

LIFE BEYOND HERE

Visiting History in The "Community of Great Lake Ontario."



James A Termotto Sr.

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Cover photo taken in downtown Cobourg Ontario 1935,
having arrived by Ontario 2 ferry from Rochester New York.
Short woman in center photo is the author's aunt, Miss Clara M Termotto.

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INTRODUCTION

"A dozen or so years ago, I had the great pleasure of living in a house along our area's Lake Ontario shoreline. That was a quiet place with the lapping of Ontario waters against Durand Beach as the only sound heard at night. I took to listening to classical music, broadcast from a station in Cobourg Ontario. If the world were flat, I may have seen that radio tower out my northern window. As I would sit there in the late night I could easily picture the musical notes floating among the stars, as they came across the lake from Canada. I joked with my kids that we lived on an international border, as Canada was out there somewhere just over the horizon.

The listening and the watching grew into the need to inquire as to what was really there, across the lake; and, why did I not know much about the "other side of the lake" ? My question and my inquiry has taken me on an adventure. After a number of years, the simplest result of my quest has been this:

in today's world, the 'other side of the lake' is a five to six hour road trip that is most often taken while on vacation; but, one hundred years ago, and even two or three hundred, the peoples who lived on these same shores, lived in a world that made the shores of the 'other side of the lake' so much closer.

As a means to investigate what was on the other side, I created in 1998 the Canada Friendship Exchange (see addendum, for our mission) . It is a volunteer friendship organization that has since developed a series of strong relationships between Rochester and many towns along the Lake Ontario shoreline of the Province of Ontario. Our American and Canadian members have participated in numerous events on both shores, and have developed cultural exchange activities that have built stronger friendships in "The Community of Great Lake Ontario." This group has also given me access to learn a great deal of the history and the people experiences of our "lake community."

I have come to learn through my adventure,
and through meeting my new Canadian friends,
that we both really do not know very much about each other.
The Canadians openly admit to this as well.
We have shared a history together; we now share a community together.
When we each get to know what's on " the other side of the lake ",
we will each know the other as friends and neighbors.
Then the " Community of Great Lake Ontario " will become a closer one.

James Termotto
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who have shared their stories, and especially those who have guided my quest:

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Finally, great appreciation is expressed
for the support of my parents and my children.

PART ONE

BEYOND HERE

1.1 Making Life Happen On Great Lake Ontario

Canada and United States have the longest undefended border in the world. Nearly one-fifth of the world's freshwater lies in the Great Lakes basin. Our two countries have the largest trading partnership on the globe. For New York State and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, Lake Ontario is the bonding agent for a living "Community of Great Lake Ontario."

There exists in this community a history, in written word and in the words of human voices of the peoples of New York State and Provinces of Ontario and Quebec who lived and carried out their living in this mutual world during the 1800s and 1900s. In several specific cases some of our legendary characters were a part of the Canadian experience, and they a part of the Americans'. Residents had family on both sides of the lake which they visited regularly. We had sailors and ships who worked on both sides of the lake. We traveled the lake with steamboat schedules that allowed daily round trips to ports on US and Canadian shores. Our commerce and resources were intertwined. We carried on and promoted our commerce over and around the lake, in much the same manner as we do today, only with different mechanisms of technology.

The water of Lake Ontario has been a bridge of friendship for those who lived here centuries before as it is for us now in the "Community of Great Lake Ontario." The story of this sense of community is made up of many individual chapters - vignettes and narratives. Most of the "visits to history" in this volume are in the eastern half of Lake Ontario. There are more stories to uncover in the western end - the Golden Horseshoe. What follows is only part of the overall story with only a few of those individual chapters.

The reader will also find in the last pages of this volume additional reference resources and institutions that can assist in Visiting History in the Community of Great Lake Ontario.

1.2 Waterway to a World Beyond Here.

It is the enormity of Lake Ontario transit for passenger and cargo that connected western New York and Provinces of Canada to each other and the world. Before and after the opening of the Erie Canal in the 1820s, the Great Lakes were a means of access to the interiors of Canada and the US, and beyond the continental shores of both countries.

The story of a lake common community began before 1700. Trade was carried on for centuries between the Seneca in New York and the French in Quebec (earlier known as Lower Canada). Starting in the early 1800s, a prolific volume of US commercial lake traffic for cargo and passengers out of Rochester and Oswego existed and continued until 1950. Daily, vessels left the Genesee and Oswego Rivers to cross Lake Ontario to Upper Canada (Ontario), or to Niagara River at Lewiston, Queenston and Niagara-on-the-Lake (first known as Fort Missasauga, then Fort George). Or, they would head to ports on the upper Great Lakes through Welland Canal entering at Port Dalhousie on Lake Ontario and into Lake Erie at Port Colbourne. They would also sail to Kingston on their way out the Saint Lawrence River to Lower Canada (Quebec) and the Atlantic Ocean.

The economics of trade on Lake Ontario was a fluid one. The conflict involving the new United States and Great Britain, known as the War of 1812, brought an interruption to this lake shipping. It was an unwelcome schism to the successful trade relationships on Lake Ontario. For both New Yorkers and Canadians the war between the US and Great Britain was more an aggravation than it was an altercation. Most of Lake Ontario's part of that war was carried out at the eastern end of the lake. It consisted primarily of skirmishes and raids between naval fleets harbored in Oswego, Sackett's Harbor, and Kingston.

The War ended, and in 1817 the Rush-Bagot Convention was signed. Both countries agreed through the convention to remove all armament from Great Lakes naval ships, except for vessels policing the Great Lakes. Canadian armaments on Lake Ontario were removed and stored in Kingston. The stone warehouse filled with those guns became known as the "Stone Frigate."

Even with the Rush-Bagot convention, the British government chose to improve its military defenses in the region. They desired to create an alternate route from Lake Ontario to the outer regions of the St Lawrence. The idea was to protect sensitive shipments from any future American attack off the New York shores of St Lawrence River. The result of that decision was the building of Rideau Canal. Using the Cataraqui River starting at Kingston it connected Lake Ontario and the Ottawa River, which flowed to the St Lawrence at Montreal. Construction began 1826, and when completed 1832 covered 123 miles with 47 locks. In Kingston, Fort Henry and a series of Martello Tower gun placements were then built to defend the entrance to the canal and the St Lawrence River. All these constructions stand today as part of Kingston's royal history.

(see notes 1.2)

1.3 Canadian Influence in Lake Ontario Shipping

Living in the "Community of Great Lake Ontario" was advanced by the transit of cargo and passengers across the lake on both wind and steam driven vessels. Enterprise of Lake Ontario shipping during the 1800s and 1900s was controlled, for the most part, by the large number of Canadian navigation firms. Legends of the lake like the Gildersleeve family created dynasties in lake travel. Canadians used Lake Ontario as a major part of their transportation system.

As an example, the Royal Mail Lines shipped the mail of Upper Canada from Queenston to Kingston across Lake Ontario from the 1840s to the 1870s. It was much faster and less expensive than by coach or train. The Royal Mail, operated by the British Royal Post Office, contracted services first to Donald Bethune of Cobourg and then to John Hamilton of Queenston. Both ran boats to every Canadian port on Lake Ontario. Bethune operated his boats between Canadian ports beginning in 1833, and also ran across the lake often with cargo to Rochester and Oswego. Besides the mail, Hamilton ran steamers from Welland Canal to York (Toronto) connecting with the Welland Railway coming from Port Colbourne on Lake Erie.

Some of Hamilton's vessels had seen previous service on Lake Ontario. He purchased the aging FRONTENAC, the 1825 first-built Great Lakes steamer. Hamilton also bought the steamer ONTARIO, in 1867 from Ontario Steamboat Company owned by Captain Horatio Throop of Pultneyville. He merged his company with Canadian Inland Steam & Navigation Company in 1857, which later merged with Richelieu & Ontario Navigation in 1875. This company was then amalgamated along with several other lines in 1913 into the Canada Steamship Lines.

Hamilton leased several of his boats from Arthur W Hepburn of Picton in Prince Edward County - the peninsula directly across the lake from Rochester. "Hepburn Fleet" was a business akin to a Lake Ontario rent-a-steamboat company which leased cargo and passenger vessels to other shippers and passenger lines.

Hepburn and Hamilton vessels were only a few of the many calling on western New York and southern Ontario ports. Companies like Richelieu & Ontario, Ontario & Quebec,

Lake Ontario & Bay of Quinte, and Lake Ontario International were all steamboat companies operating regular schedules across Lake Ontario. Vessels named ALGONA, BAVARIAN, CARMONA, CASPIAN, KINGSTON, NIAGARA, ROCHESTER (of the R & O line), and TORONTO were all Canadian owned and operated, offering passenger service as the Richelieu & Ontario line put it: from "Niagara to the Sea." Many of these vessels also became part of the Canada Steamship Lines fleet when their Canadian owners amalgamated into one company.

During the 1940s, lake passenger traffic in general fell to low levels. A subsequent 1949 fire disaster and large loss of life on the cruise ship NORONIC at the pier in Toronto Harbour, brought stiffer regulations for lake vessel safety. Boat owners found the required improvements for shipboard safety beyond the scope of logical additional investment in their vessels. Starting with Canada Steamship Lines, companies started to remove passenger vessels from Great Lakes service. Along with CSL, the Cobourg Ferry of Ontario Car Ferry Company ran the last passenger steamers on Lake Ontario, up to 1950.

Today, cross Lake Ontario shipping has no resemblance to the past. As the twenty-first century begins there is some, although limited, use of the lake waters for commercial traffic connecting US and Canadian shores. The Port of Oswego represents the only working port on New York's shores. It's the destination for Canadian cement freighter ENGLISH RIVER with cargo from Canadian LaFarge company, as it heads to the upper Great Lakes. The ship sails from its port of origin at Finkle's Point, Bath Ontario. Other freighters unload aluminum ingots made in Massena on St Lawrence River. Port of Charlotte has been an effective port in past centuries for export of coal, and import of Canadian timber and iron ore; and, in the twentieth century for import of Canadian newsprint. Now, the only cargo freighter making regular stops at the Port of Rochester is STEPHEN B ROMAN which docks near the Genesee River's Turning Point Park. Owned by Canadian Essroc company, it also unloads at a terminal in Oswego, with cargo from its port of origin in Picton, Prince Edward County Ontario. The only passenger vessel calling regularly at the Port of Rochester in Charlotte is the summer biweekly visit of NANTUCKET CLIPPER.

In Canadian waters, travel by water is an important means of transportation. Ferry service is still a fact of life in the eastern lake region, crossing from Kingston to Howe and Amherst Islands, and to the Prince Edward County peninsula.

You can enter Canada via the Cape Vincent NY Ferry to Wolfe Island to Kingston. A hydroplane fleet heads out of Toronto Harbour, crossing Lake Ontario to Ontario Niagara peninsula towns of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston. There is a renewed interest in the Great Lakes as a shipboard tourism asset. Several new cruise ships are offering excursions on all Great Lakes as an alternative to luxury ocean-liner cruising. Proposals are being discussed to establish ferry services from Rochester to southern Ontario cities.

Even so, Lake Ontario water travel may never equal the volume and importance of lake travel between New York State and Provinces of Ontario and Quebec in the centuries before year 2000.

(see notes 1.3)

PART TWO

BEYOND 1800

2.1 Kingston - Shipping Centre on Lake Ontario

Kingston is in Ontario's Frontenac County at the eastern entrance of the lake. It has been a strategic location for centuries at the convergence of Lake Ontario, St Lawrence River, mouth of Cataraqui River, entrance to the Rideau Canal system, and the Thousand Island region.

Once occupied by only Iroquois, the French developed the area in the mid-1600s as a center of the fur trade on Lake Ontario, and as a defense fortification.

Names from early history, like Champlain, LaSalle, Frontenac and Denonville are associated with growth of Fort Frontenac (1673) and area of Cataraqui (Kingston).

Denonville has special significance in relation to the Seneca in western New York and Irondequoit Bay with his march to destroy them and their villages in 1687;

just as he did to the Iroquois in New France (Canada) and Northern New York.

The English gained control over New France by winning the Seven Year's War.

Defeat of Fort Frontenac, 1758, was a key to the fall of the French in North America.

The area was refortified at the beginning of the American Revolution.

After the Revolution, Cataraqui and the north shore of Lake Ontario became the destination for many Empire Loyalists.

These were the Colonists who fled the new American states, starting in 1783, to avoid persecution for remaining loyal to the British Crown.

The earliest group of permanent settlers in Cataraqui was from New York, led by Michael Grass of Oswego. He renamed Cataraqui as King's Town in 1784.

Other first Loyalist settlers became important figures in the advancement of Lake Ontario commerce and shipping, like John Hamilton, Henry Murney, Lawrence Herchmer, John Kirby, and Richard Cartwright.

Cartwright was the first to build merchant boats in Kingston, sailing them between Kingston and Niagara.

From this start, the shipbuilding prominence of Kingston began.

In 1840, Provinces of Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) were united into the United Province of Canada.

Kingston was selected as the capitol of the new United Canada and served as the seat of government from 1841 to 1844.

Parliament chose to move the Canadian capitol to Montreal.
Queen Victoria directed the capitol to again be moved to By-Town (Ottawa), 1858,
for defense purposes and to connect the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

It is Kingston's location over the centuries
that has had major influence on the development of commerce on Lake Ontario.
Shipping and shipbuilding became a most important trade in Kingston.
Before the present St Lawrence Seaway of the 1950s, and previous river channels,
Lake Ontario cargoes and passengers going to or coming from the ocean,
or using the Rideau Canal, were off-loaded in Kingston.
Deep-draft lake boats that sailed the lake could not cross the rapids of the river.
Outgoing traffic was reloaded onto log rafts and floated down river,
or onto shallow-draft rapids-runners - steamers that could
"shoot the Lachine rapids" of the Saint Lawrence.

(see notes 2.1)

2.2 Beginning of Steam on Great Lake Ontario

Near the place where Lake Ontario and Bay of Quinte waters merge is Finkle's Point, now a roadside park in a town west of Kingston. It's located on picturesque Route 33, labeled the Loyalist Parkway - remembering the United Empire Loyalists who settled much of the land between Kingston and the Bay of Quinte region. The highway runs west along the Bay of Quinte's north channel to the Glenora Ferry crossing onto the Prince Edward County peninsula.

Here, a blue and gold Canada Historical Marker locates the "Launching of the FRONTENAC." Finkle's Point was settled in the late 1780s. At its beginnings, the village was pretty much centered around Finkle's Tavern. Henry Finkle, a Loyalist, opened his tavern in 1786. It was the first tavern built between Kingston and York (Toronto). There he also built a brewery and one of the earliest school houses in the region.

It is on this ground the first steamship to navigate the Great Lakes was built. The FRONTENAC was the prodigy of a group of Kingston businessmen. Their company was owned jointly by others in York (Toronto) and Niagara. Their goal was to take advantage of the expansion in Great Lakes shipping and commerce after the War of 1812. Having a vessel to carry cargo on Lake Ontario which would be speedier than wind-driven schooners was to their benefit. Before the war, the only steamers in the region were being used on the outer St Lawrence River.

Among the stockholders was Henry Gildersleeve of Kingston, a former American coming to Canada after the War of 1812. The Gildersleeve family later became the " Legends of Great Lakes Shipping." He himself is known as the " Father of Great Lakes Steam Navigation." Work on FRONTENAC began October 1815 on land leased from Henry Finkle. The vessel was named after an early Governor of New France (Canada before the English), the Count Frontenac, who ordered building of the first fort in what became Kingston. Saturday September 7, 1816 the hull of the FRONTENAC

was launched into Lake Ontario at Finkle's Point.

It was fitted out during that winter in Kingston.

FRONTENAC, a side paddle wheeler, also carried a three-mast schooner rigging.

The first trip was made in June 1817 to York (Toronto).

Later on, it had a regular schedule carrying cargo between Kingston, York and Niagara, three times a month.

It also carried passengers, in what were then considered "well appointed " cabins.

Eventually, the vessel was sold in 1825 to Honorable John Hamilton of Kingston.

Hamilton had moved to Queenston to operate steamboats under contract

to the Royal Post Office. The Royal Mail Line ran between Niagara and Kingston.

While in the Niagara River, FRONTENAC was set ablaze by an arsonist, and sank into the mud. Too badly damaged, it was broken up in 1827.

Building of FRONTENAC began the trend for large steam-driven Great Lakes vessels.

On the American-side, in Sackett's Harbor, the steamer ONTARIO was launched March 1817 by Robert Fulton Company of New York City.

ONTARIO ran between Oswego, York and Niagara.

In 1818 the Fulton Company launched a second steamer, the CHARLOTTE.

This vessel ran along the Upper Canada shoreline of Lake Ontario from Bay of Quinte to Prescott in upper St Lawrence River.

WALK IN THE WATER was built 1818 at Black Rock in upper Niagara River.

Owned by a group of Buffalo businessmen, the Lake Erie Steamboat Company, it was the first steam-driven vessel on the upper Great Lakes, above Niagara Falls.

By 1819, competition for Great Lakes steamboat shipping was well underway.

(see notes 2.2)

2.3 Beyond Finkle's Point - A Plank Road and A Stake of Faith

Finkle's Point proved an important location for more than steamboats. Finkle's Tavern itself became the headquarters for civil engineer Asa Danforth. A former Colonist, Danforth designed and directed construction of the first wooden plank-road built by the government of Upper Canada, around 1798. The road ran between Kingston and Ancaster, southwest of York. It followed the route of the current Loyalist Parkway, including a ferry line that crossed from the mainland to the Prince Edward County peninsula, then on to Trenton and York. The area of Finkle's Point later became the community of Ernest Town. Today, it is known as the Town of Bath, Lennox-Addington County. The first stagecoach line across Upper Canada between Kingston and York ran on the Danforth Plank Road through Finkle's Point, 1834. The line was owned by William Weller of Cobourg, a brewer and hotelier, and Cobourg's first mayor.

Arriving at Ernest Town in June 1832 were six US missionaries. Led by brothers Phineas and Joseph Young, they were members of the Mormons. The Youngs were establishing the first Mormon branches outside the United States. These first branches were in Canada, organized at Ernest Town (Bath) and and Loughborough (Sydenham); and, later in Napanee and areas near Kingston.

The story of Mormon branches in Canada begins in New York State. Near Manchester in New York's Ontario County, lived Joseph Smith. His Methodist family had moved there from Vermont. Near Mendon in Monroe County, lived the Joshua Young family, and his two Methodist preacher sons Joseph and Phineas. A third son Brigham, moved to Mendon with his wife Mariam in 1829.

The Mormons began with Joseph Smith. His mother's religious upbringing had made him sensitive to concepts of faith. In 1823, Smith believed he received a spiritual vision. The angel Moroni, son of angel Mormon, had come to Smith to tell him of an ancient civilization in North America. Moroni also foretold that Smith would find precious religious gold tablets; that these tablets were hidden in a hill; and,

that he would translate those tablets from their ancient language.

Joseph Smith was again visited by angel Moroni, in 1827.

This time, Smith was told where to find, and how to translate, the golden tablets inscribed with ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

That hill was Cumorah, north of Manchester and south of Palmyra Wayne County.

Moroni also told Smith he would find two magic crystals on Cumorah.

Smith found the tablets and crystals in 1827, and proceeded to translate the tablets.

He did so with the assistance of three other men, " The Three Witnesses."

As Smith sat behind a curtain, he read the tablets aloud in English.

The three witnesses copied his words into what became the Book of Mormon.

Another set of " Eight Witnesses ," also gave testimony to seeing the tablets.

In 1830, translation of Book of Mormon was completed and published at Palmyra.

That year the Church of Christ was founded (soon thereafter known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints).

Two of the eleven witnesses to Smith's translation and of the golden tablets,

Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page, took the first 64 pages of the book

to Toronto in 1830, to try to sell its copyright. They were unsuccessful.

Book of Mormon is Joseph Smith's translation into English

of the Account of the Angel Mormon. It describes a civilization

that existed in the western Hemisphere, 600 BC - 400 AD.

It is the record of the people of Nephi and of the Lamanites

- descendants of the Israelites. The book says that the

remnants of their civilizations became the native peoples of North America.

June 1830, Joseph and Phineas Young went to Kingston for

a quarterly meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

When it was concluded, Joseph stayed in Kingston to preach Methodism.

Phineas returned home by boat to Oswego New York.

On his way to Mendon, he encountered the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith.

Phineas was converted, baptized and ordained a Mormon in 1832.

He and four ordained Mormons from Vermont returned to Kingston in 1832.

There Phineas converted and baptized Joseph.

Together they proceeded to preach the new faith across the Kingston area,

mostly to Methodist church members known to the Youngs.

Brigham was also baptized 1832, and visited his brothers in Canada, 1832 and 1835. His first wife Mariam died in 1832 at Mendon and is buried there.

The first "British America" Mormon branch established by the Youngs was at Ernest Town 1832, and the second was established in Loughborough 1833. The first converts in Ernest Town were James and Philomena Lake. Among the first converts in Loughborough was Daniel Wood. The Mormons' most successful Canadian missionary was John Page of Loughborough, who converted followers on his trips up the Rideau Canal. Joseph Smith visited Ernest Town in 1833 and again in 1837. Branches were later organized in Napanee, Camden, Big Creek, Fredricksburg, and as far north as Clark's Mills on the Rideau Canal, all between 1833 and 1835.

Following the church's "doctrine of gathering," John Page convinced some of the Canadian Mormons to sell their property and follow him to New York. The group made hasty departure during the winter of 1837-38 across the ice of St Lawrence River; possibly in fear of the pending Patriots Rebellion. The Canadian Mormons followed the New York Mormons to the "Ohio Camp" where the church had been headquartered since 1831. They all moved on to the "Missouri Camp" in 1839. Persecution forced the church to keep moving west, to find their "new Zion." Brigham Young became president of the church in 1844, after the assassination of Joseph Smith at Carthage Illinois. Brigham Young kept the group moving west. Camp Zion was finally founded in what is now Utah, 1847.

Daniel Wood of Loughborough was among the Camp Zion members. He returned just once to Kingston in 1869, to attempt conversions. Outside of his efforts, no Mormon missionary work was done in Canada until 1919. The Canadian Mission was then established in Toronto. Branches were raised in Toronto, Hamilton and Brantford. Together with branches in Napanee, Kingston and Brockville, they were grouped into the Ottawa Ontario Stake.

(see notes 2.3)

2.4 US Friends of A Canadian Rebellion

The history of Rochester and western New York residents includes more than settling parts of Canada and, trading and shipping with the Canadians. During the nineteenth century, there were those on our shores who were involved in Canadian political activities and Canadians active in American turmoil.

A newspaper published in Queenston on Niagara River in the 1830s was owned and written by a real "firebrand" named William Lyon Mackenzie. He used his paper, The Colonial Advocate, to harass the government of Upper Canada (Ontario), then known fondly as the "Family Compact." The Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada at the time, Sir Francis Bond Head, was a relation of the King of England. Most of the government ministers were friends of The Lieutenant Governor, so the Family Compact of control in Upper Canada was very much to the benefit and favor of that incestuous group. William Lyon Mackenzie, the agitator that he was, ran and won a seat to parliament and later became the first mayor of York (Toronto). Even though his beliefs were popular among the Canadian public, he was unable to affect any changes among the insiders. Using his newspaper, he made open attack on the Family Compact. In retaliation, they burned his newspaper office and destroyed his presses. In 1837, Mackenzie connected with sympathetic New Yorkers, and in Monroe County developed the "Executive Committee of Rochester" society. The group included a dozen influential Rochesterians including Henry O'Reilly editor of the Rochester Mercury newspaper, and lawyers James Doolittle and J.W. Gilbert. Gilbert later became the County District Attorney in 1842. As much as they were a public group, they secretly were building support and funds to assist Mackenzie and his friends to create an army to overthrow the government of the Family Compact. Independence from the British was the US mindset. A convention was held in Buffalo and a Patriots stronghold was developed on Navy Island in Niagara River. One of the most noted acts of the "Patriots Rebellion" was capture and burning by the Patriots of the British steam-gun ship CAROLINE in Niagara River. The other was the key attack by Mackenzie's rebellion forces on Kingston. Launched in Watertown, carried to a tavern in Kingston, it ended on an island in the St Lawrence when British troops captured the Rebellion Patriots by gunboat. Mackenzie's troops numbered only around 100, a larger number attacked Toronto. All ended in capture. Some killed. Some jailed. The Rebellion was a failure.

In Monroe County New York there remained a large support for Mackenzie. Sympathizers formed the "Canada Refugees Association" with many supporters among the members of Rochester's Common Council. When the Rebellion failed, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada proclaimed Mackenzie a traitor and placed a bounty on him. Mackenzie came to Rochester, then moved to New York City. The Lieutenant Governor asked New York's Governor William L Marcy to extradite Mackenzie to Canada. New York refused. As a compromise, Mackenzie was indicted for violating the United States Neutrality Act which prevented anyone in the United States from conspiring to overthrow a foreign government. Mackenzie was finally arrested and tried in Canandaigua, the seat of federal court at that time. Mackenzie was sentenced to serve eighteen months in the Monroe County Blue Eagle Jail in Rochester. Mackenzie was incarcerated there from 1838 to 1840. Many of his supporters attempted numerous times to gain his release and pardon, but to no avail. During the same time, supporters for Mackenzie in Rochester and Toronto, helped Mackenzie's entire family to be secretly moved from Toronto to Rochester. They ended up in a donated house on South Avenue, near Cook's Opera House. As the family had no real means of support, the same group of loyal supporters petitioned several Rochester companies to financially assist the family. One fund-raising event was a private performance at Cook's Opera House of the popular play "Hypocrite," with all proceeds going to Mrs Mackenzie. After months of petitioning, President Van Buren granted him a pardon in 1840. He remained in Rochester after his release, then moved on to New York City. In 1849 William Lyon Mackenzie was granted pardon by the Canadian government. The family returned to Toronto where William Lyon died in August 1861.

William Lyon and wife Isabel Baxter had fifteen children; five died as infants. George was born in Rochester in 1841, and daughter Isabel, born in New York City, became mother of Canada's longest serving Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, holding office over three separate terms (1921 - 1948).

(see notes 2.4)

2.5 The Rap Rap of Two Canadian Rochesterians

A second spiritual following connected Canadian and American shores.

This one came through the medium of the Fox Sisters.

The word medium is appropriate as these two sisters were the initiators of modern Spiritualism in North America. The idea of communicating with a world beyond our own was well established in England long before Kate (12) and Margaretta (14) heard their "rapping" in 1847.

Originally from Consecon, a small village on the Bay of Quinte side of Upper Canada's Prince Edward County peninsula, the family took up residence in Charlotte New York around 1844. The family then moved to Hydesville New York, northwest of Newark Wayne County.

As the story goes, the sisters heard "rapping" in the walls and digging in the cellar of their country home, as well as, cold hands touching them in the dark.

They claimed they had talked to peddler Charles Rosna who had been murdered in that house years before. Reenactment of the murder and basement burial were nightly visions for the sisters, so they claimed.

Eventually the sounds were heard during the day as well.

Written reports had been published years before, claiming that other occupants of this house also had heard strange noises in the house.

The story spread quickly, so much so that the family was forced by their local popularity to move to Rochester.

The "rapping" continued in Rochester as well and, with assistance from their sister Leah Fox Fish who lived there, they conducted seances.

These attracted many who desired to communicate with others from the "beyond."

To test the validity of the two sisters' claim, a committee was established by local officials at the city's Corinthian Hall, 1849. The sisters claimed that their communicating code with the dead was the number of rapping heard.

In three sessions, Corinthian Hall filled to capacity to hear the rapping.

Each session could not explain the sounds, beyond the claims of the sisters.

The Fox sisters also made return visits to Belleville to hold seances there.

Other mediums started the practice of "Spirit Circles," with widespread popularity.

Eventually, 1888, Margaretta broke down to explain that the entire affair was a hoax.

Sounds from the "other side" were actually the sisters cracking their big toe joints.

Even so, modern Spiritualism was on its way, and in 1882 a national Society had been formed to do specific scientific research into the phenomenon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's longest sitting prime minister up to his retirement in 1948, was a firm believer. It was not until after his death that Mackenzie King's secret practice of spiritualism became public knowledge. His former mediums indicated he never discussed politics with the dead. They did claim he held numerous conversations with his deceased beloved companion Irish terrier "Pat ," also with US President Franklin Roosevelt and, with his father and mother Isabel Grace Mackenzie King (daughter of his namesake William Lyon Mackenzie, born in New York City after her father was pardoned and released from his Rochester jail).

Today, Spiritualist churches can be found across North America. A national convention of Spiritualist Churches has been held in Rochester, yearly. In southwest New York State the entire community of Lily Dale alongside Cassadaga Lake Chautauqua County is dedicated to the belief. Mediums there hold seances for any and all who show up on their doorsteps.

(see notes 2.5)

2.6 Genesee - "Head of Navigation" on New York Shores

The " District of the Genesee " was one of several navigation districts on the United States side of Lake Ontario. It included all navigation along the New York shoreline from Sodus Bay to Point Breeze.

As directed by US Congress in 1806,

"River of the Genesee shall be the sole port of entry;

and collector of said district shall be appointed to reside on the River Genesee."

Samuel Latta was that first federally appointed Customs Agent for the District.

He and his family resided in Charlotte, at the mouth of the Genesee River.

Some of the lake boats heading from Rochester to Kingston were those of George Latta and others like local merchants Oliver Culver and James Guernsey. They shipped and received their goods on wooden two masted schooners. George Latta owned a number of wooden schooners built between 1828 and 1832, including the GENERAL BROWN, CHARLOTTE, SWALLOW and MARY JANE. Latta, Guernsey and Frederick Brownell became partners in G & B and Company, shipping its merchandise on Latta's boats to the Thousand Islands and Montreal.

There were no piers in Charlotte then; the shoreline was more a marsh. So, at the very beginning of commercial shipping from the Genesee River, the "Head of Navigation" of the early 1800s was located below the Lower Falls. At this cascade was the village of McCrackenville on the west side and the village of Carthage on the east side.

Boat landings at the "head of navigation" were docks on both sides of the river, with the Glen House dock on the west shore being one of the busiest.

Glen House stood as a popular restaurant in the gorge right on the river's edge.

Steamboats came up river to the "head of navigation" to board passengers

who arrived from downtown Rochester several miles to the south,

by horse drawn trolley (after 1900, on the "electrics").

At time of departure, passengers would leave from Ticket Agent Waiting Rooms located at the downtown Four Corners in the Power's Block.

Ticket Agents were no different than the Travel Agents of today.

One group of travelers who departed from the "Head of Navigation" were fugitive slaves from the US Confederate States, secreted out of Rochester

and United States on steamers docking in the Genesee River. Their "ticket agents" were Underground Railroad Conductors who would escort them "invisibly" to the river at the Lower Falls and farther north to Kelsey's Landing on the river's west shore. They would hide fugitives in the woods before boarding to avoid the slave-catchers. Those steamers headed to Lewiston in Niagara River and then on to Canada, sometimes to Queenston, Hamilton or Toronto. Their final destinations were the African-Canadian settlements in Canada West. These were the communities receiving those who fortunately made it to freedom.

The river was home to Rochester's most noted legends of lake shipping. The three Rogers brothers Ezra, Diodat and Hosea lived in Carthage. In the 1800s, Carthage was a village located along the river's east side. On the river's banks, they built schooners in their Brewer's Dock boat yard. The first was CAROLINE in 1822, named after their sister. The Rogers brothers built and sold dozens of merchant schooners. They kept some to operate themselves including ALIDA JANE ROGERS, OLIVER CULVER, JEANETTE, and DANIEL WEBSTER. The Rogers would also ship cargo throughout the Great Lakes, as far as Chicago. They loaded and off-loaded cargoes as they stopped at various ports along the way, using freight agents to sell and schedule the next shipment.

Although all three brothers owned the business and sailed the fleet, Hosea Rogers is the one most recognized in Rochester history. The other Rogers brothers moved to ports on the upper Great Lakes. Hosea remained in Rochester and moved his boat works to the "River Lot" in Summerville on the eastern shore at the mouth of the Genesee. Hosea Rogers built boats there until 1873.

Diodat moved to Black River Ohio, west of Cleveland, in the early 1840s. There he too built schooners. In 1850 he built for Hosea the CITY of ROCHESTER. It was enrolled in the District of the Genesee May 24, 1853. This three-master was the only vessel in the Rogers fleet to sail on all Great Lakes. CITY of ROCHESTER was sold to interests in Ogdensburg NY in 1852, and renamed CITY of OGDENSBURG. In the St Lawrence it met its fate in an 1861 collision with steamer ONTARIO near Prescott Upper Canada. This ONTARIO is possibly

the one owned by Horatio Throop's Ontario Steamboat Company of Putlneyville. Great Lakes ship records show no other steamers named ONTARIO launched or lost during this time. Throop's ONTARIO was eventually sold to John Hamilton of Queenston for use on the Royal Mail Line of Canada, 1867.

Connecting Charlotte on the west river bank with Summerville on the east was a ferry operating under New York State charter to Jerome B Manning, 1859. The state repealed the company's charter in 1874, and commissioned Summerville & Charlotte Ferry Company to begin operation on the same route. That company was owned by Charles H Chapin and, Joseph and Bernard Tone. Joseph Tone was the company's manager. The steamer YOSEMITE was established as the ferry, piloted by Captain F Murray. The last ferry on this route in the 1900s was the ferry WINDSOR, piloted by Captain William H Andrews; it operated until 1940.

Docks at the Genesee's Lower Falls were also used for recreation. The fun of the day, at turn of the century 1900, was to take day excursions by water. It was a popular event to trolley to the steamer, like side wheeler J.D. SCOTT owned by Captain Jacob D Scott, and then go out onto Lake Ontario to Sea Breeze and into Irondequoit Bay. Small bay launches would stop at resort hotels, amusement parks and private clubs. Among them were Boardwalk Park, Sea Breeze Park, Point Pleasant Hotel, Newport House Hotel, Birds & Worms Club, Glen Edyth, and Glen Haven Park. Day trippers would then return by trolley to Four Corners in downtown Rochester. JD Scott, major stock holder in Genesee River & Lake Ontario Steamboat Company, was often called the "Excursion King" for his packaging of these day-trips and fares. Scott would offer "a one price includes all" fare for an entire day's outing. Another popular day-trip was to trolley and boat along the Greece shoreline to the resort hotels stretching from Ontario Beach to Braddock's Bay and Manitou Beach. Popular destinations included Bartholmay Pavilion at Charlotte, Island Cottage, Springwater Hotel on Cranberry Pond, and Crescent Beach Hotel.

(see notes 2.6)

2.7 Four Corners - Western New York's Transportation Hub

The Lower Falls Head of Navigation and the Port of Charlotte were several miles north of the city center of Rochester.

Railways were the first means of transportation for anyone traveling on the lake. A passenger would book a complete day-trip or long voyage with a Ticket Agent, including trolley, steamer, food, hotel, baggage, and return.

Over the years, Ticket Agents named Amsden, Kalbfleisch, Lewis & Company, Canada Steamboat Office, and Jacob Hochstein were recognized leaders of the business for travel out of the area on lake steamer, railroad, ocean steamship, and on canal boat.

Travelers would leave from Ticket Agent Waiting Rooms and take the electric trolley lines (and previous horse-drawn lines) such as, Rochester Electric Railway (part of the original Rochester Gas & Electric Company), Rochester & Lake Ontario Railway (the Bay RR), Rochester & Glen Haven RR, Rochester, Charlotte & Manitou Railway, Rochester & Eastern Railway, and Rochester & Sodus Bay Railroad (the Royal Blue Line).

Or, they would board steam trains run by New York Central & Hudson RR, and Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh RR, and head to stations at Port of Charlotte.

Business for these Ticket Agents also came from the Erie Canal. It passed one block south of the Four Corners and the Powers Block, where most Waiting Rooms were located.

Several blocks to the west was the boat basin for Genesee Valley Canal which headed south into the Southern Tier of New York State.

Here the Erie and Genesee Valley Canals crossed.

Next to the basin was the terminal for Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad (before it, the Rochester & State Line RR),

which brought in traffic from Pennsylvania and towns of southern New York.

One block north was the original New York Central & Hudson Railroad station.

Rail lines to the lake headed directly north from the intersection of Four Corners.

With this important location, Four Corners of Rochester represented the region's transportation hub for canal, rail and lake travel.

The first New York Central & Hudson Railroad station was on Central Avenue near State Street. Boats departed from the Central's Charlotte station at the port. New York Central owned two stations on Central Avenue, one replacing the other. The last of these stations, designed by legendary Rochester architect Claude Bragdon, was demolished in the 1960s. The Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad's station was on Main Street at Canal Street. This later became the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station. B,R & P tracks went north and crossed Lake Avenue at Boxart Street in Charlotte, entering the Genesee Docks of the Ontario Car Ferry Company at the Turning Basin, where large vessels could negotiate a 180 degree turn-around in the river. The routine continued into the 1900s while several railroad stations remained on Main Street, serving the Cobourg Ferry and other major lines.

(see notes 2.7)

2.8 North Star Lighting Canadian Shores

Canada as a country outlawed slavery in the years between 1793 and 1833. After their emancipation in Canada, most African-Canadians congregated at settlements in Essex and Kent counties, Canada West (southwestern Ontario on the Canadian side of the Detroit River). Chatham, Amherstburg, Elgin, Buxton, Dawn, and Wilberforce were communities then called "The Negro Colonies," settled by Canadian free blacks and free blacks leaving the United States. They operated as independent Canadian communities long before they became involved as destinations on the Canadian side of the US Underground Railroad. From these colonies, freed men and women moved on to Kingston and Montreal.

As much as they were a part of Canadiana at the time, the colonies were also very separate. They paid their taxes and allegiances to their counties but, they often had their own schools, their own economy, their own industry, and their own version of local government. One thing they had in common with all governments was the need for funds. That was a problem for the colonies. Initially, many were supported by special societies created to raise funds through donations from Canada, USA, and England. The True Band, Canada Mission, and The Elgin Association, along with the organized churches offered support. The number of inhabitants became so large that the African Methodist Episcopal AME church created a congregational Conference and named a bishop in Toronto to support the colony congregations.

One Rochester legend connected to the Canadian colonies, is Austin Steward, a Rochester merchant and freeman from slavery. Steward went to Canada in 1830 to assist and later to head Wilberforce Colony. Wilberforce is now the town of Lucan in Middlesex County near London Ontario. As one of the first colonies it was settled by free blacks from Cincinnati Ohio in 1829. Early on, the original founding leaders returned to the US. Those Cincinnati blacks familiar with Austin Steward recruited him to take over the leadership, immediately making him the settlement's president.

Steward's first action was to request the colony adopt the name Wilberforce. William Wilberforce was the English abolitionist-parliamentarian considered the key force in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, by 1833. Steward's beginnings at Wilberforce were not clear sailing. Shortly after his taking over the leadership, the settlement discovered one of the original founders had mishandled funds, with deficits and debts already in place. Despite the problems, Wilberforce did advance under Steward's tutelage. The numbers of settlers grew, a school was built with funds from the Quakers. AME church services and Sunday school were held by Steward in his home. The Baptist Church was active in the settlement as well. Unfortunately, by 1835 the Canada Land Company which was selling parcels for the settlements, decided not to offer any more land to the colonies. Wilberforce was no longer able to attract new black families, and its population began to dwindle. Austin Steward left Wilberforce in 1837 to become a full time AME preacher. Shortly thereafter, most of the Wilberforce parcels were sold to one of its residents. Later, those parcels were sold to the Grand Trunk Railway for railroad right-of-way. Longest operating of all colonies became Buxton Mission at the Elgin Settlement. Supported by the Presbyterian Church; it lasted until 1880.

(see notes 2.8)

2.9 Helping Antislavery Fighters

Among the most notable US abolitionist was Rochester's Frederick Douglass. Rochester was home to many antislavery advocates, including Susan Brownell Anthony. Douglass was one of the most outspoken, carrying the oratory against US slavery, to the nation from Rochester. He also acted as a communications agent for the many stations and conductors along the Underground Railroad.

One such railroad section operator was John Brown. Brown had come from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and finally settled in the Adirondacks at North Elba, beneath the spire of Mt Marcy. There he ran his part of the railroad system, taking fugitive slaves through the mountains to Cornwall (Ontario), and to Lake Champlain for boating to Canada. Brown, an antislavery proponent, became most known for his war in Kansas, and for his ill-fated attack on Harper's Ferry Arsenal in Virginia. Brown believed that by creating a revolt among the slaves, the South's economic system would be so disrupted that slave owners would abandon slavery. John Brown believed the only way to do this was with the assistance of Frederick Douglass. Without Douglass' sanction, he believed the slaves would not take up the arms he was going to acquire in the arsenal raid. So, over the course of many years as Brown developed his plan, he visited with Douglass both in and away from Rochester.

There was a strong respect between both men, even though they were of unlike temperaments and backgrounds. On the occasion of one visit to Rochester, John Brown used his stay at Douglass' home on South Avenue to write what Brown called "The Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States." It was Brown's version of the US Constitution, including a complete ban on slavery. John Brown did not wage his war to overthrow the United States government. He did not desire that the north and south be split into separate unions. He only wanted to make slavery nonexistent, just as was done in Canada - by 1833.

After finishing his document in Rochester, Brown took his new constitution to Chatham Canada West to hold his constitutional convention. The John Brown convention at Chatham was held in May 1858, with mixed support by attendees from both Canada and the United States. As for Douglass, he did not believe in the revolt, nor did he sanction Brown's raid. Brown knew this, but went ahead anyway. Brown's party of raiders were mostly Americans,

including Douglass' Rochester friend Shields Green.

Only two Canadians from the convention went along with Brown.

One, a white man, was killed in the attack; the other was Osborne Anderson, a free black who was elected a congressman in Brown's provisional government.

Anderson escaped capture and returned to Canada. Being a printer, he wrote and published the story in his book A Voice from Harpers Ferry.

Brown was unsuccessful, captured, tried and executed.

Hearing of Brown's failed attack and his execution,

many Canadians proclaimed him a martyr, a hero, and a symbol of freedom.

The descendants of the original Buxton Mission in southwestern Ontario still celebrate him each fall with a festival.

Also celebrated is a reunion of descendants

of Josiah Henson - leader of the Dawn Settlement.

It is believed that the life of Josiah Henson

is the model that Harriet Beecher Stowe used to depict her character of

Tom in the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin.

(see notes 2.9)

2.10 A Tale Between Two Cities

Friendships across Lake Ontario were connected by the regular schedules of the many steam-driven passenger ships.

MAPLE LEAF was a popular side wheel steamer,

which along with its sister the HIGHLANDER, made three trips weekly between Charlotte, Cobourg and Port Hope, 1851 - 1862.

The steamer MAPLE LEAF was owned and operated by Canada's Lake Ontario International Steamboat Company out of Cobourg.

It also ran excursions from Charlotte to Oak Orchard NY (Pt Breeze) on to Canada.

MAPLE LEAF had two captains popular with Rochesterians.

Its first was Captain Robert Kerr, serving until 1857.

The second was Captain George Schofield, skippering the boat to its last season, 1862.

The vessel and its owners were represented in Rochester by

Ticket Agent George Darling, who operated as Canada Steamboat Office on State Street in the Powers Block.

One tradition of the 1850s between Cobourg and Rochester

- along with traditions of camaraderie between fire brigades and police departments - was attendance by Rochesterians at the annual August Cobourg Regatta.

MAPLE LEAF would offer special spectator excursions to attend the regatta.

A Rochester band would play during the crossing and at ceremonies in Cobourg.

In July, the Cobourg town band would come over Lake Ontario on MAPLE LEAF to play at Rochester Independence Day festivities.

In October 1858, MAPLE LEAF experienced American litigation.

Eleven Rochester merchants sued the ship's company and captain

for payment-in-arrears of \$ 700, for supplies and services purchased for the boat.

The vessel was seized in Charlotte by US Marshals and held from service pending resolve of the suit.

An item in the Rochester Union & Advertiser newspaper, October 1858 reported:

Our Canadian Connections.

The seizure of the Maple Leaf has cut off the present direct communications with Canada ports on the north shore of the lake. For the first time in perhaps twenty years, we have no steamer running

to and from Cobourg and Port Hope. We trust, however, that some arrangement will be made next week, whereby the Maple Leaf will resume her trips. Our city loses some trade by this suspension, and the Canadian people experience even more inconveniences than our own. Quite a large number of Canadian passengers were here today expecting a boat to cross.

The case was heard in US District Court at Buffalo in November of that year. The debt was resolved and the vessel was released to resume its cross lake transit.

Steamer MAPLE LEAF continued servicing Rochester until it was sold to the Boston firm Lang & Delano in 1862. One week after MAPLE LEAF had made its annual August Cobourg Regatta trip of 1862, it was moved to the Atlantic Ocean. The new owners then leased it to the United States government for use as a Civil War troop ship. MAPLE LEAF was lost while on a mission, when it was hit by a torpedo off Jacksonville Florida, February 1864. Two crew members were lost; the 60 military troops on board made it to safety. MAPLE LEAF's last Lake Ontario captain George Schofield retired to Rochester. Former Captain Robert Kerr passed away in Toronto while serving as Toronto Harbour Master, in 1876.

(see notes 2.10)

2.11 Crossing Lake Lines as the Century Turns

NORTH KING (Gildersleeve) and ALEXANDRIA (Hepburn) were popular vessels crossing the lake between Rochester and Canadian ports. Their companies often offered package deals for holiday excursions, like Dominion Day July 1 and Independence Day July 4.

The Gildersleeve lake dynasty owned a number of fleets over the years. The most successful was Lake Ontario & Bay of Quinte Steamboat Company. Operated by Henry Herchmer (H.H.) Gildersleeve (son of Henry Gildersleeve) of Kingston, it owned a number of vessels calling on ports on both sides of the lake. Its most popular steamers were NORTH KING and CASPIAN operating between Port of Charlotte to the ports of Cobourg and Port Hope.

L.O. & B.Q. (the Bay of Quinte Route) also ran steamers into the Bay of Quinte and, up the coast to Kingston and the St Lawrence.

In 1899, L.O. & B.Q. Rochester ticket agents were the Amsden Company and Lewis & Company.

On Ontario shores, tickets were sold in Port Hope by Thomas Long & Son, Captain Dan Rooney in Cobourg, Rathbun & Company in Belleville, and Wescott Express Company in Kingston.

A Canadian vessel keeping schedules out of the Genesee at Summerville was steamer ALEXANDRIA of the Montreal & Rochester Transit Company.

Summerville occupies the eastern shore of the Genesee as it empties into the lake.

ALEXANDRIA operated between Rochester and the Canadian ports of Cobourg, Port Hope, Brighton in Bay of Quinte, and Montreal, 1899 - 1915.

The steamer was owned by Arthur W Hepburn of Picton, who also owned a number of passenger and cargo boats, and steamboat lines.

To get to Toronto from Rochester one could leave on the ALEXANDRIA, and change at Brighton Ontario to steamer ARGYLE of Hepburn's Argyle Transportation Company.

To get to ports in the Bay of Quinte one would change to steamer VARUNA of the Deseronto Navigation Company, owned by Edward Rathbun and family.

Even Rochester's mayor Hiram Edgerton was involved in the business as major stock holder in two firms at turn of the century 1900:

Irondequoit Navigation Company and Ontario Navigation Company. The O.N.C.'s steamer GLENN would pick up passengers at the Port of Charlotte rail station and boat them to the Sea Breeze piers that reached out into the lake at the mouth of Irondequoit Bay. As active as his two companies were, their vessels never cruised beyond the safe havens of Rochester's shoreline between Genesee River and Irondequoit Bay.

A well known turn of the century steamer that cruised all along Lake Ontario's New York shoreline was ARUNDELL. It served passengers in ports from Niagara River to the St Lawrence. ARUNDELL's regular summer schedule called on New York ports of Lewiston, Olcott Beach, Point Breeze, Charlotte, Sodus Point, Fair Haven, Oswego, Cape Vincent and Clayton. ARUNDELL was an excursion craft owned out of Michigan. It entered the lake each summer through the Welland Canal. ARUNDELL was built 1879 at Bell Iron Works in Buffalo. Originally owned by its builder David Bell, it was sold to Cole & Holt Lines of Bay City Michigan who operated it from 1892 to 1896. That company became Star Cole Line and then White Star Line. ARUNDELL was operated out of Detroit by these companies to 1909. ARUNDELL left Lake Ontario service when it was sold to its final owner, Crawford Transportation Company of Chicago. Crawford operated it as a ferry and cargo vessel across Lake Michigan. In 1911, ARUNDELL burned in Lake Michigan off Douglas Michigan. It was refitted as the steamer BREWSTER, sold and moved to a company in New York City, then to a company in North Carolina.

There have been a number of lake vessels named ROCHESTER in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The earliest found was enrolled in the District of the Genesee, April 15, 1830. This was most likely a schooner. On Lake Erie the side wheel steam-freighter ROCHESTER was launched 1837 at Richmond City Ohio; it went down in 1852 off Erie Pennsylvania. Earliest steamer on Lake Ontario was S.S. ROCHESTER, 1863,

built by Augustus Cantin in Montreal.

It had "elegant staterooms and cabins, and every convenience for traveling."

The Gildersleeves purchased this excursion vessel from Cantin in 1868, and ran it between Rochester, Kingston and Oswego.

It was rescheduled to Bay of Quinte in 1871, rebuilt 1877 as the HASTINGS, and wrecked beyond use, 1880, in Bay of Quinte.

A second ROCHESTER was built in 1910 for the American division of Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Company of Canada.

The R & O came under Canada Steamship Lines' pennant when it amalgamated with other firms into the CSL 1913.

Its route was from Youngstown New York in Niagara River and onto Lake Ontario with stops along the way to Ogdensburg New York in the St Lawrence.

In 1915, ROCHESTER was sold to Indiana Transportation Company, Chicago, and put into service between Chicago and Saugatuck Michigan. There it stayed.

(see notes 2.11)

PART THREE

BEYOND 1900

3.1 Cobourg - The Americans ' Lake Ontario Resort

The Town of Cobourg Ontario has been connected to New York for centuries. The earliest settler of Cobourg was from New York State, 1797. Much of that area of Upper Canada was settled by United Empire Loyalists - Americans who left the Thirteen Colonies after the American Revolution.

The steamer MAPLE LEAF was one of many vessels of the nineteenth century which carried Rochester families across the lake to Cobourg. The "Cobourg Ferry" of the twentieth century furthered this connection. Both ports had been trading cargo across the lake for many years. Coal, iron ore, and timber were frequently loaded at the docks in each port. In the late 1800s, the commodity on board those vessels became Americans. Coal and steel industry tycoons found in Cobourg a destination for their play. Mansion-like homes and hotels were built by the "rich Americans from Pittsburgh," after the American Civil War. Known as the "American Houses," the architecture was large and ornate.

"Cobourg had a 'busboy' economy based around the work created through domestic service to the Americans. Those Americans who owned the 'summer' homes (the mansions) built hotels to house and entertain their friends who came across the lake to visit." First large "first class hotel" between Toronto and Montreal was built there, 1874. Brainchild and chief promoter of Cobourg's Arlington Hotel was US Civil War Colonel William Chambliss. He and others traveled the northern US promoting Cobourg and the hotel. Chambliss was director of the Cobourg, Peterborough & Marmora Railway and iron ore mine, owned in part by his Pennsylvanian father-in-law. All of its iron ore shipments went to US smelters, including the one in Charlotte NY, since no iron ore furnaces existed in Canada at that time.

By 1900, Cobourg called itself the "American Summer Colony." Americans came from all over the US to build massive homes. Lifestyle was lavish, entertainment elegant. Some homes employed 20 servants. Cobourg's "Wedding of the Century" was that of Vivian May Sartoris, granddaughter of the then late US President Ulysses S Grant, to Cobourger Frederick Roosevelt Scovel in 1902. The reception was held at "Claremont," home of the bride's mother, the former Ellen Grant, which still stands. Most of the other enormous structures have since burned down.

A few Cobourg "American Houses" still remain like former hotel Sidbrook (a senior adult home), the "Villa" (a convent), and Ravensworth (a private residence) on Fitzhugh Lane - named by retired US Civil War General C. L. Fitzhugh, where he had built one of the largest of mansions, the East House - now gone.

(see notes 3.1)

3.2 Many Remember the Cobourg Ferry

Many people have "heard of," "know someone," or who actually experienced travel across Lake Ontario on the Cobourg Ferry in the 1910s through the 1940s. The Ontario Car Ferry Company was the outgrowth of the coal trade between the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad and Canada's Grand Trunk Railway. The jointly owned company operated ferry service across Lake Ontario between Rochester and Cobourg from 1907 to 1950.

Rochester, as a city, had the great economic foresight to assist in the building of the only direct-route rail line into Pennsylvania from Lake Ontario.

Rochester & Stateline Railroad was built in 1878 (later becoming the B,R&P) with some funding from the city, which created that direct line from Pennsylvania coal fields to the Genesee Docks at Port of Charlotte.

Origins of the coal trade from Rochester go back to the early 1800s when it was carried in barrels across the lake on wooden merchant schooners.

The ferries ONTARIO No. 1 & No. 2 were built, 1907 and 1915 respectively, to carry rail cars (rail car ferry) loaded with coal to Ontario for purchase by the Grand Trunk Railroad - later becoming the Canadian National.

The coal cars were loaded onto railroad tracks inside the vessels.

At the Genesee Docks in Charlotte the cars were loaded by steam locomotive directly from the shoreline railroad bed onto the boats.

In Cobourg, they were unloaded onto a pier that jutted into the harbour.

A counterbalance drawbridge allowed the tracks to raise and lower as the loading altered the vessels' water depth.

Empty coal cars were used as a buffer between the loaded cars and locomotive.

In this way the locomotives did not enter the vessels, keeping their weight from affecting the vessels' waterline during the loading process.

The ferry company also realized additional income by carrying passengers.

Later, when coal usage in locomotives dwindled, the Ontario Car Ferry Company became a ferry for automobile cars as well as people.

Both ONTARIOS 1 & 2 ran two round trips daily, between Rochester and Cobourg.

ONTARIO 1 was the largest vessel on the Great Lakes at the time of its launch, 1907.

It was also the first vessel on the Great Lakes to install, 1913,

a ship-to-shore radio (a Marconi wireless - invented 1899).
Shore station for the company was at its headquarters office in Toronto.
The last Cobourg Ferry trip was made by ONTARIO No. 2,
running from Rochester to Cobourg, April 28, 1950.
The vessels were removed from service, and sold for scrap
to a firm in Hamilton Ontario.

(see notes 3.3)

3.3 Family on Two Shores

Port Hope Ontario is a picture-perfect town in Northumberland County about half way between Kingston and Toronto, right next door to Cobourg. Ona Gardiner lives near there and wrote a local book, *The Party Line*. Ona is about seventy years old, and as the town telephone operator recalls a variety of local memories from that job and from her youth. She wrote her book to pass down the Past to her nieces and nephews. One chapter dealt with the Cobourg Ferry.

Ona's family lived on both shores. Her's in Port Hope and her aunt's in Rochester. Weekly, the family would take the ferry to Rochester to visit the aunt and cousins. Most often Ona would cross to Rochester because one cousin was in hospital there. To help the aunt, Ona would bring money to the US. They were allowed to take out of Canada only a limited amount of money; and they had to account for its use. Ona laughs at how, in order not to be discovered, she would be sure to avoid the same Canadian Customs inspector she reported to the week before. She gives a girlish grin as she relates, how on another trip one of her cousins had arrived at the ferry too late for the return to Cobourg. As the boat steamed away from the Genesee Docks, there was nothing they could do except wave at each other. Her memories are complimented by a scrap book of clippings and photographs. They reminisce an era of fun and convenience in crossing the lake, and of families living on two shores.

(see notes 3.4)

3.4 Booze Boats into Braddock's Bay

The 1920s must have been an interesting time. Religious fanaticism had permeated the US Federal Government with social reforms. What had been before, was now a kilter by Prohibition. The federal ban on production and consumption of alcohol in the United States was for some a great thing, for some a bad thing, and for some a profitable thing.

US Prohibition attracted Canadian rumrunners all along the mutual border from Canada's east coast to its west coast. An account in the St Catherines Centennial Book gives a clear picture of the Canadian part in the US Prohibition dilemma, especially on Lake Ontario.

Money was to be made, albeit illegally, by clever daring rumrunners during Prohibition in the United States.

You might say the business was a staggering success for those who risked taking part.

The cargoes of booze were concealed in compartments on boats. These boats usually took on their cargo in broad daylight and took out clearance papers for Cuba, many from Port Dalhousie. From this port and from those on the Niagara River, the boats started out in the cover of darkness. They usually returned in a few hours - empty. That was pretty good evidence that the liquor had been short-circuited to some quiet spot on the American side. But the trouble was proving it.

The Canadian Government passed an Act in 1930 outlawing the export of liquor to the United States. Enforcement on both sides was stepped up, with gun battles blazing when smugglers tried to run the blockades. Boats and contraband were seized, lives were lost, and the illegal trade subsided.

The borders of the Niagara region were not the only ones crossed by illegal liquor smugglers. Braddock's Bay, a marshy area west of Genesee River, was a popular drop-off point for smugglers crossing Lake Ontario from distilleries in Bay of Quinte Ontario. Popular resort hotels near Braddock's Bay, the Elmheart and Odenbach's, could have been destinations.

One smuggler became well known to Rochester, and to the local courts. The hard-luck story of Canadian rumrunner Bill Weldon appears in a book, now popular among Canadians, about "Smuggling Liquid Gold": Wild Bill Weldon hailed from Prince Edward County directly across the lake. While many smugglers were able to ply their "trade" without consequence,

Weldon seemed to be always in trouble. On his first arrest, he was caught off the Braddock's Point lighthouse when his boat got stuck in the ice, February 16, 1925. Agents had been tipped-off to his run, and walked across the ice to make the arrest. He posted the bail and sped his boat DANCER back to Canada. Later, in October 1925 he got caught again at Braddock's Point with 100 cases of ale. On another run he lost his boat. He took to skippering another runner's boat, the JIM LULU. Once again he was caught at Braddock's Point by the Coast Guard. His cargo was seized and other cases of ale were found in a garage at the point. Weldon must have had a sense of humor, as this trip in the JIM LULU was made in May 1926 on the same day he was to appear in Rochester Court for previous arrests. This time Weldon was sentenced to six months in the Monroe County Penitentiary. JIM LULU was seized and inducted into the Coast Guard as a picket boat to chase rumrunners on Lake Ontario. Wild Bill Weldon disappeared after his release.

Weldon and Braddock's Point are not the only names that show up in the region's rum-running history. Another noted runner who often visited our shores was Ben Kerr of Hamilton. Other destinations in the Rochester area included the shores of Oklahoma Beach, Nine Mile Point and Pultneyville. To the west were the harbors of Wilson and Olcutt Beach, and to the east, Fair Haven and Oswego.

(see notes 3.2)

3.5 Shangri-la at the End of the Lake

Around 1970, the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle newspaper ran a series of articles written by one of its editors, the late Clifford E. Carpenter. Mr. Carpenter and his wife Ethel were the proud owners of Hay Island in St. Lawrence River, Thousand Island Region, off Gananoque, Ontario, Canada. Gananoque is a romantic little river resort that rivals Niagara-on-the-Lake. Carpenter's stories related how he and Ethel would travel and live between Rochester and Gananoque, both in season and in the winter. They were vignettes of a splendid natural and relaxed river habitat. The Gannett Newspapers later published a compilation of those colorfully written stories, *Cliff Carpenter's Island*, 1982. One of those stories tells of Sunday worship services in Half Moon Bay. The word "in" is significant as the service was held in boats, with attendees sailing in from nearby islands to sing and pray while floating on the waters of Half Moon Bay near Gananoque. More than a century before Carpenter wrote about Half Moon Bay, cottage residents had met on those waters by chance. Finding divine inspiration in the natural beauty of this grotto-like cove, they agreed to meet there regularly on Sunday afternoons. Slowly the meetings turned into prayer services. By 1887 actual worship-services had begun. The land around the bay was eventually donated by the owner, a pulpit was erected on the shore, and later an organ was added to the location. A 1964 Vesper Hymn Book published for the "Bay's church" indicates the services then started at five p.m. in July and August. Friends in Gananoque say this tradition still continues each season.

(see notes 3.5)

3.6 EPILOGUE: A Final ONTARIO Observation

This journal began with the statement that there was
"a fantastic story, both in the written word and in the words of human voices,
of how the peoples of New York State and Provinces of Ontario and Quebec
lived and carried out their living in a mutual world. "
It is not difficult to find stories of family, commerce and politics
that connected our two shores in the 1800s and 1900s, even in the years of conflict.
Our mutual relationships live on today, although not as obvious.
All one need do is watch evening television.
New York weather maps show Cobourg, Brighton, Belleville Trenton, Kingston.
Canadians watch New York television stations on their cable systems.
Read the labels on the foods you eat, the produce you buy,
the beer you or your neighbors drink, the car you drive, the flowers you enjoy.
Are they American ? Are they Canadian ?
US sports teams play Canadian teams.
Canada's tourism attractions saturate US airwaves with advertising.
Vacations take New Yorkers to Toronto for theater, Niagara Falls for casino,
the Thousand Islands for fishing, and Rice Lake for cottages.
Canadians come to New York to shop, play golf, and tour the Finger Lakes.
Next time you're at the border, note the number of trucks and cars going each way.

Western New Yorkers and southern Ontarians
along Lake Ontario shores live on an international border,
just like those on the Niagara frontier and along the St Lawrence.
Another world exists just a few miles over the horizon.
The water of Lake Ontario has been a bridge of friendship
for those who lived here centuries before, and as it is for us now,
in the "Community of Great Lake Ontario."

PART FOUR

ADDENDUM:

END NOTES & RESOURCES

END NOTES

Additional background sources on each subject can be found in Addendum Sections: Resources B - Institutions, and Resource C - Internet.

PART ONE

1.2)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 27, 40, 51A, 51B, 51C, 61
- b. At that time, one of the original ports of Rochester was the Indian Landing in Penfield on Irondequoit Creek, at the head of Irondequoit Bay. Further investigation into this earliest chapter of Seneca-Quebec trade in the "Community of Great Lake Ontario" story can be carried out at Rochester Museum and Science Center's exhibit "At the Western Door ."

1.3)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 2, 4, 5, 25, 36, 38, 42, 48, 51H,
- b. A complete study of the Port of Rochester at Charlotte can be found in Rundel Library.

PART TWO

2.1)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 40, 51D, 62
- b. Loyalist Cultural Centre with complete assistance in genealogical data can be found in Adolphustown Ontario, east of Prince Edward County.

2.2)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 4, 40, 65
- b. A reenactment of the first stagecoach run was held in August 2000, with a replica of the first Weller horse-drawn coach, crossing the same route.

2.3)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 44, 47, 51E
- b. A monument to the beginning of the Canadian Mormon movement, and the first branch at Ernest Town, was erected at Finkle's Point 1997 by the Ottawa Ontario Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

2.4)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 22, 27, 33, 39, 45, 50, 56
- b. My first notice of Mackenzie's connection to Rochester came from a comment in Arch Merrill's Rochester Sketchbook. Canadian history books describe only the root and failure of his rebellion. A Canadian biography of Mackenzie offered little information.

The Mackenzie Clan genealogical society in Toronto had no information on William Lyon Mackenzie's connection to or jailing in Rochester.

A biography of daughter Isabel Mackenzie (King), Mrs King. refers to the family having "retreated to Rochester." and her father being "thrown into Rochester's dank jail for breaking US neutrality laws."

The details of the Rochester connection and more history of William Lyon were found in a University of Rochester Master's Thesis by Mabel Olney.

A copy is on file in the Rundel Library Local History Department.

- c. The Blue Eagle Jail was located on the west bank of Genesee River right about the area of Court Street.

Cook's Opera House was located close to the current convention center.

2.5)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 15A, 27, 51E, 66

2.6)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 9, 10, 20, 21, 23, 31, 34, 41, 51B, 51C, 51E, 51G, 55, 60, 63, 64
- b. There are lists of vessels registered in the District of the Genesee, available in the Local History Department of Rochester's Rundel Public Library
- c. Today's Latta Road begins at the Genesee River in Charlotte and runs through some of the original land parcels owned and developed by the Latta family.
- d. McCrackenville was an area along Lake Avenue adjacent to Maplewood Park centered around Ravine Avenue and the current Maplewood YMCA.
- e. Kelsey's Landing was opposite the present zoo, below the frontier cemetery at Eastman and Lake Avenues.
- f. On the eastern Genesee shore, Brewer's Dock was close to Seneca Park. Carthage was an area between Ridge Road and Driving Park Bridge.
- g. River Lot was on the east shore near the railroad swing bridge. Hosea Roger's house is now a private residence on St Paul Blvd. in Irondequoit, identified by a New York State Historical Marker.
- h. A fine biographical sketch of JD Scott can be found in an article by Lloyd Klos, A Resident's Recollections, series vol 5.
- i. In Irondequoit Bay were numerous resort hotels, private clubs and several amusement parks. The Rochester and Bay Railroad rail bed is now Route 590 running along the bay in Irondequoit. Donovan Schilling's book is a great picture resource of the bay's activities.

- j. Resort area of the Rochester lake area was the Eight Miles Along the Greece Shoreline starting at Charlotte and west along today's Edgemere Drive to Manitou Point. Kitchee-Manitou is the native American word for God.
- 2.7)
- a. - see Reading Resources: 39, 41, 43, 49, 51G
 - b. The New York Central station was replaced by the current Amtrak station. Lake station for NYC & H RR and later as the New York Central RR station still stands on River Street at the Port of Charlotte. Across the street remains the original Customs House. The only remaining station on Main Street is of the original Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad now housing a restaurant at the intersection of West Main and Broad Street. This became the Baltimore and Ohio station. Erie Canal bed is now Broad Street. Genesee Valley Canal is now Ford Street. The railroad tracks went north and crossed Lake Avenue at Boxart Street, The Genesee Docks of the BR&P were at what is now Turning Point Park. The Turning Basin is just north of the park. BR&P headquarters is now an office building at West Main & Washington Sts.
 - c. Early City Directories in Rundel Library indicate the Ticket Agents, many using in-directory advertising to promote the lines they represented.
- 2.8)
- a. - see Reading Resources: 29
 - b. Today in this region of Chatham-Kent southwestern Ontario, you can take the African-Canadian Heritage Tour through Windsor and Essex Counties. A number of museums and historic sites from that time are now open in the towns of Chatham, Amherstburg, North Buxton, Windsor. and Dresden.
- 2.9)
- a. - see Reading Resources: 3, 8, 29
- 2.10)
- a. - see Reading Resources: 54
 - b. This story is told through a series of 1858 articles in the Rochester Union & Advertiser daily newspaper. Microfilm copies are on file in Special Services, Bausch & Lomb Public Library branch.

2.11)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 10, 35, 36
- b. Little is published on the O.N.C.; photos of their steamer GLENN appear in publications without reference.
Data was acquired through records on file with Monroe County.

PART THREE

3.1)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 12, 57
- b. My Cobourg History connection has been Cobourger historian-scholar Doug Sifton. He provided documents on Donald Bethune Royal Mail Line history and, opened the door to the surprising Rochester & US past-presence in Cobourg, late 1800s. Douglas Sifton passed away in the spring of 2001. At the time of his passing, Mr Sifton was leading a Cobourg Town project to excavate and study a downtown Cobourg stone building of the original Judge Armstrong property. Believed to be a British War of 1812 munitions storehouse, the project has halted - its walls still holding secrets.
An esteemed educator and town figure, Douglas Sifton's importance to the Town was recognized with an impressive and elaborate Official Town Ceremony. He is missed by his neighbors, and myself.
- c. Today Cobourg is now the most prestigious resort harbour on Lake Ontario.

3.2)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 15, 49, 52

3.3)

- a. - see Reading Resources: 17
- b. Ona Garnder was interviewed in Port Hope spring 1999.
My thanks for the arrangement go to former Port Hope Economic Director Gabriel Mann.

3.4)

a. - see Reading Resources: 30

Besides the St Catherines book mentioned and CW Hunt's book, cross-Canada rum-running is described in

The Rum Runners by Frank A Anderson, Lone Pine Publishing.

b. The original Corby's whiskey distillery is located north of Belleville in Corbysville. It was the source for much of the spirits being hauled across the lake from Prince Edward County to New York State. The distillery building is still there, although closed.

3.5)

a. - see Reading Resources: 24

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Archives, Monroe County Clerk, Rochester New York

New York State Appellate Court, Denman Library, Rochester New York

Pultneyville Historical Society, Pultneyville New York

H Lee White Maritime Museum, Oswego New York

Special Collections, Pennfield Library, SUNY Oswego, Oswego New York

Kingston Archaeological Centre, Kingston Ontario

Special Collections, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Kingston Ontario

Queen's University Archives, Kingston Ontario

Picton Public Library, Picton Prince Edward County, Ontario

Prince Edward County Archives, Picton Prince Edward County, Ontario

Local History Department, Cobourg Public Library, Cobourg Ontario

Historian, Town of Cobourg, Victoria Hall, Cobourg Ontario

Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Ontario

Archives of Ontario, Toronto Ontario

Clan Mackenzie's Society, Oakville Ontario

African Canadian Heritage Tour, Chatham-Kent Ontario

Saginaw River Historical Society, Bay City Michigan

Archives of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green University Ohio

Mackenzie Heritage Printery Museum, Queenston Ontario

Local History Department, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls New York

•C Internet Resources - provided material for this investigation:

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Canada Coast Guard: www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca

Canada National Archives: www.archives.ca

Canada National Library: www.nlc-bnc.ca

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Canada Friendship Exchange



strengthening cultural connections in the
Community of Great Lake Ontario

established 1998

underwritten by PORTSource • Ports Ontario . Rochester Trade Source

Fall 1998

*The water of Great Lake Ontario
is a bonding compound that ties together two countries,
two provincial states, dozens of safe harbors, and millions of people.*

Together we share the same lifestyles and the same seasonal elements.

*Together we celebrate the same treasures and resources
in the community that is the Great Lake of Ontario.*

- skipper jack Morgen

MISSION

Strengthen cultural connections in the community of Great Lake Ontario by building bridges of friendship to span the lake's waters bringing our shorelines closer together.

OUR FRIENDSHIP GOALS

- Find elements that create a map for achieving the mission.
- Learn and share from the successes that have been achieved individually.
- Utilize current building blocks to form the foundation of this friendship exchange.
- Fill in the spaces between individual national and locality agendas.

OUR FRIENDSHIP OBJECTIVES

- Establish a means of communication with other ports of call on Great Lake Ontario.
- Establish a means of communication with other centers of major population on GLO.
- Join existing international organizations to develop commercial and social opportunities.
- Develop social participatory relationships and opportunities.
- Develop commercial relationships between American and Canadian enterprises.
- Capitalize on existing exchanges, such as, cultural, historical, environmental, tourism, sports, agriculture, electronic media, and the nautical connection.