

S&D

REFLECTOR

Published by Sons and Daughters
of Pioneer Rivermen



Vol. 33, No. 3

Marietta, Ohio

September 1996



- FRONT COVER -

The UNCLE OLIVER (5496) is the subject for the cover photo and she could hardly have been posed better. She is about to land at Ben Lomond Plantation on October 20, 1922 and Capt. Bill Tippitt was the photographer. Ben Lomond is at about mile 540 below Cairo on the Mississippi with Lake Providence, Louisiana across the river. The high ground in the background is probably Stack Island, now part of the Louisiana shore.

The UNCLE OLIVER was built as the CONCORDIA (1284) by the Howard Shipyard in 1906 for Capt. George Prince of Natchez. She became part of the Royal Route Co., Vicksburg about 1915 and renamed UNCLE OLIVER in honor of Oliver Wilds, father of her long-time clerk Capt. Ollie K. Wilds. Sold to Capt. Oliver Bradford and Dick Dicharry in September, 1925 and rebuilt at Slidell, LA. She burned at Vicksburg in 1927.

The UNCLE OLIVER looks the part of a humble working packet, no pretense and passengers were incidental. She has a good cargo of sacked cotton seed and a number of pieces of package freight are on the boiler deck. Three or four roustabouts are having a discussion alongside the stack of sacks on the starboard side and the line to the stage boom is unhitched, ready to pull the stage around onto the bank; a deckhand is tending the other boom line on the port side. The head deckhand has some sort of white package or roll of papers in his hand and seems to be talking to the mate.

The UNCLE OLIVER is gently floating into the Ben Lomond landing, perhaps to drop off a solitary passenger or maybe to load more cotton seed. We have no idea what brought Bill Tippitt to Ben Lomond 74 years ago but he did a wonderful job in framing the UNCLE OLIVER.

* * *

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- LETTERS -

The Going to the Circus story, page 31, June issue, attracted much comment, not the least of which was to educate Ye Ed on musical instruments.

We puzzled about the term "French harp" and the following alert readers have informed us it is a harmonica or mouth organ:

John Byrd, Jim Haley, C. W. Stoll, Bill Smith, Bob Grey.

* * *

Sirs: Enjoyed the gasboat articles in the March issue. The photo of the ST. DENNIS brought to mind that the Allegheny River Sand Co. of Parnassus, PA was bought by Davison Sand and Gravel. I remember when the ST. DENNIS burned (1920); they also had the VALLEY KING and the VALLEY QUEEN and I think one of these had been the ST. DENNIS.

Bill Smith
Oil City, PA

= Your memory is right on target Bill. The VALLEY QUEEN was built on the hull of the ST. DENNIS, 60.4x15.4x2.0, with a 25 hp. gas engine. She must not have been damaged too badly in the fire since she continued to be listed as built in 1915. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: I read with interest the piece on page 20, June issue about the dangers of wicket dams.

Two or three years ago a similar incident occurred at LaGrange Lock and Dam, Illinois River. A boat was upbound with

loads on a falling river with the dam still down. Several wickets were sucked up and holed two steel dry-cargo barges. I was two miles behind with a tow of single-skin oil barges. Needless to say, we held up and went through the lock.

There are still two wicket dams on the Illinois: LaGrange at mile 80.2 and Peoria at mile 157.7.

Robert Reynolds
Memphis, TN

= Bob Reynolds wrote while the M/V HAL D. MILLER was waiting to lock through Chickamauga Dam, mile 471, Tennessee River enroute to Knoxville. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: My thanks to you for the photo of the CHRIS GREENE on the back cover of the June issue, I started riding the CHRIS GREENE in 1932 after working all the school year at 25¢ an hour to pay the fare. Later, I also rode the GORDON C. GREENE several times and recall visiting at the home of Mack Gamble, up on the hillside near Clarington.

Fr. A. T. Zugelter
Chicago, IL

= When the GORDON C. GREENE ran Cincinnati-Pittsburgh and later Cincinnati-New Martinsville, WV, Mack Gamble's car frequently served as a jutney for the crew. Mack got on the boat and his car went to Marietta, Wheeling, East Liverpool or Pittsburgh, to be reclaimed whenever the boat arrived. Hence, many of the GORDON's crew and passengers visited the Gamble house. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: The photo of the TRANSPORTER on the cover of the June issue is Great! I saw the TRANSPORTER one time, at the Teitzville Light, Bracken County, Kentucky.

In answer to Bob Miller's question (see Letters, June) about

private facilities for each stateroom on the proposed OHIO VALLEY: I checked my plans for her and find no private bathrooms on the boiler deck; it looks like there were bathrooms with ten rooms in the Texas.

Jim Haley
Lakeside, KY

= Lest you think Jim is teasing about Teitzville, the village and light are at mile 431.6. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: I have first-hand experience in starting one-lung gas engines (Gasboat articles, March issue).

In the early 1920s my father took me with him to check on various oil wells in the Pittsburgh area. A pumping engine of the same type as used on some of the gas boats had to be restarted. While my father levered the engine over with a 2x4 piece of lumber, I heated the "hot plug" with a blowtorch. The engine had been built in my grandfather's works on Sandusky Street in Allegheny.

William P. Carlin
Switzerland

= Levering the engine on the compression stroke must be done very carefully lest the 2x4 and the holder thereof be thrown through the roof when the engine fires. This procedure is no longer approved by O.S.H.A. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: I represent a new transportation museum here in Williston, near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. We hope to open late this summer with Maynard Stephens' model of the JOSEPHINE the centerpiece of our steamboat exhibit.

We have as an artifact this unusual whistle which is labeled as from an unnamed steamer.

Any idea of which boat may have used such a whistle?

Doreen Chaky
Williston, ND

= The whistle in question was dated 1880 and looks like an enlarged version of one used by the Keystone Cops. Ms. Chaky had found a patent application for a similar design dated 1869. Never did we hear of one being used on a steamboat but Alan Bates has a picture of one, page 53, Engineerroom Cyclopoedium. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: Here's a little trivia: I have the November 9, 1929 issue of The Waterways Journal and on page 14, Upper Ohio column it mentions, "Fred Way, Jr. is now master and pilot of the GENERAL WOOD in the Pittsburgh-Cincinnati trade with Capt. Dan Patchell as partner.

Henry J. Peters
Lawrenceburg, IN

= This item caused us to look up chapter 21 of "Log of the Betsy Ann" to discover how the GENERAL WOOD came to be in the P. & C, trade in the fall of 1929. She was chartered to fill in for the QUEEN CITY and maintain the freight service after the passenger season. Fred Way had recently received his pilot's license and Bill Pollock filled the purser position.

"Bill and I laid the GENERAL WOOD up in late December, 1929 at Pittsburgh. She had a gaping hole in her side from getting crushed in an ice jam - but we had patched this up - and still did not make any effort to raise steam on her again." The GENERAL WOOD lay at the Pittsburgh wharf until taken to East Liverpool in November, 1934 for use as a wharfboat. Ed.

* * *

Sirs: The only sternwheel steamboat operating west of the Rockies is the ELIZABETH LOUISE built by Hal Wilmunder more than a decade ago. She is based across the river from Sacramento on the Yolo County side of the river, opposite the DELTA KING's berth, and operates mostly private charter trips and some brunch cruises.

Every five years Capt. Wilmunder has to submit the ELIZABETH LOUISE to her Coast Guard inspection and this occasions an 85 mile trip from Sacramento to Vallejo. The 1996 expedition departed Sacramento at 5:45 am. with the lights of the city reflecting on the river. We arrived at Vallejo around 5 pm., the last few miles through Suisun Bay making slow time against the tide. This run requires the opening of five drawbridges: Freeport, Courtland, Walnut Grove, Isleton and Rio Vista.

Privileged passengers along for the trip were Bob Parkinson, Dick and Annie Rutter, Bobbie Burri and the writer.

Steam still lives on the Sacramento River!

Stan Garvey
Menlo Park, CA

= Should you be spending a night aboard the DELTA KING (or in a motel) in Sacramento and desire to ride the ELIZABETH LOUISE, call Hal Wilmunder at (916) 485-9595. Ed.

* * *

The Midnight Oiler
I am the midnight "oiler",
Aboard the Delta Queen,
From St. Paul to New Orleans,
And every town in between.

Sirs: I spent my vacation 1995 as a crew member on the DELTA QUEEN. Looked at my paycheck and went back to driving my truck.

Mike Giglio
Silverton, OH
* * *

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Established in 1964 as the official publication of the Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen, edited and published by Capt. Frederick Way, Jr. through 1992. The S&D Reflector takes its name from a newspaper published in 1869 by the management of the sidewheel packet FLEETWOOD, Parkersburg-Cincinnati trade.

Membership in S&D is not restricted to descendants of river pioneers. Your interest in river affairs makes you eligible and welcome. Full membership entitles the holder to the S&D Reflector and admission to the Ohio River Museum including the W. P. SNYDER JR., Marietta, Ohio.

Membership dues are currently \$15 per year for a full membership; \$1 per year for associated memberships for spouses and children under 18. Please list full names of children so that each may receive a membership card.

Applications for membership in S&D together with your check should be sent to:

Mrs. J. W. Rutter, Secretary
126 Seneca Drive
Marietta, OH 45750

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Correspondance is invited by the editor. Please do not send unsolicited photographs on a loan basis.

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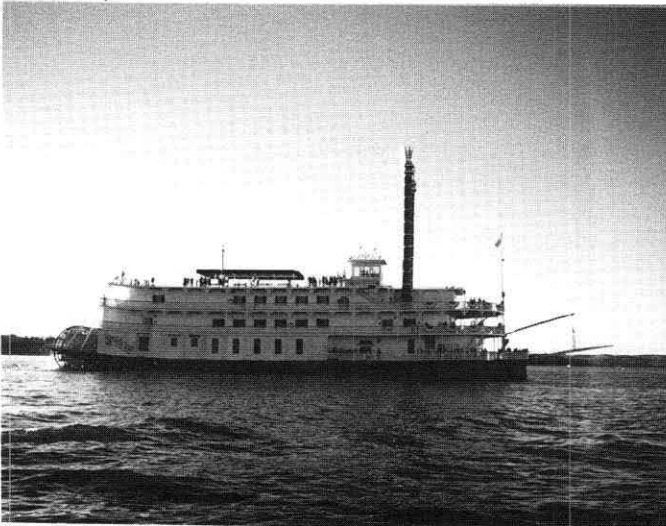
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STACKS SERVED: TALL OR SHORTENED



Capt. Scott Sexton, assistant master of the BRANSON BELLE, provides a sketch of the pride of Lake Table Rock, down on the edge of the Ozarks. She is no small thing! 278x78x7, driven by twin paddle wheels set 20 feet apart, each 26 feet in diameter with 17 staggered buckets. Power is by electric motors. Those stacks top out at 113 ft. above the water.

The BRANSON BELLE came out new in 1995, running four cruises per day starting with breakfast; the '96 season extends until Christmas. Master is Capt. Oscar Fittipaldi with Capt. Trevor Sweeney the other assistant master.

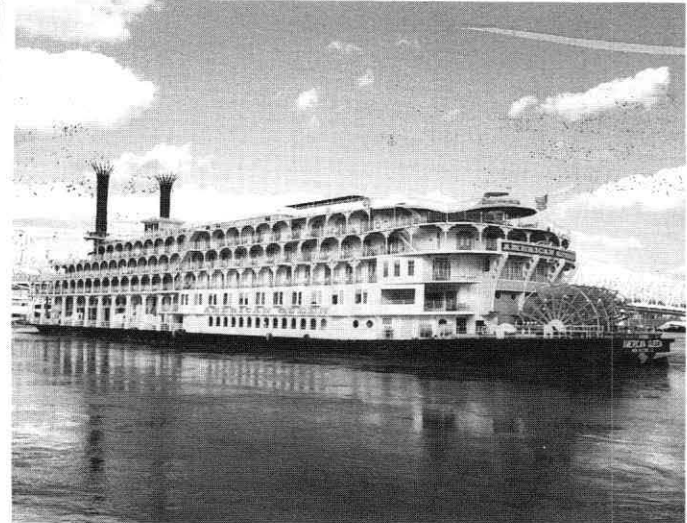
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THE WHISTLE MUSEUM

Harry Barry, North East, PA alerts us to a museum devoted to steam whistles, all types, all sizes and from whatever source of steam or air. The folder states, "See what made those sounds of a bygone era associated with steam hauled trains, ships at sea and factory hooters." The centerpiece of the museum is the whistle from the Atlantic liner, MAURETANIA: bells 9, 12 and 15 inches in diameter, weight 675 pounds. The SPRAGUE's whistle by comparison weighs 450 pounds.

Too bad the museum is in Cornwall, England or S&D might arrange a whistle blow.

* * *



Frank X. Prudent, R.N. watched the titanic AMERICAN QUEEN doing several stationary cruises at Cincinnati while trapped between the new Taylor-Southgate Bridge and the Suspension Bridge last May. Earlier in the spring the QUEEN had created a blackout over half of Iowa when a too low power line became tangled in her stacks. So, the AMERICAN QUEEN's stacks have been pruned by 12 feet and the golden dog collars discarded.

As depicted in Frank's photo above, we do believe her proportions have been improved. Top of the stacks was 109 ft., 5 inches; now 97 ft.

* * *

ANNUAL MEETING AT MARIETTA

Plans for the annual meeting of Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen on September 13 and 14, 1996 are set and your presence is anticipated.

Headquarters for the meeting is the Hotel Lafayette, Marietta, Ohio, a tradition since 1939. Whether you are staying at the Lafayette or elsewhere be sure and pick up a copy of the complete meeting program from the hotel front desk.

FRIDAY EVENING Get-together cruise aboard the VALLEY GEM departs from the landing in front of the Lafayette at 8 pm. You should have your S&D membership card available for boarding.

SATURDAY MORNING Breakfast on your own. Annual business meeting convenes in the hotel ballroom at 9:30 am.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON Picnic-style buffet luncheon will be available at 12:30 pm. on the VALLEY GEM landing barge near the Ohio River Museum; informal program to follow.

SATURDAY EVENING Banquet with table service at 6:30 pm. in the Lafayette Hotel ballroom. Speaker - Allen Hess with his photographs of, "The River's Green Margin."

Hotel Lafayette (614) 373-5522

Best Western (614) 374-7211

Day's Inn, Motel 8, Comfort Inn, Holiday Inn also nearby.

THIS AND THAT

MISSISSIPPI RIVER THEATER AT DUBUQUE

The Dubuque County Historical Society, operator of the Mississippi River Museum at the Ice Harbor and the Mathias Ham House near Eagle Point Park, announced the opening of a new theater and orientation film for the 1996 season at the River Museum. The new attraction is on the first floor of the Welcome Center and features Garrison Keillor doing the narration.

"The theater seats 38 people in four rows curved toward the screen. Ambient theatre lighting, a fog machine, spectacular visuals shown in two screen format and a dynamic soundscape enhanced by subwoofers are just a few of the special effects that help take the viewer on an unforgettable journey. Artifacts illuminated during the presentation make it a 3-D experience."

The fifteen minute "orientation experience" was created by Monadnock Media and we'll read up on ambient lighting and subwoofers before our next trip to Dubuque. With Garrison Keillor telling stories about, "Boats where all the deckhands are strong and chambermaids are good looking", the show has to be a winner.

* * *

A DELTA QUEEN TRIP IN REVERSE

The excursion boat BECKY THATCHER once operated by BB Riverboats, Cincinnati is in the midst of a sea voyage as this is written. From the Ohio River she is destined to operate on the Sacramento River in California, if she's as lucky as the DELTA QUEEN.

The SPIRIT OF SACRAMENTO, an excursion boat at Old Sacramento and docked just above the DELTA KING, burned in a spectacular fire on February 3, 1996. The BECKY THATCHER, 123x27, twin screw with a decorative stern wheel, was owned by Robert Lumpp before her sale to the west coast. Her stern wheel was removed at Morgan City, LA and she departed on June 21 for the long trip under her own power along the Intracoastal Waterway to Key West, then south to a point about 18 miles off the coast of Cuba and then toward Cozumel, Mexico. Hugging the coast in her journey south she will transit the Panama Canal and then north along the coast before crossing the Gulf of California to follow the coast up to San Francisco. Before going into service the BECKY THATCHER will be refurbished at a shipyard, have her wheel decoration attached and presumably be renamed. Good luck!

Thanks to David Massie for the report.

* * *

YOU ARE INVITED TO A CHRISTENING

After 26 years abuilding, the auxiliary schooner LARINDA will be launched on September 28, 1996 at the Sandwich, MA marina, near the Cape Cod Canal. Long time subscribers will remember that LARINDA first appeared in the S&D Reflector on page 41, June, 1979 issue. Builder Larry Mahan was then looking for a two cylinder Wolverine diesel engine to provide auxiliary power for the replica schooner; the original was built at Boston in 1767 and called SULTANA.

Larry didn't find the Wolverine he was looking for in 1979 but made do with a 1928 model, four cylinder, 100 hp. at 350 rpm. "We would like to invite everyone to come and witness this spectacular event. The festivities will start early and last all day."

To reconfirm times and date you might want to contact Larry or Marlene Mahan at (508) 428-8728.

* * *

MADISON RIVER TRADE IN DECLINE

The following developments or the lack thereof will be stale news if you were looking for an excursion boat or ferry at Madison, Indiana this summer. In the interest of giving, "The rest of the story", we will report what transpired after the item included under "This and That," page 28, June issue.

The proposed ferry service between Madison and Milton, Kentucky was to begin July '8. It may not have done so as the village of Milton was still studying a contract as of press time.

The excursion boat BONNIE BELLE, a fixture at Madison for the past five years, was sold to parties at Toledo, Ohio before the 1996 season opened. Too much boat for the trade was cited as the reason for the sale.

Our thanks to Louie De Car for the clippings.

* * *

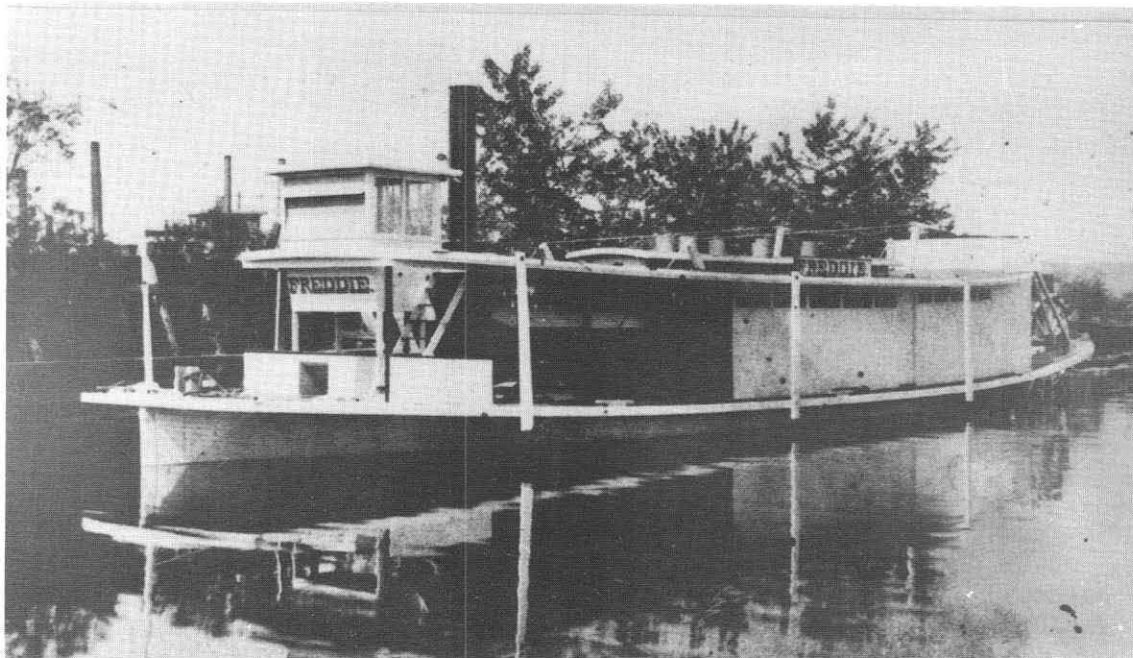
JULIA BELLE SWAIN

There's still time for a fall cruise aboard the steamboat JULIA BELLE SWAIN, according to a recent release from the Great River Steamboat Co.

Five hour cruises on the Upper Mississippi from the La Crosse, Wisconsin base are scheduled during the prime season for the fall colors. Dates are September 7, 14 and 21 and October 5, 12 and 19, luncheon and entertainment, even beyond the scenery, included. The September 25 cruise throws in a murder for good measure.

Reservations required: (800) 815-1005

* * *



THE "FREDDIE" MYSTERY CLEARED

There has been a question around for several years about the first boat owned by Capt. John Streckfus. Although the FREDDIE (2149) has been credited as the start of the business in Streckfus company literature and repeated by others the dates didn't support this. How did the story get started? Capt. William "Bill" Carroll, a member of the Streckfus family by marriage, now favors us with an untangling of Streckfus history.

- - - - -

I have followed with interest the articles and photographs in past issues of the S&D Reflector concerning the FREDDIE and the origin of Streckfus Steamers, Inc. The myth that this was the first boat purchased by John Streckfus in the year 1884, marking the beginning of his career on the river, is an old and oft-repeated one. It just doesn't fit the facts as they are available today.

The origins of this chronology are many. It was a story handed down in the Streckfus family and was repeated by the various members on many occasions, frequently quoted by the press. The tale has other origins also and I am enclosing a copy of a letter written by Fred Kahlke to Roy L. Barkhau of The Waterways Journal in 1968 and found recently by Tom Dunn, Gateway Riverboat Cruises.

Fred Kahlke's letter in part:

Rock Island, Ill., April 29, 1968

Dear Mr. Barkhau,

Received your letter of April 23 regarding a stern wheel steamer named the "Freddie". This boat was designed and built by Mr. Peter N.

FREDDIE (2149), 73x16x3, as she looked in 1891 when built by Peter Kahlke and owned by Capt. John Streckfus. She was soon sold to the U.S. Corps of Engineers and appears on the roster of the Rock Island District in 1894 as the towboat MAC (T1685). For photos and history of the MAC see S&D Reflector, June, 1994. Photo from William Carroll.

Kahlke, my father, on speculation due to lack of work to keep the crew employed. When completed he named it "Freddie" after me, his son, when I was about ten years old. Capt. John Streckfus took the boat and started a daily packet service between Rock Island and Andalusia, Illinois carrying passengers and freight, 10 miles down the river, as the roads and transportation was difficult between the two sites. It was not a financial success and he sold the boat to the U.S. Corps of Engineers who changed her name to the "Mac" in honor of Mr. J. C. McElherne, District (Corps) Engineer, who operated the boat for many years in connection with their river work."

We know from the mortgage agreement for the purchase of the VERNE SWAIN (5551) signed by John Streckfus (buyer) and David Swain and Charles Hicks (sellers) dated August 13, 1889 that the purchase of the VERNE SWAIN antedated the building of the FREDDIE. The date of 1891 is given by Way and we know that Fred Kahlke was born in 1881 so his statement that the boat was built by his father when he was about ten years old conforms with known dates. 1891 is also the date the FREDDIE appears in the records of the Dubuque District and is listed as a new boat with, "new hull and boilers".

* * *

**CAPT. WILLIAM RION HOEL,
The Life of a 19th Century Riverman
J. W. Rutter
Part II**

The first part of this saga of the adventurous life of William R. Hoel saw him learning the river under the guidance of his father, Capt. Edmond Hoel, beginning October 15, 1840. He was an apt student and became a well respected expert of the piloting art aboard a number of the major steamers operating in the trades south from Cincinnati. William R. Hoel was one of the first of the Cincinnati pilots to receive a U.S. license when the new licensing law for engineers and pilots began on January 1, 1852.

In October, 1855 Hoel was a passenger on the balloon AMERICA which ascended during a public demonstration in Cincinnati. He was injured when the balloon came down in a storm near Waynesville, Ohio. Recovered from broken ribs and other injuries, Capt. Hoel took the piloting job on the new packet MONONGAHELA and made three round trips on her Cincinnati-New Orleans during the winter of 1856.

Part I of this narrative ended when the MONONGAHELA laid up April 10, 1856.

April 10, 1856: William Hoel left the MONONGAHELA (Way 4001) at Cincinnati and transferred to the ARGYLE (Way 0333). This was a sidewheel packet, a little smaller and two years older than the MONONGAHELA. ARGYLE was owned by Capt. Jacob Poe of Georgetown, Pennsylvania with others and operated in tramp trades. She made two trips Cincinnati-New Orleans before laying up at Scuffletown Bar, near Newburg, Indiana on June 12, 1856 when low water prevented the ARGYLE from getting farther up the river on her return trip to Cincinnati.

Capt. Hoel was drawing \$250 per month as pilot at this time which was probably top-dollar for Cincinnati pilots. The captain had to wait six weeks before going out on the ALMA (Way 0188) on July 6 on a trip from Cincinnati to New Orleans and back to St. Louis which took twenty-two days and for which he was paid \$200. The ALMA was a small sternwheel packet which had been built for the Missouri River and apparently pressed into service for the Cincinnati to New Orleans trade because of low water on the Ohio.

The Mississippi River was also at a low stage that summer of 1856 for after leaving the ALMA on July 29 Capt. Hoel did not find work again until November 28. The HENRY GRAFF (Way 2594) was another smallish sternwheeler filling in as a low water boat for the regular packets. The GRAFF had been built in 1855 at Belle Vernon,

Pennsylvania. William Hoel took her from St. Louis to New Orleans and back to Shippingport at the foot of the Louisville-Portland Canal. This trip took twenty-three days and ended on Christmas Day, 1856; pay \$325.

The New Year of 1857 started favorably when Capt. Hoel was hired on the MONARCH (Way 4003) on January 1. This was one of the larger sidewheel packets then operating south from Cincinnati, 406 tons, although still built for the restrictive size of the locks in the Louisville-Portland Canal. For comparison, MONARCH was less than half the size of the big JACOB STRADER (Way 2915) of 905 tons, 347 feet in length, which operated above the canal between Cincinnati and Louisville at that time. Master of the MONARCH was Capt. John A. Williamson, Newport, Kentucky who probably had an ownership interest in the boat and was a friend of Capt. Hoel. Hoel was paid \$125 per month until the boat left Cincinnati on February 9, 1857 and then \$250 per month. The MONARCH made five round trips between Cincinnati and New Orleans before laying up on July 18. Pay received, \$1,229.

For the remainder of 1857 we surmise that the Ohio River was at a low stage since Hoel was employed on boats running outside of the Cincinnati-New Orleans trade which he preferred. He took the LINDA (Way 3476), a small sidewheel boat of 150 tons, from Cincinnati to New Orleans and arrived there on August 28. For this work, Hoel was paid \$200 but then paid Billy Parker \$50 as his steersman. The LINDA was owned and usually operated at New Orleans and was dismantled the following year.

At New Orleans he joined the VIRGINIA (Way 5590), a 277 foot packet which was then operating in the New Orleans-St. Louis trade. She had been built 1853 for the very short lived Union Line operation between Wheeling and Cincinnati and gravitated to the Mississippi when the Union Line failed. The pay was \$250 per month for pilots on the VIRGINIA and Capt. Hoel made eight trips on her until she laid up at New Orleans January 6, 1858. The VIRGINIA would explode her boilers at Lake Ponchartrain, Louisiana on August 7, 1858 with the loss of six lives; Hoel was lucky again.

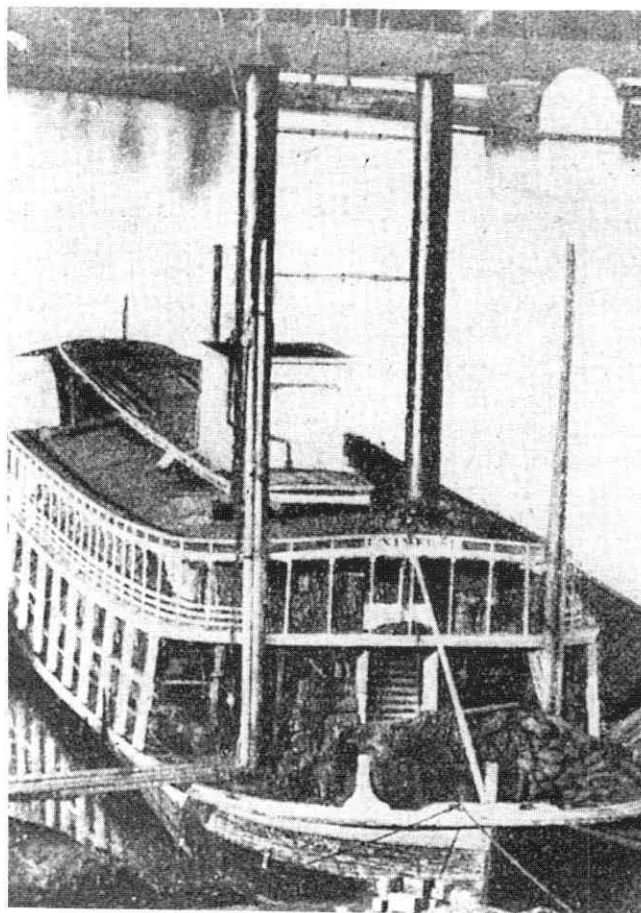
If we add up the earnings noted by William Hoel during 1857 the total is \$2,315.65. So, although the going wage for a pilot in those times was \$250-\$300 per month the vagaries of the river stages seldom permitted the packets to operate without lay up, the crew was then paid off and without wages. The organization of well financed and regular lines of boats in the

various trades would not come until after the Civil War so the pilots jumped from boat to boat, wherever the work offered. Hoel, licensed from Cincinnati to both New Orleans and St. Louis, could usually find a job in a number of trades as required.

1858 was a financial disaster for Capt. Hoel compared to 1857: Hoel's earnings were only \$1,181. He was back on the MONARCH beginning February 9, 1858 but the pay had decreased to \$175 per month; no explanation is offered. The boat was running in the Cincinnati-New Orleans trade but low water must have been a problem again this year as she made only four roundtrips before laying up at Cincinnati on July 20. The next river stage remained low and the next piloting was on the GENL. PIKE (Way 2266) in November; one trip Cincinnati-New Orleans-Cincinnati, 30 days, \$280. The MONARCH came out again the first of December and made a roundtrip to New Orleans for which Hoel drew \$350. Hoel's account book indicates that the trip took 28 days so his pay evidently included some time when the MONARCH was waiting for freight or for the river to rise. During those periods when most of the boats were laid up for low water it would seem that the law of supply and demand dictated the wages for pilots rather than any agreed wage scale in place by a pilot's association.

In 1858 William Hoel's father, Edmond Hoel, purchased a farm of about 100 acres located some two miles east of Waynesville, Ohio. The farm is not far from the place where the ill-fated balloon journey had ended on October 1, 1855. This property had been owned by Abijah Johnson who built a house there in the early 1840s. It is thought that the property was purchased upon the suggestion of William Hoel as an investment after he had become acquainted with the area following the balloon trip. Edmond Hoel never lived at the farm but continued to live in Cincinnati until his death in 1868. William Hoel had not remarried after the death of his young wife in 1853 and apparently made his home when in Cincinnati with his father. The purchase of the farm is mentioned here since it figures later in the life and times of William Hoel.

The MONARCH had laid up on December 28, 1858 and started out for New Orleans January 1, 1859. Hoel was again drawing \$250 per month and the boat made six trips before laying up in April. The UNIVERSE (Way 5524), built in 1857, of the canal size 180x35x7, and Hoel found a berth on her at Paducah for \$200 per month on the first of June. The UNIVERSE went down to New Orleans and then returned to Cincinnati in twenty days. Her next trip to New Orleans ended at Mound City, Illinois on the trip upriver and she laid up July 18, 1859.



The UNIVERSE, upon which Capt. Hoel found employment in the spring of 1859 was probably a freighter. She was chartered by the U.S. during the Civil War and is shown here at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee after the battle of Shiloh. She was a sidewheel boat, no texas and plain railings on the boiler deck with openings for loading. Lost by snagging 1864.

The low water season on the river set in and Capt. Hoel did not go out again until October 1. This was a short trip on the JULIA ROANE (Way 3184) which had just been completed at California, Pennsylvania for James M. and William Donley of Little Rock, Arkansas. The ROAN was a small sternwheel boat and Hoel took her down to Napoleon, Arkansas, a trip of six days, and received \$100. Napoleon was at the mouth of the Arkansas River and a place of some importance but has long since been swallowed by the relentless Mississippi.

Another sternwheel boat completed in 1859 and on her delivery trip south was the ANDY FULTON (Way 0262). She was only 125 feet long, built at Freedom, Pennsylvania and designed for the Red River. Hoel took her from Cincinnati to New Orleans in nine days, arriving on October 20, pay \$200. The stern wheel boats were filling in for the regular boats that fall of 1859 and the GOODY

FRIENDS (Way 2385) advertised for Memphis from Cincinnati in October. Our Capt. Hoel made the round trip on her and got off at Cincinnati fifteen days later on November 11; pay, \$100.

The fall rains brought the river to a good boating stage and the MONARCH came out on November 23 in the New Orleans trade with Hoel back in his pilot post at \$250 per month. For the year 1859 pilot Hoel earned about \$2,400.

The MONARCH was running regularly in the Cincinnati-New Orleans trade during the early spring of 1860 and continued until May 7. Hoel moved over to the QUEEN OF THE WEST (Way 4620) and made a round trip Cincinnati-New Orleans on her before getting off on June 6 and going over to the JUDGE TORRENCE (Way 3168). On the trip back from New Orleans the JUDGE TORRENCE laid up for low water at New Albany, Indiana.

Again, the Ohio went down to a low stage that summer of 1860 and the sidewheel boats that were regulars in their trades were laid up. The Hoel notebook mentions that he was on the KANAWHA VALLEY (Way 3206) that summer but no pay shown. We have no indication that this boat was out of her regular Kanawha River and Cincinnati trade so Hoel may have been riding her to extend his license. He did take the small sternwheel SAM HALE (Way 5005) on a round trip Cincinnati-Napoleon, Arkansas in September, 1860 and collected \$150 for twenty days work.

There was another boat to be delivered south that fall, the ARKANSAS (Way 0346). She was a sternwheeler, 154 feet long built at Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania for the Arkansas River-New Orleans trades. Hoel took her from Cincinnati to New Orleans and was paid \$300 for his services but notes that he paid \$100 to a Mr. Stricker, evidently his steersman for the trip. The ARKANSAS was returning from New Orleans to Cincinnati when she collided with the ELLEN GRAY at Walker's Bar, 90 miles below Evansville on November 11 and the GRAY was sunk. The ever fortunate Capt. Hoel had left the boat on October 22, 1860. The MONARCH came out and Hoel was back at his familiar post on her in the Cincinnati-New Orleans trade for a round trip before the year ended.

The year 1861 would see the beginning of the Civil War with the firing on Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor on April 12. A rapid decline in river traffic on the Mississippi and other rivers leading into the South soon followed. The Union forces set up a blockade at Cairo and the Confederate at Memphis. The blockade of goods was soon followed by a blockade of the boats themselves and through traffic between southern ports and the north was done by June, perhaps earlier. With the New Orleans and other trades

into the newly formed Confederacy stopped there was too much steamboat tonnage for the trades still open and the packets went to the bank.

In January, 1861, exact date uncertain, William Hoel brought the EMMA DUNCAN (Way 1829) back to Cincinnati after a round trip to New Orleans which took 26 days. His pay for the trip was \$300. The EMMA DUNCAN then switched to the Cincinnati-St. Louis trade, her owners being prudent in light of the secession of the southern states and talk of war.

The MONARCH came out in the Cincinnati-New Orleans trade early in the year and Hoel was back on her, almost his regular post when she was running. She made three round trips before laying up at Cincinnati in March.

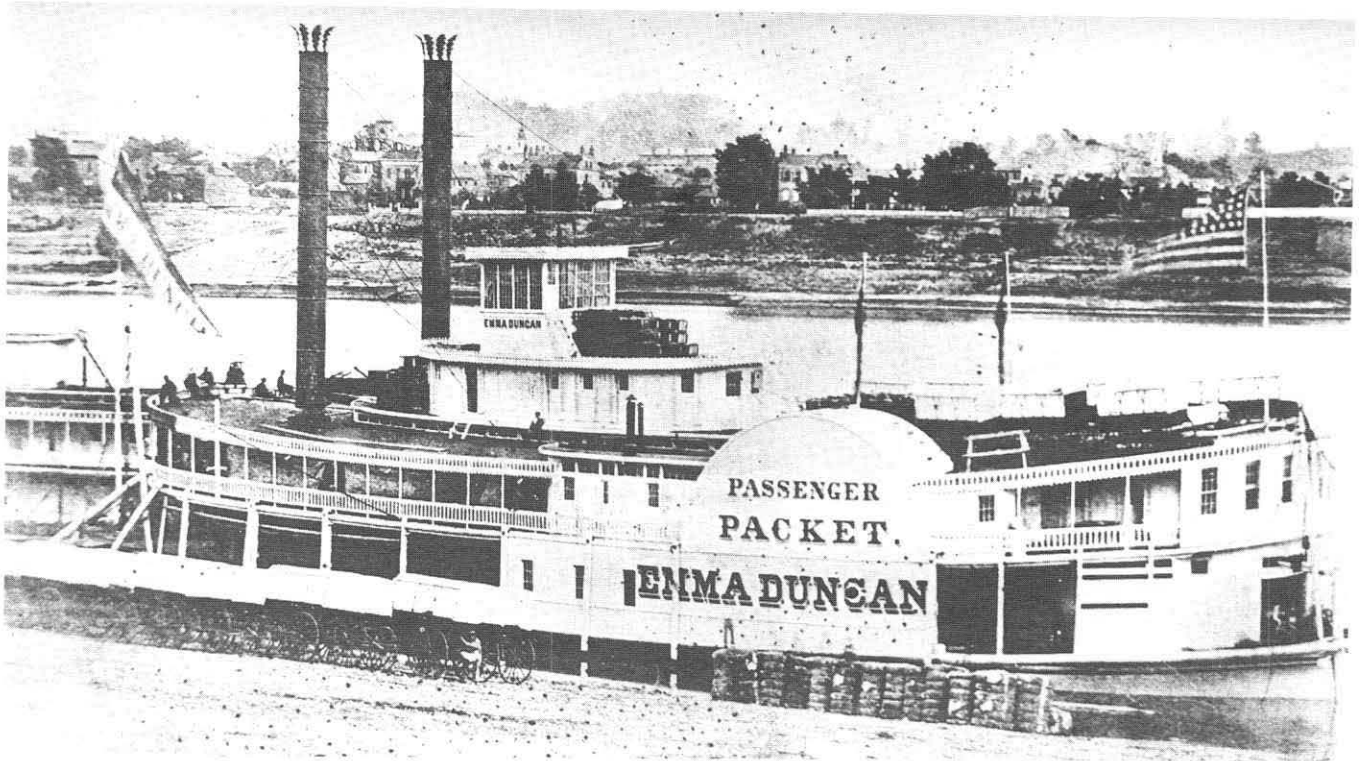
The Mississippi was gradually being closed off by the increasingly tight blockade of the river below Cairo but the IOWA (Way 2766) with Hoel as pilot got in a trip to New Orleans before the end of April, 1861. For 27 days Hoel drew \$350 and that was the end of his piloting until the fall of the year.

Lincoln had been inaugurated as president in March and both North and South were serious about defending their principles, as they saw them. Commercial traffic from the north to New Orleans would not resume until after the fall of Vicksburg in July, 1863.

The rivers leading into the Southern States west of the Appalachian Mountains were the obvious routes for the invasion by the Union forces. The South soon began to fortify various strategic points on the Mississippi, Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers to deny their use by Union transports. The answer by the North was the building of river gunboats which could assist land forces in reducing the forts and open the river routes.

By June 1, 1861 Commander John Rodgers, U.S. Navy, sent to St. Louis to consult with the army commanding general, had bought three sidewheel boats, CONESTOGA (Way 1286), LEXINGTON (Way 3445) and A. O. TYLER (Way 0024). and contracted to have them converted into gunboats. The gunboats were judged to be necessary to protect Cairo, Illinois at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi. Rodgers acted fast, to the discomfort of his superiors who had no chance to deliberate or locate red tape or review the contracts before the awarding.

The conversion of these sidewheelers into gunboats was accomplished at Cincinnati to plans drawn up by Samuel M. Pook; cut down the cabins to a single deck and protect the sides with five inches of oak plank to guard against small arms fire then equip each with several cannon. These gunboats were termed "timberclads" in contrast to the "ironclads" and



The southern states were acting to secede from the Union when the EMMA DUNCAN made her last trip from Cincinnati to New Orleans with William Hoel at the wheel, January, 1861. She

was named for the daughter of a furniture manufacturer in Cincinnati. A comparison with the photo of the JOHN HANCOCK, page 8, June issue shows the refinement in boat design in 15 years. Photo from Murphy Library collection.

"tinclads" which would follow. Their armament of cannons was six or seven guns on each and intended to intimidate lightly armed enemy boats or troops in the open.

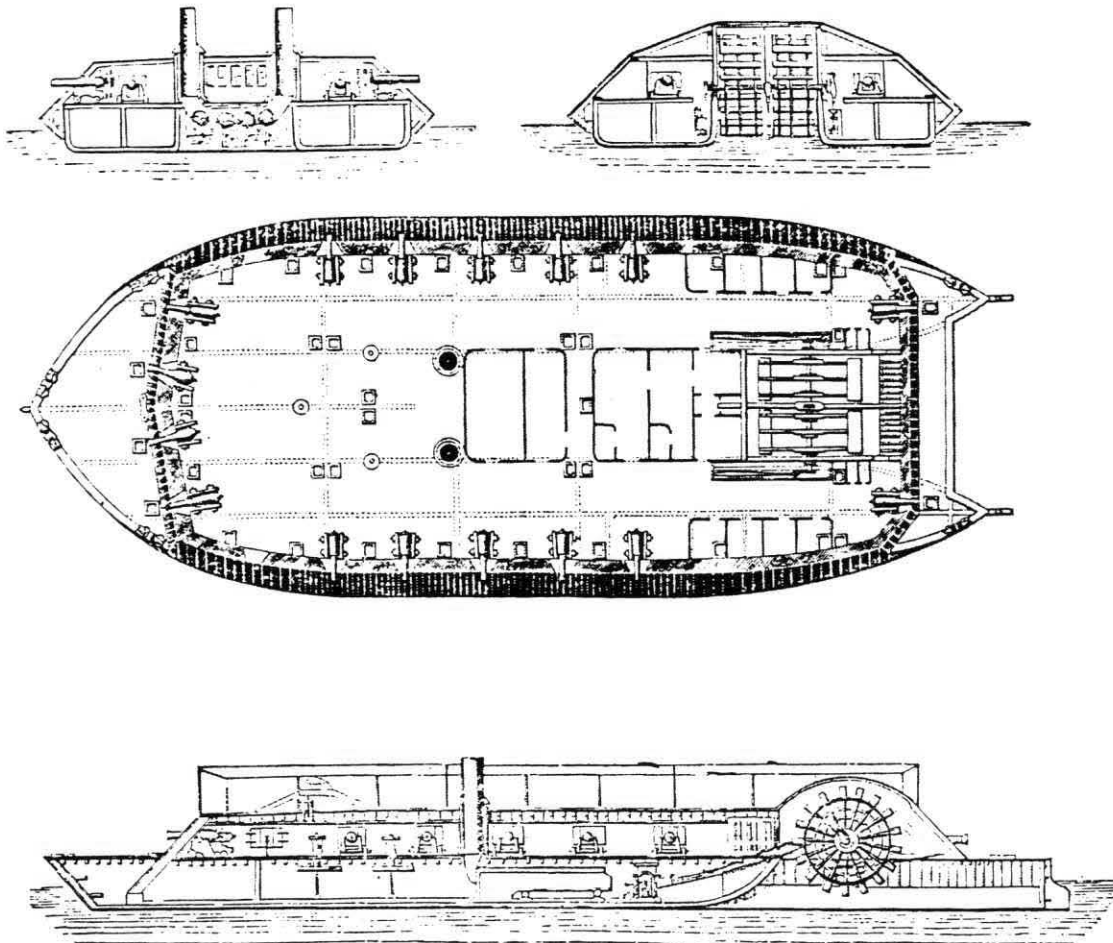
Timberclads were obviously not the answer to attacking the fixed fortifications which the Rebels were then building. Specially designed and armored gunboats would be necessary to open up the Cumberland, Tennessee and Mississippi but such boats had not been seen previously. The Navy Bureau of Construction and Repair prepared a suggested layout for a shallow draft gunboat for review by the War Department. At this point in the war, since the planning for waging the war in the west was an army show, the gunboats would be under army control but with navy officers and crews. The proposed gunboat plan was considerably modified by the river salvage expert Capt. James B. Eads, Naval Constructor Samuel M. Pook, marine engine designer A. Thomas Merritt and Navy Captain Andrew H. Foote.

Seven ironclad gunboats were submitted for bid and on August 7, 1861 the contract was awarded to James B. Eads on a bid of \$627,000 for the seven or a cost of \$89,600 each. The completion date was set at October 10, 1861 with a late penalty of \$250 per day if the date was not met.

The design, usually assigned to Samuel Pook and hence the nickname "Pook's Turtles", called for boats 175x51x7 with a recessed wheel and all machinery and guns protected by a casemate with sloping sides and covered with 2½ inch thick iron plate over heavy timber. During construction there were a number of modifications by Eads and Rodgers which resulted in 122 tons of iron placed on each vessel, more than 50% greater than originally called for and reason enough that the gunboats both looked and performed like turtles.

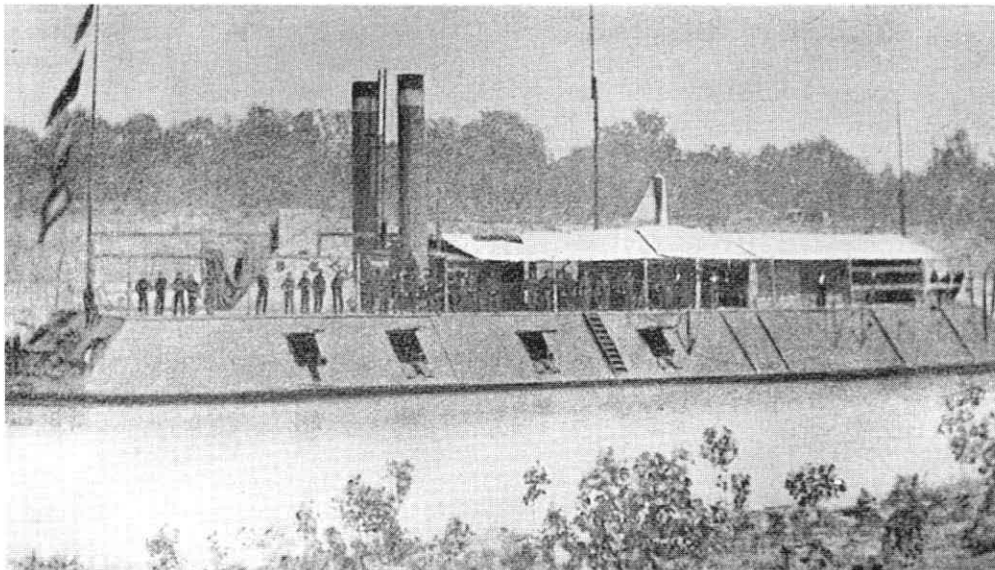
In addition to the seven Pook gunboats the commanding general at the time, John C. Fremont "The Pathfinder", bought the salvage boat SUBMARINE NO. 7 (see Way 5202) from Eads and contracted with him for the boat's rebuilding. This boat became the BENTON, a name she had carried when originally built as a U.S. snagboat, and with the design changes originated by Capt. Eads became perhaps the best of the ironclads in terms of suitability and performance. General Fremont also bought the NEW ERA (Way 4161) from the Wiggins Ferry Co., St. Louis, and she became the ironclad ESSEX.

While all this construction of the new ironclads was going on the army was buying up idle packets and towboats for conversion into tinclads, timberclads and rams. Other steamboats



The design of a "Pook Turtle" is revealed in these drawings of the ironclad BENTON taken from Alexander L. Holley's, *A Treatise on Ordnance and Armor* (1865). James Eads built the BENTON from his salvage boat SUBMARINE

NO. 7, following the general layout of the seven ironclads designed by Samuel Pook; sides of casemate 45 degrees, recessed wheel, etc. BENTON was much larger, 1,000 vs. 512 tons, than the seven "city" class with heavier armor.



Ironclad CINCINNATI was built at Mound City, Illinois, identical to ST. LOUIS, CAIRO, MOUND CITY, CARONDELET, LOUISVILLE and PITTSBURG. Size 175x51x7 feet; engines 22s-6

ft. stroke; five boilers; armor $2\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, total 122 tons; guns 3-7" rifles, 3-8" smoothbore, 6-32 pounder smoothbore, 1-30 pounder Parrott; color, black. Data from, "Hardluck Ironclad".

were acquired for use as transports, supply boats and hospital boats.

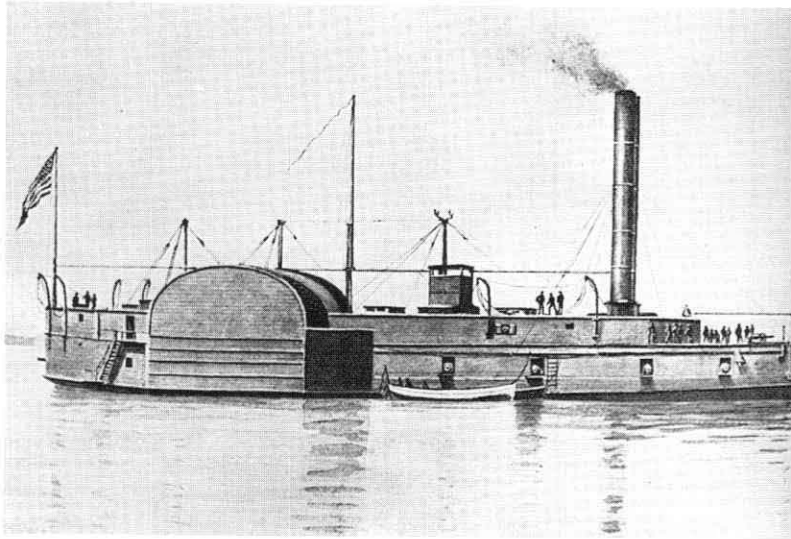
To man this new inland river fleet the navy began a recruitment campaign. Although the army at the time owned the boats in the Western Rivers Flotilla the navy was responsible for the crews; the navy paid the officers and war department paid the other ranks. The deep water sailor in Commander Rodgers took a dim view of the quality of the material he was getting for his freshwater gunboat crews but they could be trained in time. He came around, however, to the idea that river piloting was an art that only experience could master and so approached the pilots association in Cincinnati to hire civilian pilots, two for each boat. The association agreed, after considerable discussion of the wages, to recommend its members accept \$150 per month for gunboat duty.

With the river traffic in the doldrums and a surplus of pilots there is reported to have been no shortage of takers for the \$150 per month berths. Capt. William R. Hoel signed up as a civilian gunboat pilot at St. Louis on October 17, 1861 for \$175 per month. The Western Boatman's Benevolent Association, the pilot organization in St. Louis, had reluctantly agreed to furnish gunboat pilots at the government pay of \$150 per month; how Capt. Hoel managed to get \$175 is not known to us. The pay for pilots was not increased to \$250 per month until June, 1863 but by then Hoel was no longer a civilian pilot.

William Hoel did not have long to wait for some excitement. In November, 1861 the Union forces under Brig. General U. S. Grant planned an attack on the Confederate fort which dominated the river at Columbus, Kentucky, 20 miles below Cairo. Before dawn on November 7, Grant learned that troops were being moved from Columbus across the Mississippi to reinforce a camp at Belmont, Missouri so he changed his attack to Belmont. The Union troops were landed from transports onto the Missouri shore with support provided by the new timberclads TYLER, Commander Henry Walke, and LEXINGTON, Commander R. N. Stembel with Hoel on board as one of the pilots.

Some hours later, after the Confederate camp had been overrun, the Rebels who had continued to cross the river were about to trap the Union forces. The gunboats came to the rescue by breaking up the Rebel advance with cannon fire and then protected the loaded transports as they departed up the river.

Frank Y. Grayson has the following anecdote in his book, "Thrills of the Historic Ohio River: "William R. Hoel of Cincinnati was at the wheel of the LEXINGTON at Belmont while the fighting was in progress. Hoel decided he wanted more intimate action than mere steering so he headed

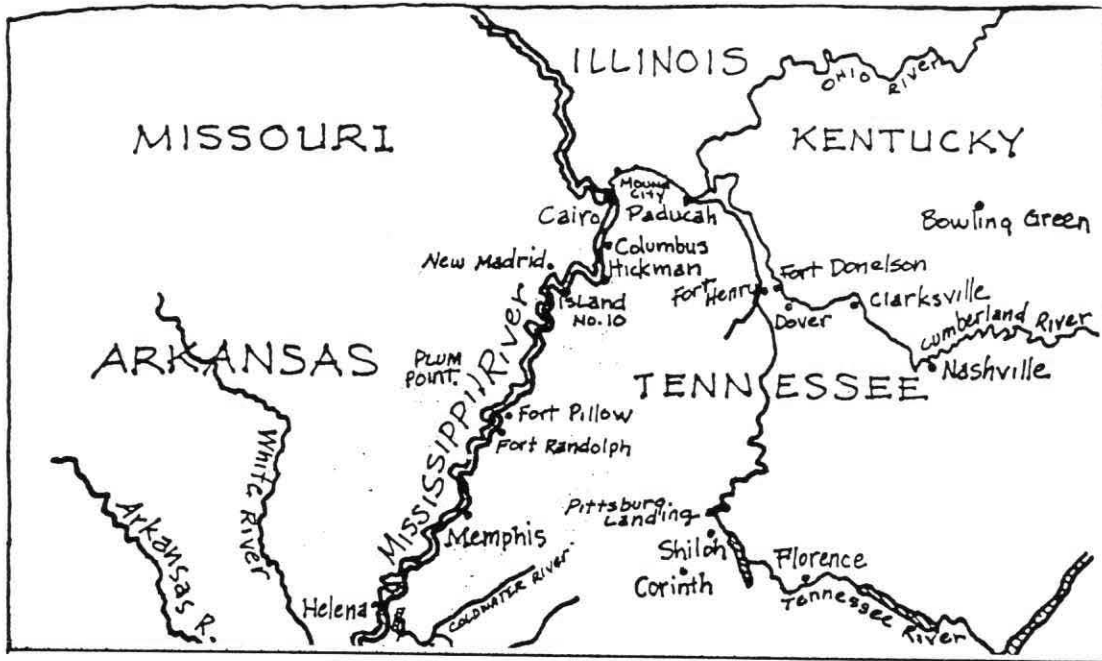


LEXINGTON (3445) was a new packet in June, 1861 when bought by the USQMD and converted into one of the first three U.S. timberclad gunboats. Civilian pilot W. R. Hoel was at the wheel at the battle of Belmont, Missouri, 1861.

the LEXINGTON right, ran out of the pilothouse, rifle in hand, stood right out on the deck in plain view of the Confederate forces and did his bit as a sharpshooter while the LEXINGTON, pilotless, plunged on but kept a straight course." Commander Stembel took a dim view of his pilot deserting his post for some target shooting but, after a chewing out, complimented Hoel for his enterprise.

Many pilots didn't have to be coerced to serve aboard the gunboats but willingly volunteered their services, either to the North or South we might add. Hoel seems to have been one of those moved to volunteer for the civilian post and, furthermore, then entered the Navy in order to see more active service without regard to the pay. He accepted First Master rank on February 1, 1862 with a reduction in pay to \$150 per month and was assigned to the ironclad CINCINNATI.

The first real test for the Pook ironclads against shore fortifications erected to blockade the rivers was to be at Ft. Henry on the Tennessee. Ft. Henry is located about 60 miles above the mouth of the Tennessee at Paducah and four ironclads and three timberclads would support General Grant's land attack. The CINCINNATI was the flagship accompanied by the CARONDELET, ST. LOUIS, ESSEX, CONESTOGA, TYLER and LEXINGTON in the attack against Ft. Henry on February 6, 1862. The fort surrendered after an hour and fifteen minutes of bombardment and while the ground force was still marching through deep mud toward the battle. The value of the ironclads seemed to be proven, perhaps too optimistically.



The CINCINNATI took thirty-one hits during the attack and the captain, R. N. Stembel, reported W. R. Hoel, 1st Master, slightly wounded. The ESSEX had thirty-two casualties when a shell passed through the casemate and opened a hole in one of the boilers. The two pilots in the pilothouse were both scalded to death at the wheel if proof were needed that this could be a serious sort of business. But, the other ironclads suffered only a number of hits without loss; the CARONDELET was embarrassingly stuck on a mud bank during the attack.

The next step in General Grant's effort to open up the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers was to capture Ft. Donelson at Dover. The army marched over the approximately 20 mile neck from Ft. Henry while the gunboats descended the Tennessee and steamed about 85 miles up the Cumberland to rendezvous. The reduction of Ft. Donelson was successful although with the ironclads suffering considerable damage in the attack. The CINCINNATI did not participate as she was still at Cairo for repairs.

The attack upon Ft. Donelson was a more serious affair as the fortifications were well sited and the garrison considerably larger than at Ft. Henry. The PITTSBURG, LOUISVILLE, ST. LOUIS and CARONDELET led the attack upon the fort with the timberclads CONESTOGA and TYLER staying back in support. Ft. Donelson was located on higher ground overlooking the downstream approach for a considerable distance. Anticipating a repeat of the success at Ft. Henry, the ironclads closed the range rather than lobbing shells from a distance and all took a number of hits with the ST. LOUIS and CARONDELET suffering the most damage and casualties. The pilots on the ST. LOUIS and ST. LOUIS were both killed and Flag Officer Foote

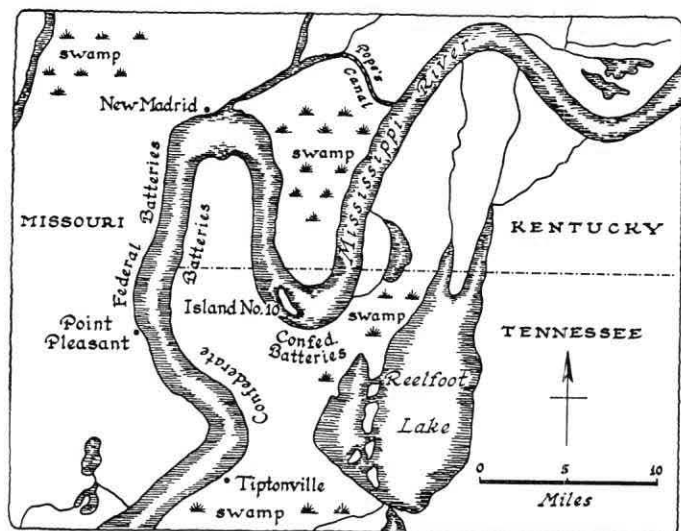
was wounded slightly in the arm and more seriously in the foot. The river navy's tactics were faulty here but then they were still learning. Ft. Donelson surrendered to Grant's army two days after the river attack on February 15.

Repairs to the damaged boats were carried out at Mound City, above Cairo, which was becoming the main supply and repair base for the river fleet. Twelve aboard the ironclads were reported killed in the action at Ft. Donelson and three of these were pilots. With the Tennessee and Cumberland now open, the Union army began moving up the Tennessee to meet the Confederates in the battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, in early April.

The river navy was now directed toward opening the Mississippi and the first obstruction was the Confederate fort at Columbus, Kentucky. The flotilla lead by Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote included the gunboats BENTON, MOUND CITY, LOUISVILLE, CARONDELET, CINCINNATI, ST. LOUIS, PITTSBURG and LEXINGTON. Captain Foote remained in command of the river operations although the painful wound to his foot was not healing properly.

The fort at Columbus was evacuated on March 4, a result of being outflanked by the loss of Forts Henry and Donelson rather than the impressive force of gunboats coming down the river. William Hoel was still assigned to the CINCINNATI and the fleet moved down to the next blocking fortification at Island Number 10.

Island No. 10 was in a sharp bend of the Mississippi about 60 miles below Cairo and 10 or 12 miles above New Madrid. It was a strong defensive position with guns on the upper end of the island supported by batteries on the Tennessee shore opposite plus a floating battery.



Island No. 10 and New Madrid

From, "Gunboats Down the Mississippi."

The channel then ran between the island and the Missouri shore; today Island No. 10 is part of the Missouri mainland. The land approaches to the island and shore batteries were blocked by marshes on both sides of the river so attack from that approach was not feasible.

The Union army under Major General John Pope was able to bypass Island No. 10 by cutting a canal behind the high ground on the Missouri side and moving troops through on barges to occupy New Madrid. But the river was still blocked and supplies and troops in numbers could not move south until Rebel fortifications were taken. Gunboat support was necessary if troops were to cross the river below New Madrid.

Extensive bombardment by both gunboats and large mortars began on March 17 and continued for ten days but with little effect. General Pope at New Madrid was pleading for gunboat support in order to cross over to the Tennessee side while Confederate gunboats below the village were beginning to pose a threat. The interlocking fields of fire of batteries on the Tennessee shore and from the head of the island would give a passing gunboat a hot time indeed but the attempt had to be made. William Hoel was about to earn his pay.

The CARONDELET, Capt. Henry Walke, was selected to make the attempt to run past Island No. 10. Capt. Hoel volunteered to do the piloting and transferred from the CINCINNATI. After the moon had set around 10 pm. on the night of April 4, 1862 a thunderstorm came up to add to the confusion of the Rebel sentries but with lightning also illuminating the scene. From most accounts, Hoel stood out on the forward end of the upper deck and directed a Mr. Gilmore, one of the masters mates, who relayed instructions to the

pilots inside the armored pilothouse. Seaman Charles Wilson was down on the main deck heaving and calling the lead.

The "St. Louis Democrat" had a reporter aboard the CARONDELET who furnished his paper with this first hand report of the Island No. 10 passage:

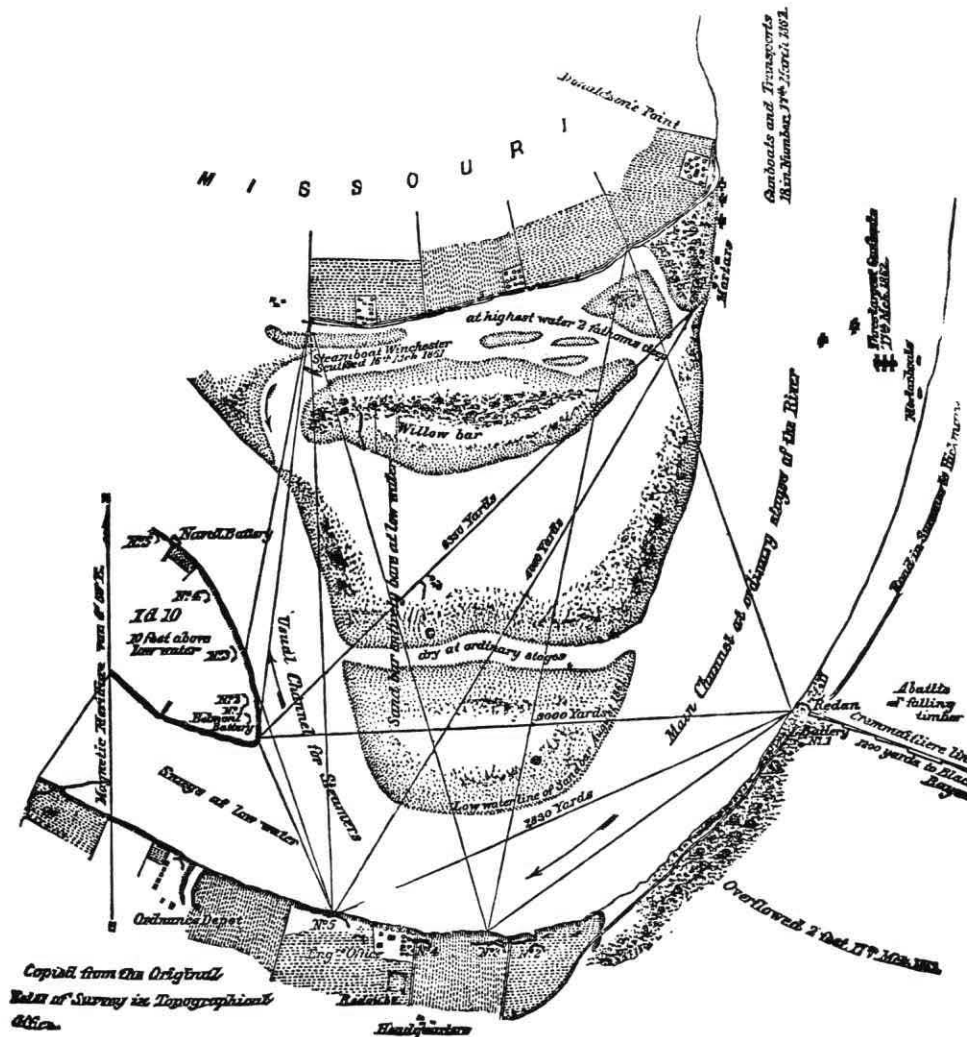
"Wm. R. Hoel, first master of the CINCINNATI, a gentleman of twenty-one years experience on the Mississippi (and whom we may parenthetically state is now making his 194th trip to New Orleans), came on board of the CARONDELET at 9 a.m. and relieved Richard N. Wade, the first master of the boat. A consultation was immediately held with the pilots in which the course of the channel and the location of the bars were taken into consideration. It had been previously determined to run down on the Missouri side of the island and to add to the practicability of this, last Thursday afternoon the fleet shelled the rebel floating battery, for the purpose of driving it from the command it held on that channel."

In preparation for the attempt to slide quietly by the Rebel batteries, the CARONDELET lashed a barge of baled hay and coal along the port side. One course of hay bales was laid over the sloping casemate at the stern while the bales on the barge came up to the height of the gun ports along the side. The top deck (unarmored) was covered by heavy planks and then loaded up with surplus chain and other solid material to discourage cannon balls from breaking through into the gundeck. An 11-inch hawser was coiled around the pilothouse up the level of the windows.

The time of departure from her anchorage was 10 pm. and simultaneously a jim-dandy thunderstorm broke over the Union fleet. A reporter for the "New York Times" provided the following account of the boat's departure:

"At such a time the CARONDELET lifted her anchor and slowly swung into the stream, watched through the almost blinding flashes by thousands of eager eyes whose owners, regardless of the driving storm, crowded the decks of the other gunboats and transports to watch the heroic undertaking.

Slowly she swung around till hauled down stream and then she pushed straight ahead, keeping well over towards the island. We could see her almost every second - every brace, port and outline could be seen with startling distinctness enshrouded by a bluish-white glare of light and then her form for the next instant would become merged in the intense blackness that lay upon the river like a pall."



Confederate arrangements for entertainment when the CARONDELET came down the river to pass Island No. 10 the night of April 4, 1862 were extensive. Only the Upper Battery (right) had been disabled. Reproduced from, "War of the Rebellion, Official Records".

The reporter for the "St. Louis Democrat" on board continued his impressions as follows:

"For the first half mile everything went still and smooth beyond even the most sanguine anticipations and the probability of passing the batteries unobserved was being remarked by some when the soot in the chimneys caught fire and a blaze five feet high leaped out from their tops, lighting brightly the upper deck of the vessel and everything around. The word was hastily passed to the engineer to open the flue-caps, after which the flames subsided but not until the Rebels had the fairest opportunity to discover our approach and prepare a reception. This was a serious mishap because no signal, even by appointment, could so perfectly reveal out intentions. And what contributed to the misfortune was the time of it happening which was before any of the batteries had been passed, giving them time to communicate from one point to another before we came within range. Notwithstanding all this, strange as it may seem, no alarm among the Rebels was discovered to

follow. We were consoling ourselves over the remissness of the Rebel sentries when, to our great astonishment, the chimneys were fired again as if a treacherous deity was presiding over the fortunes of our boat. The exhaust steam being directed into the wheel rather than to the stacks allowed the soot to dry out and take fire."

"Now was the time for coolness and heroism. Captain Walke deliberately giving orders; Captain Hoel stood firm on deck in a perfect shower of cannon balls and musket balls which were launched upon us, and as he discovered the outlines of the banks, or the course of the channel by the aid of the flashing lightning, his clear voice rang out his commands to the pilots, who steadily held the wheel. But once, we believe, during the perilous passage, did the watchful eyes of the captain suffer the boat to gain a precarious position; and then it was when a lengthened intermission between the flashes of

lightening completely obscured our course and the current, striking the cumbersome barge, sheered the vessel and carried it towards a neighboring bar. The first glance of light, however, disclosed our situation and the rapid command, 'Hard a-port' admonished us of our danger. The boat soon regained the channel and our fears were dispelled by the remarks on deck that all was going well and the anxiously awaited reports as they came up from the forecastle, 'No bottom.'

"Our boat was not very fleet and the barge in tow impeded a speed which might otherwise have been made, with the current in our favor. The consequence was an exposure of thirty minutes to an uninterrupted fire from four batteries on the Tennessee shore and one at the head of the island. The judgement which we were enabled to form from the shrieking of their shot was that they flew from five yards to thirty yards over our heads; a few were heard to plunge into the water. One cause of the wild shooting was in over-estimating the distance to our boat. It was close along the bank, under their guns, and had this been fully understood the Rebels would have found it difficult to depress their guns to such a degree as to bear upon us without having them dismounted by an angular recoil."

Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote was worried and dispatched a letter to General John Pope at New Madrid:

Foote to Pope
April 4, 1862

The gunboat CARONDELET left her anchorage this evening at 10 o'clock in a heavy thunderstorm for the purpose of running the fire of the batteries on Island No. 10 and those lining the Tennessee shore to join your forces at New Madrid. By a previous concerted signal of three minute guns, twice fired at intervals of five minutes, which have since been heard, as far as the heavy thunder would enable us to ascertain, leads me to hope that the blockade has been run successfully although the batteries opened on her with 47 guns while passing.

I am, therefore, exceedingly anxious to hear of the fate of the noble officers and men who were so readily disposed to attempt the hazardous service that I beg you will immediately inform me by bearer if Commander Walke has arrived with his vessel and the condition in which you find her and her officers and men.

A. H. Foote

Two days later Flag Officer Foote reported the action to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles in Washington:

"Flag Str. BENTON
Off Island No. 10, April 6, 1862

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the gunboat CARONDELET ran the blockade on the night of the 4th instant under a heavy fire of 47 guns and reached New Madrid safely without even receiving a shot.

Capt. Walke, his officers and crew, merit the consideration of the Government for their gallantry, coolness and general conduct on this occasion. I would especially call the attention of the Department to Acting First Master Hoel, of the CINCINNATI, who so creditably volunteered his services to go on the CARONDELET and did go on her although he is attached to the gunboat CINCINNATI."

On the night of April 6, during another thunderstorm, the PITTSBURG successfully ran past Island No. 10. The Confederates attempted to block the channel by sinking the packet WINCHESTER (Way 5851) there on April 7 but the jig was up. With two gunboats available to silence the batteries on the Tennessee shore below New Madrid, General Pope was able to take his troops across and occupy Tiptonville. Retreating Confederate troops found a reception committee awaiting them when they reached Tiptonville at 4:00 am., April 8.

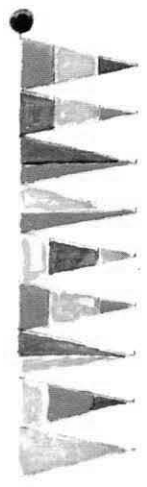
William Hoel returned to his post as First Master on the CINCINNATI.

The life and times of W. R. Hoel will be continued in the next issue.

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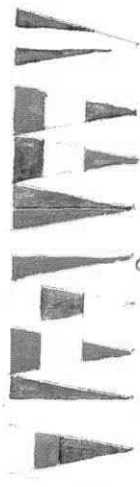
1st Div Large Vessels



- Benton
- Winnebago
- Chicotaw
- Genl. Price
- Carndollet
- Pittsburg
- Albany City
- Louisville

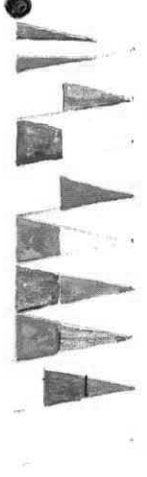
- 1
- 2
- 3
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- 8

1st Div Light Draft



- ~~Rattle~~ Tempest
- Mamora
- Romeo
- Juliet
- Fairy
- Cricket
- Stew-Era
- ~~Signa~~ Fanny

2^d Div Large Vessels



- Chillicothe
- Safayette
- Vindicator
- Cincinnati
- Genl. Bragg
- Lexington
- Sp. L.
- Onestoga
- Muscumbia

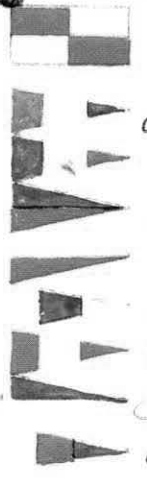
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16

2^d Div Light Drafts



- Forest Rose
- ~~Sunder~~ Valley
- Prairie Bird
- Carlew
- Fort Hindman
- Kimwood
- Hastings
- Little Rebel

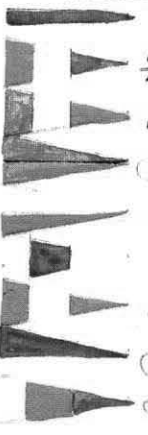
3^d Div Large Vessel



- Mocho
- Essex
- Oxark
- Osage
- Quichita
- Chickasaw
- Kickapoo
- Millwaukee

- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24

3^d Div Light Drafts




















- Fair Play
- Bridliant
- St. Clair
- Genl. Pillow
- Rabb
- Springfield
- Silver Lake
- Texas

4th Div Light Drafts

- 24  Champion
- 25  Carrington Colossus
- 26  Queen City Mist
- 27  Argoey
- 28  Siber Cloud
- 29  Tamar Collier
- 30  Fawn
- 31  Paw Paw
- 32  ~~Key West~~ Abena
- 36  Posta

Transports






-  Brown
-  Sovereign
-  Genl. Lyons
-  New National
-  Great Western
-  Judge Tenence
-  Red Rover
-  Jamson

- 41  Aranza
- 42  Strickdale
- 43  Glide
- 44  Meteor
- 45  Mars
- 46  Sallahatchie
- 47  Elk
- 48  Rudolph
- 49  Canabass

Transferred to West Gulf
 Blockading Squadron

Sam Fleet









49

-  Switzerland
-  Monarch
-  Sioness
-  Homer
-  Fulton

5th Div Light Drafts

-  Victory
- 34  Moose
- 35  Reindeer
- 37  Steam Keag
- 38  Exchange
- 40  Alexandria

6th Div Light Drafts

-  Gazelle
- 50  Aranger
- 52  Elfin Miller
- 53  Aaiad
- 54  Cymbel
- 55  Andine Porter
- 56  Sirev
- 57  Peri
- 58  Huntress
- 59  Sybil
- 60  Gamage

NOTE LOWER LEFT: "TRANSFERRED TO WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON"
 ORIGINAL IN WILLIAM R. HOEL COLLECTION, INLAND RIVERS LIBRARY, CINCINNATI.

- S&D CHAPTERS -
OHIO & KANAWHA CHAPTER

The spring skies around southeastern Ohio and southern West Virginia had been dumping copious amounts of rain for three days but that didn't deter the loyal members of the O-K Chapter from the quarterly gathering. Sunday afternoon, June 9 was warm, humid but clear for the meeting at the Mason County Library, Pt. Pleasant, WV.

About 25 members and guests were on hand when the meeting was opened by chapter Engineer Charles Henry Stone. The invocation was given by Assistant Clerk Jim Bupp. Capt. Stone made mention of the absence of chapter Pilot Bert Shearer with the explanation that Bert had urgent business in Texas, ".to attend a bar-B-que, fish fry, pork roast, chicken fight or perhaps a picnic."

The first order of business was to conduct the annual election of officers. Consideration had been given (briefly) to inviting Dale Flick, Chairman of the S&D Nominating Committee, to conduct the election. But, given the time constraints, the O-K group followed its now time-honored informality; in the absence of Bert Shearer, he was elected by default as Pilot for the coming year and Capt. Stone and June Bupp, Clerk, were also swept into office.

Some original blueprints for the Campbell's Creek Coal Co. towboat HELPER (T1084) had been laid out for inspection. The boat was designed by Capt. E. A. Burnside and the plans drawn by his nephew Capt. Joe Goold in the fall of 1920. The plans are complete in detail including how to build the pilotwheel of this neat-looking harbor boat but the head-on view also indicated how narrow she was for the height; the hull was 99.8x18.4 feet. For comparison, the excursion boat VALLEY GEM at Marietta is 104x24 feet and without the boiler deck

and stacks, etc. of the HELPER. The HELPER was the cause of Capt. Burnside's death in March, 1922 when the boat turned over in Cincinnati harbor.

Jim Bupp ran the new film by the PBS station in Huntington, WV titled, "A River Called Ohio." This is a history of the Ohio, from its geological origins through the times of the early settlers down to the the steamboat and modern era. The scenic passages are very artistic with an appropriate musical score and (finally) there are steamboat scenes of sufficiency to satisfy those interested in the important history. Several S&D personalities show up in the film including, Fred Way, Jr., C. W. Stoll, Jack and Sandie Custer and others. Jerry Sutphin gets a credit as principal Ohio River consultant.

There were refreshments and a time for visiting after the regular program. Capt. Stone reported that the proposed and long delayed Pt. Pleasant river museum is still alive with prospects of state funding soon.

Capt. Nelson Brown is again master of the excursion boat LORENA on the upper pool at Zanesville but reported the high water had shut down the operation for several weeks. The landing for the LORENA is only a short distance above the Zanesville Dam which has made the excursions this year exciting, for the pilot if not for the passengers. Daily and charter trips were planned to begin again after June 15 if the creeks don't rise.

There was no mention of the condition of the Chapter treasury but all must be well since Engineer Stone and Assistant Clerk Bupp were looking forward to a trip to Louisville. The next meeting of the Chapter should be the second Sunday in November at the Mason County Library.

* * *

MIDDLE OHIO RIVER CHAPTER

Wheeling, West Virginia was the scene of the summer meeting of the M.O.R. Chapter on the weekend of July 13-14. Headquarters was the Best Western Motel on Main Street right beside the famous and historic Wheeling Suspension Bridge (1849).

There were (by our count) twenty-four members on hand for the meeting and most arrived on Friday evening. Saturday morning was devoted to a tour of the Oglebay Mansion museum in Oglebay Park. The extensive property was the home of the Oglebay family which had coal and iron operations under the corporate name Oglebay-Norton. Part of the Oglebay empire was a fleet of ore carriers on the Great Lakes. The property was given to the city of Wheeling and has been developed into an outstanding park which attracts visitors from throughout the Midwest.

Wheeling was known for its glassware production as well as for iron and steel, nails, stogies and chewing tobacco (Mail Pouch). A new building at Oglebay Park has been dedicated to the glass industry while the Mansion Museum continues to showcase local art, pottery, early furniture and the history of the Oglebay family. Several S&Ders found an outstanding model train layout on display down at the children's zoo. The facilities of the large park including Wilson Lodge and the golf course and the quality of the museum at Oglebay is a revelation for those seeing the place for the first time.

A noon luncheon cruise was on the schedule for the S&D group. The local excursion boat is the VALLEY VOYAGER, 80x25, a stern-wheel boat as cute as a button with pilothouse on the roof, twin stacks and swinging stage. She was designed by S&D member A. Lawrence Bates and shows his typical touches of an old-time

excursion boat with feathers on the stacks, fancywork around the boiler deck, etc. Capt. Charles Steadman is master assisted by a deckhand and three working food service.

The two hour cruise on a pleasantly warm summer day took us upstream to the Pike Island Lock and Dam and return. A fine lunch of ham or chicken or both was served buffet style, the S&D gang following a friendly bus tour group from the Canton, Ohio area. It was a very enjoyable two hours with some interesting structures visible along the shore including water intakes, the brick buildings of the Martins Ferry steel mill, Centre Machine Co. and others. The erosion caused by the deeper pools created by the modern dam system was most noticeable at Lower Sister Island.

Back at the Wheeling landing the M.O.R. group dispersed to pursue individual interests for the remainder of the afternoon. Some returned to Oglebay for further exploration while others looked around the shops in downtown Wheeling; the older commercial buildings are worth studying even if the Stone and Thomas department store is about all that is left of the busy downtown of the 1960s and earlier.

We visited the old Wheeling Custom House, built 1857-59 which is also known as West Virginia's Independence Hall. In 1831 Wheeling was given status as a U.S. port of entry and the impressive custom house was built to serve the postal service, customs collections and the court for the Western District of Virginia. In 1861 the Second Wheeling Convention for the establishment of the state of West Virginia was held in the building and the room has been restored to its original appearance. Exhibits outline the history of how West Virginia broke away from the Dominion of Virginia during the Civil War but we saw little reference to the custom

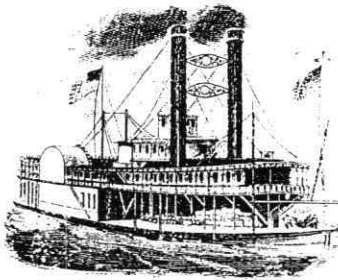
house functions of enrollment of boats or inspection services.

The evening banquet was held in the Best Western Motel and John Fryant presented a very interesting story of trips aboard the JULIA BELLE SWAIN in 1977. These covered five rivers from Chattanooga, Tennessee to Louisville, Kentucky and Peoria, Illinois to Florence, Alabama. John had excellent slides with some musical accompaniment to highlight several scenic sequences. John had prints of his sketch of the JULIA BELLE SWAIN for each attendee. It was a great program to top the visit to a once very active river town which still has many reminders of its steamboat era history. The view of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge from the fifth floor of the motel alone was worth the trip.

Jack and Sandy Custer passed out bags of handouts left over from their recently concluded Steamboat History Conference. This conference proved to be very successful with enthusiastic reaction from the attendees we have talked to. Writing in the newsletter for the Association of Retired Marine Personnel, Paul Striegel noted more than 225 people registered and from 25 states. He reported that the scheduled sessions catered to many diverse river interests and were well attended and received. The Custers opined that another similar conference might be organized by them in 1998.

The next M.O.R. Chapter meeting will be in Louisville in connection with the Octoberfest cruise of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. If you are not on the M.O.R. mailing list but interested in attending, contact M'Lissa Kesterman, Secretary, 3118 Pershing Ct., Cincinnati, OH 45211.

* * *



THE NEW YORK STATE CANALS EXPLORING SOME NEW COUNTRY

A number of years ago friend C. W. Stoll took a ride on the Erie Canal and waxed enthusiastically about the trip, perhaps even lyrical. He described sitting upon the deck of a boat called the EMITA II and traveling from Syracuse on the Erie Canal while reading the canal novel, "Rome Haul" by Walter Edmonds. The picture painted by C.W. gave us a hankering to ride the EMITA II, see the famous canal and this was the year to do it.

The story of Clinton's Ditch remembered from school history books is not quite the Erie Canal you will find today. Anyone traveling the New York Thruway between Schnectady and for some miles west of Syracuse will have seen dams with locks in the Mohawk River and other pieces of the waterway which is now the Erie Barge Canal. Clinton's Ditch is long gone with only old locks and some depressions with a bit of water and cattails remain as visible reminders.

By way of history, the Erie Canal of song and story was completed in 1825 with a depth of four feet and locks 15x90 feet. It stretched from opposite Troy on the Hudson River to Tonawanda on the Niagara River. Successful from the start, it served as a model for the canals which were built afterwards in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

In 1862 the Erie Canal was enlarged to a depth of seven feet which permitted an increase in the size of the barges from 30 to 240 tons. In 1882 tolls were abolished on the canal; it had earned \$42 million over and above its original cost and enlargement. Beginning in 1903 work was undertaken to replace the Erie Canal with a much larger barge canal utilizing canalized streams for the most part rather than a dug ditch.

The barge canal was completed by 1918 and provides depth of 12 feet, channel width of 200 feet in most sections, locks 300x43.5 feet and bridge clearances of 15½ feet. Today the state of New York maintains the Erie (340.7 miles), Champlain (62.6 miles), Oswego (23.8 miles) and Cayuga-Seneca (27.1 miles) canals. Total mileage including connecting rivers and lakes is 801.3 miles. After a threat of abandonment several years ago, tolls have been again imposed to help defray the cost of maintenance.

The Mid-Lakes Navigation Co., Ltd. has operated the EMITA II in cruise service since 1974. She was originally built in 1953 for service on Casco Bay at Portland, Maine and after twenty years there was brought to New York. Most cruises are three days east and west from Syracuse but several times each summer there are three-day cruises from Troy to Whitehall, New York on the Champlain Canal and two-day cruises from Syracuse to Oswego. Capacity is 40 passengers with meals served on board and overnight accommodations in motels.

The Champlain Canal trip from Troy fit our schedule best so, with brother Jim Rutter in tow, Ye Ed and Secretary Bee hiked off to see the sights on the Upper Hudson.

The U.S. Corps of Engineers built and maintains the first lock in the Hudson, above Troy, and this provides slackwater up to the state locks at Waterford on the Erie and on the Champlain Canals. The U.S. lock is larger than the state maintained locks with dimensions of 492.5x44.4 feet.

After locking up about 14 feet into the Champlain Canal at Waterford the locks are then spaced only a few miles apart until passing Lock 4 at Stillwater. The lifts are 16.5, 19.5 and 16 feet respectively for numbers two, three and four. The countryside becomes rural



The EMITA II travels all over the New York Barge Canal system with forty passengers per trip. Here, on Erie Canal at Waterford, NY.



No, not a guillotine; a guard gate to protect canal when the river stage is high. Entrance to canal leading to Lock 6, Champlain Canal.

surprisingly soon after entering the Champlain and the clutter of the urban landscape is left behind.

There is little uniformity in the design of the dams and in the locations of the locks; some dams have right angles in them to accommodate a hydro power plant or mill building and some locks are out in the middle of the river rather than along the shore. At several locks there are short canal approaches on the upstream ends, not unlike the canals on the Muskingum River. The lock

properties seemed uniformly well maintained, usually with attractive public parks and picnic grounds around them.

In charge of the EMITA II was Capt. Dan Wiles, one of the sons of the founder of the company, the late Peter Wiles, Sr. The crew was made up of high school and college students one of whom traveled from lock to lock in a van to handle lines on shore and bring fresh groceries or other supplies. Meals were prepared on board in a small galley and served both buffet and table



Lock 5, Champlain Canal (Hudson River) from the downstream side; lift 19 ft., dam off right.



The closely spaced concrete piers keep boats safely above the crest of the dam above Lock 5, Champlain Canal. Piers in the river distant are from a railroad bridge.

style depending upon the menu.

The first day ended at Fort Edward just below Lock 8 and our accommodations were at the Landmark Motel in South Glen Falls. The Landmark is worthy of mention because (1) it is an older motel which receives outstanding care by the owner and (2) the proprietor will proffer a ride in his 1940 Cadillac limousine when the proper interest is shown. (Don't be intimidated by the hand showing from under the trunk lid nor the license plate, "BIGDADDY"; the car's original owner was one Legs D'Cocco from Chicago.)

The second day started when a bus took the passengers back to the EMITA II at Lock 8 for a 9 o'clock departure. Breakfast was

eaten while we locked through the lock up to the summit level of the canal, the Hudson River having wandered off to the west just below Lock 7. Water supply for the summit level comes by a feeder canal from the upper reaches of the Hudson some miles away near Glen Falls, necessary to keep the canal watered back to Lock 7 and north to Lake Champlain at Whitehall. The summit level has an elevation of 140 feet above sea level at Troy while the north end of the canal at the South Bay of Lake Champlain is at an elevation of 96.8 feet. Perhaps a surprise, the Hudson River is still tidal as far up as Troy.

The countryside this day was strictly rural, a peaceful scene with cows grazing in the fields; the small village of Fort Ann is the only town between Ft. Edward and Whitehall. Here and there a barn still exists beside the canal with large doors through which produce was once loaded into boats. There were several rusting oil docks to be seen and at least one landing where stone and gravel had once been loaded. Today, there is essentially no commercial freight traffic on the Champlain Canal and surprisingly little pleasure boating.

In several places the canal had been blasted through rock formations with the channel narrowed to about 80 feet. Locks on the northern end of the summit level, numbers nine, ten and eleven, lower boats toward the level of Lake Champlain. The town of Whitehall was reached just after lunch and the EMITA II tied up above Lock 12 which is a final 15 foot drop down to the lake.

The former canal terminal and office building where we tied up has been turned into a very interesting local history museum. Whitehall claims to be the birthplace of the U.S. Navy as sailing vessels were built there in the summer of 1776 to challenge the British on Lake Champlain. Ft. Ticonderoga is another 25 miles farther north up the lake.

Whitehall, so pronounced by the natives, has been dozing for the past 50 years. It once had several silk mills and extensive repair shops for the Delaware & Hudson RR but these are now gone. The town is left with several streets of 19th century brick business blocks with now vacant stores as evidence of once thriving activity. With the lake and the canal Whitehall has an attractive situation but is too far away from the main tourist routes for many visitors. A winery or two are advertised and an effort is being made to restore Skene Manor, a 117 year old Italianate stone house perched high on the

mountain overlooking the town and canal. The EMITA II makes calls a half dozen times a year and there is daily Amtrak service to either Montreal or Albany.

After two hours or so to look around Whitehall the EMITA II retraced the canal back toward Lock 8 at Fort Edward. We anticipated another peaceful journey through the bucolic countryside but this reverie was broken at the first lock, No. 11. As the EMITA II drifted into the lock chamber our captain erupted from the pilothouse door and began throwing lines onto the lock wall. Hastily catching a cavil with the line the headway was killed out and the boat stopped before getting too close to a cabin cruiser which was also in the chamber. It seems that the usually reliable diesel had died just when reverse was wanted to stop the boat.

Investigation disclosed that a coolant hose had broken and the engine had shutdown because of rising temperatures. The van following along on shore now came in handy to go back to Whitehall for a replacement hose. A hose of proper size was found, even on a Saturday afternoon, and the crew proceeded to install it. The generator was unaffected and the electric oven kept cooking so the passengers were served a ham dinner on schedule. Although all was put right in the engineroom the hour was getting late, the engine still needed some checking so we were bussed back to the motel.

The EMITA II was waiting for the passengers at Lock 8 the following morning, as advertised. The crew was cheerful enough although they had had a short night in order to move the boat down the canal. A day under cloudy skies with blustery wind was still acceptable enough as we descended down to tidewater and the big city atmosphere around Troy. A high point was the reception at Lock 6 where S&D member Tom Cottrell had a welcoming sign displayed, in the

hands of his cousin Ron Harrington. Mr. Harrington lives in a house adjacent to Lock 6 with his front lawn running down to the river.

Cruising canals and small rivers aboard the 40 passenger EMITA II brings the descriptive "intimate" to mind. With the frequent locks and narrow river and canal sections there is no lack of interesting sights all day long. Staying in motels rather than aboard the boat permits EMITA II to accommodate the maximum number of passengers. No complaints to the chef were heard nor warranted and the meal selections were well suited to the life of sitting and looking. C. W. was right when he waxed enthusiastic some twenty years ago; the operation is a winner.

To see the heartland of New York from a boat, contact Mid-Lakes Navigation Co., Ltd., P.O. Box 61, Skaneateles, NY 13152.

* * *

- BOOK REVIEW -

THE WESTERN RIVERS ENGINEROOM CYCLOPOEDIUM

Since its appearance in 1968, The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopoedium by Alan Bates has been THE source for information on how wooden steamboats were designed and built, down to the smallest detail. Users of the Steamboat Cyclopoedium have wished for a similar reference dealing with the machinery of steamboats and now their prayers are answered.

Alan L. Bates has come up with a book that finally explains the mystery of a steamboat's engineroom. A brief history traces the development of the steam engine from its early days when it was used to pump water from deep mine shafts to its adaption in a marine environment. Because it was cheap to build and easy to

maintain, the steam engine, in spite of its inefficiency, continued as the engine of choice for propelling river boats.

For those of us who have always wondered about the strange terms associated with a steamboat engine, wonder no more. While an index in the front of the book lists these terms, Alan takes us on a tour that explains not only their meaning but their working relationship in the engineroom.

Starting with the boiler room, Alan patiently explains the different types of boilers and the design commonly used on the western rivers. Then, he moves on to expound on the boiler auxiliaries, fittings and how steam is distributed to the engines.

A diagram of an engineroom layout for both a sternwheel towboat and a typical sidewheeler is also included. The difference between a low pressure and a high pressure engine used on western river steamboats is discussed as well as the various cut-off valve gears. Also included is a listing of steamboat engines that can be seen today.

Written in simple layman terms, Alan Bates has taken a jumbled maze of pipes, valves, pumps and gauges and brought it to life so that even a mechanical misfit like the writer can understand it. In addition, the book is lavishly illustrated with pen and ink drawings, diagrams and photos.

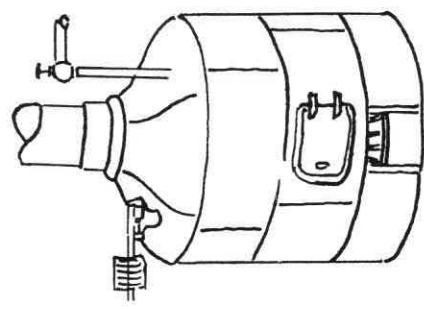
This book belongs in the library of not only every model builder but also every historian, writer on steamboat subjects and the steamboat buff curious about the mysterious engineroom.

The Western Rivers Engineroom Cyclopoedium by Alan L. Bates; 64 pages, soft cover, \$18.00 postpaid; published by Cyclopoedium Press, 2040 Sherwood Avenue, Louisville, KY 40205.

Reviewed by David F. Massie.

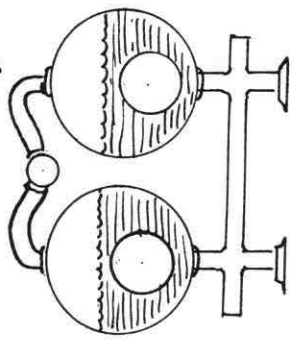
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HISTORY OF STEAM BOILERS ON WESTERN RIVERS 1811 - 1870

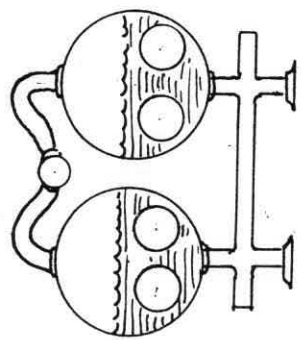


1. FIRST BOILERS LOOKED LIKE CROUP KETTLES; THEY WEREN'T AS GOOD AS CROUP KETTLES.

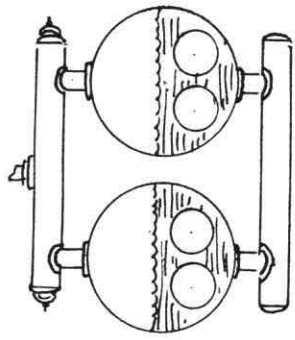
NOTE THE "OX YOKE" STEAM PIPE CONNECTION 1820 - 1830



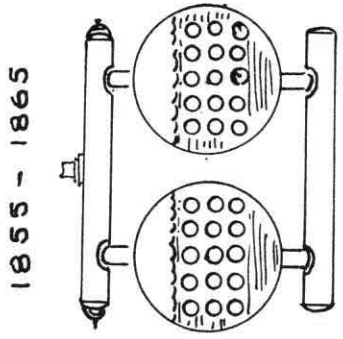
2. THEN CAME THE SINGLE FLUE RUN THROUGH A SHORT SHELL. THESE BOILERS MADE WONDERFUL EXPLOSIONS.



3. THE DOUBLE FLUE BOILER BLEW UP TWICE AS EASY BECAUSE IT WOULD GET PRESSURE UP VERY QUICKLY. IT WAS VERY POPULAR.

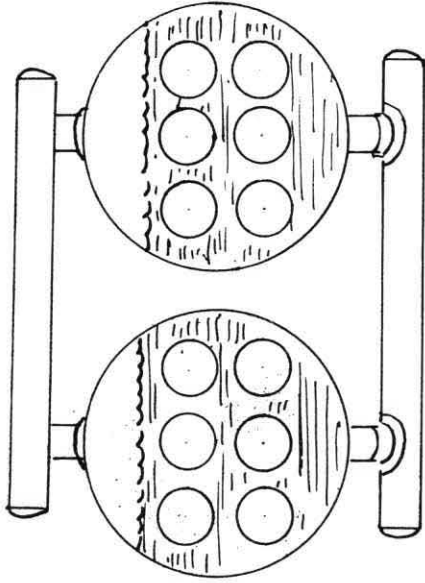


4. THIS IMPROVEMENT OF THE TWO FLUE BOILER WAS USED ON HUNDREDS OF STEAMBOATS FROM 1845 UNTIL 1870 AND WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL.

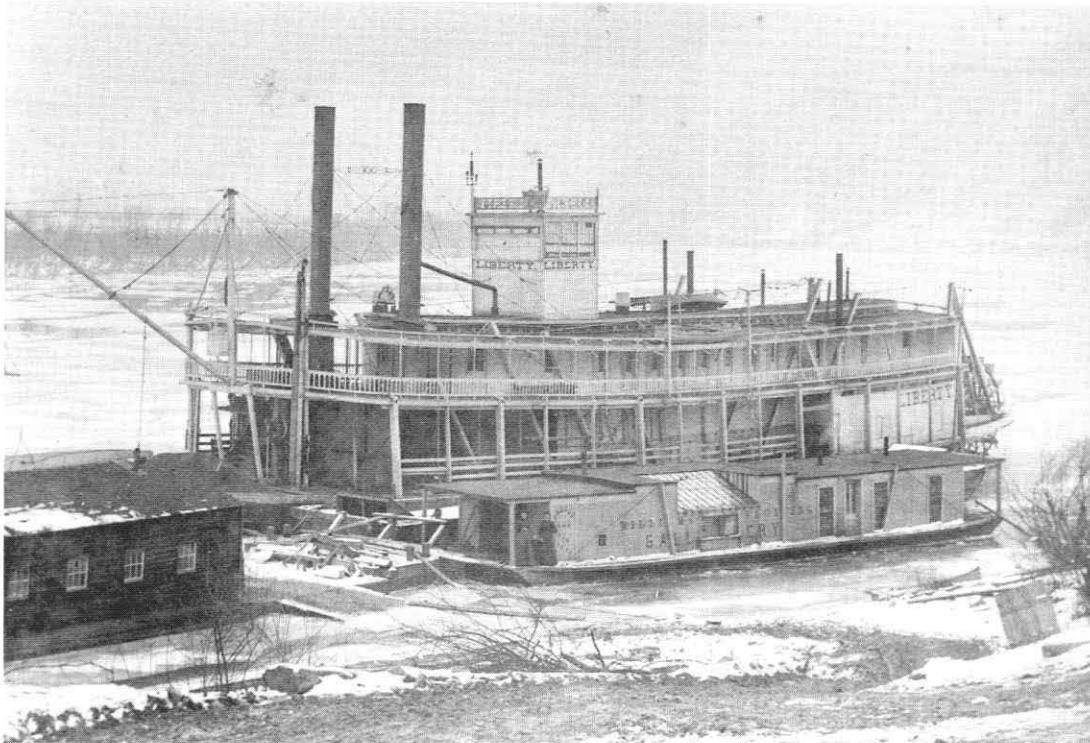


1855 - 1865

5. THE TUBULAR BOILER WAS THE BEST EXTERMINATOR OF HUMAN LIFE EVER INVENTED. IN TEN YEARS IT REDUCED THE POPULATION OF THE MIDDLE WEST BY ABOUT 2,000.



6. THESE LOW PRESSURE BOILERS WERE USED AWHILE BUT WERE TOO HEAVY FOR FRAIL STEAMBOAT HULLS.



Here's how Capt. Booth's LIBERTY looked when new. She's at the Clarington, Ohio landing with ice running in the river and a

little smoke shows from the pilothouse stove. Between the LIBERTY and the shore is the Williams Floating Gallery. H. C. Williams photo.

THE STEAMER THAT CAME BACK "THE BIG LIBERTY" Capt. Walter C. Booth

The story about the SANTA LUCIA in the June S&D Reflector reminded Dick Rutter of another steamboat that ventured out onto the Gulf of Mexico: LIBERTY (3451), or "The Big Liberty".

Capt. T. Kent Booth supplied the following story written by his father, Walter C. Booth, about the very successful LIBERTY and her trip along the Gulf Coast in 1912. Her trip to and from Mobile hardly compares with the expedition of the SANTA LUCIA but the success of the LIBERTY and her first owner is an interesting story, too. Some readers may recall when Harry Craft, mentioned in the story, was a regular at S&D annual meetings.

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In 1888, after four years of successful operations of the steamer TELEGRAM (5317) in the Clarington-Wheeling trade where

she had paid for herself, Capt. John K. Booth and his son Capt. Ernst K. Booth decided to build a stern wheel boat for the trade. They would use the engines and all other usable machinery from the TELEGRAM in the construction of the new boat. A contract was let to Knox & Sons, Harmar, Ohio (Marietta) for a hull 167x34x5 in the fall of 1888.

In the spring of 1889 the hull was completed and towed to Newell, West Virginia where, under the supervision of Capt. John K. Booth, the cabin and other superstructure was built and finished by the well known cabin builder Thomas Glascock. Thomas Parriott, whose skill with the brush had won him renown as an excellent steamboat painter, completed all painting from hull to pilothouse. He also did all interior decorating.

The TELEGRAM, which had been running with Capt. Thaddeus Thomas in charge, was brought to

Wheeling early in March for the transfer of machinery to the new boat. Boilers were furnished by Sweeney & Sons, Wheeling who also provided the shaft and moved the engines over and did the other setup work. C. R. Miller & Sons did all the sheet and iron work from boiler casing and chimneys to zinc sheets under all stoves. The G. B. MONTIETH (2175) was chartered for the Clarington-Wheeling trade until the LIBERTY was completed.

On a Sunday in late July, 1889 the LIBERTY made her first trip from Wheeling to Clarington. At every landing Capt. Booth stopped to give all interested a chance to look over the new boat. Carrying 165 psi. steam pressure the LIBERTY soon proved that she was the fastest boat to appear in the trade and one of the fastest on the Upper Ohio.

In 1890 Capt. John K. bought out the interest of Capt. Ernst K.

Booth who then retired from steamboating to devote his time to farming. John K. Booth was now the sole owner and in the first two years the boat had paid for herself and also covered a routine docking bill in 1892.

There was a lengthy low water period in the summer of 1895 and Capt. Mack Gamble had sold his COURIER (1355) to the White Collar Line. This left an opening in the Wheeling-Parkersburg trade so Capt. Booth "cabined out" the LIBERTY, built staterooms in the midship space that had been the light and airy dining room for a daylight packet. The work was done by Harry Holiday who had done the same type of work on another of Capt. Booth's boats for the same trade just 41 years before. (We surmise that the texas was also added at this time: the Wheeling-Parkersburg trade had one trip each week through to Pittsburgh. Ed.)

The LIBERTY proved successful in her new trade and from November, 1895 to September, 1896 cleared about \$10,000. This figure is the more impressive since the LIBERTY had competition from the LEXINGTON (3446) which was in the New Matamoras-Wheeling trade and from the Ohio River Railroad which began operating in 1884. The boat was docked in the fall when low water brought river traffic to a standstill, the severe ice conditions during the winter having caused considerable wear and tear.

Capt. Booth had no idea of selling his boat and in fact was considering building a duplicate to have boats in the trade operating on opposite days. Capt. Thomas Prince of Memphis approached Capt. Booth about buying the LIBERTY and, similar boats were selling for around \$12,000, Booth stated he wouldn't be interested for less than \$14,000. Prince said, "John K., the LIBERTY is mine, she's my boat," and then suggested he could have asked \$20,000.



LIBERTY after purchase by Thomas Prince for the Memphis-White River trade. She now has a texas and fancy stacks. Myrtle Bank Galleries.

Capt. Booth stood by his deal and the LIBERTY changed hands on October 10, 1896. Booth bought a half interest in the Marietta Wharfboat to keep his hand in the river game but sold out within a year.

Capt. Prince took the LIBERTY to Memphis and entered her into the Memphis-White River trade where she operated for several years. In 1902 she was sold to N. M. Jones to satisfy a debt. In November, 1902 she was sold to Eanes and Jackson to operate out of Mobile on the Alabama and also Black Warrior-Tombigbee Rivers.

In 1912 John W. Hubbard, the Shovel King, was beginning to build his packet empire. He had become acquainted with Capt. Henry Kraal who remembered the LIBERTY as a fine boat which would be suitable for the

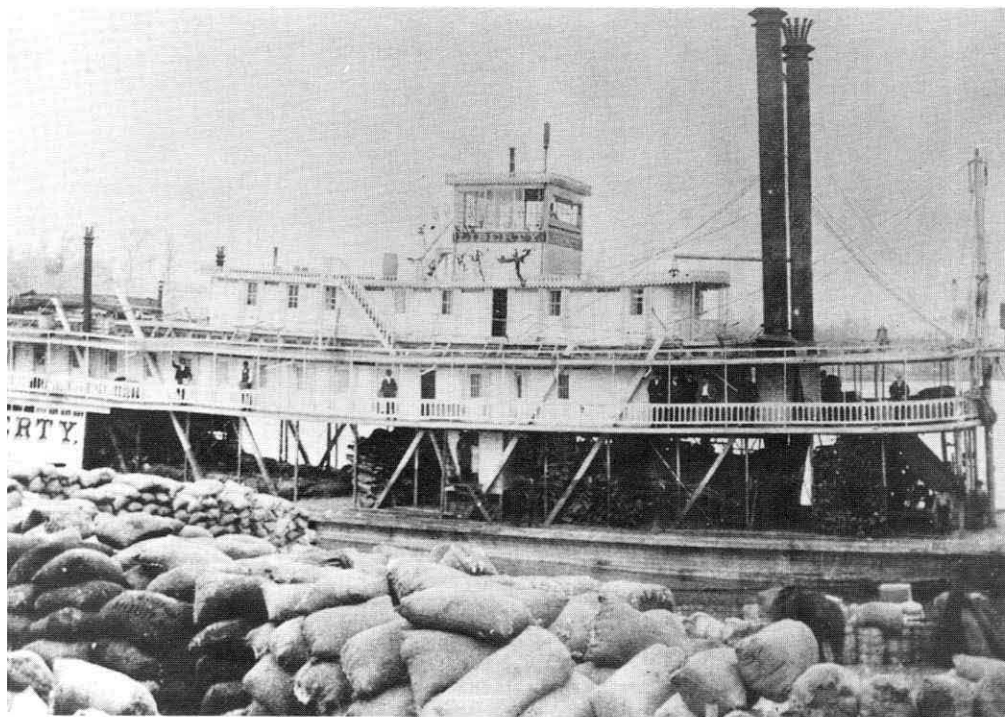
Pittsburgh-Cincinnati trade. Hubbard bought the LIBERTY and dispatched Henry Kraft, his son Harry and Frank Hull to Mobile to bring the boat back to the Ohio.

Quoting Capt. Harry Kraft:

"If my memory serves me right, Frank Hull, an engineer, my father and myself left Parkersburg in October, 1912 to go to Mobile to get the steamer LIBERTY.

When we arrived she was on the docks and it was more than two weeks before she was ready to set sail. When they had her ready, the cabin was tied down with manila rope and rope was also used to tie down the smokestacks in addition to the wire line.

We were advised to take what is known as the inside route to New Orleans instead of going out



The "Big Liberty" operated out of Mobile, Alabama on the Alabama, Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers, 1902-1912 under the ownership of Mobile and Montgomery Barge Line. She is shown here at the Demopolis, Alabama landing with a big shipment of cotton seed in the sacks in the foreground. Although well past twenty years old when John W. Hubbard bought her in 1912 the LIBERTY was evidently in fair shape with boilers new in 1910 and considerable hull work in 1912, valued at \$16,000.

The rebuilding into the CITY OF PARKERSBURG included installing bull rails on the main deck and wire railings on the boiler deck, shorter stacks, etc. She sank in 1918.

into the Gulf of Mexico; it was considered safer unless we should get caught in a bad wind storm. Should that have happened, the swells break worse in what they call shoal water and a boat like the Big Liberty just could not take it.

On the inside route we were out of sight of land several times during the day but, finally, reached Lake Bourne Canal about midnight. We had to anchor until the next morning when they could lock us through.

I remember that during the first day out my father was doing a little cleaning up and there were two anchors on the boat, one good one and the other

pretty badly eaten up by salt water. So, Dad got rid of the poor one. That night when the skipper ordered both anchors down, one ahead and the other at the stern, he found out that we only had one anchor. He raised plenty of hell!

It was very beautiful going through the canal and I enjoyed New Orleans and the trip up the Mississippi. We all three stayed on the boat while she was being rebuilt at Dravosburg (above McKeesport, PA, Monongahela River) and became part of the crew when, renamed CITY OF PARKERSBURG (1117), she came out in the Pittsburgh-Cincinnati trade in the spring of 1913..

* * *

CITY OF PARKERSBURG SINKS FORMER LIBERTY WRECKED

The following is extracted from, the Parkersburg Sentinel of February 7, 1913.

The CITY OF PARKERSBURG which recently made her appearance in the trade between Pittsburg and Cincinnati, and which was given a big ovation when it landed here on her maiden trip, sank at 1:50 am. this morning at Dam 26, eleven miles below Gallipolis as the result of striking one of the piers of the bear trap at the dam.

When the accident occurred, Pilot Harry Swaney of New Cumberland was on watch, Capt. Harry Kraft of Belpre, the other pilot, having stopped off here when the boat went down the river on Monday. Capt. Henry Kraft, his father, is the officer in charge of the boat, and was in command of the steamer H. K. BEDFORD when that boat sunk last winter above Marietta.

When the boat struck the pier a large hole was crushed in the hull and she sank rapidly but fortunately the head of the boat was run into the bank. The crew were able to throw out the gang plank and the passengers, of whom there were fifteen aboard, were hastily aroused and were able to get out on shore in their night clothing, losing all their personal effects. In order to keep warm large fires were built on the bank though all suffered severely until taken to Gallipolis.

The steamer GREENLAND struck the same pier about an hour before the accident occurred to this boat but the crew took prompt measures and she was hurried to the docks at Pt. Pleasant.

The GREENLAND had hit the same pier at 11:30 pm. and broke 17 timbers. The CITY OF PARKERSBURG was soon raised and repaired. She sank again in 1918 after hitting a sunken barge at Russell, Kentucky and was lost.

Our thanks to John King, Belpre for the timely clipping.

* * *

STAYING AFLOAT IN THE '30s

Readers of Stan Garvey's excellent book on Sacramento River steamboating, "King and Queen of the River," are familiar with the efforts by The River Lines to keep the boats operating during the Depression. The improved roads and trucks of the 1930s gave competition which dictated drastic action. Changing from steam to diesel power would save fuel costs, reduce crew and increase cargo space. Bob Parkinson and Dick Rutter have teamed up to document the first such conversion.

The ISLETON, a wood hull sternwheel boat, 167.5x36x7.5, built in 1902 was successfully rebuilt in 1935. The conversion was undertaken at the Stockton base for The River Lines under the direction of James Burns, Port Engineer. In addition to removing the steam boiler and machinery other changes were made such as installing elevators for freight handling at docks with fluctuating water levels, upper cabin reconstruction, rebuilding the bow deck house, etc. The steam plant and paddle wheel were replaced with two 200 hp. Enterprise diesel, direct

reversing engines driving twin 56 inch propellers.

The work was done between January 22 and May 31, 1935 at a time when other boats of the fleet were involved in the filming of Steamboat 'Round the Bend (S&D Reflector, June, 1995). The total bill came to \$8,222.78 exclusive of the cost of the new engines, etc. More than \$900 was for the rebuilding of the main deck for cargo; the new engines were down in the hull. The cylinder timbers were removed but the stern and original rudders were retained, modified at a cost of \$240 to work with the props. There is no indication that any rebuilding of the stern rake of the hull was necessary.

After completion, operation of the diesel MV. ISLETON was monitored during the summer of 1935. The results were gratifying: fuel costs reduced from \$40 to \$10 per day; freight space increased by 25%; crew reduced by two. Time trials run on September 5, 1935 proved the boat slightly faster than the 9 mph. with the sternwheel: 9.16 @ 320 rpm.; 10.12 mph. @ 350 rpm.

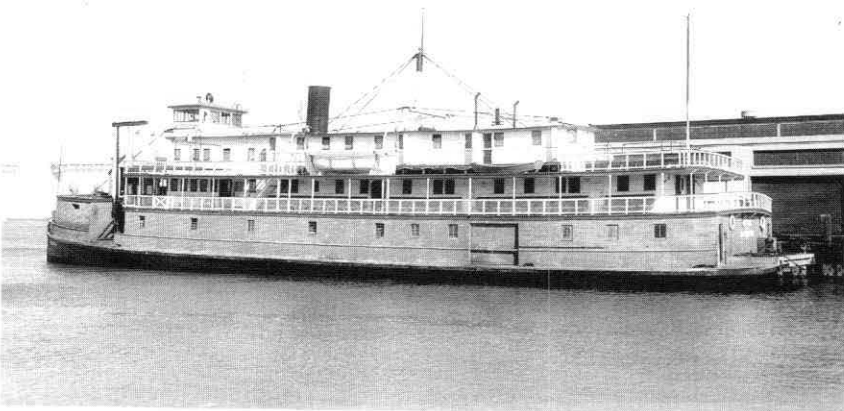
The following year a second of The River Lines boats was converted to diesel, this being the DAUNTLESS. She was also wood hull and built in 1892, 190.5x36.5x8. She was still documented as late as 1951 but we have no information on her later career.

Like her newer and larger sisters DELTA QUEEN and DELTA KING, the ISLETON was taken over by the military during World War II. She became the Army ferryboat ARMY QUEEN operating between Angel Island and San Francisco. For many midwest soldiers acquainted with river boats, her steamboat beginnings were easily detectable under the G.I. olive drab paint and "Isleton No. 100776" was carved above the cabin door on the boiler deck.

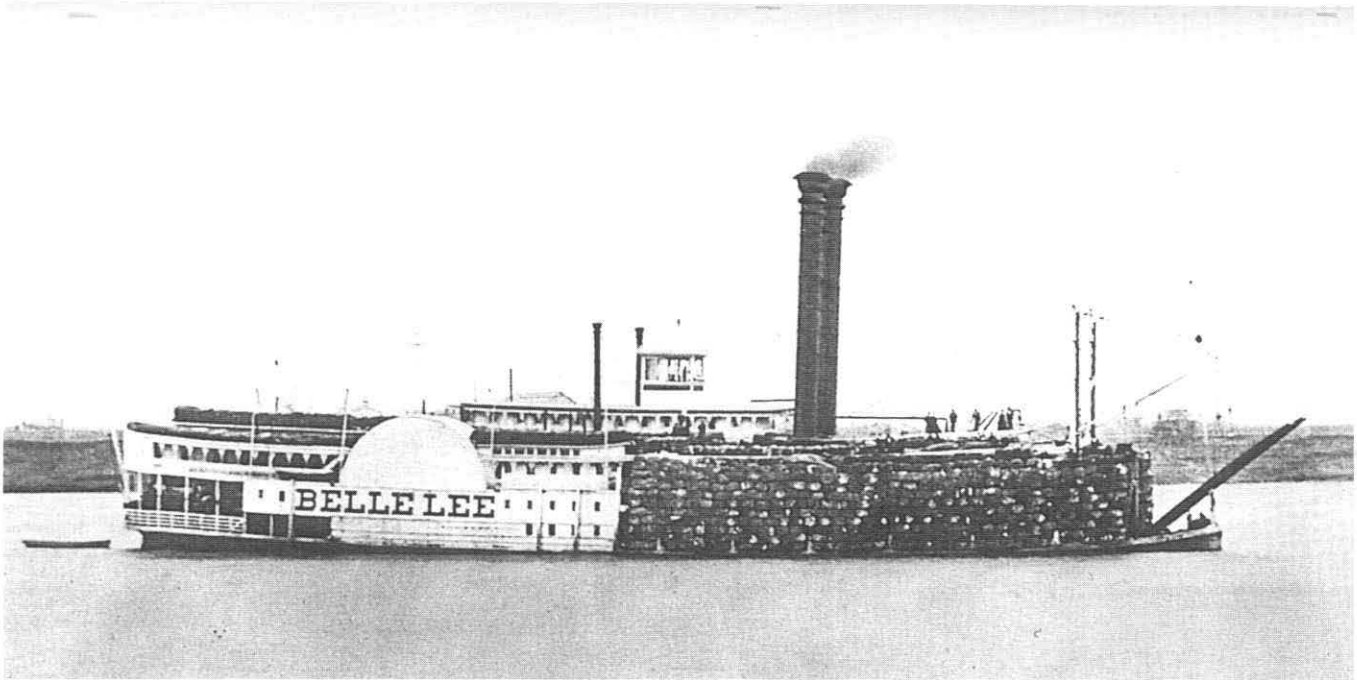
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ISLETON and behind her the J. D. PETERS at California Island Harbor, Stockton about 1920. Bob Parkinson photo.



ISLETON at San Francisco about 1938 after the conversion to diesel, twin prop. Not so pretty but efficient. Parkinson photo



The BELLE LEE (0505) figures prominently in the following story so some background on this impressive boat is in order. She was of the larger class of cotton carriers built after the Civil War: 291x42.4x8.4. eight boilers, engines 34½'s-9 foot stroke. Her reputed cost in 1868 was \$163,000; within a year she was sold for \$60,000 to satisfy a \$113,000 builders debt.

Her big cotton trip to New Orleans was in December, 1874, 5,908 bales on board and towing two barges, with 762 bales and 7,600 sacks of cotton seed. Is this photo of her record load; there's little freeboard remaining. The boat was a bare six years old when the upper works were moved onto a new and larger hull. Norman photo from the Prince collection, Murphy Library.

THE GREAT MARY BELL

By
William H. Tippitt

In the early spring of 1875 a rumor crept up the river out of Vicksburg that the mighty BELLE LEE (0505) would soon run no more.

In early May the BELLE LEE passed up by Memphis to Cairo and there her crew was paid off. From Cairo the boat was towed to the Cutting & Woods shipyard at Metropolis, Illinois where Capt. Cutting had started work on a hull for a new steamer. This was called the BELLE LEE in the local newspapers and the Massac Journal, May 1, 1875 billed it as, "the largest boat ever built on the western waters." The owners were Capt. Jeff Hicks, Capt. George Conrad and Capt. Jesse K. Bell.

Dispatches in mid-June reported that the new BELLE LEE or MARY BELL would be ready to float in just six weeks. The hull was reported as nearly completed, it being built of the best Tennessee River bottom oak and many of the planks and timbers are 70 feet long.

The Metropolis Times, July 16, 1875 gives the following description of the boat and referred to her as the MARY BELL (3789) and not the new BELLE LEE as was generally expected by river folks. "The new boat is 325 feet in length, breadth of 56 feet and floor 50 feet; depth of hull amidships is 11 feet; add to this a sheer of six feet from amidships fore and aft and a guard of 18 feet all around, then some idea of the

proportions of this gigantic vessel may be formed. There are 300 floors in the boat, 5 x 11 inches; one main keelson 10 x 20 inches; two bilge keelsons 8 x 14 inches; four clamps, four pointers and fourteen floor streaks. The bottom and knuckle planks are five inches thick and from 50 to 70 feet long. In the construction of this boat, over a million feet of water-seasoned oak has been used and seventy-six thousand feet of Florida pine consumed in laying the main deck besides a great quantity of other kinds of timber.

For fastenings, over one hundred tons of iron have been used, thirteen thousand drift bolts, besides nails innumerable. The tonnage is estimated at 3,000 tons with a storage capacity for

10,000 bales of cotton, the largest capacity of any boat on the river.

The draught of the new boat will be four feet aft and three feet forward. Another departure by the owners of the MARY BELL is in the boilers. They have contracted for a battery of eight steel boilers, having three times tensile strength of iron, thus assuring entire immunity from explosions. The engines come from the BELLE LEE and cylinders will be 35 inches in diameter with 9 feet stroke; the two wheels will be 38 feet in diameter with 16½ foot buckets. The boat will cost when completed about \$40,000."

A dispatch from Cairo on July 17 reported that Capt. Cutting had launched the new boat at 2:00 p.m. July 16. In launching, she had only 15 feet to move down the ways before striking a bearing on the water. The Ohio River, though late in the year, was on a rampage from flood waters fed into the main stream by the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

Many rivermen continued to call the new boat BELLE LEE and to squash those rumors Capt. Cutting announced in Cairo on July 25, "She was christened the MARY BELL when she was launched in honor of the estimable wife of Capt. Jesse K. Bell and that the name will stick to her while her timbers hold together and that will be a long time for she is a well made, extra fastened boat."

The work of moving the cabin from the old BELLE LEE to the new MARY BELL was much delayed by the running of heavy drift in the Ohio River. The hull of the MARY BELL was seven feet higher than that of the old boat and jack-screws had to be used to lift the cabin on the old boat before it could be set onto the new one. This feat was accomplished on the August 27, the same time as her machinery was moved.

On the 11th day of September the MARY BELL was brought down to Cairo and the Paducah packet JAMES FISK, JR. (2923) brought down some new furnishings to her. On September 12 the new MARY BELL departed from Cairo in tow of the GENERAL ANDERSON (2225) and towboat BON ACCORD (T0285) to St. Louis to receive her boilers. "While her cabin is in place, her wheel houses and wheels are not yet built. The cabin is so small in comparison with the hull, she is so very high between decks that she presents an exceedingly odd appearance. The two boats towing her looked very small alongside her and her lower guard came just even with their boiler decks."

The eight new boilers were aboard on September 21 in St. Louis and Capt. Cutting completed all the wood work on the boat. The MARY BELL was due in Memphis early Saturday morning, October 24, 1875. The levee was thronged with excited people to welcome the new boat when word was received that she was aground near Stewart's Towhead, a short distance below Tiptonville, Tennessee.

The MARY BELL finally hove into sight about noon on Sunday and landed first at Hopefield Wharfboat where she took on 378 bales of cotton. Departing Hopefield she arrived in front of the city about mid-afternoon, firing her gun as salute amid the cheers of the multitude. After the lines were made fast the report says: "The throng of visitors was so dense on board that it was difficult to move about. The forward gangway stairs leading to the cabin were so backed with ascending and descending humanity that everybody was well scrunched who attempted to go either way. It was estimated that more than 10,000 persons visited the vessel in the short space of three hours previous to dark."

The MARY BELL departed at 11:00 a.m. on Monday for New Orleans, the detention caused by the inability to ship a deck crew, only 30 being aboard and 60 more needed. As much as \$60 per month was offered without effect when \$40 per month was all that the regular packets paid. "On departure she had nearly 100 cabin passengers on board, two tiers of cotton over her deck and guards. She took on 1,055 bales here and 900 tons of other freight and has several thousand bales waiting for her below here."

"The new boat has 48 staterooms in her forward or 'Gents' cabin; 12 in the ladies cabin, four of which were handsome bridal suites; and aft of this cabin were 18 staterooms for negro maids traveling with the families of the passengers." She carried the banner trip into New Orleans for the year 1875; on that trip she had 7,108 bales of cotton along with several thousand sacks of cotton seed.

The gracious boat, built to outlast and out-carry all others, had barely entered the New Year when she was destroyed by fire at Vicksburg February 27, 1876. On that fatal day, in fulfillment of the superstitions of rivermen, the OSCEOLA (4342) sank 50 miles below Memphis and the steamer RAPIDEN (?) sank earlier in the wee small hours of the morning, five miles below Baton Rouge. In the destruction of all three boats no lives were lost.

The Memphis Appeal, February 29, 1876:

**THE RIVER - BLACK SUNDAY
THE GREAT MARY BELL BURNED
AT VICKSBURG
NEARLY \$500,000 LOSS**

The burning of the colossal steamer MARY BELL, the largest boat ever built to run on the Mississippi, which unfortunate event occurred at Vicksburg last Sunday evening, was the leading sensational topic in this city yesterday forenoon. News of the

disaster was imported by private telegrams received at an early hour in the morning and, as a large number of passengers from this city were on board, much anxiety prevailed concerning them. All fears were dispelled were lost, though their escape was so narrow that they failed to save their baggage.

The MARY BELL left here last Wednesday about dark with ninety cabin passengers and a very large freight trip. At Helena about seventy-five cabin passengers were added and one thousand bales of cotton taken on board. Down at Terrene, opposite the mouth of White River, four hundred and eighty one bales of cotton were received, brought out of the Arkansas and White Rivers on last trips of the steamer LEGAL TENDER and RUTH. When she was met by the steamer THOMPSON DEAN one hundred miles above Vicksburg, the MARY BELL had 250 cabin passengers, 4,200 bales of cotton on board in addition to 3,500 sacks of cotton seed.

The report received from Vicksburg says: "She had 5,000 bales of cotton and 7,500 sacks of seed when she was destroyed. This sum is in aggregated value of \$260,000 which added to \$140,000 which is estimated value of the boat makes to \$400,000 and was covered according to the statement made by Capt. Hicks, her commander during the last visit here.

The MARY BELL was a new boat having been completed at St. Louis in October last and having arrived here on her first trip south on the 24th day of that month. She was on her tenth consecutive trip when she burned and the prospects of its profit, had she arrived safely at new Orleans, was not less than ten thousand dollars. Since the MARY BELL began her trips she has cleared some \$30,000. The boat was valued by the insurance companies at \$140,000 and was covered according to the statement made by Capt. Hicks,

her commander during the last visit here.

From Mr. R. Hicks, son of Capt. Hicks, it was ascertained that origin of the fire was unknown and is supposed to have been accidental. Mr. Hicks was first to give the alarm, having discovered the fire beneath the forward cabin stairway. This was a little after 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Murray Hicks, the boat engineer and the captain's brother, endeavored to put out the fire with the steam hose but, in the haste to prepare the hose, it burst after which so much time was required to make repairs that the flames spread too far to be subdued. The engineer burnt his arms severely in his effort to quench the fire and worked faithfully until the boat was burning amidships.

The passengers were hurried ashore as quickly as possible and a number of children were cast from the cabin guards down to the steamers TALLAHATCHIE and YAZOO which were lying nearby and had moved up to the stricken vessel to render help. Many willing hands stood by to catch them as they fell. Over 300 head of cattle were on the after guard and were burned as they stood; efforts were made to cut the railings and let them overboard but the fire spread aft so quickly it drove the men working there away.

Capt. Hicks was up town at the time of the fire escorting some of his passengers about the city. With the sounding of the distress signals by his and other boats at the levee, he hastened back to the stricken steamer. Of the 240 registered cabin passengers, some 75 were ladies; more than 50 people had registered at Vicksburg for the trip to New Orleans.

After the calamity, the citizens of Vicksburg, headed by Mayor O'Leary, threw open their homes for the entertainment of the sufferers. The ladies were provided with clothing; a special train was arranged to carry the

people to Jackson where trains to north and south were available.

The MARY BELL was lying at the landing and not at the cotton elevator. She had just taken on 300 bales of cotton for New Orleans when fire was discovered. There were four bridal couples on board the MARY BELL, three were from Memphis: They were Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Baggett, Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Truehart, Mr. & Mrs. John Campbell and, from Louisville, Kentucky were Mr. & Mrs. John Turner. All lost every vestige of their baggage, fine jewelry and clothing.

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The MARY BELL intrigued Bill Tippitt. His story is not dated, probably written in the 1970s, but he continued to research the history of the boat and the involvement of the Hicks family as one of his last projects (but never wrote a formal article, as far as we know). The only editing has been to put in the dates of several newspaper references.

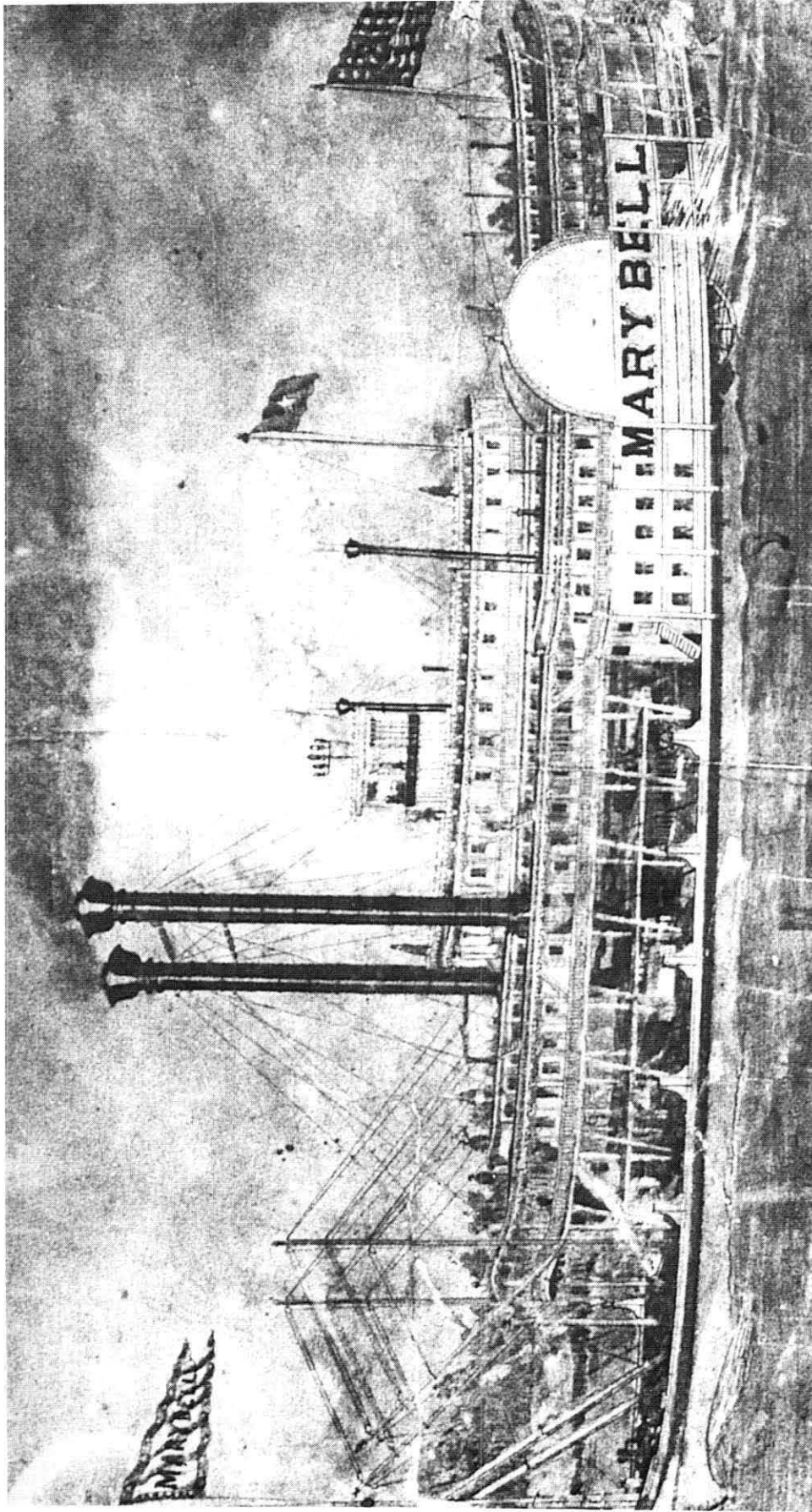
No record of the RAPIDEN has been found; probably very small and not requiring inspection or perhaps listed as a freight boat. The Memphis Appeal reports: "Sinking of the Rapiden. The first sinking occurred on morning of the 27th, at 2:00 a.m. when the small steamer RAPIDEN from Tensas (River) bound for New Orleans sank five miles below Baton Rouge with no loss of life, but complete loss of cargo."

* * *

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors of S&D will be meeting at the Hotel Lafayette the afternoon of Friday, September 13, 1996. A member desiring to bring any association matters to the attention of the Board may contact a Board member or appear in person.

A report by the Chairman of the Board of Governors will be given at the membership meeting on Saturday morning.



To date, this is the only likeness of the MARY BELL which we have that might be somewhat close to her appearance. It comes from an old print in the collection of the Golden Eagle Museum collection, printed by John Heller, St. Louis, but with no artist attribution. And we are a bit dubious about this rendering, too: the artist seems to have done the BELLE LEE with

a change of name rather than how the mammoth new boat actually looked. The BELLE LEE had a hull 291x42.4x8.4 while the new hull was 327x55.5x10.5; it could be expected that the upper works (cabin, texas, pilothouse, etc.) on the MARY BELL would have a longer forecastle than shown in the painting. Recall that the St. Louis newspaper commented, "the cabin is so small

in comparison to the hull, she is so very high between decks that she presents an exceedingly odd appearance." Surely some photographer exposed a glass plate of the MARY BELL. Almost as big in hull size as the contemporary GREAT REPUBLIC (2438), and even if she lacked the symmetry to be considered a beauty, she had to attract attention.

The hull from the BELLE LEE was used for the huge wharfboat that served Natchez from 1875 until 1886. A photo of the wharfboat with its steamboat antecedent plainly evident appears in S&D Reflector, June, 1985, page 34, and also in Joan and Thomas Gandy's photo essay, "The Mississippi Steamboat Era" by Dover Books.

Murphy Library Photo.

- OBITUARIES -

LOWELL WARDEN

Lowell R. Warden, Sr., keeper of the W. P. SNYDER JR. at the Ohio River Museum, Marietta died June 12, 1996 after a long battle with leukemia. He was 60.

Lowell was born in Marietta, a son of the late Herbert and Pearl Miller Warden. He served two years in the U.S. Army as a tank mechanic and for 16 years was employed as a press operator at Kardex Systems, Marietta. In 1989 he began working as a seasonal maintenance man at the Campus Martius and Ohio River Museums. Lowell was an avid fisherman and enjoyed woodworking, selling some of his work at area craft fairs.

Part of Lowell's early duties at the museum were helping to maintain the W. P. SNYDER JR. The SNYDER underwent a major restoration in 1988 which undoubtedly saved the steamer but the boat did not look just like she had in 1955 when brought to Marietta, "On that sweet September day," to quote from the Bob Schertz song. Museum manager John Briley and his crew worked to put the SNYDER back to her earlier appearance and Lowell became the boat keeper.

Although he had not been around river boats Lowell had an eye for details and enjoyed working on the restoration as well as the general maintenance. The double cabin in the aft end of the cabin was returned to a laundry, complete with a vintage washing machine. Scraps of wire screen indicated that the stateroom doors and transoms had once had screens and Lowell made the replacements. The crew bathroom on the boiler deck was cleaned, painted and fixtures found so it could be opened for viewing. Noting the hooks on the boiler deck resulted in clothes lines being installed so the phantom crew could hang their washing.

When the steel bunk beds in the staterooms were looking ratty Lowell undertook to disassemble and paint them all before reinstalling with new spreads. If he wasn't sweeping or polishing around the SNYDER, Lowell usually had a scraper and paint brush in his hands.

The W. P. SNYDER JR. looks as it does today, 41 years after it arrived in Marietta, largely because of the interest and dedication of Lowell Warden. No detail seemed too small if it lead Lowell to another bit of the restoration puzzle. In a conversation a year or so ago Lowell admitted, "I just love that old boat. Isn't that crazy?" But the old boat shows the results of Lowell Warden's interest. On about his last day working this spring, getting ready to open his boat for the season, Lowell was making up the beds in the staterooms and pointing visitors to the just restored bathroom under the pilothouse.

Surviving are his wife, Delores Kimble Warden, one daughter, Brenda Knight of Marietta and three sons, David Lee, Lowell Roy, Jr. and Mark, all of Washington County, Ohio. He is also survived by five brothers, five sisters and nine grandchildren.

Services were conducted at the Church of the Nazarene with burial in Eastlawn Memorial Park, Marietta.

The flag on the W. P. SNYDER JR. was lowered to half mast in honor of Lowell Warden, Sr. On Saturday, July 7 a memorial plaque to an "extraordinary shipkeeper" was dedicated in the hall of the crews' quarters on the boat Lowell loved so well.

* * *

KURT W. SWAN

Kurt Willard Swan, 78, New Cumberland, West Virginia died May 17 of complications from a brain tumor. Kurt and his wife Helen are known all along the Ohio River above Marietta as the

boat enthusiasts who always had plates of home-baked cookies for the lock and boat crews.

Kurt was a collector of boat photos, both old and new and seldom missed a chance to chase down a new boat to capture its photo at one of his favorite spots. During his working career Kurt drove over-the-road trucks hauling steel. He became interested in the river and boats while living on the river bank at his home called Swanee's Landing, mile 56.5 below Pittsburgh.

In addition to his wife Helen, Kurt Swan is survived by a daughter Nora White and son Willard M. Swan. A grandson, Michael White, is employed by Ingram Barge Co.

* * *

WILLIAM L. MILLER, JR.

William Miller of Edwards, Missouri died on May 9, 1996. At the time of his death Mr. Miller was confined to a nursing home at Warsaw, Missouri.

Mr. Miller was a great-grandson of Capt. William Heckman of Hermann, Missouri and through him related to "Steamboat Bill" Heckmann, Capt. Ed. Heckmann and Capt. Roy Miller. A cousin is Dorothy Heckmann Shrader, author of "Steamboat Legacy." William L. Miller, Sr. was a steamboat engineer and was running the ferry at Glasgow, Missouri at the time of the birth of William, Jr. Later, William Miller, Sr. was on the J. R. WELLS operating as an excursion boat at St. Joseph, Missouri with his wife Myrtle running the concession stand and the son confined to his playpen, a steamboater at age two.

Mr. Miller leaves his wife Virginia and a daughter, Debra Stonebraker of Foley, Missouri.

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OBITUARIES CONT'D. NEXT PAGE

- BACK COVER -

OBITUARIES CONTINUED -

WALTER L. MESECK

Many S&D members have crossed paths from time to time with Walter Meseck, Fort Lee, NJ. If there was a boat to ride, be it the DELTA QUEEN, deep sea, canal boats or excursion boats at Pittsburgh, New Orleans, St. Louis or Canada, Mr. Meseck was likely to show up during any given summer. Word has recently come to us that Walter died June 20, 1996, age 87, at Teaneck, New Jersey.

Walter Meseck for many years was associated with his father and brothers in the operation of Meseck Towing Co. The company had a sizeable fleet of tugboats centered in New York harbor prior to World War II. The company was sold to Moran Towing about 1955 and Walter retired at age 46, thereafter to do whatever caught his attention and wherever it might occur but usually with some nautical connection.

Walter was an active and early supporter of the Steamship Historical Society of America and its quarterly, "Steamboat Bill"; he once said that he found the S&D Reflector a bit too folksy and wished for more technical content. But Walter was interested in all vessels and related developments, particularly the engineering aspects. When well up in his 70s Walter biked the length of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. He rode the VIKING EXPLORER down the Tenn-Tom Waterway with Capt. Bill Bowell in the fall of 1985 and knew all its features from his several explorations during construction. (see S&D Reflector, March, 1986).

Walter Meseck's curiosity about all things nautical and his strenuous schedule of travel by various means each year was an inspiration. An incident on the Tenn-Tom trip is illustrative of

Walter's approach to life: He was hit with a severe attack of asthma at Demopolis, Alabama and was removed to the local hospital by ambulance; it didn't look good. Later, Walter reported how those Alabama folks came up with a new treatment for his problem, the nurses adopted him and the doctor drove him to the bus station for the trip back to New Jersey. To see the part of the Waterway he had missed, Walter was on the VIKING EXPLORER on the northbound trip the next spring.

Many artifacts from the Meseck Towing Co. were donated to the Merchant Marine Museum, Kings Point, NY and to the Tugboat Museum, Kingston, NY by Walter.

Walter Meseck never married and is survived by his brother Joseph F. Meseck, Jr.

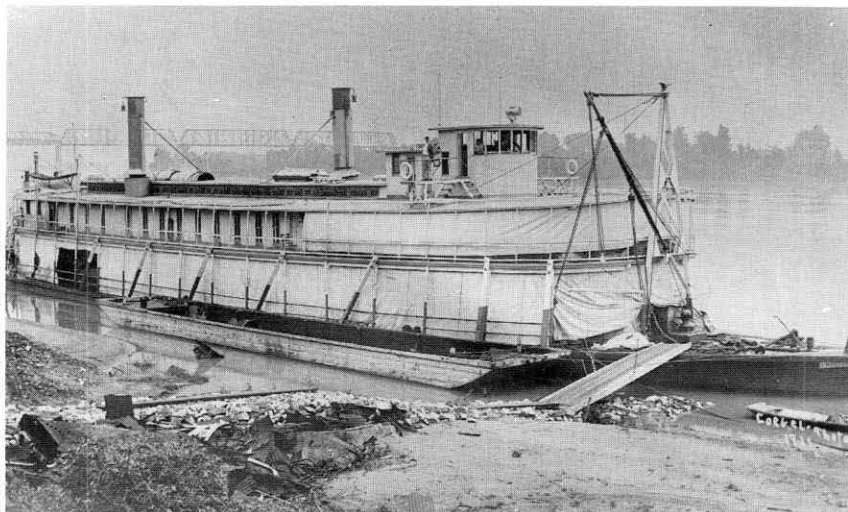
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Lest we be accused of using only "pretty" pictures on the covers of this quarterly here is something different. The stern of the CHESTER may not have beauty but it is interesting.

The remodeled CHESTER first had triple propellers but these were soon changed to twin props. The 1911 photo on this page we judge to be when the conversion was newly completed; the back cover view is after reworking. She lost one stack with the second change but hardly improved her looks.

The photo was taken at Kansas City by Charles Phelps Cushing, New York and bears a notation that the props were installed in tunnels. CHESTER was chartered by the U.S. Government during World War I and was sold in 1920 for use in Cuba.

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THE CONVERSION OF CHESTER

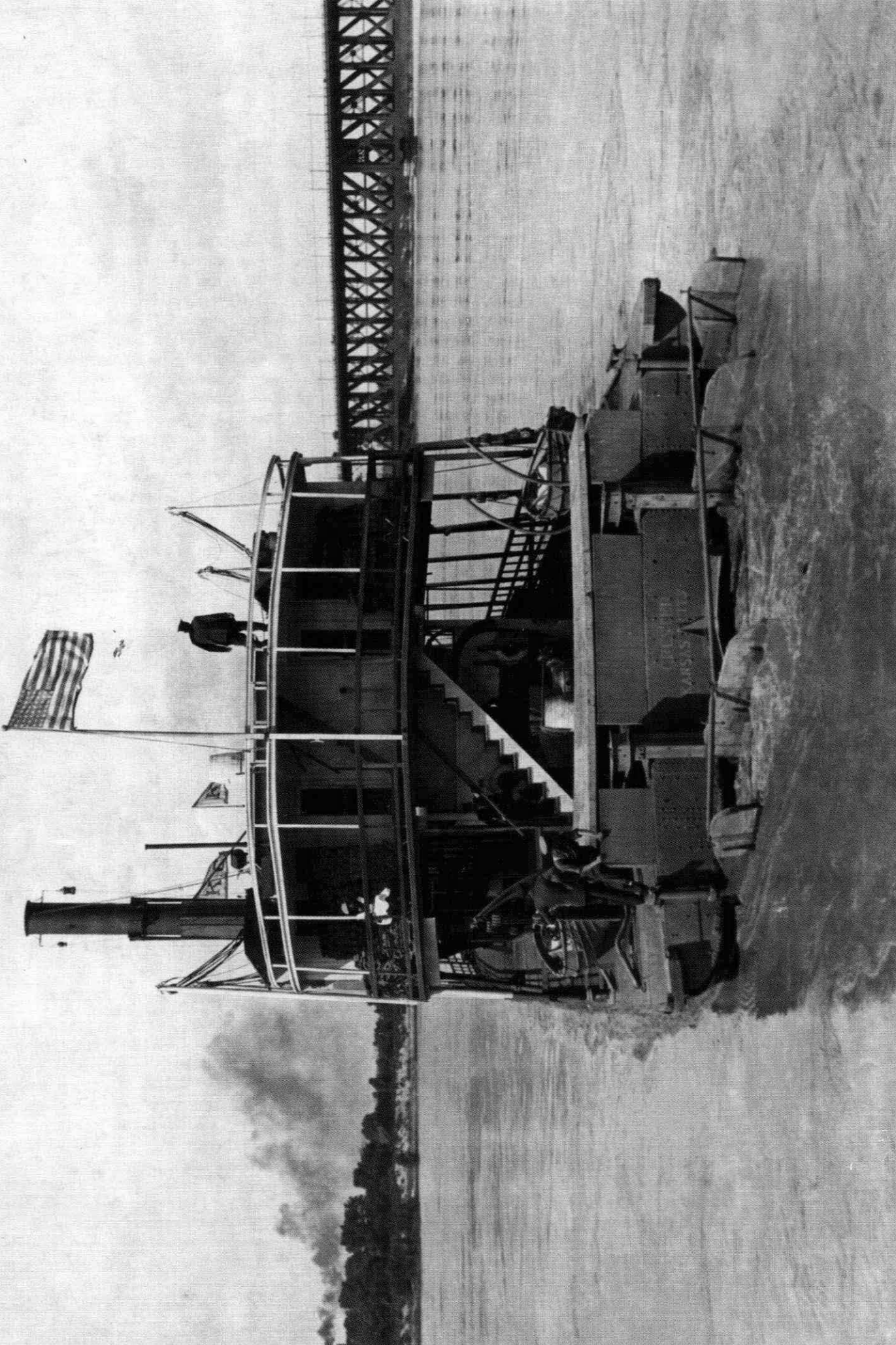
The article about the conversion of Sacramento River boats from sternwheel to props in the 1930s, found elsewhere in this issue, reminds us of an earlier such rebuilding.

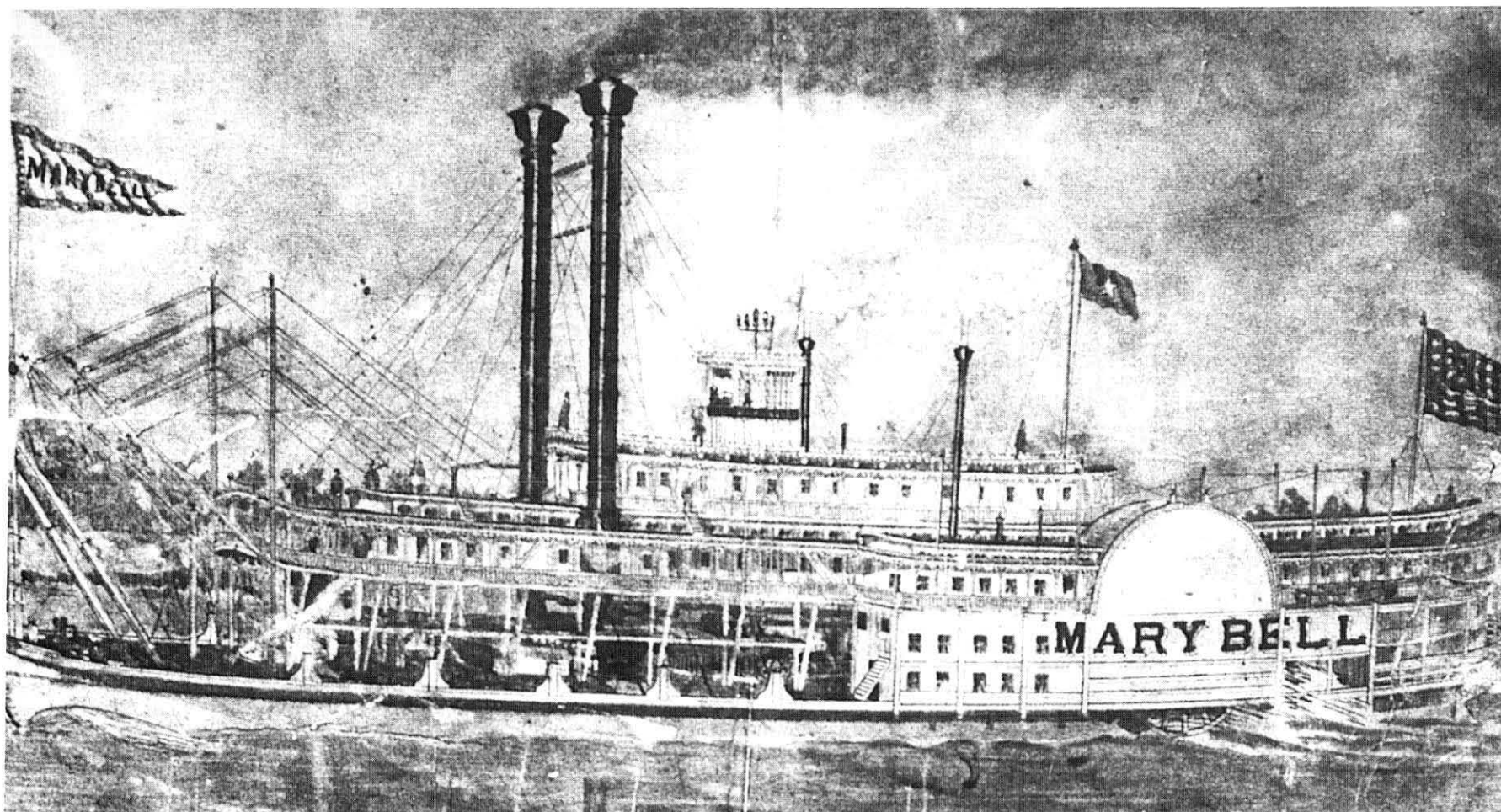
The CHESTER (1001) (above) started out as the steel hull CHEROKEE (0996) built in 1888. She was the typical sternwheel packet, 216 feet long with twin stacks, texas, etc. Renamed by the St. Louis & Chester Packet Co. in 1906.

After running in the St. Louis-Chester trade the boat was bought by the Kansas City Missouri Navigation Co. in 1907 and ran St. Louis-Kansas City. CHESTER was not successful in reviving the trade, laid up in 1908 and remained so into 1910.

New owners took her to New Orleans for conversion to propeller drive, steam power and with other changes for freight. Above photo taken in 1911, again to try the Missouri River trade.

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To date, this is the only likeness of the MARY BELL which we have that might be somewhat close to her appearance. It comes from an old print in the collection of the Golden Eagle Museum collection, printed by John Heller, St. Louis, but with no artist attribution. And we are a bit dubious about this rendering, too: the artist seems to have done the BELLE LEE with

a change of name rather than how the mammoth new boat actually looked. The BELLE LEE had a hull 291x42.4x8.4 while the new hull was 327x55.5x10.5; it could be expected that the upper works (cabin, texas, pilothouse, etc.) on the MARY BELL would have a longer forecastle than shown in the painting. Recall that the St. Louis newspaper commented, "the cabin is so small

in comparison to the hull, she is so very high between decks that she presents an exceedingly odd appearance." Surely some photographer exposed a glass plate of the MARY BELL. Almost as big in hull size as the contemporary GREAT REPUBLIC (2438), and even if she lacked the symmetry to be considered a beauty, she had to attract attention.

The hull from the BELLE LEE was used for the huge wharfboat that served Natchez from 1875 until 1886. A photo of the wharfboat with its steamboat antecedent plainly evident appears in S&D Reflector, June, 1985, page 34, and also in Joan and Thomas Gandy's photo essay, "The Mississippi Steamboat Era" by Dover Books.

Murphy Library Photo.

