their date-stamps from England they were instructed to:

‘Write on the face of each Letter at the left hand lower corner, the name of the place at which you received it, and Stamp it with your Office Stamp, (which will be supplied shortly). Until your Stamp is received, you will mark on the face of each Letter “Steamboat Letter”, adding underneath the date on which it was deposited with you, and your number.’

Two sets of proof strikes in the British Post Office archives are dated SP 23 1847 and SP 25 1847, the latter (**Figures 4a, 4b and 4c**) being annotated ‘Sent to Mr Paige 27th Sept.’ None are known in use during 1847 and, to date, only two of each of the Kingston (3 and 5), Montreal (2 and 3) and Toronto (4 and 5) hammers have been found in use in 1848. Many Kingston strikes are without indicia and two Toronto City hammers are known with different indicia.



Hammer 1



Hammer 2



Hammer 3

Figure 4a



Hammer	Indicia *	a	b	c
1	1	9.1	9.7	7.5
2	2	8.3	9.8	6.2
3	3	8.0	10.5	7.4

* Identified to date



Hammer 1



Hammer 2



Hammer 3



Hammer 4



Hammer 5



Hammer 6

Figure 4b

STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / KINGSTON

Hammer	Indicia *	KINGSTON	a	b	c
1	1	KINGSTON	8.5	9.3	6.0
2	2	KINOSTON	7.8	9.9	5.7
3	3, blank	KINGSTON	8.8	10.1	5.0
4	4	KINGSTON	8.9	8.9	5.6
5	5, blank	KINGSTON	7.9	9.8	5.6
6	6, blank	KINGSTON	9.0	9.5	5.0

* identified to date



Hammer 1



Hammer 2



Hammer 3

Figure 4c

STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / TORONTO · CITY

Hammer	Indicia *	a	b	c
1	3, 4, blank	7.5	3.8	4.5
2	5	8.6	4.6	4.2
3	3, 6	8.2	4.1	4.0

* identified to date

Hamilton as Western Terminus:- the tender for the 1850 mail contract stipulated that Hamilton was to be the western terminus and three lines were established: **Lake Mail Line** (Hamilton – Kingston), **River Mail Line** (Kingston – Montreal) and a **Through Mail Line** running between Hamilton, Lewiston and Montreal. In preparation for the change of terminus, three ‘HAMILTON’ date-stamps were ordered (Figure 5). Although probably intended to replace the ‘TORONTO CITY’ hammers, the ‘HAMILTON’ date-stamps appear not to have been used until 1854.



Hammer 1

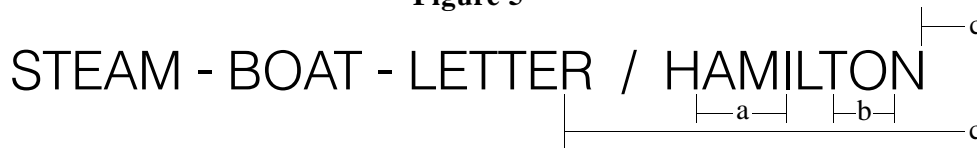


Hammer 2



Hammer 3

Figure 5



Hammer	Indicia *	a	b	c
1	3	8.2	4.6	3.2
2	blank	7.8	5.8	3.8
3	3, 5	7.5	5.3	4.3

* identified to date

In 1854, a fourth mail steamer was introduced on the River Line between Montreal and Kingston and a pair of double circle Steam Boat Letter hand-stamps appeared, one lettered 'Montreal', the other 'Kingston' (Figure 6). Unlike the contemporary date-stamps, dates, if any, were written in manuscript.



Figure 6

Illustrations courtesy of Robert Parsons

1856: The Railways take over: On October 27th 1856 the Grand Trunk Railway ran its first through train between Montreal and Toronto. A week earlier, mail conductors had been notified by letter of their impending transfer of employment, as per the following letter to Robert H Bengough, Steamboat Mail Conductor Kingston:-

Sir, On and after 26th instant, conveyance of the Mails by Steam Boat between Hamilton and Montreal will terminate, and as consequently occasion will then also cease to exist for your employment by the Department in your present capacity of Steam Boat Mail Conductor, your services as such will be recorded as closed on the date in question.

The expiring Steam Boat Mail service will from Monday the 27th instant be superseded by the conveyance of the mails between Toronto and Montreal by Railway over the G.T.R.R., and I am desired by the PMG to inform you that in order to give to you an opportunity of continuing to serve in the Department he appoints you to the discharge of an office which will be required under the new Railway Mail arrangements and which is similar in its duties to those performed by you on the Mail Steamboat Line. You are therefore under these circumstances appointed to a Railway Mail Clerkship of the 2nd class on the Grand Trunk Railway and your retention of this employment will of course depend upon your ability to discharge the duties attached to it.

(Sgd) W. Griffin

21st October 1856.

The steamboat mail contracts on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario terminated on 15th November 1856.

QUEBEC

Listing #	Postmark	Type	Indicia	Period	R.F.	Former #
<u>STEAMBOAT LETTER Hand-stamps and Date-stamps</u>						
<u>Montreal – Quebec</u>						
QC-700	M		BX4R	1841/06/11	G	NEW
<i>Double triangle, base 31mm, other two sides 27mm long, enclosing 5mm letter M. Two hammers produced but insufficient data for identification.</i>						
QC-701	STEAMBOAT LETTER / + 184(Y) + / M . _____	OV1		period 1 1845/08/15 period 2 1850/05/25-1850/06/15	G	NEW
<i>Single frame line oval, approx 37 x 26 mm, two brass hammers produced but insufficient data for identification.</i>						
QC-702	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - MONTREAL -	OC1	6, blank	1846/08/04-1855/11/26	E	NEW
QC-702.01	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - MONTREAL -		6, blank	1846/08/04-1854/08/07	E	
QC-702.02	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - MONTREAL -		6, blank	1846/11/16-1855/11/26	E	
<i>Both hammers proof struck 1845/06/26.</i>						
QC-703	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = MONTREAL =	OC2	1, 2, 3	1848/06/18-1855/10/10	F	NEW
QC-703.01	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = MONTREAL =		1	1852/06/28-1855/10/10	F	
QC-703.02	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = MONTREAL =		2	1848/07/17-1849/10/21	G	
QC-703.03	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = MONTREAL =		3	1848/06/18-1855/06/10	E	
<i>All three hammers proof struck 1847/09/23, and again on 1847/09/25 with indicia 1, 2 and 3 respectively.</i>						
<u>Montreal – Kingston</u>						
QC-704	STEAM BOAT LETTER / - MONTREAL -	DC1		1854/09/25-1854/11/04	G	NEW

Manuscript dates, if any. Used on the fourth steamer between Montreal and Kingston.

Quebec – Montreal

QC-705 Q BX4R 1841/08/18-1841/10/21 G NEW

Double triangle, base 31mm, other two sides 27mm long, enclosing 5mm letter Q. Two hammers produced but insufficient data for identification.

QC-706 STEAMBOAT LETTER / + 184(Y) + / Q. _____ OV1 period 1 1842/06/29–1844/10/31 F NEW

period 2 1850/05/??-1850/07/??

QC-706.01 STEAMBOAT LETTER / + 184(Y) + / Q. _____

period 1 1842/06/29-1844/10/31 F

QC-706.02 STEAMBOAT LETTER / + 184(Y) + / Q. _____

period 2 1850/05/08-1850/06/14 F

Single frame line oval, approx 37 x 26 mm.

QC-707 STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - QUEBEC - OC1 0, 2, 8, 9, blank 1846/11/12-1854/09/15 E NEW

QC-707.01 STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - QUEBEC - blank period 1 1847/06/07 F

period 2 1852/08/09-1854/07/05

QC-707.02 STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / - QUEBEC - 0, 2, 8, 9, blank period 1 1846/11/12-1854/09/15 E

period 2 1846/11/12-1854/09/15 E

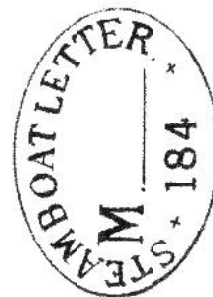
Both hammers proof struck 1845/06/26.



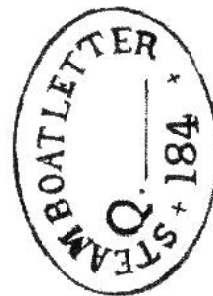
QC-700



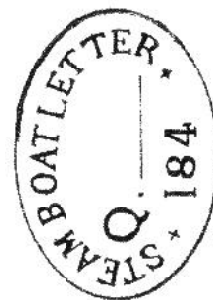
QC-705



QC-701



QC-706.01



QC-706.02

QUEBEC

ONTARIO

Listing #	Postmark	Type	Indicia	Period	R.F.	Former #
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STEAM BOAT LETTER Hand-stamps and Date-stamps

Hamilton – Toronto

ON-950	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = HAMILTON =	OC2	3, 5, blank	1854/06/24-1856/08/07	G	NEW
ON-950.01	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = HAMILTON =		3	1854/09/27	G	
ON-950.02	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = HAMILTON =		blank	1855/06/28-1856/08/07	G	
ON-950.03	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = HAMILTON =		3, 5	1854/06/24-1855/11/24	G	

All three hammers proof struck 1850/05/16 with indicia 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

Kingston – Montreal and Kingston – Toronto

ON-951	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =	OC2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, blank	1848/05/11-1856/08/05	E	NEW
ON-951.01	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		1	1851/05/15-1854/06/11	G	
ON-951.02	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		(error)	1852/11/10-1855/09/25	F	
ON-951.03	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		3, blank	1848/08/19-1855/11/12	E	
ON-951.04	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		4	1854/06/22	G	
ON-951.05	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		5, blank	1848/05/11-1856/08/05	E	
ON-951.06	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = KINGSTON =		6, blank	1851/07/05-1854/06/20	F	

All six hammers proof struck 1847/09/25 with indicia 1 – 6 respectively.

ON-952	STEAM BOAT LETTER / - KINGSTON. -	DC1		1855/05/31-1855/07/10	G	NEW
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Manuscript dates, if any. Used on the fourth steamer between Montreal and Kingston.

Listing # Postmark Type Indicia Period R.F. Former #

Toronto – Kingston

ON-953	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = TORONTO CITY =	OC2	3, 4, 5, 6, blank	1848/06/03-1856/05/23	F	NEW
ON-953.01	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = TORONTO CITY =		4, blank	1848/09/11-1849/09/13	F	
ON-953.02	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = TORONTO CITY =		3	1854/08/11-1856/05/23		
ON-953.03	STEAM - BOAT - LETTER / = TORONTO CITY =		5	1848/06/03-1848/11/01	F	
			5	1852/08/18-1855/11/24		
			6	1849/06/09-1850/09/13	F	
			3, 6	1853/05/26-1855/09/07		

All three hammers proof struck 1847/09/23 and again on 1847/09/25 with indicia 4, 5 and 6 respectively.



ONTARIO