Minnesota Works Progress Administration: Writers Project Research Notes.

Copyright Notice:

Version 3
August 20, 2018

Mississippi Project -

A

Steamboats and Cargoes. G.V.Jehu, (1).

Of late years there has been a disposition to overlook the importance of transportation. The railroads played so great a part in the development of the country that the slow going steamboats are ~~looked upon~~ regarded as insignificant factors in the advanced system of transportation of the present day. But it was the old-fashioned steamboat, slowly plowing its way against the turbid waters of the Mississippi that gave the first impetus to the commercial growth of many towns and cities along its shores. It was the advantages of water communication that determined the location of the city of St.Paul, and, like several other cities, St.Paul was the creation of steamboat navigation.

For years the river was the only channel of communication that existed; and it was only when the subsequent growth of population dispersed the inhabitants, and they receded farther from the shores of the water-ways, that artificial lines of transit became a necessity to the development of the resources of the country.

Barges and keel boats were the only means of navigation until the introduction of steamboats. Previous to 1823 it had been supposed that the rapids at Rock Island, Ill.,were an insurmountable barrier to the navigation of the Upper Mississippi, but on May 2,1823, the steamer VIRGINIA left her mooring at St.Louis destined for St.Paul and Fort Snelling. Successfully passing the rapids at Rock Island, which required four days, this pioneer craft made her way slowly up the Mississippi, arriving at Ft.Snelling May 20. Ft.Snelling is situated about five miles up the river from St.Paul at the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.

The VIRGINIA, commanded by Captain Crawford, was 118 ft. in length and 22 ft. wide. Among her passengers on the first trip were the Indian Agent Major Taliaferro, Major Biddle, Lt.Russell and the Italian refugee and traveler, Count Beltrami.

The fright of the Indians at the sight of the VIRGINIA is said to have been terrific. They thought it was some enormous water spirit, coughing, puffing out hot breath and splashing the water in all directions.

In a communication to the St.Paul Chronicle and Register of April 6,1850, Philander Prescott describes the fright of the Indians at the sight of the first steamboat:

"The Indians say they had dreamed of some monster of the deep the night before, which frightened them very much. It appears they did not discover the boat until it had arrived at the mouth of the St.Peter's river, now the Minnesota river, below Mr.Sibley's house.

They stood and gazed with astonishment at what they saw approaching, taking the boat to be some angry god of the water, coughing and spurting water upwards, sideways and forward. They lacked courage to stand until the boat came near them. The women and children took to the woods with their hair floating behind them in the breeze from the speed they were going in running from supposed danger. Some of the men had a little more courage and only moved off to a short distance from the shore, and the boat passed along and landed. Everything being quiet for a moment, the Indians came up to the boat again and stood looking at the monster of the deep. All at once the boat began to blow off steam and the bravest warrior could not stand this awful roaring, but took to the woods, men, women and children with their blankets flying in the wind, some hallooing, some crying, to the great amusement of the people on board the steamboat."

.....

The arrival of this pioneer steamer had been the subject of conversation for a long time, and in this age of rapid traveling it is hard to realize how much interest was felt in anticipation of what was then a great event. To the people of this region it meant easy and direct communication with the outside world. It also meant prospects of being at the head of steamboat navigation, so it is a small wonder that it should have caused excitement and rejoicing to those who had been receiving their mails at intervals of months instead of hours.

The voyage of the VIRGINIA demonstrated conclusively that the obstacles supposed to be insuperable to navigation were only so in imagination. This pioneer trip succeeded so well that other trips were made as the necessity of the government and trading posts required, and up to 1826 no less than fifteen boats had made the trip safely. The names of these boats were - VIRGINIA,NEVILLE,PUTNAM,MANDAN,INDIANA,LAWRENCE,SCIOTA,ECLIPSE,JOSEPHINE, FULTON,RED ROVER,BLACK ROVER,WARRIOR,ENTERPRISE and VOLGA. The number of these vessels steadily increased,and from a record kept at Ft.Snelling by Philander Prescott, we find the number of vessels arriving there in 1844 to have been forty-one.

The steamers running on the Upper Mississippi from 1823 to 1844 were used mainly to transport supplies for the Indians and troops stationed at Ft.Snelling. Previous to the voyage of the VIRGINIA in 1823 keel-boats were used for this trade, and sixty days from St.Louis to Fort Snelling was considered good time.

The trips of the early steamboats were not made with any regularity. They came up the river with supplies for the fort and Indian traders at such times as they could get freight in sufficient quantities to make the voyage profitable. The steamers OTTER, ROCK RIVER and LYNX were the boats that most frequently stopped at the then small settlement of St.Paul.

.....

So great was the importance

So great importance was attached to the arrival and departure of these early steamboats, The familiar whistle that their would frequently cause a stampede even from the church service or prayer meeting, particularly if it was the first ~~boat~~ of the season.

The first packet company to operate on the Upper Mississippi was the St.Louis and Keokuk, ~~which was~~ organized Jan.1,1842 by John S.McCune and James E.Yateman. Several other companies were formed which resulted in a great deal of competition; and as the river traffic is a natural monopoly the effect was the self-destruction of the companies in their efforts to force their rivals out of business. Low rates, both passenger and freight, combined with such attractions as speed, good food and amusements ~~which would draw trade~~, were the weapons used. to draw trade away from rival companies.

The navigation of the Upper Mississippi did not really reach any degree of regularity until 1847, when uncertain means of communication were superseded by a regular line of packet boats, which made trips from Galena to Mendota and Ft.Snelling. This line was operated by Messrs.Campbell and Smith, of Galena; Brisbois and Rice; H.L.Dousman, of Prairie du Chien; H.H.Sibley, of Mendota; and M.W.Lodwick, of Galena, who constituted the Galena Packet Company.

They purchased the steamer ARGO, of which M.W.Lodwick was commander and Russel Blakely, of Galena, was clerk. The Argo made weekly trips and did a good business until October of that year when she struck a snag near Wabasha,Minn. and sunk.

In the summer of the next year the "DR.FRANKLIN" was purchased and took the place of the lost boat, and ran for one season in opposition to the SENATOR of St.Louis. In 1849 the SENATOR was added to the line under the command of Cap't.Orrin Smith. In the fall she was replaced by the NOMINEE.

.....

In 1850 the steamboat business had grown to be quite an extensive one,as travel on the Upper Mississippi, under the flood of immigration pouring in, was rapidly increasing and freighting was also growing large. The SENATOR and NOMINEE continued to be the regular boats of the Galena Packet Line until 1852 when the BEN CAMPBELL was added to the line.

Two trips per week were made by the packet company during the seasons of 1849,1850 and 1851. In 1852 tri-weekly trips were started. During the season of 1852 a strong rivalry was begun in the steamboat trade. The Harrises, Smith and Scribe ran a packet in opposition to the old line, but before the summer closed, their boat, the new ST.PAUL was purchased by the Galena Company. At this time Cap't. Louis Robert brought out the BLACK HAWK and the GREEK SLAVE, both new boats, and at the same time there were also several boats in the trade which "ran wild".

In the spring of 1850 a great freshet occurred on the Upper Mississippi, mainly caused by extreme heavy snows and long continued warm rains. The first boat of the season, HIGHLY MARY, did not reach St.Paul until April 19 of this year, and speaking of this event the Pioneer says: "On Friday morning the 19th at six o'clock, the smoke of a steamboat was visible at St.Paul, and the very heart of the people leaped for joy ..... As she came up in front of Randall's warehouse the multitude on shore raised a deafening shout of welcome."

The HIGHLAND MARY brought five hundred passengers, not an unusual load for those days. "Such has been the anxiety here", continued the Pioneer,"for the arrival of steamboats that nothing else was talked of and St.Paul seemed likely to go to seed." From the above extracts,"Some idea can be formed of the joy," says Mr.Williams in his history of St.Paul, "with which the arrival of the first boat was hailed in early days, opening

.....

communication with the rest of the world after months of isolation. It was generally a signal for a jollification, at which all rules of restraint were thrown aside."

From 1850 to 1858 the arrival of steamboats constantly increased, and from 1854 to 1858 the rush of immigration was particulary heavy, the passengers numbering several hundred on each boat.

The steamboat arrivals at St.Paul for five years were as follows: 1854 - 256, 1855-560, 1856-857, 1857-1,026, 1858-1,068. The spring of 1857 was one of the latest ever known, the first boat not being able to arrive at St.Paul until May 1st. As soon as the icy obstacles, ~~however~~, the arrivals became numerous. On May 4 eighteen boats were at the wharf at one time, and later on no less than twenty-one could be seen at the landing simultaneously.

In these days, before the advent of railroads, the opening of navigation was a great event in the lives of the inhabitants of St.Paul and other river towns. The officers of the first boat to arrive usually received quite an ovation from the citizens.

Three new steamers were launched by the Galena Packet Co.in 1854, and six trips per week were made. This addition to their fleet occurred at a fortunate time, for during the season the DR.FRANKLIN, NOMINEE and GALENA were sunk.

The opening of the Chicago and Galena Railroad gave a great impetus to steamboat travel. Previoulsly it was necessary to travel by horse-back, stage coach, on foot, or down the Ohio to the Mississippi. Now people could get on a train, ride to Galena,Ill.,take a packet boat from there to any point on the Mississippi to which they wished to go.

The construction of railroads to Prairie du Chien and LaCrosse further increased the traffic on the Upper Mississippi because of the increasing

.....

westward immigration. As the railroads all ended at the Mississippi it was necessary to change to steamboats there. The increased population also brought about a greater amount of freight shipped, and, of course, more business.

Three new steamers were launched by the Galena Packet Company in 1854 as we have already learned, and in 1857 this number was augumented by two more, the NORTHERN BELLE and the GRANITE STATE. Later the Dubuque line of boats was purchased and operated by the packet company. The loss of the LADY FRANKLIN occurred this season, but having gained the boats of the Dubuque Company, no inconvenience was incurred through lack of capacity to carry freight and passengers.

The years from 1855 to 1858 inclusive, constituted the most prosperous period in the navigation of the Upper Mississippi. It was stated that in 1855 that the Galena Packet Co. declared dividends of $100,000 on that season's business. The WAR EAGLE, which cost $20,000 to build, cleared $44,000, and the CITY BELLE costing $11,000, cleared $30,000 profit. The river trade in 1857 was enormous and showed a large profit to all companies engaged in water-way transportation. See notes p 25

The paralyzed condition of the country in the winter of 1857 greatly reduced river traffic the following summer; and when prosperous times again came, the steamboats in this section were compelled to compete with faster and more improved methods of land transit.

In 1857 two new lines were put in operation,- the Duluth Line, composed of three boats, and the Prairie du Chien, Hudson and St.Paul Co.of three boats.

The St.Louis Packet Co.began operations in 1858, at which time the Galena Packet Co.had five boats in service,- the NORTHERN BELLE,MILWAUKEE, GALENA,NORTHERN LIGHT,and GREY EAGLE. The officers of the company were

.....

Orrin Smith,pres., and Russel Jones, sec'y.and treas. At this time there were a number of private boats running from St.Louis to St.Paul, among which were the NORTHERNER,HAWK EYE STATE,PEMBINA,DENMARK, and SUCKER STATE.

In the winter of 1857-58 a number of the captains of the steamboats plying between St.Louis and St.Paul determined to form a new line and make regular trips, leaving on stated days in the week.. On the opening of navigation in the following spring this line consisted of the steamers - CANADA,Cap't.James Ward; W.S.EWING, Cap't. W.Green; DENMARK, Cap't.R.C.GRAY; METROPOLITAN,Cap't.Thos.B.Rhodes; MINNESOTA BELLE, Cap't.Thos.B.Hill, and PEMBINA, Cap't.Thos.H.Griffith. Messrs.Warden and Shaler were appointed agents, and the line was known as the Northern Line. In 1859 the CHIPPEWA, Cap't. W.H.Crapeta; DEW DROP,Cap't.N.W.Parker; LUCIE MAY,Cap't.J.B.Rhodes; AUNT LETTY, Cap't.C.G.Morrison; NORTHERNER,Cap't.P.A.Alford, and the LACLEDE, were added.

In 1859 the first of the Davidson companies was organized with headquarters in LaCrosse,Wis. The company ran boats from LaCrosse to St.Paul in connection with the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad with which it had a contract. All of the Davidson lines were commonly called the "White Collar" lines because of the white band around the smoke stacks.

The Davidson Line caused fierce rivalry between it and the Galena Packet Company. Rates were recklessly reduced, and at one time the fare between St.Paul and Chicago was only one dollar. This rate included meals, berth, and railroad and water transportation. The fight was finally ended by compromise, Cap't.Davidson getting control of the business of the Milwaukee road at LaCrosse. When ?

In the winter of 1859-60 the owners of five private lines running from St.Paul to St.Louis decided to form a joint stock company and organized under the name of the Northern Line Packet Co. Cap't Jas.Ward

.....

was elected president, and Thos.H.Griffith sec'y.and treasurer. The vessels owned by the company made regular trips to St.Paul and Upper Mississippi river points. Boats operated were: SUCKER STATE,HAWK EYE STATE,CANADA,PEMBINA, METROPOLITAN,NORTHERNER,W.L.EWING,DENMARK,HENRY CLAY,MINNESOTA BELLE, and FRED LORENZ. This company continued business for fifteen years.

The Galena Packet Co. ceased running in 1866, when Cap't. Davidson organized the Northwestern Union Packet Co.,by the consolidation of the two old companies, the Northwestern Packet Co. and the LaCrosse and Minnesota Steam Packet Co. These two companies had been running boats between Dubuque and St.Paul.

The Northwestern Union Packet Co. became the competitor of the Northern Line Packet Co. running between St.Louis and St.Paul, and the St.Louis and Keokuk Co. These lines operated in harmony until the Northwestern Packet Co. added the PHIL SHERIDAN to their fleet. This act caused fierce competition, which continued until rates were again reduced to a mere nominal figure.

The fight was continued, however, until Cap't.Davidson gained control of the entire business in 1873. Cap't.Davidson then organized a new line known as the Keokuk Northern Packet Line, which was composed of the principal boats forming the Keokuk,Northwestern andNorthern Lines. This new company continued to operate on the river until the close of navagation in 1880, when it passed into the hands of a receiver.

A supply store, dock yards, and saw mills were also operated by the Davidsons. In 1876 the Davidsons became the sole owners of the boat yards and supplemented the building and repair of boats with the manufacture of lumber. These were maintained after the steamboat business had become chiefly rafting.

.....

In 1876 the railroad bridge was built at LaCrosse and the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad became a part of the C.M.& St.P.R.R. system. This extension of the railroad to St.Paul and Minneapolis robbed the river of much of its trade and turned a dozen flourishing towns along the Mississippi into dead hamlets.

Until 1880 the Keokuk and Northern Line had a momopoly on the river trade. During 1880 a new White Collar Line was established with four boats, - the WISCONSIN, the MILWAUKEE, the BELLE OF LA CROSSE, and the ALEXANDER MITCHELL.

The Keokuk and Northern Line went into receivership in 1881 through the mismanagement of the Davidsons, according to rumor. On April 18, 1881, what was left of the company was sold at auction at LaCrosse. The boats sold consisted of six stern wheel craft, six side wheel boats, two wharf boats, and thirty-one barges. All of these were bid in by the Davidsons for no one cared to bid against them.

In 1881 Payton S.Davidson, Lafayette Holmes and S.F.Clinton, all of LaCrosse, organized the St.Louis Passenger and Freight Line which made tri-weekly trips in competition with the Diamond Jo line. It withdrew from competition and discontinued business in 1882.

After ten years of petty steamboating the Diamond Jo Line, the only one of importance to survive bought the GEM CITY, and the warehouses and other property in the Keokuk and St.Louis trade. In 1892 the Diamond Jo took over the ST.PAUL, and remaining property of the of the "old line", and became the only organized steamboat system on the river bewteen St.Louis and St.Paul.

Feb.3,1911 Streckfuss bought out the Diamond Jo Line and until the last few years was the only company running boats on the upper river. Later the Streckfuss line placed in operation a fleet of pleasure boats.

.....

During the height of the packet boat business the side-wheel steamboat was most popular. This type of boat slowly gave way to the stern-wheelers which came into use with the introduction of rafting on the Upper Mississippi.

The stern-wheel steamboat, although a little harder to handle because of the position of the wheel, had more power and could be used in lower water than the side-wheel boats. The main difference between rafters and packet boats was size, the packet boats were much larger. Rafters were generally less than one hundred tons.

Boats which were capable of carrying cargoes all summer were money makers for their owners. Some of the larger boats were unable to get over sandbars after the mid-summer droughts began. So a stern-wheel packet of from two to three hundred tons was a boat which could handle a good sized cargo on little water. It therefore represented the highest type of profitable craft. Such a boat would be about 200 ft. long with a 30 ft. beam, and a 5 ft. hold. Three large size iron boilers and a fairly large engine gave the boat a good speed without excessive expenditure for fuel. The fuel consisted of cord wood contracted for ahead of time, and picked up from the river banks as the boats passed.

Some of the outstanding boats on the upper river, and their size, were as follows:

Alexander MacGregor	- 142.8 tons.	Mose McLellan	- 398.3 tons
Alexander Mitchell	- 512.08 "	Northern Belle	- 498. "
Annie	- 312.75 "	War Eagle	- 296 "
Annie Johnston	- 202.87 "	Tidal Wave	- 479.09 "
Ariel	- 120.44 "		
Belle of LaCrosse	- 467.77 "		
Flying Eagle	- 373.82 "		
Hudson	- 176.81 "		
Jacob Traber	- 150.00 "		
Mollie Moher	- 135.32		
John Kyle	- 1,619.06 "		

.....

The speed of the average steamboat handling passengers and freight was estimated at about eight miles per hour up stream and about eleven miles per hour down stream.

The side-wheel steamers all had highly decorated paddle boxes that enclosed the paddle wheels on either side of the boat. Pictures of people were frequently used. The PHIL SHERIDAN had pictures of General Sheridan on his horse on its paddle boxes. The boats named "Eagle" were decorated with the bird of that name, while the "Northern Belle" had a replica of a woman. Often, though, a "sunburst" and the name of the boat was all that was used.

The saloons of the boats were especially highly decorated with brilliant, if not always artistic, paintings. Music was very attractive to the passengers. As brass bands were too expensive, a colored stringed orchestra was usually found in the main cabin. These negroes also worked as deck hands when the boat was being loaded or unloaded. Six or eight negroes who could play the banjo, violin or guitar, as well as sing; and who were also barbers, waiters, baggage hands, or even firemen, were hired. These,during time off, furnished the music and received a little extra pay for their services in this capacity. It was about 1870 when the first steam "calliope" was heard on the Upper Mississippi.

Three good meals were served on the boats each day, and the passengers were welcome to eat all they wished. This was quite a contrast to the lower river where passengers were expected to furnish their own food.

In the days of keenest competition on the river boats, all this and dancing were offered at the lowest prices; each company trying to outdo the other in efforts to gain trade. They went so far as to keep agents at the railroad stations to persuade passengers to take their particular boats.

.....

During the 70's games and dancing were prohibited on the Davidson boats on Sundays by Commodore Davidson, who was, after his conversion, a strict Christian. On a Sunday in 1872 a group of excursionists from LaCrosse on the Alexander Mitchell persuaded Captain Laughton to allow them to dance. The Captain,disregarding his orders, allowed them to do so. The boat was caught in a tornado and wrecked, and Captain Laughton was promptly discharged.

The average packet boat, accomodating 200 cabin passengers and 100 second class passengers on the deck, would cost from $25,000 to $30,000 to build. In 1857 the expenses of a crew of a first class boat for a month were: captain $300; chief clerk $200; second clerk $100; chief mate $200; second mate $100; pilots,two at $500 each ($1,000); chief engineer $200; second engineer $150; firemen 8 at $50 ($400); steward $200; carpenter $150; watchman $50; deck hands 40 at $50 each ($2,000); cabin crew $800; food supplies $75 per day ($2,250); wood 25 cords per day @ $2.50 ($2,000 allowing for stop overs,etc.); sundries $1,400; or a total of $11,500.

The down stream rates for freight, no charge being less than twenty-five cents, were: for 30 miles, 5 cents per mile per 100 pounds; from 30 to 60 miles, 4 cents per mile,per 100 pounds; over 60 miles 3 cents per pound per 100 pounds; $1.50 per 100 pounds from Galena to St.Paul. The upstream rates were one cent per mile more than those for down-stream freight.

The passenger rates were: downstream from St.Paul to Hastings 32 miles, $1.50 for cabin, and $1.00 for deck; Red Wing 65 miles $2.50 for cabin, $2.00 for deck; LaCrosse,175 miles,$5.00 for cabin, $3.00 for deck; Prairie du Chien, 255 miles, $7.00 for cabin, $3.50 for deck; Galena,321 miles $8.00 for cabin, $4.00 for deck; upstream Galena to St.Paul 321 miles $12.00 for cabin, $6.00 for deck. The net receipts of the average boat for a season was about $56,300.

- -

The decade from 1860 to 1870 was one of great activity on the Mississippi river. The average life of a steamboat, computed from the following, was approximately eight years.

The WAR EAGLE was in service 17 yrs.,from 1853 to 1870; the PHIL SHERIDAN,in service 15 yrs.,from 1866 to 1881; MILWAUKEE, in service 6 yrs. from 1856 to 1862; ITASCA, in service 21 yrs.,1857 to 1878; KEY CITY, in service 5 yrs.,1857 to 1862, NORTHERN BELLE the same; CANADA,in service 5 yrs.,1857 to 1862; KEOKUK,in service 4 yrs.,1858 to 1862; NORTHERN LIGHT, in service 6 yrs., 1856 to 1862; BRILLIANT, in service 5 yrs.,1860 to 1865; SUCKER STATE, in service 3 yrs.,1858 to 1862; FAVORITE, in service 3 yrs., 1858 to 1862; BURLINGTON, in service 11 yrs.,1860 to 1871; DAVENPORT, in service 16 yrs., 1860 to 1876; McLELLAN, in service 1 yr., from 1862 to 1863; GOLDEN STAR, in service 3 yrs., 1862 to 1865; FLYING EAGLE, in service 7 yrs.,1881 to 1888; CHIPPEWA, in service 5 yrs.,1866 to 1871; BELLA MAC, in service 6 yrs.,1880 to 1886; ALFRED TOLL, in service 10 yrs., 1880 to 1890; ALEXANDER MITCHELL, in service 11 yrs.,1870 to 1881; MARY BARNES, in service 6 yrs., 1879 to 1885; MOLLIE MOHER, in service 23 yrs., from 1864 to 1887.

After the Civil War there was a gradual change from the grain trade to passenger and miscellaneous freight. This change was brought about mainly by the increased immigration towards the West and the development of railroads to the Mississippi river.

In 1856 the Chicago and Galena Railroad was completed; in 1857 the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad was completed to Prairie du Chien; and in 1858 the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad reached LaCrosse. Immigration stimulated by war flowed to the Mississippi over these roads.

.....

Immediately after the war there was a marked change in the character of the deck crews, called "roustabouts". Heretofore the deck crews had been composed of white men. While many of them were sober, hard-working, industrious men intent only on earning a living, this was not, as a general rule, true.

Many of the roustabouts were drunken, dissolute ruffians, who gave their officers a great deal of trouble. It required men of much courage and even some brutality to keep such men in order. The methods employed by these mates were not always humane, but they were effective.

The work was hard, and the fact that the mates were better equipped with strength and courage than patience made it doubly so. Because of this men seeking work drifted to other fields, and those of the less desirable class were set ashore by the mates, leaving an opening for the negroes who had been set free by the war. These, the less responsible, were light-hearted and tractable, and did their work with much singing and laughter that loading and unloading a vessel became a comedy greatly enjoyed by the traveling public. The negro roustabouts had a habit of singing a song, in their characteristic manner, the words of which included the names of many of the steamboats engaged in Upper Mississippi commerce. (see page 14-B).

Just as there had been an evolution in the type of boats, and in the crews who manned these boats, so there has been an evolution in the cargoes shipped on the Upper Mississippi River. One of the important early shipments down the river was furs from the Northwest and from Canada.

In 1870 the exports from New Orleans were valued at $62,000, of which sixty-five percent consisted of skins from the upper country.

Since the "Illinois Country",so called at that time, was settled by pioneers from French Canada by 1870, the shipments down the river included other articlaes than the fruits of the chase. Agricultural products

The F.W.Weyerhaeuser and the Frontenac,
The T.C.A.Denkmann and the Belle Mac.
The Menominee and the Louisville,
The R.J.Wheeler and the Jessie Bill.
The Robert Semple and the Golden Gate,
The C.J.Coffery and the Sucker State.
The Charlotte Boeckeler and the Silver Wave,
The John H.Douglas and the J.K.Graves.
The Isaac Staples and the Helen Mar,
The Henrietta and the North Star.
The David Bronson and the Netta Durant,
The Kit Carson and the J.W.Van Sant.
The Chancy Lamb and the Evansville,
The Blue Lodge and the Minnie Will.
The Park Painter and the Silas Wright,
The Saturn and the Satellite.
The Artemus Lamb and the Pauline,
The Douglas Boardman and the Kate Keen.
The I.E.Staples and the Mark Bradley,
The J.G.Bradley and the Julia Hadley.
The Mollie Whitmore and the C.K.Peck,
The Robert Dodds and the Borealis Rex.
The Pete Kirus and the Wild Boy,
The Lily Turner and the St.Croix.
The A.T.Jenks and the Bart E.Linehan,
The C.W.Cowles and the Bro.Jonathan.
ThePete Wilson and the Annie Girdon,
The Iverness and the L.W.Barden.
The Nellie Thomas and the Enterprise,
The LeClaire Belle and the Hiram Price.
The Dan Hine and the City of Winona.
The Helene Schulenberg and the Natrona,
The Flying Eagle and the Moline,
The E.Rutledge and the Josephine,
The Sterling and the Irene D.
The D.A.McDonald and the Jessie B,
The Gardie Eastman and the Verne Swain.
The Jas Mellon and the L.W.Crane.
The Sam Atlee and the William White,
The Lumberman and the Penn White.
The Stillwater and the Volunteer,
The Jas.Fisk Jr. and the Reindeer.
The Thistle and the Mountain Belle,
The Little Eagle and the Gazelle.
The Mollie Mohler and the Jas.Means,
The Silver Crescent and the Muscatine.
The Jim Watson and the Last Chance,
The Kate Waters and the Ed.Durant.
The Day Thayer and the Flora Clark,
The Robert Ross and the J.W.Parke.
The Eclipse and the J.W.Mills,
The J.S.Keator and the J.J.Hill.
The Lady Grace and the Abner Gile,
The Johnnie Schmoker and the George Lysle.
The Larayette Lamb and the Clyde,
The B.Hershey and the Time and Tide.

(MissSteamboat Stories p.42-43 LaCrosse Co. Hist.S.Sketches)

.....

were shipped by the Mississippi for use on the Gulf Coast, which did not produce enough food for its support during the first half century of the colony's existence.

During the period from 1822 to 1826, which we will take for a basis, steamboat traffic was light on the Upper Mississippi compared with the Ohio River and the Lower Mississippi. The following would be about the proportion of traffic enjoyed by the several districts constituting the "great valley" - Ohio 49; Lower Mississippi 42; and Upper Mississippi 9. The small proportion of commerce on the Upper Mississippi was confined principally to supplying miners in the Galena, Ill. district where lead mines were opened in 1826. A large amount of lead mined was shipped from Galena to St.Louis by boat. Supplying government forts augumented this business somewhat.

****

It is necessary at this point to discuss in greater detail the maiden voyage of the VIRGINIA and its bearing on the extensive commerce of the Upper Mississippi which was to follow.

In the spring of 1819 plans were being made for the building of a fort at the mouth of the Minnesota River where it joins the Mississippi. The war department ordered Major Thomas Forsyth to purchase $2,000 worth of goods to be shipped up the Mississippi by steamboat to the Sioux Indians living above Prairie du Chien in payment for the site, which had been ceded to Lt.Pike in the treaty of 1805.

"The owners of the steamboats," according to Forsyth,"finding it was impracticable to navigate such craft on the upper parts of the Mississippi River, changed their plans, and commenced transporting the provisions in keel boats. Finding that no steamboat could get up the different rapids, and that the contractor had commenced to employ keels, I hired a boat and crew, bought provisions, and was ready by the third of June."

.....

In the years 1818-1819 over fifty steamboats were built for western commerce - more than had been constructed in the previous seven years. It was quite natural, therefore, that there should be a gradual increase and expansion in their use. But even with this added number it is not likely that mare than a third of the total trade on western waters was carried by steamboats.

Earlier, however, in 1817, nine-tenths of the trade had been carried by other types of boats. After a slight decline in building, the number again began to increase until in 1826 it reached the high mark of fifty-two. This number was not surpassed during the following five years.

The VIRGINIA, the "Clermont of the Upper Mississippi" was a small stern-wheeler of 109.32 tons, built at Wheeling,Virginia in 1819 and owned by Redick McKee, James Pemberton, and seven others. As before stated it was 118 ft.long; 18 ft.10 in.wide; and its depth was 5 ft.2 in. It had a small cabin on its deck but no pilot house, being run by a tiller at the back, and it lacked both mast and figurehead. According to its enrollment at the port of New Orleans, dated Dec.21,1822, it was the fifty-first boat built and documented on western waters.

During the course of its first journey on the Upper Mississippi in 1823 it was commanded by two men; Pemberton acted as master occasionally, and John Crawford seems to have held the position of captain officially. The VIRGINIA completed two successful trips to the mouth of the St.Peter's River (Minnesota River), and one to Prairie du Chien during the year 1823. On Sep't.19,1823, while on its way from Louisville to St.Louis, it struck a snag and sank in the Mississippi about seventy miles above the mouth of the Ohio. The passengers and crew were saved, but the cargo was lost. No evidence has been found that the boat ever was raised.

.....

The VIRGINIA was chartered primarily to carry government supplies to the posts on the Upper Mississippi. Other freight and passengers were also carried.

Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the Indian Agent at Fort Snelling, was in Washington on business connected with his work early in 1823, and he was ordered on his return to superintend the movement of supplies to the Upper Mississippi on the VIRGINIA. He no doubt imparted a great deal of information to Beltrami, the Italian exile and explorer, who was granted permission by the Indian Agent to go to Fort Snelling on the VIRGINIA, and who "bunked" with him both on board the boat and after they reached Fort Snelling. Beltrami was the sole chronicler of the events of the trip, and it is chiefly through his records that the incidents of the voyage are known. He was a typical adventurer of the better class, sometimes called a "gentleman adventurer."

Another passenger was Great Eagle, a Sauk Indian chief, who had been prevailed upon to board the VIRGINIA, while his less fortunate fellow tribesmen made their way along the banks of the river to their home. No doubt these lesser lights must have been filled with the keenest jealousy as they plodded their weary way along the rough, muddy bank while their chief lolled at ease upon the deck of the VIRGINIA smoking his pipe and no doubt recounting weird tales of his bravery and the cowardice of his enemies.

A Kentucky family, name unknown, bound for the lead mines at Galena was on board, according to Beltrami,"with their arms and baggage, cats and dogs, hens and turkeys; the children too had their own stock." A woman missionary completes the list of known passengers. She was bound for the lead district and expected to work among the Indians.

The beautiful and romantic country around the present site of Winona,Minn., where majestic bluffs stood along the river like giant sentinels, was likened by Beltrami to the Rhine River between Bingen and Koblenz. It was

.....

here that the Sioux chief Wabasha came on board with his warriors.

The pipe of peace was passed around and Taliaferro acted as interpretor for his fellow passengers. Wabasha was greatly impressed with the construction and performance of the VIRGINIA. The intricacy of the engine especially appealed to him. He was quite curious about its construction and the principal on which it worked.

Leaving Chief Wabasha behind the VIRGINIA entered a section of the river that was "diversified by hills, plains, meadows, and forests." It passed the mouths of the Buffalo and Chippewa rivers, flowing into the Mississippi from the east. Just above the Chippewa is the lower end of Lake Pepin. This lake, or enlargement of the Mississippi which it really is, has a width of over a mile in certain places and is very deep. Boats have no difficulty in passing through it even during the season of low water. In stormy weather the waters of Lake Pepin are lashed into a fury, and steamboats that can navigate the shallow upper river, being necessarily of the light draft, seldom venture onto it.

As the VIRGINIA was plowing its way through, a terrific squall struck it and only by means of supberb navigation was the boat able to wallow its way to safety. Staring Indians gazing in astonishment from the banks, were the only witnesses to this thrilling and almost fatal incident.

At the "Mountain of Grange", now known as Barn Bluff at Red Wing, there was another Sioux village, and here again the chief and his leading warriors came on board. After the travelers solemnly smoked the peace pipe and gave ear to some long and tedious speeches, they resumed the journey.

Above the mouth of the Cannon River the Mississippi became narrower and the bluffs steeper and more imposing. The boat passed the St.Croix, Little Crow's village near the present site of St.Paul, and finally on May 10,1823, the VIRGINIA nosed her way into the Minnesota River and came to a well-earned rest under the frowning cliffs upon which Ft.Snelling was built.

.....

The long trip of 729 miles had been made in twenty days, of which four had been spent in getting over the Lower Rapids and one in stemming the Upper Rapids. During the course of the journey the boat had struck five sandbars, four below Prairie du Chien and one above. No fuel had been arranged for in advance and the VIRGINIA had been forced to lie over while fresh supplies were cut by the crew. With the exception of one night when the glow of a forest fire lit up the river, the engines had stopped each day at sundown, as it would have been fool hardy to attempt to travel at night on a river hitherto unnavigated by steamboats.

The voyage of the VIRGINIA is an important one, for it established the practicability of navigating the Upper Mississippi by steamboat.

Late in the summer of 1823 a second boat, the RAMBLER made the ascent to Fort Snelling. After the trip of the VIRGINIA the government did not hesitate to use a quicker and more reliable method of moving troops and supplies than had previously been employed. With the advent of steam navigation it became evident that the Mississippi provided the most expeditious and natural outlet for the huge quantities of lead that were just beginning to be produced and were soon to reach enormous volume.

The river was also to become the main artery along which the great influx of immigration moved steadily into the Upper Mississippi Valley. As a result of this steady growth of population a tremendous trade, which became greater and greater with each passing year, was established on the broad waters of the great river. No other means of transportation was capable of serving this region so well during the period from 1823 to 1848.

Three inter-related factors - the Indian, the fur trader, and the soldier - were responsible for the steady growth of steamboating on the Upper Mississippi following the voyage of the VIRGINIA. The Indian played an important role, both directly and indirectly, in developing steamboating. Thus before the

Civil War, steamboats carried the fur companies' goods upstream and returned with cargoes of furs and pelts. The transportation of troops and supplies also resulted from the presence of the Indian on the frontier. Steamboating was stimulated directly by carrying delegations to treaty grounds, by the delivery of annuity goods as provided by these treaties, and by the ultimate removal of whole tribes to new reservations. Each process severed a link in the chain of the Indian to the lands of the Upper Mississippi.

Steamboat captains were constantly on the alert to secure the contract for transporting Indian delegations. Outbreaks between tribes were frequent and the government often acted as arbitrator in settling disputes and restoring peace.

Indian agents were appointed to supervise and regulate the Indian trade, to settle disputes among the various tribes and between the Indian and the white man, and finally to persuade the red man to cede his lands and move farther westward.

Prior to the Black Hawk War most of the councils in the Upper Mississippi Valley were called at some point near a military post. Fort Crawford and Fort Armstrong were favorite treaty grounds. Thus Sioux and Chippewa, Sauk and Fox, Menominee, Iowa, and Winnebago, as well as a portion of the Ottawa, and Potawatomi were assembled at Prairie du Chien at the Great Council of 1825. Most of these tribes re-assembled at Ft.Crawford in 1829 and again in 1830. The whole tribe usually attended. Indians living near the treaty grounds came by canoe, on horseback, or on foot. The more distant tribes were usually brought by steamboat.

In 1830 the PLANET carried a delegation of three hundred Sauk, Fox, Iowa, and Oto together with a small deputation of Missouri Sioux and Winnebago to Prairie du Chien. The expense of transportation, the many and lengthy orations delivered, and the danger of outbreaks by discontented red

.....

men finally led the government to inaugurate the policy of transporting small delegations to Washington. It was also hoped that the Indian would be overawed by the prosperity and power of the government.

The profits of steamboat captains formed no small portion of the expenditures for such delegations. In 1837 the ROLLA received $1,450, or $55 per passage for the twenty-six Indians and their attendants for transportation and fare from St.Louis to Ft.Snelling. This sum was far in excess of the usual amount paid for such a trip.

The transportation of Indian annuities was also important. Each year goods were dispatched to the various tribes along the Upper Mississippi; but where the movement of delegations and tribes required but one trip, the traffic in annuity goods called for many voyages to the points designated in the treaty. These annuities consisted of tobacco, powder, bar-lead, Chinese vermilion, verdigris, gun-flints, shot guns, blankets, blue and red stroudings, calico, thread, needles, brass kettles, garden hoes, fine combs, box wood fire, steels, scissors, butcher knives, looking glasses, gartering, ribbon, finger rings, Madras handkerchiefs, shirts, arm bands, wrist bands, and other trinkets.

Large sums of money and goods were often granted in the treaties. In 1851 the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux provided for the disbursement of $3,075,000 as follows: money for the chiefs, money for agricultural purposes, and money to be held in trust at five percent interest to be paid the Indians annually for a period of fifty years.

Eastern markets furnished a considerable portion of the goods brought to the Upper Mississippi, but it was the enterprising city of St.Louis that claimed the largest share of the trade. As early as 1829 Caleb Atwater observed that the Indian Department had expended millions of dollars in St.Louis. While the entire western country was included in the commerce, no small share belonged to the Upper Mississippi.

.....

In 1853 the trade in goods purchased by citizens of St.Paul, and by white settlers throughout the surrounding country amounted to $390,000. The government trade during the same year amounted to fully $400,000.

Each flourishing community between St.Louis and St.Paul made strong bids for a portion of this trade and often received a generous share. For a long time Galena,Ill. played a leading role, but in the decade preceding the Civil War other river towns cut deeply into her trade. In 1857 Davenport and the surrounding territory in Iowa furnished goods to the valley of $28,000 for the Sioux of the Minnesota River alone.

Cargoes

Although no hard and fast lines definitely divide the history of steamboating on the Upper Mississippi, four distinct periods stand out in fairly bold relief.

The lead period embraces the quarter century following the successful trip of the VIRGINIA from the foot of the Des Moines Rapids to Ft.Snelling in 1823. Both production and shipment of lead experienced a phenominal growth which was only paralleled by its equally rapid decline in the decade following 1848. The lead traffic, however, was carried on from Galena,Ill. south.

Immigration is characteristic of the second period. Hundreds of settlers crowded the decks of the Upper Mississippi steamboats for a period of approximately twenty-five years. The movement of settlers by water continued until the building of the railroads parallel with the river snuffed out a trade for which river captains had reaped their richest rewards.

The third period witnessed the shipment of heavy cargoes of grain southward, and extends from the Civil War up to the early 80's when a rapid decline is noted.

The final period is one of steady decline which culminated in the sale of the equipment and the four remaining boats of the Diamond Jo Line for a paltry $175,000, a sum which would not have been a reasonable down-payment on

.....

the stock of the Northwestern Union Packet Co.

Some furs were shipped down the river each year, but the records show that the bulk of this commodity went eastward by way of Wisconsin, Fox River, and Green Bay. In 1849 the SENATOR brought down one hundred packs of buffalo hides which had been transported overland to St.Paul from the Selkirk Colonies on the Red River of the North. Hides were transported from the northwestern section of Minnesota Territory and beyond by caravans of ox carts sometimes numbering several hundred. These carts returned with merchandise purchased in St.Paul. Small consignments of cranberries also found their way to market by steamboat. In 1849 2,135 bushels were shipped from Minnesota to points south and east.

As the territory along the Mississippi River filled with settlers an appreciable movement of grain was noted, but it was not until the 60's that this trade became an endless golden stream, some going southward to New Orleans, and the remainder eastward over the railways which linked the Mississippi with the East. Prairie du Chien, Dunleith, Fulton, Rock Island, and points below were important junctions in this joint land and water transportation.

Upstream cargoes included all the personal belongings of the immigrants together with the ever increasing demand for manufactured goods from the East. Old bills of lading showed rakes, hoes, spades, axes, grindstones, and an ever increasing number of tools and farm machinery.

A precious cargo of freight consigned to the DOCTOR FRANKLIN NO.1 in 1853 listed three barrels of whiskey, one barrel of brandy, one barrel of old rye whiskey, one barrel of crackers, a ten gallon keg of gin, a keg of port wine, another of dark brandy, some St.Cruse rum, peach brandy, and Holland gin, together with an appropriate number of flasks, tumblers and decanters to serve such a shipment.

Hand
M.S.C.
12-10-

A

.....

Strange cargoes often found their way on board the Mississippi steamboats. In 1853 the Territory of Minnesota sent a large buffalo as one of its contributions to the Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York. The patience of this surly beast was not improved by the rough handling of the roustabouts on board the BEN FRANKLIN. After being jostled from boat to boat, led through the streets of Cincinnati, and finally making the last lap of the journey to New York by train, the distracted animal gave vent to his feelings when the committee appeared to pass on his fitness as an exhibit. A furious charge by the enraged beast sent the committee scurrying for safety as they formulated their verdict. It is needless to say, he was not accepted.

Elephants, a rhinoceros, and even one of P.T.Barnum's gorillas have been transported on steamboats plying the Upper Mississippi.

The large and rapid growth of traffic on the Mississippi River during the 40's was known as the "Golden Age". It must be remembered,too, that the average tonnage of boats was growing. At this time the tonnage carried by steamboats on the Mississippi River, even exclusive of New Orleans, was said to be greater than that of all the Atlantic ports combined.

In July 1860 the CANADA carried the largest cargo of the season upstream. She had on board $1,672 worth of deck passengers, and $2,000 worth of cabin passengers; while towing two barges loaded to the water's edge with freight. Her captain was obliged to refuse both freight and passengers from lower river ports enroute.

The Black Hawk Purchase, the creation of the Territories of Wisconsin and Iowa and their admission as states just before Minnesota became a territory in 1849 serve as a barometer to the northward trend of immigration up the Mississippi.

.....

It would be difficult to set a definite date on which passenger receipts became greater than those on freight. During the late 40's the famines in Ireland and the revolutions on the continent had been responsible for the tremendous influx of immigrants into the United States.

The use of tows, sometimes keel-boats but more often barges, became more common during the 50's; although large shipments handled in this manner did not assume large proportions until the next decade. In 1850 John C.Laird, a traveler who rode on the steamer NOMINEE (Capt.Orrin Smith), one of the famous Upper Mississippi boats, noted that it towed a heavy barge up from Galena to St.Paul.

A temporary lull occurred during the early stages of the Civil War in spite of the movement of troops and volunteers which caused a more equal division between freight and passenger receipts.

Heavy steamboat traffic continued as long as the railroads did not run parallel with the river. Groups of foreigners congregated at the various railway terminals along the river where they anxiously awaited the arrival of the first steamboat bound for the rich and promising lands above.

When a party of about 250 Norwegians arrived at Dunleith,Ill. with their baggage in June 1866 and prepared to take passage on the JENNIE BALDWIN, the Dubuque Herald of June 21,1866, made the following comment under the title - "Emigrants By The Car Load." The article states: "The Dunleith depot presents a picturesque appearance just at present. Twelve carloads of emigrants came in Tuesday, bound for some point up the river, and being late for the boat they were compelled to"lie over", and "lie over" it is in a literal sense. From one end of the depot to the other they are scattered over the floor, dovetailing together in the most workman like manner possible, while their huge trunks and bundles make an effective barricade against all intruders."

A deck load of passengers bound for Minnesota departed on the KEY CITY on June 23, and it was noted that 600 emigrants were in Chicago awaiting the arrival of 5,000 more from the mother country before proceeding farther. Norwegians, Swedes, and Germans were included in these groups of emigrants.

Excursion Trade

A lucrative source of revenue which, from the earliest times, the enterprising steamboat captains sought was the excursion trade. Not only were the financial returns attractive but the advertising derived on such occasions was perhaps equally important.

Various religious, patriotic, and fraternal societies ran short excursions to neighboring cities, usually choosing a holiday or local celebration as a fitting occasion.

While short excursions were common, the most popular on the entire Mississippi was that which Catlin, the artist, declared should be called the "Fashionable Tour," namely, the trip to the Falls of St.Anthony.

Perhaps the earliest and shortest trip on record to this picnic ground of the pleasure seeking public in the period ending with the "Fabulous Forties," was that of the steamboat LAWRENCE in 1825.

With D.F.Reeder in command, this tiny 120 ton craft reached Ft.Snelling on the second of May. The following day Capt.Reeder invited all the ladies and gentlemen of Ft.Snelling to take a pleasure trip to the Falls, an offer which was readily accepted by a large party.

Accompanied by a band the LAWRENCE stemmed the swift current to within three and one-half miles of the falls but did not dare venture nearer. While some played games, others danced to the music of the band. The outing was greatly enjoyed by all. As usual on such occasions staring Indians came to view the steamer with mingled wonder and astonishment.

.....

Twelve years later, in 1837, Capt.Daniel Smith Harris advertised that he would make a trip to the Falls of St.Anthony in his boat the SMELTER, providing a sufficient number of passengers wished to go. The same year a card of thanks, signed by over forty passengers, commended Capt.Perrin of the MISSOURI FULTON on the success of his trip.

A brass band entertained a party of Southerners on board Capt.John Atchinson's LYNX during the day, while a stringed orchestra provided excellent music by which to dane at night. At Ft.Snelling the party was met by Franklin Steele who provided carriages for carrying the joyous party across the waving plains to the Falls where the steward of the LYNX had spread a tempting dinner on the grass. Good wines flowed freely for two hilarious hours when a storm sent the excursionists racing for shelter beneath the friendly ledge of Minnehaha Falls.

Realizing that the tourists would patronize only those boats which offered the best facilities, steamboat captains were quick to introduce the latest accomodations. River craft were soon in a position to offer satisfactory accomodations to the most fastidious.

In 1840 the Louisville Journal expressed delight at the prospects of a large excursion party leaving on the steamboat DAYTON, and declared the trip to be the most interesting in the United States. A similar excursion left St.Louis on the VALLEY FORGE, the first iron-hulled steamboat ever built for the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Early in June 1854 the Minnesota Packet Company carried the 1,200 notable guests of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad on an excursion to St.Paul and the Falls of St.Anthony. Boats employed were the Galena, G.W.Sparhawk, Golden Era, Lady Franklin and War Eagle. Throughout the excursion the press of the nation was filled with glowing accounts of the beauty

.....

of the scenery and the fertility of the Upper Mississippi Valley. Probably no other factor was so important in popularizing the "Fashionable Tour" with Easterners as this Grand Excursion. Among the guests were ex-president of the United States Millard Fillmore and daughter, Samuel J.Tilden of New York, Edward Bates of Missouri, Ninian Edwards and Gov.Mattison of Illinois, Prof.Benjamin Stillman of Yale, Chas.A.Dana of the New York Tribune, and last but not least the dean of American historians George Bancroft.

During the same year a large party bound from Pittsburgh to the Falls stopped at Cincinnati to greet Gen'l.William Henry Harrison.

Besides the important personages mentioned in connection with the Rock Island Railroad excursion, many other notable people graced the decks of Upper Mississippi steamboats.

Notable Persons

The season of 1837 saw Col.John Bliss and family on board Capt.Joseph Throckmorton's BURLINGTON, with the renowned artist Geroge Catlin and wife as fellow passengers. During the same year J.N.Nicollet, John C.Fremont, Henry Atkinson, and Franklin Steele, together with many other prominent personages took passage with Throckmorton. Capt.Marryat, the novelist and British sea captain, also paced the deck of the BURLINGTON that year.

Sweet and serene in the dignity of her eighty years came the widow of Alexander Hamilton, braving the wilderness with its many discomforts to visit her son Col.William S.Hamilton. Her visit caused a furor of interest wherever the BURLINGTON stopped. Daniel Webster visited the West in the same year, using Ohio, Mississippi, and Illinois River steamboats.

Giacomo Constantino Beltrami, the Italian exile and adventurer, transmitted as a part of his legacy to posterity, an account of the voyage of the VIRGINIA. Beltrami was the first of a long list of passengers, many of

.....

whom left interesting accounts of their journeys. Thus Fredrika Bremer has given an account of her trips between Galena,St.Paul and St.Louis on the steamboats MENOMINEE, NOMINEE, and MINNESOTA. Many others,however,failed to leave any record of their voyages. A mere notice of the departure of Richard Cobden, from Dubuque on the WAR EAGLE is the only known record of the visit of this sturdy champion of reform.

But interesting as these characters are, it was the plain immigrant folk, both native and foreign, who formed the great bulk of passengers on Upper Mississippi steamboats. These immigrants, together with the vast cargoes of freight which resulted from their presence, fattened the pocketbooks of steamboat captains and made possible the phenominal development of early steamboating on the Mississippi.

Captains and Pilots

Most important in the operation of Mississippi steamboats were the captains and pilots. And what an aurious array the captains and pilots who manned and steered those steamboats on the Upper Mississippi were! Asa B.Green, captain and owner of the EQUATOR, wrecked on St.Croix Lake in 1858, was a God-fearing, God-talking Methodist minister; Thomas Cushing, before becoming a pilot, was a prominent opera singer in New York; Orrin Smith Sr.,president of the Minnesota Packet Co., was so devout a churchman that he refused to run his boat between midnight Saturday and midnight Sunday, and forced the crew on the idle vessel to hear Sunday services, which, no preacher being obtainable, he delivered himself. Captain William Laughton was an Englishman who jumped overboard so often to save people from drowning that he nearly made a profession of it. He saved nine in all and was once given a silver cup and a set of resolutions from his passengers for diving after a little girl who had fallen over the rail.

.....

Captain John B.Davis, who had command of a vessel at 19 years of age, was a man who would try anything once. While in command of the FREIGHTER he attempted to cross the flooded land between Big Stone Lake and the Red River of the North and was grounded on the prairie and wrecked about ten miles from the lake. Another was pilot David Tipton, who began service on a keel-boat in 1820, soon went into steamboat piloting which he continued until, at the age of 84 years, he dropped dead at his wheel.

Titled blood was not uncommon among the boatmen. Count Ageston Haraszthy, a political refugee, owned and commanded the ROCK RIVER which ran between St.Louis and Mendota,Minn. Robert C.Eden, younger son of an English baronet, bought an 80 ton side-wheeler called the ENTERPRISE and, filling her cabin with books, cruised about on the Mississippi, Wisconsin,St.Croix and Fox Rivers. He dressed roughly and was known to the rivermen as"Bob". He was captain of his own boat, but employed a pilot, deck hand and engineer. The pilot was George Byron Merrick who wrote an account of his life on the river. During the Civil War, Eden served as major in the 37th Wisconsin Infantry, and after the struggle ended returned to England and entered the ministry.

A captain of one of those boats was a devotee of prize fighting, and pulled the KATE CASSEL into a woodyard near Hastings,Minn., to allow his pilot, J.B.McCoy, to fight out a quarrel with a St.Louis freight handler named Parker. Here a ring was roped off, seconds chosen and bottle holders and sponge bearers supplied from the crew and passengers. It was a hot and heavy slugging match and an enjoyable diversion to the passengers. There is no report that anyone was shocked; on the contrary there was general regret that the captain, his sense of business getting the better of him, pulled the bell for departure before the knockout.

.....

Commodore Davidson, one of the biggest boat owners on the Upper Mississippi, was another of the pious but strong-armed captains. No gambling or dancing or other public diversion unsanctioned by the church were permitted on his boats. However, Capt.Laughton, commanding the commodore's ALEXANDER MITCHELL was made of more earthly material and on a certain Sunday he allowed a few of his passengers to engage in the Virginia Reel. They danced that night until late under the brilliant chandeliers of the cabin, and then went to bed, not feeling any immediate effects of heavenly wrath upon their sin. The boat kept on going down the river. It seemed as if they were going to escape punishment.

But they weren't. At three o'clock the next morning a tornado screamed its way over the land and swooped down on the ALEXANDER MITCHELL. Both smoke stacks were ripped off, the roof of the pilot house sailed upward and onward, followed by part of the hurricane deck on the port side. Trudall, the mate, was standing by the boat's bell when the twister struck. It passed on , taking Trudall with it, blowing him a full quarter of a mile to the shore where it neatly dropped him.

"You see," said the commodore sternly, "that's what comes of violating the Sabbath".

A strange assortment of people. And adorning their steamboats just as strangely! Captains painted their paddle boxes with the name of their boat on the background of a brilliant sunburst; with grey eagles, golden eagles, black eagles, war eagles and spread eagles. The Minnesota's paddle box carried the state's coat of arms; the MINNESOTA BELLE had the picture of a buxom maiden with a bundle of wheat and a reaping hook; the NORTHERN BELLE also had a girl on the paddle box; the GENERAL BROOKE and PHIL SHERIDAN carried enormous portraits of their namesakes, and so forth, list without end. Others had their

.....

cabins painted with lurid pictures, many of which were symbolic warnings to travelers against strong drink.

The music furnished consisted of brass bands for the larger boats and orchestras for the smaller ones. Ned Kendall's cornet, it was said, could make any boat popular. Then there were the harmonious souled negroes. Shipping as waiters, barbers, porters and deck hands, they played stringed instruments and sang as only they could play and sing those haunting, joyfully-sad melodies and hymns.

The EXCELSIOR appeared with a steam calliope, the first on the Upper Mississippi. Other boats soon followed the example of the EXCELSIOR but they were never very popular with the adult passengers, although the children seemed to enjoy their music.

Yes a curious lot! An editor of the "Prescott Paraclete" wrote: "The river is navigated, with but few exceptions, by a class of low-bred, ungentlemanly, and sometimes ruffianly vagabonds, who seldom, if ever, treat a person with as much respect as a well-bred hound deserves. This we know from personal observation on the best boats of the river." And Capt.Chas.J.Allen, Corps of Engineers,U.S.A. included in a report for a River Improvement Assn. the statement that - "Most of the river pilots are possessed of but little knowledge beyond that required in turning a wheel."

Pilots have been accused of being ignorant, but were they? All they knew was every bar and rock and snag in the river, every land-mark on the bank, and how to guide their boats to their destinations through wind and water and the darkness of the pitch-black night! And they knew perhaps a little of human nature from the many people they had steered through every kind of weather, and alittle of the world from the strange places they had seen. People from all walks of life had come under their observation - the

.....

various types of human nature found in cosmopolitan New Orleans, and on the thronged levees of St.Louis. They were also acquainted with the gamblers and money swindlers and the exploiters of the new country which was fastly becoming settled up the river. A favorite subject of conversation on boats was land booms, such as the one at Nininger,Minn., where one man, the only one in town, printed a fake newspaper with pictures, social notes and news of supposed town, thus leading the emigrants still in the East to pay large sums of money for lots on the wild banks of the Mississippi.

Capt. Wm. F. Davidson

Back in 1854 there appeared in St.Paul,with a little boat which he had brought from Pittsburgh, William F.Davidson, familiarly known in later years as "Commodore Davidson."

Mr.Davidson was born in Lawrence County, Ohio, Feb.4,1825. His father was a river captain on the Ohio and did not fail to instruct his son in river matters. William, no doubt, made use of his education for he became captain of the GONDOLA at the age of twenty.

In 1856, with his brother Peyton, Davidson established a steamboat line on the Minnesota River. The FRANKLIN STEELE, a little stern-wheeler, began carrying freight on the Minnesota in 1857 running up to Mankato, and sometimes when water was of sufficient depth, as far as New Ulm. Since his rates were considerably below those of the then "king of the Minnesota River" Louis Robert, farmers came with their ox carts for miles to get the supplies which Davidson dumped upon the river bank on his way up, and left their grain for him to carry down on his return trip. So rapidly did the enterprise grow that he added the FAVORITE the next season, and by 1859 had five boats in operation. He saw the commercial advantage of having a connecting boat on the Mississippi and for that purpose put the AEOLIAN into operation between St.Paul and LaCrosse,Wis. In 1859 he added the MOSES McLELLAN, G.H.WILSON and the WINONA. These boats comprised the LaCrosse and St.Paul Packet Co.which was consolidated in 1861 with

.....

the Minnesota Packet Company.

The Davidson fleet of steamboats was known as the "White Collar Line" as the smoke stacks had white rings or collars painted around their tops. May 1,1866 the White Collar Line and the Northwestern Line consolidated under the name of Northwestern Packet Copany with Capt.Davidson,president; J.Lawler of Prairie du Chien,general manager; George A.Blanchard,of Dubuque,sec'y; W.H.Rhodes,of St.Paul,treas; Wm.E.Wellington,of Dubuque, and P.S.Davidson of LaCrosse,sup'ts.

At the close of the Civil War Davidson was well entrenched in the carrying trade of the Upper Mississippi. He was chief owner and manager of the LaCrosse and St.Paul Steam Packet Co.,the White Collar Line; he owned stock in the Dubuque,Prairie du Chien and St.Paul Railroad Packet Co., and the Northwestern Line. So nearly like a monopoly was the result that "anti-monopoly revolt" of 1865-66, insofar as it affected Wisconsin and Minnesota, viewed Davidson and his associates as menaces to actual and potential prosperity, second only to the railroads of Wisconsin and Illinois. (facts from Lester B.Shippee).

Of all the prominent steamboat men of the Upper Mississippi, in the period after the Civil War, William F.Davidson stands out in a peculiar way. On a relatively small scale he typifies the economic forces which were then beginning to make themselves apparent in all lines of endeavor - combination and absorption - if this could be accompolished, otherwise ruthless competition to drive the opponent to the wall. It is,perhaps,not unfair to liken Davidson in his field to Jay Gould and his manipulation of railroads and their finances; many common characteristics were evidenced by the two men. And yet Davidson was but a product of his day, following the general line of activity pursued by business promoters of his time. There is no evidence that his business dealings appealed to the commodore in any other light than legitimate activities. Than anyone could call him personally immoral was quite obviously

.....

far from his mind.

Sometime during the 70's the Commodore became deeply interested in religion , and one of the tangible evidences of his conversion was the abolishment of drinking bars from his boats. In doing this he voluntarily cut off a source of revenue which was almost universally looked upon as not only unquestionably good business but also quite proper.

In 1870 Commodore Davidson left St.Paul and established himself in St.Louis, where he resided for the next ten years, and where he maintained the principal offices for his steamboating interests. He was welcomed as an addition to the business community and his activities in connection with river navigation were favorably commented upon.

William F.Davidson continued in the steamboat business until his death at St.Paul May 26,1887. He left one son,Edward E.Davidson, of St.Paul, and a daughter,Sallie,who resided at the old home in Ohio.

(Note - No definite information is available as to the source of Davidson's financial backing. Evidence seems to point to S.S.Merrill,gen'l. manager of the Milwaukee and St.Paul Railroad, as one who stood in very close relations to the Commodore. - Lester Shippee,U of M.)

.....

Keel Boats

The early explorers and traders first used canoes on the rivers and lakes. When the necessity of larger carrying craft arose, they turned naturally to the one type of boat with which they were familiar - the ship's boat. The sail was useless in the winding rivers; oars were about all that could be used, except in the shallow streams, where poles were handier. Under these conditions it was easy to go down stream, but when the voyagers wished to go up the river it was another matter. The depths of the inland rivers varied, as did also the speed of the currents. Necessity compelled the use of the cordelle or tow rope,- thus the "keel-boat" was developed.

Keel-boats carried the travel and the commerce of the inland rivers until man developed boats better suited to their needs. These were known as flat-boats. And even after flat-boats were carrying the bulk of downstream traffic, keel-boats were the only craft making the up-stream trip. Keel-boats and their crews were characteristic products of early American transportation.

The keel-boat was built with a heavy timber along the bottom to take the shock of river obstructions. Unlike the flat boat, they were forced upstream by setting poles or by the aforementioned tow lines, with occasional help from a makeshift sail. Operation against the current, however, was slow, arduous and expensive which prevented its use on a large scale for commercial purposes. Some keel-boats, and flat boats too for that matter, were fitted out as a form of general store and, floating downstream, carried commodities to dwellers along the river,- a peddler afloat instead of with pack or wagon.

.....

Neither flat-boats or keel-boats were graceful in appearance yet they were beautiful in a different way; beautiful in their ability to fulfill their function, in their promise of a nation that was to be.

With the growth of trade on the inland water ways the keel-boat was improved until it became the best possible craft for upstream transportation prior to the advent of steam as a motive power in navigation. Most of the river keel-boats were built in Pittsburgh. Sixty to seventy feet long, fifteen to eighteen feet in the beam, with three or four feet depth of hold, they cost from $2,000 to $3,000. Designs varied, of course, bearing different names and being adopted to various purposes.

One kind of keel-boat called the "batteau" was a large, high-built boat which was rounded at both ends, and could be used for carrying large cargoes, up as well as down stream. Sometimes one of these vessels carried as much as eighty tons of military stores, Indian supplies, or furs. The handling of such a boat required one man for each ton of freight aboard. Sails of all kinds were used; if the owners neglected to provide sufficient sails, as was often the case, the crew used blankets as makeshifts, and even board screens when the wind was favorable. The crew was required to work hard to propel the boat and any help from the elements was welcomed.

Another variation of the keel-boat was the barge, a large boat generally fitted up more elaborately than the batteau. But all the boats were similar, and as the rivers were long and travel slow, there were often several terms for the same type of boat. In one place a boat might be called a keel, a batteau in another, and a barge somewhere else.

.....

Among all the adventurous crews which poled, rowed, or floated down the muddy river waterways, the keel boatmen formed a class unique in American history. Most of them were of French extraction; many with an Indian strain. The traders who employed them considered the French-Canadians less desirable for this kind of work than the Creoles, or those with Indian blood. The Creoles were less excitable, less likely to grumble at hard work and poor fare, and less likely to have ideas of their own. Creoles or Canadians, they were all a happy-go-lucky crowd; their lives alternating between periods of hard labor and complete idlemess. Aboard, they toiled for long hours with the poles, the oars and the cordelle. Their food was salt pork, corn, navy beans, and wild game.

They were not hunters, but on long trips wandering frontiersmen were hired to travel with the boats and keep the crew supplied with fresh meat. These hunters, masters of powder and ball, rarely helped in navigating the craft; they were experts in their line and could earn their living with the rifle, which the Creoles couldn't shoot with much success.

The keel-boat floated down stream, sometimes aided by a sail which was used with a following wind. The sails , averaging only about 100 sq.ft. were small as compared to the size of the boats. But in upstream work sheer muscle power was all the rivermen had to aid in combating the current, and it was then that they bent their backs. Deep water called for oars; but as the greater part of the journey could be made over shallow water, setting poles were the usual instruments of propulsion.

Fifteen inch walks ran along the gunwales on either side of the central roofed compartment, or cargo box; and the boatmen, poles against their shoulders and firmly bedded in the bottom, would double themselves forward and tramp from bow to stern on these footways, laboriously pushing the craft ahead.

.....

They worked in continuous lines; as one man reached the rear end of the footway, he pulled his pole from the mud, ran forward, and again took his place at the head of the laboring crew.

When the current was swift, and when it was possible to walk easily on the river bank, the cordelle was used. The cordelle was a line, often 1,000 ft. in length, which was made fast to the mast, tied high enough to claar snags in the river, and held at the bow by a bridle; a rope running from the bow to the cordelle , to keep the boat from yawing. All hands jumped ashore, took hold of the cordelle, and splashing through mud and forcing their way through willows, bucked the boat against the current.

Twenty to forty men were needed to cordelle a boat. But even then in very swift water, or in case the boat went aground, the cordelle had to be made fast to a tree or snag on the bank and reeled it with a windlass.

Used as we are to power driven transportation, it is difficult for us to realize the amount of human energy that was expended in one of these upstream voyages, or to sense the dangers that often went with them. In case of damage or delay, cargoe and crew were very likely to be set upon by the Indians,or by the bandits who waited in ambush on the forest-clad banks for the crippled boats with their rich stores and tired boatmen with silver in their pockets.

Ashore, the keel boatmen played as hard and as roughly as they worked. When a boat's crew landed for the evening in one of the smaller river towns of those days, it was a part of discretion for the town authorities to lock up their offices and have all business out of sight. For if they attempted to keep the peace it was very likely that they would recover their wits in their own little jail, with the door bolted to the boatmen in possession of the town. But by being conveniently absent, these town officers maintained their dignity and avoided trouble.

.....

The hardy boatmen wore light weight garments and a cap in summer, but when cooler weather arrived in the autumn and early winter they wore buckskin clothes and also used blankets for additional warmth. If there was no one else to fight with, no officers of the peace to scare, they would often enliven their hour of recreation by a fight among themselves to settle any argument that had come up during the day. For the boatmen were quick to collect their debts of honor. It was a rough and tumble code that prevailed, and before a voyage was many days old, the best fighter aboard was weraing a red feather in his cap as a symbol of supremacy with his fists.

When the combat was over, some of them would take out their fiddles and horns and sing such songs as wayfaring men have always sung,- songs of home, of adventure, of sadness and ribaldry.

Like other men who led their lives on the frontier, the keel-boatmen were democratic in theory and practice, acknowledging no authority save that of their superior officer.

Thomas Carter, an old keel-boat captain, illustrates this in his account of the time he carried as passengers Louis Philippe and his two royal brothers on their way to New Orleans and South America. The water was very low during the trip and the boat grounded frequently. When she stuck fast and the cordelle was taken ashore to pull her off the mud, some bare chested and shaggy boatman would shout into the cabin: "You kingsdown there! Show yourselves, and do a man's job, and help us three-spots pull off this bar!" And, according to Captain Carter the kings gladly lent their royal muscles to the task, happy to hurry the long voyage by their earnest, if unskillful, efforts.

The first appearance of the keel-boat in the Mississippi River, above the mouth of the Ohio, of which we have any account, was in 1751, when a fleet of boats, commanded by Bossu, a captain of French marines, ascended as far as Ft.Chartres.

Keel Boats.

.....

This enterprise,also,was the first to ascertain, by experience, something of the nature of the navigation of the Mississippi. One of the boats, the St.Louis, struck a sanbar above the mouth of the Ohio, was unloaded and detained about two days. "Three days after", says the Traveler,"my boat ran against a tree, of which the Mississippi is full; the shock burst the boat and it sunk in less than an hour's time." This was probably the first boat ever snagged on the Mississippi.

Indian Attacks

In the earlier period of keel-boat navigation on the Mississippi, the boats employed were liable to attack from the Indians, who employed a variety of artificies to decoy the crews into their power. Sometimes a single individual, disguised in the apparel of some unhappy white man who had fallen into their hands, appeared on the shore making signals of distress, and imitating the motions of a wounded man. The crew, supposing him to be one of their countrymen who had escaped from the Indians, would draw near the shore for the purpose of taking him on board. They would not discover the deception until, on touching the bank, a fierce band of painted warriors would rush upon them from an artfully contrived ambuscade.

At other times the savages would crawl to the water's edge wrapped in the skins of bears, and thus allured the boatmen, who were ever ready to exchange the oar for the rifle, into their power. But the red warriors were often sufficientlynumerous to attempt, by open violence, that which they found it difficult to accompolish by artifice against men so wary, and as expert in border warfare as themselves. The Indians boldly pursued the boats in their canoes, or rushed upon the boatmen, when the incidents of the perils of their navigation drove them to the shore.

.....

Arrival of Red River Traders at St.Paul

The following is an extract from the St.Paul Press of June 30,1866.

"The past two or three days an immense amount of furs and buffalo robes have been received by Pembina carts, and also by rail, from the Hudson Bay region.

"We saw yesterday at the railway depot nearly 1,000 bales of buffalo robes, making a pile as high as a house. They are being rapidly shipped below. There are ten robes in each bundle, making nearly 10,000 robes in all, worth from $10 to $12 each. These are but a portion of those on their way down, which are estimated at 15,000 or 20,000.

"In addition to the buffalo robes, there have been about 100 bundles of wolf skins and other furs received at St.Paul this season, fully up to the amount marketed here in previous years, and maintaining the rank of St.Paul as one of the largest fur markets in the world.

"About 150 Red River carts were yesterday loaded up with groceries, miscellaneous, and Hudson Bay Co's stores,preparatory to making the long trip back to their hunting grounds on the shores of ~~the~~ Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan and Red Rivers. Business,consequently, was unusually lively among the wholesale dealers and the streets were crowded with the unmistakable residents of the far Northwest, whose pecularities of feature and costume are as distinctive as if they belonged to another race."

****

Sun Rising on Lake Pepin

During warm weather, when a calm state of the atmosphere prevails in this latitude, the waters and shores of Lake Pepin present a grand and beautiful appearance. The break of day is often announced by a golden sky in the east, fringing the horizon, gradually giving way to a silver tint as the rising sun makes its appearance. Then the beauty of the land and water is enhanced by a contrast of colors, the silvery tint being given to the water, like unto a mirror of vast proportions, reflecting the sun so as to

.....

dazzle the eye in its direct rays, while the yellow bluffs and the green foliage of the forest give a grandeur and beauty to the scene as witnessed from the deck of an ascending or descending steamer,- the only perceptible motion of the air being caused by the speed of the steamer, while the lungs draw in this healthy and life-restoring influence, rendering the spirits buoyant and hopeful.

A thin gossamer mist, or fog, sometimes rises on portions of the lake, giving another variety and interest to the scene, which when dispelled by the noon-day sun, an extended and lovely view is presented of unequaled splendor.

(Upper Mississippi River Tourist's Guide)

****

Running the Mississippi River by Moonlight

This magnificent stream above Dubuque presents varied beauties of the most romantic and picturesque character. As seen by moonlight from the deck of the steamer, during the summer or autumn months, nothing can exceed the panoramic view of its banks, reflected in the water below. If to this sublime effect be added the aurora borealis or northern lights, when the sky is partially obscurred by clouds, you have the most gorgeous reflection in the waters that can be imagined - the dark somber appearance of the forest being enlivened by the silvery color of the water, reflecting the moon and all the prominent stars in its bosom.

This effect is often witnessed for hours, when, if the clouds are dispersed, a fog often arises that effectually obscures the banks and the heavens above; then the bell is sounded, and the impatient steamer is run for the nearest shore bow foremost, and made fast to a tree until such time as the fog disappears, which is usually after the sun rises on the ensuing morning.

The sun effect during the day, if clear, is equally magnificent when passing the castellated bluffs which line both shores for many miles above LaCrosse, the water below reflecting in splendor all the colors and inequalities of the

.....

elevated headlands, as well as the rich forest trees that line its banks.

The numerous low islands,also,mostly wooded,are lovely in the extreme, often presenting a labyrinth that seems exceedingly intricate to all but the practiced pilot, who from his eyrie in the wheel-house, directs the motions of the steamer as if the were a thing of life. It is utterly impossible for pen or brush to describe the varied beauties of the Upper Mississippi - nothing by a visit to its romantic valley, from one to ten miles in width, with rocky bluffs, partly clothed with green verdure, can convey any idea of its pure dark waters, green banks, and the blue sky here witnessed during most of the season of navigation.

The villages and settlements that lie nestled along its shores at intervals of some ten or twelve miles, inhabitad by an intelligent class of people, giving life to the scene, altogether stamps the noble stream as exceeding all others on the continent of America, if not in the wide world. (Tourist Guide)

****

12-27-37
Fcw

BIOGRAPHY OF Wm.F.DAVIDSON

William F.Davidson, long and favorably known in connection with the steamboat business of the Upper Mississippi River and its tributaries for a number of years resided in St.Louis and in St.Paul. He was president and active manager of the Northwestern Union Packet Company, and the Keokuk Northern Line Packet Company.

His early career in steamboating began on the Ohio River, but his life's work extended over an area of the entire Mississippi Valley, and there is hardly a man who has been connected with river interests of the valley during the last half century who has obtained more prominence, or been better known than the late Commodore Davidson.

Mr.Davidson was born at South Point,Lawrence County,Ohio, Feb.4,1825. His father, William W.Davidson, was a pioneer in that part of Ohio, and was very well known throughout the southern part of the state, eastern Kentucky and West Virginia.

William F.Davidson began his steamboat career when but a small boy by boating on the Big Sandy River, the Ohio River, the Sciota, and other tributaries of the Ohio. He accompanied his father, who did something in that line in the early days of boating along the Ohio and Sciota Rivers. When quite a young man he became interested in as part owner in the steamboat Gondola; also, the RELIEF, and later on, the U.S.AID, the JACOB TRABER, the FRANK STEEL, FAVORITE, and other boats.

He married in southern Ohio,in the winter of 1858-59, a daughter of Judge Benjamin Johnson, who survives him (1889). A son also survives him, Mr.Edward E.Davidson of St.Paul, and a daughter, Miss Sallie Davidson, who makes the home with the mother in southern Ohio.

Wm.F.Davidson.

.....

Commodore Davidson visited St.Paul and the Upper Missipsippi in 1855, and subsequently removed to St.Paul, and began steamboating on a large scale between LaCrosse and St.Paul. This business steadily increased until his line was extended from St.Paul to St.Louis, and his business became so large in the line of boating and transportation that in the spring of 1870 he found it desirable to reside in St.Louis and so removed his family to that point, making it his home until about 1882. He was also very much interested in real estate in the city of St.Paul, which he held onto with great persistence, steadily improving it and building business blocks and structures thereon, up to the time of his death which ooccurred at St.Paul May 26,1887.

During his residence in St.Louis he was converted, and thereafter became an active worker in temperance and religious reforms. Perhaps the best works he did in this line was during his presidency of the St.Louis Bethel Assn. where he was the most active business manager in its financial interests.

He was later also identified with the St.Paul Bethel Assn. and was an officer of that organization at the time of his death.

After Capt.Davidson was converted he abolished all bars and gaming devices from the steamboats which he controlled. He also did a great deal of personal work to reform the employees on the river from intemperance and immorality. He personally aided and assisted many men whom he had once employed, or in whom he had become interested while working on the river steamboats.

He led a very busy life, worked hard, and attended to all the details of his business up to a few days before his death. He took very little time for pleasure or the ordinary amusements which engross most men situated as he was financially.

Real estate and business property well locate din the heart of St.Paul comprised the bulk of his estate at the time of his death. Real estate purchased at a low price as early as 1864 and 1865 had greatly enhanced in value so that it represented a handsome fortune which was left to his heirs.

People of the community greatly missed Mr.Davidson as he was identified with so many business enterprises of St.Paul. He had inaugurated and pushed to success many undertakings during his lifetime.

Many of the business men of St.Louis, where he resided for a time, and citizens of other Mississippi Valley towns, will long remember him as a pleasant business acquaintance. An active, energetic,man of business, he was ever ready to do his share in bringing to a successful issue enterprises with which he became connected.

Like many of his associates who have passed on to the "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns," he is lying quietly at rest in Oakland Cemetery in the city of St.Paul.

.....

Problem Of Fueling

Wood burning vessels on long voyages were obliged to make frequent stops to take on fuel; and for this purpose fueling stations were set up along the river courses. These stations were nothing more than clearings near the river to which settlers could bring wood for storage and for sale. The wood used on the boats was mostly oak, and was cut in the desired length of four feet. It was placed in convenient piles on the levee so as to be quickly measured by the boat's clerk or some other of the crew assigned to that job.

There was seldom any dock or wharf at the point where fueling was necessary, and the steamer was merely run ashore. Deck hands were supposed to carry the wood aboard, but as haste was essential, passengers often helped in the job; for which they redeived a discount on their fare.

Accidents frequently occurred at fueling stations owing to the extra weight of the wood which grounded the boat so she could not back off. Sometimes the boat would break her wheel in trying to creep out to deep water. It was customary to keep the steam up during fueling, so as to have an extra power to get away; but, unfortunately, in the prevailing excitement the engineer sometimes neglected to keep his boilers full of water and they would blow up.

When the winters were severe and little employment was to be found elsewhere, many of the poorer settlers chopped wood and hauled it to the levee to sell to the boats the following spring at the opening of navigation.

If no wood was available when the supply on board became scanty, the crew would be obliged to go ashore and cut the needed fuel. This made steamboat trips slow and laborious.

Often Indians became troublesome and chased the men from the banks while they were chopping, causing them to leave their axes and make a quick retreat to the boat before any wood had been carried aboard. Indians could often be

.....

pacified by the boatmen giving them food. They could not be trusted, however, and the whites had always to be on the lookout for some trecherous work on their part

****

The River Primeval

"The Navigator," a book written by Zadok Cramer, and published by Cramer and Spear, Pittsburgh,Pa.1824, has some very interesting things to say about the, then little known, upper Mississippi River.

The muddy river water was thought to contain rare medicinal qualities especially beneficial in cases of blood or skin ailments. Numerous obstructions , or impediments as they were called, dangerous to navigation, are fully discussed and defined; also warnings to pilots and advise how to avoid these impediments.

One hundred and fourteen years ago when "The Navigator" was written, the common belief seems to have been that the Mississippi River took its rise in White Bear Lake, latitude 48 16' N., longitude 23 17' W. The latter figures are obviously in error and most likely should read 93 17' W.longitude. An historical atlas of the state of Minnesota published by A.T.Andreas in 1874 does not show a White Bear Lake in the above mentioned locality.

To show the condition of the river in the early days, with its hazards to navigators, we quote from the "Navigator". -

"This noble and celebrated stream, theis Nile of North America, commands the wonder of the old world, while it attracts the admiration of the new.

"The Mississippi is said to take its rise in the White Bear Lake lat. 48 16' N., long.23 17' W. But the natives of the country say that it loses its name at the Falls of St.Anthony, lat.45 N. and above them it assumes the name of Blue River, which is navigable 300 miles, making a distance of about 2,580 mi. from the mouth of the Mississippi, taking its meanderings.

.....

"From the warmth and muddiness of the water, it is rendered a disagreeable drink to navigators. By filling some jars with it overnight, it becomes cool and clear, and is rendered more palatable. The waters of the Mississippi are said to contain medicinal qualities, having performed cures for most cutaneous diseases, operating on some as a powerful cathartic, and as a purifier of the blood. It is upon the whole, after filtration, and being kept cool in large jars, sunk in the ground or shaded, the most agreeable water I ever drank, and I am led to believe the most wholesome. I have frequently drove off a slight stomach fever after eating, occasining a headache and a quickened pulse, by drinking two, three or four tumblers of this delightful water. And I have known those distressed, with the sudden attack of a violent intermittent fever, whose pulse was very quick, and skin dry and hot, to get relief in a few minutes after drinking freely of this water, two or three tumblers full throwing the person into a fine and free perspiration.

"The following impediments form the most imminent dangers attending the navigation of the Mississippi. These are:

"1 - The instabliity of the banks.

2 - Currents, called bayous, rushing out of the river in a state of its high waters.

3.- Planters, sawyers, and wooden islands.

"We shall endeavor to instruct the inexperienced navigator how to avoid them.

"The instability of the banks proceed from their being composed of a loose, sandy soil, and the impetuosity of the current against their prominent parts (points), which by undermining them unceasingly, causes them to tumble into the river, taking with them everything that might be above. And if, when the event happens, boats should be moored there, they must be necessarily buried in the common ruin, which has unfortunately been the case. For which reason navigators

.....

have made it an invariable rule never to land at or near a point, but always in the cove below it, which is generally lined with small willows of the weeping kind, whence some call them, though improperly,"willow points", and which generally being clear of logs and planters, the landing is easily effected by running directly into them, the resistance of the willows destroying a part of the boat's velocity, and the rest is overcome without much exertion, by holding fast to the limbs that surround you. In those places the river generally deposits the surplus of soil with which it is charged from the continual cavings of the points, and so form new land on one side by destroying some on the other.

"To avoid planters and sawyers (which will be defined later) requires nothing more than attention, for they always occasion a small breaker when they are, as if your boat seems to be hurried towards them, pull from them quickly, else if you are dilatory you must abide the consequence."

Planters are large bodies of trees firmly fixed by their roots in the bottom of the river, in a perpendicular manner, and appearing no more than a foot above the surface of the water in its middling state. So firmly are they rooted, that the largest boat running against them will not move them; but they frequently injure the boat.

Sawyers are likewise bodies of trees fixed less perpendicularly in the river but somewhat smaller. Sawyers yield to the pressure of the water current, disappearing and appearing by turns above the water, similar to the motion of a saw-mill saw, from which they have taken their name. They sometimes point upstream as well as down.

Wooden islands are places where, by some cause or other, large quantities of driftwood has through time been arrested, and matted together in different parts of the river.

.....

Wooden islands are more dangerous than real ones. The former being an obstacle lately thrown in the way of the current, and the bed of the river not having had sufficient time to form that bar or gradual ascent from the bottom of the river to the island, which divides the current at the same distance from the point of the island above water. The current will hurry you against them unless you use timely exertion. From all this it must be evident how imprudently it is attempting to go after night, even when assisted by a clear moon.

The islands of the Mississippi are numerous, and many of them large, and from their being generally situated in the bends of the river, they become more difficult and dangerous to pass.

Snags are flood washed logs and trees from the river bank precipitated into the stream. They are troublesome to the navigator and very dahgerous.

The snags which cause the destruction of so many boats, are formed of large trees which are thrown into the channel by the crumbling of the banks, or the forse of the current. The base of the stem covered with a mass of roots, rendered heavier by the earth which adheres to them, sinks to the bottom; the top of the tree floats and is thrown in the direction of the current; the roots become imbedded and firmly fixed; the smaller branches decay and drop off, and the larger limbs remain pointing down the stream. When these sunken trees are concealed beneath the surface of the water, they are very dangerous to navigation. The boats rush upon them with the momentum produced by a powerful steam engine, and when they strike seldom escape having their hull perforated and the boat sunk.

The government has taken steps to rid the river of these impediments and the results of the experiments have been entirely satisfactory. The snag-boat, constructed under the direction of the government, has been successful in removing these obstacles at a small expense and with great facility.

.....

The snag-boat used by the government is of simple construction, yet has such power that the largest tree, however firmly fixed, is removed in a few minutes. In the early days of steamboating on the Upper Mississippi River a number of these ingenious vessels were employed for several years with such success that thousands of snags were removed. As a result the most dangerous places were rendered perfectly safe, and the whole navigation made completely free from formidable evil.

In the season of 1833 chances of danger greatly diminished on the Mississippi, as 1,960 snags were taken up that year. The boat crews were employed within the same year, when the water was too high to permit their working on the river bed, in felling the overhanging trees which stood on the banks and were in danger of being undermined. Ten thousand trees were removed which would ultimately have been precipitated in the current.

The records show that during the five year period from 1822 to 1827 the loss of property on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers by snags alone, including steam and flat boats and their cargoes, amounted to $1,362,500. The losses 1827 to 1832 were reduced to $381,000 in consequence of the beneficial work of the government snag-boats; and those losses were still further reduced in the years immediately following, by the diligent prosecution of the same service.

The cause of discontinuance of this valuable service is unknown, but we know that the consequences have been most disastrous. For several years past the appropriation for snag-boats has been so small as to render that service wholly inefficient, and the snags have rapidly accumulated in all the western rivers. The increasing amount of commerce, and number of boats, have swelled the danger and the losses to an appalling extent. Insurance rates as high as 12% to 18%, and taken only on the best boats, cause the insurers to lose money.

Steamboat Racing

The absolute necessity for every steamboat on the Missippi River to maintain its character and reputation against other boats, was in early days so vital that the racing propensities of river steamers became almost proverbial.

A captain would rather wreck his boat on a snag or overtax his boilers to the bursting point, than allow a rival to out-distance him. In such an encounter, the pilot was his right-hand man.

From a vast number of speed contests on the river, we will attempt to describe briefly the race between the Adelia and the Gray Eagle in June 1857, as typical of these old time events.

Both vessels were at this time lying at the St.Paul wharf, ready to proceed down the river. The Adelia was commanded by Capt.Gillett and piloted by Mr.Nichols, while Capt.Smith Harris was the master of the Gray Eagle.

"How soon are you going out,George?" Capt.Harris called over to the pilot of the Adelia, and was answered:

"Right away captain."

The Adelia immediately swung off, and turned down stream with the Gray Eagle right behind her. Hastings, about thirty miles down the river was the first port on the route, and, upon arrival here, the Adelia was already 400 yds. ahead of her rival.

Seeing a man with a horse and buggy at the landing the boats head was turned up stream,preparatory to stopping, and Capt.Gillett called out:

"If you want to come aboard, stranger, be quick about it."

"I am going on the Gray Eagle" answered the man.

Upon which response the Adelia lost no time in regaining her course and slipping out into the stream, just ahead of the Gray Eagle. The latter boat paid no attention to the demandsof the man on the river bank, but throwing ashore the freight bound for the place, and without stopping, she

.....

hurried after the Adelia, from the deck of which boat we will continue to view the race.

At Red Wing a short stop was made for a few passengers to get aboard, but the Adelia managed to swing out into the stream just as her ardent follower appeared in sight. Reed's Landing was the next port, and here the Adelia had a half-mile start, while at Winona she was a mile and a half ahead. But after leaving this port her supply of wood became very scarce, and a stop must soon be made to replenish this indispensable factor to her progress.

So at a place of supply, ten miles below Winona, the Adelia rounded to the shore, threw her rope around a convenient tree, and sent all the available crew out to carry on board the wood piled along the river bank. When about five cords had been secured the Gray Eagle appeared from behind a turn in the river, close up to them. And now came the tug of war. The men threw down their filled or half-filled loads wherever they happened to be, and while a few ran to untie the rope, the remainder hurried aboard to get everything in readiness for an immediate start. But the line with which the boat had been tied became entangled, so that it would take a few minutes to unfasten it, seeing which the pilot called out:

"Never mind the line, boys, but get aboard."

And thereupon sent his boat into the stream, breaking the rope and losing about sixty feet of it; but he managed to get a few yards ahead of the Gray Eagle, and what more could be wished. Everyman whose services were not elsewhere needed, crowded upon the deck with the passengers, in the exhultation of their boat's success and the lively interest of the company found vent in the jesting remarks and triumphant expressions which were freely bestowed upon the gradually losing boat.

.....

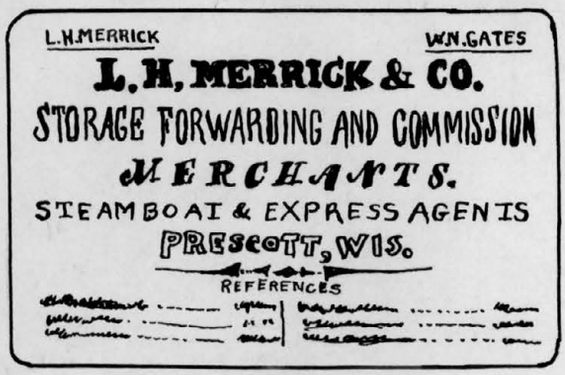
The chagrin of Capt.Harris and his company at meeting with this disappointment, after being offered so grand an opportunity to beat their competitor, somewhat cooled their ardor and lessened their enthusiasm; but the Gray Eagle still continued the chase, and, though to gain it was out of the question, she sought to lose as small a distance as possible.

In the next twenty minutes run to LaCrosse the Gray Eagle reached the landing just as the Adelia had completed her business there and was leaving, and when the pilot,Mr.Nichols, landed his boat safely at her final destination , Dubuque, the Gray Eagle was at Eagle Point, three miles above.

Thus ended the eagerly contested race of 400 miles. Both vessels had maintained a break-neck speed and curtailed their landings to the briefest time allowable. For when a steamboat captain gets the racing fever there are very few exigencies in his world of sufficient significance to pacify it. Captain Harris admitted that he would rather have bribed the pilot of the Adelia three or four hundred dollars than to have been beaten so completely, and the following season he hired Mr.Nichols to hold the wheel on board the Gray Eagle.

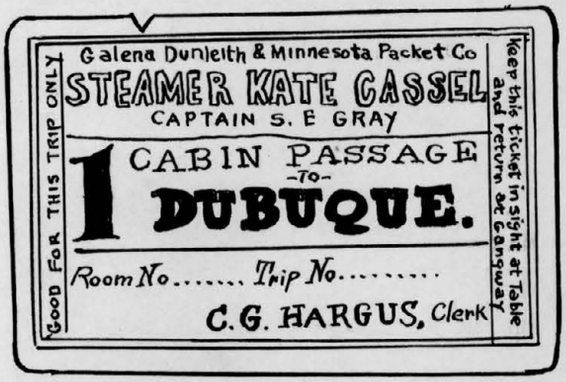
****

****



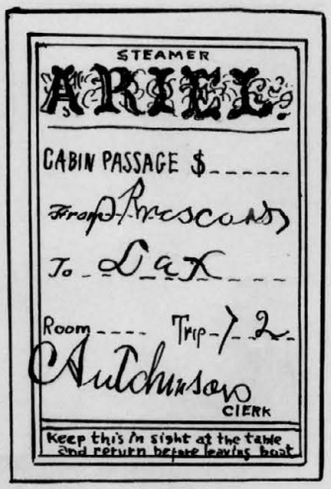
Business Card (1854)

Business card of Mississippi Freight Agents from a facsimile of the original in George B.Merrick, "Old Times on the Upper Mississ ippi," Cleveland,1909. Courtesey A.H.Clark Co.



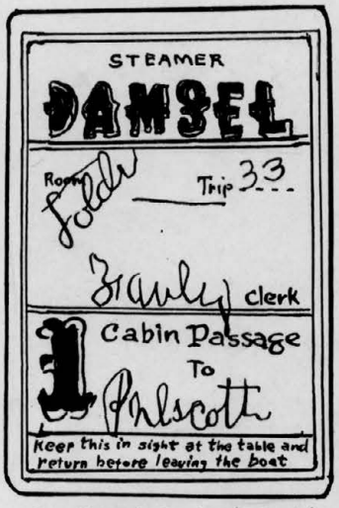
Steamboat Ticket. (1856)

Mississippi Steamboat Ticket, from a facsimile of the original in George B.Merrick,"Old Times on the Upper Mississippi," Cleveland,1909. Courtesey of A.H.Clark Co



Steamboat Ticket (1864)

Mississippi Steamboat Ticket, from Merrick,"Old Times on the Upper Mississippi. Courtesey A.H.Clark Co.



Steamboat Ticket (1864)

Mississippi Steamboat Ticket, from Merrick,"Old Times on the Upper Mississippi," Courtesey A.H.Clark Co.

Steamboats and Cargoes. Mississippi River. G.V.Jehu.

YEAR	BOAT	ARRIVAL	River Frozen.	YEAR	BOAT	ARRIVAL	River Frozen
1856	Alhambra	April 8	Nov.27	1877	Diamond Jo	April 7	Dec.8
1857	Hamburg	" 2	" 19	1878	Arkansas	March 19	" 13
1858	Brazil	March 28	Dec.2	1879	Josie	April 4	" 12
1859	Grey Eagle	" 18	" 3	1880	Ida Fulton	March 24	Nov.20
1860	Chippewa	" 13	Nov.24	1881	Josie	April 23	Jan.2,'82
1861	Northern Lt.	" 26	" 27	1882	Josephine	March 24	Dec.6
1862	Keokuk	April 2	Dec.1	1883	Libby Conger	April 11	" 17
1863	Keokuk	March 20	Nov.27	1884	Hartford	" 1	Nov.30
1864	Union	" 16	Dec.4	1885	Josie	" 10	Dec.6
1865	Lansing	" 30	" 4	1886	Libby Conger	" 7	Nov.28
1866	Addie Johnston	April 13	" 9	1887	Sidney	" 5	" 28
1867	City St.Paul	" 13	" 7	1888	City of Winona	" 12	Dec.28
1868	Diamond Jo	March 21	" 8	1889	Pittsburg	March 30	" 20
1869	Buckeye	April 6	" 18	1890	Gardie Eastman	" 31	" 8
1870	Keokuk	" 8	" 15	1891	Silver Crescent	April 12	Nov.25
1871	Addie Johnston	Mar.18	Nov. 22	1892	Lafayette Lamb	" 2	Dec.9
1872	Belle of Lax	April 9	" 22	1893	Reindeer	" 7	Nov.29
1873	Union	" 3	" 29	1894	R.J.Wheeler	" 6	" 30
1874	Northwestern	" 8	" 30	1895	Alert	" 5	Dec.4
1875	Lk.Superior	" 10	" 29	1896	R.J.Wheeler	" 13	Nov.29
1876	Dubuque	" 10	Dec.1				

(From-"Winona" by Lafayette Houghton Bunnel
Winona,Minn.1897.)

The best time made by a steamboat from St.Louis to St.Paul was made by the "Hawkeye State" in 1868. Time 2 days and 20 hours.

(Gould's History of Navigation)

12-27-37
FCW

.....

Mississippi Valley Historical Review - v.6,No.4. Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi After the Civil War , by Lester B.Shippe.U of M,1919-20

From Canoe to Steel Barge,On the Upper Mississippi,by Mildred L.Hartsough U of M Press 1934. Pub.by Upper Miss.Waterway Assn.

Miss Steamboatin! by Hubert and Edward Quick, H.Holt and Co. N.Y.

The Mississippi and Its Forty-four Navigable Tributaries,by Alex D.Anderson Wash.Gov.Printing Office,1890.

Along the Mississippi - issued by Strekfus Steamboat Line,St.Louis,Mo. Feb.1928. Illus.

Genesis of Steamboating on Western Rivers with a register of officers (1823 1870) on the Upper Miss. by,George B.Merrick and Wm.R.Tibbals. Pub.by Wis.State Hist.Society,Madison,Wis.1912. Illus.

Edwards Descriptive Gazetteer and Commercial Directory of the Miss.River From St.Cloud to New Orleans. Shipper's Guide. Edwards,Greenough and Deved, St.Louis,Louisville,Chicago,Milwaukee. 1866

Old Times On the Upper Mississippi,The Recollections of a Steamboat Pilot from 1854 to 1863 by,George Byron Merrick, Cleveland,O. Arthur H.Clark Co.1909

Summary Statement of the General Interests of Manufacturing and Trade Connected With the Upper Mississippi by Hon.David Heaton,by T.M.Griffith,Esq.and Dr.C.L.Anderson.Pub.by the Minneapolis and St.Anthony Board of Trade, Mpls.1862.

Tourist's Guide to the Upper Mississipi,by J.Disturnell.Pub.by American News Co. 121 Nassau St,N.Y.1868

The Western Pilot,by Capts.Chas.Ross and John Klinefelter, Cincinnati, O. pub.by George Conclin,1849.

The West - Its Commerce and Navigation, by Jas.Hall. H.W.Derby & Co.pub. Cincinnati,1848.

Steamboats on the Upper Mississippi,(The Waterway to Iowa) by Wm.J.Petersen pub.at Iowa City,Iowa.by State Hist.Society of Iowa. 1937.

LaCrosse County Historical Sketches (Wisc.). Reprint LaCrosse Tribune and Leader Press, LaCrosse,Wis. Lisenfeld Press. 1931

Early Steamboats and Packet Lines (on the Upper Miss.) by Ruth Bristow

Statistics of the West, at Close of Year 1836 by Jas.Hall. J.A.James & Co. Cincinnati,O. 1836.

The Pageant of the Packets,by Garnett Laidlaw Eskew. Henry Holt & Co. pub. N.Y.

Paddle Wheels and Pistols, by Irvin Anthony. Macrae Smith & Co.pub. Philadelphia,Pa.1929.(by author of "Down to the Sea in Ships").

Early Transportation of the Upper Mississippi,by Chas.Jagow.(LaCrosseCo Historical Society Sketches series 1931)

History of St.Paul,by C.C.Andrews. D.Mason Co.pub.,Syracuse,N.Y. 1890

A Record of Old Boats,by Randolph Edgar. Ward C.Burton, Minneapolis.1926.

Wabasha County Herald - June 12-26,1924. July 10,1924.

The Virginia,by Wm.J.Petersen. U of Iowa, Iowa City,Ia. Minn.Hist.v.9,p.347

The Romance of Miss.River Steamboat Days - Southern Minnesotian,Oct.1932.

A Lost Chapter in the History of the Steamboat,by J.H.B.Latrobe,Baltimore, Md.March 1871

The First Steamboat Voyage on the Western Waters,by J.H.B.Latrobe,Balt.Md. Maryland Hist.Society,Fund Publication Nos.1-8.

The Lead Traffic on the Upper Mississippi,by Wm.J.Petersen,in "Miss.Valley Historical Review 1823-48

Captains and Cargoes of Early Upper Mississippi Steamboats,by Wm.J.Petersen in Wisconsin Magazine of History,v.13,1929-30.

The Upper Mississippi - Harper's New Monthly Magazine,March 1858. v.14,No.94

Lloyd's Steamboat Directory and Disasters on the Western Waters, by - Jas.T.Lloyd. Pub.Jas.T.Lloyd & Co.,Cincinnati,O. 1850

The Navigator,by Zadok Cramer. 12th Edition.Printed and Published by Cramer & Spear,Pittsburgh,Pa. 1824

River Guide,by James,U.P. Illus. U.P.James,pub:167 Walnut St. Cin.O.1860.

Sixty Years on the Upper Mississippi - My Life and Experiences, by - S.W.McMaster, Rock Island,Ill.1893.

Old Father Waters,by A.M.Fleming. Meader Pub.Co.,Boston.1936

Recollections of a Steamboat Pilot,by George C.Nichols. Tucker & Co. printers,LaCrosse,Wis.1883.

A Rafting on the Mississippi,by Chas Edward Russel. The Century Co. New York and London.1928.

Gould's History of River Navigation,by E.W.Gould. Nixon,Jones Ptg.Co St.Louis,Mo.1889

Winona and its Environs on the Mississippi in Ancient and Modern Days by Lafayette Houghton Bunnell.M.D. Jones & Kroeger pub.Winona,Minn. 1897.(written for and under the auspices of Winona County Old Settler's Assn.)

1-3-38
Jaw

B

STEAMBOATS and CARGOES. Rec'd 8.7. G.V.Jehu

Raft Boats.

Rafts of Lumber

Rafts of lumber were made as follows: The boards were 16 ft. long and one inch thick. They were arranged side by side, one layer one way and the next criss-crossed on this until twenty-four courses had made an even -edged pile 32 ft. long and 16 ft. wide. This pile was called a "crib" and was the unit of the raft. The crib was framed in with pieces of 2 by 8 in.which contained holes through which stakes or "grub pins" were thrust to keep the frame together. The pins projected above the cribs.

The crib was built on a movable platform that, when tilted, would allow the crib to slide down into the water. To make a raft it was only necessary to fasten the cribs together with pieces of plank bored with holes to fit the grub pins. The plank was fastened fore and aft and also crosswise. A crib for the Chippewa River usually consisted of 24 cribs, and for the Mississippi from 120 to 160 cribs.

Rafts for running the St.Croix River were made of ten cribs in length and three in width. Each string of cribs had at each end a great oar.

To navigate rafts through lakes,such as Lake St.Croix, was a problem that required considerable skill on the part of the raftsmen. The lakes had very little current, if any at all, and sails were often used to help the progress of the raft. The wind was useful if it blew downstream, but it seemed to have a habit of blowing in the opposite direction whenever a raft came along.

Oars were tried; also poling. Neither of these methods,however, were successful. If the water was shallow, which was seldom the case in the lakes, poling could be used to advantage.

Rafts.

.....

Finally a process was hit upon whereby an anchor was carried, in a small boat or skiff with a line about one-half mile long, out ahead of the raft to a place where river or lake bottom could be reached. The anchor was dropped and then all hands pulled on the line until the raft was drawn up to the anchor. Then the skiff would be launched again and the process repeated. Sometimes the anchor would stick fast in the mud and all hands were put to work getting it up. It was impossible to release the anchor at times and the only hope was to have a steamer come along and break the line.

Until the middle sixties all rafts were floated down by the current and kept in the channel and clear of sand bars, islands, bridge piers and other dangers by a crew of strong, lusty men who used large oars, or sweeps on the bow and stern. There was an oar placed at each end of every string of cribs, so that a raft of ten strings had a bow crew of the ten best men, and the other ten pulled on the stern. The pilot had charge of these men while on duty and also hired them and paid them off.

The mess cabin, where the cooking was done, was a wood shanty built on the raft. Little improvised houses were provided for the men to sleep in. On long trips, such as from Stillwater or Redd's Landing to St.Louis they would fix up comfortable bunks of lumber . There was a good floor to commence on and lumber was always plentiful.

On log rafts the men usually depended on flimsy tents which were provided by the pilot. The conveniences of life were meager, but the work was healthful as the long span of life of a riverman proved. Work in the open air gave them good appetites and excellent digestion. They had plenty of good, wholesome food and strong coffee. The coffee was drunk without milk or cream, and no ice was used by the crew even in the hottest weather.

Rafts.

.....

Many rafts were put together in the famous Beef Slough. This bayou was situated just below where the Chippewa River enters the Mississippi. It was thirteen miles long and just wide enough to have only a sluggish current, which made it an ideal place for raft making purposes.

Each log was branded with its owner's mark cut near one end with an ax. Logs came into the slough and were assorted into booms according to the marks they bore. The men who did the sorting were experts in this work who did their task with marvelous celerity and seldom made mistakes. It took a keen eye to detect the markings as the logs swept along.

The smaller rafts coming from the Chippewa and St.Croix Rivers were made into larger ones to run the Mississippi. The ultimate market for this lumber was usually St.Louis,Mo.

No one had yet devised a satisfactory plan to moor a raft, or, in river language, "check it". They tied one end of a rope to the raft and took the line ashore, wrapping the other end several times around a tree. When the line went taut it frequently pulled the tree out by the roots. Often the line broke, and the end flying through the air, became a dangerous missle. The most able pilots had difficulty in maneuvering a raft through the twisted channels in broad daylight, so running at night was beyond the daring of the most efficient.

One night a raft was obliged to tie up near what is now the city of Red Wing. A tribe of Indians was camped nearby, giving the raftsmen plenty to worry about. All night the Indians swarmed over the raft, made threats by brandishing weapons, demanded whiskey and food, and searched for something to steal or kill. The raftsmen were much relieved when day began to break and they made ready to leave their dangerous visitors.

Rafts.

.....

Speed of river rafts was from three and one-half to four miles an hour. Some days the rafts traveled a distance of forty miles. Bridge piers were never built far enough apart and an ordinary raft could not squeeze through them in one piece. This required "splitting" the raft and resulted in many disasters which proved dangerous and expensive. Difficulties of managing so great a mass of sluggish weight developed a class of men of extra-ordinary skill, and often of character as unusual.

Hanks Devised a Better Way to Check

A popular raftsman by the name of Stephen Beck Hanks devised a better and safer way to moor or check a raft. He built a large cleat on the raft, with projecting arms to pass a line around. The men took ashore only the end of the line and managed the checking on board. They took a turn around the cleat and then around the arms, and when the line went taut slackened it and eased it until headway was stopped, without breaking anything. This device was installed on all rafts. It saved no end of trouble, and perhaps some lives.

The labor of getting rafts through the perilous Lake Pepin was great and the longer one stayed in the lake the greater the chances of disaster there. Hanks also devised a remedy for this. The raftsmen built platforms over the cracks where the cribs joined. Horses were taken on board, and when they had sent the anchor ahead in the skiff, the horses tailed to the line and walked the whole length of the raft, pulling it along at a fair rate of speed. This method, however, was attended with a new difficulty. In cold weather the line, wet with icy water, was extremely hard to handle. Hanks devised a simple thing - a board with a notch cut deeply into it by which the line could be picked up and dragged in without the men touching it.

Rafts.

.....

When winter set in and the river and lakes froze over, the rafts were tied up in some slough,or wherever they happened to be at the time, to wait for the spring opening. When navigation resumed, the rafts proceeded on their journey.

The winter of 1843 had been unusually severe, with a heavy snow fall and ice on the rivers and lakes over three feet thick. It was a late spring and the middle of May had arrived before enough ice went out to make log driving possible. Logs were finally started down one of the small rivers in the St.Croix district, when orders were given to "hold everything". A flood had come to the St.Croix river towards which thousands of logs were heading.

The order came too late, for the drive had started in earnest. The flood proved to be one of the worst ever experienced in that region. The logs were caught in it and swept along like straws! The destination of most of these logs was a mill above what is now Stillwater. The mill and all the area around were flooded. An attempt was made to catch some of the logs as they went shooting past, but to no avail! The whole vast drive of three million feet of logs went by and tossed helter skelter down the river! Some were thrown upon the banks and stuck there, a few were caught, and some went into a boom that belonged to another firm.

The problem now was - what to do with this valuable lot of timber? To attempt to get it back up the river to the mill was out of the question. To let it lie and rot would certainly not meet with the approval of the owners. In this dilemma someone suggested sending it down the river to St.Louis to be sawed there. Such a thing had never been done before, but no good reason appeared why it should not be, if the scattered logs could be fastened together something like a raft.

Rafts.

.....

The reliable Stephen B.Hanks was put on the job to see what could be done to save the day. Using his skill and experience, he put together the first log raft that floated down the Upper Mississippi. He first collected the wandering logs into strings, then he fastened them together with birch bows and burr-oak staples. Next he put the strings of logs into a raft. Bitter experience had taught him how easily a raft, even a lumber raft, could go to smash if not properly put together. He used the greatest precaution, and backed by many years of valuable experience on the river, succeeded. Part of his plan was to make his log raft as stiff and as substantial as possible. In order to stabilize the whole mass he ran long lines zig zag from side to side,and then from corner to corner. He hauled all these lines taut with a windlass making the raft secure.

Out of the debris of the drive six rafts were salvaged, each six strings wide and about six hundred feet long. Hanks was delighted to learn that he was to pilot one of these rafts.

Lake Pepin arose to mar his happy thoughts! Horses could not be used on a log raft, and to haul these huge masses through with anchor and line would be next to the impossible. Hanks negotiated with a steamboat and for a stipulated price, she pulled all the rafts through the lake. This was the first instance on the Mississippi of raft-towing by a steamboat.

He forgot to enter the name of the steamer engaged for this memorable event, an unusual oversight for him, but remarked afterwards that he thought it was the "Otter". In this he seemed to have been wrong, for historically the first steamboat to haul a raft through Lake St.Croix was an aged relic called the "War Eagle", the first of many of that name. The point is important, for the event had momentous consequences.

Rafts.

.....

A brief description of the method of "splitting" rafts into two parts to pass bridge piers follows:

At a number of points in the river, such as rapids and at railroad bridges, the channel was too narrow or two dangerous to allow the whole raft to go through. It must be remembered that these rafts were sometimes one hundred feet wide and several hundred feet long. They were hard to maneuver around a corner, or to keep off rocks and sandbars. At such places one half of the raft was taken through at a time, and then joined again below the difficult stretch. All the pilot's skill and all the crew's strength was needed in such an emergency. Often, in spite of the combined efforts of both crew and pilot, a sudden storm or high water would bring disaster and the raft would split up; the logs scattering along the shore or on an island, or floating along down the river. It took days of hard work to bring them together again after an accident of this kind happened.

The raft finally reached its destination and was broken up. The pilot and crew then returned up river on a steamboat. On the trip back they were able to obtain a much needed rest after many weary days of labor.

Largest Rafts

It is said the largest raft brought down the river during the fifty years from 1865, when rivermen first began using steamboats for towing rafts, until the steamer "Ottumwa Belle" ran the last raft in 1915, was taken from Stillwater on Lake St.Croix to St.Louis by Captain Winans with the steamer "Saturn".

The raft was sixteen strings wide and forty-four cribs long, rafted twenty-six courses deep. It was 270 ft.wide and 1,450 ft.long, and with the top load contained approximately nine million feet of lumber. Most of the lumber was consigned to a firm in Lyons, Iowa, and nearly every crib

Rafts.

....

of this consignment carried from 3,000 to 5,000 ft of stock boards, piled on top as deck loading. It is safe to say, therefore, that this raft contained more than nine million feet of lumber. It would have required about 900 freight cars to transport a like amount of lumber. The raft occupied more than six acres of space, and must have made something like two hundred crossings during the trip; without mentioning bars, tow-heads and bridges that it must negotiate.

Commodore Winans, who performed this remarkable feat in river history, kept a record of 975 million feet of lumber that he transported in the form of rafts. His record does not date back to the exact beginning of his career as pilot, so it is safe to say that one man steered down the Mississippi river more than a billion feet of lumber.

The "Saturn" was a good, strong boat; with engine 16 in. by 5 ft., and Capt'n.Winans had a good bow-boat on the head. This trip was made in 1901.

The largest log raft was brought from Lynxville to Rock Island in 1896 by Captain O.E.McGinley with the steamer "F.C.A.Dankmann", and using the "H.C.Brockman" as her bow boat. The raft was 270 ft.wide and 1,550 ft. long, containing about two and one-quarter ($2\frac{1}{4}$) million feet.

Some double-decked log rafts were brought from Stillwater in the 90's. The double-deckers did fairly well in good river when they placed only small logs on top, crosswise; but when they were careless and put large logs on top, loaded unevenly, these rafts soon encountered trouble in shallow water. Doubled deckers were never very popular with the river pilots who had to steer them or the crews who had to work on them.

Rafts.

.....

The profitable industry of lumbering and rafting on the Mississippi river lasted for a period of approximately seventy years. The crest came about 1892, and then the whole thing began to dry up and blow away faster than it had come. The lumbermen, and the community at large, awoke to the fact that the supply of white pine that Providence had so wisely bestowed upon us was not inehaustible but almost extinguished. One by one the saw mills were abandoned and men thrown out of work. The rafts grew fewer and fewer, and were made up of smaller logs, showing that the largest and most valuable timber was a thing of the past. The rafting steamers were sold into the lower river or the Ohio trade or were broken up for other purposes. Sidewalks were made from the wood used in the decks and sides of the steamers.

The last scene of all in this panorama of history was not without a touch of sentiment. The final raft on the Mississippi started on its journey August 1915. It was of lumber, as the first had been; of lumber gathered from remnants left at mills that had passed into history. It was towed by the steamer "Ottumwa" Belle," last of her kind. As they neared Albany,Ill., the captain remembered that there was living in that town a man ~~that~~ who had a peculiar and uneaqualed interest in this so called funeral procession,- a man ~~that~~ who had played a notable part in the raft history of the river, and borne great honors in its navigation.

He sent a yawl ashore and invited this man to come and ride on the final raft of the Mississippi. The man came. He stood in the pilot house of the "Ottumwa Belle" and held the wheel. He glanced out at the scenes that had been so familiar to him in days gone by. With his pilot's eye he noticed where the channel had changed; and foretold with the pilot's sixth sense where it would make other changes in the future. He rode as far as

Rafts.

.....

Davenport and saw the bridge swing for the last time on a raft boat. He landed and had a reception given in his honor from old rivermen and citizens. After it was all over he was escorted back to Albany.

He had had the distinction of riding on the first lumber rafts that descended the Mississippi, and he had piloted the first log raft. He had seen the beginning, the culmination, and the end; the whole thing had passed in one man's lifetime. He died on Oct.7,1917, two days before he would have been ninety-six years old. His name was Stephen B.Hanks.

(Can you find this name?)

In the early days of rafting on the Mississippi 300 feet was considered a raft of good bulk. Below are some of the records of later days to afford comparison:

The "F.C.A.Denckmann", a raft boat in the Weyerhaeuser and Denckmann interests, brought from West Newton to Rock Island a raft 1,625 ft. long and 275 ft.wide. Capt'n.Otis McGinley was in command. The bow of his raft was about one-third of a mile away from the pilot house. The handling of such a large body of logs around the bends and over the crossings of the river in daylight and in dark, is,a triumph in river navigation.

A few statistics at this time should not be amiss:

The first lumber run from St.Croix lake was from the little town of Marine Mills in 1839. The first logs from Stillwater to St.Louis were run by Stephen B.Hanks in 1843. The last - a lumber raft in August 1915 to Ft.Madison,Ia.by the"Ottumwa Belle", W.L.Hunter,pilot.

The Mississippi Logging Company began operations on the Chippewa River, and took over the work begun by the Beef Slough Boom Co. in 1871. This company increased the output steadily, reaching its maximum about

Rafts.

.....

1892, when over 600,000,000 feet passed through its boom in a season.

In 1889-90 the works were moved to West Newton, from which three to six hundred million feet were turned out annually, until 1909, when the exhaustion of the timber caused a final shut down.

The first lumber rafted down the Chippewa River was in 1831, and from a small beginning the industry developed rapidly.

The following large companies engaged in sawing pine lumber and sending it down the Mississippi and Chippewa rivers:

The Badger State Lumber Co.
The Eau Claire " "
The Daniel Shaw " "
The Lafayette " "
The Northwestern " "
The Union " "
The Valley " "
The Dells " "
The Sherman " "

Also Ingram,Kennedy and Co; the great Knapp,Stout Co. which cut two billion feet of lumber in six years, and the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company which cut 325,000 feet a day, with 75,000 lath on the side.

There was plenty of work bringing this large amount of lumber down to Read's Landing, where small rafts were made up into large Mississippi rafts for down river.

Captain John E.Smith invented the bow boat. This was usually a smaller boat attached to the front of the raft and used to help in keeping it in its course. It moved from right to left from a signal given by the raft boat, and aided greatly in getting the raft around bends in the river and passed the bridge piers.

Logging out of the Wisconsin River ended about 1876; Black River 1897; Chippewa River 1905; St.Croix 1914; and the St.Paul Boom 1916.

Steamboat Disasters.

Will you please come in and see me Thursday? G.V.

Steamboat disasters on the Upper Mississippi river were less numerous than those on the lower river, south of St.Louis. Many craft ended their days of usefulness by dying of old age, in which case they were consigned to the scrap heap.

It is with difficulty that historians are able to determine just which boat bearing the name was the victim of that particular casualty. The fact is that the same name was conferred, time after time, on boats built to take the place of those sunk, burned, or otherwise put out of commission.

For instance there was a boat named "Pike No.8" operating on the river as early as 1840. The number indicated that there had been several of that name. There was also at the same time, the"Ben Franklin No.7". Boats thus named were called simply "Pike" or "Ben Franklin", the numbers not appearing on the pilot houses, except in rare cases. All the other "Pikes" having gone to the bottom, there was but one "Pike" afloat. When reference was made to the boat of that name, the auditors knew at once that the speaker referred to the boat than in commission.

But should you wish to refer to the time when the "Pike" or the "Ben Franklin", for example, was snagged, or burned, or blew up, in order to be fully understood you must designate the particular "Pike", and add such other details as would leave no room for doubt as to which particular boat you spoke about.

Steamboat owners had no superstitious objections to thus naming a successor to the unfortunate boat that had gone before. Neither did captains object or refuse to command such vessels.

Steamboat Disasters.

.....

Names Of Boats

When a boat settled comfortably in the mud at the bottom of the river, her owner lost no time in notifying the shipyard to commence the construction of another. In less than a week the keel was laid for a successor. The new boat was usually named for its predecessor until the fashion came into vogue of naming boats after persons, instead of impersonal objects.

There did not seem to be enough names to go around, and thus it came about that the "Warriors", "Post Boys", "Telegraphs", and "War Eagles" were worked overtime, to the great confusion of anyone attempting to localize a disaster that had happened to one of that name in the past.

People read today of the total loss of the "War Eagle", for instance; yet a month or so from now you might hear of the arrival of the "War Eagle" at St.Paul, or some other port, with a full cargo of freight and passengers. The boats might go to the bottom, but the names went on forever!

Seven or eight "Post Boys", which was a favorite name at the time, had been launched, run their appointed courses, and met their fate. This all happened within a period of forty years or less, - an average of five years per boat, which was considered a good average for old-time steamers.

On the upper river there were among others, three "Burlingtons", two "Chippewas", two "Danubes", two "Denmarks", two "Dr.Franklins", three "Dubuques", two "Galenas", three "St.Pauls", three "War Eagles", and many other doublets and triplets.

Explosions

Boiler explosions were spectacular and the consequent loss of life was often considerable. When a disaster of this kind took place the boat immediately became helpless and could not be run ashore in time

Steamboat Disasters.

.....

to save passengers and crew, as was possible when she struck a snag or other obstruction in the river.

Explosions invariably start a fire on the boat and there is little chance for escape. It is next to impossible to reach the life-boats carried on the roof; and if reached it is seldom found possible to launch them.

Of a list of three hundred and sixty (360) boat disasters on western waters from 1823 to 1863, seventy-three losses were between St.Louis and St.Paul. An analysis of the causes of such losses shows that thirty-two boats were snagged or sunk; sixteen were burned; ten were sunk by ice; five stove in by hitting rocks, and sank; three struck bridges; three sunk by Confederate batteries during the war between the states; one struck a wreck of another boat and sank on top of the first wreck.

It will be observed that nearly one-half of the losses on the upper river between the years 1823 and 1863 were the direct result of snagging. The danger of hitting snags was imminent at all times and many vessels came to grief through this cause, notwithstanding the alertness of the skillful pilots at the helm.

The Mississippi from Keokuk to St.Paul is lined with rock bluffs, thus moderating the wear and tear of its banks. A number of heavily wooded islands, however, furnish many sunken trees which become dangerous obstacles to navigation.

Fire Next to snags, fire is the greatest enemy of steamboat owners.

Millions of dollars worth of river transportation property ~~has~~ have been destroyed by this cause alone. The reasons for a sudden conflagration on a steamer are obvious. Built of light combustible pine, soaked with pil paint,

Steamboat Disasters.

.....

the upper parts are like tinder when once ignited; and danger of this is even present in a hundred different forms.

A minature explosion in the furnaces, throwing live coals over the deck; over-heated smokestacks starting a blaze on the roof; carless passengers or crew throwing half-burned matches on deck or into inflamable freight; or the mass of live cinders and sparks continuously falling from the stacks, ~~especially when burning wood. All these~~ are a constant menace, and with a blaze once started the chances are a hundred to one that the boat is lost. A flame flashes up in an instant, and the draft generated by the forward movement of the boat carries it the full length of the cabin. In a few minutes the upper works are gone. Sixteen Mississippi boats out of seventy were burned. The Great Fire at St.Louis in May 1849 caused a great destruction of steamboat property. This great fire was the most disasterous of all calamities to occur in the history of navigation in the West.

Ice The upper river season was short at best. Before the railroads came into St.Paul, the boats ~~endeavored~~ tried to get as early a start in the spring as possible so as to show large financial returns for the season.

Lake Pepin Great chances were taken in the 50's in trying to get through Lake Pepin before it was clear of ice. The river above and below was usually clear of ice two weeks before the large floating cakes were out of the lake sufficently to enable a boat to force its way through.

In the early spring boats were constantly butting the ice at either end of the lake, trying to get up or down; or were periously coasting along the shore, where the ice had decayed and was more broken up than in the

Steamboat Disasters.

.....

center of the lake, on account of the in-flow and the shallowness of the water.

A change of wind or a sudden freshening, catching a boat thus coasting along the shore, would cast her onto the rocks or sand and crush her hull as though it was an egg shell.

The "Falls City" was thus caught and smashed. The "Fire Canoe" following for a mile or more in the wake of the "Fanny Harris" was crushed flat, in the middle of the lake, a short distance below Wacouta,Minn. The rising wind had shut the ice in the track made by the latter boat. The ice moved so slowly as to be almost imperceptible, ~~but it was as irresistible as fate~~, ~~and~~ but it crushed the timbers of the "Fire Canoe" as though they were one-inch boards instead of five-inch planks. According to those who heard it, the noise of the impact was audible two miles away. The upper works were left on the ice, and latter the crew and passengers were taken off by the "Fanny Harris". When the wind shifted and blew the other way, the cabin was turned over and ground to splinters amid the moving cakes of ice.

In 1857 the "Galena" was the first boat through the lake (Apr.30). There were twelve other boats in sight at one time, all butting the ice in an attempt to force a passage and be the first to reach the port of St.Paul.

Not only in Lake Pepin, in the spring, was danger present; but in autumn also at the close of navigation. At this time of the year young "anchor ice" formed and drifted with the current, before it had become attached to the banks, and formed the winter bridge over the river. This was a most insidious danger

Steamboat Disasters.

.....

The new ice, just forming under the stress of zero weather, cut like a knife; and while the boat might feel no jar from contact with ice fields and solitary floating cakes, all the time the ice was eating its way through the firm oak planking, and soon the bow of the boat would be ground down so thin that an extra heavy ice floe, striking fairly on the worn planking, would stave the whole bow in, and the boat would go to the bottom in spite of all attempts to stop the leak. This was the fate of the "Fanny Harris". She was cut down by floating ice and sank in twenty feet of water opposite Point Douglas, being a total loss. Often,as a precaution, boats were strengthened by spiking on an extra armor sheathing of four-inch oak plank at the bow, and extending back twenty or thirty feet.

Strange as it may seem, the greatest damage from ice was not experienced at the far north of the upper river, but at the southern extremity of the run; although many other boats were lost on the upper reaches, at wide intervals of time and place.

St.Louis was a veritable killing place for steamboats, from the ice movements. The reason for this was that so many boats wintered there. When a large break-up did occur it had a large number of boats to work upon. The season of cold weather, while long and severe on the upper river, was distinctly marked as to duration. There was no thawing and freezing over again. When the river closed in November it stayed closed until March or April. Then when the ice went out there was no further danger to be feared. Boats did not usually leave their snug harbors until the ice had run out; and when they did start, they had only Lake Pepin to battle with.

Steamboat Disasters.

Early Pilots on Raft Boats.

.....

At St.Louis, on the contrary, the most disasterous break-ups came unseasonably and unexpectedly, with the result that the great fleet of boats wintering there were caught unprepared to meet such an emergency and many were lost. Two such disasterous ice movements occurred at St.Louis. The first in 1856, and the other in 1876.

****

Early Pilots On Raft Boats

Lumbering operations had already begun on the Black, Chippewa, and St.Croix rivers prior to 1836; and pilots were in great demand to handle the boats and timber rafts down the rivers. Sometimes the pilots worked for a lumber company by the month or season; sometimes they were on their own, running the raft on contract at so much per thousand feet; and sometimes they even owned part of the lumber themselves.

Among the first pilots of whom there is any record, were De Marah and one Louis Moro (or Morrow), evidently a corruption of the name Moreau.

Evidence points to the fact that Moreau was a protege of De Marah, and was probably taught the science of piloting by the elder man, as the two names are nearly always spoken of in connection. They were most likely partners, so far as that was possible in the days when steamboats took but one pilot, running only by day, and lying at the bank during the night. Captain Russel Blakeley, who began life on the river in the early 40's, speaks of these men as the first who engaged in steamboat piloting as a business.

Early Pilots on Raft Boats.

.....

It is possible that Louis Moreau, the noted courier du bois, an an adventurous trader who befriended Father Marquette, as he lay sick and slowly dying in his hut on the portage between the Chicago river and the Des Plaines, one hundred and fifty years earlier, as recorded in Parkman's "LaSalle and the Discovery of the Great West".

Another early pilot, perhaps one of the earliest, was a man by the name of Pleasant Cormack. He also was a Frenchman with possibly a little Indian blood in his veins. The records describe Cormack as an intelligent, trustworthy pilot. He held the wheel of many of the largest and finest of upper river boats during the prosperous days between 1850 and 1862.

Joe Guardapie was a raftsman on the Mississippi and St.Croix rivers. He was a man who filled the bill completely, and anyone having seen and known him, the type was fully identified. Rewrite

In stature he was a well built man 5 ft.10 in. in height and weighed between 165 and 170 pounds. His color showed more of the traits of his Chippewa mother than of his French father. As quick and agile as a panther, and as strong in nerve and sinew, he could whip any member of the crew single handed; and if necessary could put to route a dozen of them. Had not this been true he could not have run a raft to St.Louis; in fact had it been otherwise many doubt if he could have started a raft from the landing at Prescott.

Guardapie had the habit of loafing in the pilot house most of the time on the "up trip", as was the custom of the pilots dead-heading back. He occasionally took a trick at the wheel to relieve the regular pilots. His tastes and education were for rafting and he seldom, if ever, took other work.

Another old time raftsman was Sandy McPhail. He piloted log and

Early Pilots on Raft Boats.

.....

lumber rafts from the Chippewa river to Prairie du Chien, and further down, in the days when Jeff Davis as a lieutenant in the regular army, was a member of the garrison at Fort Crawford. His hair and beard were bright red in color and everyone on the river called him "Sandy". He was a very good pilot and had a remarkable understanding of how to handle men,- the two assets which made him a model raftsman. He stuck to rafting exclusively and cared for no other kind of work.

Charles La Pointe ran rafts from the Chippewa to lower river points prior to 1845. He also was of the typical French half-breed voyageur pioneers of the West. He left a record as a competent navigator of rafts on the river when it was almost unknown and entirely undeveloped.

There were many others, too numerous to mention, employed om both raft and packet boats in later years, but the above list comprises the most notable rafting pilots of early days.

At a later date when the packet boats flourished on the upper Mississippi, the names of many pilots sprang into prominence. These are mentioned elsewhere. The pilot was looked up to and respected by passengers and crew alike. They commanded salaries ranging up to $500 per month, and several of them held investments in lumbering and rafting concerns. The passing of these colorful characters took place soon after the railroads spread their network over the Upper Mississippi region; and after the timber supply dwindled from the adjacent forests. The business was a healthful one, and many a pilot lived to a ripe old age.

Origin of "Texas" and "Staterooms".

The name "Texas" was applied to the small cabins found on most passenger boats on the Mississippi River and tributaries, upon which the pilot house is superimposed. The boat's offices are usually quartered in these cabins.

This title is said to have originated about the year 1845, when a loyal citizen of the republic conceived the idea of giving the staterooms in the new steamboat he was building the names of the several states instead of the convential numbers.

His boat had twenty-eight staterooms in the cabin, to which he applied the names of the states in the order in which they were admitted to the Union. When he finished he found that the name of the latest commonwealth - Texas - was left over, and this name he promptly applied to the officer's cabin on the roof.

Captain Killeen supplies (in a letter dated Dec.17,1915) a different explanation of the origin of the name. His letter states that in early days the meat supply for New Orleans and other southern cities was driven to Louisana and Mississippi by Texas cowboys. They usually left New Orleans under the influence of liquor and made so much trouble that one of the boat owners built a shanty on top of his boat and stipulated with the Texans who wished to secure passage with him that they must occupy the quarters thus provided, where their quarrels could be fought out without disturbing the other passengers or the crew. "This occurred", concludes Captain Killeen,"before my day on the river." "If I had had the naming of it I would probably have called it Pittsburgh, as the Pittsburgh coal boat men were the wildest lot that I have ever seen on a steamboat anywhere."

Steamboats above St.Anthony.

.....

In 1861 the broad waters of the Mississippi provided the highway which linked St.Cloud,Minn. with the outside world. Steamers ascending the river from St.Anthony carried freight and passengers, and in addition the mails and whatever other communication the city was to have with the rest of the country.

Peltries transported overland by ox cart from Pembina and other Northwest fur-trading posts were loaded onto the boats at St.Cloud to be shipped to Prairie du Chien, or St.Louis, via St.Paul. Most of these peltries were the property of the Hudson Bay Company which had extensive interests in the fur business of the Northwest and in Canada.

The first railroad train reached St.Cloud in 1866 and from that time on steamboat trade became less and less until it was altogether abandoned. The trains, even though they took five hours to make the run to St.Paul, were far swifter than the steamers which usually took a full day to make the voyage, even downstream.

Vieing with the steamers in the early days were the stage coaches which traveled over uncertain highways at uncertain times.

Interesting items pertaining to St.Cloud's history as a transportation point and taken from the files of the St.Cloud Daily Times and Journal Press follows:

Feb.27,1862 - "Captain Davidson of St.Anthony is building a boat to run the coming season on the river between that place and St.Cloud. This is in addition to the 'Enterprise' and the 'St.Cloud', and will make three boats for this trade.

Steamboats Above St.Anthony.

.....

April 24,1862 - "The first boat of the season to arrive was the 'Enterprise', which landed at the upper levee. A.R.Young, the oldest captain on this part of the river in command. It took back 3,000 bu. of wheat."

May 8,1862 - "The new boat, the 'Cutter', made her first appearance at our levee. She is a much finer looking and better boat than the 'Enterprise'."

May 15,1862 - "The little steamboat the 'St.Cloud' came up on her first trip. She is a side-wheeler and of small dimensions, and is therefore expected to make regular trips when the water is too low for the larger boats to run."

April 14,1864 - "The steamer 'Enterprise' is to be moved below St.Anthony Falls. The building of the railroad to St.Cloud has killed steamboating above the Falls".

May 18,1871 - "A steamboat called the 'Betsy Jane' has been put on the Sauk Lake, and is making regular trips between Sauk Center and Little Sauk."

****

George Byron Merrick

- -

George Byron Merrick was born in Niles,Mich. Sept.21,1841. When he was thirteen years of age his folks, who were farmers, removed to Prescott,Wisc., where his father obtained employment with the Minnesota Packet Company. Thus young Merrick became interested in steamboat matters.

For about a year George Merrick worked in the office of the Northwestern Democrat, a paper published by D.M.Lusk and William J.Whipple. Tiring of the hum-drum office work and always longing for the river and everything pertaining thereto, he shipped as a cabin boy with Sam S.Fifield on the steamer "Kate Cassell" in the spring of 1856.

The following season young Merrick went on the "Fanny Harris" as "cub" engineer; and later took a position of second clerk under C.G.Hargus of Dubuque,Iowa. He enjoyed his work and was well liked by the captains,pilots and other river men.

His life's ambition was realized when he was given a position of pilot on the St.Croix river; and from 1859 to 1862 he was either pilot or clerk on the Mississippi steamers - "H.S.Allen" "Kate Cassell" "Enterprise" and "Fanny Harris".

When winter came and there was no work on the river, Merrick would seek employment at various printing offices. His earlier experiences in this line of work helped him considerable when applying for a job. He was generally successful in obtaining employment until navigation opened up again in the spring.

The Civil War came, and,on Aug.6,1862, George Merrick enlisted in Company "A", 30th Wisconsin Infantry, serving for three years.

George Byron Merrick.

.....

Merrick married Marietta Brooks Oct.9,1866 at Norwich,Conn. After two years in the War Department at Washington he found employment as a steamship agent in New York. He held the agency position until 1876 when he took editorial work at River Falls,Wisc. He also acted as railroad agent at the same point.

In 1885 George Merrick came to Madison,Wis. where for five years he was employed as proof-reader in the adjutant-general's office and later in the Madison "Democrat" office, and since 1897 as accountant for the University of Wisconsin. In 1895-96 he was adjutant-general of the G.A.R. for Wisconsin.

He aided in compiling the Roster of Wisconsin Volunteers (Madison 1886), and is the author of a "Roster and Itinerary of the 30th Wisconsin Infantry". (Madison 1896). He also wrote a "Genealogy of the Merrick Family". (Madison 1902), and "Old Times on the Upper Mississippi," (Cleveland 1909).

Read S.V.

****

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

Joseph Reynolds was born in Fallsburg,N.Y., June 11,1819, of Quaker parentage. He was the youngest of six children. After finishing a common school education at the age of 17 years, he entered business for himself. He was engaged in buying cattle, sheep, and hogs, which he butchered, peddling the meat from a wagon throughout the neighborhood towns and among the farmers along the route.

This business involved much hard work and long drives in the summer heat and dust, without corresponding returns. His books often showed more losses than profits; and at the close of one season he had just $3.00 net profit for his summer's hard work. Being a very methodical man he kept accurate accounts of all his business transactions, thus enabling him to determine whether he was making or losing by his efforts.

In the winter Reynolds taught country school at ten dollars a month and his board. As was the custom in those days, he "boarded around" among the families of his pupils, a week in a place.

Not content with the meager financial returns from either teaching or peddling meat, Reynolds opened a general store, in partnership with his brother Isaac, in Rockland,N.Y. Little is known of this business venture. A few years later he married Mary E.Morton of Rockland. Her father furnished the capital with which young Reynolds bought a custom flour and feed mill; and which under his careful management proved a paying investment.

The mill burned and another was built. The new mill was considered the best in all that region, drawing business from long distances and proving a great financial success.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

Mr.Reynolds always believed the slogan - "Anything that is worth doing at all is worth doing well." Later he formed a partnership with an old school mate, and bought a tannery situated near the mill. They remodeled it and commenced the manufacture of oak-tanned sole leather.

This business also proved very profitable, and after a few years Reynolds received such a good offer that he sold all his interests in Rockland and came West. He located in Chicago about 1856, where he established a tannery on West Water Street. He traveled extensively throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota, buying hides and furs for the Chicago tannery.

Phil Armour was the financial giant of the West at that time, and the following incident concerning the meeting of Armour and Reynolds is related by John Deery, a lawyer and writer in the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald in 1911:

"It may not be true, but it is related that Joseph Reynolds and the late Phil Armour, after coming West engaged in the same business of buying hides and furs along the river towns. That was before his steamboat days. As the story goes it appears that both had at the same time an overstock of hides for the market, and they agreed to play the then popular game of cards,"California Jack", the winner to buy out the loser, and Reynolds won. The market soon afterwards rallied and he made good money on the deal."

There has always been more or less speculation as to the origin of the title "Diamond Jo" as applied to Reynolds from the time he came on the river in 1860. The popular conclusion being that it was derived from the fact that he wore,in later years, a very valuable diamond in his shirt -front. This story was so reasonable that it was generally accepted as correct.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

However, this was an error. Reynolds had other uses for his money at that time and did not adorn himself with costly gems.

Captain Fred A.Bill, the well-known builder and master, who resided at Read's Landing,Minn. in the 60's; and who for many years was connected with the Diamond Jo Line, and was well acquainted with Reynolds, has undoubtedly given the correct answer to the question.

In a letter to the Burlington Saturday Evening Post, June 1912, he says: "In shipping the hides and furs purchased on his trips through the Northwest it was his (Reynold's) custom to mark the packages "J.Reynolds, Chicago,Ill." It seems that there was another J.Reynolds in the same business in Chicago, and their shipments frequently became mixed. Mr Reynolds then conceived the idea of establishing a sort of trade-mark, and his next consignment was marked with his nickname,"Jo" with marks around it shaped like a diamond, and ever after he was known as Diamond "Jo" - and you will note that there is no period after the "Jo" when correctly written."

In 1860 Reynolds disposed of his interests in Chicago and engaged in the grain trade exclusively, with headquarters at Prairie du Chien. Trans shipment was made at this point from steamboat to the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad. The Minnesota Packet Co. had practically complete control of the steamboat business on the upper river between Galena and St.Paul. Some of its stockholders were interested also in the railway company, and were also engaged in buying grain. Their connection with both steamboat and railroad enabled them to obtain favors not accorded to others who were considered "outsiders", of whom Reynolds was one.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

Grain owned by Reynolds would be refused by the boat line while that of his rivals would be taken. He s uffered losses by the elements at the point of shipment, and pecuniary losses through failure to deliver his grain upon a favorable market.

To avoid at least in part some of the annoyances and delays to which he was subjected by the Packet Co., and to provide adequate transportation for his rapidly growing business, Reynolds,in the spring of 1862, built the steamboat "Lansing", a stern wheel boat of 123 tons. Under Capt.J.B.Wilcox this boat was operated between Lansing and Prairie du Chien.

Fearing that this small venture might lead to a competition detrimental to its business, the Packet Company prevailed upon Reynolds to sell them the "Lansing", and promising in return to care for his business in a satisfactory manner.

Before the season ended,however, he found that the company had no intention of living up to the promise made him, and his business was suffering greatly from neglect and discrimination.

Reynolds was not dismayed, however, and in the winter of 1862-1863 he built at Woodman,Wis. a stern-wheel boat of 242 tons which he named "Diamond Jo". He also built and placed in commission two barges for bulk grain, the "Conger" and the "Fleming".

In 1864 the old Minnesota Packet Company was re-organized and became known as the "Northwestern Packet Co." The new company was anxious to protect its monopoly of the Prairie du Chien business, and by promises and guarantees induced Reynolds to sell the "Diamond Jo" along with the barges, and for the second time retire from the transportation business.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

....

The new company, unlike the old Minnesota Packet Co.,honorably fulfilled the terms of the agreement and for three years satisfactorily cared for all Reynold's business.

Trouble again presented itself for Mr.Reynolds when on May 1, 1866, the White Collar Line - W.F.Davidson's LaCrosse and St.Paul Packet Co.- and the Northwestern Line were consolidated under the name "Northwestern Union Packet Co." with William F.Davidson of St.Paul, president.

Through this consolidation, W.F.Davidson became the ruling factor on the river between Dubuque and St.Paul. Grain buyers, interested in the new company, through their connections with the line, controlled the situation at the railroad terminals of LaCrosse and Prairie du Chien. This embarrassed Reynolds to such an extent that he was obliged to secure other river transportation and railroad connections or go out of business. The latter course he did not consider for one moment.

In 1867 he purchased the twin-screw propellar "John A.Gault" and several barges, and for the third time engaged in steamboating on his own account. The "Gault" a small boat, was used that season to tow barges to Prairie du Chien.

Negotiations with the Chicago and Northwestern Railway ~~allowed~~ resulted in permitting Reynolds to use the railroads terminus at Fulton,Ill., and in 1868 he first began to operate a steamboat line, which he called the Chicago,Fulton and River Line. Four boats were employed - the "John C.Gault," the "Ida Fulton," the "Diamond Jo," which he bought back from the Minnesota Packet Co., and a chartered boat, the "Lady Pike."

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

The "Bannock City" was chartered in 1871 to take care of the rapidly increasing business, and to provide transportation for the freight from the railroad, which the firm was bound to take care of. The title of the line was changed to that of "Diamond Jo Line Steamers" with general offices at Fulton. Freight and passenger service was inaugurated between Fulton and St.Paul.

The business prospered so rapidly and to such an extent that it was found necessary to increase the efficiency of the fleet. The "John C.Gault" was sold, and two larger and better boats, the "Arkansas" and the "Tidal Wave" were purchased at New Orleans. In 1873 the "Imperial", and a number of additional barges were bought from John Robson of Winona. These new purchases augumented the fleet, as well as adding to its importance as a transportation system.

An arrangement was made with Capt.Edward Campbell of Durand,Wis. to handle the transfer freight at Read's Landing for the Chippewa River trade,

The arrangement made between Mr.Reynolds and the C.& N.W.Ry.had proved a very satisfactory one for both parties, although competing lines operating boats on the Chippewa protested strongly. The railroad received all his grain and he handled all the merchandise the road could secure from points on the run. Practically all the grain belonging to Mr.Reynolds which amounted to many millions of bushels a year, passed through the elevator at Fulton built by the C.& N.W.Ry.

The year 1874 witnessed a number of important changes in the Diamond Jo Line Co. The general offices were moved from Fulton to Dubuque. One reason for this was that Reynolds lived at McGregor,Ia.,near Dubuque; another reason was on account of the shipyard at Eagle Point, three miles above the city, which the company established. There were also greater advantages afforded by the larger city from a business point of view.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

The shipyard proved a great success. Not only were new boats built here as needed by the line, and all repairs made; but many of the finest wood-hulled raft boats were also built.

The twenty years between 1875 and 1895 witnessed the greatest activity in the lumber business ever known on the Mississippi or any other river, or in any country or age. It gave employment to hundreds of steamboats used in towing the logs and lumber to market, and to thousands of men who constituted their crews.

The repairs constantly required by these boats, and the new craft necessary to take the place of worn-out or disabled boats, kept the shipyard continually working. At times a force as high as eighty skilled mechanics was employed building and repairing boats. In addition to the boat builders, a crew of expert divers with all the necessary equipment, such as barges, pumps, rigging for raising sunken vessels, and other machinery, was likewise maintained. The men and apparatus was ready at all times to proceed on short notice to the relief of any boat in trouble, anywhere between St.Louis and St.Paul. Capt.Killeen, General Superintendent of the shipyards, was an expert in this particular line of work.

Regardless of the removal of the general offices to Dubuque, the run remained from Fulton to St.Paul, with the four boats handling the the regular business under an eight day schedule. This was not very fast time but as each boat towed from two to four barges loaded with package freight up and grain and flour down, it was a very good service.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

In 1878 the "Libbie Conger" was launched from the Eagle Point shipyard, the first boat to be built for the company at its new plant. The "Diamond Jo" was dismantled the same year, and her machinery placed in a new boat, the "Josephine", built in the company's shipyard at Dubuque. Two of the older boats, the "Arkansas" and the "Tidal Wave" were sold to the Peyton S.Davidson Co., and taken to the Missouri River for service.

During 1879 the services of the line were extended to St.Louis. The following comment appeared in a current newspaper at that time under the caption "Diamond Jo Line Steamers." -

"This popular line of steamers will be extended to St.Louis this season (1879). The steamers "Josephine" and "Libby Conger" will run between St.Louis and Fulton, making eight-day trips and connecting there with the steamers "Ida Fulton" and "Josie" for St.Paul. The "Imperial" will run between Rock Island and St.Paul, thus giving the upper end of the river three boats in eight days.

In 1880 the great Keokuk Northern Line Packet Company, with a capitalization of $750,000, and of which Commodore Wm.F.Davidson was president, was thrown into bankruptcy by internal dissensions.

In the spring of 1881 Capt.Davidson formed a new company with a capital stock of $100,000. He bought some of the best boats of the defunct organization, and with eight boats attempted to cover the river above St.Louis, running a daily line to Keokuk, and a semi-weekly line to St.Paul. He also had a brother who entered the St.Louis-St.Paul trade with a fleet of six boats.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

....

Under these conditions the Diamond Jo Line began to pay more attention to passenger business. In the meantime the C.& N.W.Ry. had extended its lines to ~~many~~ several of the upper river ports, and the arrangement with the Diamond Jo Line was at least partially cancelled. A similar agreement was entered into with the Illinois Central Railroad, whereby the grain business of Reynolds was to pass through its elevator at East Dubuque, formerly Dunleith, and in a short time Fulton became a port of call.

The partial collapse of the Davidson Line from St.Louis presented a very tempting opening, of which the Diamond Jo people were not slow to avail themselves. The grain trade was beginning to be diverted more and more to the railroads that were tapping the source of supply, not only on the river itself, but the country lying back of the river.

In pursuance of this changing policy, more attention was directed to passenger business. The company built a fine, large stern-wheel passenger boat, the "Mary Morton", named for Reynold's wife, and the run was extended to St.Louis.

The "Sidney", another large stern-wheeler, was brought from the Ohio River and placed on the St.Louis run. Two of the older and smaller freight boats, the "Josie" and the "Libby Conger" were sold.

In 1881 still another big stern-wheeler, the "pittsburg" was bought down on the Ohio and added to the St.Louis line. These boats were operated in active competition with the Davidson lines.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

From 1881 to 1886 the line consisted of four boats - the "Josephine", "Mary Morton," "Sidney," and "Pittsburg". The "Josephine" was more of a freight and towboat than a passenger packet. In 1883 the line had been incorporated as the Diamond Jo Line of Steamers with a capital of$300,000.

Two of its trusted employees,E.M.Dickey and Capt.John Killeen, became stockholders. Mr.Reynolds was elected president; E.M.Dickey, sec'y. and treas., also general freight and passenger agent; and Capt.Killeen was appointed superintendent of construction. Capt.Killeen held his position until 1891, when after the death of Reynolds, he was elected vice president and appointed general sup't.

Owing to the rapid increase of business the board of directors was increased from three to five in 1884. The two new members were Capt.F.A.Bill and Isaac P.Lusk.

The business of the line was gradually changing. As the grain trade dropped off, the passenger and package freight business increased. Another change which took place about this time was in the crews, or roustabouts, as they were commonly called. White men were rapidly being replaced by negroes, mostly from the southern states and lower river ports. The white men sought other fields where there were better wages and less of privation.

In place of sullen and despondent white men, unwillingly driven to their tasks by the urgency of the officers over them, the negroes toting sacks and boxes of freight, happy and singing songs at the same time, became a sort of comedy greatly enjoyed by the traveling public.

Bars were prohibited on all Diamond Jo Line steamers, and liquor-drinking by either passengers or crew was not allowed. Reynolds, himself, did not drink, and being a Quaker he refrained from the use of profanity.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

Reynolds had one son,Blake, born at McGregor,Ia. in 1860. After he had finished his education he joined his father in various enterprises. In the late 70's father and son turned their attentions to gold mining in Arizona and Colorado. This proved an unsuccessful adventure and considerable mohey was lost. Reynolds was a good loser,however, and accepted his loss as a good joke on his apparent astuteness in making a bargain.

The first mine they purchased proved worthless. It had been "salted" by the owners in order to create a sale. To "salt" a mine means to make it seem more valuable than it really is, by introducing rich ore obtained elsewhere; a trick first resorted to by gold-diggers with the design of obtaining a high price for their claims.

Reynolds and son at once cast about for a new venture, and soon after bought the Congress Mine in the same locality. To the verbal criticism of his many friends, who considered it poor business to buy another mine in the same locality, he replied: "Well,when you lose anything don't you look for it where you lost it?" The Congress was a very rich mine, and fully justified Reynolds in his decision. On the whole his mining ventures were very profitable. The death of his son,Blake, in 1885, caused a curtailment in this line of investment.

While on his way to Hot Springs,Ark. to take the cure at the resort there, an experience happened to Reynolds which later proved most profitable indeed. Along with several fellow passengers he was traveling in a rickety, old stage coach from Malvern, a town some twenty odd miles away.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

When the conveyance broke down, causing considerable inconvenience to the passengers, Joe Reynolds was quite upset about the whole thing and told the stage man in no uncertain terms that he would build a railroad connecting Malvern with the springs. Of course they all thought it was just a bluff uttered in the excitement of the moment.

He called into conference a few engineers, put up his steamboat and mining stock as collateral to finance the project, and within a few months had a narrow-gauge railroad in operation between Malvern and Hot Springs, a distance of about twenty-two miles.

Later as business increased and the springs became the most popular health resort on the Continent, he bonded the road and with the proceeds changed the line to standard-gauge. He installed much heavier steel, and its side tracks at the top of the mountain, from that time to this, have constantly been filled with palace cars and private coaches from all parts of the country, switched onto this, one of the best paying twenty miles of railroad in the United States.

These are a few of the many interests that engaged Reynolds attention, aside from the steamboat line bearing his name. For more than twenty years after his death his name was perpetuated in the line which he founded, and up until the final dissolution of the company and the sale of its boats and other assets.

Mr.George B.Merrick describes the passing of Reynolds as follows:

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

"Joseph Reynolds died at Congress,Arizona, Feb.21, 1891, leaving an unsigned will. All of his large estate reverted to his widow, who scrupulously carried out her husband's wishes as expressed in the memorandum made in the Arizona wilderness.

"To each of the seven or eight men named she gave $50,000, and in addition a large amount was set aside for the establishment of a training school for young men at Chicago.

"The death of Joseph Reynolds was not only tragic but it was also highly dramatic. He was in a desert place, sixty miles from the nearest railroad when the final summons came. The malady was pneumonia, and he knew that he had not the constitution to withstand a serious attack, so far from a physician and medicine.

"A messenger was dispatched post-haste to Prescott to telegraph for a physician and a lawyer - the latter to draw his will. Storms and wash-outs delayed them several days. Reynolds had been dead thirty hours when they finally reached Prescott. The disease made rapid inroads upon his strength. His breathing became difficult, and his voice failed. He realized that his end was near. He lay in a rude shack at the mouth of the Congress Mine, from which he had taken nearly a million dollars of his wealth. With him were his mine superintendent, Pierce, and half a dozen other employees of the mine.

"His whole mind was centered upon the disposition of a part of his great wealth which he wished to go to some of his trusted employees, and to an educational trust which he had long had in mind - a training school for young men of limited means. The balance would go to his wife as the only heir in any event.

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

"The fear that his strength would not hold out while these wishes had been put in form was greater than any fear of death, which seemed not greatly to concern him. He started to dictate his wishes to Pierce, and named him as one of the beneficiaries.

"Pierce at first refused to assume so equivocal a part; but Reynolds insisted, and a will was drawn as the dying man desired. He siezed a pen to sign it, but he was too weak. The name was but a scrawl. Then summoning all his remaining strength, and almost with his last breath, he called upon those who were in the hut to witness that the unsigned paper was his last will and testament, and fell back into the arms of his friend - dead. His body lies in Mount Hope Cemetery, Chicago, besides his wife and son. His labors are ended."

Captain Fred A.Bill has this to say of Diamond Jo:

"In many ways Mr.Reynolds was peculiar. He was very quiet and had little use for"society", minded his own business and expected others to do likewise. He told very little of himself, and practically nothing of his early life, which was generally supposed to have been one of gret hardships.

"He became rich and famous; made money rapidly, and when it was made it was easy to trace that it came from reasoning from cause to effect, and not from what is commonly called luck.

"While nearly always in debt it was his boast that he could generally pay his debts, if forced, within twenty-four hours. His word was his bond, and he had the unlimited confidence of those who knew him, and was always able to get credit that would enable him to embark in any enterprise he desired."

Jo Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line.

.....

Mrs Reynolds died in August 1895, leaving the whole of her estate, amounting to several millions, to her brother, Jay Morton of Rockland, N.Y. Morton came to Chicago and assumed control of the property.

The history of the Diamond Jo Line may be briefly stated so far as the following years of its service are concerned.

Jay Morton continued as president, John Killeen, general manager, and Isaac P.Lusk as general freight and passenger agent.

Four boats were in service every season until 1911, when the property of the line was sold to the Streckfus Steamboat Co. The boats thus transferred were the side-wheel steamers "St.Paul" and "Quincy", and the stern-wheel steamers "Sidney" and "Dubuque", all as fine boats as ever operated on the river above St.Louis.

In the transfer to the Streckfus Line were included these four items: the wharf boat at St.Louis, the shipyard at Dubuque, and all the warehouses and other property along the river between St.Louis and St.Paul. The name alone was excepted. This title was retained; and whenever in the future historians shall mention the Diamond Jo Line the name will recall the man whose genius built it up from the day of small beginnings in 1862, when the little "Lansing" was built, through all the years that witnessed so many changes in upper-river steamboat ownership; until at the end of half a century, it remained the only organized steamboat line between St.Louis and St.Paul.

Its title and its history constitute the greatest monument that can be erected to the memory of its founder,- "Diamond Jo" Reynolds.

****

"This story of "Diamond Jo" is interesting - parts must be rewritten when the material is put together. P.V.

Steamboats and Cargoes. Mississippi River Project. G.V.Jehu.(41)

Samuel R.Van Sant.

See page 5

Samuel Rinnah Van Sant was born in Rock Island, Ill.,May 11,1844. His father was employed as an expert shipwright in the boat yards at Rock Island and the river environment had an important affect on young Samuel.

His parents were of New York Dutch stock which accounts perhaps in part for his great determination in overcoming the many obstacles which beset him in later life.

The house in which Samuel Van Sant was born overlooked the Mississippi river, then beginning to swarm with traffic. He grew up with a passionate attachment for the river that remained with him through life. The first dollar he earned he spent for a skiff on that river. His thoughts and plans turned instinctively to the ~~river~~ Mississippi where he met his first adventure; and, incidentally ~~if he had not been possessed of this spell in its utmost power~~ it would have been enough to turn him from the river forever. had he not loved it so deeply.

At the age of nine he was just old enough to help around the house and the boat-yard, and one afternoon his father sent him to the sawmill for an ax. As it was pouring down with rain he took an umbrella. Just at that time the steamer "Denmark" was passing upstream and her "swells" loosened a skiff that had been pulled up on shore, and sent it floating down-stream. According to the common law of the times whoever found and rescued a floating skiff could claim salvage or take possession.

Sam stood the umbrella against a tree near by, leaped into his own skiff and put out after the direlict. In a short time he captured the runaway, took it in tow, and started for home, but The rising wind swept him backward and made it difficult for him to proceed in the right direction. He soon realized that he must abandon his prize if he were to win against wind and current. He freed the boat and was rowing his best, but still seemed to be

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

getting farther and farther away from the starting point.

Darkness was coming on. Through the dusk he saw an island on which he faintly traced something that looked like a house. He reached shore, beached his skiff, and pushed through the thick underbrush to where the house stood. No one was about, and the ~~house~~ place seemed unoccupied.

By this time night had fallen and he could not tell in which direction was home. The house evidently was a wood-choppers shanty. He went in and found a bedstead on which lay a mattress but no bedding. He fastened the door as well as he could and lay down on the mattress to sleep for he was very tired from rowing his boat. He found an ax in the shack which he kept close-by in case of emergency.

The night was cold and the damp river air made him shudder; or perhaps the lonesomeness of the situation made him just a little frightened. When the cold became unbearable he would put the mattress over him and lie in the cold. All night he listened in terror to the howling of wolves and the hooting of owls. Daylight seemed ages in coming, but finally light enough entered the shack so that he could make out different objects about him.

He looked over the things that had been left in the shanty and discovered an old Bible. So he read a chapter and said a prayer,and always averred afterward that he felt much better. The wind had died down at sunrise and it was a beautiful, clear morning. As he sallied forth onto the beach he could see which way his home lay. With a large clam shell he bailed out his skiff, got in, found he could make headway now against the current, and rowed home. He arrived just as his father was about to have the river dragged for his body. On discovering the umbrella standing against the tree his parents had given up all hope. The neighbors had come to condone with his mother and offer sympathy.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

Samuel attended the local school, and,like the other boys of the neighborhood, was greatly interested in the river, and anything connected with it. He spent much of his spare time at the boat yard picking up scraps of river lore and listening to tales told by the different tradesmen who took part in the making of a steamboat. It seemed to him that a steamboat was the grandest thing in all the world, and to build and steer one the only legitimate object of human life.

When he was about thirteen years of age the captain of the packet "James Lyon", a friend of his father's, invited the promising youth to make a trip to St.Paul as the guest of the boat. Samuel was nearly overcome with joy and pride. Before the "Lyon" had whistled for the bridge, he had been all over the craft and become acquainted with the officers.

Next day the second mate was taken ill and the watchman took his place. Young Samuel immediately applied for the watchmanship and received the appointment. His duties included the cleaning, filling, and hoisting of the red and green chimney lights. By comparison all other duties on that steamboat he deemed unimportant to navigation.

Sometime after his return from this memorable voyage, the "Joe Gales," the Burlington ferry-boat which had been repaired at his father's ship-yard, was ready to return home but had no fireman. Sam volunteered to do the firing and took along a boy chum to help him. They reached Burlington ~~alright~~ all right without mishap, and the money they received for this work they spent for a ride on the "Grey Eagle" back to Rock Island. It was a privilege of great distinction to have so much as touched the mooring line of that glorious vision.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

The next season he secured his first regular employment on his beloved river. His job consisted of fourth or "slush cook" on the old packet "Lamartine." His duties were to peel potatoes, scale fish, chop wood, and wash dishes. All that summer he worked hard at these menial tasks.

Slush cooking on the Lamartine was not much of an occupation for one who had high ambitions and aspired to command. It did not last long for young Van Sant and he was soon offered engagements of a more dignified character. But just as the prospect for learning the river was brightest, the Civil War broke out. His schooling was also interrupted at this time.

The day following the publication of President Lincoln's call for 75,000 men ~~was published~~, Samuel Van Sant, aged sixteen years, stood in line at the place of enlistment. He was rejected ~~on account~~ because of his youth but tried again and was told that if he could furnish a written consent from his father he would be accepted. His father, at first, refused to give his consent, but finally allowed him to go with a friend who was forming the ninth Illiinois Cavalry. Sam served through the war and took part in many hot engagements. He was a good soldier on the battle field, and sent most of his pay home.

After the close of the war, young Van Sant obtained a business education in the East and a partial collegiate course at Knox College in Galesburg,Ill. After completing his freshman year at college he returned to Iowa and went in the boat-building business with his father at LeClaire. At these yards the Van Sants built the first power raft boat for towing logs and lumber down the Mississippi river. They named it the "J.W.Van Sant" in honor of the elder member of the firm. This was a great inovation in Mississippi river history; as, prior to the tow boats, logs and lumber had been floated down stream with no pushing and controlling power attached.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

Father and son built other boats of similar construction and became actively engaged in rafting and lumbering on the Mississippi.

Despite the loss of two of his boats, the burning of his home and other misfortunes, S.R.Van Sant surmounted all his difficulties. While still in his thirties he moved his business to Winona,Minn.

In later years "Captain" Van Sant was known at all the upper river ports as one of the largest steamboat figures of all time. The business founded in a small way,and on borrowed capital, was now prosperous and bringing in large returns to the owners. J.W.Van Sant and Son added to their fleet until they had twenty rafters at work, and had reached easily the first place in the industry.

His friends were soon pushing him into politics. Although a staunch Republican he drew many independent voters, especially in local politics. He progressed from local city offices into the Legislature in 1893-95.

During his first term in the Legislature he was chairman of the State Normal School Committee and acompolished much in the development of the entire normal school system. In the session of 1895 he was elected speaker of the House, receiving every Republican, Democratic, and Populist vote for the office. Admiring friends pointed out that he was the logical candidate for governor.

Captain Van Sant was not only popular among the lumbermen and business men of the state, but had become very prominent among the Grand Army men and the younger generation of soldiers

While a member of the Legislature he had been elected commander of the Minnesota Department of the G.A.R., and his active influence resulted in bringing the National Encampment to Minnesota in 1896. That same year he made

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

his appearance as candidate for governor of the state. Governor Clough who received the nomination on the first ballot was his opponent. Friends of Van Sant cast 158 votes for him.

After the results of the nomination were known and announced, the Captain made a good natured little speech in which he said: "I feel it an honor to have been mentioned for governor in this convention, but I beg to assure you I was not running for governor, I was only walking."

In 1898 when he was defeated by William H.Eustis his humerous acceptance of the situation, and his unqualified support of the successful candidate, both in the convention and in the campaign which followed, earned him thousands of friends who came to his support in 1900.

His election for governor over such a strong and popular man as John Lind even marked him for future preferment along gubernatorial lines. He won the election by 2,254 votes.

Opponents of Van Sant had referred to him as the "intelligent raftsman." He had shown that at least he was intelligent enough to upset all their calculations.

When he stood up to be inaugurated, instead of placing his right hand upon the Bible, as was customary, he placed it upon the shoulder of his father, John Wesley Van Sant, who had come up from LeClaire to witness the ceremony. The old firm had carried on to the end.

He established and practiced the policy of economy in state government. Among the practical measures of development urged by the governor were the building of good roads and the conservation of the forests of the state.

Van Sant was re-elected in 1902 by a large majority over all other candidates. His opponent was Leonard Rosing.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

Sudden success and power had made J.J.Hill, the "Railroad King", over confident and a little arrogant. From obscurity and near-penury he had been lifted without investment ~~or exertion~~ into great wealth and the control of some of the most important railroad properties of the United States. He had lately added to his railroad possessions the Northern Pacific Railroad, and now started to consolidate it with his own original railroad, the Great Northern.

An opposition arose that visibly astonished and annoyed him. The Great Northern and the Northern Pacific were parallel and competing lines; and the laws of the State of Minnesota and the constitutions of six states affected absolutely forbade their consolidation.

Hill announced the consolidation,law or no law, in Nov.1901, and was preceeding merrily with his plans, when he encountered a stupefying report that the governor of the State of Minnesota, one of the Hill provinces, was strongly against the project and would take steps to prevent it.

This seemed unusual to the governor's friends, and many of them doubted the truthfulness of it. They were not allowed to remain long in hopeful uncertainty.

One night in Winona the governor wrote a statement that settled the matter. It was a clear-cut statement to the effect that the merger, being against the law, would be carried out in Minnesota over his political dead body - or words to that effect. He then summond a reporter from the "Winona Republican" and gave him a message.

Scores of friends came to save his political life by trying to persuade him to change his decision. "But its against the law," said Van Sant, as he brought out the statute.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

He was told that he was acting against his own interests. It lay in Mr.Hill's power to re-elect him, and, besides there were greater honors than being governor of Minnesota - political honors.

"But it's against the law," repeated the governor.

The party machine now started out to end the career of this unpractical person. They could not prevent his re-nomination, but they knew full well how to deal with him when election day should arrive.

January 7,1902, the governor directed the attorney-general of the State to bring action against the merger and sat by to see the approach of his own ruin.

When it was time for the campaign, Mr.Hill made no secret of his wrath. He even took the stump himself against the renegade. For instance, he arranged a large meeting at Crookston, a railroad town, and to be sure of an audience ran excursion trains from all directions. About twelve thousand persons assembled to hear him describe the perils that awaited Minnesota if this evil man should be re-elected governor.

"He is the enemy of law and order," said Mr.Hill. "He is the enemy of progress. He is the enemy of prosperity and stability. He is the enemy of business. He is the enemy of the nation. He is the enemy of every railroad man. He is your enemy. Not in fifty years will Minnesota recover from the blow if he should again be its governor."

The crowd,led by Mr.Hill's railroad employees, cheered long and lustily. It was plain that he had made a deep impression.

When Governor Van Sant came along a few days afterwards and desired a chance to refute Mr.Hill, he was not allowed to hold a meeting in Crookston, nor in the county in which Crookston lay.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

.....

It was a hard and discouraging fight for Van Sant. His friends turned against him, the press was unkind, the political organization was generally hostile. The logging and lumbering interests fought him with all the resources at their command. Men with who he had had close business relationships for years and whom he regardesd as warm friends would have nothing to do with him.

One night he was to speak in an important towm in the logging region. A prominent committeeman stole quietly to his room in the hotel and explained that he could not attend the meeting nor give him any support. A few dispirited and apathetic people comprised the waiting audience.

On election day he returned to Winona, where all the experts knew he was defeated. The next morning they awoke to the fact that he had carried the State by nearly sixty thousand. In the logging towns where he could not draw an audience, he ran two thousand votes ahead of his record in the previous election. At Crookston where he was not allowed to speak, he carried the county by seventeen hundred; two years before he had lost it by eighteen hundred.

The people cheered Mr.Hill and voted for Mr.Van Sant.

The fame of his success and his defiance of corporate wealth went about the country and awoke surprised attention with loud applause. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, took up the cry of financial autocracy. He ordered his attorney-general,Philander Knox, to begin in the federal courts a suit against the merger similar to that Gov.Van Sant was urging in the state courts.

National attention was centered upon the Minnesota governor, and in 1904 he was widely mentioned as the fit candidate for Vice-President. Roosevelt and Van Sant, it was felt, would be a great ticket to win with.

Samuel R.Van Sant.

At the Republican National Convention, because Minnesota was considered safely Republican and Indiana was doubtful, Charles W.Fairbanks was named for vice-president.

The suit in the federal courts against the Hill merger was pressed to a momentous conclusion. The Supreme Court upheld the position that from the first Gov.Van Sant had affirmed and the merger was off. The case made history and passed into everlasting precedent.

At the close of Van Sant's second term he might easily have had a third. But he held in reverence his old Revolutionary traditions, and particularly the example of Washington. Besides the old firm had been dissolved by death, the river traffic had come to its decline, he had accumulated in it a modest fortune, and he determined to pass the remainder of his life in quiet and leisure except for work in behalf of the Civil War veterans, of whose national organization he had been the head.

His retirement was coincident with the close of the great epoch in which he had been such a commanding figure. There had come an end to rafts and rafting.

When Samuel R.Van Sant was eighty-four years of age, he drove a pioneer wagon in a pageant through the streets of Minneapolis, later that year; and ~~in Washington~~ he was consulting with the President in Washington and vigorously engineering veteran's pension bills through congress.

He died Oct-1936

Steamboat Women.

While the greater part of the steamboat period belonged to the age when "woman's place was in the home", nevertheless there were a few who made names for themselves on the river.

One was Mrs Ida Moore Lachmund, the proprietress of a log-towing business, operating chiefly in the 1890's. Her husband was engaged in the lumber business and later became interested in rafting. Beginning by making trips on the river with him, Mrs Lachmund progressed to part ownership of a steamboat. In a short time she owned an interest in several boats.

In February 1890 she was listed in the "Democrat" as part owner of three raft boats, and in 1897 she owned one tow boat, the "Robert Dodds". She often chartered other boats and it has been said that she towed all the lumber for one Clinton lumber firm. It was also claimed that she made her own contracts with the lumber mills, hired her own crews, purchased her own supplies, and directed necessary repairs.

Women pilots were very rare, but at least on one occasion a woman, licensed as a pilot, handled a boat on the Upper Mississippi. Capt.Jerome Short tells of it in his memoirs. Toward the end of his river career, when he was pilot on the "East St.Louis", an excursion boat running between LaSalle,Ill., and St.Louis, his brother pilot brought a woman into the pilot house whom he introduced as Mrs Mary Hulett, a licensed pilot. Capt.Short relinquished the wheel to her and he says,she "handled the boat for some time through some close places as well as any one could."

(3) should be lived.

In Burlington there still lived another woman who spent many years on the river. She is Miss Mary Kinnear, whose father was a well known river man, long Sup't. of the White Collar Line before its sale to Diamond Jo, and later a steamboat agent at Burlington. After his death his daughter for two years

Steamboat Women.

.....

continued the agency for Capt.Blair's Carnival City Line. Apparently she was the only woman to serve in that capacity on the upper river.

Later she acted as cashier for the Streckfus Line excursion boats, which ran on the lower river as well as above St.Louis.

****

GV

B

Louis Robert

Louis Robert was born in the old French village of Carondelet, Mo., now a part of St.Louis, Jan.21,1811. He was a descendent of French settlers ~~that~~ who had come to St.Louis when that city was nothing more than a trading post in the French territory of Louisana.

Inclined to a life of diversion and adventure, he came up the Mississippi to Prairie du Chien in 1838, and made several trips on the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers, accompanying parties sent out by the government. He returned to St.Louis the next year where he married. He left St.Louis once more for Prairie du Chien with a stock of merchandise and opened a trading post at the latter place that was fairly successful.

In 1843 Louis Robert came to St.Paul with another stock of goods, and, with Charles Bazille, purchased the former claim of Pierre Parrant at the foot of what is now Jackson Street. They opened a trading establishment and the next year Robert moved his family to St.Paul.

At first Robert lived with another Frenchman in a small log cabin, but on the arrival of his family he built a house, the first frame dwelling to be erected in St.Paul. It was built ~~from~~ of lumber from the St.Croix where at this time the first sawmill was just beginning to operate.

Mr.Robert later owned a large part of the townsite and in 1847 was one of its original proprietors. He took a prominent part in the Stillwater Convention in 1848, and helped to secure the location of the Territorial Capitol at St.Paul. It has been said that as long as the city of St.Paul shall stand, the name of Capt.Louis Robert will be preserved. He was chief among its founders, and is considered a true and enterprising citizen,- a man of good sense, and excellent business judgement. In 1849 he was elected County Commissioner for Ramsey County, Minn.

Louis Robert

.....

Louis Robert was engaged in the steamboat business on the Miss. and on the Minnesota Rivers. He operated the "Greek Slave" and the "Time and Tide" , besides others boats, for several years. He traded much among the Indians and knew their dialects and ways, lived in peace with them, and believed that they looked upon him as a father.

An interesting, but almost tragic event, happened to Mr.Robert in the summer of 1862. He was on a trading trip to the Indian Agency at Redwood, not far from New Ulm,Minn. when,after/ transacting his business, he started home in his buggy drawn by two horses. That night, in accordance with the plans ~~long matured~~ formulated by the Indians Chief Little Crow, rose and attacked the white settlers, staging the historic massacre of New Ulm. About eleven hundred white people are said to have perished that night and among those were all the settlers at the Redwood agency.

The Indians had no grievence in particular against Capt.Robert, but they wanted to get him because they regarded him as a leader of the whites. When they failed to find Robert among the dead, the chief offered alluring awards for his scalp and sent out scouting parties in all directions for him. They knew well that he had been at Redwood the day before and could not be far off.

The next morning Robert reached a place called Traverse des Sioux, which was located about fifteen miles from the present city of Mankato, when he was overtaken by a rumor of the Indian outbreak. He believed he had a great influence with the Sioux so turned back with the notion that he could protect the people at Redwood, never dreaming that they were all dead.

Fort Ridgely, a government outpost, lay on his route, and as he approached that point he discovered Indian signs that put him on his guard. He left his carriage and made his way on foot to the fort, where he learned the truth . The fort had been surrounded by Indians and the situation was perilous for the garrison had only a few men avilable for protection.

Louis Robert

.....

Robert offered $1,000 to anyone who would attempt to get through the besieging line to St.Peters and bring help. As no one accepted his offer he made the attempt himself.

For a long time he scouted around the fort to find an opening through which to pass. He immediately found himself in a position of great danger, for many Indians were busy patrolling the spot where he was crawling. To protect himself, he discarded his hat and wove a head-covering of swamp-grass. Then he got upon his back into a swamp where he lay with his body almost entirely submerged in the mud. Only his nose was above ~~was above~~ the surface and it was well protected from view by the woven swamp-grass. He was in that position when a band of several hundred Indians passed him so close that he could have all but touched them. When they were gone he emerged from the swamp, looked about, and ~~was~~ convinced that there was no way to get through, ~~so~~ he started to crawl slowly back to the fort.

As he approached the fort, his queer head-gear and his muddy clothing looked so wild and strange that the garrison took him for an Indian and raised their rifles to shoot him. He was saved only by a man who begged the rest to hold their fire because it might possibly be a white man instead of a savage.

He got safely into the fort and took an active part in its defense. Troops later arrived and relieved the fort. The Indians captured the buggy and horses belonging to Robert. They took delight in tying the silver mountings of the harness around their necks for ornaments. This was an experience that Capt.Robert never forgot as it was the nearest he had ever been to capture by the Red Men.

As a steamboat man Louis Robert met with considerable success. In 1853 he bought the "Greek Slave" for $20,000 and operated it between St.Louis and St.Paul. Trips were also made to Stillwater on the St.Croix River.

Louis Robert

.....

A troublesome experience happened in the autumn of 1853 when Capt. Robert was about to make his last trip of the season before tying his boat up at St.Paul for the winter.

He had a large cargo of freight and a full passenger list, when, as the time arrived to start, the boat's crew went on a strike. They did not strike for higher wages but for other reasons. Most of the men lived in Galena,Ill., and they did not want to be stranded in St.Paul for the winter. They demanded a guarantee that they should be transported home. Everybody struck except the engineer, the pilots, the mate, one chamber-maid and one cabin-boy.

Capt.Robert attempted to get the boat under way with a short crew, but there was no steward and the problem of feeding the passengers was a difficult one, ~~to cope with~~. At this junction the chamber-maid came to the rescue. She said to the cabin-boy:

"Here,you - run up town and tell my beau Mike to come down here and be steward of this boat, or I will make trouble for him."

Mike came as directed and the Greek Slave put into the stream. It was not yet out of its troubles, however, for the captain was suddenly stricken ill and was unable to move from his bed. More trouble came when the boat ran onto a sand-bar five miles below Winona. Ordianarily a steamboat on a sand-bar, if it did not go too far, could get itself off by the use of spars on each side. Lines and the capstan were used to pull the boat ~~off~~ up and off.

The small, inneficient crew could not work the spars and the boat refused to budge. The captain was sick, the winter was close at hand, the thermometer ~~fastly~~ fast falling, and over two hundred passengers viewed with horror the prospect of remaining where they were until frozen in.

Louis Robert.

.....

Luckily there was on board a landsman of prestige and ready wit, Mr.A.L.Larpenteur, a pioneer, and the first grocer in St.Paul. He immediately sized up the situation, went direct to the captain, whom he knew very well, and proposed nothing less than to take full charge of the boat. Capt.Robert knew the ability of his man and consented. Mr.Larpenteur came from the cabin dressed in the captain's overcoat and cap, announced that he was in charge of the "Greek Slave", and issued his instructions in a voice of authority. He knew enough about boats to know how the spars should be worked.

The"Greek Slave" happened to be the first steamboat on the Mississippi River that carried a steam capstan. Mr.Larpenteur also knew something about this useful instrument. With the aid of the capstan, the spars, and with the starboard wheel backing, he worked the boat off the bar and proceeded. The next morning the pilots steered it and he captained it safely into Stillwater.

Other boats owned and operated by Capt.Robert were the Globe and the "Jeanette Robert", named for his favorite daughter, ~~He~~ At one time he owned five steamers on the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. He disposed of his fleet at an oportune time and realized handsomely from his river operations.

Although Louis Robert lost a large amount of goods which were stolen by the Indians in 1862, he received the value of the greater portion of this merchandise through action of the government. He and his brother performed valuable services under the command of General Sibley. After peace was declared with the Indians, he continued stores at Redwood, Madelia and elsewhere. These enterprises were large and mostly successful from a financial standpoint.

Capt.Robert was a remarkable character. Physically he was strong and athletic, well proportioned and muscular in build. His manners were somewhat bluff and hearty but always frank and open. He enjoyed good company and various forms of sports and recreation. Fishing and hunting were his favorite pastimes, but he never

Louis Robert.

.....

allowed these to interfere with business. He was a born leader and always had a large following. He later became an able politician. Whatever he did was done earnestly, vigorously and effectually.

Capt.Robert was well known throughout the State of Minnesota as well as by the people in his immediate locality. He was a typical pioneer, brave, energetic, enterprising, generous and liberal to a fault. He often gave aid to the less fortunate and to worthy enterprises. Among his notable gifts were the bells of the Cathedral and of the French Catholic Church in St.Paul, and from time to time he made liberal donations to the support of the church generally.

Closing an eventual career seldom eaqualed, Capt.Louis Robert died at his residence in St.Paul, May 10,1874 after a long illness. He left a valuable estate at his death.

****

Minnesota River
(Tributary)

.....

The Minnesota River enters the Mississippi River at Mendota, approximately five miles above St.Paul. Fort Snelling is situated at this junction across the Minnesota River from Mendota.

The Minnesota River Valley has attracted a large share of the favorable attention which has been given to the territory. Old maps show the Minnesota River as the "St.Peters". An act of the legislature changed it to the Minnesota.

For at least five months of the year the Minnesota River is navigable for a distance of about two hundred miles from its mouth; high and low water , however, has much to do with navigation on this waterway. Some of the cities and towns located on this river are Shakopee, Carver, Belle Plaine, Henderson, LeSueur, and Mankato. The last named is situated at the point where the river commences to flow ~~northwest~~ N.E. to ~~Big Stone Lake~~ Mendota, and is the largest city on the river.

During the early days of steamboat navigation regular lines of packet and freight boats traveled up the Minnesota River as far as Mankato and sometimes as far as Granite Falls, where,only a few years ago, the remains of the wreck of one ofthe boats still protruded as a kind of melancholy ~~fossil~~ reminder of from a lost ~~geological~~ age.

Trouble might be expected at almost any landing on the Minnesota. Sometimes the Indians came aboard and virtualy took possession, for they would not leave until they had procurred what they were after - unless some smart engineer or captain was wise enough to outwit them. One way was to slip the safety valve when the whole tribe would leap overboard in terror. But sometimes the boat must remain tied up until the visitors were intoxicated.

Often the Indians would shoot at the steamers as they passed up and down the river, or in lonely and remote places try to capture it. The Minnesota and Missouri rivers were the ~~commonest~~ most common scenes of these ~~attentions~~ incidents.

Minnesota River.

.....

Captain Fred A.Bill, a prominent, old steamboat man of his day, states that the first boat to travel any distance above the mouth of the Minnesota River was the "Anthony Wayne" which carried an excursion party in the summer of 1850. It was in the same year that steam navigation was established above St.Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River.

Historians generally agree that 1850 marks the date of the beginning of commercial steamboating on the Minnesota, although they admit isolated trips had been made earlier. Before a year had passed one boat had gone about three-hundred miles up the river, and by 1853 there were five steamboats in the trade, all of which were crowded to capacity with passengers and freight. One reason for such prosperity on the river at this time was the stream of immigrants coming to take up land after the Indian cession of 1851. In this year one boat went as far as Fort Ridgely, towing two barges.

In 1855 there were 109 steamboats arrivals at St.Paul from the Minnesota River, and by 1858 this number had increased to 394. Boats operated up the river to Mankato, and even farther on regular schedule; one of the best known being Louis Robert's "Time and Tide", so called because it waited for no man. One traveler has described a trip he made in this boat in 1857 from St.Paul to the Sioux Agency on the Minnesota, which he says was 500 miles by boat from the mouth of the river. This statement, however, was an exaggeration.

The thing that astonishes anyone who is acquainted with the present condition of these rivers is that a paddle-wheel could turn over in them. Some of them are little more than creeks now, and no one would attempt to take anything of deeper draft than a row boat into them. To be sure, the navigation season was often limited to periods of high water, and ~~even~~ the boats sometimes had difficulties.

Minnesota River

. . . . . .

Many of the boats were especially constructed for use on the small streams. They were usually small, often of less than 100 tons, and they were of shallow draft, sometimes requiring a little as a foot of water. It was craft of this type that almost justified the oft quoted boast of steamboat captains that they could run their boats over a heavy dew.

Some of the boats were so small as to arouse humorous comments. The story is told of a captain of one of these small boats who became greatly incensed when some citizens of a town where he had stopped requested permission to load his boat on a wagon and run it up-town to exhibit to a bed-ridden invalid.

An analysis of the arrivals at the St.Paul levee for 1857 shows that most of the boats came from Galena, or were on their way to the Minnesota River. Arrivals at St.Paul levee 1857 follows:

From Dubuque. . ..123	From Prairie du Chien..138
" Galena 213	" Cincinnati..... 12
" Fulton..... 65	" Pittsburgh. 27
" St.Louis.....156	On way to Minnesota River - 292.

The first St.Paul city directory printed in 1857 states: "In 1851, three boats went up the Minnesota River, and in 1852, one boat ran regularly up that stream during the season. In 1853, the business required an average of one boat per day. In 1854 the business had largely increased, and in 1855, the arrivals of steamers from the Minnesota, amounted to 119.

"The business on the Minnesota hasgreatly increased this year (1856). This was to have been expected, considering the great increase in the population of that flourishing portion of our Territory. From the Minnesota River in 1856:"

"H.T.Yeatman - - - 4 Trips.	~~Tide~~ Time and Tide - - - - 11 Trips.
Glabe - - - - - - 34 "	Wave - - - - - - - - 29 "
Clarion - - - - - 12 "	Equator - - - - - - - 40 "
Reveille - - - - -40 "	Minn.Valley - - - - - 20 "
H.S.Allen - - - - 10 "	Berlin - - - - - - - 10 "

Total - - - 216 Trips.

Minnesota River.

.....

One of the most stirring incidents of Civil War days on the Minnesota River was the trip of the Fanny Harris in 1861. The boat started from St.Paul, went to Fort Ridgely on the Minnesota River, and thence to LaCrosse to bring down a battery of light artillery. The story of this memorable journey has appeared a number of times in print, including an account in "Old Times On The Mississippi", by G.B.Merrick, who was aboard the Fanny Harris at that time.

The Minnesota was difficult to navigate on account of its many curves, and the Fanny Harris was larger than most boats that attempted it.

The fact that the river was flooding at the time reduced the danger of striking bottom, but greatly increased the difficulties of following the channel. The current was swift, the stream was full of driftwood and fallen trees, and there was the most pressing necessity for speed, for the troops were needed at Fort Ridgely as fast as transportation could get them there.

Perhaps no other trip has ever been made on the Upper Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers under more harrowing circumstances. Most of the upper portion of the boat was sacrificed. Much damage was done,when,on one occasion, her pilots tried to save time by running her through the timber on the bank and across flooded fields for some distance before re-entering the channel. Hours were spent every night, after the boat made fast, in repairing damages done to the different parts of the boat, especially the wheel. The trip of three-hundred miles upstream was completed in four days, and the return to St.Paul with the troops in two days.

The "Fanny Harris" went into dry dock at LaCrosse after the trip where repairs were made. Most of the boat above deck had to be replaced, but the hull was little damaged. The men who made the journey, both soldiers and boat's crew, must have felt that the war thereafter had few terrors for them.

Minnesota River.

Steamboating on the Minnesota,and other tributaries of the Mississippi, was at its height from about 1855 to 1865. On the Minnesota River, for instance, traffic reached a high point in 1862, when there were over 400 boat arrivals at St.Paul.

Steamboat navigation, however, on the Red River of the North, which had barely been established before the Civil War, continued to flourish all during the 60's and 70's. St.Paul furnished supplies for that part of Canada, and was also the chief market for furs of the district. For a number of years the Hudson's Bay Company, large fur dealers, brought goods in bond through St.Paul to Ft.Garry.

A boat called the "Anson Northrup" was the first steamer run on the Red River. It was transported piecemeal overland from above St.Anthony Falls and assembled on the Red River. It made its first trip in 1859. This boat was taken to pieces and transported to Moorhead in 1859 for J.C.Burbank and Co., proprietors of the Great Northwestern Stage Lines. Edward Bell was her captain.

In 1860 Capt.John B.Davis started up the Minnesota River in high water with his boat the "Freighter". He intended to cross over from Big Stone Lake to Lake Traverse and pass thence into the Red River. This attempt to take a steamboat over what was ordianarily a portage,even for canoes, met with failure. The boat grounded before Big Stone Lake was reached. Her machinery was taken out and used in another boat on the Red River and her hull lay and rotted in the open prairie.

All the Hudson's Bay Co's. boats were later sold to the Red River Transportation Co, which also ran a number of barges on the river. Traffic continued on a profitable basis until the end of the 70's, when the railroad north from St.Paul was joined by a Canadian Pacific line from Winnipeg and took over all the business.

Tugs were used on the Minnesota River to tow barges usually loaded

Minnesota River.
Red River of the North.

. . . . . .

grain. As much as 30,000 bu.of grain were hauled in this manner on one trip. The steamboat companies opposed the development of this traffic, for it upset their established trade.

In 1854 William F.Davidson appeared in St.Paul. He was the son of an Ohio canal-boat man. In 1857 he operated the "Franklin Steele" on the Minnesota River, where the Robert Bros. had formerly handled the most of the business. Cutting under their rates, he did a profitable business and within a short time had outgrown the Minnesota River. He then went into steamboating on the Mississippi in a big way.

The following steamboats operated on the Minnesota and Red Rivers:

Name of Boat.

Anson Northrup - - - Taken to pieces and transported to Moorhead in 1859, where she was put together agin and run on the Red River of the North by Capt.Edwin Bell, for J.C.Burbank & Co. owners of the Great Northwestern Stage Line.

Anthony Wayne - - - - Side-wheel built 1844. In Galena and St.Louis trade,- 1845-46-47. Capt.Morrison first, later Capt.Dan Able; 1850 Capt.Able; went up to Falls of St.Anthony 1850, first boat to make the trip; made a trip up the Minn. River into the Indian country, as far as Traverse des Sioux with a large excursion party from St.Paul; went into the Missouri River trade and sank Mar.25,1851, three mi. above Liberty Landing, Mo.,being a total loss.

Ariel (2nd) - - - - Built at Cincinnati,Ohio,1854; 169 tons. Minn.River packet 1861.

Bertrand - - - - Rogers,master,at Galena 1846; regular St.Louis packet; Advertised for pleasure trip to St.Peters June 19,1846.

Blackhawk - - - - Capt.M.W.Lodwick,1852; bought that year by the Galena Packet Co. for a low-water boat; ten trips to St.Paul 1853; Capt.R.M.Scencer, opening season 1854, later O.H.Maxwell; 1855, Minn.River packet, Capt.O.H.Maxwell; at St.Paul 1859.

Cremona - - - - Stern wheel; built at New Albany,Ind.1852, 266 tons. In Minn.River trade 1857 Capt.Martin.

Dr.Franklin (first) - Sunk at foot Moquoketa Chute 1854,total loss. Galena and Minn.Packet Co. bought 1848. First boat to have steam whistle on upper river. Capt.Lodwick 1849; 1850 in Galena and St.Paul trade; Capt.Lodwick 1851 took a large party on excursion from Galena to Indian treaty grounds at Traverse des Sioux. Minn River trade.; out of commission 1853

Minnesota River Boats.

.....

Eolian - - - - Stern wheel; built at Brownsville,Pa.1855; 205 tons; in Minn. River trade 1857,Capt.Troy; same trade 1858,1859.

Equator - - - Stern wheel, built at Beaver,Pa.1853; 162 tons, in St.Paul trade 1855-56; Minn.River 1857,Capt.Scencerbox; wrecked in great storm on Lake St.Croix Apr.1858, Capt.Asa B.Green,pilots Chas.Jewell, George B.Merrick.

Fire Canoe --- Stern wheel; built at Lawrence,Ohio,1854; 166 tons; at St.Paul May 1855, Capt.Baldwin 1856; Capt.Spencer 1857; in Minn.River trade 1858, sunk by ice in Lake Pepin three miles below Wacouta,Apr.1861; passengers and crew taken off by the "Fanny Harris" which was near her when she sunk.

Frank Steele - - Small side-wheel, 175 ft.,28 ft.beam; Capt.W.F.Davidson in Minn.River trade 1857, same 1858; same trade Capt.J.R.Hatcher 1859, and spring of 1860,in Davidson's Line,same 1861. Minn.River 1862.

Freighter - - - Minn.River trade 1857-58; Capt.John Farmer 1859. Sold 1859 to John B.Davis, who took a cargo from the Red River of the North, and attempted to run her via Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake, and over the portage to Red River. His attempt was made too late in the season, on a falling river, with the result that the Freighter was caught about ten miles from Big Stone Lake and was a total loss. Her timbers remained for many years a witness to Capt.Davis's lack of caution.

Globe - - - - Capt.Haycock, in Minn.River trade 1854-55-56.

H.S.Allen - - - Small stern wheel; Minn.River boat 1856-57-58-59.

H.T.Yeatman - - - Stern wheel; built at Freedom,Pa.1852; 165 tons; wintered above lake at Pt.Douglas 1856-57; left St.Paul for head of Lake Apr.10,1857 and was sunk at Hastings by heading into rocks at the levee, staving hole in bow; drifted down and lodged on bar one-half mile below landing; in Minn.River trade 1855-56.

H.M.Rice - - - Minn.River project 1855.

Isaac Shelby - - At St.Paul Nov.14,1857; in Minn.River trade 1858-59.

J.Bissel - - - Capt.Bissel, from Pittsburg 1857; in Minn.River trade 1857-58.

J.B.Gordon - - - - Minn.River boat 1855.

Jasper - - - - Made seven trips Galena to ~~St.Louis~~ St.Peters,Minn.1843.

Jeanette Robert - - Small stern wheel; Capt.Louis Robert 1857-58; in Minn.River trade; Capt.F.Aymond 1859, same trade 1860-61-62; 146 tons.

Medora - - - - Owned in St.Paul by Wm.Constans,1857; Capt.Ed.McLagan, in Minn river trade 1858.

Minnesota River Boats.

Minnesota (first) - -Stern wheel; built at Elizabethtown, Ky.1849; at St.Paul, from Galena 1849, Capt.R.A.Riley; at St.Paul June 25,1851; 1857-1858 Capt.Hay, in Minn.River trade.

Montello - - - Small stern wheeler from Fox River, Wis., in Minn.River trade 1855; built over hull of barge, no boiler deck.

Pavilion - - - Capt.Lafferty, at Galena for St.Peters, June 1,1837.

Pomeroy - - - Minn.River boat, Capt.Bell 1861.

Rumsey - - - Small Minn.River boat, sunk on mud flat opposite St.Paul levee.

Stella Whipple - - Stern wheel, Capt.Haycock; Minn.River trade 1861; built for the Chippewa River.

Tiger - - - Had engines of old "Otter"; Capt.Maxwell, in St.Paul trade 1850, same captain, in Minn.River trade 1851-52; 104 tons, 52 horse power, very slow.

Time and Tide - - (2nd) Stern wheel, built at Freedom, Pa.1853; 131 tons. Capt.Louis Robert, at St.Paul 1855-56; same captain in Minn.River trade 1857-58; Capt.Nelson Robert, same trade 1859.

Wave - - - - - - - Small stern wheel; Capt.Maxwell, in Minn.River trade 1857-58 at Galena from St.Louis 1845 (possibly another boat)

Wenona - - - - - - - Stern wheel, built at Belle Vernon, Pa.1855, 171 tons, Capt. L.Brown; in Minn.River trade; also in St.Croix River trade for a time; at St.Paul 1859.

Yankee - - - - - Stern wheel, 145 ft.long, 200 tons, at St.Paul Sept.27,1849; Aug.1,1850. started on trip of 300 mi up Minn.River with a party of ladies and gentlemen on an exploring expedition. Capt.M.K.Harris, clerk G.R.Girdon, pilot J.S.Armstrong, engineers G.W.Scott and G.L.Sargent; reached a point many miles further up the river than had heretofore been reached by steamboats; at St.Paul June 26,1851, Capt.Orrin Smith.

G.V.

Importance of the Minnesota River.

The importance of the Minnesota River as a commercial waterway was duly recognized by the railroads in the 1870's. Steamboat navigation was a factor not to be entirely disregarded by the faster and more efficient method of transportation employed by the railroads.

The Minnesota River was navigable, and therefore competition to rail traffic, from April to August. Boats were able to run as far as Mankato, and a part of the time to Ft.Ridgely and the Redwood and Yellow Medicine Indian agencies. The depth of water of course determined the distance a vessel could proceed up the river.

In 1867 the terminus of the Minnesota Valley Railroad was at Belle Plaine,Minn. The railroad company made arrangements with the steamer "Mollie Mohler" to make a daily round trip between Belle Plaine and Mankato, leaving the former town on arrival of the morning train from St.Paul. On the return the boat would connect with the afternoon train to St.Paul. Other boats made frequent trips carrying both passengers and freight. At a time when the railroads needed all the traffic the country afforded, this competition was keenly felt.

In the spring the river ~~was accuctomed to~~ often overflowed its banks and covered the bottom lands over a area one to two miles wide, and to a depth of from five to fifteen feet. The railroads were compelled to build their tracks above the high water level and follow generally the contour of the bluffs.

At that time the district south and west of Mankato tributary to the Minnesota River was an uncultivated and uninhabited prairie. The only white people were the few settlers along the river banks. The Maple, Blue Earth Watonwan, Cottonwood, Redwood, Yellow Medicine and Lac qui Parle rivers with several others from the north side flowed into the Minnesota above Mankato.

Importance of the Minnesota River.

Water from melting snows in the spring, or from heavy rains in the summer, drained into the creeks and then into the rivers. Unable to take care of so much water the swollen rivers overflowed their banks, flooded the Minnesota Valley, and even covered the West St.Paul flats to a depth of from ten to twelve feet.

Settlement and cultivation of this area changed the situation and the habits of the river, and it has been several years since a steamer has been able to navigate above Shakopee.

The first steamboat to navigate the Minnesota River was the "Virginia" on May 10,1823. This small vessel, 118 ft.long by 22 ft.wide, ascended only as far as Mendota and Ft.Snelling which were about the only two points of importance at that time in the territory now embraced within our state. In those days all the boats navigating the Upper Mississippi River had to enter the Minnesota to reach these terminal points.

No attempt was made to navigate the Minnesota River with steamboats until 1850; with the exception of a small steamer in 1842 that carried an excursion party as far as an old Indian village near Shakopee. Prior to this time the river was not considered navigable to any great distance for larger craft than keel boats, and a demonstration to the contrary, that then took place, has made the year 1850 notable in the history of the state.

The "Anthony Wayne", a Mississippi River boat in charge of Capt.Daniel Able, arrived at St.Paul with an excursion party June 1850. A freshet caused the water in the Minnesota River to be high just at this time, and someone suggested to Capt.Able that he entertain his guests by taking them up this, then little known river, to see the country. People of St.Paul became interested in the proposed trip and a purse of $225 was soon raised to defray expenses.

Imortance of the Minnesota River
(Tributary)

.....

In the early morning of Friday, June 28, the day set for the trip the "Anthony Wayne," her decks crowded with nearly two-hundred people started her memorable journey up the Minnesota. Louis Pelon and Thos.J.Odell, two men who were acquainted with the river, acted as pilots.

A Sioux village was situated on the opposite side of the river from the present site of what is now the town of Chaska Some goods were unloaded at this point for Louis Robert who operated a trading post there. At the foot of the rapids, near Carver, the steamer overtook a keel-boat whose crew was engaged in the arduous task of forcing their boat up the turbulent waters by dragging it with a long rope passed around a tree some distance upstream, and by pushing it with long poles. The captain of the "Wayne" concluded not to attempt the rapids, and turned the prow of his boat homeward.

By this time the fuel had about given out and the boat's crew made a raid on an Indian cemetery near by, and replenished their stock from the dry poles and pickets there found. Vandalism of this nature was probably excused on the grounds of necessity, no other dry wood being available. The voyage had proven eminently successful and the people were wild in their praise of the river and the beautiful country which they had passed through.

A sort of jealousy was aroused by the "Wayne's" achievement with the result that the "Nominee", a rival boat in command of Capt.Orren Smith, advertised another excursion party to take place July 13th. On that date the "Nominee" passed the formidable rapids, planted her shingle three miles above, and then returned home in triumph.

Importance of the Minnesota River.
(Tributary)

.....

The "Wayne" refused to be outdone by a rival, and on the 18th of the same month, with a third excursion, once more ascended the now furious river. The Ft.Snelling band was taken along to help entertain the guests. This time the "Wayne" passed the rapids successfully and on the first day came to the spot where the shingle of the "Nominee" had been placed. The second night was spent at Traverse des Sioux. After partaking of a picnic dinner at the bend in the river two or three miles below the present site of Mankato, the party returned home. Everyone was loud in his praise of the beautiful Minnesota Valley and looked forward to another trip up the then little traveled river.

Incited by the success of these two boats others planned excursions of their own. The "Yankee", belonging to the Harris Line determined to outdo them all. A grand excursion, including many prominent officials and business men of St.Paul, was organized, and on Monday,July 22nd, this ambitious little boat steamed into the mouth of the Minnesota. M.K.Harris was her captain; J.S.Armstrong, pilot; G.W.Scott,first engineer; and G.L.Sargent, second engineer. The FT.Snelling band furnished the music. On the second day out the steamer passed Traverse des Sioux where the missionaries had just harvested a field of wheat, probably the first ever raised in the valley. How fitting, that the first year of steamboating in the valley should also be the first year to grow that commodity which was to play so important a part in the river's traffic. The party spent the second night at the upper end of Kasota Prairie where a dance was held in the moonlight.

The "Yankee" soon passed the sign the "Anthony Wayne" had fastened to a tree the week before. By the third day the steamer reached a point near the present village of Judson, in Blue Earth county. It was late in the season but the stage of water in the river was excellent and no difficulty had so far been incurred in navigation.

Many of the passengers wished to go further up the river, but the intense heat which was around 104° in the shade, and the swarms of mosquitoes prevented both crew and passengers from sleeping. Provisions also were getting low and the enthusiastic crowd finally re-considered their vote and agreed to turn home. The fourth night found them again at Traverse des Sioux.

On the return trip they spent an hour at an Indian village where the old chief and several braves came down to the landing to meet them. The chief accused the excursionists of tramping down his corn for which he claimed large damages. The truth was that the corn had been drowned out and washed away by high water long before the whites landed. The Indians argued tthat the Great Spirit was angry because the whites had taken those big "fire canoes" up the river, and that was why the freshet came, so they ought to pay for the corn. There is no record of how the chief succeeded with his damage suit, but the excursionists reached St.Paul all safe and sound by night.

The fact that the Minnesota River was navigable to steamboats had been fully demonstrated, and the desirability for settlement of the fertile country it drained was everywhere heralded with enthusiasm. Focusing the public eye on the valley contributed largely to the making of the great treaty with the Sioux.

The following summer,when the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux was signed, the beautiful, fertile Minnesota Valley was thrown open to civilization.

At sunrise on the morning of June 30,1851, the treaty commissioners, Hon.Luke Lea and Gov.Ramsey, with their attendants and supplies, arrived by the steamer "Excelsior" at Traverse des Sioux. Ten days previous the"Ben Franklin" carried to the same place a party of St Paul people to witness the famous treaty then in progress.

Importance of the Minnesota River.
(Tributary)

.....

The third and only other steamboat to ascend the Minnesota this year was the "Uncle Toby", which ,on Oct.7th, carried to Traverse des Sioux the first load of Indian goods under the new treaty.

After this treaty had been signed, there was a great rush of settlers into the Minnesota Valley; and before the spring of 1852, several townsites lined the banks of the river from St.Paul to the mouth of the Blue Earth, a distance by water of one-hundred fifty miles. Naturally these young towns were in dire need of communication with the outside world that they might be accessable to settlers ever pressing westward, and that their citizens might have their wants supplied.

Many St.Paul business men had interests in the town of Mankato, and for this reason the "Tiger" under Capt.Maxwell was induced to make three trips to this remote place in 1852. She made the trips in April and May of that year and each time carried a capacity load of freight and passengers for Mankato and intermediate points. Water too low for navigation soon forced the "Tiger" to go elsewhere.

Congress passed an act June 8,1852 restoring the old Sioux name "Minnesota" to this river which heretofore the whites had called the "St.Peters".

Mid-summer rains came and again made navigation possible. Colonel Robertson chartered the "Black Hawk" to make three trips to Mankato during July. This boat, 130 ft.long and 21 ft.wide, was commanded by Capt.Hall. With a draft of only seventeen inches of water the "Black Hawk" was well suited for the Minnesota River trade. She had thirty state rooms and was capable of carrying 130 tons. The first trip, July 3, was made with a cargo of freight and

Importance of Minnesota River.
(Tributary)

forty passengers. Arriving at Mankato July 5th, she returned the next day to St.Paul. The other two trips were made on the 12th and 21st of July.

The "Jennie Lind" also entered the Minnesota River trade in 1852 and made a trip to Babcock's Landing, also one to Traverse des Sioux, and one to Holme's Landing, which is now called Shakopee. The "Enterprise" went as far as Little rapids making in all thirteen departures from the St.Paul wharf during the first year of traffic with the white settlers.

The "Greek Slave", Capt.Louis Robert, was the first steamer to enter the Minnesota in 1853. She left St.Paul April 4th with a full load of freight and one-hundred-fifty passengers, arriving at Traverse des Sioux and Mankato on the 7th. The small seventy-two ton stern-wheeler "Clarion" owned by Capt.Humbertson entered the trade the same year. On her first voyage Apr.22 she carried an excursion party.

Two very important events in the development and expansion of Minnesota River trade took place in 1853. One was the erection of Ft.Ridgely and the other the establishment of the Sioux Agencies. Soldiers and Indians stationed at these places required large amounts of supplies annually, all of which must be transported up the river. An impetus for several years was thus given to steamboat traffic on the Minnesota.

The "West Newton", a small packet 150 ft.long and 300 tons burden owned by Harris Brothers, secured the government contract to transport troops from Ft.Snelling to the new post. The first load of troops consisting of two companies of the Sixth U.S.Regiment, in command of Capts.Dana and Monroe, left Ft.Snelling Apr.27,1853. The steamer towed two barges which were used to accomodate the soldier's baggage. A few days previous the "Tiger" and the

Minnesota River (Tributary)

....

"Clarion", each with a couple of barges in tow heavily loaded with supplies for the new fort and agencies, had departed from St.Paul. The "West Newton", a much faster boat, passed both"Clarion" and "Tiger" and was first to arrive at the new fort.

The year 1853 was a good season for the steamboat business. The Minnesota remained navigable all during the summer and boats ascended to Ft.Ridgely, Mankato, the Lower Sioux Agency and other points. Passenger and freight trade were excellent. The little "Clarion" carried 150 passengers at a time and other boats were equally crowded. C.D.Fillmore and Wm.Constans,two St.Paul men, placed the "Humboldt" and the "Iola" in service. Captains were well pleased with the steady patronage received,and hopes ran high for even greater prosperity in coming years.

There were 49 boat arrivals in 1853 from the Minnesota river at the St.Paul wharf. The "Greek Slave" made 4 trips; "Clarion" 16; "Tiger" 13; "Black Hawk",8; "West Newton" 1;"Shenandoah",3;"H umboldt",2; "Iola" 2. The "Greek Slave" opened the season April 4, and the "Iola" closed it Nov.2.

The winter of 1853-4 was mild and open, with little snow, and the river broke up early without the usual freshet. The "Greek Slave" once again opened the season of navigation with an excursion to Shakopee on March 21. The "Humboldt" followed her, and during March and April made a dozen trips; but owing to low water never got above the rapids more than once or twice. The "Greek Slave" attempted but one trip, this being in April.

Success of the prior season had awakened great interest in Minn. River trade and preparation for an extended business had been made during the inactive winter, but all was doomed to disapointment.

Minnesota River (Tributary)

Capt.Humbertson sold the "Clarion" and built a fine,new boat 170 ft.long, with 35 well-furnished state rooms. He named it the "Minnesota Belle". Her maiden voyage took place May 3rd with a load of immigrants for South Bend,a new townsite Humbertson had started. When the new boat failed to climb the Little rapids near Carver, the captain abandoned the river, townsite and all in disgust.

A heavy rainfall May 20 made it possible for the "Black Hawk" to reach Traverse des Sioux. Regular trips were made between Little rapids and Traverse des Sioux up to July 20 by the "Iola" and "Montello", supplementing the "Black Hawk", "Humboldt", and other boats plying below the rapids.

Keel-boats became common on the river this year. Andrew G.Myrick placed two of these barges on the river in charge of the Russell boys. The keel-boats were from 50 ft. to 60 ft. long, 10 ft.to 15 ft.wide, and 4 ft. to 5 ft.high. Along the top a plank walk,for use of the pole men, was fastened, and a small cabin for the cook was built in the stern. During a storm or bad weather a tarpaulin was spread over the goods for protection. The crew consisted of a captain who also steered the boat, ten or twelve pole men, and the cook. These boats made a speed of from 12 to 14 mi. a day with a fair stage of water, but if sandbars or rapids were encountered a mile or two a day was the limit. Down-stream, however,they would make much better time. Low water made it necessary to ship most of the supplies for Ft.Ridgely and the Sioux Agencies, as well as for all up-river towns this year, is such barges.

In 1854 steamboat arrivals at St.Paul from the Minnesota River did not exceed thirty, and few of these came from beyond the Little rapids.

Minnesota River (Tributary)

Very little snow fell during the winter of 1854-5, and consequently the Minnesota River continued low in the spring of 1855, though not as low as the prior season.

The "Globe", a new boat belonging to Louis Robert left St.Paul April 8. She was the first steamer to ascend the Minnesota this season. The "Black Hawk", "J.B.Gordon,No.2", the "J.S.Allen" and the "Montello", with barges "Russell" and "Master" soon followed. The April business was fair, but during mid-summer navigation was mostly suspended owing to low water. Heavy rains in the autumn caused quite a freshet, and trade was brisk again until the middle of November. The "Time and Tide", "Berlin","Equator" and "Reveille", had now joined the other boats in the Minnesota river trade.

Capt.Louis Robert had the contract to deliver the Sioux annuties and took them up to the agency late in October. This money was taken up to the agency in the "Globe" of which Edwin Bell was captain. The boat struck a large rock within two miles of its destination and the goods had to be unloaded on the river bank. While the two captains Robert and Bell were gone to carry the Indian money, amounting to $90,000 in gold, to Ft.Ridgely, the Indians who had gathered to divide the provisions, carelessly set fire to the dry grass. The blaze soon reached the pile of goods; and most of them, including fifty kegs of powder were totaly destroyed.

Boats engaged in the Minnesota river trade during 1855, and the number of trips taken by each from St.Paul, were as follows: "Globe" 14 trips; "Black Hawk" 13;"Berlin" 13; "Time and Tide" 8; "H.S.Allen" 22;"J.B.Gordon,No.2," 28; "Equator" 6; "Reville" 3; "Montello" 1; "Shenandoah",1. Total 109.
The "Globe" was first to enter April 8, and she was the last to leave Nov.16.

Minnesota River (Tributary)

.....

An event which tended to stimulate traffic on the Minnesota River in 1855,and for some years afterwards, was the transference of two-thousand Winnebago Indians from the Upper Mississippi to a reservation near Mankato.

The steamer "Reveille" opened navigation for the 1856 season. Captain R.M.Spencer was the commanding officer. An extra heavy fall of snow during the winter caused plenty of water in the river which aided the larger boats especially. The "Globe" Capt.Nelson Robert followed by the "H.S.Allen" got away to a good start. The fast "Reveille" on her second trip of the season left St Paul at 2 p.m.,Thursday,April 17, with 132 passengers and a full cargo of freight. She arrived at Mankato the following Saturday. Departing from Mankato on the return trip at 5 a.m. Sunday she reached St.Paul by 8 p.m. after having made twenty-four landings on the way. This was considered very good time.

On May 5th the"Reveille" landed between two and three hundred settlers at Mankato. These people established what was known as the Mapleton Colony. On May 10th the "Yeatman", Capt.Sam G.Cabbell, landed at South Bend a company of Welsh settlers from Ohio, numbering one-hundred and twenty-one. The "Yeatman" was the largest stern-wheel boat on the Minnesota, and this was her first trip. She continued in the trade only a short time while the water was high. On account of her size, low water forced her from service early in the summer. Several other boats made regular trips to Ft.Ridgely and the Lower Sioux Agency, while some ascended to the Upper Agency at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine River.

Minnesota River (Tributary)

.....

The time-table issued by the "Time and Tide" for this season showed the distance from St.Paul to Yellow Medicine to be 446 mi. The idea of a time-table was somewhat amusing to the travelers of that day, as there was nothing more uncertain or void of any idea of regularity than a steamboat. Unexpected delays were frequent and it often took several days to complete a comparatively short trip. The most common causes for delay were stopping to re-fuel; sandbars and other obstructions in the stream; repairing smokestacks, hull or paddle wheel which had been damaged by rocks or snags in the water,; and many more too numerous to mention.

While the boat was tied up to some nearby tree for repairs, the passengers would sit on the bank and tell stories, go hunting in the woods, or pick berries and wild plums which grew abundantly along the river. Many a pioneer remembers the good boat "Time and Tide" and how its jolly captain, Louis Robert, would sing out with a bellowing voice when the boat was about to depart,- "All aboard! Time and Tide wait for no man," and then add, with a sly twinkle in his eye,"and only a few minutes for a woman."

The names of the boats which left St.Paul in 1856 for the Minnesota River, and the number of trips made by each, were as follows: "Equator",46 trips; "Reveille",40; "Globe" 34; "Wave" 29; "Minnesota" 20; "Clarion" 12; "Time and Tide" 12; "Berlin" 10; and "H.T.Yeatman" 4. Total trips recorded 207, being an increase of nearly 100 over the preceeding year. The steamers "H.S.Allen" and "Humboldt" were also on the Mississippi River this year.

S.V.

13

Minnesota River.

- -

The high stage of water in the spring of 1857 made it possible for the "Equator" to leave St.Paul for Mankato as early as April 12. She carried a full load of passengers and freight and was followed the next day by the "Clarion".

Two new boats the "Jeanette Roberts," a large stern-wheel packet owned by Capt.Louis Robert and the "Frank Steele", a side-wheel packet owned by Commodore Davidson. Smaller boats operating in the Minnesota River trade for the first time were the Antelope, Medora, J.Bissell, Isaac Shelby, Fire Canoe and Red Wing.

The steamboat business was exceptionally good this season. Eighteen boats arrived at St.Peter during a single week in May, and by the first of June thirty-four boats had passed that town for up river points.

The following boats departed from the wharf at St.Paul for points on the Minnesota River in the year 1857. The number of trips each boat made is also given: Antelope,105 trips; Jeanette Roberts,40; Isaac Shelby,36; Medora,29; Frank Steele,20; Equator,14; Time and Tide,13; Clarion,12; Minnesota,8; Ocean Wave,6; J.Bissell,5; Red Wing,3; and Fire Canoe,1. Total trips 292, an increase of 85 from the year before. The Antelope closed the season Nov.14

The following winter was very mild and the ice in the Minnesota broke up earlier then usual. The "Jeanette Roberts" left St.Paul March 20 for the Minnesota. The"Medora", although starting later passed the "Jeanette Roberts" below Shakopee injuring one of her wheels in the act. After a delay of about two hours for repairs she managed to overtake and pass the "Jeanette Roberts" at Traverse des Sioux, and reached Mankato as the first boat of the season on March 22.

Minnesota River.

.....

Heavy rains kept the water level high enabling some of the larger boats such as the "Frank Steele" and "Isaac Shelby" to ascend to Mankato late into September. The "Freighter", a new boat, appeared this season.

In the spring of 1858 J.R.Cleveland and C.F.Butterfield built the large barge "Minneopa" which was employed for many years in the Minnesota traffic. This barge, 75 ft. long and 12 ft.wide and 4 ft.high, was propelled by a poling crew and usually took two weeks to make the round trip to St.Paul. The register at Mankato showed 179 steamboat arrivals for the season. The St.Paul wharfmaster's book gave the following: Antelope,201 trips; Franklin Steele,54; Jeanette Roberts,35; Time & Tide,30; Freighter,18; Isaac Shelby,16; Ocean Wave,12; Clarion,11; Medora,8; Fire Canoe,6; and Minnesota,3. Total trips 394, an increase of 102 over the previous year.

The "Freighter" had the honor of being the first boat to arrive at Mankato. She docked to unload her cargo on March 27,1859. The "Favorite", one of Capt.Davidson's new boats entered the Minnesota trade this spring. Heavy rains kept the river in good navigable condition throughout the season. In fact, the high-water level encouraged Capt.John B.Davis to plan an extraordinary adventure. He attempted to take the "Freighter" across from the Minnesota River to Big Stone Lake and thence to the Red River. Low water on the divide made it impossible to get the boat across,and the trip proved a failure. The Captain and his crew returned home about the last of July in a canoe. The "Freighter", a small flat-bottomed boat was left in dry dock near the Dakota line.

Minnesota River.

.....

The Indians carried away everything but the hull, which, half buried in the sand about ten miles below Big Stone Lake, remained in view for over twenty years. The Captain always believed that had he started the month previous his attempt would have been successful.

Steamboat arrivals at Mankato for 1859 totaled 131 as follows:

	From St.Paul	From West
Favorite	44 trips	4
Jeannette Roberts	31	8
Frank Steele	19	11
Freighter	2	1
Ocean Wave	2	2
Time & Tide	2	1
Isaac Shelby	1	1
Belfast	1	1
	102	29

The total arrivals from the Minnesota at St.Paul were 300. Navigation continued until quite late. The last boat to pass down over the Little rapids was the "Jeannette Roberts" Nov.6.

In 1860 the navigation season commenced early. The "Time and Tide" left St.Paul March 19, reaching St.Peter March 21 and Mankato the next day. None of the larger boats were able to navigate owing to the low water. Several smaller boats of light draft, such as the "Dorrit", "Eolian", and the "Albany" were placed in service. The "Jeannette Roberts" managed to get up as far as Mankato a few times, and once as far as the Sioux Agency. Considerable rain fell in June which enabled the "Time and Tide", "Favorite" and "Franklin Steele" to ascend as far as St.Peter. The "Albany", however, which the old timers used to say required a light dew to run it, was the only boat able to navigate above Little rapids

Minnesota River.

.....

Finally the water receded to such a extent that navigation was entirely suspended except for the little "Antelope" plying between Shakopee and Chaska. At a time like this Cleveland's two barges practically had a monopoly on the Minnesota River traffic. Each barge had a capacity of from 10 to 12 tons and were kept busy until the river closed in November.

The records show only 250 steamboat arrivals at St.Paul from the Minnesota this year,and one boat, the "Antelope", made 198 of these.

In the year 1861, there was a big flood in the Minnesota River. The first boat to leave St.Paul was the "Albany" on March 30. She arrived at Mankato April 1. The older Indians and traders claimed that the Minnesota was higher this spring than it had been since 1821. The water was so high that the Minnesota and Red Rivers were united between Big Stone Lake and Lake Traverse. Under these favorible conditions the "Jeanette Robert", in April made a record of ascending the river two miles further than any steamer had ever gone before.

This year Capt.Orren Smith, president of the Minnesota Packet Company, put two first class boats, the "City Belle" and "Fanny Harris" into the Minnesota River trade to compete with the Davidson and Robert lines. The "Fanny Harris" made a trip in April to Ft.Ridgely and brought back Major Thos.W.Sherman's battery to quell the southern rebellion, which had just started. The "Favorite" also went and brought back Major J.C.Pemberton, with his command of 80 soldiers.

The "City Belle" a fine side-wheel packet, and one of the largest steamers that ever entered the Minnesota, made her first appearance at St.Peter and Mankato May 18 under command of Capt.A.J.Chamblin.

Minnesota River.

.....

The river receded rapidly and by the latter part of June became so low that boats could not ascend above the rapids.

The arrivals at St.Peter and Mankato from below numbered 66, as follows: Albany,22 trips; Favorite,18; City Belle,10; Jeannette Roberts 9; Eolian,4; Frank Steele,2; and Fanny Harris,1.

Boats below the rapids ran as usual and the total arrivals at St.Paul from the Minnesota were 318.

Barges did a prosperous business between Mankato and points below. The first bulk shipment of wheat from Minnesota was made on one of these barges June 1861. It comprised 4,000 bu. for LaCrosse,Wis. Wheat had now become the principal export of the valley,but prior to this time it had been transported in sacks.

Another great flood appeared in the spring of 1862. The "Albany" arriving at St.Peter April 3, opened the season. Several new boats entered the trade including the "Pomeroy", the two small craft "Clara Hines" and G.H.Wilson", and the "New Ulm Belle". The "Favorite" and "Jeanette Roberts" were active in the trade as usual. Boat arrivals at Mankato numbered 70, as follows:

From below		From above
Albany	19	1
Jeannette Robert	13	8
Favorite	9	1
Clara Hines	8	1
Pomeroy	6	1
Ariel	2	
G.H.Wilson	1	
	58	12

Minnesota River.

.....

Navigation continued from April 13 to July 20. Mankato shipped 62,000 bu.,and South Bend 8,000 bu of wheat by boat. The steamers operated until late in November. Total arrivals at the St.Paul wharf from the Minnesota were 413 - the largest number in the river's history. The Sioux outbreak of 1862 was partly responsible for the heavy traffic.

The "Favorite", Capt.Bell, carried the first soldiers of Genl.Sibley's command from Ft.Snelling and St.Paul to Shakopee and as far as the Little rapids.

When the "Jeanette" arrived in Mankato April 3, opening the season of 1863 she was greeted by a cheering throng including about 1,000 soldiers. It was customary in those days to gather on the levee to welcome the first steamboat of the season. It meant news from the outside world and a fresh supply of provisions including different kinds of food to relieve the monotonous round of corn cake.

The transportation of troops and supplies in connection with the Sioux War furnished a large part of the river traffic this year. The "Favorite" had been enlarged during the winter and was now entirely taken into government service. It was this boat that carried 270 condemmed Sioux from Mankato to their new quarters at Davenport,Iowa. The "Pomeroy" and the "Eolian" took part in transporting a party of Winnwbagoes from Blue Earth County to their new agency in Nebraska.

Mankato shipped over 60,000 bu. of wheat this spring. The "Flora", a stern-wheeler, was placed into the Minnesota River trade this season by the Prairie du Chien Railway Co.

Minnesota River.

.....

A drouth appeared during the summer of 1863, and by the middle of June, the Minnesota River had fallen so low that all traffic above the rapids was suspended.

The need for freight transportation in the valley became greater every year, and the steamers employed had more traffic than they could handle. Barges were pressed into service to relieve the congestion. A number of these were towed by a small tug boat. The steamboat owners frowned on this new competition.

Steamboat arrivals from the Minnesota in 1863 at the wharf in St.Paul were 177.

In 1863-4 the Davidson Company built the "Mankato", named in honor of the thriving town at the mouth of the Blue Earth. The citizans of Mankato, in appreciation of the compliment, planned to present a fine silk flag to the boat on her first arrival. That opportunity,however, did not present itself until a year later; for during 1864 the "Jeanette Roberts" was about the only boat to reach Mankato.

Total arrivals of steamboats at St.Paul from the Minnesota this year was 166. Barges numbered 82.

In January 1865, the state legislature appropriated $3,000 to improve the Minnesota River. Major E.P.Evans of Blue Earth Co. and John Webber of Ottawa,LeSueur Co., were appointed commissioners to oversee the work. Accordingly Major Evans cleared the river of snags and made other helpful improvements.

Minnesota River.

.....

The drouth of the last two years seemed to be broken. The "Ariel" was the first steamer up the Minnesota. She left St.Paul April 2 and arrived at Mankato on the 4th.

Among the new boats to enter the Minnesota river trade in 1865 were the "Mollie Mohler", "Julia," "G.H.Gray," "Otter," "Mankato," "Lansing," "General Sheridan," and the "Hudson." The "Mollie Mohler", Capt.George Houghton, was 125 ft.long and had accomodations for 56 passengers in her cabin. The "Julia," Capt.Reany, a stern-wheeler,141 ft. long with a 28 ft. beam had a capacity of 300 tons although drawing only 17 in.of water. She was built and owned by the Northwestern Packet Co. expressly for the Minnesota River trade.

Trade was brisk during the entire season. One hundred and fifty boats arrived at St.Paul from Carver and the Little rapids, and forty arrived from points above the rapids as far as from Mankato. A few trips were made to the upper Minnesota. Total arrivals from this river at St.Paul in 1865 was 195.

Barges also did a good business. Grain, wood, lime and various other commodities were shipped by this method. Twenty barges, each loaded with 200 bbls. of lime from Shakopee, and 97 barges loaded with 40 cords of wood, each from various points in the valley, arrived at the St.Paul wharf. No record of the wheat barges was kept, as they generally carried their cargoes to LaCrosse or Prairie du Chien and had no reason to stop at St.Paul.

Minnesota River.

.....

In 1866 the first boat up the river was the "Chippewa Falls" which arrived at Mankato April 15. The "Minnesota," a very fine packet, entered the Minnesota River trade for the first time this season. Other boats engaged in traffic were the "Julia," "Mankato," "Mollie Mohler," "Stella Whipple," "otter," "Pioneer," "Tiber," and "Pearl." Fifty boats with a combined tonnage of 3,750 arrived at Mankato.

The barge trade was expanding rapidly and now over 175 of this type of craft were in use. These barges carrying heavy loads were towed by small power boats or tugs, and often by the smaller steamers. The "Tiber" towed, at one time, out of the Minnesota and down the Mississippi, a string of barges loaded with 30,000 bu.of wheat. Some of these barges were quite large. "Little Mac," one of the largest and owned by Davidson, was 142 ft. long, 25 ft.wide and of 114 tons burden.

Wheat shipments from points in the Minnesota Valley during 1866 amounted to 688,641 bu. in spite of low water and poor navigation. Arrivals at St.Paul from the Minnesota were only about 100, a comparitively low figure. Two main reasons are given for this falling off in steamboat traffic this year: the St.Paul and Sioux City railroad had extended its line to Belle Plaine which cut off a large share of steamboat traffic on the lower and most navigable portion of the river; and barges carried most of the freight from the Minnesota down the Mississippi without occasion to stop and register at St.Paul.

The exceptionally good year of 1867 was opened by the "Chippewa Falls," which landed at Mankato April 18.

Minnesota River.

The "Mollie Mohler," Capt.H.W.Holmes was used out of Mankato to make connections with the railroad at Belle Plaine. She was a fast boat and often made the trip from St.Peter to Mankato, a distance of 30 mi., in one hour and twenty minutes. Up to September, when the "Mollie Mohler" retired, there had been 166 steamboats arrivals at Mankato, of which the "Mollie" had made 87.

The "Otter" ran regularly until Oct.30, making 2 or 3 trips a week; and the "Ellen Hardy" and "Mankato" made a few trips; while the "Ariel" made regular trips between Mankato and St.Peter and the railroad terminus, until the river closed Nov.10.

A U.S.Survey of the Minnesota River was made during the summer of 1866 with the intention of improving it. In 1867 Congress appropriated $7,000 for river improvements but little came of the project and it was soon abandoned. The coming of the railroad to the valley made it unnecessary.

A river accident happened on the 10th of May 1867, two miles below Mankato. The "Julia" struck a snag and sank in 12 ft. of water. Luckily no passengers were injured and most of the freight was recovered; but the hull lies in the sands of the Minnesota to this day.

The "Chippewa Falls" was again the first boat at Mankato in 1868, arriving March 31. Navigation was not as good as the previous year, yet by the first of May, fifty steamers had arrived at Mankato. No new boats entered the service this year, and quite a few heretofore prominent in the trade had disappeared, among them the "Mollie Mohler," and the "Jeannette Roberts." Trade was confined mostly to points above

Minnesota River.

.....

the terminus of the railroad, which by October had reached Mankato.

The first steamboat to reach Mankato in 1869 was the "Ellen Hardy" April 18. Other boats engaged in business were the "Otter," "St.Anthony Falls," "Pioneer," "Tiger," and "Jeannette Roberts."

The business men of New Ulm purchased the little steamer "Otter" for $3,000 and worked her between New Ulm and Mankato. She made regular trips and carried an average load of 3,000 bu.of wheat. Several trips were made to Redwood. On Nov.3 there were three boats at one time, the "Pioneer," "Otter" and "Tiger" unloading at the Mankato levee.

The "Otter" was first to reach Mankato in 1870, arriving from New Ulm April 5. The"Mankato" on April 13 was the first boat to arrive from St.Paul. Business increased rapidly during the early spring and several smaller boats like the "Otter" and "Tiger" continued to run through July and August. Total arrivals for the season were about 80. The "Mankato" handled 17,000 bu. of wheat in one load from New Ulm, and a few days later the"Dexter" brought 21,000 bu. down in two barges. The "Otter" and "Tiger" plied between Mankato and New Ulm, while the "Mankato" "Dexter" and "St.Anthony Falls" made frequent trips to St.Paul. This year the well-known "Jeannette Roberts" was sold to the Wisconsin River trade.

The "Otter" was again the first boat at Mankato in 1871, arriving April 4 from New Ulm. The "Pioneer" from St.Paul arrived Apr.15.

Minnesota River.

.....

The "Mankato" struck a snag and sank near St.Peter on her first trip of the season April 18th. Her passengers and crew were unharmed. After lying in the river for over a year, she was finally raised and taken away never to enter the Minnesota again. The season was a short one, not over two months, but the "Otter", "Pioneer," and "Hudson" were kept busy hauling wheat and other freight from New Ulm and Redwood to South Bend where it was transferred to the railroad.

Among the last steamboats to operate on the Minnesota River were the "Osceola," Capt.Haycock, a small vessel which ascended as far as Redwood once in the spring of 1872, twice in 1873, and once in 1874. Low water made navigation more difficult each season. In 1876 the "Ida Fulton," and "Wyman X" came up the Minnesota; and in 1886 one trip was made by the "Alvira". For a decade no steamboats were seen on the Minnesota. Taking advantage of a freshet in April 1897,Capt.E.W.Durant of Stillwater ran the "Henrietta," a 170 ft.stern wheel vessel with 40 staterooms, on an excursion to Hudson,St.Peter, and Mankato.

Cultivation of the country has exposed the surface of the land so that much of the moisture which in the olden days drained into the creeks and rivers now evaporates, causing all of the streams to shrink to half their former size.

To view the Minnesota River today, one would wonder that it ever was a navigable stream. But the old settler who remembers the river in its prime when it carried the commerce of the great valley, can see in the dim vistas of the past a different scene. Many a tale of thrilling interest can be told of those by-gone days, when this river was navigable.

G.V.