S&D REFLECTOR

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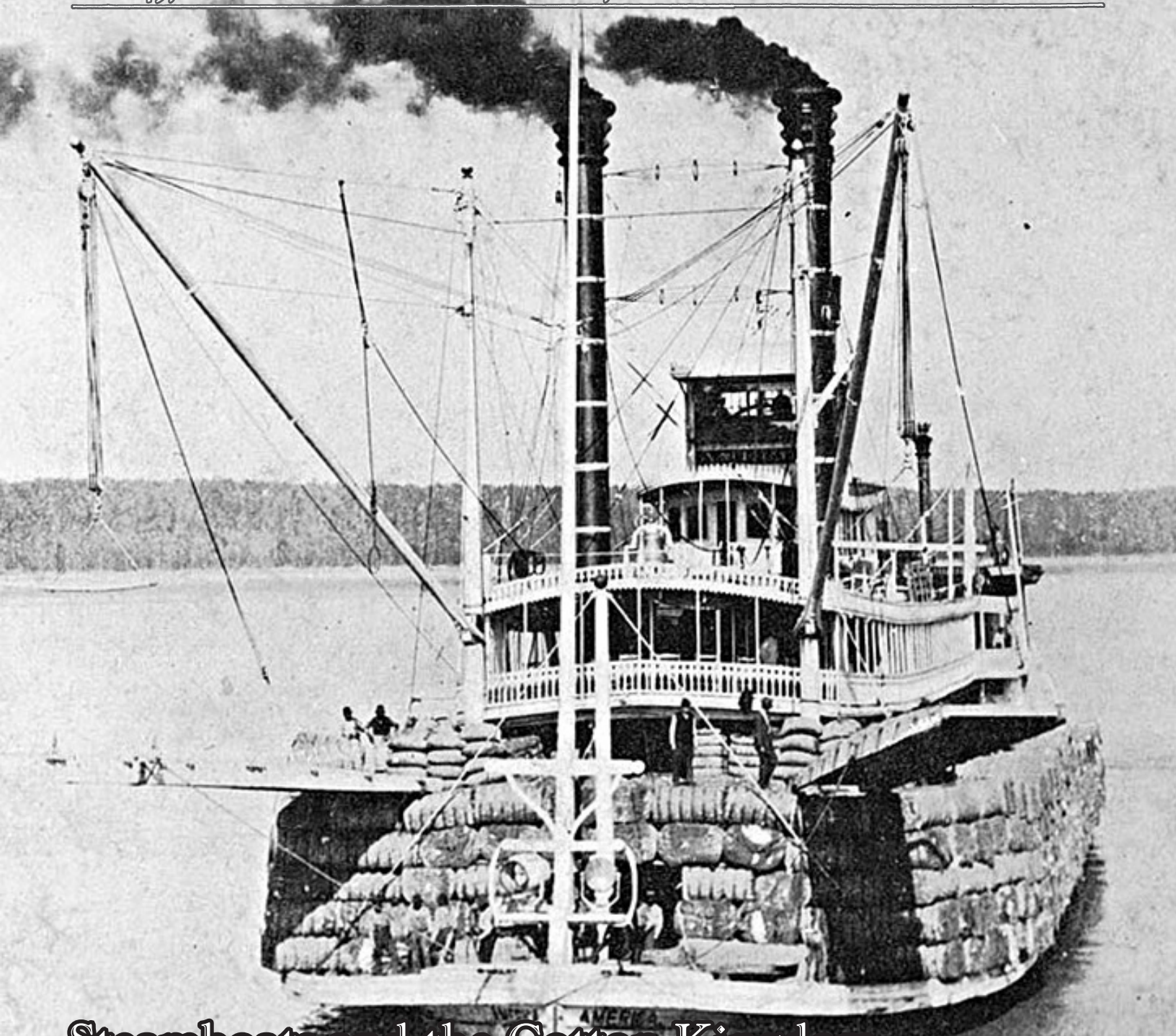

Steamboats and the Cotton Kingdom
Falls Heroes: Chapter Five
Vintage Steamboat Models Restored

Front Cover

"Impressive" is the word Capt. Fred Way used to describe Capt. LaVerrier Cooley's beloved sternwheel cotton packet AMERICA (0240), shown here loaded to the guards. Built for the Ouachita River trade between Monroe and New Orleans, she is a graceful 1898 creation of Howard Shipyard, measuring 200x38x6.5 with engines 18's by 8-foot stroke. Her career also heralded the end of Southern cotton packets when she was laid up in August 1926. That trade is featured in Jack White's story beginning on page 8. A close examination of the AMERICA's home port of registry on her stern sign shown on page 15, reveals a real surprise: Galena, Ill. -- located five miles up the Fever (Galena) River! By the time the HELEN BLAIR ran a trip to Galena in 1913, the river had filled in to the point that no other steamboat ever ventured up that famous stream again. Part of the mystery behind this far-flung connection may lie in the fact that Capt. Cooley hailed from Savanna, IL, a mere 24 miles downstream from Galena on the Upper Mississippi. Capt. Doc Hawley has a striking oil portrait of the AMERICA in the living room of his French Quarter home. We wonder if Doc ever took notice of her home port. *Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, Univ. of Wisconsin - LaCrosse.*

Reflections from Our Readers

Lexie Palmore writes: "Attached is one of several snapshots taken by Bill Kelley in the 1930s when he was working for the Corps, or USED as they called it then. Although the quality is not all that great, they scanned very well and I'm sure no one has seen these views before. Bill did write on the back of some of them, which helps. This one has nothing, so what steamboat is that? Bill and Harry Louden would talk about their days with the Corps and it was rich. Wish I had had a tape recorder going all the time. I remember them mentioning the SCIOTO, and there is a TARIC in one of the photos. If you are interested in more, let me know. By the way, could you make some of those pictures in the REFLECTOR a little bigger, especially if there is a lot of detail? Analyzing those old pictures is fun!"

We quickly assured Lexie of our desire to see more of these great pictures. Her "first installment" is printed below, and we trust that either Lexie or one of you will come to our aid in IDing the boat pictured in Bill's photo. Failure to make more surreptitious pilothouse audio recordings is something regretted by many river rats, and yet we are reminded of the terrible and sometimes swift consequences that resulted when the covert operation was found out. Bob Reynolds tells about a classic recording of Capt. Rip Ware he made under cover of darkness on the afterwatch, only to have the tape deep-sixed by the pilot when Bob made it known what he had done, after unsuspectedly handing over the offending recorder and cassette to the good captain. Lexie's request for a VistaVision treatment for more detailed photographic views is well said, and we will make renewed efforts along those lines.

Bobbi Steinike writes: "Thought the enclosed *Waterways Journal* article interesting. The guy retracing and rephotographing Bosse's feat sounds like a good interview for the REFLECTOR. Fun to hear news of old crew joining the AQ. At least there will be a few familiar faces. Steamboat a-coming! Yipee!

Bobbi forwarded the *WJ* story which quoted a *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* report concerning the 137 oval cyanotype photos of the Upper Mississippi River made by Henry Peter Bosse in the late 1880s/early 1890s. A rare album of these photos, which at one time was tucked into a corner of a desk drawer on the US Engineer dredge WILLIAM A. THOMPSON, was recently

appraised by Sotheby's international auction house at $4.5 million. St. Paul photographer Chris Faust plans to retrace Bosse's route and make photographs at sixty of those sites, creating a "then and now" exhibit and possible book. University of Minnesota Press already published a complete collection of Bosse's prints in 2001 --*Views on the Mississippi: The Photographs of Henry Peter Bosse*. One particularly tragic view is Plate 22, showing the salvaged wreck of the steamer SEA WING tied off at Diamond Bluff, WI after she capsized in Lake Pepin on July 13, 1890. The accident claimed the lives of perhaps 100 of her excursion passengers, including the wife of her pilot/owner, Capt. David Wethern. His son Roy, who was not aboard that day, became the dean of upper Mississippi pilots for Federal Barge Line, ending his long river career as trip pilot on the AVALON in the late 1950s. We intend to tell that tragic tale of the SEA WING in a future edition of the Reflector.

Robert Parkinson writes: "The account of the 72nd Annual Meeting in the December Reflector mentions the exhibit at Ohio River Museum on 'The Volcano and the Flood.' Some years ago I wrote an article for the Golden Gate Chapter of SSHSA about the volcano and the ships involved from the San Francisco Bay area, but had not noted the effect the weather pattern had on the Western Rivers resulting in the great flood of 1884. The effect in Marietta mentioned in the article was of interest.

"I have been a member of S&D for many years. I first met Capt. Fred Way Jr. in Antioch when he was preparing the DELTA QUEEN for the trip east. I had made a few special day trips on the DQ on the Sacramento River and over a period of 50 years, six DQ cruises on the Western Rivers. Is there is a brochure for this exhibit that I might obtain? With best wishes to S&D and to the Reflector for 2012."

Jeff Spear, one of the creators of Ohio River Museum's flood exhibit, has been in touch with Mr. Parkinson. Jeff, who forwarded a copy of Mr. Parkinson's Krakatoa article, observed, "This article is very interesting indeed. And perhaps his note is even better." We are always delighted to hear from our long-time members.

continued on ***page 36***

In This Issue

Columns

Features

Articles

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

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1939 2012

America's Riverboat Historical Society

Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen

PO Box 352
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The *only* requirement for membership in S&D is an interest in river history!

S&D REFLECTOR

Published by Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen

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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
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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:
Sharon Reynolds
1002 Oakland Drive
Paragould, AR 72450

Getting Posted Up

Send Us Your Favorites

In the final pages of Alan Bates' index of the first five years of S&D Reflectors, "Reluctant Editor" Capt. Fred Way wrote: "In putting together this Index we have wound up with two blank pages, hence this opportunity for some after-dinner remarks.

"S&D was formally incorporated in 1941 and got along tolerably well until 1964 with no magazine at all -- some 23 years. Why all of this heel-dragging? The subject of a publication was discussed many times, the chief proponent being J. Mack Gamble who, for all his persuasion and urging, refused to take on the responsibility of editorship. Mack contended that if S&D's membership was to continue its healthy growth, some sort of a magazine was necessary to give far-flung members who didn't get to the annual meetings, something for their money.

"No other willing volunteers seemed to present themselves to take on the task. 'You can do it,' Mack said time and again, looking at me. I harbored a curious uneasiness that the thing would start out innocently enough but develop as it went along. You see how things turned out.

"What this reluctant editor could not, and did not, foresee was the enthusiastic response from so many people in so many walks of life. It was as though the S&D Reflector was what they had been waiting for; they loved it; they cherished it; and a great throng of these well-wishers voluntarily sent in priceless letters, photographs and contributions -- this started in 1964 and swelled to such proportions that the magazine simply had to grow.

"Alan L. Bates has now indexed [forty] years of the S&D Reflector. Sometimes it seems as though Alan has done so many things he never dreamed he'd do (what was his boyhood ambition we wonder?) and in 1964 he had no notion one day he would sit down to indexing the S&D Reflector. In fact in 1964 he had designed old-timey decorative bracket-work overhead and around in the ballroom of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE -- still continues to attract favorable attention these [forty-eight] years later."

Capt. Fred speaks here of his amazement at how the magazine from its beginning was embraced by members as their very own. On a bittersweet note we also read his comments about the contributions of our recently departed friend, Alan Bates. All of which brings us to the here and now. With next year's March issue, Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen will reach the milestone of fifty years' publication of Capt. Way's magazine. It is our desire to mark that event by dedicating the first issue of volume fifty to stories and pictures which hold special meaning for our readers. So we invite you to send us your favorite steamboat or river photo, or your favorite story (250 words or less, please) for publication in the special March 2013 issue. Please mark your contributions "Anniversary Issue." Thank you for keeping alive the spirit of Capt. Way's great gift to S&D. You can be sure that both Capt. Fred and Alan would be very pleased.

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

Meet Our Contributors

This issue of the Reflector *welcomes back three contributors to previous numbers of last year's magazine. They are:*

John H. White, Jr. (*Steamboats and the Cotton Kingdom, p. 8)* whose biographical sketch appears on page 6 of our September 2011 issue.

Leland Johnson (*Chapter Five of Falls Heroes: Louisville's Lifesavers, p. 18)* who was first introduced to readers on page 6 of our June 2011 issue.

Carl Henry (*Vintage Steamboat Models Restored, p. 28)* who made his initial appearance on page 6 of our March 2011 issue.

Boy, Is Our Face Red Department

An editor is ever watchful to keep typos and other such errors to a minimum. Our good friends at Richardson Printing employ expert proofreaders to assist in this task as well. But despite the best efforts, inevitably such mistakes do occur. When they do and especially when a misspelling involves the name of the author of a feature article, the editor usually feels like crawling into a hole.

It was with great embarrassment that we discovered our error in printing Dennis Reece's last name in the previous issue -- a discovery made, of course, only after your editor had unknowingly okayed the proofs and hundreds of copies had been printed and mailed. Dennis, upon receiving our apology, was very kind and understanding. We thank him for being so gracious.

We also extend an apology to the Way family for misstating the date of Fred and Nell's passing in our tribute to them on page 34 of the December issue. These two charter members of S&D passed from this life on July 26, 2011. Bob Way wrote: "My brother Jay and I and Jay's daughter Kelsey all attended the September S&D luncheon and as always had a wonderful time. Best wishes."

Greetings from New Board of Governors Chair Lee Woodruff

Dear S & D Members,

If you are not aware, our long time Chairman of the Board of Governors, Captain Bill Judd, decided it was time to step down as chairman. I would like to personally thank Captain Bill for his many years service as chairman and encourage all of you to do the same. Fortunately for the organization and for me, Bill will continue to serve on the board and I will definitely draw on his knowledge and experience as we move forward.

Let me introduce myself to those who do not know me. My name is Lee Woodruff and I was recently asked to serve as new Board of Governors Chairman. I live in Cincinnati and have been a member of S & D since around 1977, serving on the board since 2006 and as chairman of the nominating committee for several years. I also look forward to serving the organization in this new capacity.

There were some additional changes in the organization at this year's annual meeting. Rick Kesterman decided not to seek re-election as Secretary and Darlene Judd has stepped down as Chairperson of the J. Mack Gamble fund. I want to thank both of them for their service.

To replace these positions, Sharon Reynolds has been elected Secretary and Bill Barr has agreed to serve as Chairman of the J. Mack Gamble fund. Just a reminder: since all of the officers and board members serve the organization in a voluntary capacity, I want to encourage all of you to also consider serving S&D in some way.

A major issue that faced the organization last year has now been resolved. The timely mailing of the Reflector has been addressed and our new editor David Tschiggfrie is doing a great job. The S&D website has also been updated and I encourage all of you to visit it.

While the organization is continuing to move forward, there is one problem that we are facing. Over the past few years there has been a fairly significant drop in our membership. There are a variety of reasons for this, but the long term success of S&D requires us to maintain a healthy membership level. The board has identified this as an issue and will be working to identify actions to address it.

Also, I encourage all of you to become salespersons for S&D. If each of you could recruit one or two members, this would go a long way to making sure that we can continue to provide a first class magazine and support the various activities and projects of the organization. Membership dues are our only source of income, so if any of you have any thoughts on how to increase membership, your suggestions are welcomed.

Finally, I hope to see and meet all of you at next year's annual meeting.

Lee Woodruff
Chairman

Visit us online at

www.s-and-d.org

for more current events

and up-to-date news.

Earliest Use of Propeller on Inland Waters?

Jeff Spear recently sent us a clipping with a note suggesting this may perhaps be the earliest instance of a propeller used on the inland rivers. The article was surfaced by Bill Reynolds and Glenna Hoff of Ohio River Museum, and appeared in the *Historical Collection of Ohio -- Volume II*, copyright 1888 by Henry Howe. We reprint it here and ask along with Jeff, "Do we know of anything earlier?"

"Benjamin Tupper was born in Stoughton, MA in August 1738; died in Marietta, OH in June 1792. He served in the French War of 1756-63 and was in the field the whole of the Revolutionary War. In August 1776 he commanded the gunboats and galleys on the North River (Hudson River). He served under Gen. Gates of Saratoga, was at the Battle of Monmouth in 1788, and was brevetted a general before the war closed. In 1785, he was appointed one of the surveyors of the Northwest Territory. With General Rufus Putnam, he originated the Ohio Land Company.

"He removed to Marietta with his family and that of his son-in-law, reaching there August 19, 1788. These families and those of Col. N. Cushing and Maj. Goodale, who accompanied them, were the first to settle in what is now the State of Ohio. Gen. Tupper was appointed Judge of the Common Pleas in September 1788 and, with Gen. Putnam, held the first court in the Northwest Territory.

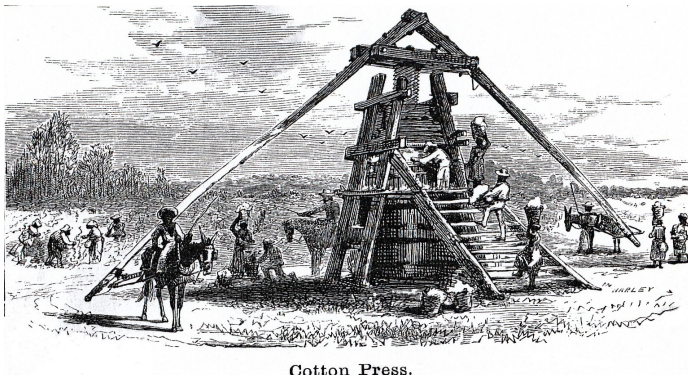
"The following entry in Dr. Cutler's journal (*Life of Rev. Manasseh Cutler*) indicates that Tupper was the real inventor of the screw propeller: 'Friday, August 15, 1788. This morning we went pretty early to the boat. General Tupper had mentioned to me a mode of constructing a machine to work in the head or stern of a boat instead of oars. It appeared to me highly probable it might succeed. I therefore proposed that we should make the experiment. Assisted by a number of people, we went to work and constructed a machine in the form of a screw with short blades, and placed it in the stern of the boat, which we turned with a crank. It succeeded to admiration, and I think it a very useful discovery.' "

Steamboats and the Cotton Kingdom

by John H. White, Jr.

Cotton was a popular fiber in ancient times. Nature spread its seeds around the world and it was native to North America before Columbus reached the New World in 1492. Its use was, however, limited because of the difficulty of removing the seeds from the fiber. This problem was solved by Whitney's cotton gin in 1793. By 1800, the U.S. was exporting 56 million pounds of cotton and that number doubled within ten years. Southern planters went "cotton-mad" for this new cash crop that proved so popular and profitable. Tobacco, once the favorite child of American agriculture, fell from grace because demand remained nearly level. At the same time, cotton mills of England and New England could never get enough of the fluffy white fiber. And because cotton grew best in the lower South, land from South Carolina to Texas was cleared of virgin timber and American Indians at a rapid rate, starting around 1820. The Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw were marched over land into Arkansas territory across the Mississippi River. Most Native American peoples were removed by or before 1835. Great and small cotton plantations grew up along southern rivers such as the Chattahoochee, Tombigbee, Yazoo, Trinity, and eventually the Brazos. Thousands of field hands were needed to plant, tend and harvest this valuable crop and so slavery was in effect given a second wind. Almost sixty percent of the U.S. slave population (3.2 million) was engaged in cotton farming by 1850. Production grew each year as more land was cleared. By 1860, the South was producing five million bales of cotton worth $192 million. It was the nation's most valuable export and produced dozens of new and wealthy plantation owners, such as Jefferson Davis at his farm in Warren County, MS.

Growing the plants was only one step in a series of moves to produce cotton. It was a light but unusually bulky material and so around 1800 a Scottish immigrant named William Dunbar invented a screw press to compact and reduce its bulk. The bale, which was generally about five feet long by two feet deep and three feet wide, was strapped inside a burlap bag or covering. There really was no specific size or weight to the bales but in the U.S. they generally weighed around 500 pounds. The rectangular shape made it easy to stack in a wagon, railroad car, or on the deck of a boat. Being compressed and relatively solid, the bales could be stacked many layers high without collapsing. Workers soon learned to roll and tumble the bales from place to place. As early as 1832, major cotton ports, such as New Orleans, built giant cotton presses to quickly produce the bales, with a pressure of one-half million pounds.



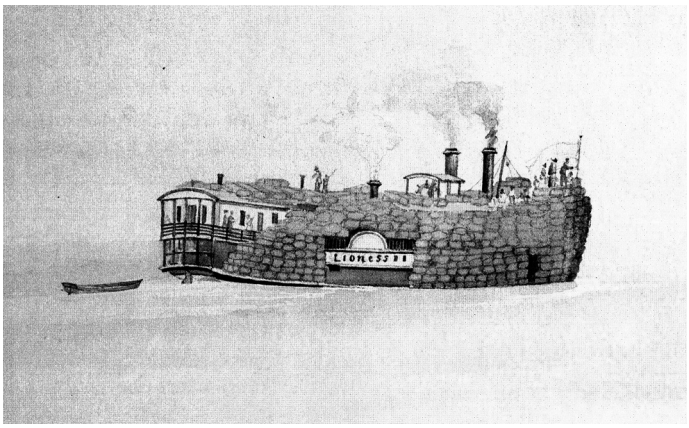
Cotton Press.

Illustration courtesy of John White

In October 1886 the *Scientific American* reported nearly twenty five large cotton presses at New Orleans. The largest stood about thirty feet high and cost $100,000. The bales produced at plantations by much smaller screw presses were reprocessed by these hydraulic giants that exerted five million pounds of pressure and reduced the bales to about three quarters of their original size. The presses were so well-designed and so strongly constructed that even after pressing a million bales, they showed no signs of wear or tear.

Flat boats were first employed along the Mississippi and its various tributaries to get bales down to New Orleans during the early years of the trade. Steamboats were active soon after the appearance of the NEW ORLEANS in 1811-12. The earliest report I can find is for Fulton's second inland river steamer, the VESUVIUS. In 1819 she delivered 830 bales of cotton to New Orleans. Mention of other pioneer cotton carriers can be found in the popular press of the times. In 1828 the MOHICAN,

a 371 ton sidewheeler built in Pittsburgh, dropped off 2800 bales at New Orleans. She was a large and fast vessel powered by nine boilers. On a subsequent trip she brought 3500 bales to the Crescent City. In early 1831, the UNCLE SAM, another Pittsburgh-built steamer dating from 1829, delivered 2246 bales.



Watercolor by Swiss artist Karl Bodmer painted in late January 1833 showing cotton packet LIONESS near Baton Rouge. The LIONESS was built in 1832 at New Albany, IN and measured 175 tons. Boat exploded her boilers on Red River May 19, 1833, with loss of about 15 lives. Photo courtesy of John White from original art in Joselyn Museum of Art.

DeBow's Magazine offered these details on the cotton trade in its issue of July 1846, pp. 57 and 58:

"You will see one of those gigantic steamboats coming to the wharf loaded down to her guards with 2500 to 3000 bales of Cotton – the hold not only full, but piled up 8, 9 and 10 tier high on her deck, so as almost to exclude the sight of any portion of the boat except her wheel-houses, and having the appearance of a moving mass of Cotton bales, and whilst one part of the crew are actually yet engaged in taking out her mooring lines to secure her to the wharf, the other portion are already engaged in landing Cotton, and a long pile of bales with two men at each, are seen rolling up along the levee, and in half an hour afterwards the Press drays are hauling it away.

"The HENRY CLAY [built 1841 at Cincinnati, 310 tons], a first class boat, arrived at the levee late on Thursday afternoon, and left at 10 A.M. on Sunday, during the interval of two working days, she had landed and shipped 1400 tons of cargo, besides which, the boat had to be cleared up, fixed, and all the supplies procured, and arrangements made for 100 cabin passengers that returned with her, nor was this considered as being anything extraordinary.

"The RAINBOW [built 1842 at Cincinnati, 221 tons], one of the smaller class boats, and therefore not with so strong a crew arrived at 10 P.M. with 1000 bales of Cotton which she landed and took on board a return freight, though not a full one, and started next morning at noon, at her regular hour – the same boat stopped at a plantation and in 38 minutes took on board and stowed in her hold 128 Hhds. of sugar.

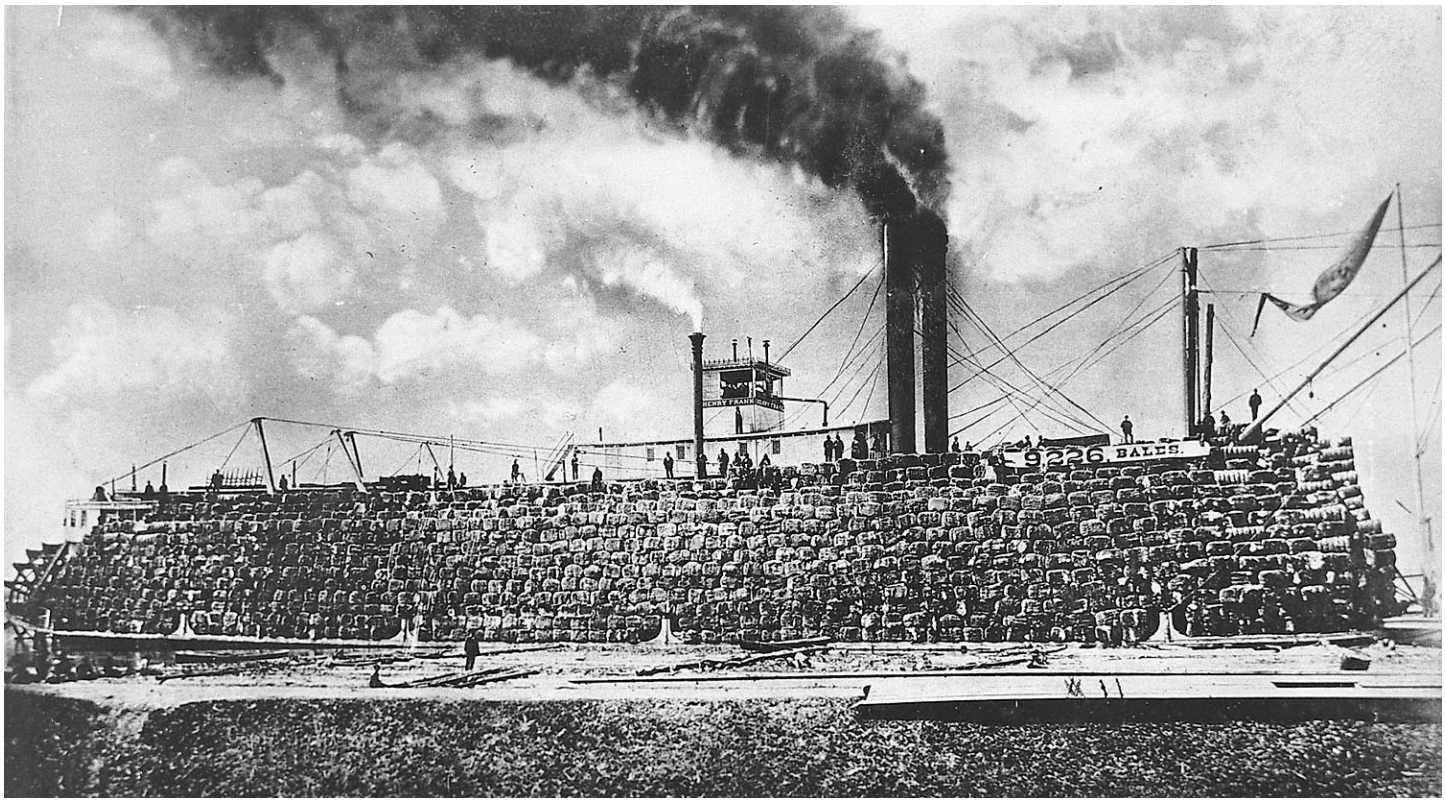
"The CONCORDIA [built 1843 at Cincinnati, 469 tons] landed 2200 bales of Cotton, reloaded a full return freight and left the city in 26 hours after her arrival – the Cotton was landed in 8 hours. Probably no other city can produce parallel instances of dispatch in the usual routine of business, and it is in a great degree necessary to use this dispatch in consequence of being obliged to condense the business of a year into about six months; for although the business season is considered to be from November to June inclusive, 8 months, it is really condensed into little more than 6 months, as it is hardly fairly open till December, and falls off rapidly after the 1st June – nor can it ever be otherwise in consequence of natural causes, as all the waters above are unnavigable during the summer months, and consequently all the produce must be sent to market, and all the return supplies be received before low water."

By 1859, reports of even larger cargos were recorded - the MAGNOLIA (1859) 824 tons, during her first season, took 6536 bales to New Orleans. Other boats, such as the ROB'T. E. LEE of 1876, made 43 trips in one season ending in July 1878, that involved the carriage of 124,084 bales of cotton together with other cargo.

Top billing must go to the big stern wheeler HENRY FRANK, that captured national attention in April 1881 by carrying a record load of 9226 bales. *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* published an engraving of the well-burdened steamer on her arrival at Memphis. On pages 10-11 there are contemporary accounts of this event and a description of the boat when completed at Cincinnati in September 1878.

The port of New Orleans prospered from the cotton trade and by the late 1820's was the second

continued on page 11



HENRY FRANK with record 9,226 bales of cotton delivered to New Orleans on April 2, 1881. Murphy Library, UW La Crosse.

Captain Frank Hicks' New Steamer HENRY FRANK

CINCINNATI, September 29, 1878 -- As but few persons are aware of the magnitude and character of this immense vessel, we give below an account of her size and construction. The hull was built by Capt. A. R. Perry at Mack's Shipyard. Length on deck, 276 feet; beam 52 feet; depth of hold aft, 11 feet; forward, 14 feet. In the construction of the hull 650,000 feet of timber was used, and 120 tons of iron.

The cabin, though plain, is a model of comfort and convenience, main saloon 200 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 12 feet high. There are 32 rooms, most of them very large and nicely furnished, the beds being extra large and comfortable. Eight rooms in the ladies cabin are handsomely furnished in chamber style. There is a magnificent promenade guard 12 feet wide, running the entire length of the boat. The saloon and cabins are covered with handsome Brussels carpet. The texas is 75 feet long, with 10 large rooms and hall forward and aft.

The machinery consists of two high-pressure engines, 29 inches in diameter, with 9 feet stroke; wheel 30 feet in diameter, 29 feet length of bucket, and 28 inches dip; shaft 16 inches in main journal. The boilers, six in number, are made of Otis steel. They are 28 feet long, 42 inches in diameter, with five flues each. Attached to the furnace is Tusher's patent smoke-burner, whereby a saving of forty percent in fuel is guaranteed.

The entire boat was constructed under the direct and personal supervision of Capt. J. F. Hicks. In no instance have strength, durability and safety, comfort and convenience been overlooked. There is a lack of that lavish expenditure for overdone and useless display, and instead are qualities which make this a boat for the times. The HENRY FRANK was built and especially designed for the Memphis and New Orleans cotton trade, with which Captain Hicks has been identified for twenty-five years. She has a capacity of about 11,000 bales, or 2,800 tons.

The boat is named for Mr. Henry Frank of Memphis, one of the solid businessmen of the South, who in appreciation of the compliment paid him, has presented the boat a handsome piano. The following are entitled to mention in connection with the construction of the boat: A. R. Perry, hull and cabin. Arthur Moore, machinery; McIlvaine & Spiegel, boilers etc.; Van Duzen, gas pipe fitting etc.; John A. Dickerson, Louisville, furniture, bedding etc.; John Shillito & Co., carpets, linen etc.; Tice & Huntington, table ware.

The FRANK will leave for the South shortly, to enter her regular trade, with Captain J. F. Hicks in command, and Alf. Grissom clerk, these gentlemen being the sole owners.

Leslie's Weekly, April 6, 1881.

The Champion.

The event of the day in steamboat circles was the arrival yesterday [April 2] from Memphis and the bends of the steamer HENRY FRANK, with the monster cargo of 9,226 bales of cotton, 1,213 sacks of cotton seed, 1,224 sacks oil cake, 500 sacks seed meal, 705 sacks corn, 2 wagons, 9 sacks coffee, 2 bundles sacks, and 14 packages sundries, in all 12,895 packages, equal to 10,226 bales, the largest cotton trip ever carried on one hull, and beating the famous load, 8,844 bales of the CHARLES P. CHOUTEAU. Her trips of cotton have averaged 5,530 bales a trip. To move her cotton alone of this trip by rail 284 box cars or 190 flat cars would be required. The FRANK was photographed at Carrollton by Lillienthal, and at the landing by an artist of Frank Leslie's.

It was a sight worth seeing – one that will not be looked upon again in many a day. From her jackstaff floated a blue ribbon pennant with a profusion of bunting streaming in the air from every stair. It was noticed that the FRANK rode the water very prettily. She sat plumb and square, and moved along as gracefully as a swan. At Carrollton an enterprising photographer, warned of her approach with the champion load of this or any other season, was on hand and taking advantage of the packet's stoppage, made several large pictures of her. Steaming away from Carrollton, the vessel proceeded on her journey and reached the head of Canal Street at the time mentioned. Old steamboatmen watched her approach with great interest. Every revolution of the great propelling power from the rear was closely scrutinized. "Why, look there," said one interested observer, "her guards are three inches out of the water! I'll bet one hundred dollars she can carry one thousand bales more!" The wager was not accepted. After the headlines had been made fast and a small gangplank thrown out, a *Times* reporter stepped on board and made his way to the office. This was not very easily accomplished. The avenue to the cabin was like a tunnel under piles of cotton bales, through which a small passage was found. In the office the reporter found the affable clerk of the FRANK, Capt. Alf. Grissom, all smiles and good humor. He exhibited a long manifest, at the head of which was a blue ribbon knot. The "9,226" was prominent on the paper. The weight of the entire cargo, averaging 450 pounds to a bale of cotton, was as follows:

Cotton	4,151,700 pounds or 2,076 tons
Miscellaneous	300,000 pounds or 150 tons
Total	4,451,700 pounds or 2,226 tons

The insured value of the cargo was $461,000 on cotton, and $4,000 on sundries or $465,000.

Captain Grissom was interrogated. He thought that even with the load on the boat at the time, it was possible to put 500 additional bales of cotton on board. He said every bale, with the exception of 526, was received above Vicksburg. The FRANK started away from Memphis with 2,596 bales on board, and picked up the rest above Vicksburg. The bad weather of the past several weeks had prevented the farmers from getting their cotton to the levees, and taking advantage of the dry spell they had rushed it in.

Steamboats and the Cotton Kingdom
continued from page 9

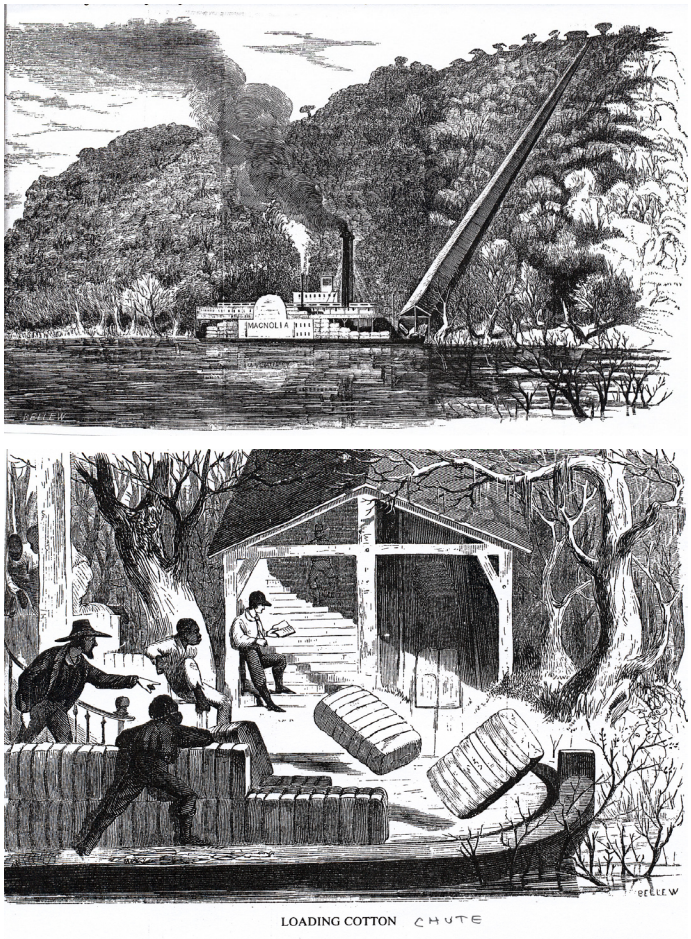
largest U.S. port in terms of export tonnage. It actually surpassed New York in the late 1830's and early 1840's in this regard because of the high value of cotton. By 1856 cotton exports were valued at $744 million or 54% of all U.S. exports. To protect this valuable cargo, the New Orleans Cotton Exchange took possession of the cotton once it had been unloaded on the dock. The levee inspectors protected it from theft, covered it with tarpaulins in the event of rain and made sure it was not damaged in any way. Each bale was marked with a distinctive emblem, such as a white ball on a black background, or a red diamond or a blue anchor. Hence each bale was delivered to the correct consignee. An iron rod with a flag of that symbol marked the place on the levee for the bales of each consignee. This made it easy for the labor force that was largely illiterate to deliver each bale to the right location.

Picking up the bales was a stop-and-go process as the boat moved along the river, to take on cargos and passengers. William B. Miller, captain of the THOMPSON DEAN, explained the process to his children in a letter reproduced in *Way's Packet Directory*. The boat would leave Memphis with 1000 or 2000 bales already loaded. She would pick up another 300 or 400 at various stops before reaching Helena, some 90 miles up river. It usually took three or four hours to load at Helena but on the last visit there were 1700 bales – which required all day to load. This, of course, wreaked havoc on the schedule, but anyone in a hurry was best advised not to travel on a cotton boat. With bales stacked 12 high, the windows were blocked and passengers

were obliged to climb up to the hurricane roof or the pilot house to see daylight. A big load of cotton would cause the boat to ride low in the water, causing the guards to drag in the river and slow the boat's progress. The deck crew, an impressive force of 100 men, was weary after four days and nights of stacking the bales at each landing along the way of this 800-mile trip. At 1564 tons, the DEAN was a large vessel, but for ordinary cargoes a far smaller deck crew would suffice. Applying Louis Hunter's estimate of twelve men per 100 tons, she would have a crew of 180 and so a count of one hundred deck hands appears reasonable. However, smaller and more typical river steamers managed nicely with crews of sixty to seventy.

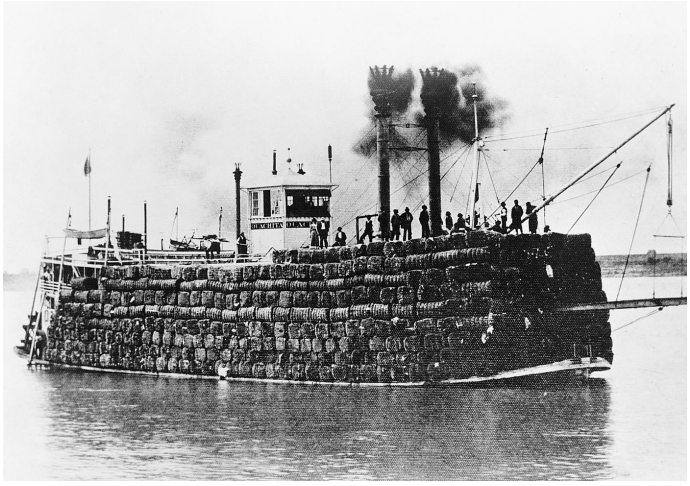
THOMPSON DEAN, built 1872 at Cincinnati, 306 x 46 x 9 with engines 30s, 10-ft. stroke. Ran Cincinnati-St. Louis-New Orleans and Memphis-New Orleans in the cotton season for Thompson Dean and Capt. James H. Pepper, and later Capt. William B. Miller. Photo from Murphy Library.

Some of the labor in handling cotton bales was reduced by an ingenious wooden slide or "chute." One such gravity device was located at Claiborne, AL on the Alabama River about 70 miles north of Mobile. The top station was about 200 feet above the river while the slide itself was 300 feet long. Bales picked up speed on the descent and hit the front deck of the boat with enough force that the vessel shuddered from stem to stern. A few bales might go overboard but they were fished out with much excitement and shouting on the part of the deck crew. The slide had a roof for its length. We assume that there were similar slides elsewhere. The Alabama River slide was in operation from about 1850 to 1890, according to the information available on this wonderful installation. Engravings of the slide and the bottom landing are shown above right.



MAGNOLIA shown loading cotton at the Alabama River Chute in first engraving is probably Way 3696, built 1852 at Jeffersonville. Both illustrations from* Ballou's Pictorial, *March 21, 1855. Courtesy of John White.

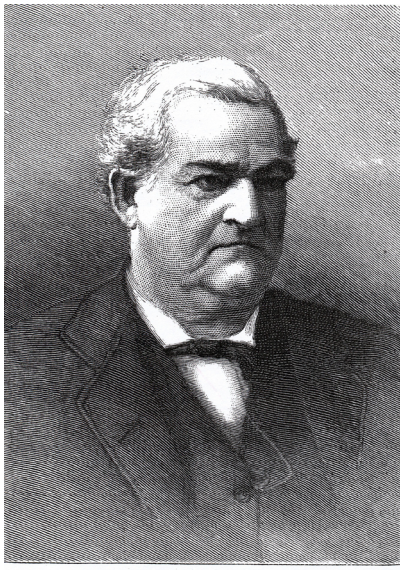
A first hand account of a trip on a cotton boat was included in the September 1892 issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The vessel was the stern wheel OUACHITA (pronounced washata) that made weekly 1000-mile round trips from New Orleans to Monroe, LA. She was a fairly small vessel, 190 feet long with a 38 foot beam; ample guards expanded the main deck to a width of 52 feet and allowed her to carry 3800 bales of cotton. She was built in 1890 by Howard for Captain L.V. Cooley. Her crew totaled 90 and of this number, 50 were roustabouts. At five o'clock each Wednesday afternoon, she headed up the Mississippi to Red River and then to the Black and Ouachita Rivers. It was a six-day journey. The passenger fare was only twelve dollars both ways and that included room and board. A bale of cotton traveled from Monroe to New Orleans for just one dollar. The local railroads were forced to match the freight rate but when low water ended navigation, the railroads raised the rate to $2.25 per bale.



OUACHITA (4351), Howard-built in 1890 for Capt. L. V. Cooley, was 189 x 38 x 6.5 and is described in Cosmopolitan *magazine. She was larger predecessor to OUACHITA shown here (4352) 142 x 32 x 4, also built by Howards for Cooley nine years later. Murphy Library photo.*

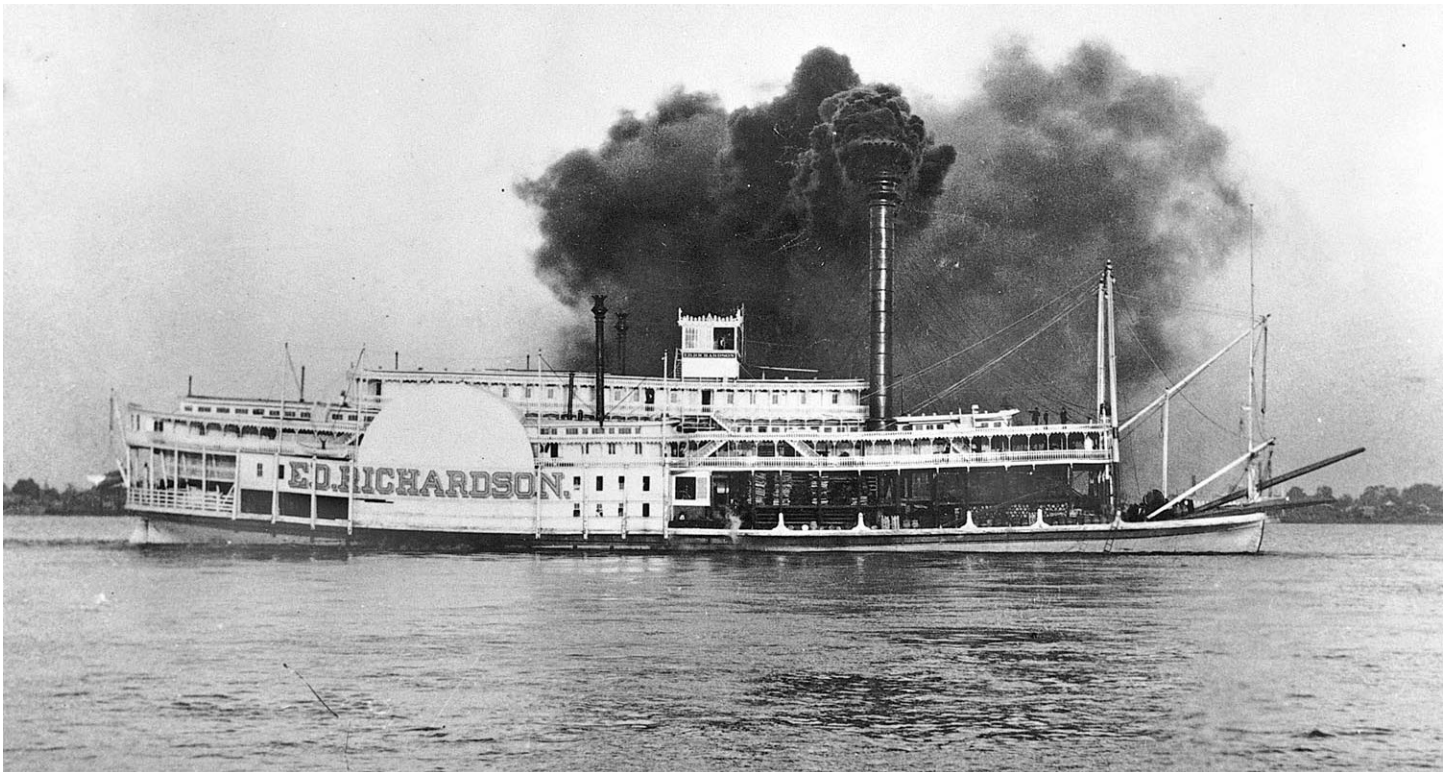
Once off the mighty Mississippi, the boat followed the narrow and curving channels of three smaller streams that led the way northward to Monroe. Pine trees, graceful plantations, and small towns added to the pleasures of this excursion. The deck crew had an easy time on the upriver trip other than one or two stops for more fuel. The OUACHITA arrived at Monroe on Saturday morning and had few difficulties in proceeding so long as the river level remained at two to three feet of water. The upriver cargo was unloaded during Saturday afternoon - the roustabouts then turned to the much more arduous job of putting the bales on board. They stopped only for meals and could usually finish the reloading by early Sunday afternoon. When all the bales from Monroe were on board, the hold was full and with bales stacked three or four tiers on the main deck, it was time to head south for New Orleans. Progress was slow because more cotton was waiting for shipment along the riverbanks. The boat stopped every few miles as the deck hands used their last reserve of strength to push the bulky bales onto the boat. There was little time for rest or food as the boat moved from one landing to the next. The treatment was harsh, the pay was only fifty to ninety dollars a month, but the food was plentiful and good and there were not many jobs for unskilled working men in the South. Once back on the Mississippi, the deck crew could rest except for a brief stop at Baton Rouge for more coal. Upon arrival at the New Orleans levee the bales were carried ashore. And the entire labor-intensive process would start anew on Wednesday afternoon.

The boat crew and dockside roustabouts, the field hands and plantation owners were not the only men involved in the cotton trade. Others were behind-the-scenes operatives that were essential to this business. They were called "Factors" and were part banker, part lending agent, and part marketing advisor. They provided credit to planters to buy seed, fertilizer, and tools to raise the cotton. When it was ready for picking – a process that could go on from September to December – the Factor would act as a sales agent. And, of course, he would extract a large portion of the profit as his fee. The king of the Factors was Col. Edmund Richardson (1818-1886) shown below, who was the largest cotton planter in the nation, if not the entire world. He controlled about 40 plantations or 30,000 acres of cotton land and was the richest man in the southern states. He also invested in cotton textile mills and cotton seed oil plants as well as railroads. In 1878, Captains John W. Cannon and John W. Tobin joined to build a deluxe steamer named in honor of Richardson. She was built at Howard's yard in Jeffersonville, IN. A contemporary description of this handsome vessel appears on page 15.



Colonel Edmund Richardson

The downside to cotton boats was fire. Cotton was a very flammable substance and even when compressed into bales, would burn readily. By placing the bales on the guards, outside the cabin, sparks from the chimneys could easily find their way to the cargo. In wood-burning days,sparks were very plentiful. It's a wonder more boats did not go up in flames. We will offer just a few examples. An early cotton boat fire took place aboard the GRECIAN (1820, 160 ton) as she neared New Orleans in June



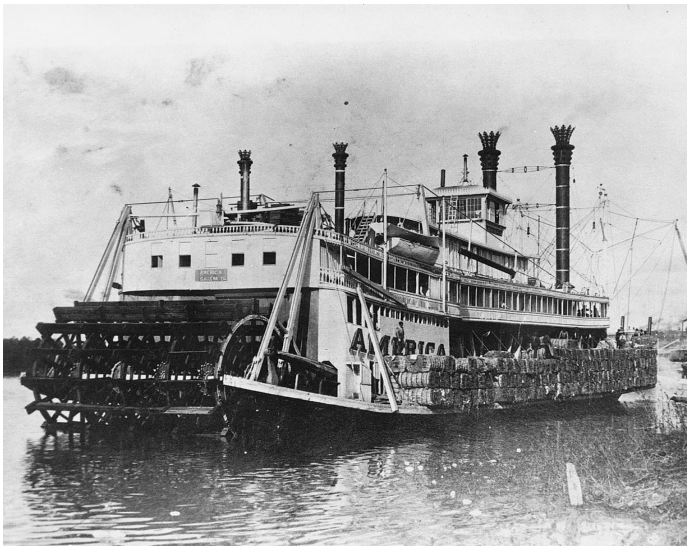
The elegant ED. RICHARDSON (1706) built by Howard, whose family members were aboard on her maiden trip south. For Capt. Jim, then four, this was his first boat ride. For a description of her building and launch, see page 15. Murphy Library photo.

1826 with 400 bales on board. The COLUMBUS of Louisville burned at Fort St. John, LA, December 21, 1827. A British traveler who rode on this boat in March 1826, mentions a stop at the mouth of the Cumberland River. It took six hours to load some 200 bales of cotton. A more deadly early morning fire broke out aboard the CREOLE in February 1841, as she neared the mouth of Red River bound for New Orleans. She had a big cargo of cotton that soon burned through the tiller line and all too soon the entire vessel was in flames. Thirty-five died and thirty-one were injured; the vessel was a total loss.

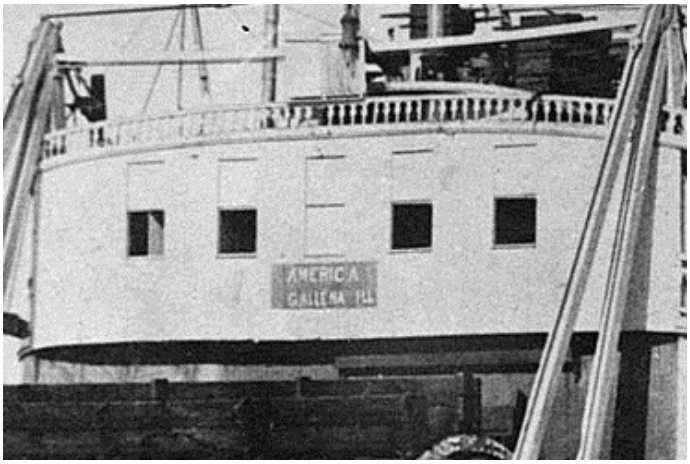
Each year, more cotton boats were claimed by fire. In late December 1866, the beautiful FASHION, built at Litherbury's yard in Cincinnati less than two years earlier, became another victim. The flames were first noticed a few miles above Baton Rouge. She was carrying 2700 bales of cotton and 250 passengers. A second cotton boat came to her aid but was set ablaze in the process. Eight crew members and thirty-five passengers were lost. One last example – the PAT ROGERS was running up the Ohio near Aurora, IN in early August 1874 when the engineer noticed flames on the stern. Just 45 bales of cotton were enough to doom this first class boat. The pilot attempted to run her to shore, but the tiller failed to respond and she grounded on a sand bar. Some passengers were taken to shore in a row boat, but others jumped into the river and drowned. Her crew worked quickly to push furniture overboard as life rafts, but the fire consumed the vessel quickly. Everyone was off the ROGERS in about ten minutes. Even so, thirty lives were lost. A few days later, one of the passengers recalled seeing deck passengers resting on the cotton bales while smoking – this may have been the source of the blaze. By the 1890's cotton was well recognized as a hazardous cargo, not just for river steamers but for sea-going vessels as well. Some Atlantic steamship lines refused to carry it as being too dangerous.

The decline of steamboating in general and the loss of the cotton trade was much like the old soldier who never really dies but just fades away. Harry Owens captured this story in his excellent book, *Steamboats and the Cotton Economy* (1990), which features the Yazoo River. During the peak years in the nineteenth century, about twenty boats specialized in the cotton trade. Rates were low – one bale from Natchez to New Orleans shipped at $1.00 per bale. The Civil War killed the trade for about

four years, but by the 1870's it came back to 100,000 bales a year and peaked in 1886-1887 at 133,000. The last really good season was 1903-1904, when 78,000 bales were transported. But the decline accelerated and by 1925 it was dead.



Capt. Cooley's cotton packet AMERICA: 1898-1926
Close-up below shows home port of registry.



There were a few clever captains who held on to a piece of this trade for a few more years. Capt. Le Verrier Cooley (1855-1931) ran several fine cotton boats on the Ouachita River and delivered thousands of bales to New Orleans in his sixty-two years in the river trade. He continued to haul cotton until late 1931 when he suffered a stroke while aboard one of his boats. He died several days later in a New Orleans hospital. This was, so far as available records reveal, the end of the cotton boat trade.

Launch of ED. RICHARDSON

LOUISVILLE, Oct. 31, 1878. – The mammoth steamer ED. RICHARDSON, built for Capts. Cannon and Tobin for the New Orleans, Vicksburg and Memphis trade, was successfully launched this evening by the Howards. A vast concourse of people attended the launch, and some 400 were on the boat, including Col. Moorman of New Orleans, the representative of Col. Richardson. The boat was christened by Miss Roberts, of Frankfort, the niece of Capt. Cannon, who is delighted with the boat, pronouncing her the best ever built for the cotton trade.

Her draught is only 30 inches at the stern, 28 inches amidships and 32 inches at the bow, with 5 feet sheer. It is expected that when completed and in running trim her draught will be only 5 feet. She was towed back to the shipyard by the tug LITTLE ANDY FULTON, and will be brought to the wharf tomorrow to receive her machinery. The ED. RICHARDSON is the 280th boat built and launched by the Howards during their career as boat builders, and, with the exception only of the huge JAS. HOWARD, the largest they ever constructed. She is 318 feet length of hull, with 52 feet beam and 11 foot depth of hold, giving her freight capacity equal to the burthen and storage of twelve thousand bales of cotton.

Her motive power embraces two engines, each with 39 inch diameter cylinder, and 10 feet stroke, working wheels 42 feet in diameter, with buckets 16½ feet in length. She is to have nine steel boilers, each 32 feet in length and 42 inches in diameter. In power she is surpassed only by the R. E. LEE and J. M. WHITE, but as a business boat she must prove unequaled, as in that respect she is the best boat ever built by the Howards, who stand at the head of the list. This new boat was modeled after the famous RUTH, the best boat ever in the St. Louis trade, built for Capt. Pegram in 1864.

The ED. RICHARDSON has an easy model to the water line, which with her immense power, fully one-third more than that of the RUTH, must make her the fastest business boat ever constructed. She is calculated to carry a fair upstream load, say passengers and 500 tons freight, on less water than the LEE, WHITE or NATCHEZ flying light. She has better bearings, more beam and is fuller in the harpings than any of the other fast boats. She may not equal the others in speed or the WHITE in magnificence, but in usefulness and business, money-making qualifications, she must take the lead.

1881 Newspaper Accounts of Lower Mississippi Cotton Packet Trade

Another Big Cotton Trip of the Champion Iron Steamer Chas. P. Chouteau

VICKSBURG, March 22, 1881. – The iron steamer CHAS. P. CHOUTEAU of the Memphis and New Orleans Packet Line, passed here this morning at 3, with 8,452 bales of cotton. She was telegraphed at White River to take 200 more at Natchez, and will probably go into New Orleans with as large a trip as she did in November 6, 1879, when she carried 8,844 bales. When she landed here last night, she had four inches draught to spare without any danger. The cotton was 12 tiers high and was beautifully loaded. Capt. Wm. Thorwegan expected to take 9,000 bales, but it is too late in the season and he could not get it. Clear and cool. Ther. 52°. River fallen 2 inches. Up – BELLE OF MEMPHIS, noon. Down – NATCHEZ, 6 a.m.; J.M. WHITE, 9 a.m.; CHOUTEAU, 2 a.m.; THOMPSON DEAN, 6 p.m.

MEMPHIS, March 23, 1881. – The HENRY FRANK takes 2,300 bales cotton from here, destined by the Gulf route to Fall River, Mass. Heretofore shipments for that point have gone the overland route. A private telegram today announces the arrival of the iron steamer CHOUTEAU at New Orleans with 8,452 bales cotton – 382 bales less than her great load of Nov. 6, 1879. She cleared the banks of all that offered on the down trip.

Vicksburg Herald, April 29, 1881 – The HENRY FRANK has made twelve trips to the Bends and Memphis this season, and she has earned the name "Champion" by landing at this port the largest load of cotton ever carried – 9,226 bales. The following statement will show the amount of cotton etc. brought to this city by the FRANK and CHOUTEAU while in the Memphis trade:

HENRY FRANK

Number of trips, season 1880-81 11
Bales cotton, season 1880-81 76,009
Bags cotton seed, 1880-81 49
Sacks cotton seed, 1880-81 28,218
Oil cake, 1880-81 13,675
Cotton seed meal, 1880-81 2,534
Barrels oil, 1880-81 1,225
Aggregate in bales, 1880-81 91,758
Total number of trips 33
Total bales cotton carried 184,484
Total bags cotton seed carried 240
Total sacks cotton seed carried 153,395
Total oil cake carried 50,947
Total cotton seed meal carried 19,648
Total barrels oil carried 5,549

CHAS. P. CHOUTEAU

Number of trips, season 1880-81 12
Bales cotton, season 1880-81 76,958
Bags cotton seed, 1880-81 2
Sacks cotton seed, 1880-81 30,088
Oil cake, 1880-81 15,335
Cotton seed meal, 1880-81 ..... --
Barrels oil, 1880-81 239
Aggregate in bales, 1880-81 92,256
Total number of trips 47
Total bales cotton carried 233,267
Total bags cotton seed carried 81
Total sacks cotton seed carried 231,228
Total oil cake carried 46,513
Total cotton seed meal carried 5,058
Total barrels oil carried 3,368

Excess in cotton this season over that of last: HENRY FRANK, 19,033 and CHAS. P. CHOUTEAU, 5,088.

MEMPHIS, Nov. 8, 1881 -- The GOLDEN RULE, towing a barge passed Helena early this morning, and is expected here late tonight. The ANNIE SILVER, due up tomorrow, takes 1,500 bales of cotton. The Anchor Line have carried over 12,000 bales from here in the last five weeks. The CITY OF VICKSBURG takes 1,000 bales of cotton here to go East by rail from Cairo. The GOLDEN RULE adds 310 bales here for Cannelton. The CHOUTEAU left Arkansas City Saturday with nearly 6,000 bales of cotton; also 4,000 sacks of seed and 2,000 sacks of oil cake.

Adventures on Red River and Lake Caddo, 1874

by John G. Gibbs, Steamboat Engineer

Dale Flick sends this firsthand account of cotton packets RAPIDES and HENRY TETE, with the observation that not all perils in this trade were because of fire.

A picture of the FLAVILLA with a full load of cotton at the Shreveport Wharf in 1871, which appeared in a Shreveport newspaper, struck me so forcibly that I am going to tell you of the last trip I made on Red River as far up as Jefferson, TX in 1874.

I shipped up as striker with my friend Charley Fulton, Chief engineer (whom I'd been with on another boat and the first engineer I had ever known), to make a trip up Red River on the sternwheel RAPIDES [4685]. She was a boat of about 1,500 bales of cotton capacity. All went well until we got somewhere between Alexandria and Grand Encore on Red River when one of the cylinder heads blew off but did no other damage. We made necessary repairs and went on to Shreveport on one engine, where we sent to New Orleans and ordered a new head made which was brought up by another boat. We laid at Shreveport all that time with the whole crew under half-pay and board.

When the new cylinder head came and was fitted to its place we went on to Jefferson, TX, where we got a full load of cotton. Going through Lake Caddo dodging stumps left from a primeval forest was a tough job on the pilots and engineers. The lake, I am told, sank to its present depths several centuries ago and at one time was a dense forest. The number of stumps justified the statement. We went through all right and mapped out a route to return by.

We laid at Jefferson and piled on all the cotton possible—and it was piled to the hurricane roof. Returning we passed through Lake Caddo all right and had entered what they call Twelve Mile Bayou when the cylinder timber on the same side that blew out the head broke off even with the hull. If the hog chains had not held, the whole wheel would have gone into the river. We floated some distance down the bayou before the mate could get a line out to check her. After tying up, the captain, mate and several roustabouts went in the yawl to Shreveport for help. The HENRY TETE [2607] was in port and was engaged to come and tow us to Shreveport and take our load of cotton to New Orleans.

When the load was all off and on the TETE it did not look so big. I knew we were in for a long lay-up, so I went to Mr. Fulton, the Chief engineer, and asked him if there would be anything for me to do while the boat was laid up there in a broken down condition. I told him I could work my way home on the other boat and it would cost me nothing. "Go to it, my boy, if you can," was what he told me.

It took but a few minutes for me to enter the engine room of the HENRY TETE bound for New Orleans. We left about daylight the next morning and picked up cotton and other freight all day until, at 10:55 that night, when we were loading the last cotton, the captain said it was the last we would load—and it proved to be so.

The Chief engineer on watch said to me, "Johnny, go upstairs and see what time it is." I climbed up into the cabin hallway and saw it was five minutes to eleven. I got back to the engine room as soon as possible and reported to him, and just as I uttered the last word the sound of ripping and tearing of the timbers began, and before you could look to see what the racket was all about, the boat gave a careen to the other side and dumped all the cotton overboard.

The guards on the side where the racket started had broken every timber even with the hull from the bow of the boat to the wheel houses. When that happened, the boat, being relieved of the weight, suddenly leaned to the other side and dumped that load overboard.

Some of the Negro roustabouts who were about their duties or resting went into the water with the cotton. The yells of the poor devils for help—and those on the boat trying to tell them what to do—created so much excitement that it was some time before we could make a survey of things and do something. It was a sight seldom seen. The river was full of roustabouts astride the bales or in the water holding on and yelling for dear life. Those roustabouts were surely frightened, and it was a hard job to get them to turn loose of the bales and be pulled aboard the yawls.

We got started out again about 3:00 AM and went on to New Orleans with a deck room full of freight and laid up for repairs. I got home after twenty-two days on the trip and was fully convinced in my young mind at that time I would never again leave port on a Friday. Three accidents had happened on the one trip in addition to which I caught a heavy cold in my head and laid up sick for a month with one of my ears. My hearing has been affected ever since.

Falls Heroes: Louisville's Lifesavers Chapter 5

by Leland Johnson

DREAMS DASHED

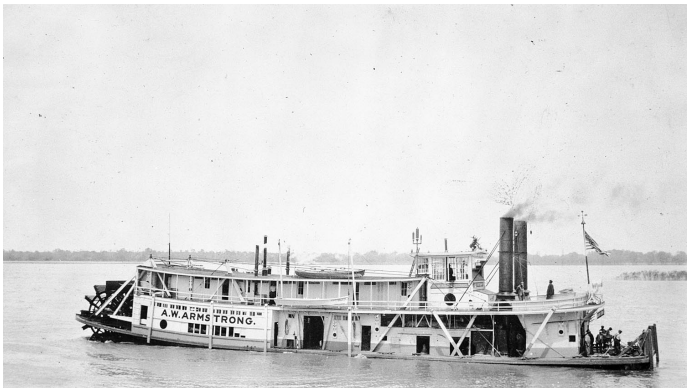
Ever since creation of the Louisville station in 1881, leaders in Indiana had urged formation of a lifesaving station on the north side of the Falls at Jeffersonville or Clarksville. Indeed, the Hoosier side of the river had its own Falls heroes. The most outstanding of these were the three Fuller brothers of Clarksville—George, Homer, and Albert. They were fisherman on the Falls who had their home on the edge of the Big Eddy at old Clarksville and thus had ample opportunity to help rescue the drowning. The Big Eddy, a notorious whirlpool rivermen called the Graveyard of the Ohio, was a swirling, apparently bottomless pit, deep and treacherous. Jagged rocks and terrific undercurrents made it one of the most feared spots on American rivers. Indeed, so many boats sank in the Big Eddy during pioneer times that Captain Henry Shreve of the Corps of Engineers had to clear boat wreckage from the channel there to keep the river open for commerce. Indiana leaders hoped the three Fuller brothers would become the nucleus of a lifesaving station on their side of the Falls.

Forty-three year old George Fuller, an expert oarsman and swimmer, had rescued twenty-three people from drowning single-handed in 1900. He and his fishermen brothers, Homer and Albert, had saved more than one hundred people from death at the Falls. George was employed by a contractor working at the Falls for the Corps of Engineers, and at noon on October 5 he got into his skiff, pulled home to the Indiana bank for lunch with his mother and brothers, then started back to his job. At the tip of Corn Island where the river dashed furiously over projecting stones, his boat tipped over and instantly he was whirling helplessly along. Workers far away saw it and rowed to help, while Fuller frantically tried to regain his skiff which shot down the Falls like a bullet, beyond his reach. The rumbling river took him down, spit him back to the surface, then dashed him against the rocks, twisting and grinding. Fuller washed farther down into more dangerous rapids and then into the Big Eddy, until the river at last tossed him against Wave Rock on the Indiana side where his body lodged.

George had made a gallant fight, but the current dragging him over jagged stones had beaten him senseless. When friends reached his side, his head was bleeding and torn, an ear was missing, and his heart only faintly beating. They called a physician, who on hasty arrival pronounced him dead. In the doorway of a cabin up the Indiana bank stood a woman, who perhaps thought her son had saved another man; but when a friend walked up the hill to tell her the truth she collapsed in sorrow. After constant exposure on the river, her other hero sons contracted what she called consumption, and with their disease were dashed the dreams for a lifesaving station on the Hoosier bank of the Falls.

IN TRANSIT

Captain John Hoffman of Jeffersonville took his harborboat TRANSIT (T2463) below the Falls to West Louisville on March 20, 1901, to help Falls pilot Dan Varble steer the TORNADO (T2459) and its barge tow up Indian Chute. As together they pushed the tow up the rapids to the Big Eddy, the TRANSIT got onto a pile of rocks, knocking a small hole in her hull. She began to take on water and Captain Hoffman sounded the distress whistle, while Captain Varble on the TORNADO desperately tried to control the barges. But the fleet broke apart and the jumbled barges drifted rapidly, pushing the TRANSIT backwards before them. As the TRANSIT filled, she began to careen over and her crew scrambled to take refuge on the barges. When the lifesavers streaked down Kentucky Chute to answer the distress call, they reached the barges and took off eleven crewmen, then helped



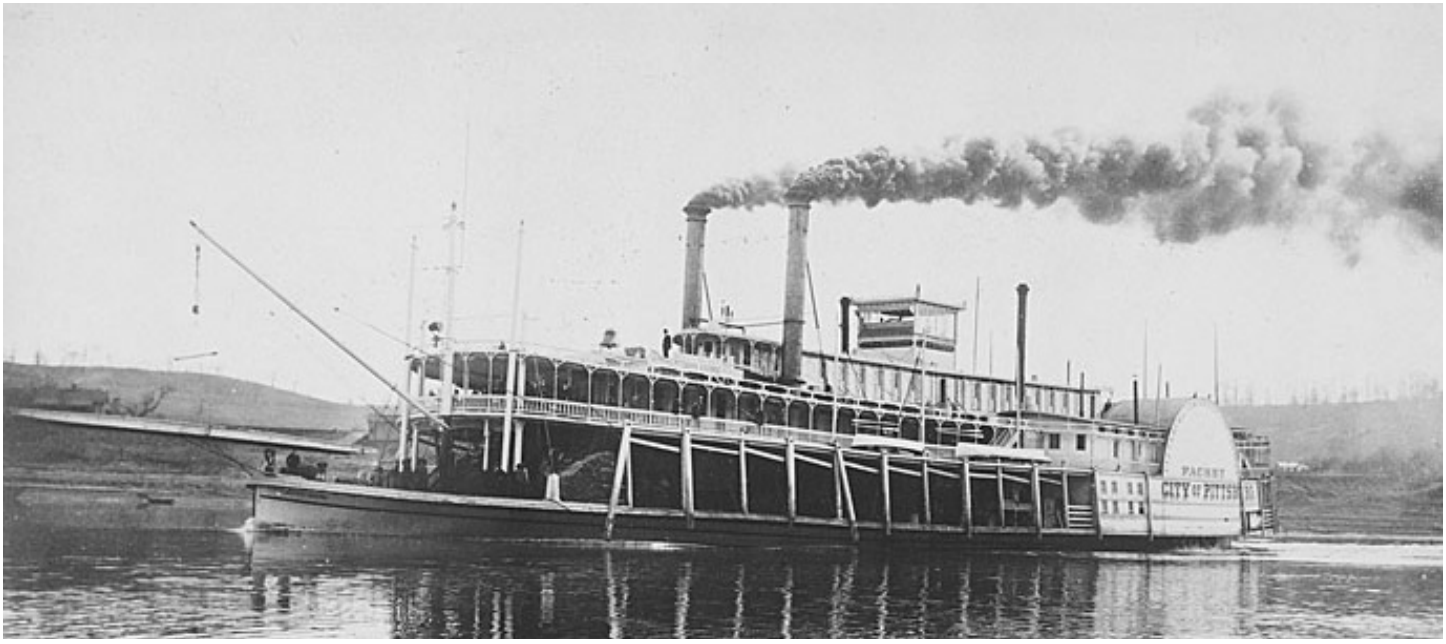
TRANSIT, Louisville harbor boat sunk in March 1901, appears on page 26 and back cover of December 2011 issue. Raised and put back into service, she was later bought by the Combine. Shown above when rebuilt in 1925 as A. W. ARMSTRONG for Ayer & Lord Tie Co. in Paducah. Murphy Library photo.

recover the loose barges. The TRANSIT went to the bottom at West Louisville in sixteen feet of water, while the barges guillotined her cabin and upper works. Later raised, she was rebuilt and under the name A. W. ARMSTRONG (T0025) hauled crossties at Paducah until 1930.

CITY OF PITTSBURG

The day after the TRANSIT wrecked, the great steam packet CITY OF PITTSBURG (1122), bound from Cincinnati to Memphis, left Louisville with Falls pilot Dan Varble at the helm and Captain John Phillips in command. As customary for steamboats, she went upriver and rounded to before entering the currents going down Indian Chute. A high wind was blowing, the current swift and treacherous. As the steamer went under the railroad bridge, wind and current pushed her bow to port and Captain Varble signaled to the engineer to reverse engines and back, but a moment later the boat struck the bridge pier a glancing blow. Feeling the shock, passengers ran from their rooms and stampeded for the deck. Crewmen below found the steamer's bow stem had been broken and had sprung a leak. They stuffed bales of hay into the leak to form a temporary plug, while Varble steered the boat toward the Indiana bank. Two lifeboats arrived alongside to calm passengers as Varble grounded the steamer in shallows at the mouth of Silver Creek. The lifesavers then helped carpenters build bulkheads to contain the leak, and afterwards the boat steamed on to New Albany, took on more freight, and headed south. The following year, in one of the worst steamboat disasters on the Ohio, the CITY OF PITTSBURG burned on the Grand Chain of the Ohio with the loss of more than sixty passengers and crew, slightly upstream of and in sight of the Olmsted Locks and Dam completed in the 21st century.

CITY OF PITTSBURG, built 1899 at Knox Yard in Harmar, OH. 292.7 x 48.8 with overall width of 79'5" Engines 26s with 10-ft. stroke. Her first trip was a round trip Pittsburgh-New Orleans. For the remainder of 1899 and early 1900 she ran Pittsburgh-Louisville, then Cincinnati-Louisville, and finally Cincinnati-Memphis. Her complete story along with many pictures appears in the March 1968 REFLECTOR. Murphy Library photo.



In July 1901 a raft of 1,880 pine, poplar, oak, and walnut logs worth seven thousand dollars came down from the upper Kentucky River with Mr. A. Gunn and a crew of seven lumberjacks aboard. Gunn had been told a towboat would meet his raft near the Louisville waterworks to steer it down to the Louisville levee, but no boat arrived. Seeing that his log raft would float without assistance directly into the teeth of the Falls, Gunn climbed into a skiff to row for help. He could row a little faster than the current floated the huge raft along, and he headed straight to the lifesaving station, where the lifeboats were manned and sped after the raft. The first boat tied onto the raft and its crew rowed furiously, attempting to pull the raft toward shore. This proved futile and the raft's onward race to destruction seemed certain until the second lifeboat arrived and also secured a line to the upper end of the raft. Both crews then rowed and under the strain the mass of timber slowly turned. The lines creaked and groaned, but held until the lifesavers checked the raft's drift and landed it at the Louisville levee. The seven lumberjacks were truly grateful, thinking they all would have drowned when their raft splintered against the rocks in the Falls.

The following winter the lookout saw a red-colored object floating toward the Falls, waving and sending up bursts of steam. Three lifesavers launched their boat after it and bent eagerly to their oars. As they neared the floating figure, they saw it was a red bull, swishing its tail in apparent terror and bellowing clouds of steam from the icy water. As the lifeboat came alongside, one of the crew bent over the gunwale and grabbed the beast by the ears to put a rope on its neck. But bull and boat plunged over the dam and tossing waves caught the boat, popping it into the air like a cork, the occupants holding on for dear life. The critter escaped their grasp and swept along before them, a thrilling race with three men risking perils of the rapids to save the poor beast. The lifesavers had no easy time overtaking the animal, but at last they came alongside and one crewman took the oars while the others took the bull by the horns. The animal's strength had ebbed and the men firmly held on. Now the lifesavers were on the horns of a dilemma. What could they do with it? They were exhausted and nearly frozen. A two-mile swim in ice-cold water had rendered the beast nearly senseless. With the Falls roaring around them, ice floes clashing back and forth, they pulled the animal into the shallows and called on it to move as if they were stock drivers. Here they were met by Jeffersonville butcher Fred Capehart, who claimed the bull as his property. While taking cattle from Kentucky to Jeffersonville on the ferry W. C. HITE (5625), he had trouble with the red varmint and when the ferry landed, like a flash it bounded out into the river. Thanking the heroes, he made steaks for their dining pleasure.

W.C.HITE was transporting Fred Capehart's contrary bull to his butcher shop in Jeffersonville, when the critter broke loose. Finally corraled by the Louisville Lifesavers after an icy struggle over the dam, they were rewarded for their efforts with juicy steaks (presumably not from the rescued animal.) Murphy Library photo.

Over the years the lifesavers rescued many animals from the river. Once a lifeboat returned to the station towing two swimming mules, and another came in loaded like a sty with three hogs. Another time, Tony Leopold dove into the river to retrieve a coop of chickens that fell off a boat. Their mission, after all, was to save life and property, and the animals fit both categories. And Devan added the value of the rescued livestock into his regular reports to Superintendent Kimball on the number of lives and the value of property saved at the Louisville station. Kimball, in turn, reported the cumulative figures nationally to Congress when requesting annual funding for the service. No bull.

NEW STATION

The figures reported by Devan justified construction of a new station at Louisville to replace the worn 1881 structure with its rotted hull. The contract for construction went in May

1902 to Captain Ed Howard at the boatyard in Jeffersonville, and Captain H. C. Davis supervised the contract award and design on behalf of the Life Saving Service. The new station's design showed the results of twenty years experience with the first station. Seventy feet long, it was thirty feet wide with a four-foot depth of hull, larger and more convenient than the first. Two-stories high, it had a tall and handsome tower for use of the lookouts. Rather than an open bay, the new boathouse had eight rooms for the crew, with thirty closets for storage in the rooms and on both levels. Beneath the living quarters was the large lifeboat room on the lower deck with chutes to slip the boats into the river in a hurry.

Devan's most embarrassing moment came in October 1902, when he and boatmen Edward Farrell and Edward McDonough rowed Captain Charles Abbey, lifesaving station inspector from New York, over to Jeffersonville to examine the completed station. After the inspection, they left Abbey to take a return train, and they hitched their boat to the ferry W. C. HITE for a free ride back to Louisville. But as the HITE arrived at the levee, the U. S. MACKENZIE was passing, catching the lifeboat in a whirlpool created by the wake of both steamers. This proved too much for their skiff, and it turned turtle, baptizing Devan, Farrell, and McDonough unceremoniously in the river. When they surfaced, they swam for the overturned boat. In the meantime, the station lookout saw the debacle and dispatched another lifeboat, which found the three lifesavers floating along clinging to their overturned boat. Hoisting Devan and the damp lifesavers aboard, the second boat towed the first back to the station. It was a long time before Devan heard the last of that. Jokes even appeared in newspapers about where the lifesavers had found the elephant they were seen towing—meaning Devan.

As he aged, Devan had grown stout and he suffered from gout, rheumatism, and diabetes. He had difficulty passing the physical examinations required of all keepers after 1901, with the threat of dismissal hanging on the outcome. This would have been a great hardship to Devan and other keepers because neither they nor their crews could receive pensions like those awarded to military servicemen.

The harborboat TRANSIT towed the new lifesaving station into position on November 6, 1902, and Devan's crew took great pride in it. They politely welcomed visitors aboard to see their new floating home, especially on Sundays. The TRANSIT also towed the 1881 station to Howard's yard, where it was auctioned and purchased by Wharfmaster Wilkins for $226 to become the wharfboat at Patriot, IN.

TARASCON

The TARASCON (5310) was a daisy steamboat, named for the pioneer French family of Shippingport and running from 1896 to 1910 in the Louisville-Evansville trade. Will Hays had renewed his steamboat license and every summer he captained the TARASCON on excursions to Evansville and back. By the 1890s, Hays was famous on the rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, especially for his poetry and songs, and his name attracted crowds. The French Lick resort, a short train ride north of Louisville, hired him as its manager, no doubt because his reputation brought wealthy rivermen and their families to enjoy the pluto water. Fortunately, Hays was not piloting the TARASCON on June 15, 1902, when storm winds played badminton with the boat.

The steamer TARASCON was landed at the Louisville wharf with all her crew ashore except Captain Fred Zoll, Mate William Cheatham, chambermaid Mary Murphy, and a few roustabouts. They were resting when sixty-mile-per-hour wind gusts and blinding sheets of rain

struck the boat, breaking her stern line. She swung out from the wharf, presenting a broader front to the gale, which snapped her other three lines. The lookout at the station could not see the boat through the driving rain until she had floated out into the river. Then he sounded the alarm and lifesavers went in pursuit through the driving storm as fast as they could row. Without steam up, the packet was at the mercy of the gale, which sent her whirling along upstream, now sideways, now backward, now head on. She hit the Cincinnati wharfboat at foot of Third Street a resounding whack and bounded off. She then hit a fleet of coal barges tied between First and Third Streets. Roustabouts climbed off the boat onto a barge and raced up the levee through the driving rain. Miss Mary Murphy, the chambermaid, came to the rescue. Unmindful of the terrific rain and danger, she rushed to rouse the captain and led him onto the deck, where they began untangling the broken lines. When they got the lines straightened out, the captain threw one to the lifesavers in their boat alongside, who took it to the bank and tied it off at the ferry dock. The heavy downpour had filled their lifeboat half full before they could get the steamer secured safely from the storm. They would have been the first to admit, however, that Miss Murphy was heroine of the hour.

Later that month, two besotted young men left the Louisville levee in a skiff bound for Jeffersonville. As they passed the lifesaver station they yelled out, "How would you like to go to hell with us?" A boatman replied he did not want to leave just yet, but probably would see them down Indian Chute if they were not careful. The lookout in the tower kept close watch on the two drunks as they rowed across the head of Kentucky Chute, and he saw that when they arrived at Indian Chute they shipped their oars, waved their hats goodbye to the station, and allowed their boat to be drawn down into the current. The lookout rang the alarm and a lifeboat set out to catch the men. But as the lifesavers crossed the river, the men took their oars, turned their boat, and pulled mightily upstream. Just a short distance from the Big Eddy, which would have capsized their craft, they rowed hard and fought their way back. When they reached the Indiana shore, they ditched their boat and ran up the bank. The lifesavers then changed course and returned to their station. They chewed over among the crew whether the young men really intended to commit suicide by drifting into the waves and whirlpool, or whether their courage had failed them at the last moment, or whether they just intended a bad prank aimed at the lifesavers.

TARASCON, Howard-built in 1895 for Louisville & Evansville Packet Co. 191 x 35 x 5.1 with engines 15½ with 6-ft. stroke. Ran as partner with TELL CITY. On June 15, 1902, she broke loose from Louisville wharf in a torrent of wind-and-rain, collided with the Cincinnati wharfboat and a nearby fleet of coal barges before she was safely landed. Famed Louisville riverman, newspaper writer and composer Will S. Hays, piloted the boat several summers Louisville-Evansville. Chartered in 1917 for Memphis-Carruthersville trade and sank that December. This photo and that of Will Hays from Murphy Library.

But on most alarms the dangers were real. One night, lookout William Drazel heard someone upstream from the station calling for help. Devan sent three of the crew running up the levee in search of the victim, and they found an elderly woman fallen into the river, helpless and cold. The lifesavers pulled her from the water and carried her to the station. Devan sent a runner to his home to bring his sister to the station, and the sister removed wet clothes from the victim and helped her put on warm garments donated by the Woman's Relief Association. When the woman warmed and revived, Devan sent for a cab, wrapped blankets around her, and sent a lifesaver with her to see that she got home safely. Rescues of this sort along the levee were common, and often involved pulling out someone who had attempted suicide.

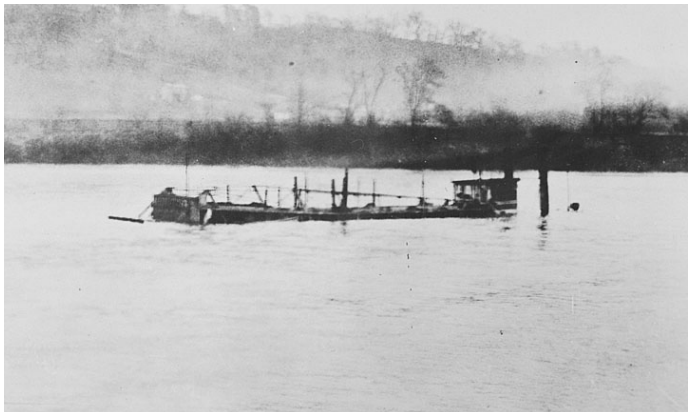
LET THERE BE LIGHT

By 1900 the Army Engineers had blasted a channel clear of rocks through Indian Chute along the northern shore of the Falls, and boats began to pass through without hiring the Falls pilots. The last elected Falls pilots took office in 1901 and Captain Dan Varble, nephew of Captain Pink Varble, became the last Falls pilot. Working mostly aboard his harborboat TRANSIT (T2463), Captain Dan helped the Monongahela River Combine, which had formed a monopoly on shipment of Pittsburgh coal down the Ohio, to get their tows across the Falls. To speed its business, the Combine sought to send its barge tows down Indian Chute at night, and Captain Max Sebolt, Combine manager at Louisville, installed a signal light at the head of the chute to help guide the tows. The Louisville lifesavers saw to it that this signal lantern was blazing at night.

Will Hays and John Tully initiated a campaign in 1903 to have beacons established at the Falls and maintained by the National Lighthouse Board, a sister agency of the Life Saving Service in the Treasury Department. It employed 1,200 light tenders, many of whom were women, who received small pay for filling signal lanterns with oil each evening and lighting them for the night. The Fourteenth Lighthouse District maintained the navigation lights on the Ohio and its tributaries, employing 490 light tenders. In support of the Combine and river captains generally, Will Hays urged "let there be light" on the Falls. He recommended six beacons at the Falls: at the head of Indian Chute, on both sides of the chute at Goose Island, at the head of Kentucky Chute, at Shippingport Point, and at the head of Sand Island. If towboats could navigate the Falls with safety at night, he reasoned, much time and money could be saved. Although Hays' campaign was continued by John Tully another two decades, the Army Engineers soon placed signal lights on its dam at the head of the Falls, supplemented by warning buoys upstream of the dam. This helped boat traffic, but on occasion it also caused problems.

W. H. FLINT

The Pittsburgh towboat W. H. FLINT (T2568) with Captain Flint at her wheel, brought a coal tow to Louisville in March 1903 and unloaded it at New Albany. She started back up the Falls to help the towboat G. W. THOMAS (T0873) bring down another coal tow, but in the middle of the chute the FLINT hit a concealed object, thought to have been a buoy submerged by high water. Water gushed into the hull and Captain Flint had his twenty-man crew start the pumps while he headed full steam toward the Indiana bank. Edward Farrell, on watch at the station, saw the accident, and the lifesaving crew put out to dart across the river to the rescue. Captain Flint grounded the boat in the shallows as she sank, so the lifesavers helped moor her to the bank to prevent drifting back into the chute. Her owner then repaired the hull, raised the boat, and put her back in service.



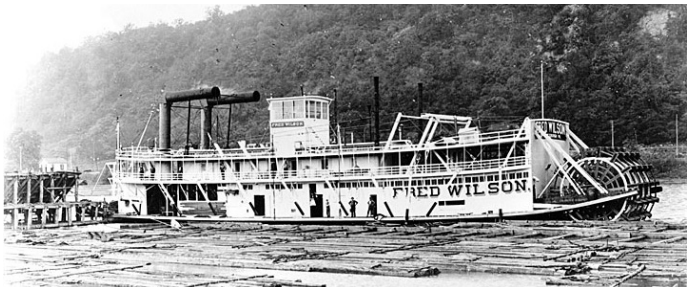
W. H. FLINT sank in 1903. She was renamed MONITOR in 1907 and sank three more times by 1925. Murphy Library photo

FRED WILSON

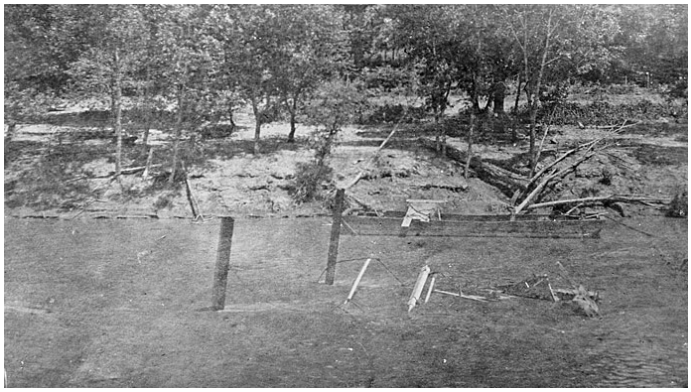
Thinking it healthy, Captain Dan Varble liked to walk, and he decided to walk back to Louisville after bringing the towboat FRED WILSON (To848) below the Falls at three in the morning. He had walked about fifteen minutes, when rumbling shook the ground and a garish glow lit the western sky back toward the river.

After landing the Falls pilot ashore, the WILSON began to make up tow. Suddenly, without warning every one of her boilers exploded, blasting the boat to splintereens. Two deckhands, Andy Thornton and H. E. Sykes, were on a nearby barge, but escaped the shower of hot metal and burning timbers. Thornton described it as a gigantic Roman candle exploding in their faces. Captain Joseph Price, pilot Albert Miller, and twelve crewmen of the thirty-two aboard died instantly. Pilot Charles Nadal was off duty and asleep; he was blown from his bunk onto the riverbank and injured. Engineer J. A. Walker was blown into the river and swam to the bank unhurt. Deckhand Carl Cody, asleep in the cabin, was blown to the bank and, stunned, he ran away wildly, naked and bleeding. When the blast blew out the windows of John Whallen's home, he awoke, saw Cody, and brought him into his home to recover. Subsequent investigation blamed the explosion on a careless engineer.

The Louisville lifesaving station then had no telephone, but a runner relayed news of the explosion some seven miles away. Devan sent the lifeboat with lines and drags to recover the bodies. They found the steamer sunk to its hurricane roof, its pilothouse and forward section a mass of wreckage. Reinforced by firemen and police, the lifesavers searched the wreck for bodies, then dragged the river. But few remains were found.



FRED WILSON, built 1883 at Elizabeth, PA. 174 x 30.8 x 5.4



Splintered remains of FRED WILSON after exploding her boilers May 26, 1904. Her paddlewheel shaft had been fabricated by the famous Krupp plant in Essen, Germany, ordered through James Rees and Sons at the cost of 15 cents per cwt. fob. Both photos from Murphy Library.

SIGNAL FLAGS

Captain E. E. Chapman, assisted by a lieutenant from the district offices—S. B. Winsom in 1905—regularly visited Louisville to inspect the crew, station log, time clocks, and equipment, and to train the crew. They spent hours, for example, teaching them the Myers, or Wig Wag, signaling system. Albert Myers, the Army's signal officer in 1861, developed a system that both Union and Confederate armies used. Flagmen held up flags of red or white with contrasting center on a ten-foot pole. Moving it to the left represented the number one; moving right represented the number two. This conveyed the alphabet through a series of ones and twos: letter A was 2-2; letter B was 2-1-1-2, and so on, a binary system similar to modern computer code. By 1905 the system had been combined with Morse code used in telegraphy. Moving the flag ninety degrees signaled a dot, and moving it one hundred eighty degrees represented a dash. Good flagmen could transmit Morse code visually as fast as sixteen words per minute. No doubt the lifesavers enjoyed learning and transmitting the code. It might have been useful if any riverboat captains had known the code.

In 1906 Captain Chapman, commander of the Ninth District at Buffalo, retired the two Louisville lifeboats built back in 1893. He ordered two new river lifeboat skiffs from Howard boatyard in Jeffersonville and put them in service. The new lifeboats were 25 feet long, 5 feet wide, 15.5 inches

deep, with three pairs of oarlocks. These had oak ribs and floor timbers covered by white pine sides and bottom. Galvanized iron air chambers were installed in both the bow and stern of each skiff for increased buoyancy.

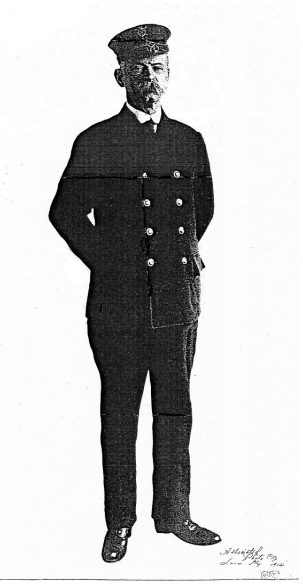
In late 1906 Captain Chapman also visited Howard boatyard to see the gasoline-engine power boats abuilding there and learn if any seemed suitable for use at the Louisville station. None were, but Chapman started the paperwork to place an order for the construction of a motorboat when funding became available.

Newspaper photo showing the original Howard-built lifeboats with the new gasoline-powered boat that took their place. Photos on this page courtesy of Leland Johnson.

A motorboat might have been very useful when a major flood inundated lower Louisville in January 1907. In their rowboats, the lifesavers moved people from flooded homes to shore and rescued families from sinking shantyboats. On January 21, Devan with the two lifeboats escorted Louisville's mayor, police chief, fire chief, and William Haldeman, editor of the Louisville newspaper, on a tour of the flood zone to determine what was needed to provide relief. In following days, the lifesavers took repairmen to repair telephone wires, mail carriers to make deliveries, and physicians to tend to the sick. They delivered food, provisions, and heating coal to more than a thousand flood victims, to "men, women, and children, white and colored," wrote Devan in his log.

A year later, after funding had become available, Captain Chapman placed an order with Howard boatyard for the station's first power boat. Equipped with a small one-cylinder inboard gasoline engine, it was completed in February 1908 and that spring the lifesavers began practicing with their new motorboat. Inexperienced, they soon tore out the clutch and had to return the boat to Howard's for repairs. Yet, they were learning basic engine mechanics, which proved useful on the Fourth of July 1908. The alarm announced a gasoline yacht with two men and two women aboard was floating down into danger near the Middle Chute. Capt. Jack Gillooly, pictured below, took the lifeboat after this gasboat and caught up with it. Tying onto the gasboat, Gillooly and his crew were towing it down the chute when they heard distress cries near Rock Island at Shippingport. Cutting the yacht loose, they raced to the scene and found a boy wallowing in the water, drowning. Gillooly bent over the gunwale, rammed his arm down into the river, caught the boy by the hair, and yanked him up and into the lifeboat. They returned the boy to his friends on the island, then set off like a streak to catch the drifting yacht. When they caught it, they found it had been out of control because its engine had broken down. They soon found the mechanical problem, solved it, started the engine, and took it up the canal to the station, thus completing two different kinds of rescues in one fell swoop.

Later that month, news came that Annabelle Varble, granddaughter of Captain Pink Varble, had drowned while swimming six miles upstream from Louisville. The lifesavers started upriver with their motorboat, loaded with the drag and hooks to find the girl's body. Finding her at last, they brought her to the station for her grieving parents to claim.



Their new motorboat proved very useful for the dragging work, relieving the boatmen of the tedious rowing back and forth to drag the hooks in a selected pattern. But its one-cylinder engine proved underpowered, and Devan arranged with Captain Chapman for the delivery of a more powerful two-cylinder engine with five horsepower—similar to the engines used by Ford in the

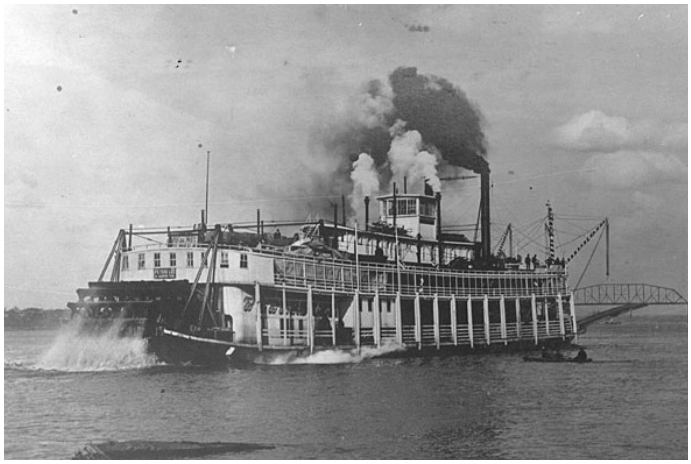
Model T. (Although Evinrude began the production of outboard marine engines in 1909, they were not widely available for a decade.) The lifesavers' mechanical skills had so improved that they were able to remove the one-cylinder engine and install the larger engine on their own without employing mechanics, and soon they were sailing along the river with greater alacrity.

PETERS LEE

Near noon on February 13, 1909, the packet PETERS LEE (4463), one of the largest then plying the Ohio from Cincinnati to Memphis, left the Louisville wharf with twenty-one passengers, five horses, and 360 tons of freight. Steaming upriver, she crossed to the Indiana shore and turned to enter Indian Chute. The river was racing high and as the LEE descended the chute she hit cross currents. Pilots Harvey Brown and Arthur Lyons could not hold her against the current, and the boat sheered toward a railroad bridge pier. Desperately, the pilots, under a double gong, put the wheel hard over to turn her away from the pier and toward the bank.

The station's lookout saw the boat's predicament, gave the alarm, and Devan expressed both lifeboats toward the LEE for the rescue. They dashed halfway across the river before the LEE's captain sounded the distress signal as the boat hit the rocks and stranded. The impact alarmed the passengers, and the lifesavers boarded the steamer quickly to calm their fears. Finding the collision had not stove in her hull, Captain John Flannigan had his crew lower the smokestacks to clear the railroad bridge span near the bank, then ordered full astern in an abortive effort to back the steamer into the channel. A black cloud of smoke and steam exploding from the lowered stacks created the illusion that the boat had caught fire, again frightening the passengers. After this excitement subsided, Gillooly with the lifeboats took the passengers ashore, then ran lines from the bank to the boat to get her landed.

Oddly, the LEE had stranded in the same place the JAMES PARKER had wrecked in 1882, and both were property of the Lee Line packet company. With several lines securing the LEE in position, the captain telephoned New Albany for the harborboat E. T. SLIDER (To663) to bring up a barge. The captain hoped to remove the cargo worth $100,000, mostly whiskey bound for "dry" states in the South, to allow the LEE to rise and float off the rocks. This plan worked well and she got afloat again under her own power. The SLIDER then lashed alongside to help the steamer get down Indian Chute. When signaled by a tap on the steamer's bell, the LEE's crew used axes to cut the lines securing the boat in place, and she spun on down Indian Chute, resuming her voyage to Memphis.



PETERS LEE, built by Howard 1899 for Lee Line, Memphis-St. Louis trade. 220 x 42 x 7, engines 18s with 8-ft. stroke. In 1904 Lee Line entered her in Cincinnati-Memphis run and seven years later she unloaded the first bales of cotton seen in Louisville for many a year. Both photos from Murphy Library.

E. T. SLIDER and barge offloaded LEE's whiskey barrels

Many dreams were dashed on the Falls over the years. The Indiana volunteer lifesavers came to grief there. So did many other folks, although the toll would have been atrocious without the work of the gallant lifesavers. The lifesavers entered the 20th century, however, with optimism. They received a new floating station, new lifeboats, and a new motorboat. And they earned plaudits near and far for their useful public service.

S&D Recipient of Ed Mueller's Steamboat Photo Collection

Last fall FedEx delivered two shipments to Dubuque from Jacksonville, FL. Inside the first package were hundreds of photographic negatives, and a week later two large cartons arrived containing eleven thick three-ring binders. Inside each binder's clear plastic sleeves were 8x10 prints of all the negatives in Ed Mueller's steamboat photo collection.

Included with the shipment was a most generous and gracious letter in which Ed wrote: "I am giving some items to S&D. If you can't use them, perhaps you could get them to Murphy Library in La Crosse, as I'm sure you get there now and then. They are:

21 negatives of Tennessee River vessels/scenes
92 negatives of Ohio River steamboats/scenes
171 negatives of Mississippi River steamboats

"Also you will find 92 photos from William Tippett, 25 photos by Thain White of Montana, 25 photos from Lin Caufield (official photographer for BELLE OF LOUISVILLE), 145 photos as described in the handwritten copies from C.W. Stoll negatives, as well as many photos described in the typed and otherwise handwritten copies from C.W. estimated at about 100 photos, 51 photos from Don Rehm negatives, and 14 photos from Robert Rowe negatives of Kentucky area."

Ed had also written to alert your editor that he would be in Prairie du Chien, WI to dedicate a model of the DELTA QUEEN in memory of his late sister-in-law Helen Valley, long a trustee of the Fort Crawford Museum there. Both of us had hoped we could meet that day, but as circumstances turned out, it was not to be. A most unfortunate situation, as we had wanted to express our thanks to Ed in person for his generous gift to S&D.

S&D's resident model-builder, artist and historian John Fryant was granted a "sabbatical" this issue as reward for his good and faithful service in writing his regular column "Small Stacks." Since Carl Henry's story of the restored steamboat models at Winona is featured in this issue, we felt John deserved a break. As luck would have it, he had sent a photo snapped at Louisville during the DQ/BELLE race in April 1968, picturing (L to R) John, Ed Mueller, Bert Fenn, Capt. Bill Tippett, and Roy Barkhau. We print it here in honor of a group of long-standing and outstanding S&Ders.

At our September Annual meeting, Board member Michael Jones shared some of his steamboat "treasures" with your editor. One of those, which Mike identified as among his favorites, is this Detroit Publishing Company post card view picturing the "Coaling of a River Packet Under Way, Mississippi River." We are aware that this practice was common on the Upper Miss and also occurred during the LEE/NATCHEZ race, but we wonder just how common it was on the Lower.

Vintage Steamboat Models Restored

by Carl Henry

Growing up in the small river community of Trempealeau, WI, Fred Beseler would watch the riverboats--paddlewheel excursion boats and towboats--pass so near the Wisconsin shore that they were almost close enough to touch. This left a lasting impression on a young boy. He also remembers tagging along with his grandfather on trips to the Winona (MN) County Historical Society. On one of those trips, he remembers seeing a steamboat model display that also left a big impression, a group of home-built models that would, unbeknownst to the young boy, come back into his life many years later.

Fast forward several decades and Fred, 56, is living in La Crosse, WI, married and with three grown children and a long and successful career as a writer and editor at Trane Company there. He was a model builder himself now, a hobby that had become a lifelong passion along with his interest in history. He had recently won an award for one of his WWII models that was built entirely from paper.

So when Fred's wife Jane, Director of Development at La Crosse County Historical Society, mentioned that their organization wanted to do a steamboat exhibit, Fred's mind wandered back to the steamboat models he had seen as a young boy. A member of both the La Crosse and Winona Historical Societies, Beseler inquired if those old models might still be around somewhere.

Sure enough, several old steamboat models were discovered in a back storeroom of the Winona County Historical Society, unprotected and in various states of disrepair and with broken pieces. Beseler offered to clean them up and fix the broken pieces if they could go on display at the Historical Society. "They thought about it for about 5 seconds," Beseler says. "Then they said, 'You've got a deal.' "

So Beseler set about meticulously cleaning and reconstructing, painting and gluing to repair the 60 year old models. A student of history, Fred also started researching the original steamboats, as well as the model builder himself, to learn as much as he could about their origins. Beseler searched through databases of old newspaper clippings and articles for the information he sought, and admits that researching the boats was just as much fun as restoring the models, and even turned up a few surprises.

Most of the models were built in the 1940s. The builder of the models was a man named Jacob (Jake) Mathias (1900-1976), described in a 1949 *Winona Republican Herald* newspaper clipping as "an old-time riverman from Wabasha (MN)."

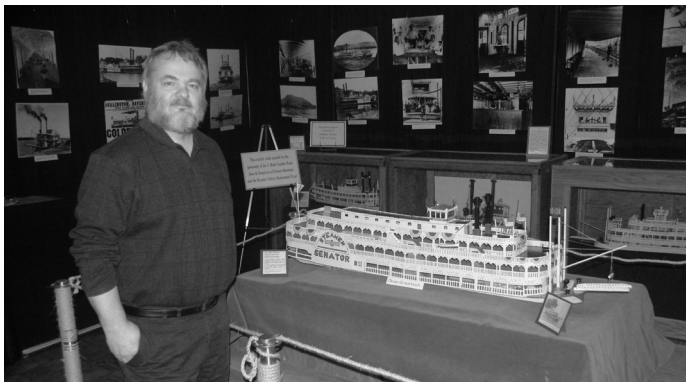
The models themselves are not precise duplications of the steamboats in proportion, craftsmanship or detail, from a modeling point of view. More aptly viewed as "folk art," their primary construction is of available materials, mainly cardstock and thin wood, but Fred also found ample use of the backs of cereal boxes and cigarette cartons. Yet, this crudeness does not diminish their appeal, and they are no less impressive. Indeed, the models are accurate representations of their full-size counterparts in both styling and overall proportion, and considering that Mathias was probably working only from memory, and possibly photographs, makes it all the more impressive.

In the present display of Mathias models at La Crosse are several excursion boats & packets, even a rafter, that would have been familiar sights for many years on the Upper Mississippi River--boats like the SENATOR, SIDNEY, G.W. HILL, RED WING, HELEN BLAIR and FREDERICK WEYERHAUSER. Beseler has three more boats in his basement that he is still working on, the WASHINGTON, WONDERLAND (a theatre boat) and J.S. "DELUXE". He knows of two other Mathias models, the ECLIPSE, which is in Wabasha, MN, and the VERNIE MAC in Winona, MN. Others mentioned or shown in old newspaper stories include the FRONTENAC, IDEAL, W.J. YOUNG, MARQUETTE and the

dance barge MISSISSIPPI, their whereabouts and status unknown. In all Beseler believes there may be seventeen or eighteen Mathias models "out there somewhere" according to his research.

And the surprise? One of the models he restored, the G.W. HILL, was discovered a little closer to home than the others. "We bought it at a rummage sale in Winona decades ago," says Beseler. Not realizing it was a Jacob Mathias-built model or part of the display he had originally seen as a child, it became a toy for their children. "All of our kids played with it," his wife Jane says. "It's remarkable that it didn't get destroyed. It's been in our closet for 20 years." And Beseler's research turned up a family member, a great uncle, who had worked aboard the boat. "He was a soda jerk aboard the G.W. HILL in 1916," says Beseler proudly. This uncle, Maurice C. Howard of Winona, went on to graduate from Harvard Business School in 1923 and retired as vice president of the South Bend Lathe Co. in the 1960s. In the 1950s the Winona County Historical Society was interested in purchasing a steamboat for display in Winona, and Mr. Howard put them in touch with his friend Julius Wilkie. Wilkie had always been interested in steam engines, and underwrote the purchase of the steam towboat JAMES P. PEARSON (T1336) which was renamed JULIUS C. WILKIE, a prominent feature at Winona's Levee Park for many years.

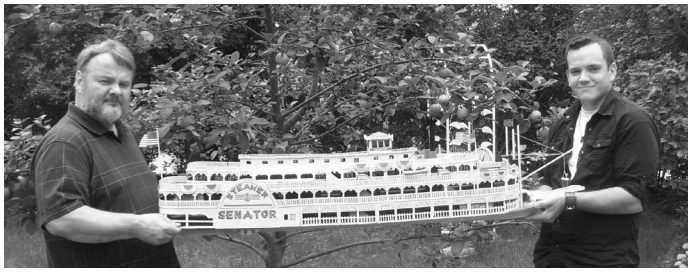
The steamboat model display was featured in the La Crosse County Historical Society's Swarthout Museum, located at the Public Library in downtown La Crosse, through May 2011. Later that June, the display moved to the Winona County Historical Society in time for Winona's Steamboat Days celebration which began June 15.



Fred Beseler with restored model of Streckfus sidewheeler SENATOR, the former SAINT PAUL. Carl Henry photos.

Jake Mathias, ca. 1950s with his models of CHAPERON and FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION showboat. Although these "folk art" models lack the painstaking detail and precision of the model builder's art exhibited by John Fryant and others, they faithfully represent river people's fascination with preserving the boats they saw and worked on during the days when steamboats still plied the rivers.

Winona Republican Herald ***photo announcing a 1949 Winona Steamboat Days "exhibit of model old-time river steamboats in the lobby of First National Bank. On the left is RED WING, at center is FRONTENAC, and on right is IDEAL. Also on exhibit are W. J. YOUNG and MARQUETTE and dance barge MISSISSIPPI." Models were by Mathias, and their admirer is Miss Barbara Kalmes. We trust our readers' attention was first drawn to the boats, of course.***



Side view of SENATOR after Fred Beseler's restoration.

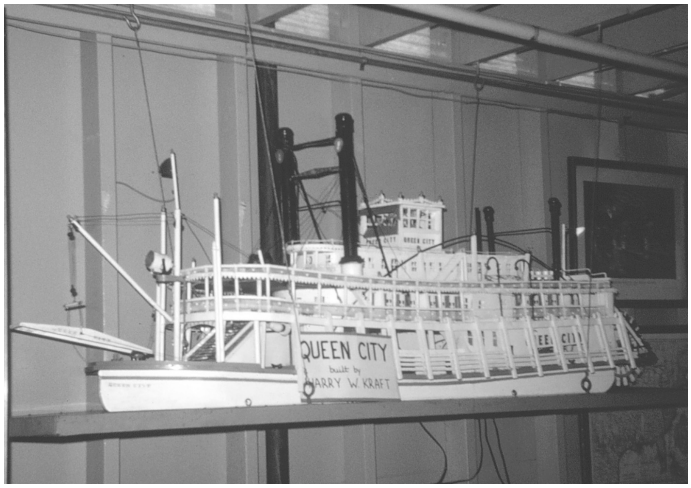
Shown below are photos of Mathias' Streckfus models displayed in 1968 in the cabin of JULIUS C. WILKIE at Winona. Both the models and the WILKIE are long gone from Winona's Levee Park.

J. S. DELUXE, flagship of Streckfus excursion fleet 1919-1934.

Mississippi and Ohio River sternwheeler WASHINGTON.

SENATOR in her "younger days" at Winona.

Unidentified steamer in Mathias' collection aboard WILKIE.



One non-Mathias model on display is Ohio River's famed QUEEN CITY, constructed by Harry Kraft. Unfortunately we have no information about Mr. Kraft and hope our readers will come to the rescue. All photos on this page are from editor's collection.

It's a Small World After All

When the phone bell rang one day last spring, it was Carl Henry on the line about a story he was putting together for the REFLECTOR. As he shared some of the details, another faint bell started to jingle in your editor's memory. During the DQ's St. Paul trip back in September 1968, he recalled a shorestop at Winona and pictures that were snapped that afternoon of some steamboat models by an unknown model builder. A few more minutes' conversation with Carl confirmed that the boats in his story were those same ones. Then Carl mentioned they were originally built by a Wabasha riverman named Jake Mathias. Well now, hold on just a minute. Some years ago Capt. Doc Hawley sent several pictures of a model of the AVALON he had built, and on the back side of one of the photos was a note that this hull had been provided by a friend from Wabasha. Could that be the same model builder?

"Yep," said Doc later that day when he picked up on the other end of the line, "same guy." Turns out Mathias had an unfinished model of the G. W. HILL he had started back in the late forties or fifties. But he gave it to the AVALON's young Mate who tore it down to the hull and rebuilt her as the AVALON ca. 1948. Doc displayed that model at his house in Charleston for some years, until it found a new home with Jeff Spear in Marietta. Your editor and son had the good fortune to see Doc's model for the first time several years ago while visiting Jeff.

Capt. Hawley recalled that Jake always came down to the boat whenever the AVALON was in Wabasha, and that he was a well-known figure around town and had a reputation as a handyman. He also thought that one of Jake's parents was of native American descent. During the AVALON's stop there in 1954, Jake brought a big old steam whistle down to the boat and asked Capt. Wagner if he'd hook her up and blow it. If you'll look on page 90 of *Moonlite at 8:30*, you'll see the dubious results of that whistle blow. Although the book suggests the tooter may have come from a towboat, Doc referred to the incident as "the time we blew that old sawmill whistle of Jake's."

***AVALON** model built by Captain Hawley on the hull of Jake Mathias' earlier G. W. HILL. Editor's collection.*

Historic 1908 SPRAGUE Model on Display at Dubuque

One hundred years after it was first crafted by shipwrights at the famous Elizabeth, PA Marine Ways, a globe-trotting model of the steam towboat SPRAGUE has returned to the original site where the actual steamboat was built in 1902. John William Lynch of Elizabeth, PA was employed at the boatyard, and in 1908 he and several other men were engaged in building some models for an upcoming exhibition. After acquiring his journal with entries from 1885 through 1948, Lynch's great granddaughter discovered a notation which put her on a long search to track down that model. Her great grandfather wrote: "The minature 1/2 inch scale model barges -- coal boats -- coal barges -- coal flats -- coal boat bottoms -- a replica of the Str. SPRAGUE and a miniature bridge were built at the Elizabeth Marine Ways August 1908. These were first on exhibition at the Pittsburgh Exposition 1908-09. The barges and other coal craft were hitched into the Str. SPRAGUE representing the largest tow that ever went down the Ohio River. They were exhibited in a large shallow tank of water. They were all loaded with coal and passing under the bridge. This display was put on by The Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company and were installed, ready for public inspection, by Jno Wiegle and Jno Morgan and myself. Later they were exhibited in Europe, London, Paris and Rome, after which they came back to the Ways. The bridge and coal craft are still at the Ways, 1926. The Str. SPRAGUE is in the offices of Pittsburgh Coal Company, Oliver Building, Pittsburgh."

The giant 40-foot diameter sternwheel on the 1908 scale model

Capt. Fred Way and Woody Rutter shared a few more details in the *Steam Towboat Directory*: "The SPRAGUE was reproduced with a revolving paddlewheel and electric lights and was hitched to 56 minature coalboats loaded with coal. The whole of the exhibit was contained in a tank 50 x 21 feet, filled with water, with a model of the Cairo, IL bridge featured. Later this model was on exhibit at the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, for a number of years into the early 1930s."

In 1998, the owner of a Pittsburgh museum named The Mattress Factory acquired it from Carnegie Museum after it was auctioned off following a fire that burned through the model's roof. Although it was this museum's intention to restore the model to its original condition, they eventually sold it to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium at Dubuque in 2008. Two years later, the SPRAGUE became the feature exhibit at the entrance to the Fred Woodward Riverboat Museum there. The museum is housed in the former Burlington Freight House on the banks of the Ice Harbor, not more than a stone's throw from the Iowa Iron Works' marine ways where the actual steamer was built in 1902.

The model is a whopping 13 feet 3 inches long by 31 1/2 inches wide, and towers 20 inches from the bottom of her hull to the top of the pilothouse.

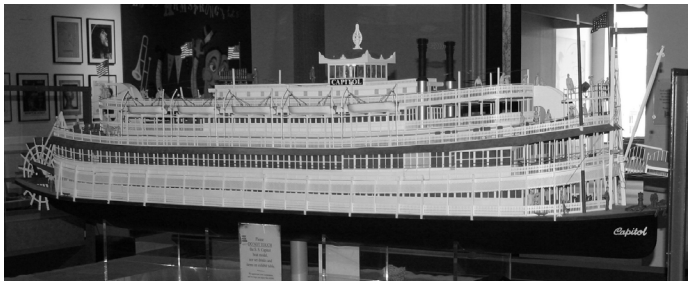
Views of Elizabeth Marine Way model of SPRAGUE are from editor's collection. Fire damage appears on skylight roof.

Steamer CAPITOL Model Anchors Exhibits at Davenport's River Music Experience

Before leaving the subject of steamboat models, we move downriver from Dubuque to Davenport and the exhibits at River Music Experience. Founded in 2004, RME began as a museum celebrating music of the river and the Quad Cities' musical heritage, but has of late expanded to include a live music venue, recording studio, and programming to provide instrumental music lessons.

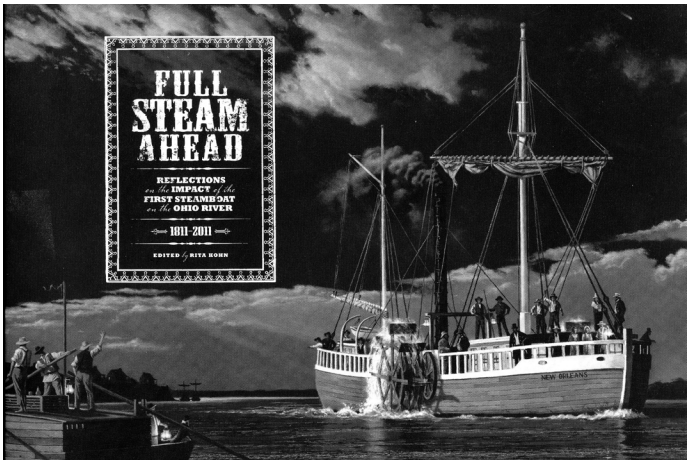
The centerpiece of the second floor exhibit area is a 1/24th scale model of the Streckfus excursion steamer CAPITOL, a boat well-known at Davenport since her construction there in 1919-20 (see March 2011 REFLECTOR).

The model, 128 1/4 inches long and 25 1/4 inches wide, was built by Scale Models Unlimited of Memphis. Included with the model are several small speakers for broadcasting calliope recordings. Constructed of laser-cut wood, metal and acrylic, it was fitted with fiber optic lighting for the model's interior. Cost for the CAD design, construction, delivery and installation, which spanned seven months from November 2003 to June 2004, was $45,000. Project manager was Cai Nguyen and consultant was Henry Ellis, who had previously been consultant on the snagboat model built for the Mississippi River Museum in Tunica, MS.



CAPITOL model in Davenport. Photos courtesy of Ellis Kell.

Full Steam Ahead
A Fitting Tribute to Steamboat Bicentennial



In her Introduction to this comprehensive and well-written collection of essays, editor Rita Kohn writes: "*Full Steam Ahead* is not intended as a definitive treatise for scholars. Rather, it taps into our core humanity and offers a mix of analytical, descriptive, historical and narrative approaches for the general reader by an eclectic group. Because their lives are tied to the river, they offer personal connections to and perspectives on an event of two hundred years ago. Their ways of expressing themselves differ, from blunt to chatty to factual.

"Ohio River historian Leland L. Johnson brings us on board Roosevelt's newly designed vessel in 'Harbinger of Revolution.' Captain Alan L. Bates shares his knowledge and experiences with building steamboats in 'Structural Evolution of the Western Rivers Steamboat' [sadly for us, among the last articles from Alan's pen to be published]. Steamboat historian Jack E. Custer takes us into the generation following the steamboat with an overview of steam-powered vessels in 'A Synoptic History of Towboating and Its Origins' [the topic of his well-received talk at last spring's MOR Chapter meeting of S&D]. Social historian Rick Bell follows with an analysis of why one town flourishes and another fails in 'The Era of Town Building Below the Falls.' Cultural historian Thomas C. Buchanan analyzes the effects of the steamboat on nineteenth-century African American and American Indian populations in 'Omen of Evil: Steamboats and The Colonization of the Ohio River Valley.' Joe William Trotter, Jr., historian of the African American experience, examines 'The Steamboat and Black Urban Life in the Ohio Valley.'

"Sandra M. Custer taps into her family's steamboat piloting heritage for a brief overview of 'Steamboat Music.' Gerald W. Sutphin digs into his years of service with the Army Corps of Engineers for a detailed description of changes wrought for steam-powered boats in 'The Steamboat NEW ORLEANS and Its Impact on Navigation on Ohio River Tributaries.' Robert Willis likewise utilizes his Army Corps of Engineers tenure to examine the Ohio River's place within the world's rivers for 'The Ohio River: A World-Class Inland Waterway.' Kenneth A. Wheeler shares his entrepreneurial experise for the forward-looking 'Afterword: The River Today and Tomorrow.' CEO Linda Harris and education coordinator Kadie Engstrom of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE highlight the boat in 'BELLE OF LOUISVILLE: Sole Survivor of the Pioneering NEW ORLEANS.' The text closes with an annotated bibliography describing the treasure trove of materials at Hanover, compiled by archivist Douglas Denne and librarian Katherine McCardwell."

Several of these essayists are well-known to S&Ders and readers of the REFLECTOR. Also joining those familiar names is that of Chuck Parrish, who wrote the book's Preface. This reviewer enjoyed the broad range of materials and styles that shine through in these pages, and would recommend it as containing "something for everyone" who is interested in the Ohio River, steamboating, or the changes this event brought about for the people along its banks.

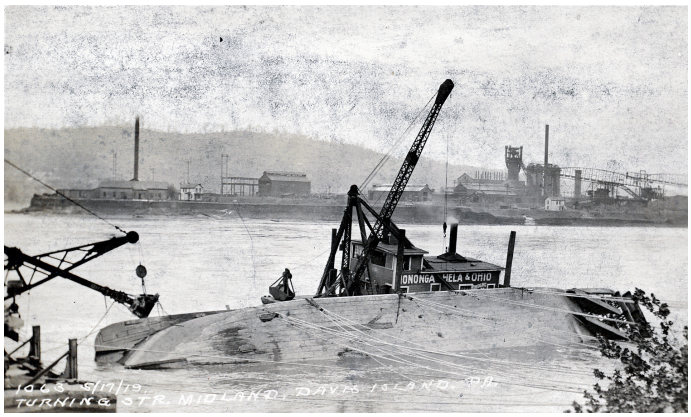
Full Steam Ahead: Reflections on the Impact of the First Steamboat on the Ohio River, 1811-2011 is published by Indiana Historical Society Press with the support of the Rivers Institute of Hanover College. Its 240 pages are generously illustrated with black-and-white photographs and drawings. The book retails for $19.95.

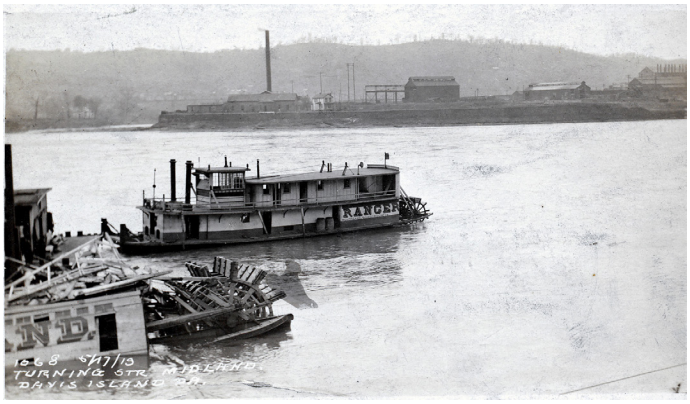
It may be ordered via telephone at **1-800-447-1830** or online at **http://shop.indianahistory.org**

Righting the MIDLAND

The December 1974 REFLECTOR shows a photo of the bottom side of the overturned steamer MIDLAND with the caption: "Crucible Steel Company's towboat MIDLAND speared a mooring pin on the lower guide wall at old Davis Island Dam, West Bellevue, PA on the Ohio River, on May 11, 1919. In the photograph you can see the ripped-off bottom plank as she lies there bottom-up. When the river fell, she was repaired and turned right side up, rebuilt, and ran many years after." That view depicts the boat in a very sorry state indeed.

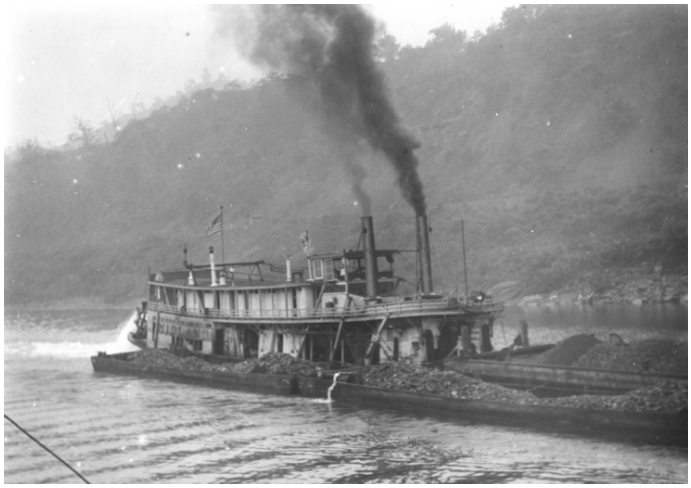
Some thirty-seven years after that picture appeared in these pages, S&D was recipient of the outstanding river collection of Capt. Charles E. Ritts, Sr., as reported in last year's September issue. And there, tucked away among many artifacts and documents, was a group of ten post card views showing the righting of the MIDLAND on May 17. We are now pleased to show you "the rest of the story" in the photos that follow.





In the bottom right photo on page 34 Capt. Ritts, Superintendent of Transportation for Crucible Steel Company, stands on the side of main deck bulkhead with derby, back to camera. The second photo on this page shows the steamer CRUCIBLE in the background after the MIDLAND has been righted, while the RANGER appears in the photo which follows. The final view pictures the RANGER and ATHA in background. Notice the pilotwheel still standing amid the wreckage where the pilothouse once stood. The bell pulls pictured on page 7 in the September 2011 issue were made in 1864 and served on the steamers BOB CONNELL (T0280) from 1864-1901, on the ELEANOR (T0700) from 1901-1912, and then on the MIDLAND after the ELEANOR was sold to Crucible Steel in 1912 and renamed. They would have been in use when this accident occurred. The steamer ATHA (T0173) shown in the last photo was renamed REZISTAL (T2155) in 1938, and Capt. Wallace Smith swapped REZISTAL's bell pulls for those on the MIDLAND shortly after.

Crucible's MIDLAND, originally ELEANOR, was built in 1901 at Brownsville, PA at the Axton Yard by Capt. Bert Gribble with a hull measuring 117 x 23 x 3.8. Her engines were 14's with a 4 1/2-ft. stroke. She towed coal in the Monongahela pools for Clyde Coal Co. and later for Lewis Pope & Sons of Parkersburg, WV. Capt. Fred Way notes that "some of the best descriptions of towboat operations on the Monongahela are found in several articles by Jacob A. Yonker, fireman on the ELEANOR, which appeared in *The Waterways Journal* 1942-47." After the boat's sale to Crucible in December 1912, her master was Capt. John H. Hudson. Once raised, the MIDLAND continued towing and was completely rebuilt about 1929, but never ran much after that.



"Reflections from Our Readers" continued from page 3.

Clinton Laird writes: "I am trying to locate information about John Sherman Chapman who died in 1865 in a boiler explosion. It is said he was a steamship captain, but most likely a steamboat officer or crew member. I was checking the census and found John Chapman living in St. Louis in 1850 where he is listed as a 'boatman.' Then in 1860 in St. Louis he is a 'ship carpenter.' Not found in 1870. I'm wondering if maybe he was crew rather than captain and perhaps that is why I cannot find him."

After following several leads, Clinton turned up further evidence that his ancestor was indeed a pilot, licensed Cincinnati to St. Louis beginning in 1852. At that point, we suggested he speak with Pott Library in St. Louis and the Cincinnati Public Library. In tracking down further information for steamboats destroyed by boiler explosion in 1865, a short list contained the famous SULTANA disaster (where the research in Jerry O. Potter's *The SULTANA Tragedy* contained no evidence of a John Chapman aboard as either passenger or crew). Other 1865 possibilities included the ECLIPSE which exploded her boilers on Tennessee River at Johnsonville; BURD LEVI at West Franklin, IN; and ARGOSY NO. 3 at Rono, IN. Unfortunately, none of the contemporary accounts of these steamboat boiler explosions list a John Chapman as casualty. Clinton still has one lead to follow up with a distant relative who, interestingly, also bears the name John S. Chapman. We haven't yet heard whether this has panned out, so invite any of our readers who might provide assistance to contact Mr. Laird at clinton_laird@yahoo.com

Tom McNamara writes: "Kudos on the latest edition. The first person accounts about the ADMIRAL and MQ are great. A plus is knowing some of those who were commenting. Thought you might want to see this -- quite interesting."

Tom sends us information about Cincinnati Public Library's upcoming events commemorating the record 1937 Flood. On January 28, 2012, the Library hosted a talk by Betty Ann Smiddy, author of *Cincinnati's Great Disasters*, an exhibit titled "1937 Flood: River Still Rising," and an opportunity for Cincinnatians to have their contemporary scrapbooks of the flood scanned into the Library's website. During the entire month of January, the Library conducted oral history interviews as well. Just before the REFLECTOR went to press, we also received an e-mail from Yvonne Knight at Howard Steamboat Museum announcing their February 26 "Great Ohio River Valley Flood of 1937" presentation by Rick Bell, author of *The Great Flood of 1937, Rising Waters -- Soaring Spirits*. The REFLECTOR thanks Tom for keeping us posted with *Cincinnati Enquirer* articles about the future of the MIKE FINK riverboat restaurant in Covington and also with an extremely interesting story which predicts an important role over the next three decades for the Ohio River freight corridor through the Greater Cincinnati area. Dramatic increases of up to 56% in the volume of freight that will be moving through this area are anticipated with the coming expansion of the Panama Canal.

Daniel McCay writes: "I'm enclosing some photos and clippings of my grandfather and great grandfather, both of whom worked on the river. I'm also looking forward to the BELLE's 100th Birthday interview with S&D REFLECTOR."

Daniel sends some family photos and mementoes of Capts. Horace E. Speck Sr., and Horace Speck, Jr. which we hope to share in a future issue. We met Daniel two summers ago at Howard Steamboat Museum, where he displayed three huge, painstakingly documented scrapbook albums detailing the story of the BELLE from 1962 to the present day. It looked to us like a story there worth reporting, and one we will tell in this magazine in conjunction with the BELLE's centennial observation in 2014. To say that Daniel has a passion for the historic sternwheeler is to state the obvious. Like him, we too hope to gather with all her friends on October 18, 2014, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the steamboat. Linda Harris tells us that plans for that grand event are already on the drawing board, and will include a few surprises. We'll keep you posted as the details are released.

Final Crossings

Capt. Alan Bates

Alan Lawrence Bates, 88, passed away early on the morning of January 1, 2012, at the home of his daughter Barbara in Louisville. Born on June 6, 1923, Alan had early memories of the excursion steamer AMERICA, initiating a lifelong love of steamboats and the river. A man of multiple talents and far-ranging interests, the river community is both saddened at this loss and grateful for the imprint of his life and work in preserving the steamboating tradition in this country.

Alan is survived by his wife of 67 years, the former Rita Aschbacher; and by daughters Patricia Cooley, Catherine (Mark) Atcher, Barbara (Steve) Koehler, and son Lawrence; a sister Dorothy Cheney; eight grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Alan's remains were cremated, with arrangements made by Highlands Funeral Home of Louisville. A celebration of Alan's life will be hosted dockside aboard the steamer BELLE OF LOUISVILLE from 4 – 7 p.m. on June 2, 2012. Granddaughter Vicky Nugent requests that those who are able to attend the gathering aboard the BELLE contact her at **victoria.nugent@louisville.edu**

Pictured on the lazy bench of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE in September 1972 are (L to R): Bert Fenn, Ruth Ferris, Capt. Doc Hawley, and Alan Bates. Keith Norrington photo.

Those who had the privilege of knowing Alan need not read any further, as you already know the futility of trying to pin him down with words on paper. On the eve of his reception of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Rivers Hall of Fame in April 2010, Alan spoke his mind to your editor about this very thing, cautioning: "A lot of weird stuff has been written about me. I seem to be enough of an individualist to excite such writing. Certainly my erratic career would tend to confuse them. Most know nothing of my efforts at land architecture, construction and music. Some assume I hold a degree. I do not. The list of things that I am not is far longer than the total of what I am. As a dedicated screwball, I have few peers. It is my intention to have a grand final party after I die in which my friends can get together and swap lies about me for one last time."

Alan continued: "Here is but one example. I worked in one dance band for about seventeen years. The guy who stood next to me in the trumpet section was a witty sonuvagun. One night I was having a bad time of it (as we musicians say, I couldn't blow my nose and have it come out right!), and I disgustedly told him, 'I'm going to sell this damned horn and quit.' He replied, 'You can't do that!' I came back, 'Why the hell not?' He asked, 'Who'd buy a one-octave trumpet?' We both laughed and went back to work, but the story made the rounds in every band in Louisville and is still being told."

For any of our readers who did not know Alan Bates, what follows is an attempt to share some facts and details of his life – offered with the best of intentions and yet mindful that perhaps even now Alan is cringing at this effort. After all, he once reminded your editor in the aftermath of a major error in editing the REFLECTOR, "Good God, man, what were you thinking?"

Alan Bates was born in Louisville when steamboats were making their swansong on the Ohio River. But fortunately for today's generation of Americans, he would play an important part in preserving the story of steamboating through his writing and drawing, and especially in his creation of the last authentic and classic example of Western Rivers-style steamboat in America.

With a smile and glint in his eye, Alan confessed that his mother attributed his fascination with steamboats to the haunting sound of the excursion steamer HOMER SMITH's whistle that lingered with her before he was born. And his days as a young boy riding the sidewheeler AMERICA to Louisville's Rose Island Park further sealed his love for this uniquely American form of river transport.

As a teenager, Alan played trumpet in a house band at a Louisville roadhouse. Seated next to him on the bandstand was trombonist George W. McBride, whose father Capt. Leo "Birch" McBride operated a local harbor service and towing firm. In August 1941 "Batesy" landed his first river job as deckhand for Capt. McBride as part of the crew which brought the steamers SARAH and WILLIAM EDENBORN up the Mississippi and Ohio to Harrod's Creek above Louisville. That memorable trip is preserved in Alan's article "Dept. of Fuller Explanation" in the December 1972 REFLECTOR, and was the centerpiece of a talk he gave at Howard Steamboat Museum in 2009. The following year Alan decked for Capt. McBride on the KONGO, but soon left to serve in the Army during World War II (which included duties as a cartographer). In 1944 he married Rita Aschbacher, with whom he celebrated 67 years of married life in July 2011.

Although Alan continued to do some relief work for McBride after the War, his employment in the construction trade and as a draftsman laid the foundation for his professional career as a residential architect. A self taught person with an inquisitive nature, tremendous capacity for learning, and a strong, independent work ethic, Alan was the only licensed architect in the state of Kentucky who was not a college graduate.

Then an article by Capt. Fred Way in a 1951 issue of *Ships and the Sea* magazine reconnected Alan with the river and steamboating in a way that would benefit future generations of steamboat fans. In that article, Capt. Fred lamented the lack of any steamboat plans for model builders. Alan decided to fill that void by drawing a set of the AMERICA, the excursion boat of his youth. An unbelievably good stroke of fate brought Alan to the home of Capt. Jim Howard of the famed Howard Shipyards in Jeffersonville. Capt. Jim had been at the forefront of building these classic steamboats and possessed a wealth of practical knowledge that was becoming extinct. During many visits, Alan learned the fundamentals of steamboat construction and design from a master of the trade, and thus began "my matriculation and introduction into naval architecture – an extremely rare privilege." In 1953 he redrew his plans for the INDIANA using that new-found expertise. Those drawings were the first of a set of twelve different steamboats to come from Alan's drawing board, and as a result he became well-known in river circles as *the* man to see about what a Western Rivers steamboat looked like and how it was designed and built.

Capts. Bates and Hawley at the Howard Steamboat Museum book signing of* Moonlite *at 8:30, April 14, 1994. Photo courtesy of Judy Patsch.

In 1962 the old excursion steamer AVALON was sold at auction to Louisville and Jefferson County, and it was to Alan that the renovation and resurrection of the 48-year old veteran sternwheeler was entrusted. He designed and rebuilt the fancy dome that had once crowned her pilothouse, and added elegant feather-topped smokestacks and graceful cabin arches on the ballroom deck. On October 14, 1962, Alan's wife Rita rechristened the boat BELLE OF LOUISVILLE. At the suggestion of her Master, Capt. Paul Underwood, Alan earned his Mate's license and served as her mate for the next three seasons. Several years later, he also became a licensed Master of inland steam and motor vessels.

By 1973, Wilbur Dow had decided to enter the steamboat excursion business in New Orleans

harbor. Being dissuaded from trying to convert the narrow pool towboat CLAIRTON into an excursion vessel, Mr. Dow commissioned Alan to design a brand new steamboat. After working sixteen hour days for three straight months, he completed the plans for the steamer NATCHEZ. Alan designed her complete, except for the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning. After this experience, he embarked on a commitment to study naval architecture, and began to teach himself the principles of that profession using the Handbook of Marine Engineering. In the years that followed, he was commissioned to design a second steamboat, the CHAUTAUQUA BELLE for Lake Chautauqua in western New York State. All told, Alan designed thirty-two excursion and work boats, and served as consultant on the steamboat MISSISSIPPI QUEEN in Holland, a unique design in that the boat can literally be "folded down" to pass beneath bridges having a mere twenty-nine feet of vertical clearance.

In addition to Alan's river career, he was one of the founders of Howard Steamboat Museum and served as its first president. He also served on the research and nominating committee of the National Rivers Hall of Fame to assist in their selection of nominees. Alan was a frequent contributor to the REFLECTOR and achieved the monumental task of compiling eight of the nine indexes to these volumes. But his dedication to preserving the story of steamboating extended far beyond his involvement in these organizations.

Alan was a featured speaker at many meetings and conventions, sharing his passion and knowledge in an easy and inviting manner, with generous touches of humor. In addition to being a sought-after speaker, Alan was also a gifted writer. He authored nine books, including two volumes which are probably the most authoritative references on steamboats available today: *The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopedium* and *The Western Rivers Engineroom Cyclopedium.* With Capt. Doc Hawley, Alan also co-authored *Moonlite at 8:30*, the definitive story of excursion steamboating in America. Following Jim Swift's passing, Alan graciously assumed writing *The Waterways Journal's* Old Boat column.

And just when you thought you knew Alan's many talents, he surprised you. During a July 2009 talk at Howard Steamboat Museum, he shared several other glimpses of his creativity in painting and wood working. But perhaps the greatest surprise came at the end of his talk, when he stepped up to play the alpenhorn for his audience – no mean feat!

Alan once confessed, "I think I've been a failure as a riverman – and I blame it on the fact that I despise coffee." Well, notwithstanding this aversion, we take exception to Alan's self-assessment. He will be remembered as a creative and consummate riverman, and as one of the finest modern-day examples of a true Renaissance Man that it has been our privilege to know. But even more, Alan will be held in our hearts and memories as a supreme example of an individualist, truly his own man. That, in the end, is perhaps his greatest legacy, and all who knew Alan are immeasurably richer for having been touched by his life, his work, and his indomitable spirit.

Chief Scotty Viegas, Alan, and Kenny Howe on engineroom guard of NATCHEZ at Louisville, November 2005.

Back Cover

Capt. Clarke Hawley sends the photo tribute on our back cover with this note:

"In this view the NATCHEZ is saluting her architect/designer Capt. Alan Bates. Capt. Don Houghton has the flags at half-staff and the calliope, with Debbie Fagnano at the keyboard, playing "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" and "Didn't He Ramble." Thanks be to Captains Wilbur and Bill Dow for choosing the right man, Alan Bates, to design this wonderful and beautiful steamer."

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