



All About Michigan

America's Only Floating Zip Code: 48222

Zip 48222 is a very special zip code. This zip code is for mail that is delivered to freighter crews or vessels that are underway, meaning ships that are moving. This special service is done by the J.W. Wescott Company that is located just south of the Ambassador Bridge along the western shore of the Detroit River. Right here in Michigan!

This company was founded in 1874 by Great Lakes Captain J.W. Wescott. At that time Captain Wescott used a rowboat to deliver ship's orders and supplies to passing vessels. In 1895, he began delivering mail.

The boat, the J.W. Wescott II, which was commissioned in 1949, is now used. It is 45' in length with a beam of 13'. The boat's speed is rated at 15 knots.

Any mail that is sent to: Vessel Name, Marine Post Office, Detroit, Michigan 48222 is delivered to the appropriate ships as they pass under the Ambassador Bridge. But, not only does the J.W. Wescott Company deliver the mail - they deliver freight, pick up mail off the passing ship, offer storage, forwarding, messenger service to and from vessels, pilot



boat services for the Port of Detroit, sell nautical charts, postcards, books, candy and sometimes they have delivered pizza!

The way they do it is unique. The J.W. Wescott II rides along side the big ships as they go up and down the river. Keeping up with the big vessel while its moving, the mail is lowered by a crewman from the bigger vessel in a pail fastened to a rope to the J.W. Wescott II. Deliveries are then hauled up using the same pail by the Wescott crew.

The J.W. Wescott Company works 24 hours a day from mid-April through mid-December in all kinds of weather. It can be a dangerous job at times. On October 23, 2001, the J.W. Wescott II sank in the deep water under the Ambassador Bridge while being caught in the wake of MT Sidsel Knutsen, a much larger ship the boat was delivering to. The captain and one other crew member were killed and two others were rescued. The J.W. Wescott II was later salvaged, refurbished and returned to service again.