

Steamboats on York River

In 1817, the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, or the “Old Bay Line,” began regular steamboat service between Baltimore, Maryland, and Norfolk, Virginia. The company’s boats transported mail, crops, freight, and people along the length of the Chesapeake Bay.



Photo courtesy of Bonnie and Jerry Karwac, Jr.

Smaller packets on the rivers connected to the larger craft. The local York River packets stopped in at Yorktown, as well as at Allmond’s Wharf, Cappahosic, and Clay Bank on the Gloucester side, when heading toward West Point, Virginia. The Bay-going steamboats transported travelers to hospitals and stores in the cities as well as on vacation excursions. A trip “on a party of pleasure to York-Town (Va.)” was offered in 1819 by the Old Bay Line.

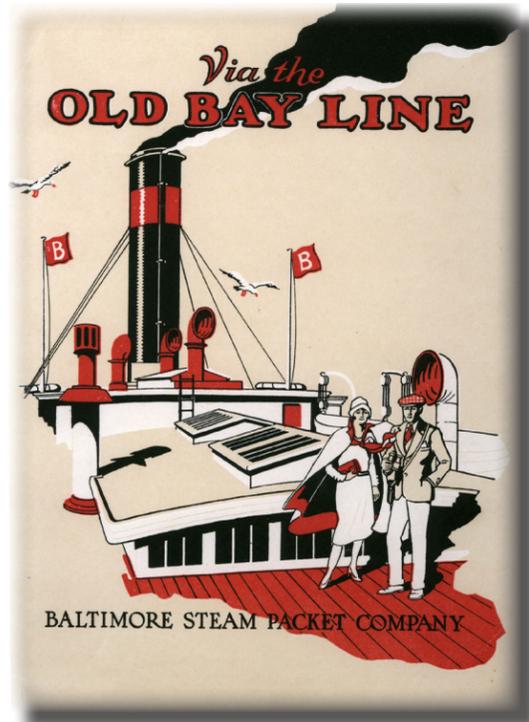


Image courtesy of Steamboat Era Museum, Irvington, VA.

In addition to sailing vessels, steamboats were the only means of reliable transportation until highways were paved in the twentieth century. The use of steamboats peaked around 1910 and declined as motor cars became more popular.

