



# Floating Palaces of the Great Lakes: A History of Passenger Steamships on the Inland Seas

*Joel Stone*

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Through much of the nineteenth century, steam-powered ships provided one of the most reliable and comfortable transportation options in the United States, becoming a critical partner in railroad expansion and the heart of a thriving recreation industry. The aesthetic, structural, and commercial peak of the steamboat era occurred on the Great Lakes, where palatial ships created memories and livelihoods for millions while carrying passengers between the region's major industrial ports of Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Toronto. By the mid-twentieth century, the industry was in steep decline, and today North America's rich and entertaining steamboat heritage has been largely forgotten. In *Floating Palaces of the Great Lakes*, Joel Stone revisits this important era of maritime history, packed with elegance and adventure, politics and wealth, triumph and tragedy. This story of Great Lakes travelers and the beautiful floating palaces they engendered will engage historians and history buffs alike, as well as genealogists, regionalists, and researchers.



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