

S & D

REFLECTOR

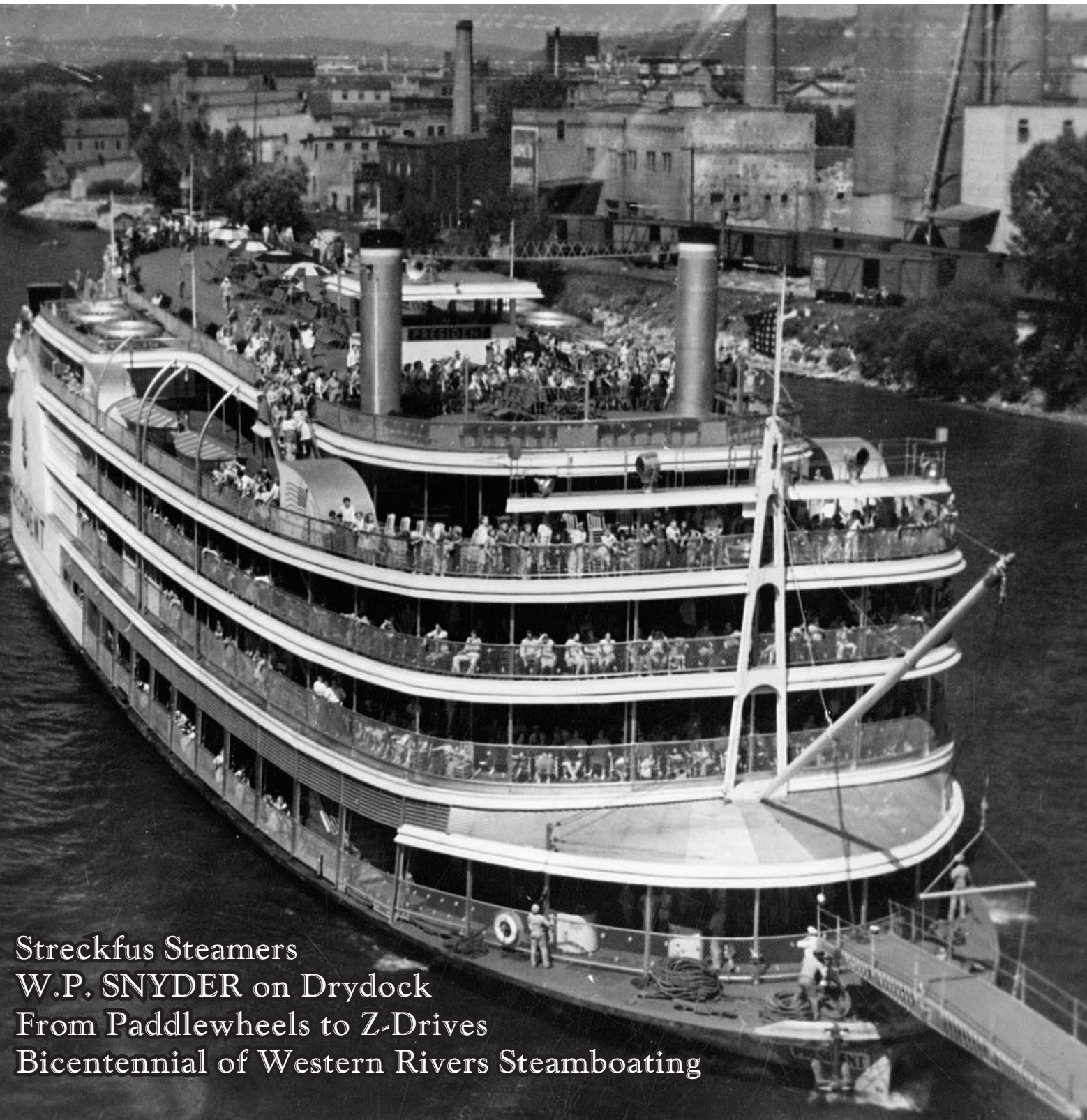
Published by Sons and Daughters
of Pioneer Rivermen



Vol. 48, No. 1

Marietta, Ohio

March 2011



Streckfus Steamers
W.P. SNYDER on Drydock
From Paddlewheels to Z-Drives
Bicentennial of Western Rivers Steamboating

Front Cover

The big sidewheel Streckfus steamer *PRESIDENT*, loaded to the guards with passengers, is about to pass beneath the La Crosse Highway Bridge on an afternoon excursion in this view snapped in summer 1940 or 1941. After the *ADMIRAL* became company flagship at St. Louis in 1940, the *PRESIDENT* began tramping the Upper Mississippi during her summer season, eventually settling into a forty-year tenure as New Orleans' year-round excursion boat beginning in 1944. Two decades earlier, Streckfus Steamers ran head-to-head competition with Cincinnati's *ISLAND QUEEN* in the Crescent City during her off-season on the Ohio. See Tom Dunn's letter on page 7 for the interesting details. Yet another episode from the *PRESIDENT*'s seventy year history appears on page 46. River fans shake their heads in dismay when comparing our cover view with the sad remains of the once-proud steamer pictured in our September 2009 issue.

Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse.



🔦 Bert is right. We do indeed like this full-color *CAPITOL* shot snapped at the foot of Canal Street in 1941, pictured above. The accompanying view below shows Bert's present boat to the left and also the 1926 Howard-built steam ferry *LOUISIANA* (3597). Measuring 144.5x55x9.3, she was owned by Baton Rouge Transportation Co. until acquired by Plaquemines Parish Commission Council and rebuilt as a twin prop at Avondale Shipyard in 1969. *BELLE CHASE* was a Howard steam ferry appearing in 1925 as *NEW ORLEANS* (4183), of same hull size, engines 18's with 6-foot stroke built by Iowa Machine Works, and allowed 800 passengers and 40 autos. She was rebuilt in 1962 when G.M. diesels were placed aboard. Thanks to Bert for sharing his fine photos.



Ellie Brown, daughter of Capt. Bill and Betty Carroll, writes after listening to audio tapes of the *ADMIRAL*'s steam calliope and whistle: "Love the *ADMIRAL* calliope, especially the afternoon concert. I can actually follow along and place where the boat is, going under the bridges and by the stadium when Dick [Renna] plays 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame.' When he plays 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,' Capt. Carroll (Pop) has arrived on the



Reflections from Our Readers

A mailbag and computer inbox filled to overflowing bring these recent greetings from our readers.

Bert Suarez writes: "Thought you may like this one for the *REFLECTOR*. In all my years of steamboat photo collecting, I have never seen a real color picture of the *CAPITOL*, only ones that were color-enhanced. I am now pilot on the m/v *PLAQUEMINES PRIDE*, a ferry boat in Belle Chase for the Plaquemines Parish Government. In our ferry yard we have two retired boats that were built at the Howard Yard and were originally steam with a paddlewheel between the two catamaran hulls. One boat is *BELLE CHASE* and the other *LOUISIANA*. The latter was still running at Pointe-a-la Hache, LA until 2008. Best regards."

top deck and is making his way to the pilothouse to land the boat. He stopped by the calliope, gave Dick a little bow, and Dick saluted him back. How neat to be able to hear that in the music! Thanks again.”

‡ We are very pleased that Ellie and husband Mike are signing up as new members of S&D. We welcome them, and trust that our newly revised website, the pages of the REFLECTOR, and our stalwart members’ word-of-mouth will continue to “get the word out” to prospective S&Ders.

Marlene Morris writes: “I started receiving the REFLECTOR a few years ago when I became acquainted with Bill Torner who is my dad’s cousin. Bill has been a longtime subscriber, however he’s been very ill for most of the past year. He turned 95 in December and his health is deteriorating quickly. His niece has a large collection of publications and memorabilia from Bill’s lifelong interest in river vessels. She’s wondering if she can donate what she has to some person or to an organization. I told her I’d ask you for suggestions. Thanks so much.”

‡ Our response to Marlene’s request referred her to several of the river libraries and museums in Marietta, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, LaCrosse, and Dubuque. S&D members wishing to contact Bill to offer their greetings and good wishes may contact the editor for Mrs. Morris’ e-mail address.

Virgil Reynolds writes: “It was interesting to read about VEGA [pp. 23-24 in September 2010 reprint of December 1965 issue]. Enclosed are some photos of a model built by a friend. After he passed away, the model was offered to me after his grandchildren played with it for about six years. I put a new wheel and wheel housing on it and kinda touched it up. She ran the Muskingum River for 17 years and never upset. Then I think she went to Pittsburgh, her height was lowered and she did upset! Very good news about the possibility of the DELTA QUEEN running again.”

‡ Shown on page 50 is the model of the “skinny” steamer VEGA in Mr. Reynolds’ riverboat display at his home in East Liverpool.

Continued on **page 50**

IN THIS ISSUE

Columns

<i>Reflections from Our Readers</i>	2
<i>Getting Posted Up</i>	5
<i>Meet Our Contributors</i>	6
<i>Small Stacks</i>	48
<i>The Newer Faces of S&D</i>	52
<i>Final Crossings</i>	55

Features

<i>SNYDER on McGinnis Drydock</i>	8
<i>Streckfus Steamers: Company & Fleet</i>	12
<i>From Paddlewheels to Z-Drives</i>	24
<i>Bicentennial of Steamboating</i>	35

Articles

<i>DVD Review: “Maritime Music”</i>	7
<i>Saga of the PHIL SHERIDAN</i>	20
<i>Wood from TELL CITY in Model MOR Report</i>	23
<i>Return to Alton Slough</i>	39
<i>ORM’s First Waterways Festival</i>	42
<i>Deck Lights and Steam Calliopes</i>	43
<i>Low Bridges and Emergency Surgery</i>	46
<i>Steamboat Business</i>	53

Thinking about submitting to the REFLECTOR?

Please follow these guidelines:

Articles

- » 500 words or less
- » .rtf or .doc format (no PDFs)

Features

- » 750 words or more
- » .rtf or .doc format (no PDFs)

Images

- » at least 300 dpi
- » .jpg, .tif, .png, or .bmp format
- » minimal compression

Send to the Editor as an e-mail attachment

"Lighting Up the Past, Present, and Future of the Mississippi River System"



SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF PIONEER RIVERMEN

PO Box 352
Marietta, OH 45750

www.s-and-d.org

OFFICERS

Jeffrey L. Spear, President • Vic Canfield, Vice President
Richard R. Kesterman, Secretary • R. Dale Flick, Treasurer

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Term Ending 2011	Term Ending 2012
Capt. Rob't. Reynolds	Capt. Wm. Judd, Chairman
Michael Jones	Capt. Tom Dunn
Taylor Abbott	Fred Rutter

Term Ending 2013
Lee Woodruff
Capt. William Barr
John Fryant

J. MACK GAMBLE FUND TRUSTEES

Darlene Judd, Chairman • Frank Pollock • Jim Bupp

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

J. W. Rutter

The *only* requirement for membership in S&D is an interest in river history!



The S&D REFLECTOR is the property of the Sons & Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen Corporation and is not to be reprinted or electronically reproduced without written permission of the Editor.

S&D REFLECTOR

Published by Sons and Daughters
of Pioneer Rivermen

Vol. 48, No. 1
ISSN 1087-9803

Marietta, Ohio March 2011
Post Office Permit #73, Marietta, OH

The name of this publication comes from the *Fleetwood Reflector* published in 1869 aboard the packet FLEETWOOD. This quarterly was originated by Capt. Frederick Way, Jr. in 1964.

Correspondence is invited and serious papers on river related history from our readers are always welcomed. Please check with the Editor before sending any material on a "loan" basis.

David Tschiggfrie, Editor
2723 Shetland Court
Dubuque, IA 52001
reflector@comcast.net

REFLECTOR BACK ISSUES AND INDICES

Copies of the current or of the immediate prior year are available at \$5 each, postpaid for members, \$8 for non-members. Issues for most years through 1972 are available at \$3 each or \$10 for a complete year (4 issues).

Indices for five year increments of the quarterly, 1964 through 2003, are available for \$5 per volume.

Orders should be sent to PO Box 352, Marietta, OH, 45750 for these items.

THE US POSTAL SERVICE DOES NOT FORWARD MEDIA MAIL! ADDRESS CHANGES - SEASONAL OR PERMANENT - REQUIRE TIMELY NOTICE TO THE SECRETARY TO ENSURE THAT YOU RECEIVE THE S&D REFLECTOR!

There are two classes of membership - full and family. Full membership includes the quarterly S&D REFLECTOR, admission to the Ohio River Museum and towboat W. P. SNYDER, JR. at Marietta, and voting rights at the Annual Meeting. Family members enjoy all privileges except the REFLECTOR.

DUES

FULL MEMBER - \$30 each

FAMILY (spouses and children under 18) - \$1 each
Please list full names of family members.

Remit to:

Richard R. Kesterman
3118 Pershing Court
Cincinnati, OH 45211-6915



Getting Posted Up

Two History-Making Steamboat Events

This year, 2011, marks the anniversary of two significant events in Western Rivers steamboating. Beginning with this March issue, Volume 48 of the REFLECTOR celebrates the Bicentennial of Steam Navigation on America's inland rivers inaugurated by the NEW ORLEANS' voyage from Pittsburgh to her namesake city. This year also commemorates the centennial of the acquisition of four landmark steamers destined to become the excursion fleet of Streckfus Steamboat Line, the longest-lived and best known excursion boat company on the Ohio and Mississippi River system.

Many of the events scheduled by the Rivers Institute at Hanover College in observance of the Bicentennial Celebration are detailed in our story on page 35. Included are recently announced weekend cruises in Madison by the BELLE OF CINCINNATI and BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. Another significant gathering will occur in conjunction with the events at Ohio River Museum's inaugural Inland Waterways Festival on August 6-7 described on page 42 and on our website. Maintaining that focus, our June issue will feature Leland Johnson's account of the epoch-making journey in 1811-12. And while the year unfolds, we anticipate other events to be reported in these pages as further activities build up a full head of steam.

Capt. John Vize provides us with commentary and superb photos of the W. P. SNYDER, JR.'s drydocking at McGinnis Shipyard last year, prior to her return to the Muskingum on S&D weekend. Check out the photo spread on pages 8-11.

The story of Streckfus Steamboat Line's 1911 expansion in the packet/excursion business as successor to Acme Packet Company was introduced in our December 2010 issue by Judy Patsch's Streckfus family portrait. This issue continues that saga with her overview of the steamers of the company's fleet, coupled with some new "finds" to pique our readers' curiosity and interest.

S&D REGIONAL CHAPTERS

Ohio - Kanawha Rivers Chapter
Jim Bupp, President

Middle Ohio River Chapter
Frank X. Prudent, President

Mississippi River Chapter
Capt. Tom Dunn, President

ADJUNCT ORGANIZATIONS

Ohio River Museum, Marietta, OH
601 Front St • (740) 373-3750

Inland Rivers Library, Cincinnati, OH
800 Vine St • (513) 369-6957

Blennerhassett Museum, Parkersburg, WV
137 Juliana St • (304) 420-4800

Weblinks available at www.s-and-d.org

Most appropriately, we welcome Capt. Carl Henry to the pages of the REFLECTOR as he shares his "view from the pilothouse" in the feature "From Paddlewheels to Z-Drives." Carl tells a story that bridges his experiences from pilot on the traditionally-designed and hand-steered excursion steamer JULIA BELLE SWAIN to the modern Z-drive-propelled m/v SCOTT STEGBAUER, one of a series of river towboats powered by the latest technology.

As we celebrate the Bicentennial of Steam Navigation on the Western Rivers, your March issue of the REFLECTOR encompasses a panorama of two centuries of travel on our nation's inland waters by mechanically-powered riverboats. Welcome aboard. We hope you enjoy your travels with us in this anniversary year. 🌐

Announcement of 72nd Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for September 16-17
as we gather at our headquarters in the
Hotel Lafayette at Marietta, OH.
Watch for complete details in the June issue.



Meet Our Contributors

John Vize (*W.P. SNYDER, JR. on Drydock, p. 8*) was born and raised in the Quad Cities (Moline, IL) and grew up working on and around the river with his dad, John W. Vize, Jr., a well-known Upper Mississippi riverman. John's river career after graduation from high school in 1989 began when he decked for Joe Schadler on the QUEEN OF HEARTS, DIAMOND LADY, and CASINO ROCK ISLAND. After serving on the PAR-A-DICE casino boat in Peoria in 1994, John became deckhand/watchman on the steamer MISSISSIPPI QUEEN, where he received his 1600-ton Mate's license.

Returning to the QUEEN OF HEARTS as captain, he took the boat to Tall Stacks in October 1995 and was offered the Mate/Pilot's position on the CITY OF EVANSVILLE, a 3,000-passenger casino boat. In November 1995 he moved to Evansville where he has lived for the past fifteen years. Two years later he upgraded his license to Master and began serving as Mate/Relief Captain. During his years aboard the CITY OF EVANSVILLE, he also ran as part-time harbor pilot in Evansville and Mt. Vernon in his time off, allowing him to obtain a Master of Towing endorsement on his license.

John met his wife Tracy while both were employed on the casino. They have two daughters, Taylor (14) and Bailey (11). In November 2007, both John and Tracy left the casino boat, John taking a job as Pilot with AEP (American Electric Power) on the m/v PAUL STRIEGEL, where he is currently employed.

Carl Henry (*From Paddlewheels to Z-Drives, p. 24*) was raised in rural Wisconsin and has lived in the LaCrosse area along the banks of the Mississippi River for over 35 years. He has been a logger, truck driver, commercial artist, riverboat pilot and spelling bee champion.

Carl began his river career on passenger boats in the Wisconsin Dells tourist area, later working as

towboat deckhand and mate. Eventually he was pilot on the ISLAND GIRL and LA CROSSE QUEEN excursion boats there. Along the way, Carl graduated with degrees in art and English, leading to a 13-year career in advertising and public relations.

Returning to the river full-time, he piloted the steamer JULIA BELLE SWAIN in LaCrosse for several years while working in the company office during the off-season in advertising and public relations.

The RIVER EXPLORER, a large passenger/hotel boat owned by RiverBarge Excursion Lines in New Orleans, provided Carl with his next job as First Mate, Steersman and Bargemaster, traveling the entire Inland River System along the Mississippi, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Cumberland, Kanawha, Atchafalaya and Gulf Intracoastal waterways.

Currently Carl is towboat captain with Southern Towing Company of Memphis, and serves as master of the m/v SCOTT STEGBAUER, one of a series of four new, state-of-the-art Z-drive towboats. He continues to travel widely on our nation's inland waterways and is quick to tell you that he has the "greatest job in the world." As proof, he points out the window of his "office," the pilothouse of whatever towboat he is currently working on.

Carl's articles about steamboats and river history have appeared in various magazines and he still speaks to groups whenever he is able. He has been interviewed by Wisconsin Public Radio. His illustrated monthly newsletter "From the Pilothouse" chronicles his adventures and daily life on the river. Capt. Henry recently published his first collection of photography, Pioneer Hall, available at Lulu.com online.

A licensed riverboat pilot for thirty years, Carl holds an 8th-issue license as Master of Towing Vessels and Master of Steam and Motor Vessels/1600 tons. In his off-time, he enjoys writing, photography, camping, hiking, collecting music, and stays interested in a wide variety of historical topics. Carl, his wife Kristi, and children Gabe and Abby live in La Crosse, WI.

Review: “Maritime Music” A DVD of Sheet Music Covers

Before the advent of crystal sets, radios and victrolas in American homes a century or more ago, the parlor piano provided home entertainment for generations of families. And the music industry responded by churning out popular sheet music by the ream. It is only to be expected that some of this music would popularize boats and ships which were part of the lives of those who lived along riverbanks, lake and seashores.

Ed Mueller, longtime S&D member and former editor of the SSHSA’s *Steamboat Bill* quarterly magazine, has written and directed a newly released DVD in cooperation with John Leynes, Jr. Titled “Maritime Music – Ships, Events and Men”, this 51-minute color video features over seventy covers from sheet music composed about celebrated steamboats and ships of the past 150 years. Many of these come from Ed’s personal collection, and are supplemented by covers from other private and museum/library collections. The DVD provides a fascinating look at the place of river, lake and ocean steam vessels in our nation’s pop musical culture.

The covers are divided into six categories: Early Paddle Steamboats, Western Rivers Steamboats, Excursion Vessels, Ocean and Great Lakes Lines and Vessels, Unusual Vessels, and Maritime Disasters. Included with each cover are photos of the boats and ships featured, along with detailed historical information about each.

Of particular interest to river fans are the thirteen covers commemorating the exploits of such Western Rivers steamers as TOM JASPER (5417), NATCHEZ VI (4109) and ROB’T. E. LEE (4777), CITY OF ALTON (1045), BELLE OF ALTON (0511) and GUIDING STAR (2470).

Price is \$10 with \$2 shipping and handling. Orders may be sent to:

Ed Mueller
4734 Empire Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32207

The Foot of Canal Street A Letter from Tom Dunn

The recent article by Judy Patsch about the Streckfus family came to mind when going through my Streckfus files and I came across the photo below. The story behind this photo follows.



The Streckfus brothers in New Orleans, Roy and Verne, were always very protective of their landing site at the Foot of Canal Street. It was *the* prime location in the city for the excursion business and they were constantly warding off competition. The ISLAND QUEEN was one competitor out of Cincinnati that had made overtures to the city for that location for their new boat. Depending on who was promoting the boat, it was said to have a capacity of 3000 or sometimes 4000. Streckfus wanted to prove otherwise and they wanted to show that the ISLAND QUEEN could actually carry many fewer passengers. In fact, they argued that the boat was not being operated safely.

On this particular day, Saturday, October 9, 1926, they took this picture of the ISLAND QUEEN and then sought the actual passenger count on that trip. The count was around 1700. “Look at this boat’s freeboard,” they argued. There was no way that it could safely carry any more and, in fact, 1700 was too many. Judging by the boat’s officers in the photo, they seemed a little concerned too.

The end result was that Streckfus continued to hold its prime location, a landing spot they held for another 40+ years. Eventually the ISLAND QUEEN added sponsons in 1941 and was able to handle more than the 1700, but by then the PRESIDENT was well established at the Foot of Canal Street.

W.P. SNYDER JR. on McGinnis Drydock

by Capt. John Vize



These first few photos of the SNYDER showing her on drydock and partially hidden by empty barges were taken in April 2010. This is where most of the work on the boat was done, at the original McGinnis repair dock in Southport, OH. The first photos were taken as I passed by going upriver on my boat.

The rest of these pictures were taken in September 2010 as work was being completed at the new McGinnis repair dock. The new dock is only a few miles downriver from the original one. Although I'm not sure when they moved the drydock and boat from the original site to the new one, it was obviously sometime between April and September. I was at the repair dock for almost three weeks while repairs were being made to my boat, the m/v PAUL STRIEGEL, and I walked around the SNYDER almost daily and was lucky enough to see her refloated and towed away for her return to Marietta.





This next group of photos show the SNYDER during the last two weeks at the shipyard as work is completed on the hull. She was then refloated and repositioned on the dock so paint could be applied to her bottom where she had been sitting on the blocks. When she was refloated a lot of the paddlewheel wood, which was apparently cut apart, was lying on the drydock and floated away. I wanted to get a piece for a souvenir, but they were fairly large and I didn't want to lug it around on my boat.





The last photos show her final floating and repositioning by the McGinnis tugs prior to being towed to Marietta. The SNYDER left for Marietta at approximately 9:30 p.m. on September 15, 2010, under tow of two McGinnis harbor tugs. 🌐

During Friday evening's presentation at the S&D Meeting on September 17, Jack Deck commented about a shipyard worker's discovery that a large rusted bolt had dropped out of the hogchain supports on the fantail. Replacement was made prior to her departure for Marietta.

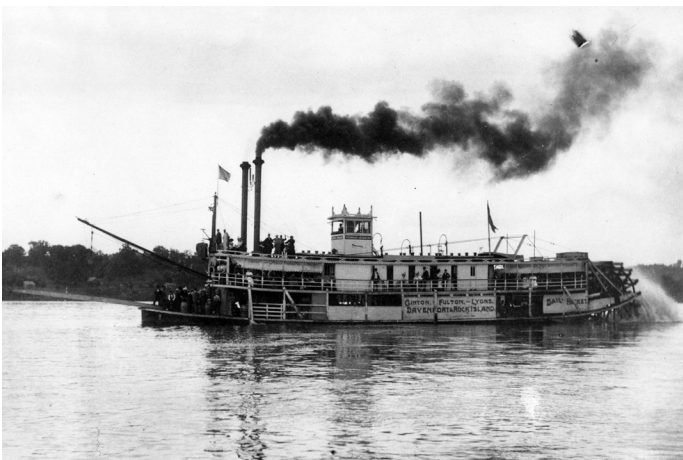
Additional photos of the SNYDER from John's collection can be accessed at the www.s-and-d.org website.



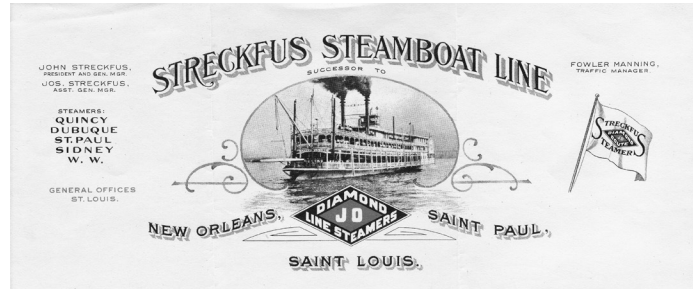
Streckfus Steamers: Company and Fleet

by Judy Patsch

The enigmatic nature of the family Streckfus is reflected in the contradictory history of the company. It was long perpetuated that John Streckfus started his river business by purchasing the FREDDIE in 1884 [as noted in the photo at lower right]. This is the history as stated in Streckfus magazines, in a doctoral dissertation on the company, and in oral histories passed on by the Streckfi. However, as reported on page 7 of the September 1996 REFLECTOR, Fred Kahlke dispelled this possibility, as the FREDDIE was not built until 1891. Kahlke wrote a letter to Roy Barkhau in which he stated that the FREDDIE was built in their family boatyard merely to keep the workers busy when he was about ten years old. This corresponds with the first appearance of the boat in the official records. John Streckfus bought the FREDDIE shortly after it was completed. Based on this information, the first boat bought by Streckfus was the VERNE SWAIN in 1889 [pictured below], with the FREDDIE following a few years later. Why the 1884 date was perpetuated for generations as the beginning of the company and the FREDDIE as its first boat will probably never be known.



Now, to the known facts about the Streckfus business and its boats. John Streckfus incorporated the Acme Packet Company of Iowa in 1893. This remained the company name until 1910. On August 18, 1910, the Streckfus Steamboat Line Company was incorporated and Acme was dissolved. In 1926 the rather cumbersome name was changed to Streckfus Steamers Inc. and this remained the name until the company dissolved in 1981. Capt. John was the



President of Acme and then SSLCo. until his death in 1925. Son Joe became President of the company and served until his death in 1959, when brother Roy took over. After Roy's death in 1968, brother Verne declined the Presidency but served as head of the New Orleans operations. Roy's son William served as President from 1968 to 1979, after which Bill Carroll assumed leadership until the company's dissolution in 1981.

John Streckfus bought the VERNE SWAIN in August 1889 from its builder David Swain. It was being used in the Clinton-Davenport trade, which Streckfus continued. Common history has Streckfus purchasing this larger boat from the profits of the FREDDIE, which we now know wasn't possible. He most likely used his earnings from the family grocery store to buy the VERNE. In 1891 Streckfus bought the FREDDIE from Kahlke Boatyards and used it in the Rock Island - Andalusia trade, a distance of only 8 miles. The FREDDIE carried passengers and freight for a couple of years, but Streckfus sold it to the U. S. Engineers in 1893, who



renamed her MAC. The Acme Packet Co. was incorporated in 1893, with its only boat being the VERNE SWAIN, but the corporation was set up to cover any other boats which Streckfus would operate. The VERNE SWAIN ran one round trip daily between Clinton and Davenport and was very profitable due to her speed and punctuality. In 1896 competition in the form of the JO LONG arrived. Streckfus countered this by buying the CITY OF WINONA [shown at lower right] and entering it into the same trade, freeing up the VERNE to start her round trip in Davenport, while the CITY competed with the JO LONG. Within months the



Streckfus boats had the route to themselves and by starting from opposite ends of the route, they provided customers two choices per day. In 1900, with business declining, Streckfus sold the VERNE SWAIN to Peoria interests, who renamed it SPEED. This left the Acme Packet Company with the CITY OF WINONA as its only boat.

Streckfus saw the decline of the packet business, but also realized that many of his passengers were riding more for entertainment than for business. This led him to design and build a boat intended for the excursion business: the J.S. Howard Shipyard in Jeffersonville built this luxurious new vessel, with great input and much supervision from Streckfus. The J.S. was christened in 1901 and arrived at her homeport of Rock Island with great fanfare and many local dignitaries aboard. Another misconception perpetuated over the years was that the J.S. was the first boat designed and built *exclusively* for the excursion business. While she was designed without boiler deck staterooms and with a large ballroom, it was Streckfus' intention to run her in the Clinton-Rock Island day trade and then run excursions in the evening. However her draft

was too deep to navigate the Rock Island Rapids on a regular and safe basis, so that part of her trade was short-lived and she did indeed become exclusively an excursion boat. But she was conceived to be a dual purpose vessel. The J.S. tramped the Upper Mississippi, St. Croix and Illinois in the summers and ran excursions during the winter season in New Orleans harbor for most of her career. She also made trips out of Nashville on the Cumberland. She was truly the foundation for the Streckfus boating empire. All of the Streckfus children got their start on the river aboard the J.S. - the girls worked in concessions and pursers positions while the boys were deckhands and served in other lower navigation and engineering positions. The J.S. was a tremendous success due to her elegance, modern conveniences, attentiveness of the crew, and most importantly the popularity of her music and the ballroom. Here is one more long-perpetuated misconception: the term 'jazz,' which referred to the type of music played on the boat, did not come from the boat's name. Jazz was a dictionary term long before that musical genre emerged. The flagship of the Acme Packet Company met her end on June 25, 1910, near Bad Axe Island below LaCrosse, WI when she burned to the waterline. (See pages 4-5 of the June 2010 REFLECTOR for a contemporary account of this accident.) This left Acme Packet with one boat - the W.W., which had been the CITY OF WINONA. In 1905 Streckfus had her rebuilt at Paducah into an excursion boat, renaming her in honor of longtime employee Walter Wisherd. She ran summer excursions on the UMR and carried fall freight in the Calhoun County apple country until she was sold in 1917.



The company reincorporated on August 18, 1910, as the Streckfus Steamboat Line Co., and the Acme Packet Co. was dissolved. Needing a replacement for the beloved and very profitable J.S., Streckfus contemplated building a 250 foot, 3500 passenger steel-hulled boat, but these plans were shelved when he was offered the entire Diamond Jo Line properties. These were purchased in February 1911 and included not only the four packet boats SIDNEY, DUBUQUE, SAINT PAUL, and QUINCY, but also the St. Louis wharfboat, the Dubuque shipyard at Eagle Point, three barges, 17 warehouses and two lots. The SIDNEY was soon changed into an excursion boat while the other three continued the Upper Mississippi packet trade until 1917. The headquarters for Acme Packet and the early Streckfus Line was in Rock Island, where the downtown levee and park now stands. But with his boats running out of St. Louis and with the company wharfboat there, John decided to move both his company and family to St. Louis in 1912, which remained the Streckfus base until the end. Even though Streckfus provided efficient and reliable packet service, this genre of steamboating was dying, so he decided to convert all of his boats to excursion vessels. The SAINT PAUL was the first to be converted in 1917 and took up residence in the St. Louis harbor, retaining her original name. In 1919 the QUINCY was converted into the second steamer named J.S. and also worked in the St. Louis harbor. She was envisioned as the new flagship and was outfitted with the finest accoutrements,

catering to the 'carriage' trade. Her deluxe features caused her to be referred to as the J.S. DELUXE, but her official name was merely J.S. The DUBUQUE was remodeled into the CAPITOL in 1920 to tramp the Upper Mississippi in the summer and work the harbor trips in New Orleans in the winter. The SIDNEY was the final boat to be fully converted into an excursion steamer, the WASHINGTON, in 1921 at Mound City, IL. The WASHINGTON tramped the Ohio, based out of Pittsburgh. Much of the conversion work on the others had been done in Credit Island Slough in Davenport, where Streckfus wintered the boats and had a carpenter shop until approximately 1920. Once all the boats were converted, the warehouses and other former Diamond Jo properties were sold off.



Capt. Roy Streckfus in office on Str. CAPITOL, St. Paul, MN, 1937.

Upon the Commodore's death in 1925, his eldest son Joe became company president. In 1926 the company's name was changed a final time to Streckfus Steamers Inc. This name endured until the end of the Line in 1981. SS, as it was commonly known, continued tramping the CAPITOL and WASHINGTON and running the SAINT PAUL and J.S. in the St. Louis harbor. The GREATER NEW ORLEANS (former VIRGINIA) was bought around 1930 but was never run by Streckfus. She was dismantled and her boilers were installed on the WASHINGTON. Joe was a forward-looking businessman and saw the need for a steel hulled boat in his fleet. The letter which appeared in the last issue of the REFLECTOR addressed that need, but that boat was never built. Then in 1931 Capt. Joe's desire for a steel hulled boat was met. The packet CINCINNATI, built in 1924, was bought from John Hubbard and brought to St.

THE CALLOPE IS CALLING YOU

Enjoy THIS FIRST
Moonlight
DANCE EXCURSION

presented by
ALLEN CHAPTER — DeMOLAY
— and — YOUNG DEMOCRATIC CLUB

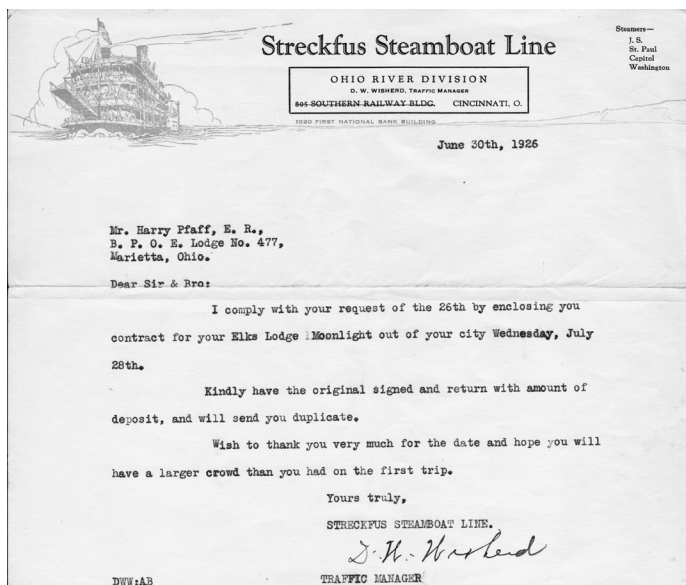
FRI. JUNE 14

Lv. Dubuque.....8:30 p.m.
Tickets 75c

Thrills — Fun — Entertainment
Dancing to the rhythm of Fats Waller's 12
LOUISIANA SWING MASTERS

DUBUQUE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL EXCURSION
FRI. JUNE 14
Lv. Dubuque.....10 a.m.
Rt. 6:30 p.m.

Steamer
Capitol
De Luxe



Traffic manager D.W. Wisherd confirming Elks Lodge excursion on Str. WASHINGTON at Marietta, July 1926.

Louis, where she was dismantled to the hull and rebuilt into the new modern PRESIDENT. Capt. Joe was the designer of the new boat and brother Capt. John, who had assisted on the rebuilding of the WASHINGTON, was the Superintendent of Building Operations. Interior decorations were designed and coordinated by Mazie Krebs, a well known St. Louis businesswoman. Yet another misconception to dispel here: Mazie Krebs designed the interior decor of the boat, but was not involved in the construction of the exterior or navigational aspects, as she often proclaimed in interviews and newspaper articles. That was Capt. John's domain.

Once the PRESIDENT began running in the St. Louis harbor with her first trip of July 4, 1933, the J.S. was free to tramp, and on July 4, 1934, she played Red Wing, MN for the first time, the farthest north she had gone. She also worked on the Ohio River in 1934 and ran the New Orleans harbor in the winter. She was dismantled at St. Louis in 1938. The SAINT PAUL was rebuilt in 1933-34 and began tramping the Ohio River, with Pittsburgh eventually becoming her home base. In 1939-40 she was once again rebuilt and renamed SENATOR. The SENATOR ran out of Pittsburgh for two years and was taken to St. Louis in 1942 to be used by the Coast Guard as a receiving and training ship for six months. In 1943 her pilothouse, upper deck, and machinery were removed and she served as the company warehouse and machine shop until 1953. Her demise was noted in the newspapers as

the tugboat SUSIE HAZARD towed her down through the harbor to her watery grave across from Jefferson Barracks. The CAPITOL continued tramping the UMR through the 1941 season and worked the New Orleans harbor in the winter. She was brought up to St. Louis and dismantled in 1945. The WASHINGTON continued her Ohio River service until she was dismantled in St. Louis in 1938.

The modern streamlined PRESIDENT held forth in the St. Louis harbor during the summer and in New Orleans during the winter, until the ADMIRAL came out in 1940. She then tramped the UMR for several summer seasons before settling in New Orleans year round in 1944. In 1981 the PRESIDENT was sold to New Orleans Steamboat Company but remained in New Orleans until the summer of 1985, when she returned to St. Louis for the season. This St. Louis/New Orleans schedule lasted for three years. In May 1988 the PRESIDENT left New Orleans, ostensibly for the summer, but unknown to the public, it was the end of 44 years' service to the Crescent City. She had been bought by John Connelly with the intention of using her in the Iowa riverboat gambling scene which was being set up in the Legislature. She ran two summers in St. Louis and then was laid up for the gambling conversion. She opened up in Davenport, IA on April 1, 1991, and remained a casino until Sept. 29, 2000. After being laid up in various fleets for several years, she was dismantled with the intention of rebuilding her into a hotel near St. Elmo, IL. The Streckfus clan and company was very proud of being a step ahead of the competition and so their



Capt. Joe Streckfus with his sister May aboard the Str. PRESIDENT while under construction in St. Louis.

(Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, U.W. - LA Crosse)

sleek new steel-hulled, steel-superstructured boat had no gingerbread or calliope. Those things were considered outmoded. But there were so many complaints about no calliope aboard that they placed the J.S.'s instrument on the PRESIDENT for the 1939 season. That was the feature story in the 1939 edition of the Streckfus Steamers magazine. It was one time they were a bit too modern.

With the success of the PRESIDENT and the aging of their wooden hulled fleet, SS decided to build a second steel boat. They purchased the railroad ferry ALBATROSS, dismantled it to the hull and began building the ADMIRAL on the St. Louis levee, even as the older boats were being dismantled just upriver. Once again Capt. John Streckfus was Building Superintendent for this project and Mazie Krebs was interior decorator.

Unfortunately Mazie exaggerated her role in the ADMIRAL's construction even more than she did regarding the PRESIDENT. The Streckfus men were the marine experts and there would have been no way they would have acceded the marine design to Mazie, as she so often claimed. She was an interior decorator, period. Capt. John brought the

ADMIRAL out on her maiden voyage in the St. Louis harbor on June 12, 1940. While she was built above the Eads Bridge, she never traveled above it, and in fact only left the St. Louis harbor for drydocking

or to replace the PRESIDENT in New Orleans while she underwent drydocking. The ADMIRAL's last operating season was 1979, after which she bounced from owner to owner, place to place. Her time as a casino ended earlier this year and at this writing she is shuttered above the bridges awaiting her fate.

In 1963 Capt. Roy saw the company's future and realized it involved shorter trips on smaller boats. In that year Streckfus contracted with Dubuque Boat and Boiler Company to build several faux paddlewheel diesel excursion boats. These boats are still operating under other owners and in various locations along the river system.

While the steamboats themselves are gone, the memories, the grandeur, the good times which the Streckfus family provided river cities through their steamboats will endure. 🕒

All photos on pages 12-19 not otherwise credited are from the collection of Judy Patsch.

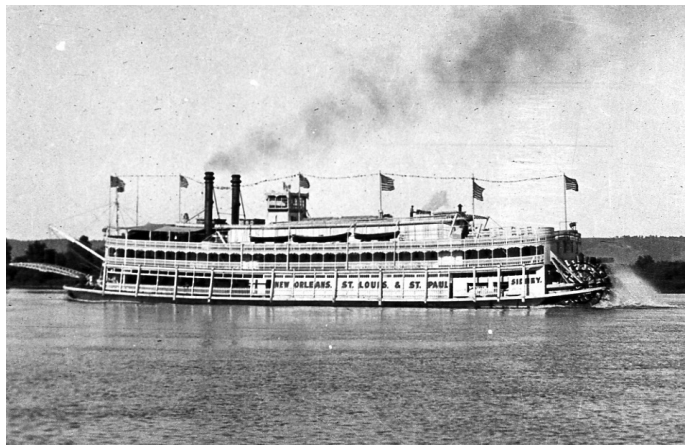


Tramping on the Upper Mississippi in 1942.

Poster from editor's collection.



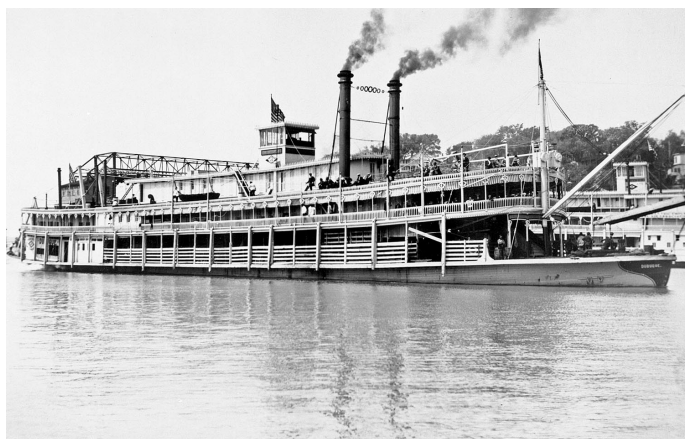
W.W. was former **CITY OF WINONA**, rebuilt in 1905 and renamed in honor of Capt. D. Walter Wisherd, friend of John Streckfus. Remained in Streckfus Line until 1917. Carried a barge alongside for additional excursionists. 137x29x4. Engines 13's with 5 ft. stroke.



SIDNEY, still displaying her former Diamond Jo Route "New Orleans, St. Louis & St. Paul" was the first of the packets to be converted for excursion service. Louis Armstrong began his river career aboard this boat in 1917. She is also pictured in our December 2010 issue on page 25. Hull was 221.3x33.5x5.5 Engines 17's with 5½ ft. stroke. (From editor's collection.)



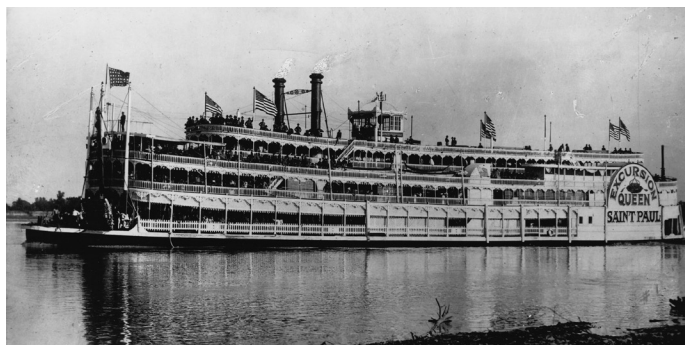
First steamer **J.S.** under construction at Howards in 1901. Built without staterooms but with a dance floor, she was to run as a day packet with occasional moonlite excursions. For further details, see "Deck Outline Lights and Steam Calliopes" on page 43. Hull was 175x33x5.5 Engines 16's with 6 ft. stroke.



DUBUQUE leaving Keokuk Lock in her Diamond Jo days. Rebuilt at Dubuque from the **PITTSBURGH** after the 1896 St. Louis tornado destroyed her upper works. 257.2x40.6x6.1, engines 21's with 7 foot stroke. (Courtesy of Murphy Library.)



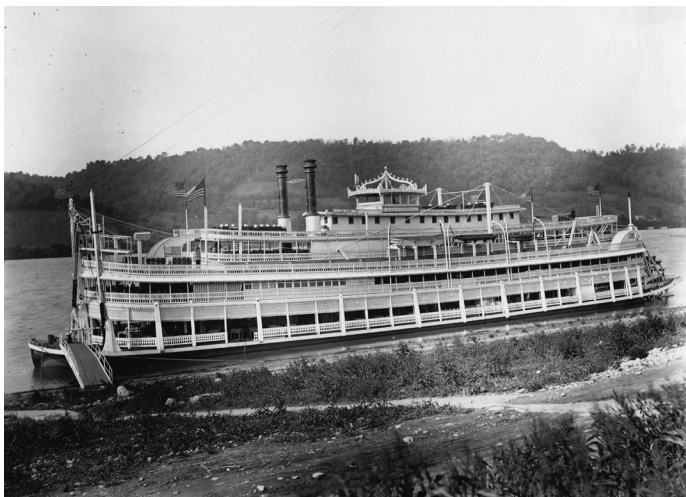
Government snagboat **DAVID TIPTON** raising boilers from the wreck of the **J.S.** at Bad Axe Bend after she burned, a total loss on June 25, 1910. Of the 1100 aboard, there were two casualties.



SAINT PAUL was a big sidewheeler, 300x37.4x6.4, shortened 24 feet at Dubuque in 1903. Engines were 22's with 7 foot stroke. She is the only Diamond Jo packet which retained her name after conversion to the Streckfus excursion trade. She handled the general crowds at St. Louis while her elegant sister **J.S.** was engaged in the "carriage trade."



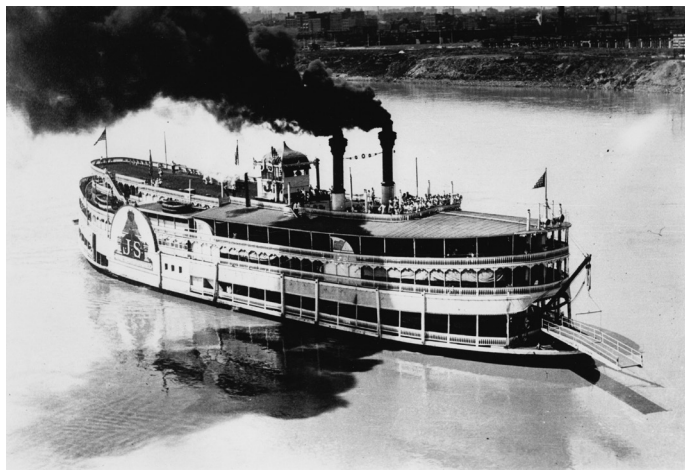
QUINCY in her very early Streckfus days with the company's S. S. logo surrounding the old Diamond Jo insignia. Photographed while passing Keokuk. She measured 264x42x6.8 with engines 23's by 8 foot stroke. Rebuilt in 1919 as J.S.



WASHINGTON posing at Madison, IN, popular location for steamboat photographers. She was rebuilt from *SIDNEY* in 1921, last of the boats to be converted. The company's regular Ohio River excursion boat, she was headquartered at Pittsburgh. Capt. Edgar Mabrey was longtime Master and Capt. Fred Way and Bill Pollock pilots. Clarence "Heavy" Elder later served as calliapist, band leader, purser and captain.



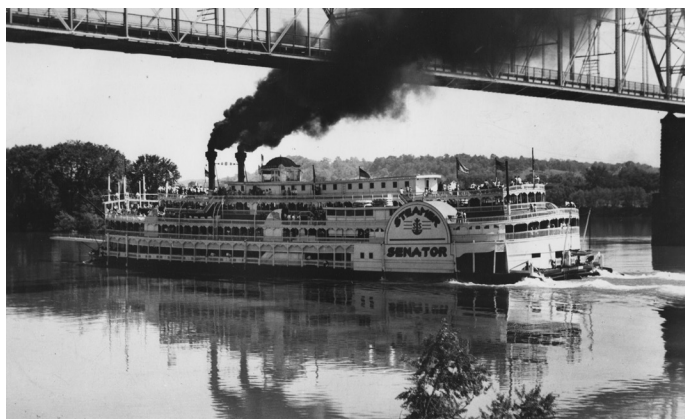
CAPITOL (left) and *SAINT PAUL* on the marine ways at Paducah.



J.S. (or *J.S. DeLUXE* as commonly known) shown fairly early in her career. Although the texas has not yet been added, her bow has been narrowed and elongated and she carries the fancy painting on her wheelbox. Replaced by *PRESIDENT* in 1933 as company's "brag boat" and flagship at St. Louis.



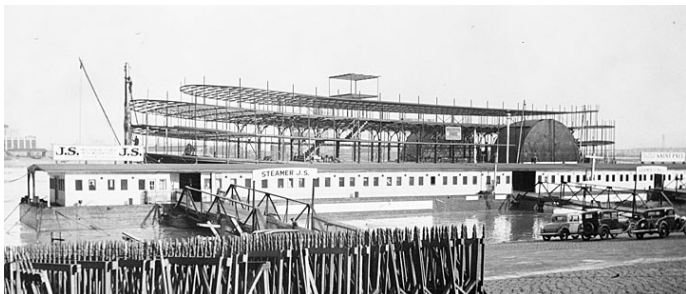
St. Louis landmarks *J.S.* (right) and *SAINT PAUL* wait with lights aglow at the foot of Washington Avenue to take out their next Moonlite excursions. *CAPITOL* and *WASHINGTON* are busy tramping the Upper Mississippi and Ohio.



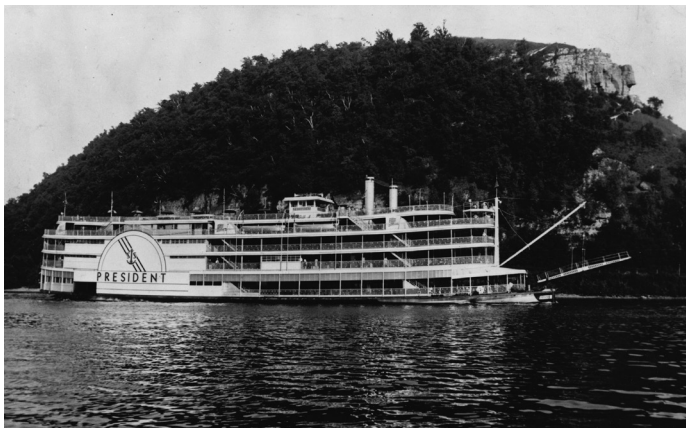
In 1940 the *SAINT PAUL* was rebuilt at Paducah into the *SENATOR*, shown here at Marietta. She finished her excursion days on the Ohio. Later she was taken to St. Louis and used as a floating machine shop and warehouse until 1953, when she was towed downriver and sunk on the Illinois shore.



Is it the **CAPITOL** (top) or **WASHINGTON** (bottom)? At first glance, they have a similar profile. **CAPITOL** was larger of the two, but the giveaway is the pilothouse. **CAPITOL**'s is topped with a large green dome while **WASHINGTON**'s has arched gingerbread.



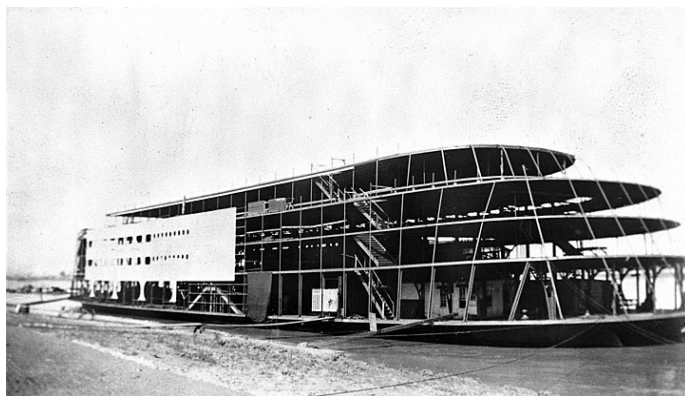
Modern all-steel **PRESIDENT** under construction at St. Louis. Packet **CINCINNATI** was stripped to her hull and new superstructure placed under supervision of Capt. John Streckfus, son of the Commodore.



PRESIDENT cruising the Upper Mississippi in the early forties near Mount Trempealeau above LaCrosse.



PRESIDENT in New Orleans harbor after her second and third decks were glass-enclosed in 1944. She replaced the **CAPITOL** there and reigned in that location until the **NATCHEZ** came on the scene. She was brought back to St. Louis and eventually to Davenport as a casino boat in the 90s.



ADMIRAL under construction above the Eads Bridge in the late 30s. Once again, Streckfus built their newest boat from the hull up, using the former railroad transfer steamer **ALBATROSS**.



The 4,000-passenger **ADMIRAL**, 374x92x9, was the largest excursion boat and first air-conditioned passenger vessel on the rivers. Converted to diesel in 1974 and decertified in 1979, she finally ended operation as a casino in 2010.

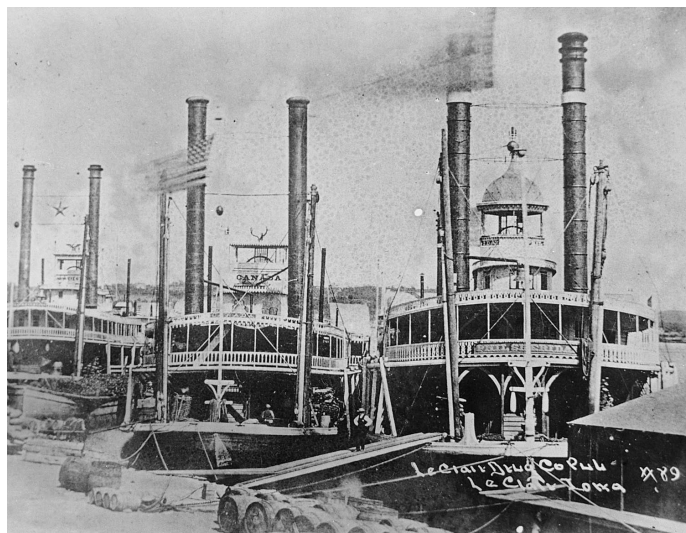
Continuing Saga of the PHIL SHERIDAN

Page 7 of our September 2010 reprint issue tells the opening chapter in the story of the PHIL SHERIDAN (4480), the Cincinnati-built sidewheeler whose career on the Ohio lasted all of two months in 1866. Her early display of speed in the Wheeling-Cincinnati run lured Capt. Payton Davidson of the Upper Mississippi to plunk down \$65,000 cash to enter her in the lucrative and highly competitive St. Louis-St. Paul trade. Except for a single trip to Pittsburgh in 1870, she would not return to the Ohio, but spent the rest of her career making a reputation for the Davidson Line up north. Capt. Way ended his commentary by observing that after she went to the Upper Mississippi, “historians of that area have been writing stories of her ever since.”

Ever since? Well, yes. Within days of your editor’s return home following the Annual Meeting in Marietta, a letter arrived, forwarded courtesy of Woody Rutter. It was from Ed Mueller in Jacksonville, FL. The same author and editor who gave a nineteen-year old in Dubuque his first chance to publish a story, this in the SSHSA journal *Steamboat Bill*. And also the first collaborative effort between that fledgling writer and noted steamboat artist, model builder and S&D REFLECTOR columnist John Fryant, whose drawing of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE graced the front cover of that Summer 1967 issue. Small world. Ed sent a brief biographical sketch of the boat over her ten-year life span, for even modern-day historians continue to be fascinated with her. And Ed’s connection to the Upper Mississippi runs long and deep, with his authoritative *Upper Mississippi River Rafting Steamboats* volume a fitting companion to Capt. Fred’s *Packet and Towboat Directories*. Included with his letter was a photo CD of the PHIL, her cabin, and the famed Civil War general himself, some of these images appearing with this update.

Ed’s commentary was in the tradition of Capt. Fred Way, and of three other historians of no mean reputation: Dr. William “Steamboat Bill” Petersen, Charles Edward Russell and George Byron Merrick. Their writings helped fix the SHERIDAN’s place

firmly in the lore of the Upper Miss. Petersen kept tabs on the packet’s comings and goings in his *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*. “In 1866, the PHIL SHERIDAN and MILWAUKEE (3936), along with a score of other boats, ran excursions to St. Paul and the Falls of St. Anthony, popularized by the Grand Excursion of 1854. In 1869, Capt. Abe Hutchinson of the SHERIDAN advertised that he would take passengers to the St. Louis Fair at two-thirds the regular rate.” Business must have been good, for Petersen reported that the boat netted almost \$30,000 profit for the 1867 season alone. Part of her success was due to her great freight and passenger-carrying capacity. “During the sixties [1860s] such boats as the PHIL SHERIDAN averaged five times the tonnage of the boats which frequented the Upper Mississippi twenty years before. The SHERIDAN alone measured 728.46 tons. Immigration was the prime factor in enlarging and beautifying Upper Mississippi craft.” Visual evidence of her imposing size is apparent in the photo below picturing (left to right) the HAWKEYE STATE (2557) and CANADA (0817) of the Northern Line Packet Co. landed with the PHIL at Le Claire, IA, location of the Upper Rapids.



Steamboat Bill also commented on the fierce competition and strong territorialism that existed among the packets of that day. “Wild boats in the Ohio River trade would frequently bring a cargo around to the Upper Mississippi. ‘The DELAWARE (1492), an outside boat,’ notes the Dubuque Herald of May 12, 1866, ‘arrived yesterday from Pittsburgh, which place she left with 1400 tons of iron, nails, glass and drugs loaded on her deck and on three barges. After discharging about 35 tons

here she pushed on up the river.' Most of the time, however, Ohio River merchandise was transferred at St. Louis to an Upper Mississippi boat. The heavy cargoes of stoves carried from St. Louis and Ohio River ports each fall are suggestive of the great number of new hearth fires. Within the space of ten days in 1869, seven steamboats deposited nearly 300 stoves on the Dubuque wharfboat. The PHIL SHERIDAN brought up 76, in addition to discharging a large amount of merchandise." Not only was the sidewheeler a noted commercial success, but she achieved notoriety on April 4, 1868, when she "was able to smash her way through to St. Paul across frozen Lake Pepin, opening the navigation season on the Upper Mississippi," and not coincidentally, garnering the bulk of freight waiting to reach downriver ports.

But it was her reputation as a thoroughbred of the Upper River that secured her legendary status. Charles Edward Russell, in his lively memoir *A-Rafting on the Mississip'*, tells that story.

"The racing instinct was ineradicable in these people of the river. Owners, underwriters and elderly opinion were all against it, but it persisted virtually unchecked. Let two raft boats deliver rafts and start up the river about the same time; all the underwriters between Dubuque and kingdom come could not have prevented a race. The weight on the safety-valve had now been riveted to the beam, so there was no shifting of it; but nobody could prevent some handy article of a substantial character being hung where it would do the most good. Strict injunctions were issued against firing up for extra steam, and they were obeyed – in form. When an engineer saw behind him the smoke of an approaching steamboat, he was faithful to his employers and never gave orders to the fireman to heat her up. He only loafed forward in a casual way and said to one of the firemen, 'Jim, do you know what boat that is coming up after us?'

"Search me," says Jim. "I don't know."

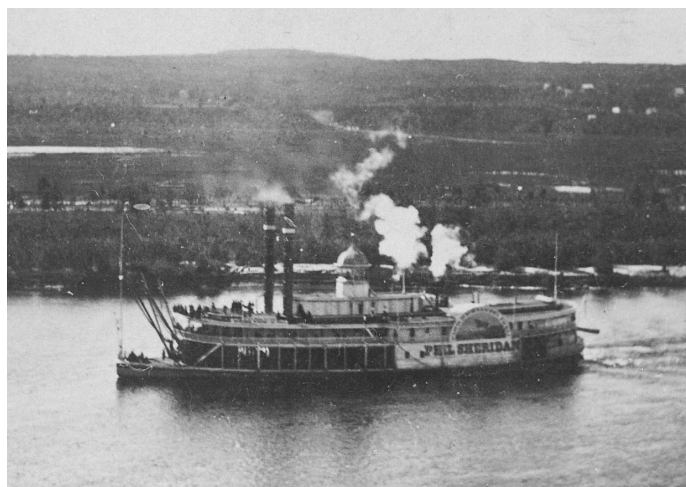
"Well, neither do I," says the Chief, "and the queer thing is I don't want to know," and walks aft, whistling.

Or if the smoke was in front it would be: "Jack, what's that boat ahead of us, up there?"

"I don't know, Chief."

"Well, by Gosh, I wish I knew!"

"About ten minutes later the steam had strangely risen from 150 to 165 pounds and the wheel behind was digging up the bottom of the river. No racing – that was the rule. But of course it was a fact in nature nobody would deny that one boat could travel faster than another.



Racehorse PHIL SHERIDAN on Upper Mississippi between La Crosse, WI and Winona, MN.

"I remember well the commotion that shook our citizens [in LeClaire] when the report was received that the ANNIE JOHNSTON had beaten the PHIL SHERIDAN. Townspeople that had seen both assured me that the excitement caused by the Fall of Richmond was by comparison nothing. The PHIL SHERIDAN, pride and wonder of the river, the swiftest thing that ever floated there, the unsurpassed beauty of creation, with the picture of the Battle of Winchester on its paddle-boxes and its pilothouse dome neatly painted in blue with gilt stars—and now beaten by the ANNIE JOHNSTON, that long, lean sternwheeler – if the earth had opened and swallowed the Methodist meeting-house, men could not have been more amazed.

"It was the fall of 1869. The JOHNSTON had been coaling about four in the afternoon at Port Byron when the SHERIDAN went by and the JOHNSTON had impudently taken out after her. By a kind of electric telepathy, all the town knew there was a race on and had crowded down to the shore to see it. So far as most persons could see, it was neck and neck when the two boats passed out of sight in the neighborhood of Princeton.

"The next day came the devastating news that the JOHNSTON had won to Dubuque by seven minutes.

“There was not lacking those who had clearly discerned as the race started that the JOHNSTON was making the better time, nor those who had always said that she was the faster boat. Down at Waldo Parkhurst’s grocery the debate got so hot that good old Mr. Parkhurst had to interfere. The side-wheeler PHIL SHERIDAN beaten by the stern-wheeler ANNIE JOHNSTON! – credibility itself would balk at that, said some. Yet here was the report. For twenty-four hours the battle had raged. At last came trustworthy information that the dire news was untrue. It was another boat and not the JOHNSTON that had arrived in Dubuque, the gilded laurels of the River’s Pride were still undimmed, and sighs of relief went up from all LeClaire. Order in the heavens had not been reversed. All was still well in the world.”

Commodore William F. Davidson, owner of the PHIL SHERIDAN, tangled with Joseph “Diamond Jo” Reynolds over delay in the shipment of Reynolds’ wheat on one of Davidson’s packets. So Reynolds formed his own packet line in 1864 and eventually put Davidson’s White Collar Line out of business. Russell tells of a dramatic change that took place after this encounter.

“It was before these last developments that the Commodore got religion. When it had permeated his system he went in for it with the same enthusiasm he had shown in butting other people’s steamboats off the track. One of the manifestations of the new life was to refuse to allow his crack boat, the PHIL SHERIDAN, to accept a challenge to race – a thing unheard of in river annals and enough to cast old-timers into a state of coma.

“The average life of a steamboat on the Mississippi being five years, if by reason of strength or luck it might be prolonged to six or seven, yet was the addition usually when she was in a way to shake to pieces. The PHIL SHERIDAN was one exception. For about the space of ten years she was the pride and wonder of the valley and was still in condition, for she had been built with a conscience as well as with hammer and adze, when accident ended her days. She was hauled out at La Crosse and being fixed up for the coming season, when the ways broke down and in the crash the SHERIDAN received her death blow.”



Cabin of the PHIL SHERIDAN. (Three photos courtesy of Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.)

Truly an ignoble end to a river legend! But Capt. Way was right: historians of the Upper Mississippi have been writing stories of her ever since. Our thanks to Marvin Bergman at the State Historical Society of Iowa for permission to quote from Dr. Petersen’s classic *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*. And also to Jeff Moen of the University of Minnesota Press for allowing us to share from Charles Edward Russell’s *A-Rafting on the Mississipp’*. Finally, a most special thank you to Ed Mueller for reminding us of the storied career of this Cincinnati-Wheeling packet after she left her birthplace on the Ohio. 🌀

WAY’S PACKET DIRECTORY 1848-1994

ISBN No. 0821411063

List price at \$39.95 plus \$5 shipping/handling

WAY’S STEAM TOWBOAT DIRECTORY

ISBN No. 0921409697

List price at \$39.95 plus \$5 shipping/handling

***Note: any additional copies ordered ship for \$1 each**

CONTACT

CHICAGO DISTRIBUTION CENTER

11030 South Langley Avenue

Chicago, IL 60628

Phone toll-free: 1-800-621-2736

Check, Money Order or Credit Card

Wood from TELL CITY Source for Steamboat Model

by Jack Hinkley

Jack Hinkley's letter to the REFLECTOR provided this unusual story of his special connection to the TELL CITY pilothouse displayed on the Ohio River Museum grounds.

I want to let you know what a great read the March 2010, Vol. 47 No. 1 issue was in taking some of us new-timers back to the old-time day of steamboating on our inland waterways. I found it particularly interesting because on the back cover there was a photograph in which the packet TELL CITY appeared. I have a special interest in the TELL CITY and I will tell you why.

Some time ago I was visiting the Ohio River Museum while the TELL CITY pilothouse was being restored. I asked one of the workmen if I could have a couple pieces from the pile of old wood that was to be destroyed. He said, "Take what you want." Having permission I picked two small lengths of old tongue and groove siding, took them home and fastened them to my family room wall to await the day when I would call upon them to "do their duty." They would become a vessel of a ship in a bottle. Yes, I was at that time President and Co-founder of the Ships-In-Bottles Association of America, now retired.

Not long afterward a neighbor gave me a copy of S&D REFLECTOR, the first one that I had ever seen, and in it was a photograph of the packet LIBERTY drawn up on a river bank. Here was my "ship"!



I had dealt myself a tough hand because the TELL CITY wood apparently didn't want to be a riverboat again, fighting me all the way being dry and brittle. However the battle was won after eight months' work. There is the paddlewheel, of which I am most proud. There is the pilot wheel in the pilothouse with glass windows and boilers with steam pipes running out to the engines. Yawls are on her roof and a stage swings out over her bow. The three-tone whistle adds a touch of class.

There is a high-falutin' ship model club in Boston - sail models. LIBERTY entered one of their competitions one year and she took first place. This was the first time that the winner was not from Massachusetts. LIBERTY and I were proud, and now maybe her wood won't mind being a packet again. Her home port is now inside of a 1000-watt mercury vapor light bulb. ☺

MOR Report for 2010-11

by Frank Prudent

Last year's MOR meetings began with our May 2010 visit to the DELTA QUEEN in Chattanooga. Saturday afternoon we boarded the Chattanooga Aquarium's RIVER GORGE EXPLORER and went roaring down the Tennessee River. Following that adventure we assembled in the Orleans Room for dinner and show by ex-Delta Queen Steamboat Co. entertainer Bob Stevens. Sunday morning the spiritual and early risers attended a traditional steamboat Sunday service.

Last October MOR members felt right at home on the gently trembling decks of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. No screeching stops were made during either of the two trips that most of us made. Speed was needed by the wait staff at the Key West Shrimp House, faced with the task of seating and serving thirty of us in an hour and a half so we could arrive for the BELLE's 7 p.m. departure.

On April 9th of this year, the Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Vevay. If hotel and banquet facilities cannot be arranged there, we may move to General Butler State Park in Carrollton. Jack Custer will be the featured speaker on the rise and fall of steam towboating on the Mississippi River system. MOR will join Judy Patsch & Co. and Midwest Riverboat Buffs for the August 14, 2011 sailing on the TWILIGHT. Stay tuned for details. ☺

From Paddlewheels to Z-Drives

by Capt. Carl Henry

Capt. Carl Henry was the featured speaker for last summer's Howard Steamboat Museum "River Ramblings" series, held in August 2010 on the museum grounds in Jeffersonville. His talk coincided with a "garage sale" of river memorabilia and was preceded by an afternoon cruise on the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. Carl was asked to relate experiences from his career in the passenger vessel and towing industries. The REFLECTOR is pleased to share his synopsis of that presentation to the Howard group.

"If I have seemed to love my subject, it is no surprising thing, for I loved the profession far better than any I have followed since, and I took a measureless pride in it." (Mark Twain, reflecting on his years as a riverboat pilot)

I've always liked this quote by Mark Twain because it reflects my own passion for the river. As I've come to learn, everyone on the river has their own unique story, and mine is just one of many. For me, it was only after working in other professions that I discovered the river and intentionally chose it



as a career. It didn't happen by accident or because I had grown up near the river. I found that the river suits me: my background, my love of history and the outdoors, my sense of adventure. It suits my skills and personality, and gives me a great feeling of pride and accomplishment. I'm just where I'm supposed to be.

This marks the thirtieth year I've been working on boats in one way or another. Along the way I've been fortunate to have worked on everything from World War II amphibious Ducks to authentic steam sternwheelers to a towboat so old that the pilothouse still had a wood stove for heat. I was impetuous enough in my twenties to telephone Capt. Fred Way and introduce myself, figuring he might want to talk to some excited kid about the river (I remember that he said "righto!" a lot). And although much has changed over the years in machinery and technology, much still remains the same. The river and the essential elements of navigation and the profession of piloting are much the same today as they were in the days of Mark Twain.

I grew up in rural Wisconsin working outside with my father and older brother, logging and cutting pulpwood, driving tractors and skidders, and navigating truckloads of logs to paper mills in central Wisconsin. Developing a craving for the outdoors, it gave me a natural high and still does today. From my parents I gained a lifelong love of adventure, exploration and learning, and was encouraged to believe that with hard work, I could do anything I wanted to do.

During college I landed summertime employment in the tourist area of Wisconsin Dells, twenty miles from where I grew up. In the 1800s the Wisconsin River was an early thoroughfare for log rafts and steamboats working their way to the Mississippi River. The breathtaking scenery of a twenty mile stretch of rock formations along the Wisconsin, viewable only by boat, made the small town of Kilbourn, WI a destination for

eastern tourists seeking the wonders of the west as our then-young country expanded. Now known as Wisconsin Dells, its current incarnation is more well-known for its plethora of water parks and go-kart tracks than its boat trips, but people still come to see the world-famous river scenery. In 1980 another excited college kid joined the multitude of others of his ilk in taking groups of tourists through the beautiful scenic canyons of the Wisconsin River on amphibious Ducks and double-decker sightseeing boats. I studied for and received my first Coast Guard license. It limited me to 30 tons and just a handful of miles of the Wisconsin River. I was 19 years old and thrilled to death. Although I loved it, I had no idea that I was laying the groundwork for what could later become a full-time career. In fact, of the tens of thousands of college kids employed by these boat companies over the decades, I'm the only one I know of who continued working in the maritime industry and made a career out of it.



(Photo by user Royalbroil at Wikimedia Commons)

After graduating from college in La Crosse, WI with degrees in art and English, I began working at local advertising agencies as a graphic designer, illustrator, typesetter, photographer and proofreader. At the same time I continued to stay active as pilot on excursion vessels in the area: paddlewheelers like the LA CROSSE QUEEN and sleek dinner boats like the ISLAND GIRL. Although my river career remained a summertime, fill-in job, the seeds were being sown for an eventual career change.

During my years in advertising I would often look out the windows of my office high above the Mississippi and yearn for a change. I longed for the outdoors and the working-class, physical labor of my upbringing. And I was taken by the romance of the river: I wanted to do something exciting, something

that mattered, something that not everyone else was doing. I knew I couldn't work behind a desk for the rest of my life. So that is how, after thirteen years in the advertising and printing fields, at age 34 with a wife and new baby on the way, I left the cubicle world behind and reduced my income by half to become a deckhand on a Mississippi River towboat. I think friends and family were pretty evenly split over whether to be proud of me for following my dreams or thinking I was completely crazy.

I remember stepping across from the towknee of the m/v MISS KATHRYN to the northbound tow that was in the process of landing opposite Broken Arrow Light just below La Crosse. I was coming on watch just after midnight, a green deckhand with no idea of what was going on. It was pitch-black out. Searchlights stabbed through the darkness and the haze of diesel exhaust. The Mate shouted instructions and the sound of clanging and banging was everywhere as ratchets, wires and chain links were being tossed about. Typical for the time, I received very little instruction. Training was delivered via the "sink or swim" method. I was simply thrown out there to follow someone around and try to learn and pick it up as I went. Not much time or effort was invested in someone until they knew that person was going to stick around and make it. I found myself thinking, "What did I get myself into? What the heck am I doing out here?" Looking back on that night, it's a wonder that I didn't walk away and never come back. Maybe I was just too thick-headed to give up and it wasn't in my nature to quit. I kept coming back for more abuse until I gradually got used to it. My thoughts returned to the times I had gazed down from the office window years before at the tows passing below, thinking "How hard could it be?" Now I was finding out exactly how hard it was and what was involved. I rededicated myself to learning all I could in an industry that was completely foreign to me.

It was this time spent as deckhand and mate that most prepared me to be the pilot and captain I am today. Despite how people view me now as a towboat captain, I am prouder of my time spent on deck than of any position I have held since. I loved the hard work and I was prepared for it. In all, I spent three years at Brennan Marine as deckhand

and mate, working in some of the worst weather the Midwest has to offer: the searing heat and humidity of summer, and the snow, ice and numbing cold of winter. I learned the finer points of rigging and how to build tow, crawled into void tanks and inspected and shingled barges, pumped wing tanks, worked with the drydock crew and crane operators, and learned how to operate an end loader and hydraulic crane. We switched barges at all the local docks, assisted tows through Lock 7 and the railroad bridge at La Crosse, and did all the tow work and tow building for line boats coming through La Crosse. We also went out on construction and dredging jobs. I trained incoming deckhands and enjoyed the precision of line handling and working with hard rigging, splicing line and making bumpers. Of course, we also did a lot of chipping, grinding, painting and cleaning! Working in all these aspects of the towing and barge industry gave me a solid foundation and variety of experience. I loved the responsibilities, duties and control entrusted to me as mate. When we built tow or worked a big line boat, I was in charge and running the show. At the time, my only goal was to be the best I could be at my job, but all that experience is what makes me a more confident pilot now. And, of course, I'll always remember what is going through the mind of a green deckhand as he steps out on the tow for the very first time.

Because this was seasonal work and I had a young family, I briefly stepped back into my former career in advertising. That didn't last long and I eventually landed squarely and with both feet back into river life for good. In 1999 I became pilot of the steamer JULIA BELLE SWAIN, now based in La Crosse. It was there that my love of history, steamboats and the river all came together. Over the four years I worked for the Great River Steamboat Company, I piloted every trip that the JULIA BELLE made: weekly overnight trips to Prairie du Chien, WI and Winona, MN, as well as extended tours to Dubuque, IA and Wabasha, MN. In addition, I worked in the company office during the off-season, helping with public relations and advertising, writing and designing brochures, and creating their first website. I also supervised off-season maintenance and repair work on the boat, including drydocking and inspection, steam engine overhaul, generator rebuild, and various

remodeling and retrofitting projects. All the while I was reading everything I could find related to the river and its history, immersing myself in the writings of Fred Way and Mark Twain and the music of John Hartford. I would speak about these topics to anyone who would listen.

We had some great crews during those years. It truly felt like family, and many of us still keep in touch. We all worked together to make the trips successful. At any given time you might find the banjo player tending the steam plant, the engineer serving the guests, the cruise director tying us off in the lock, and the chef steering the boat. We were all aware of the significance of what we did and the traditions we were helping to uphold. Shared mishaps and adventures forged a strong bond and camaraderie and a fierce pride and sense of purpose in everything we did. Every time we got up steam and backed away from the landing it felt like we were going back in time. The trembling of the whole boat, the rhythmic loping of the paddlewheel, the *chuff-chuffing* from the 'scape pipes, the creak of the giant 7-foot pilot wheel, the breastboard open to the great outdoors, the slight side-to-side rocking motion as the pitmans came and went, tromping down on the treadle to blow the whistle, the pervasive smell of cylinder oil ... it was easy to close your eyes and imagine being in a time and place long ago when those sights and sounds were commonplace. Passengers loved to watch the antique 1915 reciprocating Gillet & Eaton engines at work, mesmerized by the slow Rube Goldberg-like collection of rods, levers and pistons doing their artful, choreographed dance. And I loved learning about steam and how to handle a steam-powered boat. That sternwheeler with its basic, limited controls, taught me much about boat handling: detecting and calculating the effects of wind and current; of anticipating, recognizing and understanding the limitations of physics. It taught me to trust my instincts and be confident in my decisions. It made me a better student of the river and its forces – terrifying and beautiful at the same time. I will be forever thankful for the opportunity to work aboard one of the last remaining steamboats in the country. "The Last Packet Ever Built," newspapers proclaimed as the JULIA BELLE SWAIN was launched at Dubuque Boat and Boiler Works in 1970, a nod to its authenticity and faithful



Carl began working on the river as a Duck driver in Wisconsin Dells in 1980. This experience set the stage for a lifelong career in the passenger vessel and towing industries.



Green towboat deckhand for Brennan Marine in La Crosse at age 34.



Capt. Carl teaches his son Gabe to steer the JULIA BELLE SWAIN in 1999.



Carl directs movements aboard the M/V DENNIS COLLINS in 2008. At this time, the boat was towing on the Monongahela River.



Installing the three-chime whistle from the Str. MINNESOTA (former Str. GENERAL ALLEN) aboard the JULIA BELLE SWAIN for a whistle blow CD recording, "Riverboat Whistle Blast."



Carl and his pal Miss Virginia Bennett aboard the RIVER EXPLORER in 2004. Miss Bennett was a frequent guest and speaker on the boat.



JULIA BELLE SWAIN in drydock at La Crosse in Spring 2000.



Southern Towing Company's m/v DENNIS COLLINS on the Ohio River in 2007.



The RIVER EXPLORER and DELTA QUEEN landed at Charleston, WV in 2003.



Pilothouse of Southern Towing Company's new Z-drive towboats. Note all the modern devices - no wheel, no sticks.



The m/v DAVID STEGBAUER, second in a series of four identical Z-drive towboats built for STC by Steiner Shipyard, Bayou LaBatre, AL.



From Z-drives to paddlewheels, Carl's experience spans the history of river transportation as we celebrate the bicentennial of steam navigation on the Western Rivers.

Above: the motor vessels DAVID, SCOTT, and FRANK T. STEGBAUER in 2009. Right: Capt. Carl Henry, 2010. Below: the steamboat JULIA BELLE SWAIN at La Crosse, WI.



reproduction as an old-time packet. It was a great honor and privilege to pilot the JULIA BELLE, which was and always will be my favorite boat.

In 2003, to better prepare for my future and to expand my territory and upgrade my license, I made the very difficult decision to leave my beloved JULIA BELLE SWAIN. I accepted the position of First Mate and Steersman aboard the passenger hotel boat RIVER EXPLORER with RiverBarge Excursion Lines based in New Orleans. In this job I traveled the entire inland river system, greatly increasing my knowledge of our inland waterways. I enjoyed learning and navigating new tributaries, arriving at river towns large and small the way our pioneer forefathers did, and learning all I could about the areas we visited. Keeping a bicycle aboard, as soon as we landed I would head off to explore as much as time would allow. I poked around steamboat wrecks, local museums, Civil War battlefields and stately southern mansions, from the mountains of Appalachia to the sandy beaches and palm trees of the Gulf coast. We even made an historic trip to the head of navigation on the Missouri River, following the journey of Lewis and Clark 200 years later to the day. I especially enjoyed all of our trips up the Ohio River and its tributaries. In my three-year position as Mate on this 800 foot long passenger vessel, I worked as hard or harder than at any other time in my life, including logging and other towboats jobs, leading a crewmember to nickname me "The Hardest Working Man on the Mississippi." I earned this title by managing an eight-man deck crew and working alongside them, keeping all of the maintenance projects moving forward, tending to vessel security and passenger safety, and being responsible for all physical aspects of landing and securing the boat every day. I challenged myself to work hard and challenged the deck crew to keep up with "the old man." I was steering and learning sections of the river in my off-time, but it was becoming increasingly harder to squeeze that in. In addition, because of my background in the passenger vessel industry, tourism and public relations, as well as being Coast Guard licensed, I was promoted to Bargemaster, which was their term for Hotel Manager. This put me in overall charge of the entire vessel, personnel decisions, and so on. Most would consider this a feather in their cap, but this move took me even further away from my area

of interest, which was navigation. It was time for me to get back to the pilothouse. I'd had a great experience at RiverBarge Excursions, being treated well and meeting some good friends and colleagues who valued my experience and hard work. But with no openings for wheelhouse positions in the foreseeable future, it was time for me to move on.

I accepted a pilot position with Southern Towing Company of Memphis, and in June 2005 stepped aboard the m/v DENNIS COLLINS northbound at Helena, AR. After my first trip, I was asked to take on the additional responsibilities of Captain and accepted. As linehaul towboats go, the DENNIS COLLINS was on the smallish side at 1800 hp. Still, it was pushing a unit tow the equivalent of two football fields of barges out in front. The best part was that the boat had the most desirable run in the company: a dedicated 3600-mile round trip from Donaldsonville, LA to Donora, PA and back. We stayed busy, moving all the time, stopping only rarely for inclement weather or river conditions. A round-trip took about a month, so I usually made one complete loop each time I came back to the boat. I was seeing and learning lots of river. For about three-and-a-half years I was on this run, learning thousands of river miles, becoming intimately familiar with the entire Ohio River, Lower Mississippi and part of the Monongahela, along with occasional side trips on the Kanawha, Tennessee, Cumberland and Illinois. I made some trips up the Arkansas River all the way to Tulsa/Catoosa, which felt like the end of the earth.

On one northbound trip on the Ohio, we had to make emergency landings twice in two days because of air leaks and loss of pressure in our air system (all of our engine controls, throttles, etc. operate off compressed air.) The first time, above Louisville, we developed a leak in the clutch of one of our main engines. We were able to isolate it, shut down the affected engine and use the other engine to hold us safely against the bank while we made repairs. Soon we were back underway upriver. The next day above Cincinnati, a pipe burst in the main line of the air tank resulting in a complete loss of air pressure. We had enough headway to get to shore but soon started to drift downriver toward a harbor fleet of barges and equipment, while the engineer raced to repair the leak. There were no fleet boats

in the area to help us, and as there are no anchors to drop on inland river towboats, we were floating free and helpless. Almost. Having to act quickly, I grabbed a few tools and left an apprentice steersman in the pilothouse, launched the skiff and instructed a deckhand to get out on the head of the tow. I met him there in the skiff, and after shackling two 300-foot lock lines together, he fed it down to me and I towed it ashore, hauled it up a steep, muddy bank, and tied it off around a tree. Some of you know how heavy 600 feet of wet, three-inch cotton line can be. We pulled up the slack and checked the line down on a timberhead of the lead barge. It appeared to hold – meaning we didn’t pull the tree over on ourselves – and the tow came to rest about 100 feet above the harbor fleet. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to



Changing out a wheel on a conventional towboat. The boat must be drydocked and worked at from the underside by shipyard personnel. Replacement of a Z-drive unit eliminates the need for a drydock and typical shipyard crew.

me, we had drawn a small group of local residents who were curious about our plight (and the huge barges looming above their houses and backyards). They had come down to the river’s edge with their morning coffee and folding chairs to watch the show. To the shouts of hurrahs and encouragement, and a small round of applause, our tow slowed to a stop. I grinned and waved up at them. When it became apparent that there would be no disaster that day, the locals gradually filtered back up the hillside, secretly disappointed that the rest of their day was not going to be as exciting. We completed our repairs, built up air pressure and got underway northbound. Just another day on the river.

Meanwhile, Southern Towing Company was in the process of building four new identical 3200 hp. state-of-the-art towboats, the first new boats the company had constructed since the 1960s. They were to be “green” boats, attracting several big-name investors in part because of their modern sanitation system that treats and evaporates all waste, eliminating the need for collection and disposal. In fact, there is “zero” overboard discharge, which exceeds current regulations while anticipating and addressing future environmental requirements. But even more revolutionary, they were to have azimuth (Z-drive) propulsion. This type of propulsion has been commonplace in harbor tugs used for ship-assist work in coastal ports for decades, but had yet to be mainstreamed and developed for inland river towing. When they asked for volunteers for the Z-drive program, I considered it a unique opportunity and signed up. To familiarize us with Z-drive propulsion, several of us were sent to train on a simulator at Pacific Maritime Institute in Seattle, WA, as the actual boats weren’t yet completed to train on. It was a humbling experience as groups of veteran pilots learned new skills, essentially starting fresh and learning how to pilot all over again. At first it didn’t seem intuitive at all. Compared to conventional towboats with fixed propellers, shafts and rudders, Z-drive boats have independently operated thrust units with a 360° range of motion using joy-stick controls. These boats have an almost unlimited number of combinations of thrust angle and rpm speed to obtain a desired result, compared to that of a conventional boat. It was obvious that there was a certain learning curve that had to be mastered in order to gain even basic proficiencies in handling this new propulsion system. A person really had to train their mind to think, visualize and anticipate differently than on a conventional boat. And Z-drive controls are quick; if you’re not careful you can get into trouble fast.

After being on a Z-drive boat for two years now, it’s hard to imagine going back to a conventional boat. First of all, there are many maneuvers that from a pilot’s perspective are much simpler and safer with Z-drives, most of them relating to control the pilot has with the stern of the boat. For instance, the practice of “downstreaming,” or landing on a barge fleet in a following current, can be very dangerous in



Exchanging a Z-drive propulsion unit in one of Southern Towing Company's new towboats.

certain river conditions with a conventional towboat. This danger is greatly reduced or even eliminated in a Z-drive boat because of the control the pilot has with his thrust units, making it almost impossible for a pilot to “lose his stern.” For the same reasons, Z-drive boats perform well in outdraft conditions at locks, and their ability to throw wheelwash through all directions of the compass also make them very effective in ice conditions. Drift lodged in a wheel or nozzle is easily washed out by turning the affected unit around or by pointing the other unit at the obstruction and washing it out. Other maneuvers that are impossible on conventional boats are performed quickly and safely with Z-drives. For instance, turning the stern of a “light boat” upstream and then backing against a strong current, or backing a tow away from the bank but flipping the boat upstream against the current (as opposed to the customary method of tucking the boat’s stern back against the bank and letting the

head come around), are but two situations that a pilot wouldn’t even consider with a conventional boat because they are not possible under normal conditions. Having said that, the pilot of a Z-drive boat must also remain alert to dangerous conditions that can result from the considerable strength and torque of the thrust units, conditions they may never have worried about on smaller horsepower conventional boats. Parting of lines or wires, or tearing fittings off decks and breaking out of tow, even shoving the stern of the boat underwater, are all possible results when making certain maneuvers without staying aware of conditions and/or keeping a light touch on the controls.

Z-drive boats are very fuel efficient, with the most obvious advantage being that 100% of a unit’s thrust is applied directly toward its intended angle, without having to first deflect it off a big barn-door of a rudder as on conventional boats. Fluke pitch on the wheels is calculated for maximum pushing. No compensation need be made for “pushing” vs. “backing,” since the propellers always turn in the same direction. To reverse or stop the boat, the unit is simply turned in the other direction and thus, Z-drive boats back as efficiently (and as fast) as they come ahead.

These boats are considerably quieter in operation than conventional boats. Without as many moving parts under the hull – the play and slop of rudder stocks, bushings and rams – there is simply less machinery to take a beating and make noise. Short of the rumble of wheelwash under the hull when backing which all boats have, there is none of the additional chattering, jumping, clanging and banging that most towboat crews are accustomed to. Crewmembers have also had to learn to be more considerate in the hallways of a boat that is as quiet as these Z-drive boats are while underway – closing doors softly and not talking too loudly – in order to avoid waking the off-watch crew.

Yet another difference between a Z-drive towboat and its conventional counterpart is the location of machinery and the resulting ease of maintenance. The belly of the boat is entirely devoted to fuel and water tankage, with only a narrow catwalk along the centerline below decks. Main engines and generators are located above

the waterline on the main deck. A four-foot long driveshaft couples directly to the upper gearhead of the Z-drive unit located in the engine room. All of the Z-drive units are identical and interchangeable on both sides of the boat. Compared to conventional boats which have a variety of components that can be unique to each boat (rudders, shafts, left- and right-turning wheels), a Z-drive unit consists of just one standard, all-in-one control unit (albeit an expensive, high-tech combination of propeller, gearbox, hydraulics, electronics and various pumps and motors.) And the procedures to replace these standardized units are less involved than those of conventional boats, which have to be drydocked or lifted out of the water to work on steering and propulsion units from underneath, and then have to utilize shipyard personnel, welders, etc. to do the work. A Z-drive boat doesn't need a shipyard at all for this type of work, just a place to get a crane close enough to it. A steel panel is removed from the roof of the towboat above the engine room and the propulsion unit is unbolted, lifted out and replaced with an identical unit. Most of the work can be performed by the boat's engineers and crew. The damaged unit is then sent off to be rebuilt and the towboat is back underway with considerably less downtime and expense. Of course, this is a bit of a simplification: it's all heavy-duty work.



Z-drive propulsion/control unit.

Initial reaction from industry and trade sources point to these boats as the new generation of workboat and the future direction for the industry. For Southern's first series of Z-drive boats, proving their mettle in the field is still an ongoing

testimony, as their launching nearly coincided with a major downturn in the economy, translating into idle periods and sporadic runs at a time when many eyes in the industry were on the new boats. And like all new technology, improvements and adaptations are being steadily implemented as the technology is put through the tests of real-world situations on the inland rivers. All bodes well for the expansion of Z-drive propulsion on inland river workboats. Southern Towing Company's current series of boats continue to outperform expectations and plans are already on the drawing board for a new series of Z-drive boats.

River transportation remains an important and vital part of this nation's economy, and I'm proud to be a professional working riverman and part of the history and culture of the modern river maritime industry. I am fortunate to have had the scope of background that I've had, working on everything from amphibious Army Ducks to sternwheel steamboats to modern Z-drive towboats, with a few things thrown in between for added character. All my experiences have worked toward making me a better pilot, captain, supervisor and professional mariner. It's hard to know exactly what the future holds. I only hope that my varied background has positioned me to successfully meet the challenges that lie ahead, and as a working pilot, I mean this both figuratively and literally. For now, I ask that you keep track of all of us out here on the river, keep us in your thoughts and prayers, and give us a big wave as we pass by. Look for the proud riverman who loves his job. Capt. Frederick Way, Jr., who himself witnessed the transition from paddlewheel steam packets to diesel propeller towboats, put it this way in his 1940 book *Pilotin' Comes Natural*:

“Tonnage is moving up the rivers tonight, slowly, foot by foot, steadily, fighting for days upon days against stubborn currents. That they have done this, and done it successfully, is another example of the American way of taking things as they come.”

For now, also in the words of Capt. Way, “I face the river ahead of me.” 🌀

Celebrating the Bicentennial of Western Rivers Steamboating

As mentioned on page 5, this year marks the 200th anniversary of the inauguration of steam navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi by the steamboat NEW ORLEANS. 2011 will witness many celebrations along our inland rivers, including a boatload of activities sponsored by the Rivers Institute of Hanover College near Madison, IN. A number of these activities were already engineered in the fall of 2010 at regional planning meetings in Wheeling, Paducah, Cincinnati and Huntington. Among them is the Traveling Steamboat Exhibit scheduled for appearances at Vevay, Lawrenceburg, Rising Sun, Madison, Jeffersonville, Vincennes, Indianapolis, and Evansville. A complete listing of all activities coordinated through the Institute is available online at the <http://rivers.hanover.edu/steamboat2011/> website.

A special resource that will be of great interest to readers of the REFLECTOR is the pending publication of a Book of Steamboat Essays, a compilation of writings by ten noted river authors, many of whom are familiar to S&D faithful. These essays include *Harbinger of Revolution* by Leland Johnson, whose feature story on the 1811-12 voyage will also appear in our June issue. Other well-known contributing authors to this volume are Sandra Miller Custer (*The Impact on American Music Heritage*), Alan Bates (*Structural Evolution of the Western Rivers Steamboat*), Jack E. Custer (*A Synoptic History of Towboating and Its Origins*), and former S&D president Jerry Sutphin (*The Impact of the NEW ORLEANS on Navigation on Major Ohio River Tributaries*). This stellar collection of essays is scheduled for a Spring 2011 release. More information will appear in the REFLECTOR as it becomes available.

Two of the culminating events to take place prior to the Bicentennial's Port of New Orleans Arrival Reenactment on January 10, 2012 occur in Indiana. October 21 is the scheduled date for a Steamboat Symposium by the Indiana Historical Society at Indianapolis, followed the next day by a Steamboat Family Day Celebration. And Marissa Austin, Director of External Relations for the

Rivers Institute, shared one other tantalizing bit of information with the REFLECTOR last fall.

"Two very exciting events have to do with the BELLE OF CINCINNATI and BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. In May 2011, the BELLE OF CINCINNATI will make its way to Louisville for the Derby Great Steamboat Race. The Rivers Institute at Hanover College has committed to providing educational (and fun) programming on Steamboat and River History for her passengers. The BELLE will stop overnight here in Madison on the way."

"In October 2011, we are working with both BELLEs to have them make the trip (with passengers) to Madison on the same weekend. We are hoping to do a weekend-long festival of sorts both on land and on the boats commemorating and educating about steamboat and river history...and hoping to do our own mini steamboat race."

By mid-January, the REFLECTOR received word that arrangements have been finalized, and we are pleased to report the following steamboat events at Madison.

Friday, October 14

- 8:00-10:00 p.m.
BELLE OF LOUISVILLE and BELLE OF CINCINNATI Moonlite Cruises

Saturday, October 15

- 8:00-9:30 a.m.
Boat tours of both boats at the landing
- 11:00-1:00 p.m.
BELLE OF CINCINNATI lunch cruise
- 2:30-4:30 p.m.
2011 Bicentennial Steamboat Race
- 8:00-11:00 p.m.
Bicentennial Ball aboard both boats

Sunday, October 16

- 10:00 a.m.- Noon
BELLE OF LOUISVILLE and BELLE OF CINCINNATI Lunch Cruises
- 2:30 p.m.
Both boats depart Madison

As tickets for these events and cruises are expected to sell out fast, the Rivers Institute urges those interested to make reservations as early as possible.

Paging back to the 1911 Centennial of the NEW ORLEANS' voyage, the highlight of that anniversary was construction of a 138-foot replica of the sidewheeler in Elizabeth, PA. The departure of her reenactment trip in October and November was accompanied by a steamboat parade. Highlights from that trip were pictured in pages 21-35 of the June 1969 REFLECTOR. More recently, a magnificent two-page panorama depicting the start of the voyage/parade appeared on pages 22-23 in our March 2010 reprint issue of the original September 1964 REFLECTOR.

We conclude this initial announcement of the Bicentennial festivities by sharing excerpts from two noted river historians of the past. The first, a commentary on the 1911 Centennial celebration, appeared in Bill Petersen's history *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*.

"A grateful nation did not forget the work of this trailblazer on the American steamboat frontier. A century later, on October 31, 1911, a colorful flotilla of steamboats lay marshaled along the Monongahela at Pittsburgh. Gaily festooned in flags and bunting an armada of some fifty vessels had assembled to celebrate the centennial of western steamboat navigation. President William Howard Taft and a group of other dignitaries were aboard the VIRGINIA which served as flagship of the squadron. The nearest lineal descendants of the Livingston, Fulton and Fitch families, together with some sixty thousand people, were present to witness the christening of the 'quaint' little NEW ORLEANS by Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of Theodore Roosevelt whose grand uncle Nicholas J. Roosevelt had launched the first steamboat on western waters exactly a century before. Built by the city of Pittsburgh at a cost of \$10,500, the diminutive craft was as close a replica of the NEW ORLEANS of 1811 as steamboat inspection laws and fragmentary information would permit.

"Following the christening of the new boat, President Taft spoke briefly. At the conclusion of his address the whistles of the entire fleet

saluted the little sidewheeler with wild acclaim. The NEW ORLEANS then led the flotilla in a spectacular review before the President. In 1811 the first NEW ORLEANS had ushered in an era in river transportation whose halcyon days could still be remembered in 1911 by many a hoary-headed riverman as he watched with tear-dimmed eyes this colorful pageant of the packets.

"A century had witnessed many changes in the Mississippi [and Ohio] valleys. The centennial celebration of 1911 attracted a throng that doubled the combined population of Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and New Orleans in 1810. Pittsburgh in 1911 could boast three times the population living in what is now the States of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi in 1811. Illinois and Indiana contained a million more inhabitants than did the entire United States in 1810. The steamboat had played a significant and dramatic role in the settlement and development of the [river] valleys."

Our final words, written with the enthusiasm of an entrepreneur or chamber of commerce, and echoing the unlimited optimism of the time, are from a near-contemporary account of the actual event. Zadoc Cramer made his observations in the 1814 edition of *The Navigator*.

"There is now on foot a new mode of navigating our western waters, particularly the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. This is with boats propelled by the power of steam. This plan has been carried into successful operation on the Hudson River at New York and on the Delaware between New Castle and Burlington. From these successful experiments there can be but little doubt of the plan succeeding on our western waters, and providing immense advantage to the commerce of our country. A Mr. Rosewalt [Nicholas Roosevelt], a gentleman of enterprise, and who is acting it is said in conjunction with Messrs. Fulton and Livingston of New York, has a boat of this kind now (1810) on the stocks at Pittsburgh, of 138 feet keel, calculated for 300 or 400 tons burden.

"This steamboat called the NEW ORLEANS, was launched in March and descended the Ohio and

Continued on page 38

"The New Orleans Steaming Upstream by Moonlight, 1811" Gary Lucy



Painting "The New Orleans: Steaming Upstream by Moonlight, 1811" by Gary R. Lucy.
 Courtesy of the Gary R. Lucy Gallery, Inc. Washington, MO - www.garylucy.com

Artist Gary Lucy's Commentary on "The New Orleans: Steaming Upstream by Moonlight, 1811"

On October 1, the NEW ORLEANS arrived and dropped anchor in the Ohio River at Louisville, Kentucky. She arrived in the middle of the night; and, as she let off steam pressure, the sound awakened sleeping residents of the small frontier town. For the past few evenings, the residents had observed a comet in the sky. Before the sleeping town could find their way out of their homes many thought the comet had fallen from the sky and landed in the river. If you look carefully, the comet can be seen in the upper right hand corner of my painting.

On one of the following evenings the citizens of Louisville invited the Roosevelt family ashore for dinner. At dinner, Roosevelt told of how the NEW ORLEANS had the ability to steam upstream without the aid of pole, paddle, cordell rope, or sail. This concept was not imaginable by his dining companions. While dining in the forward cabin, the guest heard a loud clatter and felt the boat begin to move. Terrified, the guests thought the vessel was dragging anchor and they were all going over the falls and would be killed. As they rushed up on deck, they realized the NEW ORLEANS had the ability to navigate upstream as well as down under her own power. In the painting, we see a moment in time when the business owners and leaders of the community must be gazing over the bow thinking about the future and what steam power will mean to them. The depiction of the flatboat in the foreground floating with the current away from the viewer and the depiction of the NEW ORLEANS making way upstream under its own power is a symbolic gesture outlining a point in the history of the United States where an old technology makes way for the new.

The New Orleans 18" x 28 1/2" print retails for \$200 and New Orleans notecards (package of 6) with artist's essay on reverse retail for \$10.95. They may be ordered from Gary R. Lucy Gallery, 231 W. Main St., Washington, MO, 63090.


Mississippi, and landed at Natchez in December 1811, where she took on loading and passengers for the first time, and passed on to New Orleans, in which route she has been successfully employed ever since. Her accommodations are good, and her passengers generally numerous; seldom less from Natchez than from 10 to 20, at \$18 per head, and when she starts from New Orleans, generally from 30 to 50, and sometimes as many as 80 passengers, at \$25 each to Natchez. According to the observations of Captain Morris of New Orleans, who attended her as pilot several trips, the boat's receipts for freight upwards has averaged \$700, passage money \$900. Downwards, [she averaged] \$300 freight, \$500 for passengers. She performs 13 trips in the year, which at \$2400 per trip, amounts to \$31,200. Her expenses are 12 hands at \$30 a month (\$4320) and captain at \$1000. 70 cords of wood each trip at \$1 - \$5, which amounts to \$1586; in all, \$6906. It is presumed that the boat's extra trips for pleasure or otherwise, out of her usual route, has paid for all the expenses of repairs, and with the profits of the bar-room, for the boat's provisions. In which case there will remain a net gain of \$24,294 for the first year. A revenue superior to any other establishment in the United States, and what is equally gratifying, arising out of . . . an application of singular benefit to the whole community.

"The steamboat goes up in about seven or eight days, and descends in two or three, stopping several times for freight and passengers. She stays

at the extreme of her journey, Natchez and New Orleans, about four or five days to discharge and take in loading. By pushing her, it is thought she is capable and ought to make a trip in every three weeks throughout the year, in which case her net gain would be considerably more than stated, three weeks to each trip giving seventeen trips, four more than she performed the first year.

"I have descended twice in the steamboat from Natchez to New Orleans; the first time she ran it in thirty-two hours, that is, throwing off the time she stopped for wood, freight, etc. The second time in thirty-one hours, making about nine miles an hour. She passes floating wood on the river as you pass objects on land when on a smart trotting horse.

"When we consider that England has had in use the steam power for upwards of one hundred years, and that it was left to Americans to apply its force to the propelling of boats against wind, tide, and the most powerful currents in our rivers, we cannot but rejoice and for a moment believe America possesses that happy kind of superior genius. Thus the flattering prospects of [our country's] future greatness through the channels of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers."

The continuing celebration of the Bicentennial will be reported in this volume of the REFLECTOR, with Leland Johnson's historic recreation of the voyage in our next issue. 

About the Artist

An egret enjoying a mid-morning break. A steamboat churning up the river in a historic race. A near collision of boats on a foggy morning. The river comes to life, both past and present, with the stroke of Gary Lucy's brush. Whether working in his floating river studio *River Rover* or in his home studio on the Missouri riverfront in Washington, MO, Gary Lucy captures the beauty and ruggedness of nature and river.

Growing up in Missouri's boot heel, Lucy never envisioned a life in art. However, his career path changed direction after an invitation to take a drawing class with a friend at Southeast Missouri State University. After graduation, Lucy taught elementary art in the Washington, MO School District, but the desire to earn a living as a full time artist pulled at him. After only one year of teaching, he was ready to try his art all on its own.

Gary now immersed himself in the study of wildlife, winning multiple awards in state and federal Duck Stamp design competitions, and creating several murals depicting Missouri wildlife for business and libraries, and for the covers of Southwestern Bell's phonebooks. Eventually, as the market for wildlife art faded, Lucy discovered new inspiration - the history of the river. With this change, his popularity increased.

His river paintings have been exhibited in St. Louis's Old Courthouse, at Missouri State Historical Society, and Southeast Missouri State University. Recently, Lucy finished a painting for the Bank of Washington and is working on another for AEP River Operations. He continues to pursue his art up and down the river and into the pages of the past. Gary resides in Washington, MO above the gallery run by his wife Sandy.

Return to Alton Slough

In our December 2010 issue we paid a visit to the IDLEWILD in winter layup at Alton Slough during a 1935 pilgrimage by C. W. Stoll, Ruth Ferris, Rudy Gerber and Dick Lemen. After some further thought, we wondered whether Dick also happened to photograph the GOLDEN EAGLE and CAPE GIRARDEAU that day, the other two steamers within a stone's throw of the IDLEWILD. A good question indeed, considering that Dubuque's Capt. Bill Bowell Library contains Dick Lemen's photographic collection. And sure enough, lurking in those file folders were the accompanying photos also snapped on that January day, just awaiting their public debut in the pages of the REFLECTOR.

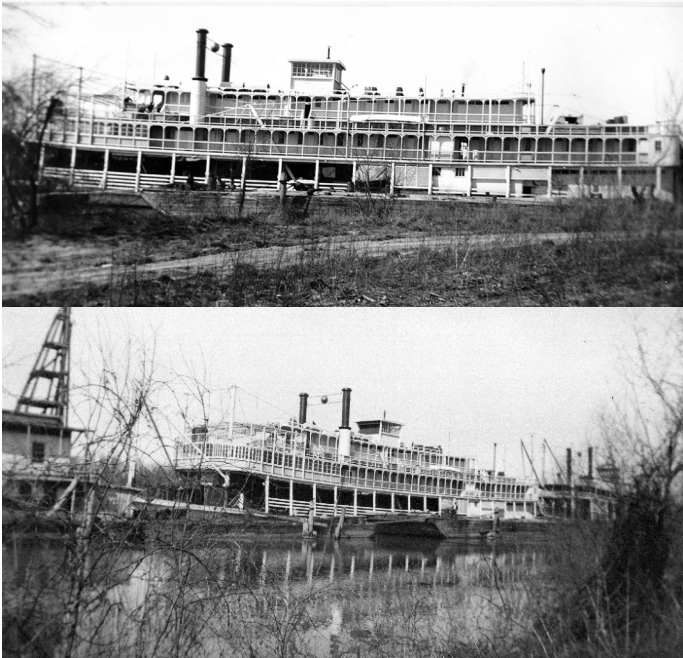
The GOLDEN EAGLE (2366), originally the Howard-built cotton packet WM. GARIG of 1904, was sold to Eagle Packet Company in 1918 who operated her in the St. Louis-Cape Girardeau-Commerce trade through 1934. After the company's beautiful steel-hulled packet CAPE GIRARDEAU (0829) was sold to Greene Line the next year, GOLDIE was converted into a tourist steamer with cruises scheduled to St. Paul, Chattanooga, Cincinnati and Nashville. All of this transpired



within weeks after these photos were taken. She continued in the tourist trade through 1943 when, because of the war, she was laid up, unable to secure replacement boilers. Capt. Buck sold her to the Miller and Willers families in 1946 who ran her that season, ending the Leyhe family's longtime management of Eagle Packet Company. Next year she passed to Herman Pott of St. Louis Shipbuilding and Steel, and on her first 1947 trip ran aground and sank at Grand Tower, 100 miles below St. Louis.

Tied off inside the GOLDEN EAGLE is the wood hull towboat BETSARA (To244), 89.2 x 22 x 3.8, built in 1934 at Naker, KY. We were unable to pinpoint the city of Naker on any map, even with all of today's GPS systems, and we hope that someone reading these words can supply the missing location. Capt. Way says Frazier-Davis Construction Co. of St. Louis owned her as late as 1941. She was sold to Zubik Towing in Pittsburgh, converted to diesel the following year, and renamed DONALD ZUBIK. The BETSARA, GOLDEN EAGLE, barges and wharfboat of Eagle Packet Co. are all tied off immediately above the IDLEWILD as pictured in our last issue. The mystery boat in the center foreground appears to have a well-shaped model bow and is possibly a diesel prop government or military vessel, for she bears the identification "S.C. 33 D" on her bow. Any reader's thoughts on the unidentified member of our trio would be appreciated as well. Also making an appearance in the foreground of Dick's photo are the celebrated visitors from Louisville and St. Louis.

In relating the story of C.W. and his compatriots' visit to Alton Slough, we suggested this entourage may have been unaware at that time of the immediate future awaiting the CAPE GIRARDEAU. Upon closer investigation, it is more likely that they were already in on the know, if not via the sternline telegraph, perhaps from even more reliable sources in the Greene family of Cincinnati or from Capt. Donald Wright of St. Louis. For in the late fall of 1934, Capt. Mary Greene, while a guest at Capt. Wright's home, traveled by motorboat to Alton Slough to inspect the CAPE. And a thorough inspection it was from pilothouse to the bilges in the hull, for it was inconceivable that Greene Line would consider acquiring a new boat without Ma Greene's approval. Capt. Wright



observed that Chris and Tom “know enough to consult their mother.” An AP dispatch to the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* reported a purchase price of \$135,000, but a letter appearing in *The Waterways Journal* stated that “of course the purchase price is a lot of baloney.” Capt. Wright commented, “All know that the largest packet still on the Western Rivers, having under it a steel hull to boot, was not given away.” Fred Way reliably reports that she cost Greene Line \$50,000.

And so the CAPE GIRARDEAU shown in Dick Lemen’s 1935 photo is in her final days under Eagle Packet Co. ownership, for she was sold to Greene Line on March 5th. Her pilothouse nameboards have been removed, perhaps for protection from the winter elements, but it appears that her name on the engineroom bulkheads has either faded considerably or has already been quickly painted over. In the remaining four weeks of March, the boat was cleaned, painted, decorated (by Capt. Jesse Hughes), and GORDON C. GREENE appeared on her bow, stern, engineroom bulkheads, in the cabin, and on her new pilothouse nameboards. Capt. Buck was present when the name CAPE GIRARDEAU was painted over. There is some sign of habitation aboard the boat as tell-tale wisps of smoke escape from the cookhouse stovepipe atop the texas roof.

The Cincinnati crew which arrived at Alton Slough to ready the boat for her maiden trip under the Greene Line house flag included Capt. Tom

Greene, Capt. Jesse P. Hughes, and Capt. Volney “Stogie” White. The photos appearing below capture these Ohio River veterans sprucing up her decks while spattered up to their eyeballs in good old lead-based oil paint. The GCG departed St. Louis

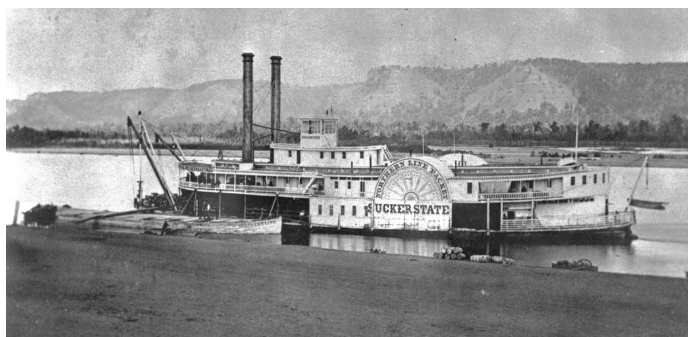


on March 31st with Capt. Buck as her UMR pilot. She arrived at Louisville on April 7th and at her new home port on the 8th (see page 19 in September 2010 reprint issue). Upon arrival in Cincinnati, the photo appearing below was snapped behind the pilothouse. From the left are Capt. Donald Wright, owner and editor of *The Waterways Journal*, whose river career began as clerk on the MORNING STAR in 1914 and who was subject of a biographical sketch by Capt. Way on page 25 in the March 2010 issue. Next is Capt. Tom Greene, the boat’s Master until the newly acquired DELTA QUEEN entered tourist service in 1948. To Capt. Greene’s right is pilot Henry Holloway who had previously served thirteen years aboard the HOMER SMITH, regular excursion boat at Pittsburgh and in the Upper Ohio tramping trade. To the far right is boat’s clerk C. W. Stoll, contributor to *The Waterways Journal*, steersman on the IDLEWILD at Louisville, and part of the “Catfish Navy” which delivered LSTs to New Orleans in World War II.



This was the activity in Alton Slough that winter of 1934-35. Normally a safe winter harbor for

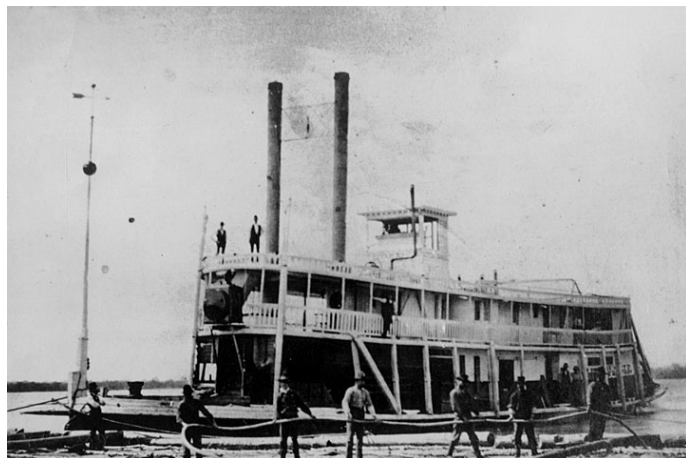
many UMR steamboats, it was also the site where three steamboats burned in their winter quarters in 1872. The most well-known of those lost that winter was the SUCKER STATE (5206). A race horse for the Northern Line Packet Co., she was built in 1860 at McKeesport, PA under the supervision of Capt. Richard C. Gray, along with her twin sister HAWKEYE STATE. She once made the 728-mile run between St. Louis and St. Paul with all scheduled stops in 2 days, 23 hours, 48 minutes (averaging over 10 mph upstream). In the spring of 1867, the SUCKER STATE amazingly escaped destruction when the ice ran out. "Steamboat Bill" Petersen, in his classic *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*, relates the following tale.



"The SUCKER STATE and several other boats had gone into winter quarters the previous fall behind an island opposite Fort Madison [IA]. When the river broke up 'with a crash', these craft barely escaped destruction by the immense masses of ice that bore down upon them. The steamboat RESERVE suffered considerable damage; the ferryboat NIOTA and the SUCKER STATE were carried away. Authorities at Keokuk were telegraphed to be on the look-out should the boats stay afloat to that point.

"When the SUCKER STATE hove in sight 'floating lazily along' in the ice-flow, the LITTLE EAGLE steamed boldly out into the ice-choked current and succeeded in landing her amid the shouts of joy from every one on hand. A Keokuk dispatch read: 'It seems almost miraculous that a large boat like the SUCKER STATE should float 25 miles, without a soul to guide her, and not be destroyed. About the only damage she received was the breaking of her cross hog chains, the smashing of several stanchions on the starboard side, and the disfiguring of her cabin by a spar being driven through her in the vicinity of the wheel house. On her way down she made a landing at Sandusky, IA

[midway between Montrose and Keokuk], where she remained for an hour or so, and then swung round with as much grace as though an experienced pilot was guiding her, and continued 'on her way rejoicing' till overhauled by the LITTLE EAGLE'."



Str. LITTLE EAGLE, above, which corralled the SUCKER STATE, left, from an ice-choked river.

By the end of 1873, the Keokuk Northern Line packet NORTHWESTERN and dozens of other steamers of the Keokuk Northern Line were making their winter quarters in Alton Slough. Earlier that spring, the sidewheeler had been the first steamer to push her way through the ice-filled waters of Lake Pepin to inaugurate the shipping season all the way to St. Paul.

The lower end of Alton Slough was entered behind Ellis Island on the Missouri side of the channel near Mile 201.3 opposite Alton, IL, and it stretched upriver for nearly a mile. Its upper end was eventually closed off by the Missouri approaches to the old Clark Highway Bridge and the Alton Railroad Drawbridge, situated just downstream from Lock and Dam 26 after its completion in 1938. When Mel Price Lock and Dam replaced the old Alton Lock, all of the adjacent land and backwater at Alton Slough was filled in as this location was now just above the new dam. Today there is no remaining physical evidence of the once famous wintering place for hundreds of steamboats. Like so many other river landmarks of another era, it exists only in historic photos and in the memories of those who once sought safe haven for their boats in its sheltered waters. 📍

GOLDEN EAGLE and GCG photos courtesy Capt. Bill Bowell Library, NMRMA, Dubuque, IA; crew photos courtesy Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County; photos this page courtesy Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse.

Ohio River Museum's First WATERWAYS FESTIVAL


As reported in our December issue, the Ohio River Museum is sponsoring the first celebration of its Inland Waterways Festival the weekend of August 6-7, 2011. Among the scheduled activities during this weekend extravaganza are:

- on-going demonstrations, music, hands-on activities, tours, boat displays, all examining 200-plus years of inland waterways history
- exploration of all aspects of river transportation from dug-out canoes (we will be working on one) to diesel powered towboats that will be docked near the museum for the event
- interaction with many historical characters who lived and traveled the inland waterways through first person story-tellers
- a major focus on the connection between the Ohio River and France through French-Canadian music, food and historical exhibits
- celebration of the Bicentennial of the NEW ORLEANS, first steamboat to travel the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers
- calliope and steamboat whistles, flatboats, and historic craft on the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers
- encampments of river pirates and "voyageurs"
- displays, lectures, and demonstrations about the inland waterways today, including environmental changes, fish, mussels, and wildlife

As this festival gains headway, your editor has noticed the buzz in postings on steamboats.org between our own John Fryant and other steamboat model-builder/operators in renewing the glorious days when scale-model radio-controlled steamboats churned the waters of the Ohio River Museum campus.

Visit us online at
www.s-and-d.org

for more current events and up-to-date news.

Museum Curator Floyd Barmann solicits and encourages the active involvement of volunteers throughout the Ohio and Mississippi valleys (with a special invitation to S&D members) in making this gathering a signature event for the Bicentennial year of steam navigation on the Western Rivers. Contact person is Glenna Hoff who may be reached at 740-373-3750 or on the web at ghoff@campusmartiusmuseum.org. 

In Upcoming Issues:

The Historic 1811 Voyage of the New Orleans

The Frisbie Engine & Machine Co.

Memories of the Showboat MAJESTIC

Sinking of the FBL Str. NATCHEZ

On the Origins of the DELTA QUEEN Calliope

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!



AND WHERE? AND WHEN? AND WHY?

Read our June issue to find the answers to these questions and more.

As always, reader contributions are welcomed and encouraged. Submission guidelines and contact information are found on pages 3 and 4 of this issue.

Deck Outline Lights and Steam Calliopes

Two of the trademarks of Western Rivers excursion steamboats are the myriad of electric lightbulbs outlining the sheer and camber of the decks, coupled with the maze of pipe, fittings, valves, whistles and wire comprising the steam calliope up on the roof. Both of these accoutrements were part and parcel of every excursion boat of note at the advent of the twentieth century. As the story of the Streckfus Line unfolded over the past few months for publication in these pages, so too did a trio of photographic “discoveries” about the company’s first excursion boat built by the famous Howard Shipyard, the sternwheel steamer J. S.

The unearthing of two of these discoveries began last spring when your editor had the rare treat of viewing part of the historic photograph collection of Capt. Ed Howard. Thousands of these images had just been digitally scanned and indexed for the Howard Steamboat Museum. Jim Reising was one of the volunteers who transferred these photos to the computer age for easier accessibility and preservation, while Alan Bates generously provided an opportunity to witness the stunning results. The first image reproduced above right captured the eye and imagination of this viewer, for here was a previously “unknown” time exposure showing the new packet/excursion steamer J. S. at the shipyard on a night immediately prior to her delivery trip for Capt. John Streckfus at Rock Island in 1901.

A flood of questions accompanied the discovery of this picture, and e-mail messages flew back and forth between Dubuque, Louisville and Rock Island. Relying on the seasoned experience and educated conjectures of Capt. Bates, the import of this photo may plausibly be interpreted as follows: You are looking at the photographic record of perhaps the earliest excursion boat to be illuminated with deck outline lights. Electric illumination on a steamboat probably originates with the arc light installed on the GENERAL LYTLE of the U.S. Mail Line in the 1875 Cincinnati-Louisville run. However, two other contenders for that honor (R.R. SPRINGER and GUIDING STAR) are also mentioned in John Hartford’s “When the GUIDING STAR Came

to Tell City.” By 1881 the night sky of the Upper Mississippi River valley was pierced for the first time by similar beams from the GEM CITY. All of which begs the question, when did the first interior electric lighting of a steamboat take place and on what boat? Any illumination from our readers on this question is welcomed!

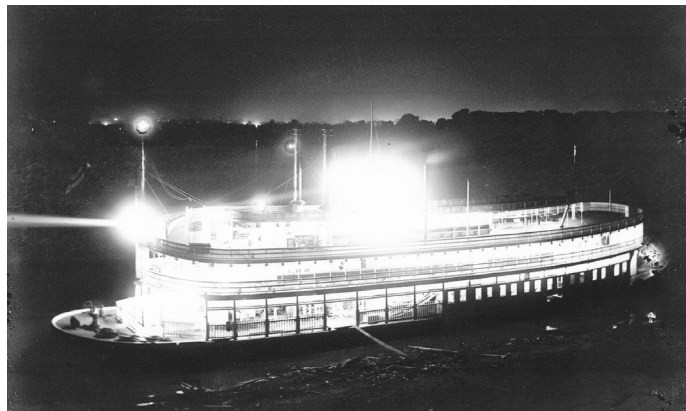


Photo courtesy of Howard Steamboat Museum.

A quick perusal on the internet shed some further light on the topic. Edison’s 1879 invention of the carbon filament produced incandescent bulbs which burned for a meager 40 hours. Within a year, his improved design resulted in bulbs providing 1200 hours of illumination. It wasn’t until 1903 that metal-coated carbon filaments appeared which prevented the inside of the bulb from turning dark as it burned. And finally in 1906, G. E. patented the familiar tungsten filament. The earliest record of an Atlantic steamship with electric illumination is Cunard Line’s SERVIA in 1881, which probably predates anything on the Western Rivers. The P&C packet VIRGINIA boasted interior electric lighting in 1896, but not necessarily the first steamer to be so equipped.

And now to the question of exterior deck lighting on excursion boats. Among the first such descriptions are those associated with the HOMER SMITH in 1915, which sported multi-colored globes of red, yellow, blue and green. These lasted until sometime in the twenties, when the U. S. Steamboat Inspectors insisted the rainbow bulbs be replaced with plain white ones so as not to interfere with the display of her red and green signal lights. But was she the first boat to be outlined with them? Close-up examination of photos of Cincinnati’s ISLAND QUEEN of 1896, one of the most well-known excursion steamers in these early years of electric

lighting, do not appear to any show deck outline lights. Which brings us back to the J.S. This 1901 photo removes any doubt that she was so equipped from the beginning. That Capt. Howard chose to take this rare time-exposure night-time photograph certainly hints at the novelty or perhaps even historic nature of the occasion. Night shots of boats at this time are almost non-existent.

In further support of this theory, a second photo from the Howard collection arrived weeks later,

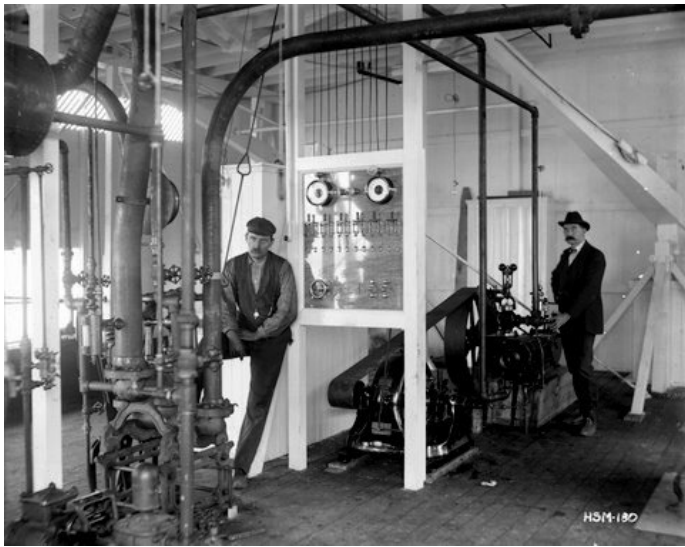


Photo courtesy of Howard Steamboat Museum.

again courtesy of Alan who had recently used it in his Old Boat column of *The Waterways Journal*. He initially remarked: "This may be the power plant on the SENATOR CORDILL. I do not know the names of the men but Loretta Howard says the engineer on the left was a grouch. The other man is probably the electrical contractor. The engineer's right foot is resting on a chair on the other side of the boat's throttle. And you can see the 'carriage' tracks that supported the throttle assembly. Little wheels rolled on the rails to accommodate expansion, contraction and vibration."

Elaborating on the details in this rather remarkable photo, he further described "the dynamo in the foreground, barely aft of the marble panel. It is connected to the steam engine near the man in the felt hat. At the top of the panel are the ammeter and voltmeter. Below them are six knife-blade switches, one per circuit. Below them are the fuses. The brass wheel at lower left is the rheostat for controlling voltage. Two main fuses are at lower right. Today OSHA, the U.S. Coast Guard,

the American Bureau of Shipping, insurers and electrical inspectors would condemn this entire set-up. The exposed belt would be enough by itself. The exposed knife switch blades and fuse clips could kill a man quicker than the wink of an eye. More than likely the wires were insulated by cotton and asbestos, both now illegal."

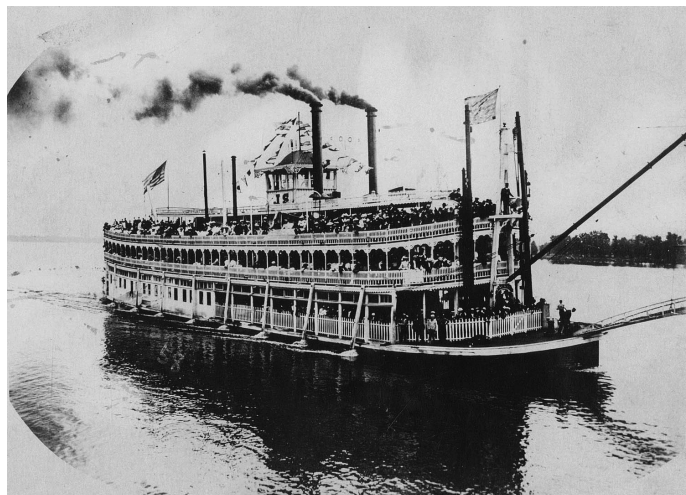
After further scrutiny of the photo, Alan expressed some doubts about the identity of the boat in question. "Look in the upper left hand corner and you will see a diagonally-slatted grill. That does not seem appropriate to the rest of SENATOR CORDILL's décor, but it was a typical Streckfus detail. However, six circuits seem too few to light the J.S., even with 10-watt bulbs. There were probably 500 or more of those deck lights - 5,000 watts. There may have been a lot of other lighting as well, plus the searchlight. The builder of the panel was Chapman Electrical Co. of Louisville whose nameplate is at the bottom center of the marble slab."

Two weeks later, another e-mail from Alan with a final comment: "After much thought, I believe the electrical panel picture is indeed of the J.S. First, that lattice in the upper left corner is practically a trademark of Streckfus excursion boats. Second, the picture was part of a long group of photos of the J.S. Third, one circuit could easily have carried all the deck lights. On the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE there are 420 ten-watt lamps outlining the decks. If the J.S. had 400-500 of them, the total wattage would be a maximum of 5,000 watts. Rita's flat-iron is rated at 1200 watts, so the load is not excessive. Fourth, Howards were proud enough of the system to make a special night picture of the boat. And finally, in 1901 electricity was used almost exclusively for lighting. There were no electric saws, drills, adding machines or typewriters, so those loads did not exist. I'd bet the popcorn maker ran on flame heat! All in all, you should be safe in saying that it is the J. S. panel." And so we are left with the intriguing but plausible conjecture that the J.S. may well have been the first steamboat equipped with exterior lights outlining her decks.

Prior to this bit of sleuthing, another "revelation" and a good deal of postulating about the J.S. had already taken place. The principals involved here

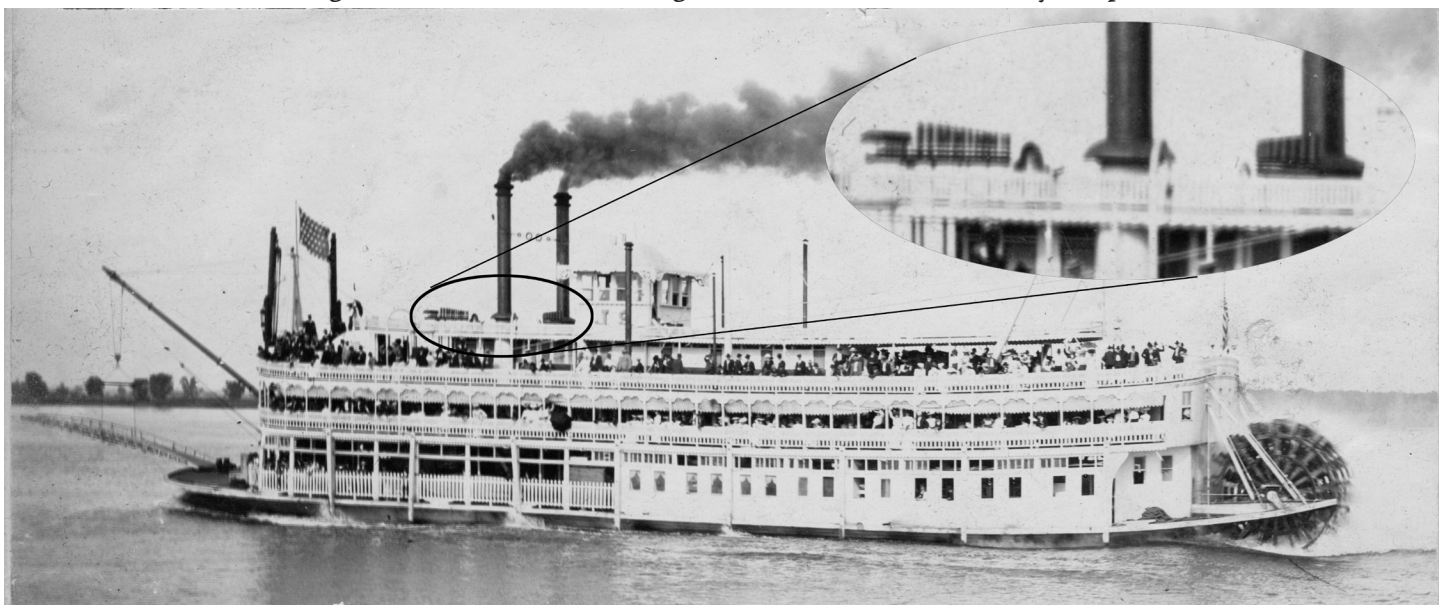
were Travis Vasconcelos, Dave Morecraft, and Jonathan Tschiggfrie – a notable trio of calliope historians. It all began when Jonathan forwarded the photo with enlargement shown at bottom (original courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society) with the question, “Did you know that the J.S. once carried TWO calliopes?” Well, no, I didn’t! Nor, I dare say, did anyone else including our panel of experts, *calliopus emeritus* Keith Norrington, or the dean of steamboat Perfessors, Capt. Doc Hawley. Conventional wisdom said she always carried a single instrument, manufactured by the famous Thomas J. Nichol Company of Cincinnati. But there are the two instruments sitting in plain sight, forward of the pilothouse. Embarrassingly, an immediate search of the extensive photo archives in Cincinnati and La Crosse even turned up a second photo confirming this anomaly, seen above right from the Murphy Library collection. The novelty of making such a modern-day discovery in these century-old photos was not lost on those who set about pondering the circumstances of this heretofore unheard of situation.

E-mails again initiated the search for an explanation. From Dubuque: “The first photo [from the Murphy Library] confirms the one Jonathan found at U of Minnesota, as two calliopes are visible. The Nichol sits forward on the roof and forward of the pilothouse along the centerline of the boat, with the Kratz instrument (if that’s what the other one is) positioned athwartship immediately in front of the pilothouse.” Reply from Travis: “This is most interesting news to me. Concerning



the question of the ‘other’ calliope, from what I can see it is a Kratz [manufactured in Evansville, IN.] I do not know of any other manufacturer who built calliopes with the semi-circular manifold or utilized whistles so tall. I have noticed in all the pictures the shortness of the Nichol calliope. When it turns up on the stern it almost disappears in the rails. Since this boat had short rails on the roof, much like a packet boat hurricane roof, I wonder if they cut off the legs to accommodate a rather height-challenged Perfessor?”

But when did the J.S. carry this musical duo? Travis continued: “What I have noticed is the signage on the hurricane roof is missing in all pictures showing the two calliopes and also in all the photos with the Nichol aft of the pilothouse. That said, I have figured out she came out of the yard with the signage installed . . . so we know she didn’t leave the [Howard] yard with the Kratz. As a matter of fact, the yard photos show her with no



calliope at all. My thoughts at this juncture are that the dual calliopes were only on the boat for one season. She came out with no calliope. Then she carried the Kratz on one side of the roof and the other calliope abreast of it was a Nichol. And the Nichol ended up being on her till the end and was relocated to the stern. The relocation to the stern makes sense. It isn't in the line of sight of the pilot. I can't imagine steering a boat with the calliope in front of the pilothouse. The only boats that I have seen that on are the AMERICA, CINCINNATI and MINNE-HA-HA. I bet if we can get pics of the J.S. with dates on them we will find that this dual calliope thing was just one season. Photos clearly show the Kratz disappeared later in the boat's career."

DAILY RIVER EXCURSIONS



ON
STEAMER J. S.
LEAVES CANAL ST.. 2:30 P.M.. RETURN 5 P. M.
Fare 50c. - - Children 25c.

POINTS OF INTEREST:
Greatest River Harbor in the World. U. S. Barracks. Numerous Ocean Vessels. Large Grain Elevators. Immense Government Dock (Floating). Chalmette Battle Field and Monument and Sugar Plantations.
The "J. S." is the finest Excursion Steamer on Western Rivers; has Steam Calliope and Fine Orchestra. Steam heated throughout, making it comfortable at all times.
No Gambling or Slot Machine operated on this Steamer, and these Excursions are of the highest class of entertainment the City affords.

Monday February 15, to Meet Rex
STEAMER LEAVES 11:30 A. M. RETURN 1:30 P. M.
(OVER.)

So the mystery continues. Even if the year of this unusual event is eventually nailed down, the question still remains, why did she carry two of the instruments? Might their presence on the boat have provided occasion for a testimonial to the Nichol Company's tooters had Commodore Streckfus been asked, assuming they were engaged in head-to-head competition to test their passenger drawing power? And knowing the Streckfus' propensity for being frugal, one may readily imagine that both calliopes were there "on approval" or through some similar arrangement with the manufacturer. ❗

High Water, Low Bridges, and Emergency Surgery

While trying to come up with a date for the lower photo on our back cover, your editor called Pat Welsh in Davenport to get his considered opinion. During that conversation, mention was made of the PRESIDENT photo which would appear on the front of this issue. A casual comment, "I think the picture of the PRESIDENT was taken in either 1941 or 42," was greeted with a short silence and then the intriguing response, "You do know how you can tell which year that shot was taken, don't you?" As it was clear that this was a mystery to at least one of us, Pat went on to say that the height of the smokestacks was the give-away. If the stacks were pilothouse height, the year was 1942. If they were taller, then it was 1941. After relating an instructive and fascinating tale, Pat was thanked and the caption for the front cover amended. Two days later a large envelope arrived from Davenport containing copies of two newspaper clippings. The first was from the June 18, 1942 *Quincy Herald-Whig*.

"Anchored just below the Quincy (IL) Memorial Bridge, the Streckfus excursion steamer PRESIDENT underwent alterations Wednesday [June 17] in a three-hour operation made necessary by the unprecedented height of the Mississippi River. Due here for two excursions and with a heavy schedule farther up-river, the PRESIDENT arrived Wednesday morning only to find that its twin smokestacks were several feet too high to pass under the bridge – the first time since the span was completed in 1930 that high water has thus interfered with river traffic.

"In the picture, crewmen working against time are shown removing a six-foot section of the second stack to trim the boat down and make passage under the bridge possible. Torches were used to cut through the stacks, both outer shell and inner core being removed, and block and tackle set up to lift the heavy steel and lower it onto the top deck."

A companion article from the *Davenport Times-Democrat* also of June 18 reported this story from downriver at Keokuk, IA .

“Although its smokestacks were cut to a level with the top of the pilothouse, the Streckfus steamer *PRESIDENT* arrived in Keokuk this morning and took out the first of two excursions from here this afternoon. Tonight it is scheduled to carry a moonlight crowd for another ride on the flood-swollen Mississippi.



(Photo courtesy Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse.)


“Arrival of the palatial excursion steamer brought to an end grave apprehension of many local residents who planned to go on one of the river outings, probably the only ones to be taken out of here this summer; at least until late in the season.

“Rumors have spread thick and fast the past couple of days that the boat would be unable to keep its date here because of the high water. As a matter of fact, some of the people who spread this story had an accurate foundation for their belief.

“It was necessary for the boat company to cut off with blow torches the upper five feet of the craft’s two smokestacks before it could pass under the Quincy Memorial Bridge yesterday. On Tuesday evening it had succeeded in getting under the Hannibal bridge with only two or three inches of clearance.

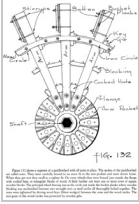
“Because of the high water it had also been feared that the boat would be unable to load and unload passengers at the Victory Park boat landing, part of which was under water. An area at the upper end of the landing, however, was high and dry today and the gangplank was set down there.”

High water and low bridges were a perennial headache for commercial traffic, even more so for

the remaining excursion and tourist steamers on the Upper Mississippi and other major waterways like the Ohio and Illinois. During her 1961 and 1962 St. Paul cruises, the *DELTA QUEEN* carried a banner across the bow of her sun deck railing pleading “No Low Bridges.” At the time, highway commissions in Iowa and Wisconsin were planning construction of new interstate bridges near Le Claire, IA, and La Crosse, WI. With existing bridges at Quincy (which stopped the *PRESIDENT* in 1942) and Winona, MN having the lowest vertical clearances on the Upper river at 63.7 feet above normal pool, plans being contemplated would have reduced this clearance to a mere 35 feet. Greene Line Steamers and Steamer Avalon, Inc., operating the last two traveling steamboats on the Upper Mississippi, and aware of the impending plans which would prevent their steamers from continuing in the river trade above St. Louis, joined forces in protesting low bridges. In addition to the banner displayed on the big Cincinnati tourist steamer, Ernst Meyer, president of Steamer Avalon, Inc. sent an urgent request to over 100 groups on the Upper Mississippi who had chartered the *AVALON* in 1959, asking that their mayors and chambers of commerce wire Corps of Engineers officials at an upcoming public hearing in St. Paul to protest the drastic reduction being considered. The I-80 bridge at Le Claire was eventually completed in 1967 with a 60-foot vertical clearance. The photo below was snapped on September 15, 1962, as the *DELTA QUEEN* approached Lock and Dam 11 at Dubuque. 



Interested in becoming an S&D member? Go to
www.s-and-d.org
 for your membership form and more info.



Small Stacks

“Proud Monster of the Sunny South”

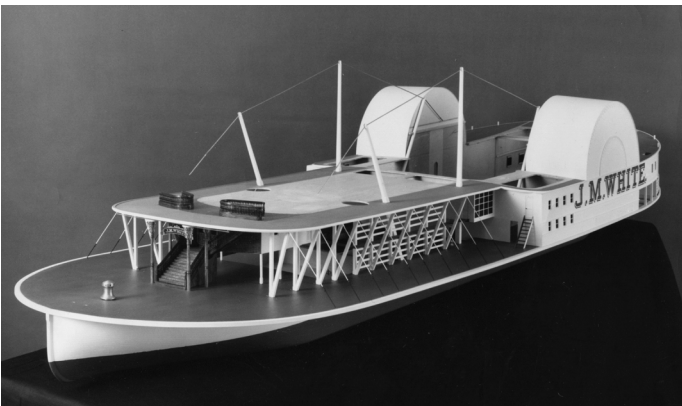
by John Fryant

“Proud monster of the Sunny South,
Go, bearing proud thy name;
May every trip you make for Tobin
Add fortune to his fame.”

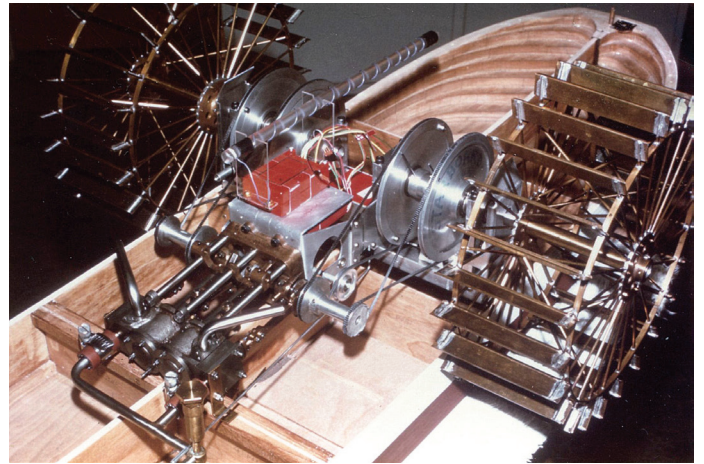
(Will S. Hays)

The sidewheel packet J.M.WHITE III is considered by many to be the most elaborate of the big cotton carriers in Mississippi River service. Built by the famous Howard Shipyard, she entered service in 1878 and lasted about nine years, being destroyed by fire in 1887. You can read about her in the March 1974 REFLECTOR beginning on page 25 and in *Way's Packet Directory*.

In June 1967, two gentlemen got together with the intention of building a 1/48th scale operating model of her. John H. (Jack) Leslie of Glenview, IL (Chicago area) and Ralph C. Hitchcock of Seattle WA were responsible for this fantastic creation. Research and planning began in 1967 with actual construction taking place between Jan. 1969 and Aug. 1972. 7000 total hours were consumed in the entire endeavor. Jack Leslie was president & CEO of Signode Corp. and financed the project while Hitchcock did the majority of the modeling work. Leslie did all the fancy railings and trim for the model on a pantograph engraving machine. I don't know how they got together, or which one came up with the original idea for this fantastic creation, but that doesn't really matter at this point in time.



Not only was the model fully operational and radio controlled; it was powered by live steam. A single two-cylinder Stuart Turner engine with a bore and stroke of 3/4" x 7/8" was used. It drove the two sidewheels via a system of pulleys and clutches. These were activated by the RC so that either wheel could be started, stopped or reversed while the engine ran continuously. There was no throttle. When steam was raised the engine began to run. Speed was controlled by a damper in the firebox that varied the intensity of the alcohol fire. Four cans of Sterno supplied the heat. While there is a photo of the engine and clutch unit, I don't

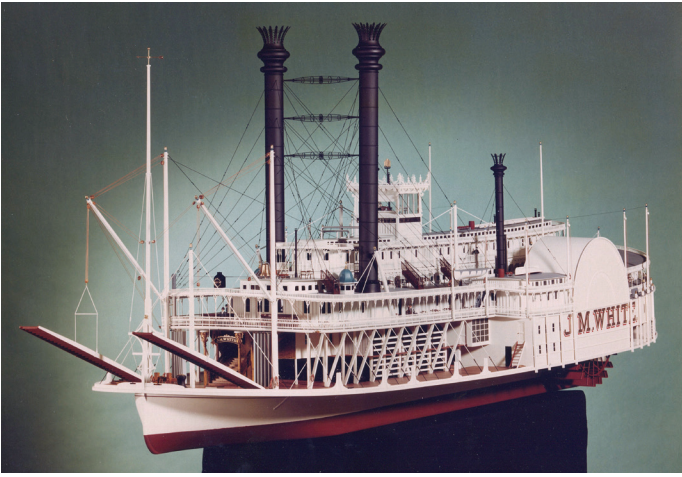


Note two-cylinder engine laid on its side and connected to each wheel shaft by pulley drives. Shafts had two: one for forward and the other for reverse. Red box in center held RC receiver and servos. Long horizontal tube above box held RC antenna.

have any further details of the boiler arrangement. It was located in the proper spot on the main deck but was a single unit; not a copy of the WHITE's ten Western River boilers. As it was hidden by the surrounding superstructure it wasn't visible anyway. I believe that the two stacks and 'scape pipes were functional, conducting the heat and steam exhaust up and away.

The model had two sets of paddlewheels. The set shown in the engine photo was made entirely of brass, soldered together. While they were of proper diameter and width, they were otherwise not scale reproductions of the WHITE's wheels. Another more detailed set was made for use when the model was displayed out of the water. It also had an oversize rudder which could be installed for on the water operation.

The model had its debut at the 1972 S&D Meeting where it was demonstrated in the reflecting pool at



the then new Ohio River Museum. When I got wind of this upcoming event I decided to invite myself to participate. The principal reason was that I had built an RC model of the IDLEWILD to the same 1/48th scale as the WHITE. I thought it would be quite interesting to see how the IDLEWILD would look next to the gigantic J.M.WHITE. To me it was amazing to see the two models together, which could never have happened with their full size counterparts. As the photo below by R. Dale Flick shows, the stacks on the IDLEWILD only came up to about the top of the WHITE's texas. The event was well written up in the December 1972 issue of the REFLECTOR. The WHITE model also made the cover of the September 1975 issue.

A couple of years later, both models ended up in the Smithsonian's Museum of American History in Washington DC. For several decades they sat almost across from each other. After the Museum's recent remodeling, the IDLEWILD model is no longer displayed, but the J.M. WHITE is still present in all her glory.

Ralph Hitchcock passed away a few years ago. Among his other modeling accomplishments was a 1/48th scale model of the Columbia River sternwheeler BAILEY GATZERT, which was built for one of the maritime museums on the West Coast. He was kind enough to give me his plans for this model, which I now list in my Paddlewheels and Props catalog. I do not know if Jack Leslie is still alive. Their work will live on in this incredible model, the very best one ever created of probably the most elaborate Western Rivers steamboat.

A few years after the 1972 event the museum's reflecting pool developed a leak and was drained. It has stayed dry for a good many years now,



(Photo by Bob Smith)

but that is about to change. On August 6 and 7, 2011 the first annual Waterways Festival will be held at Marietta's Ohio River Museum. The pool will again be filled and there will be operating riverboat models afloat in it as part of this festival.

Although the J.M.WHITE and the IDLEWILD won't be present, there will hopefully be many other models on hand for visitors to see and enjoy. If you own an operating riverboat model and wish to participate, contact Floyd Barmann or LeeAnn Hendershot at the museum, (740) 373-3750, or myself at (513) 899-9258, or e-mail jnboat@aol.com.



(Three construction photos courtesy of Darrel Wood)

“Reflections from Our Readers” continued from **page 3**

Also included was a photo of his “conversation piece,” a 5-foot long radio-controlled scale model of the 1952 Hillman-built towboat HENRY L. HILLMAN, still running between Baton Rouge and Houston as m/v ELIZABETH MARIE.



Mike Ware writes: “I am a new member. Is there a library or place where I can review all the past issues? I would like to research my family connections with steamboats on the Ohio River. My great grandfather, Andrew Flesher, owned a company that built boats on the Ohio between 1840-1884. My grandfather was a riverboat carpenter/mechanic and my father played in bands on showboats circa 1920. My Dad always said that one of my great-great-grandmothers was the first woman down the Ohio on a flatboat. I have no idea as to the veracity of that claim.”

🔔 After forwarding locations where complete sets of REFLECTORS are available for perusal and study, Mike is arranging next summer’s travel plans from Maryland to include stops in Marietta and Cincinnati. We couldn’t help but be pleased that copies of previous issues can still be purchased by those seeking them (see ordering info on page 4) and that Alan Bates’ indices for the first forty volumes are available to provide valuable research assistance. We anticipate that the index for volumes 41-44 will go to press in 2011.

Bob Krepps writes: “I wish you well as new editor, and look forward to each issue. I greatly enjoyed the reprints that made up the most recent issues. I’m a descendant of A. J. Flesher who co-owned the Murraysville Yard for many years. That old article gave me some new information. Thanks for taking on this project.”

John Hall sends a request for help in tracking down some family history: “I was very pleased to receive and read some of the original REFLECTORS this year. I noted references and pictures in two of the issues to the E.A. WOODRUFF, snagboat out of Cincinnati. A picture of this boat is hung on the wall of my household office. My grandfather John Emmett Hall was Chief Engineer of the boat for many years before his untimely death in June 1910. Prior to this I was told that he was chief engineer in the packet boat trade between Cincinnati and New Orleans. I have another picture that shows him with some of his crew taken in New Orleans in the 1890s. Our family history is not too definitive about his life since he was an orphan. If anyone has more information about him I would be very interested.”

🔔 John’s e-mail address is jcbf64@neo.rr.com if any of our readers can assist him in his search.

David Thomson writes: “I am a friend of Michael Blaser and own two of his original paintings as well as some of his prints. I used to be an S&D member/subscriber and would call Fred Way while he was still with us. I finally met him at Marietta in 1990. Fred used some of my photos in the REFLECTOR as did Jim Swift in The Waterways Journal. Please advise how I can get your current issue and also a new subscription.”

🔔 David has since “joined up” and kindly provided links to his steamboat collection and Mark Twain memorabilia at <http://steamboats.com/museum/davet.html> An avid collector of photos and post cards of the Diamond Jo/Streckfus steamer QUINCY, he recently acquired a Ralph Law painting of the well-known packet. He also mentioned a strong desire to relocate to Hannibal (despite the abominable winter weather reports he has received out in Southern California from friends back in Missouri.)

Cynthia Davidson Bend writes: “I was very happy to receive the REFLECTOR. There was a lot I could relate to as, like C.W. Stoll the bell ringer, I too went to Carleton College. Also on page 25 of the December edition, I found a mention of the Davidson Line. It’s great to see the lives and boats of the old times still being remembered. Thanks for your work.

I am attaching an article I wrote, 'Steamboats on the Mississippi,' about Commodore Davidson, my great grandfather. I'll be looking forward to the March issue. It will be my 86th birthday present."

‡ Cynthia's great grandfather plays a key role in this issue's "Continuing Saga of the PHIL SHERIDAN" on page 20. S&D members can also look forward to reading in the pages of a future issue her family portrait of The Commodore, one of the more notable Upper Mississippi steamboat tycoons.

Bill Ragan is seeking help with his investigation into specifics about an early Ohio River steamboat builder: "I am researching steamboats built by Dowerman & Humphries of New Albany during the 1845-1865 period. In addition to the usual sources I have reviewed, there are still details that I cannot seem to locate. Are you aware of any other researchers that have focused on New Albany boats? Any assistance offered will be greatly appreciated."

‡ Dr. Ragan was directed to make immediate contact with New Albany steamboat expert Keith Norrington and with the good folks at Howard Steamboat Museum. We suspect that any of the late Paul Seabrook's research and collections relating to New Albany's boatbuilding may be available through those connections. Other assistance from those reading these words will certainly be welcomed. Contact Dr. Ragan at sanmanbil@aol.com to offer your help.

Jonathan Tschiggfrie offers some further observations about 'The California Cut-Off' article in the reprint of Vol.2 No.1 which appeared in our June 2010 issue: "In researching the patents secured by Mr. Cross, the first patent was issued on 24 January 1871, rather than the 14th. The drawing of Fig. 3 also corresponds to the second of the two patents, granted on Aug. 8th, the significant difference being the simplicity of adjusting the cut-off afforded by the addition of a screw rod. It is interesting to note that the surname of the inventor may lead to some confusion when speaking of steam engine cut-off designs. We are used to discussions of "cross compound" engines while the California cut-off is also referred to in some publications as 'Cross cut-off.' My letter, however, chiefly concerns

the Sacramento River steamer CHIN-DU-WAN upon which the California cut-off was first used. In multiple accounts, this steamer was the first West Coast steamer to have a calliope. I realize the REFLECTOR deals with Western Rivers steamboats, but I've included an attachment of a brief history of this vessel."

‡ Accompanying Jonathan's history of the CHIN-DU-WAN was a reprint of an article appearing in the Sept. 29, 1870 *Daily Southern Cross* of Auckland, New Zealand, detailing the workings of Cross' invention which became so ubiquitous on Sacramento River steamers. Both can be found at www.s-and-d.org under the S&D REFLECTOR tab.

Capt. Jim Blum has the thanks of the REFLECTOR for sending wonderful snapshots of the annual meeting in September. We were sad indeed at having these dandy pictures after already going to press with John Fryant's article in our December issue. Capt. Jim also sends some sad, sad images of the remnants of the PRESIDENT at St. Elmo, IL, shown below. We fear that writing an obituary for that proud vessel at some point in the not-too-distant future may be required, and that these recent photos speak tragically of her eventual fate. We much prefer to remember her as pictured on our front cover.



Want more? Visit us on the web at

www.s-and-d.org

for our exclusive Reflections Online.



The Newer Faces of S&D

Matt Dow

Growing up in New Orleans in a family that revolved around the Steamer NATCHEZ, one would think that I loved the sights and sounds of steam right from the womb. Well, I didn't. I hated the calliope and whistle because they were loud and they scared me. So what kept me begging my nanny, Geneva Robinson, to take my siblings and me down to ride the boat every time we could? It was the people and their never-ending kindness, still the main reason I go back today. My love for the rest would come later.

Though we left New Orleans in 1995, steam was never out of my life. In 1998 at the age of 8, I began working in the Photo Lab at the Lake George Steamboat Company, the family company in Upstate New York. Many times after work, I would ride our steamboat, the MINNE-HA-HA, on one of her many hour-long cruises. After 5 years on land, I switched departments and landed a spot working aboard the MINNE. The next two summers were two of the best of my life and slowly, my love for steamboats grew. In 2005, I became a deckhand aboard another of our vessels, the LAC du SAINT SACREMENT. Though it wasn't the boat I had come to love, I would always watch the MINNE when we passed. It never gets old seeing steam puffing from her scape pipes and watching that big red paddlewheel churn up those lovely rollers that stretch out for a mile.

Though Lake George was our new home, New Orleans was never far from my life. Every February

during our school's winter break, my family would take us back to New Orleans for the week, and I spent every second I could on the NATCHEZ. Maybe it was because I was older or had gotten used to it from my time around the MINNE, but suddenly, the calliope and whistle weren't scary anymore. I can't remember when or why it started, but I began going out on the roof with Debbie Fagnano, our resident calliope player, and listening to her concerts. Something about it struck a chord with me (excuse the pun!) and from then on, I was hooked. I began teaching myself how to play by ear, listening to both Debbie and the legendary Capt. Clarke "Doc" Hawley and slowly picking out one song after another. I may not be the best performer out there, but I love doing it, and that's what matters to me.



*Matt Dow stands with calliope
on the roof of the Str. NATCHEZ.*

In 2006, I was part of the crew that brought the NATCHEZ to Tall Stacks, working in both the engine room and on deck. In 2008, I again worked aboard her for four months as deckhand, gaining much hands-on experience and creating lasting relationships with the people that really matter in this world - the men and women who keep the boat running so future generations can discover the magic of a real steamboat.

Currently, I attend Maine Maritime Academy where I major in Interdisciplinary Studies. I hold a New York State Apprentice Master's License for the inland waters of New York, and have worked as pilot for the past two summers. This upcoming summer, I hope to get a job somewhere on the Western

Rivers with a company not owned by my family, so hopefully I'll get the chance to meet some of you folks. Upon graduating in 2012, I plan on making the excursion boat business my life. Steamboatin' is not dead, and there is a younger generation that feels the same way I do, so keep up steam, y'all. I know I will! 🌀

Steamboat Business

by Lee Shepard

SòD Treasurer Dale Flick, longtime member of the Literary Club of Cincinnati, forwarded this fascinating look behind the scenes at the work of an “advance man” for the famous L&C Packet Company. First delivered to the members of the club fifty-five years ago, Dale prefaced Mr. Shepard’s sketch with this paragraph of introduction.

[Lee Shepard was a pioneer in the field of advertising as we know it today. Steamboats, steamships, railroads and large corporations came to realize the potential for the new field of mass communication following World War I. “Public relations” as such was an out-growth carrying not only business but political connotations. “Drummer, head man, advance man,” were all known in the excursion boat and big circus companies. Shepard prepared this 1955 paper for a Literary Club Monday evening dinner speech. A ten year member of the Club, he died in May 1958.]

The closing years of the 1920s remind many of us of the stock market boom and bust and the paper profits that we waited too long in cashing, but fewer remember that these same years marked the close of a long epoch on the Ohio River.

The Louisville and Cincinnati Packet Company was in difficulties, but not from any stock market manipulations. The company, successor to the old U.S. Mail Line organized in Cincinnati in 1819, could look back on an unusual record. In its operation over many years of scores of steamers, some of which were fast and luxurious, they had established a reputation for honesty and fair dealing which had won for the company many friends along the lower Ohio.

Back in 1830 the company had obtained the contract to carry U.S. Mail between Cincinnati and Louisville, a contract they held against all competition until 1870. Maintaining a daily freight and passenger service, the whistles for the different landings usually brought many of the local residents to the river to see what was to be unloaded, and especially to see the passengers who might be

disembarking for business or pleasure. Residents knew each boat by its whistle—the officers and crew by name.

A major financial blow descended on the L&C Line with the severe winter of 1917-1918, when the ice gorges crushed the CITY OF CINCINNATI and the CITY OF LOUISVILLE. Those losses forced the reorganization of the line and John W. Hubbard became President, with Oscar F. Barrett as Vice President, W. F. ‘Billy’ Roe, General Manager and Martin F. Noll, Treasurer.

Reduced to two small steamers and an excursion boat, these gentlemen bought the QUEEN CITY. The ANDES was built from the damaged LOUCINDA, and the M.A. BURKE re-christened JOHN W. HUBBARD and the KENTUCKY. When the line successfully built the CINCINNATI, their largest and finest at a cost of \$417,000, expansion plans were complete. In her eight years of operation she earned about \$200,000. Her maiden Mardi Gras trip earned \$40,000 for her owners. Passengers wore evening clothes for dinner. All her appointments were of the best.

With this new lease on life the line faced a bright new world. But great changes were in the making. The building of good roads enabled truck companies to advertise ‘store to store’ delivery to river towns. Steamers unloaded freight on the wharfboats, consignees receiving notice to pick up their merchandise at their own expense. This ‘double handling’ at each end of the trip was proving more and more expensive. Thus the short haul freight business for the company all but disappeared in a few years. Railroads, buses, trucks and automobiles finally spelled ‘finis’ to the century-old company which declared bankruptcy in 1932. The energetic management of Greene Line Steamers purchased the line with the exception of the CINCINNATI, which John Hubbard bought at the sale, later selling her to St. Louis for conversion to excursion work [as the Streckfus steamer PRESIDENT.]

One spring day in 1924 I received a call from the L&C Line office in Cincinnati. On visiting I found they wanted to arrange some publicity, a ‘souvenir book’ being the principal item, something they could mail out to friends and prospective

passengers. They wondered if their 'friends' in the river towns, many of whom had been customers of long standing, would help finance this souvenir book by taking small advertisements or 'cards.' As a result of this interview they gave me a pass and letter of introduction and asked me to give the scheme a try. My first stop was Madison, IN. Leaving here [Cincinnati] on a 5:30 boat we arrived at Madison about 2 o'clock in the morning. Directions to the only hotel proved confusing, but walking up town I emerged on Main Street and was amazed to find it lit up from end to end as if important visitors were expected. However, not a soul was in sight, not even a stray dog to bark a welcome or bar my steps. At length, after wandering up one street and down another, the hotel was located and a sleepy clerk put me away for the balance of the night.

After breakfast my first call was on the mayor, who was busily engaged at his hardware store. Explaining my errand, he at once furnished me with his photo and wrote out a check. Following me to the door he indicated the stores on both sides of the street and with some emphasis said, "You can call on every one of those merchants and tell them I sent you." By early afternoon about thirty checks reposed in my folder, the two banks paying in cash. Hardly anyone asked to see my letter of introduction. What a harvest a crook could have had out of this situation. It only proved to me that the merchants of Madison felt very friendly toward the century-old L&C Line. Some at least felt honored to be asked to contribute to the company's 'campaign chest', the first occasion in which the line had ever asked a favor from their customers. Needless to say, Madison received adequate treatment in the forthcoming book.

Leaving Madison on the night boat up the river, my next stop was Warsaw, KY where we arrived about 2:30 in the morning. The gang plank went down and the deck officer, finding no freight to be unloaded or picked up, advised me he would leave the search light on the bank until I reached the top of the 'hill.' However, he immediately forgot his promise, for no sooner had I started up the long hill through waist-high weeds, than the search light turned up the river, and very soon all that was audible was the swish of the paddlewheels growing fainter and fainter. The path up the bank

was almost invisible but after a struggle, the top of the hill was reached and in the distance a faint light indicated evidence of human habitation. Picking my way gingerly toward this oasis, a street was discovered and wondering along it, the hotel soon came into view. Entering the office through the open door, I went in and discovering no one at the desk, ventured up the stairs. Finding a door open, I went in and took possession of the bed. The next morning as I registered, the clerk explained that informality was the custom here. He went on to tell me that this was the hotel that entertained Jesse James and his friends when they were 'socializing' with the bankers in Kentucky. On my inquiry as to what time of night Jesse appeared, the clerk languidly replied, "We never lock up here, every one is honest."

The few merchants in Warsaw were friendly to the Packet Company and my experience there paralleled that in Madison, but on a smaller scale. Furniture factories seemed to thrive in early river towns for they could ship cheaply by water. People in these river towns seemed to be living in the past. Captain Whitlock of Rising Sun, IN, using the title by which he was known to his friends, greeted me at his furniture factory with a bored air until the conversation turned to his hobby, that of building and racing speed boats. His heart was in his beloved boats on the river and not furniture, and he achieved wide reputation with his racing boats. His ambition, he explained to me, was to build a sizeable boat with a glass enclosed cabin, which would make quick daily trips from Cincinnati to Louisville carrying passengers only. He thought the speed boat principle could be used to advantage and provide a scenic trip at the same time. My business sojourn to river towns was cut short at Louisville because the Derby crowds were commencing to arrive. The Seelbach Hotel, without apology, took my room for a more sport minded individual. Reluctantly I took passage on the night boat for Cincinnati.

Life aboard the river steamers was always interesting day or night. The boat's long, low, throaty whistle, warned all concerned of an intended landing. The bells gave notice the boat was landing. Orders to the roustabouts were heard and possibly a crate of nervous chickens would be brought aboard. Often a balky calf with one man at its head and



Final Crossings

Glenna Hendricks

Glenna Hendricks of Milford, OH, passed away on January 3, 2011. Mrs. Hendricks was a former Gift Shop Purser on the MISSISSIPPI QUEEN. She is survived by her daughter Denia Hendricks Davisson, also a former MQ Purser, and by grandson Adam Davisson, deckhand on the DELTA QUEEN and AMERICAN QUEEN. Our thanks to Fred Carmichael for obituary information about these three generations of steamboaters.

Paula J. Betlem

Paula Betlem, 60, of Rochester, NY, well-known entertainer/choreographer on Delta Queen Company steamboats, passed away on January 11th. Paul Penta honored her with his tribute: "Paula was amazing. In all the years I've been in the music business, I never met a performer so laid back, yet so talented. She was a beautiful spirit who honored our family of entertainers with her presence."

Shirley J. Roth

Shirley Roth, 67, of Cincinnati, who (with her sister Carol) was a devoted fan of the DELTA

another holding manfully to the tail, would come up the gang plank amid considerable cursing—the calf the object of the tirade, but voicing its objections at every step. These were familiar scenes at the landings where the roustabouts had their work cut out for them, but after the boat left the landing, these fellows would get back to their crap game, a care-free group once more.

These colorful scenes are but a memory for me today, with the long haul freight business dominating the river scene. There are many here who still remember these old scenes on the Lower Ohio and someone with the 'gift' would do well to write the whole story, especially from the human angle. 🕒

QUEEN (29 trips) and member of S&D and MOR Chapter, passed away January 11, 2011. Shirley's most recent river cruises were with the Rambling River Rats aboard the SPIRIT OF PEORIA.

Forrest F. Steinlage

Forrest Steinlage, 93, of Louisville, passed away on January 14, 2011. He served as licensed surveyor for the Louisville Metropolitan Sewer District for 37 years. Mr. Steinlage retired as a Lt. Col. in the U.S. Army after 35 years of distinguished military service. Forrest was a longtime member of the Louisville Propeller Club and was a talented artist, producing detailed paintings of steamboats and river scenes. His work was often displayed at meetings of S&D and of the MOR Chapter. A life member of Howard Steamboat Museum, he served as curator and member of the Board of Directors. Mr. Steinlage is survived by his wife of 62 years, Dorothy, three children and three grandchildren. Our thanks to Keith Norrington and *Louisville Courier Journal* for obituary information.

Back Cover

Several photos exist of the Streckfus excursion fleet at the Foot of Washington Avenue in St. Louis, as pictured in the top photo on the back cover. In the lower view, we share with our readers a rare panorama of three of the boats landed at Davenport, IA in 1931! A story told to Michael Blaser said the boats could not get back to St. Louis because of low water. Whether this occurred prior to or after the tramping season of the WASHINGTON (extreme right) and St. Louis harbor schedule of the SAINT PAUL (second from right) and J.S. (third from right) is not known. If so, the CAPITOL, absent from this group portrait, is still down south in her customary New Orleans harbor trade when not tramping the UMR in summer. To the far left in this view is the famed R.I.-Davenport ferry W.J. QUINLAN. Judy Patsch and Jerry Canavit, both Rock Island natives, recall gazing at a mural-sized version of this photo on the wall above the soda fountain in Grant's Five-and-Ten in Davenport when they were youngsters.

(Top photo from Judy Patsch collection; bottom photo from editor's collection.)

