

MAIL FROM ALONG THE ERIE CANAL: 1825-1862

—with emphasis on mail between places on the Canal or involving Canal business.

Subject: This exhibit tells of the impact on our country of the biggest, boldest engineering achievement of the first half of the nineteenth century. The Canal utilized a gap in the Appalachian Mountains created by the Mohawk River, and the endless supply of water from Lake Erie, to create a 363-mile-long waterway connecting the Atlantic Ocean with all those states touching the Great Lakes and all points in between. Foreign imports, New England's manufactured goods, emigrants, and immigrants traveled west on the Canal while products such as iron, coal, grain, flour, salt, and lumber were shipped east. Its impact was beyond measure. The cost of shipping a ton of freight from Buffalo to Albany dropped from \$100 by wagon to \$6 by the Canal. It provided employment over 25,000 people.

Plan:

Section 1 Albany to Utica (mile 110)

Section 2 Whitesboro (mile 114) to Jordan (mile 191)

Section 3 Elbridge (mile 191) to Rochester (mile 270)

Section 4 Spencerport (mile 282) to Buffalo (mile 363)

Timeframe: The “**Original Canal**” was completed in 1825. The “**Enlarged Canal**” and “enlargement” refer to the deepening (from 4 ft. to 7 ft.), widening (from 40 ft. to 70 ft.), and modifications (larger but fewer locks, doubling of locks, etc.) between 1835 and 1862.

Place names: Names used are what they were called at the time, ignoring formal designation such as hamlet, village, town, or city. Place names along the Canal are in **bold**. **Mile markers** appear at the upper right to show the approximate distances from Albany (measured along the Canal).

Included are examples of:

- (a) manuscript, stampless and stamped mail, and postal stationery,
- (b) different postmarks and auxiliary markings,
- (c) correspondence to or from persons involved with the Canal,
- (d) differing destinations, rates, and types of service, and
- (e) non-philatelic items that help tell the story or explain Canal operations.

Note - the Canal was only used to carry mail in exigent circumstances, such as a road being washed out.

Headnotes: “**Post Office**” lists years of operation and any predecessors. “**Elevation**” relates to the rise and fall of the Canal as it passes through valleys and over hills.

Descriptions: “**Cover**” refers to an envelope or folded cover (address leaf only, without any message leaves), while “**Letter**” refers to a folded entire containing the address leaf and message leaf(s). **Calvet Hahn** was a prominent collector and authority on New York postal history.