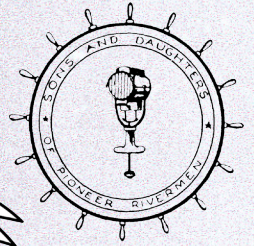


# S & D

# REFLECTOR

*Fifty 50 Years*

Published by Sons and Daughters  
of Pioneer Rivermen



Vol. 50, No. 2

Marietta, Ohio

June 2013



The Battle of Buffington Island  
1811-1820 Western Rivers Steamboat Index  
GORDON GREENE Spring Pilgrimage Cruise



## Front Cover

It's Independence Day 1924 on the Great Kanawha River at Point Pleasant, WV. The steamer VALLEY BELLE (5534) is about to enter the Ohio as this unidentified young lady has set aside her newspaper to watch the scene from her veranda, which is suitably bedecked with flags and bunting for the holiday celebration. VALLEY BELLE was built at Harmar, OH in 1883, measuring 127 x 22.4 x 3.4. Originally operating in the Muskingum River trade between Marietta and Beverly, she ran for 60 years - 34 as a packet and another 26 as a towboat - including stints on the Ohio and Upper Kanawha. *Photo from the steamboat photo collection of G. W. "Jerry" Sutphin.*



Shown above and below left are Dick's postcards of this event. With today's woes at the USPS causing delays in the timely delivery of the REFLECTOR, our members would undoubtedly welcome the arrival of the mail packet LADY GRACE at their landing! Dick also included some bonus views of Capt. Way's graceful minipacket which we share with you.



## Reflections from Our Readers

Dick Rutter writes: "It has been fifty years since Fred Way's LADY GRACE carried U.S. Mail along the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers as part of West Virginia's 100th anniversary of statehood. That occurred in June 1963, and I bet everybody - except me - has forgotten about it! Later that summer, as deckhand, I helped grandad take her from Charleston, WV to Sewickley, PA - back home after all the festivities were over. Attached are a few photos, including front and back of LADY GRACE's cancellation stamp on special postcards issued for the occasion."



LADY GRACE ready to launch in spring 1957.



Underway with the U. S. mail, June 1963.

### POST CARD

Greetings: This post card was carried aboard the LADY GRACE from Wheeling to Charleston, W. Va., June 20-24, 1963, by authority of the U. S. Post Office Department, Washington, D. C. and is sent to you with the best wishes of your organization, Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen.



Capt. Mrs. J. W. Rutter,  
89 Paris St.,  
Canal Winchester,  
Ohio



Walter D. Macy

Fred Way Jr.

George Woodward writes: "I am in the process of painting the boats my family worked on. I have the OMEGA and the OMAR done and am working on ROBERT P. GILLHAM. The pictures you sent will help me a lot. I didn't have pictures of OTTO



MARMET and SALLIE MARMET, and I will try to get them on my canvases as soon as I can so I can have them to show my children all about their great grandfather, grandfather, and father. I am not a great artist, but they look nice on my 24 x 36 inch canvas.

I have been a member of S&D for several years, and have seen several things about my family in the magazines. I hope to make it to the meeting this September. I might bring one or two of the paintings with me if you would like to see them.

‡ It would indeed have been our great pleasure to view George's paintings at our September meeting. Unfortunately, word arrived from his daughter Katie Maciag just two months after this letter with the sad news of George's passing. (See *Final Crossings* column on page 42.) Katie sent this copy of Mr. Woodward's painting of the OMAR, completed in February this year



Included with George's letter was an article detailing his family's river history. In tribute to the Woodward family, we print it in its entirety below.

#### The End of the Woodward River Men

Asa Woodward had two children. A boy named Edward Herbert and a daughter whose name is unknown. Asa found his career on the river working as captain on a sternwheeler called RAVEN. The RAVEN ended his life on April 15, 1870 when he drowned just after an explosion. They had just made some repairs on the boat and headed across the river from Cincinnati. They found a leak and were trying to reach the other side to make more repairs, but the boilers blew up and Asa was killed. His two children came down from Pt. Pleasant, WV and put his body on the ANNIE LAURIE and traveled

*Continued on page 43*

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### 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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# S&D REFLECTOR

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of Pioneer Rivermen

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Marietta, Ohio June 2013  
Post Office Permit #73, Marietta, OH

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

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

David Tschiggfrie, Editor  
2723 Shetland Court  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
[Reflector@comcast.net](mailto:Reflector@comcast.net)

## REFLECTOR BACK ISSUES AND INDICES

Copies of the current or prior years are available at \$8 each, postpaid for members, and \$10 for non-members.

Indices for five year increments of the quarterly, 1964 through 2003, are available for \$5 per volume. The 2004-08 index is available in CD format only for \$11 postpaid.

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

Preserving the Past and  
Celebrating the Future

Tinclads, gunboats, tourist steamers, and the pioneering packets of the first decade of steam on the Western Rivers highlight this second issue of our fiftieth anniversary year. We are pleased to welcome Myron Smith as a contributor to the REFLECTOR with his timely feature on the Civil War Battle of Buffington Island. This Union naval engagement is commemorated as part of the Campus Martius "Inland River Navy" exhibit on the Friday evening of our Annual Meeting.

John White next unveils his well-researched preface to Capt. Fred Way's monumental *Packet Directory, 1848-1993* with the first ten-year installment of the Western Rivers Steamboat Index from 1811-1848. Although his listing is also available to members on our website in spreadsheet form, it appears in these pages using the same narrative format adopted by Capt. Way for his book.

Lastly, we showcase a companion piece to the photo essay about the GORDON C. GREENE which appeared in this magazine five years ago. By a great stroke of good luck, we are able to bring you the March 1949 *Holiday* magazine article which first accompanied those spectacular views as our final feature story this June.

Thirty-two of our S&D members shared some of their memories with us in the special March edition, and that tradition continues this issue with contributions from Jerry Sutphin, Dick Rutter, George Woodward, Jeff Spear, Bob Anton, Tom McNamara, Dale Flick, Pat Welsh, Judy Patsch, John Fryant, and Capts. Doc Hawley and Don Houghton. Thanks to all for keeping alive this family history of story-telling as we begin the next fifty years of publication!

Recently your editor was the recipient of some very kind words from Mrs. Eleanor Huntoon Ray of Dubuque regarding the story of her parent's excursions aboard the SIDNEY and GORDON C.

## S&D REGIONAL CHAPTERS

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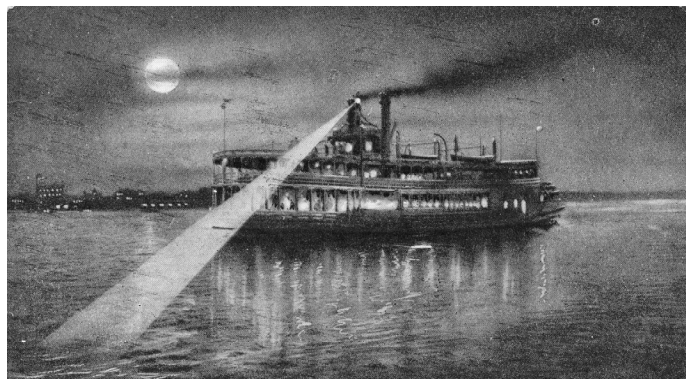
Inland Rivers Library, Cincinnati, OH  
*800 Vine St • (513) 369-6957*

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

*Weblinks available at [www.s-and-d.org](http://www.s-and-d.org)*

GREENE in our June 2012 issue. However, we admit to confusing the caption showing the Huntoons and their friends on SIDNEY's hurricane roof. Those are Eleanor's parents on the left side of that photo, not on the right. Eleanor received an apology and our promise that we would set the record straight.

As you read this summer edition of the REFLECTOR, remember to set aside the weekend of September 13-14 in Marietta this fall for our 74th Annual Meeting. Come join us as we gather to preserve and to celebrate the stories of our river heritage as America's Inland Rivers Society. 



**Ferry boat DAVENPORT by moonlight - more on page 38.**





## Meet Our Contributors

**Myron J. Smith, Jr.** (*Gunboats at Buffington: The U. S. Navy and Morgan's Raid, 1863, p. 8*) has served as a professional librarian and historian since 1966. Jack is an Ohio native and joined Tusculum College in Greeneville, TN in 1990 as Library Director and Professor of Library Science and History. He has previously served in libraries in Indiana and Maryland, as well as spending 15 years as library director and professor at Salem College (now Salem-International University) in West Virginia.

Active in his profession, Prof. Smith is also an internationally known author and bibliographer, his latest title being *The Fight for the Yazoo, August 1862-July 1864: Swamps, Forts and Fleets on Vicksburg's Northern Flank* (McFarland, 2012). The author of 85 other volumes of bibliography and history, including six volumes devoted to the Civil War on Western Rivers, Smith has been the recipient of a variety of honors and awards for his work. In 1993, he received the Nelson Ross Award from the Professional Football Writers Association. Smith remains the only American to have received the Richard Franck Preis for historical bibliography from the German government.

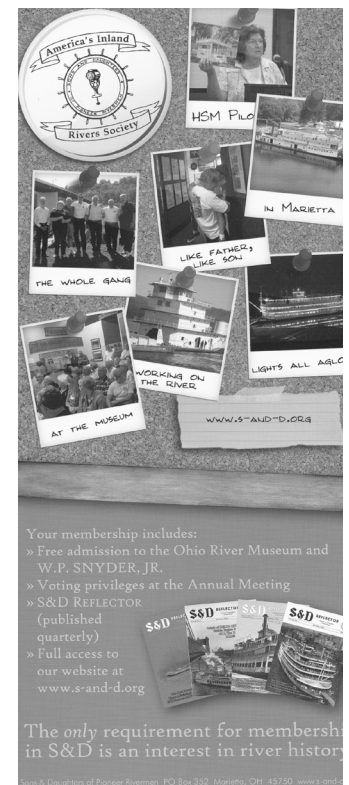
The writer first developed his interest in steamboats during the late 1940s when, as a youngster, his parents and grandparents would often travel between Sandusky, OH and Cedar Point via the Lake Erie steam ferry G. A. BOECKLING, which was retired in 1952. Today, he and his wife Dennie reside north of Greeneville on a small farm with 12 cats and one feline-loving English Setter.

**John H. White, Jr.** (*1811-1820 Western Rivers Steamboat Index, p. 18*) was first profiled in the September 2011 REFLECTOR. Jack generously shares with our readers the results of his wide-ranging study of steamboating in contemporary newspaper and magazine stories. His most recent efforts have resulted in this article which provides an important prelude to the lifetime work preserved in Capt. Fred Way's *Packet Directory 1848-1994*.

## S&D Premieres New Membership Rack Card This Spring

Museums, libraries, and riverboat venues along the inland rivers will begin displaying S&D's new rack cards for promoting membership beginning this spring. Designed by our S&D webmaster Jonathan Tschiggfrie, the full-color card is printed on heavy glossy stock, and features an eye-catching close-up of the BELLE OF THE BENDS - a view that received unprecedented favorable comment from our members when it appeared on the back cover of our September 2011 issue.

The card has already been placed at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; Murphy Library at University of Wisconsin - La Crosse; National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, Dubuque; LONE STAR Steamboat Museum, Le Claire, IA; GEORGE M. VERITY Steamboat Museum, Keokuk, IA; Mercantile Library, St. Louis; and aboard the m/v TWILIGHT on the UMR. Further plans call for placement at Point Pleasant River Museum, Clarington River Museum, Lock 34 Museum at Chilo, Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County, Howard Steamboat Museum, Seamen's Church Institute, Paducah, KY; Mud Island, Memphis, TN; and aboard AQ, BELLE OF LOUISVILLE, and NATCHEZ. 📍





## S & D 74th Annual Meeting September 13-14, 2013

We are pleased to announce the festivities for the 74th Annual Meeting of S&D on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 13-14. The Friday evening mixer at Campus Martius Museum features the new Civil War exhibit "Inland River Navy," a display highlighting hundreds of Civil War artifacts and 1/4 inch to the foot scale models of Union gunboats and tinclads. This exhibit is especially timely in that the sesquicentennial observance of the Battle of Buffington Island takes place this summer (see feature story on page 8).

Our Saturday morning begins at 9:30 with the annual meeting in the Sternwheel Room at the Lafayette. From noon - 2:00 p.m., a picnic buffet will be served during our excursion aboard the VALLEY GEM (\$27/person all inclusive) with a special narration on the history of Buckley Island by Louise Zimmer, local historian and past librarian of Washington County Public Library. Upon return from the cruise, there will be a formal dedication of the new shantyboat exhibit on the Ohio River Museum grounds. S&D is very fortunate to be the recipient of this historic artifact from the Schoonover family.

Saturday evening's banquet and program begins at 6:30 in the Lafayette ballroom. Entrees include prime rib (\$27), salmon (\$26) and lemon chicken (\$22), served with salad, rolls, mixed vegetables, roasted potatoes, ice cream, tea and coffee. Please make your dinner reservations at least a week in advance by calling the Lafayette at 800-331-9336. Chief Engineer Gary Frommelt is our featured speaker that evening. He will share his adventures working on the PRESIDENT, but hinted that he may just toss in a few more memories while he's at it. Gary's talk is sure to be informative and very entertaining as well!

So mark your calendars now, and come join your friends for this celebration of our nation's inland rivers heritage. SEE YOU THERE!

## 2013 Inland Waterways Festival at Ohio River Museum August 3-4

August 3-4, 2013 are the dates for ORM's 2013 Inland Waterways Festival. The festival is free and offers families a venue to explore the history, industry and environment of our inland waters.

Visitors will enjoy a conversation with Mark Twain, travel with Harriet Tubman on the Underground Railroad, and listen to nationally-known artist and Marietta native Michael Dickinson as he speaks about his paintings of the Marietta area. Saturday evening the River Institute at Hanover College presents "Nothing Stops This Train," the intriguing story of slaves escaping across the Ohio River and the hardships and dangers of the Underground Railroad.

Attendees will also be able to tour a towboat, courtesy of AEP. Other exhibits include the popular ORSANCO 2200-gallon freshwater aquarium with fish from the Ohio River, a lock and dam model by the Corps of Engineers, and presentations from the West Virginia Raptor Rehabilitation Center. Scale models of historic river boats will ply the ORM pool, while historian/storytellers Louise Zimmer and Susanna Holstein will amaze and amuse audiences with stories of days past. 🕒

For more information call ORM at 740-373-3750 or visit them at their website:

[www.campusmartiusmuseum.org/iwf](http://www.campusmartiusmuseum.org/iwf)

## Howard Steamboat Museum's River Ramblings Program Coming July 27

Howard Steamboat Museum in Jeffersonville, IN announces program 9 in their popular series of river talks, "River Ramblings," on Saturday, July 27 beginning at 3:00 p.m. Captain Kevin Mullen, HSM Board member and former master and pilot of the BELLE OF LOUISVILLE, will be sharing his river experiences with the crowd. S&D members will recall Kevin's captivating talk at our annual meeting last year, and this session at the Howard promises to be every bit as enjoyable. An added feature to the program is the "Riverboat Rummage Sale," offering gently used t-shirts, books and steamboat trinkets. Admission is \$5. For more info, call 812-283-3728. 🕒



# Gunboats at Buffington: The U.S. Navy and Morgan's Raid, 1863

by Myron J. Smith, Jr.

*July 18-19 of this year marks the sesquicentennial of the Civil War Battle of Buffington Island at Mile 217 on the Upper Ohio. This event is part of the commemorative display at the new Civil War exhibit scheduled for September 13-15 at Campus Martius Museum, in conjunction with S&D's 74th Annual Meeting.*

*The following article by veteran historian Myron Smith originally appeared in Volume 44, No. 2 (Winter 1983) issue of the journal West Virginia History. We thank Prof. Smith and Mary Johnson of West Virginia Archives and History for their kind permission to share that story in these pages.*

*Some of the information contained in this article has been updated and expanded in two books authored by Prof Smith: Le Roy Fitch: The Civil War Career of a Union Gunboat Commander (© 2007, McFarland & Co. publisher) and Tinclads in the Civil War (© 2010, McFarland & Co. publisher.)*

With the surrender of Vicksburg and Lee's Gettysburg defeat both coming during the first week of July 1863, about the only northbound "aggressive operation" of which the *Richmond Enquirer* could advise its readers was a "bold raid" into the rear area communication lines of Indiana-Ohio being led by the swashbuckling John Hunt Morgan. Few in the newsroom of the Confederate capital's major daily could then guess that this slashing sortie would end within days at a little island called Buffington in the Ohio River just north of Ravenswood, Jackson County WV.

Over the past one hundred-plus years, countless pages have chronicled this ill-fated but romantic three-week Southern campaign. These have gone into great detail concerning the roles taken by high- and low-ranking Yankee and Rebel soldiers, raw militia, civilians and even West Virginia politicians in one of history's most colorful military chases. Unfortunately, there has been but passing

acknowledgement to the vital – indeed critical – role played in this story by the Union Navy, that Lincoln called "Uncle Sam's web-feet." After the war, Confederate Gen. Basil W. Duke, a Buffington participant, tersely pointed out that "the arrival of the gunboats prevented the entire [Southern] force from [re]crossing the Ohio River."

The man in charge of Federal naval operations on the Upper Ohio Station was a twenty-eight-year-old regular naval line officer named Le Roy Fitch. In the ten months following the Union command's formation of a special "light squadron" to quash the partisans operating in the northern Mississippi Valley, this Hoosier rolled up an impressive record. Using lightly armed and thinly armored converted steamers called "tinclads," he supervised countless convoys and worked closely with local garrison commanders. When the river levels fell in late spring 1863, as they did each year about this time, he took the opportunity to visit Cincinnati, where he could personally supervise the outfitting of



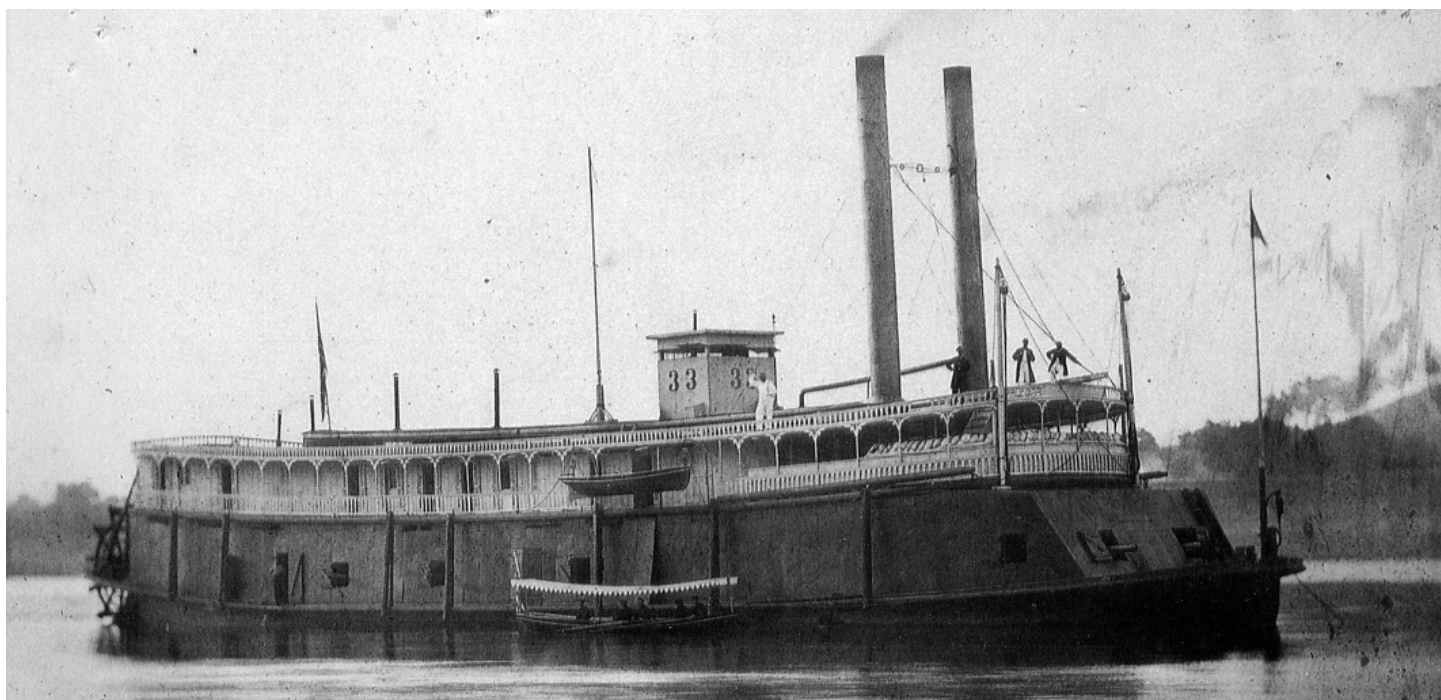
*Lieutenant Commander Le Roy Fitch, in charge of the operation to halt Morgan's raiders at Buffington Island. Photo courtesy of Myron Smith.*



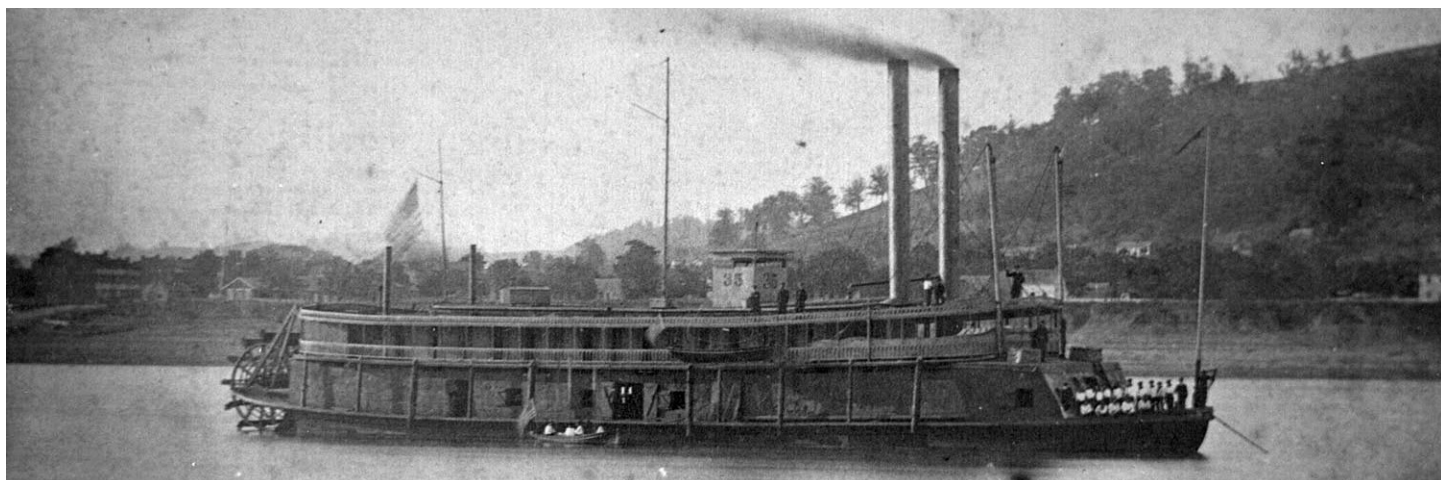
three new tinclads, VICTORY, REINDEER, and MOOSE, his flagship for future missions. As he checked the workmen placing the thin armor and mounting the cannon, he may have taken a moment to reflect on the dimensions of his command steamer. U.S.S. MOOSE was a newly constructed 189 ton sternwheel steamboat which briefly bore the name FLORENCE MILLER NO. 2 before its purchase and commissioning into Union service on May 20, 1863. The vessel was 154 feet 8 inches long, 32 feet 2 inches wide and had a five foot draught. Once outfitted with armor and six 24-pounder smoothbores, the MOOSE could produce a flank speed of [over 7 mph] in calm waters.

As refitting the MOOSE continued, Fitch also considered the state of his counter-guerilla operations. Although he expected "trouble all along the Ohio this summer," on July 3 he confidently wrote his chief, Acting Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter, of his hopes to "meet and check the guerillas at every point." He did not dream that scarcely before his new boats were finished and manned, they would be called into active service and his optimism put to the test.

Meanwhile that spring, Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan from Lexington, KY took a little time off from his job of mounting cavalry raids in

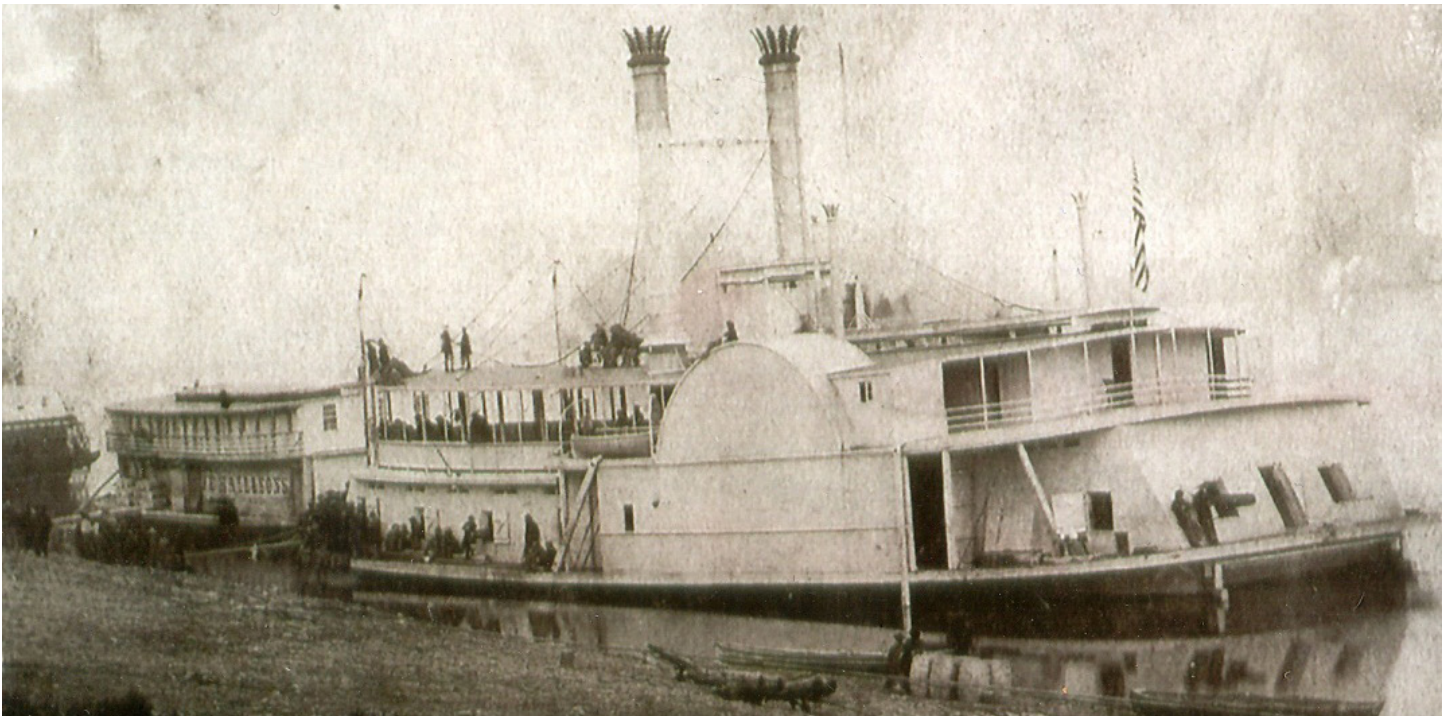


*U.S. tinclad 33, VICTORY (5569), built in 1863 at Cincinnati, 157 x 30.2 x 4.1 with engines 13's - 4 ½ foot stroke. Sold to U.S. Navy before her documentation. After the war she was sold and renamed LIZZIE TATE in October 1865. From Jeff Spear collection.*



*U.S. tinclad 35, REINDEER (4716), also built 1863 at Cincinnati as 212-ton RACHAEL MILLER. Acquired by U.S. in May of that year. Visited Pittsburgh October 1864. Renamed MARINER when sold in October 1865. From Jeff Spear collection.*





US Gunboat NAUMKEAG (4122), built 1863 at Cincinnati. 154.2 x 30.4 x 4.5 with engines 14's - 5 1/2 foot stroke. Sold to U.S. in April 1863 and went to Cape Girardeau, MO and on to Parkersburg, WV and Kanawha River, eventually becoming part of Fitch's fleet at Buffington Island. Later saw action on Arkansas and Lower Mississippi. Pictured here at Marietta wharf bringing back the Marietta contingent following Buffington Island engagement. NAUMKEAG was the only gunboat on Upper Ohio River. Jeff Spear notes: "She is listed in Way's Directory as sternwheel. Look at that squared-off stern and funny placement of sidewheels ala Diamond Jo's ST. PAUL. My guess is USN took her as a hull a-building as a sternwheel boat and came up with this. Makes sense, though, as you can shoot aft on a sidewheel boat and not on sternwheel." Renamed MONTGOMERY in September 1865 and went to Mobile. Photo from collection of George C. Racer through the courtesy of Ruth Thornley Hawkins and Jeff Spear.

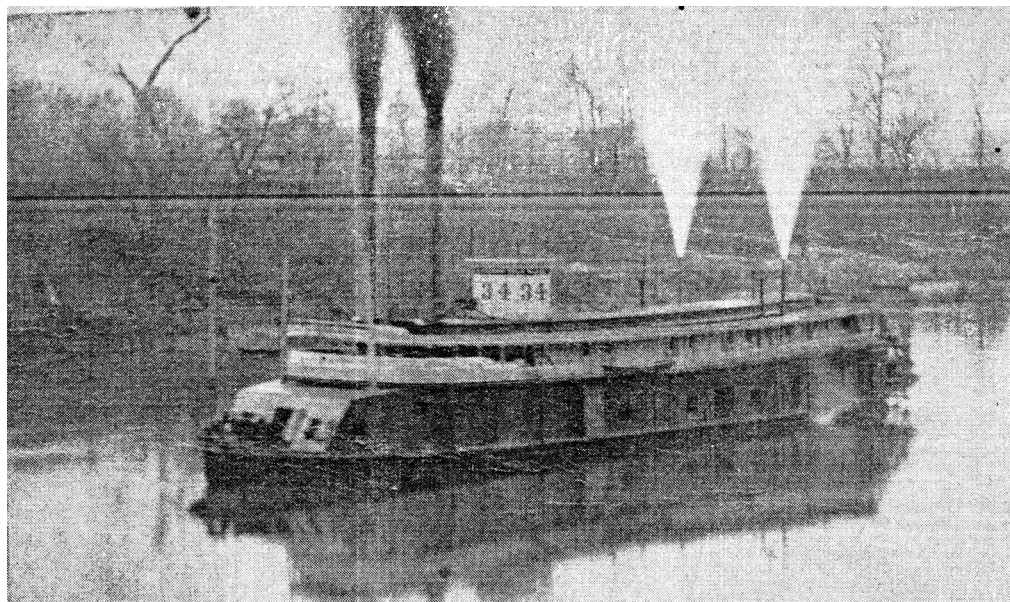
Kentucky to plan the campaign beyond the Ohio River which would challenge Fitch's fleet. Such an operation, the horse soldier reasoned, would serve as a diversion for Confederate forces in Tennessee about to be assaulted by the Northern armies of Generals Burnside and Rosecrans. Morgan's scheme called for a confusion-causing sweep across southern Indiana and Ohio with a re-crossing of the Ohio somewhere east of Cincinnati. Agents were dispatched to find an exit site and returned toward the end of June with their report. The agents announced the existence of a well-known, but little-guarded crossing point below Portland, OH, where there was fordable water in summer to the head of Buffington Island and thence over the far shallows a few miles above Ravenswood, WV. It is doubtful if Morgan's spies knew - or cared - that the new Mountain State's jurisdiction extended across the river and island to the low water mark on the Ohio side. Nonetheless, it would allow future Civil War historians to claim that the climactic encounter of Morgan's "bold raid" occurred at least partly in West Virginia.

Embarking on the execution of his plan, Gen. Morgan, with about twenty-four hundred picked mounted men and four field cannon, moved north from lower Kentucky on July 2 to begin his "very daring raid." By July 8, after a stiff fight at Lebanon, the Confederates reached the small Kentucky town of Brandenburg. The same scene was set for one of the most publicized pursuits of the War Between the States and certainly one of the strangest blockades in naval history.

When the news of Morgan's activities arrived in Cincinnati around noon on the eighth, Le Roy Fitch was mustering crewmen aboard the MOOSE. Thinking it only a small band which had seized the steamers JOHN T. McCOMBS and ALICE DEAN and set up batteries at Brandenburg, he wired his immediate superior Fleet Capt. Alexander M. Pennock of the disturbance and promised that the tinclad SPRINGFIELD, on patrol between Evansville and Louisville, would arrive on the scene in a few hours. As a precautionary measure, he ordered the FAIR PLAY and SILVER LAKE



*U.S. tinclad 34, MOOSE (4032), built Cincinnati 1863 as FLORENCE MILLER NO. 2. She was Lieut. Cmdr. Fitch's flagship for naval operations on the Ohio River. After the war she was sold in October 1865 to Capt. David White at Mound City, IL for \$10,100 and was renamed LITTLE ROCK (3516). Burned and lost at Clarendon, AR, December 23, 1867. Of the four armored vessels engaged in the Battle of Buffington Island, this image of MOOSE was the most recent to be surfaced, and Larry Strayer has the thanks of the REFLECTOR for allowing us to share this photo with our readers.*



to assist the SPRINGFIELD. Returning to the riverfront from the telegraph office, the young officer sent the REINDEER upstream to aid the new tinclad NAUMKEAG down over the shoals near Parkersburg. With the VICTORY in company, he then “started down at once.”

When the MOOSE and VICTORY landed at Louisville on July 9, the commander was handed a wire from New Albany, IN by acting Ensign Joseph Watson, captain of the SPRINGFIELD. As Watson's craft had rounded the bend above Brandenburg the day before, he had seen the Rebels crossing. Twice that day the tinclad attempted to halt the Southern operation, but its howitzers were no match for the plunging fire of the Confederate Parrotts planted high on a hill near the town courthouse. Unable to recapture the two steamers or outgun the enemy, Watson was returning upriver at that moment to communicate with Fitch.

Reading Watson's message, Fitch grew fearful that the SILVER LAKE and FAIR PLAY might be taken by surprise should they reach the town. Misled as to the number of raiders as well as to their objective and speed, he immediately passed orders for the MOOSE and VICTORY to raise steam and push over the Falls at Louisville to the rescue. A few miles downstream he sighted the SPRINGFIELD. Hauling close, Fitch directed all three boats to continue at full speed to Brandenburg. Toward six o'clock in the evening the mini-fleet arrived off the Kentucky town only to find the Rebels had

finished crossing late the night before. About a half hour later the two unarmed tinclads hove in sight escorting a convoy. Their crews had neither heard nor seen anything of the Southerners who were even then pounding away into Indiana. Unhappy to have missed this chance for battle, the commander signaled his squadron to round to.

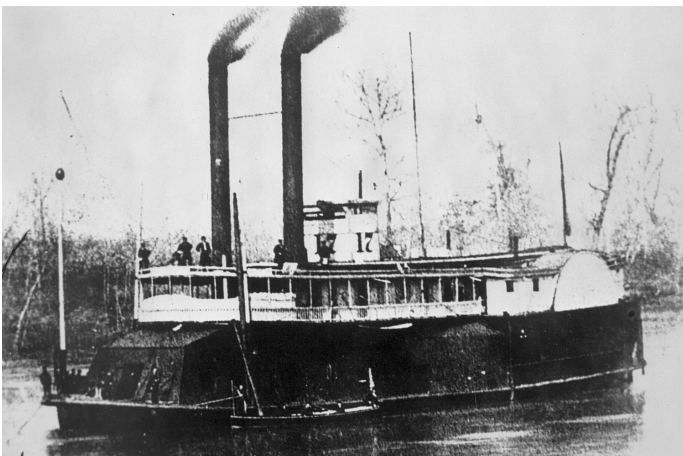
With Morgan's escape, the naval command was saddled with one of the war's most recurrent problems – faulty information. No one knew for sure where the Confederates were at any given time or where they might appear next. Interviews with citizens living along the Kentucky shore were fruitless. Officers of the Federal army either did not know where the Rebels were (which was usually the case) or believing they knew, seemed to think it beneath their dignity to inform or communicate with a naval commander. Frustrated in his personal efforts to obtain intelligence, Fitch was forced to rely on newspaper accounts for all his information – and the reports of the panic-stricken press were the most inaccurate of all.

Faced with this intelligence gap and aided only indirectly by small daily telegrams from the Cincinnati office of area commander Ambrose E. Burnside, whose information-gathering problems were just as difficult, Cmdr. Fitch was forced to make his own estimates. Reflecting on the skimpy evidence at hand, he guessed that Morgan was being hemmed in by Yankee militia in the center of a circle. With the river running around him, the





*This photo shows the second ALICE DEAN, built in 1864 to replace the previous packet of that name. The first ALICE DEAN (0155) was constructed at Cincinnati in 1863 and measured 411 tons. She was surreptitiously flagged down at Brandenburg, KY by Morgan's raiders on July 8. The maurauding band of cavalry had already captured the small packet JOHN T. McCOMBS (3120) earlier in the day, but finding her too small to meet their needs, they seized the DEAN to ferry them across the river into Indiana. After reaching the opposite shore, they burned her between Morvin's Landing and Mauckport. Her machinery was salvaged in fall 1863 and auctioned off. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse.*

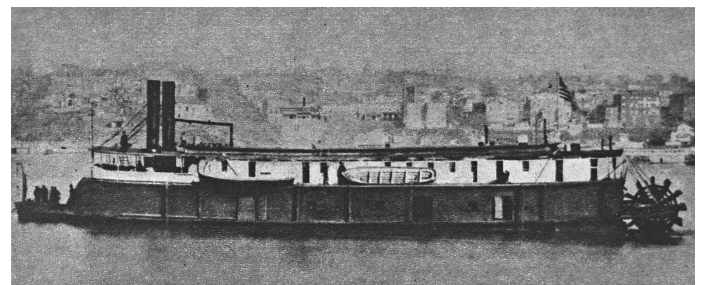


*FAIR PLAY (1961) shown above, and SILVER LAKE NO. 3 (5118) at far right, were ordered by Fitch to assist the tinclad SPRINGFIELD already enroute to Brandenburg when news of the raid reached him at Cincinnati on July 8. Lacking reliable information, Fitch initially thought that Morgan had only a small band of cavalry, and that the incursion could be easily quashed. However, dispatches containing more accurate intelligence as to Morgan's numbers and the speed with which they were moving soon caused him concern about the safety of these two boats. As a result, both the VICTORY and MOOSE were immediately sent downriver in support. Upon arrival at Brandenburg, it was discovered that the rebels had finished crossing the night before. Consequently, the naval fleet was turned around to head back upriver in pursuit of Morgan.*

commander decided that his best move would be to post a string of gunboats along the Ohio to guard as many of the accessible crossings and shallow fords as possible. As an added safety measure he issued a General Order forbidding all unarmed steamers to run without convoy.

In a "nice piece of work," Morgan continued to baffle Federal calculations by sending flying columns to various Indiana locations. Digesting the assorted location notices, the consensus reached in various quarters by July 11 indicated a Confederate attempt on the tremendous quantities of government stores held in the Jeffersonville and New Albany army depots. Acting on this faulty conclusion, Fitch dispatched the SPRINGFIELD and VICTORY to patrol between Louisville and Madison.

Although the Southerners were not moving on the Union supply bases, one of their previously detached units was attempting a linkup. After scouting Louisville, the 180-man force of Capt. Davis chose this time to effect a crossing of the mustard-colored river. They were soon sighted near Twelve Mile Island (twelve miles above Louisville) by the vigilant tinclads. Moving up fast, the VICTORY and SPRINGFIELD "met this gang and shelled them back." The Federal steamboat commanders saw this skirmish as a great victory over 1500 of Morgan's reinforcements. In truth, 50 Confederates did cross over; the rest were scattered and some were



*FAIR PLAY (U.S. tinclad 17) was built 1859 at Jeffersonville, 139 x 27 x 4.7, measured 162 tons. Captured by U. S. forces on August 18, 1862 with a load of rifles marked for delivery to the Rebel army, she was turned into a tinclad. Sold after the war and renamed COTILE. The 212-ton SILVER LAKE NO. 3 pictured above measured 157 x 32.5 x 4.5 and was built at California, PA in 1862. Used for transporting ordnance between Pittsburgh and St. Louis, she was sold to the U.S. Navy on November 15, 1862 and served as tinclad 23. Sold at public sale in August 1865 and renamed MARY HEIN. Photos from Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse.*



captured. When Fitch heard the inflated figures, he sent the good news to Porter and Pennock and grew more confident of being able to meet Morgan.

Later that day Burnside sent the navy a wire placing the Rebels near the Hoosier town of Vernon; another telegram followed with news that their advance was really towards Madison. By this time the NAUMKEAG and REINDEER had come down and Cmdr. Fitch, trying to keep on Morgan's right, directed his task force upriver. When the warships reached Madison, Fitch went ashore to have a long talk with Lt. Cmdr. Brown. The former captain of the ill-fated INDIANOLA was able to give him more positive information than any place yet during the chase. The conference concluded, Fitch returned aboard the MOOSE and signaled most of his vessels upriver toward Aurora and Cincinnati. Along the route, every flat, skiff or scow encountered would be destroyed in an effort to rob the Southerners of possible fording vehicles.

While the navy maintained its surveillance, Morgan pushed his men steadily eastward in "an enormous horserace, accompanied by horse-stealing extraordinary." Although he was followed by thousands of volunteer and militia troops, his movements were still going according to plans laid out earlier. Leaving Vernon, the Confederate proceeded on to Dupont and Summersville. After calling in his flying columns and opposed only by small groups of Indiana "Squirrel Hunters," the general arrived at Harrison on the Ohio line by July 13. Avoiding the garrison at Cincinnati, the horsemen rode through the suburbs during the night and came to Williamsburg, 28 miles away, late the following morning – a march of 90 miles in 35 hours. Morgan's plan now called for an escape back across the river to the new state of West Virginia. To that end, he steered his men southeast for the great bend of the Ohio at Pomeroy still visible on any roadmap today.

With Union Gen. Edward Hobson's regular cavalry gaining in close pursuit, the Rebels maneuvered around Pomeroy and reached Chester, 18 miles from the river, at midday on the 18th. Here they rested for two hours before moving down to their ultimate goal, the shoals above Buffington Island. Exhausted after their hard flight and reduced

in numbers to about two thousand, the raiders halted near the river as night fell.

A shallow river in eastern Ohio, easily passable by foot or horse, was vital to Morgan's plans and according to Basil Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law, was recognized as one of the "chief difficulties of the expedition that might prove really dangerous and insuperable." Thus, the depth of the Ohio River was to play a much more important part than most recognize.

On July 9, the river was reported falling upstream at Pittsburgh, and recent arrivals from that city noted only two feet at Buffington and Blennerhassett – an ideal fording level. Four days later as the result of heavy rains in the West Virginia mountains, the Pittsburgh river stage went up rapidly and the surge continued downriver. This rise, estimated at 5½ feet in some sections, allowed the NAUMKEAG to steam down. More importantly for the Union forces, it allowed troop steamers and the tinclads to range much farther upriver than usual.

From the Queen City, the Federal navy escorted the soldier-laden transports of Gen. Henry M. Judah upstream to Portsmouth. As the bluecoats disembarked to chase the Rebels overland, the general asked Cmdr. Fitch to guard the nearby river sector. Shortly thereafter, learning the Confederates were still eastbound, the bulldog sailor made his final deployment by establishing a blockade some forty miles in length around Pomeroy. "This might have been considered an extravagant use of boats," Fitch later confided, "but the river was so low and fords so numerous that a less number might not have met with such a favorable result."

Steaming north against an increasing current, the six warships were distributed at those locations which might prove most inviting to the raiders. In all, four major and a number of minor fords were thus patrolled, leaving only the MOOSE to handle Morgan's attempted crossing at Buffington.

Despite the increased rise, it was still necessary for Fitch to warp his gunboats upstream. Assisted by a tow from the dispatch steamer IMPERIAL, the gunboat passed over Letart Falls and other obstructions before reaching the blockade's main



position. A few hours before the Confederates reached the crest of the nearby shore, the MOOSE was anchored off Sand Creek Bar below Buffington Island. Here she was sighted by Confederate outriders sometime later.

Unable to ford in the dark, the Southerners found themselves on the dawn of the 19th entirely surrounded. In addition to the MOOSE, the land forces of Gens. Hobson and Judah were closing in from the rear. The Battle of Buffington Island ensued when the advance elements of the Union army came up from Pomeroy about six in the morning.

The Union Navy already on hand was momentarily stalled. At two that Sunday morning, Fitch, wishing to move closer to the foot of the island, had ordered the IMPERIAL to tow him upriver slowly. Unfortunately, a dense fog set in and the two steamers were forced to anchor. The naval officer, uninformed of the army's movements, knew nothing of the impending battle until the officer-of-the-deck awoke him at seven in the morning with news that musket fire was rampant a little ahead off the port bow. Fitch quickly ordered up steam.

Sounding along the way, the bluejackets were able to pilot their vessels over the bar fairly into the chute between the island and the Ohio shore. Churning slowly, the steamers were soon greeted by a hail from shore. Easing in, the MOOSE picked up Capt. John J. Grafton, a member of Judah's staff who had lost his way. The soldier was able to give Fitch his first indication of the impending fight as well as the relative positions of the opposing forces as the infantrymen last knew them. While the two men spoke, the MOOSE yawed just enough to open fire over the high river bank with her three broadside guns, which had been elevated to their maximum angle.

Unable to direct the fire for his green gunners, Cmdr. Fitch was never quite sure where his 24-pounder shells were landing. Both Yankee and Rebel soldiers later agreed on the confusion the shells caused as they roared in overhead. On one occasion, Gen. Hobson and his staff, standing on a hill overlooking the conflict, were fired upon. An observer wrote some years afterwards, "a shot or two

caused a hasty transfer of headquarters." Although Fitch remained basically ignorant of the changing bluecoat maneuvers on shore, his fire upon the Rebels was deadly. Morgan's brother-in-law, Basil Duke, cursed what he believed was more than one tinclad and "heartily wished that their fierce ardor, the result of a feeling of perfect security, could have been subjected to the test of two or three shots through their hulls."

Overwhelmed by thousands of Federal soldiers and subjected to bombardment by the MOOSE, the contest began to go against the Southerners. In fact, it was going so badly that a large group of raiders tried to make a break. Shielded by Duke's gallant rear-guard and two light guns on the north bank, Morgan's men speedily descended a steep ravine toward the river. This hasty and desperate move was exactly what Cmdr. Fitch had been seeking throughout the 500-mile pursuit. On the enemy's left flank at a point less than two miles above the island, the MOOSE opened on the protective Confederate cannon. After a few shots from the bow pieces, the Rebel gunners fled. Seeing Morgan's column about one-third over the crossing, the commander shifted fire to the men in the water. Unable to retreat back up the ravine, the Confederates broke into a rout. Throwing down their arms, they clawed their way back up the bank and headed for the woods. After insuring possession of the cannon, the MOOSE retired to the head of the West Virginia island to render any assistance needed in that quarter.

After hours of fighting, Basil Duke and about 700 men were prisoners. John Morgan led away the remnants of his shattered band hoping for another ford. The Battle of Buffington Island, which some still wrongly regard as a "naval battle," was nothing less than a disaster for the outnumbered raiders, one which was followed by a naval "mop-up" upstream.

Early Monday morning, the ALLEGHENY BELLE, a packet outfitted at Burnside's order and placed under naval authority, joined the MOOSE. With assistance from the IMPERIAL, the MOOSE stood upriver followed by the auxiliary, the latter with a few field guns of the 11th Michigan embarked.

A significant body of the Rebels under Col. Adam R. Johnson, with Morgan along, escaped



the Buffington melee and were reported retreating towards Reedsville, 20 miles north, from whence they could cross into West Virginia. Cmdr. Fitch determined to prevent their escape. As the Yankee boats progressed, the desperate Southerners reached a point above their goal and began wading across the head of Belleville Island, which lay just below the Wood County village. Although some drowned in the rush of men and the river's swift current, about 300 men reached the safety of the West Virginia bank before the MOOSE and ALLEGHENY BELLE were seen rushing up the channel. Again the Confederates, for the most part, were driven back by cannon fire, with a few more men and several horses lost. From here, Morgan, who had gained the middle of the shell-splashed river only to rejoin those of his command unable to cross, headed for the interior.


Not all of those reaching West Virginia fled immediately. Near the Wells farm on the upper side of Lee Creek two miles above Belleville, sixteen-year-old Foster Wells met Johnson and some of his troopers, hoping to guide them to safety. Before departing, one butternut squad prepared an ambush for the steamers. As the unsuspecting warships passed, the raiders fired two volleys of musketry at a range of less than twenty yards. Amazingly, only two Yankee sailors were hurt. Accepting the challenge, the MOOSE replied with her starboard battery, killing nine of the bushwhackers. With their guns elevated to fire over the river banks, the two Federal warships began a general bombardment of the area, concentrating on the roads leading inland. Many of the Union shells passed over the Wells homestead with some cutting limbs from the tops of surrounding shade trees. This shoot marked the last raider resistance the gunboats encountered; long before the final naval shell exploded, the Rebel survivors had been directed to the Elizabeth Pike and hills leading to the Little Kanawha Valley. Finding the water upstream too shallow and with too many shoals to warp, the boats rounded to and returned to Buffington Island.

Cmdr. Fitch remained anchored off the island overnight. Leaving orders for the ALLEGHENY BELLE to assume his post, he retired from the area shortly before sunrise Tuesday. The blockade of the fords was maintained until he received word that

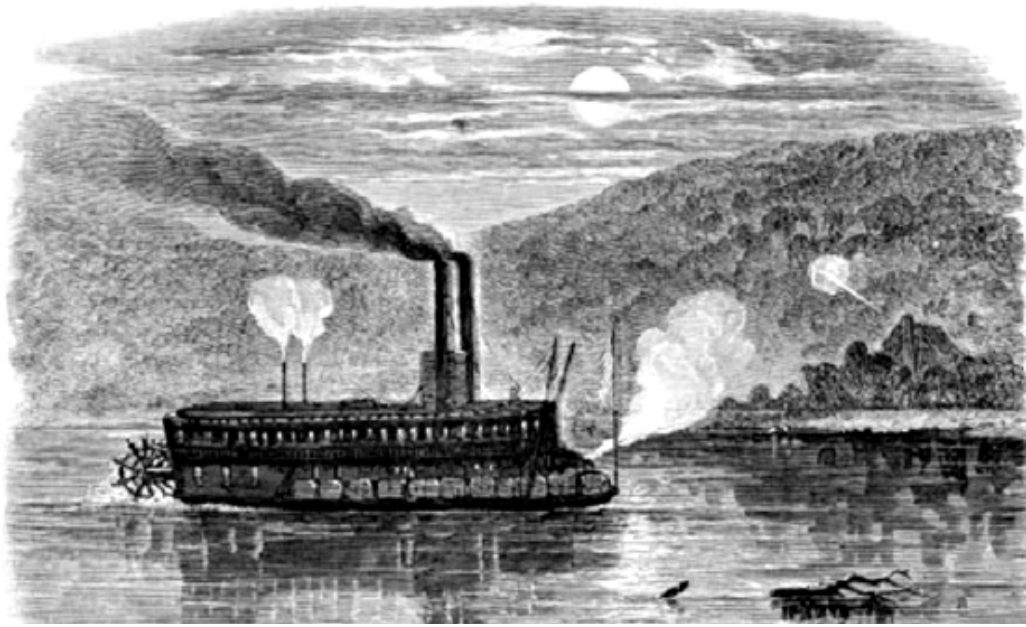
Morgan and his last 300 men had surrendered near Salineville, close to East Liverpool, OH on July 26. With the "bold raid" finished, the tinclads returned to their ordinary duties.

The value of the Union Navy's river squadron in repulsing Morgan's raid into Indiana and Ohio is hard to overestimate. With little actual knowledge of the Rebel's disposition, Fitch had organized his combinations in a most successful manner. Capt. T. J. Oakes of the IMPERIAL, a civilian onlooker, was convinced that credit of this defeat of Morgan is due entirely to the gunboats. Navy Secretary Gideon Welles was so pleased that he sent the commander an official commendation on July 27. Three days later, both Burnside and District of Ohio commander Gen. Jacob Cox wrote to Adm. Porter with praise for the navy's role. Modern students may yet come to appreciate the difficulty of Fitch's undertaking when considering that a century later river gunboats in South Vietnam, equipped with the latest in electronics and communications, were hard pressed to turn in equivalent records.

Doubtlessly pleased with these accolades, Leroy Fitch barely paused at all before continuing his battle against the partisans. In October 1864 he fought a similar engagement at Johnsonville, TN with Nathan Bedford Forrest. Two months later, iron- and tinclads under Fitch's command provided invaluable assistance to Gen. George Thomas during the Battle of Nashville. Remaining on active duty after the war, Fitch, Morgan's most determined naval opponent, died at his Indiana home in 1875 at the age of forty. Gen. Morgan, meanwhile, escaped from the Ohio State Penitentiary, only to be killed in action at Greeneville, TN on September 4, 1864. The MOOSE was sold on October 9, 1865. Redocumented as the LITTLE ROCK, she plied the rivers until fire destroyed her at Clarendon, AR on December 23, 1867.

Buffington Island literally slipped into the backwater of history after the July 1863 battle. Today it is visited mainly by birds and the occasional boater and fisherman. Both West Virginia and Ohio have placed historical plaques to commemorate the encounter, the latter choosing to add a freestone pillar on a four-acre plot at Portland to the former's Wood County remembrance. 





**Top left:** Unidentified Union tinclad shells Confederate positions on Kentucky bank of the Ohio River. Sketched by H. Mosler in Harper's Weekly, October 11, 1862.



MORGAN'S RAIDERS.

**Middle left:** Morgan's Raiders as they moved through southern Ohio prior to the Battle of Buffington Island. Sketched in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, August 1865.

**Bottom left:** Confederate General John Hunt Morgan (1825-1864) as drawn for August 1865 Harper's New Monthly Magazine. Morgan was born in Huntsville, AL. He is most remembered for his 1,000-mile "raid" from Tennessee through Kentucky into southern Indiana and Ohio, ending at Buffington Island. This was the farthest incursion north by any uniformed Confederate troops during the War. Morgan was killed on Sept. 24, 1864 by Union cavalry while attempting an escape during a Union raid on Greeneville, TN.

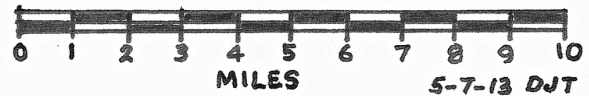
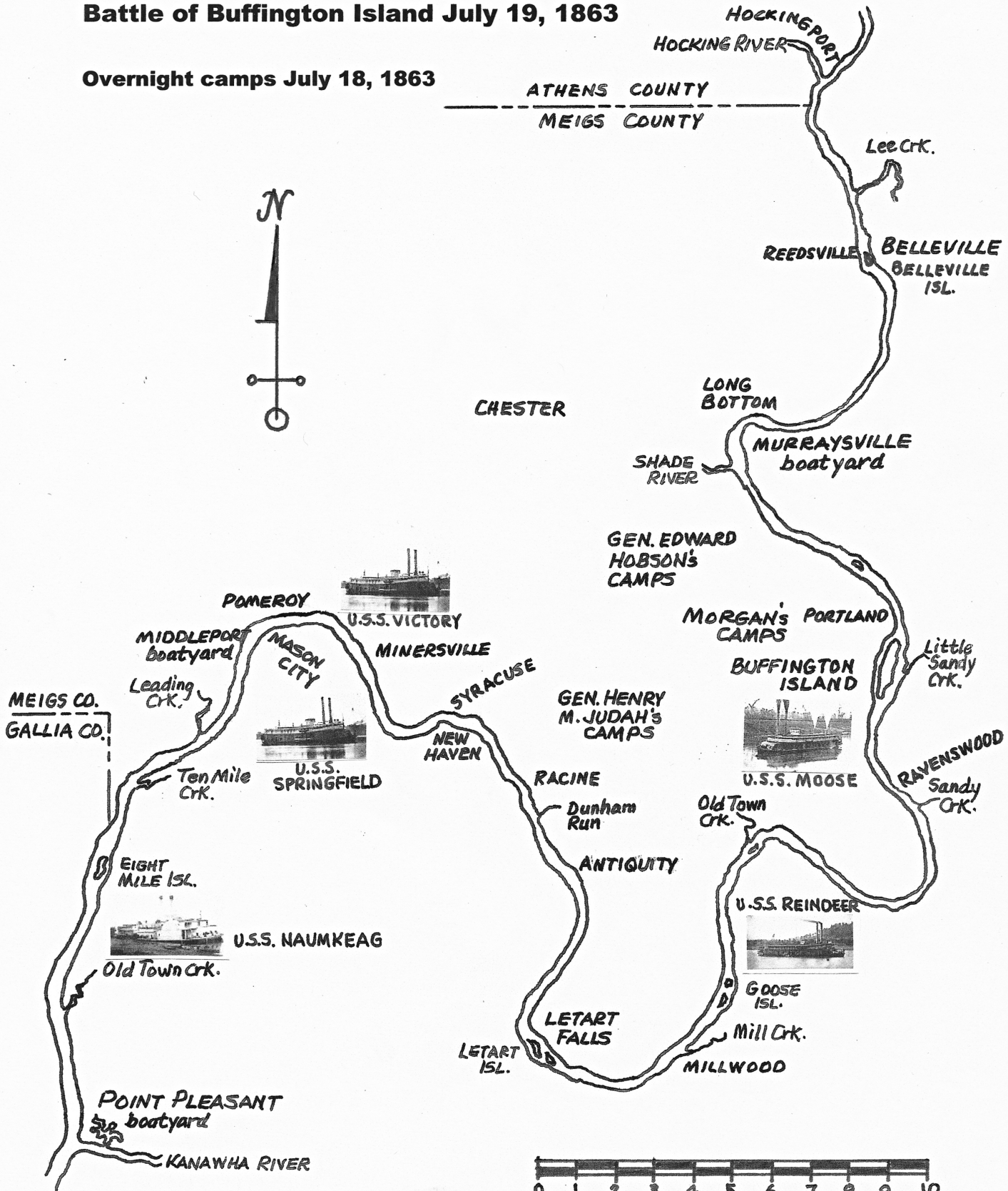


**Opposite page:** Map of the Battle of Buffington Island showing approximate positions where the armies of Gen. Henry Judah and Gen. Edward Hobson were encamped prior to the engagement. Also shown is the location of Morgan's campsite the evening of July 18, 1863, after his troops had advanced to the southeast from Chester, OH. The Ohio River squadron under command of Lt. Cmdr. LeRoy Fitch is shown by positions of gunboat U.S.S. NAUMKEAG (4122), and tinclads VICTORY (5569) and REINDEER (4717), as well as Fitch's flagship U.S.S. MOOSE (4032) stationed off Buffington Island. The MOOSE would be assisted by IMPERIAL (2741) and ALLEGHENY BELLE NO. 4 (0176). After Morgan's attempt to cross at the island was thwarted, MOOSE chased the remnants of the troops up to the head of Belleville Island, and once again prevented most from crossing over into West Virginia. Those reaching the opposite shore were finally pursued all the way to the upper side of Lee Creek, where those few remaining raiders fled into the hills of the Little Kanawha River valley.



# Battle of Buffington Island July 19, 1863

## Overnight camps July 18, 1863



# 1811-1820 Western Rivers Steamboat Index

by John H. White, Jr.

This list is compiled from early records published in the nineteenth century. It is intended to complement Captain Frederick Way, Jr.'s *Packet Directory 1848-1994*. He explained in the preface to this book that he would not include packets dating between 1811 and 1847. However, like many authors, Captain Way decided to alter his course somewhat during the composition of the text. He included a rather large number of vessels dating before 1848, especially when a series of boats used the same name, such as the BEN FRANKLIN. He lists eleven BEN FRANKLINS, the first dating back to 1826-1827. Even so, there were many boats not included, especially those dating before the 1840s, and so this supplementary listing was compiled.

Four lists have been prepared for the years 1811-1848 in a decade-by-decade sequence. The present list covers the first decade. The following sources were used: *Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States 1790—1868: The Lytle-Holdcamper List*, Staten Island, NY, 1975; James Hall, *Statistics of the West*, Cincinnati, 1836 (the boat list from this work is reproduced in *Who's Who on the Ohio River* by Ethel C. Leaky, Cincinnati, 1931, without attribution.) The U.S. Treasury report on Steam Engines to the U.S. Congress House Doc. 21 - 3rd Session 1838, includes a listing of inland rivers steamboats arranged by home port. A Treasury Department report to the U.S. Senate Doc. 42 - 32nd Congress 1852, contains a list of river vessels lost on Western waters prior to 1849. Possibly the best source for early Western steamboats is the *Ships Register and Enrollments of New Orleans, Louisiana, Vol. 1*, a summary of Federal Archives, Works Projects Administration, Baton Rouge, LA. I have only had access to a microfilm of these documents. It offers contemporary information recorded at the time the boat was entering service. Measurements of the vessel and details about who owned it were carefully recorded. New owners and name changes were also documented. It begins at the very early years of steam navigation and continues for several decades. This record is very helpful because New

Orleans was home port to so many steamboats. Sadly, preservation of the federal enrollment papers was not well-handled for other river ports. These records covered sailing vessels, ocean, lake and sound ships and not just river steamboats. Unfortunately, a fire destroyed some of the Bureau of Navigation's older records in 1921, which resulted in gaps in information available on many of our pioneer watercraft.

Another rich source for early river steamers was compiled in a newspaper series "Navigation on the Monongahela River" by Mrs. Sarepta Cooper Kussart for a Pittsburgh area newspaper, starting in January 1832. A scrap book containing this series is in the Inland Rivers Library housed in the Cincinnati Public Library Rare Book Collection. A more formal assembly of this material was compiled and indexed by Richard T. Wiley in 1971, but is not represented in the Cincinnati Library system. However, in 1935 Mrs. Kussart assembled a 342-page study of the Allegheny River. These volumes present much useful information on the early steamers of the Pittsburgh area, and we owe Mrs. Kussart considerable thanks for her efforts. She made a diligent search of local enrollment records. So often, records of this fundamental nature are lost through negligence, house cleanings, or the indifference of officials in charge of them.

*The Western Boatman*, a trade journal edited by Captain Davis Embree (1787-1870) published in Cincinnati and St. Louis for a few years starting in 1848, contained several listings that included most of the pioneer steamboats. Early City Directories sometimes published lists of steamboats built locally as did many newspapers. Some of these listings were reproduced in *Niles National Register* of Baltimore and *Hunt's Merchants Magazine* of New York, as well as James DeBows' *Commercial Review of the South and West*. An unexpected source for steamboat data was William G. Lyford's *Western Address Directory, 1837*, which included a sizeable steamboat list.



One should not assume that having so many sources made this task of compiling a comprehensive listing of pre-1849 steamboats an easy matter. Duplicate listing actually made the work more difficult because there was often no agreement as to the correct spelling of the boat's name or when or where it was built. Tonnage figures were often at a great variance. With a variety of authors, one must expect some disagreement in the data presented. It must be remembered that hulls were often built in one location and then towed to another place to receive engines, boilers, cabins and furniture. This would explain the place of construction as being given as Brownsville and Pittsburgh. Date, especially if only a year apart, can be explained by the boat's completion in late 1847 but not being officially enrolled as a U.S. vessel until early in the next year, 1848. The tendency to name new vessels with commonplace or popular names, such as AMERICA, COLUMBUS, or WASHINGTON, causes other obvious problems. Tonnage can be figured by several formulas that seemed to change every decade. Proof reading is too often done in a hurry and under the desire to get the publication to market, so that the printer or author might feed his family.

My personal opinion is that a primary problem with the consistency and accuracy lies with the typesetters. My own experience with typesetting done in old-fashioned methods, long after the day of hand setting but by line-o-type, still remained an imperfect process. I can remember proofs that were a succession of mistakes. Often portions of the text were repeated or omitted. They were unspeakably bad. It was also a given that tables were particularly prone to errors. The typesetter was under pressure to get the job done, quick and dirty. Speed was essential – he was paid by how many words he could produce per minute – his fingers flew to put the type in place. Dittos saved time; hence if two consecutive boats were built in Pittsburgh, all to the good; but what if he repeated the ditto 3 or 4 times? And so, too, a careless typesetter overused dittos for dates and tonnages. Not to worry, the proof readers would catch all of the errors. Yet if the printer said time is up, the presses would roll and the pages were bound, because the buyer wanted his copies now, not next week. Corrections could be made in the next edition. Yet it was more likely that there

would be no subsequent printings or editions and so this defective first printing would be the only record presently available, warts and all.

I wish I could promise that the list presented here is complete and perfectly accurate. Unfortunately, I cannot do so. Although this is my best effort to reconcile all available data, the result is far from perfect. It is, at best, a working document and can be improved, over time, as better information is uncovered.

It should be noted that my list contains the names of 122 boats built between 1811 and 1820. Yet the official U.S. Government total, as reported in the 1880 census, records only 71 such vessels. This number was accepted by Louis Hunter in his definitive study, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers*. A more recent book, *Western River Transportation*, by no less than three scholars, gives a total for these same years of 77 steamboats. Once again it is clear that there is no agreement on the details of the first decade for Western Rivers steamboats. It would appear the more we study, the more confused the record becomes. This is why historians are so often compelled to use the word “about”.

#### **ADRIA**

SW packet wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1814. 361 tons. 158 x 40 x 9. Lost on Red River.

#### **AETNA**

SW packet wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1815. 361 tons. One of Robert Fulton's Western Rivers fleet. She was intended for service between Pittsburgh and Louisville, but this plan died with Fulton and the failure of his Ohio River Steamboat Co. She was running between New Orleans and Natchez by spring 1815. In December 1815 she ran from New Orleans to Louisville in 15 days, 8 hours. Her owner and master was Capt. Anthony Gale. Worn out 1822.

#### **ALABAMA**

SW packet wh b. Ft. Stephen, 1818. 219 tons. Collided with NATCHEZ. Off records in 1824.

#### **ALEXANDRIA**

SW packet wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1819. 60 tons. Stranded at Bonnet Carre, LA on February 1, 1823.

**ALLEGHENY**

SW packet wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1820. 45 tons.

**ARKANSAS**

SW packet wh b. Clarksville, TN, 1820. 50 tons. Snagged 1827.

**BALIZE**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1817. 300 tons. Burned 1826.

**BALIZE PACKET**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 50 tons. Lost 1825.

**BAZALEEL WELLS**

SW packet, wh b. ?, 1820, see HERO.

**BEAVER**

b. Louisville, KY, 1819.

**BEAVER**

SW packet, wh b. Clarksville, TN, 1819. 136 tons.

**BUFFALO**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816. 250 tons. 120 x 25 x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. Her draft is given variously as 27 or 30 inches. Fourth boat in Fulton's Western Rivers fleet. She was launched in May 1814, but was completed sometime later after the failure of the Ohio River Company by new owners. She had two passenger cabins, 100 berths and four staterooms large enough for a family. Exploded at Owensboro, KY, March 20, 1820.

**CALHOUN**

SW packet, wh b. Leestown, KY, 1819. 130 or 185 tons.

**CALHOUN**

SW packet, wh b. Frankfort, KY, 1818. 60 tons. Part of the Missouri River exploration fleet under Col. S. H. Long which also included WESTERN ENGINEER, INDEPENDENCE, EXPLORATION, and JOHNSON. Worn out 1824.

**CAR OF COMMERCE**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 150 or 221 tons. Worn out 1822.

**CAR OF COMMERCE**

SW packet, wh b. Freedom, PA, 1818. 221 tons. Renamed RISING STATES.

**CHEROKEE**

SW packet, wh b. ?, 1819. 125 tons. Burned on Red River.

**CINCINNATI**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 157 tons. Built by William Parson, a veteran Eastern shipbuilder who came to Cincinnati about 1812. She left for New Orleans on April 29, 1818 upon completion. Snagged at Ste. Genevieve, MO, November 5, 1823.

**COLUMBIA**

SW packet, wh b. ?, 1819. 220 tons. Burned at Bayou St. John.

**COLUMBUS**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1817 or 1819. 460 tons. Worn out 1824.

**COMET**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1813. 25 tons. Designed by Daniel French. Scrapped 1814-15.

**COMET**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1817 or 1819. 154 tons. Rebuilt from barge ELIZA. Lost in 1828.

**CONSTITUTION**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816. 112 tons. Originally named OLIVER EVANS (see).

**COTTON PLANT**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820. Lost at Mobile, AL.

**COURIER**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820. 119 tons.

**CUMBERLAND**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818 or 1819. 250 tons. Worn out 1825.

**DESPATCH**

SW packet, wh b. Brownsville, PA, 1817. 75 tons. Designed by Daniel French. Worn out 1820.



**DOLPHIN**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 149 tons.  
Worn out either 1824 or 1834.

**EAGLE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 70 tons.  
Plied Natchez trade. Snagged November 1825.

**ELIZABETH**

SW packet, wh b. Salt River, KY, 1819. 150 tons.

**ELIZABETH**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1817. 243 tons.  
Worn out 1824.

**ELKHORN**

SW packet, wh b. Portland, KY, 1819. 300 tons.

**ENTERPRISE**

SW packet, wh b. Brownsville, PA, 1814. 75 tons.  
Designed by Daniel French. Worn out 1817.

**EXCHANGE**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1818. 214 tons.  
Worn out 1824.

**EXPEDITION**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV or Plum Creek,  
PA, 1819. 235 tons. Worn out 1824.

**EXPEDITION**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818. 120 tons.

**FAYETTE**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1819. 314 tons.

**FELICIANA**

SW packet, wh b. Philadelphia, PA, 1819. 407 tons.  
Blew up above New Orleans, January 13, 1828.

**FLORIDA**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1820. 278 tons.

**FLORIDA**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1820. 250 tons.  
Burned at Mobile, AL.

**FRANKFORT**

SW packet, wh b. Frankfort, KY, 1818. 250 tons.  
Worn out 1822.

**FRANKFORT**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816 or 1817. 220  
or 320 tons.

**FRANKLIN**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816 or 1817. 125 or  
150 tons. Snagged 1819 or 1822.

**GEN. CLARK**

SW packet, wh b. Clarksville, IN or Louisville, KY,  
1818 or 1819. 200 tons. Worn out 1822.

**GEN. GREEN or GEN. GREENE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1820. 306 tons.  
Lost on Cumberland River February 1824.

**GEN. HARRISON**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, 1819. Off records 1823.

**GEN. JACKSON**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1817 or 1818. 150  
tons. Snagged Clarksville, TN in May 1821.

**GEN. PIKE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 180 tons.  
Launched August 2, 1817 at Big Bone Creek, KY, 45  
miles south of Cincinnati. Hull was towed upstream  
for completion in Cincinnati. When ready for  
service, the passenger cabin was described as a large  
hall supported by marble columns and furnished  
with mirrors, furniture and carpets that "gave the  
whole an air of elegance." Worn out 1823.

**GEN. PUTNAM**

SW packet, wh b. Newport, KY, 1819. 200 tons.  
Launched May 23, 1819.

**GEN. ROBERTSON**

SW packet, wh b. Newport, KY, 1819. 250 tons.  
Snagged at New Madrid, MO, April 1823.

**GEORGE MADISON**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1817 or 1818. 200  
tons. Ran in Louisville trade. Worn out 1822.

**GONDOLA**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1820. 120 tons.

**GOV. SHELBY**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1819. 80 tons.  
Worn out 1822.

**GRECIAN**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820. 160 tons. Burned at New Orleans 1826.

**HARRIET**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816. 54 tons. 83 x 15' 4" x 4' 7". Built for Fulton's Western Rivers fleet. Started by Benjamin Latrobe in May 1814, but was completed by Capt. Joshua Armitage over two years later. Named for Fulton's wife, Harriet Livingston, niece of Robert Livingston, Fulton's partner and patron.

**HECLA**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 120 tons. Worn out 1823.

**HENDERSON**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 124 tons. Collided with BALIZE PACKET (see) April 1825.

**HENRY CLAY**

SW packet, wh b. Licking River, KY, 1819. 190 tons. Lost on Mobile River, December 7, 1826.

**HERO**

SW packet, wh b. Steubenville, OH, 1819. 120 tons. First steamboat built at Steubenville. For reasons unknown, she was built with a brick chimney that toppled over into the river when the boat hit the shore a bit too hard. Presumably she was refitted with an iron smokestack. Hit a rock near Golconda, IL, 1822.

**HORNET**

SW packet, wh b. Brandenburg, KY, 1820. 118 tons. Lost at Mobile, AL.

**INDEPENDENCE**

SW packet, wh b. Salt River (Louisville), 1818. 100 tons. Worn out 1821.

**INDEPENDENCE**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818. 50 tons. Part of Missouri River exploration and one of the more successful members of that not so successful fleet. Reached Fort Osage, about 20 miles east of Kansas City, on August 21, 1819.

**JACKLIN**

SW packet, wh b. Marietta, OH, 1818. 103 tons. Built as a barge and converted to steam in 1820.

**JAMES MONROE**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816. 156 tons. 100' 1" x 21' 6½" x 9' Another vessel intended for Fulton's Western River operations to be finished by a second owner. Enrolled in New Orleans November 1817 as a single deck steamer with two masts. Snagged at Smithtown, KY, 1820.

**JAMES ROSS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818. 270 tons. Made a quick trip from New Orleans in May 1819 to Shippingsport, KY in 16 days, 14 hours, according to a Lexington, KY newspaper. Along the way she passed HECLA, HORNET, and MAID OF ORLEANS. Lost in ice at St. Louis on February 18, 1823.

**JOHNSON**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1818. 140 tons. Built for Richard M. Johnson. Worn out 1822.

**KENTUCKY**

SW packet, wh b. Frankfort, KY, 1813 or 1818. 112 tons. Worn out 1821.

**LEOPARD**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820. 60 tons. Snagged near Point Chicot, AR, 1825.

**LOUISIANA**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1818. 50 tons.

**LOUISIANAIS**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1818. 103 tons.

**MAID OF ORLEANS**

SW packet, wh b. Philadelphia, PA, 1819. 193 tons. 160 x 37 x 10. Launched at Philadelphia for New Orleans investors according to item in newsweekly Niles Register Sept. 26, 1818. Designed by Samuel Humphreys (1738-1846), Chief Constructor of the U.S. Navy. Intended to connect Mobile and New Orleans via Lake Pontchartrain. Arrived in New Orleans by sea on February 12, 1819. Made trip to St. Louis in May 1819. One of her passengers, Fleury Générelly, made a sketch of the vessel. The original



drawing is in the art collection of Tulane University. Not a typical riverboat, but appears to be more of a small coastal vessel. Blew up on Savannah River, May 21, 1825, killing six.

### **MANDAN**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1819. 150 tons. Snagged at New Orleans, 1825.

### **MANHATTAN**

SW packet, wh b. New York, NY, 1819. 427 tons. Left New York for New Orleans and Louisville loaded with goods and passengers, according to an item in November 17, 1819 newsweekly *Niles Register*. Worn out 1825.

### **MARS**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1819 or 1820. 55 or 60 tons. Stranded December 6, 1822.

### **MAYSVILLE**

SW packet, wh b. Maysville, KY, 1818. 209 tons. Worn out 1824.

### **MERCURY**

SW packet, wh b. Steubenville, OH, 1819. 15 tons. Hit by PITTSBURGH December 1823.

### **MISSISSIPPI**

SW packet, wh b. Mobile, AL, 1819. 380 tons. Lost at Ste. Genieve, MO, on May 26, 1825.

### **MISSOURI**

SW packet, wh b. Newport, KY, 1819. 177 tons. Snagged in 1826.

### **MISSOURI PACKET**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1819. 60 tons. Snagged on the Missouri, 1820.

### **MOBILE**

SW packet, wh b. Providence, RI, 1818. 150 tons. Built for Louisville trade.

### **MOBILE**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1820. 145 tons.

### **NAPOLEAN**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1817. 316 tons. Snagged at Grand Gulf, MS on May 17, 1822.

### **NEPTUNE**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1820 or 1821. 50 tons. Worn out 1828.

### **NEW ORLEANS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1811. 300(?) tons. First steamboat built for service on Western Rivers. Built in Fulton's boatyard in Pittsburgh on Monongahela River. Left Pittsburgh October 1811, arriving in New Orleans January 1812. Sources differ as to size of the vessel. Zadoc Cramer's *The Navigator* of 1811 states the keel was 138' long and the tonnage 300 to 400 tons. An English visitor, John Melish, who visited the boatyard in August 1811, claimed she was 148' 6" long x 32' 6" wide x 12' deep. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* of October 18, 1811, claims the keel was 150 feet long and tonnage was 450. J. H. B. Latrobe in his 1871 article for the *Maryland Historical Society* gives her length as 116 feet. His father, Benjamin H. Latrobe, managed Fulton's boatyard in 1813 and 1814. Sank on a snag while tied up near Baton Rouge on July 13, 1814. (see September 2011 S&D REFLECTOR, pages 8-11.)

### **NEW ORLEANS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1815. 350 tons. 145' 7" x 26' 10" x 8' 10" Built to replace the first NEW ORLEANS. Her engine and boiler were salvaged from that boat. Arrived New Orleans April 1816. She had a 42-foot long cabin on the main deck and 13 staterooms, but no masts, galleries or figure head. Her speed upstream was 3-4 mph; downstream 9-10 mph. Her master was Capt. Anthony R. Gale. A very detailed description of the boat prepared in January 1817 by a German visitor was published in the *Louisiana Historical Society Quarterly* of July 1924. Sunk and raised in 1818 or 1819.

### **NEWPORT**

SW packet, wh b. Newport, KY, 1819. 50 tons. Built for Red River trade.

### **OHIO**

SW packet, wh b. New Albany, IN, 1817 or 1818. 364 tons. Built for Louisville trade. Stranded on Ohio River, May 1827

### **OLIVE BRANCH**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 313 tons. Burned at Louisville on April 28, 1827.

**OLIVER EVANS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1816. 75 tons. Renamed CONSTITUTION (see). Blew up May 4, 1817.

**OSAGE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1820. 149 tons. Snagged at Coffeerville, AL on February 24, 1824.

**PARAGON**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1819. 355 tons. 156 x 27 x 9. Launched from William Parson's boatyard January 18, 1819. She left Cincinnati on her first strip April 27, 1819 and reached Louisville in 13 hours, 38 minutes. A fine engraving of PARAGON appears in F. B. Read's 1873 book *Up the Heights of Fame and Fortune*, but apparently was prepared for the book and is not contemporary with the boat. Worn out in 1828.

**PERSEVERANCE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1818. 40 tons. Burned near Madison, IN on February 8, 1820.

**PHILADELPHIA**

SW packet, wh b. ?, 1820(?) 445 tons.

**POST BOY**

SW packet, wh b. New Albany, IN or Louisville, KY, 1819. 230 tons. An early U. S. mail carrier. She was described by William Faux, a British visitor to the U.S. who saw the boat in October 1819. Built at a cost of \$50,000, she was a large elegant vessel with three decks, separate dining and ladies' rooms, and a fine promenade on the upper deck. Louisville-New Orleans service. A book about Faux's travels, *Memorable Days*, was published in 1823. Worn out 1824.

**PROVIDENCE**

SW packet, wh b. near Frankfort, KY, 1818 or 1819. 450 tons. Snagged at Cantrell Church, LA on November 11, 1824.

**RAMAPO**

SW packet, wh b. New York, NY, 1818 or 1819. 60 or 146 tons. She was a sailing ship converted to steam in 1819.

**RAPIDS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 189 tons.

Burned at New Orleans on January 21, 1823.

**RIFLEMAN**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1818. 231 tons. Burned at Cahawba, AL on November 19, 1824.

**RISING STATES**

SW packet, wh b. Freedom, PA, 1818. 221 tons. Originally named CAR OF COMMERCE.

**ROBERT FULTON**

SW packet(?), wh b. New York, NY, 1820. 500 tons. Although listed as a riverboat, the author believes she was actually a coastal steamer built by John Eckford to run between New York and New Orleans. Her deep hull, at 17' 3" would have made her unsuitable for river service. She was retired in 1825 and sold two years later to the Brazilian navy for conversion to a sailing ship.

**ROCKET**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820 or 1821. 75 tons. Worn out in 1824.

**RUMSEY**

Water-jet propelled packet, wh b. Clarksville, TN, 1819. 200 tons. This vessel was promoted by a relative of Virginia inventor James Rumsey in a futile attempt to revive jet stream propulsion expelled through pipes at the stern advocated in the 1780s. The machinery was made at William Green's foundry in Cincinnati.

**ST. LOUIS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818. 250 tons. Burned near New Madrid, MO on December 12, 1820.

**TAMERLANE**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1818. 307 tons. Snagged near Island 21 on Lower Mississippi.

**TECHE**

SW packet, wh b. New Orleans, LA, 1820. 295 tons. Exploded near Natchez, MS on April 14, 1825.

**TELEGRAPH**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1818. 60 tons. Snagged near Island 21 on Lower Mississippi 1823.



**TELEGRAPH**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1820. 108 tons. Home port was St. Louis. Burned near Point Chicot, AR.

**TENNESSEE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1819. 416 tons. Sank at Natchez, MS with loss of 30 lives on February 8, 1823.

**THOMAS JEFFERSON**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1819. 224 tons. Snagged at Helena, AR on October 4, 1824.

**TUSCALOOSA**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1821. 160 tons.

**UNITED STATES**

SW packet, wh b. Jeffersonville, IN, 1819. 700 tons. 170 x 37' 6" x 11. Largest boat on the inland rivers when launched in May 1819. Towed to New Orleans for installation of her engines and boilers that were imported from England. Parts of the hull were made from thick 20-inch timbers to make her snag-proof. She proved slow and expensive to operate and was laid up in New Orleans about 1823. On September 3, 1824 the levee collapsed and she was swamped by a huge wave.

**VELOCIPEDA**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1820. 109 tons. Worn out in 1824.

**VESTA**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1816 or 1817. 100 or 203 tons. Converted from barge INDEPENDENCE and was the first steamboat built in Cincinnati. Her engine was built locally by William Green and after the boat's retirement, it was sold to Cincinnati Water Works where it operated as a pumping engine until 1844. Off the records in 1821.

**VESUVIUS**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1814. 340 tons. 160 x 28' 6" with 5 – 6 foot draft. Second vessel built at Fulton's Pittsburgh boatyard. Upon completion in April 1814, she departed for New Orleans, reaching that port in 226 hours running time. A cabin on the main deck was nearly half her length and was fitted with 56 double berths. Grounded on sand bar enroute

to Louisville in July 1814 and remained stranded for six months. Two years later she burned and sank, but was raised and ran until 1823.

**VIRGINIA**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1819. 109 tons. Snagged at Ste. Genevieve, MO 1822.

**VOLCANO**

SW packet, wh b. New Albany, IN, 1818. 217 tons. Retired December 1828.

**VULCAN**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1819. 257 tons. Worn out in 1824.

**WASHINGTON**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1815. 212 tons. Designed by Henry Shreve. Worn out in 1823.

**WESTERN ENGINEER**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1819. 30 tons. 75 x 13. Flagship of Missouri River expedition sponsored by U. S. government and led by Col. S. H. Long. Accompanied by EXPEDITION, INDEPENDENCE, CALHOUN, JOHNSON, and THOMAS JEFFERSON. Worn out in 1822.

**WHEELING PACKET**

SW packet, wh b. Wheeling, WV, 1819. 100 tons. Worn out in 1823.

**YANKEE**

SW packet, wh b. Cincinnati, OH, 1819. 258 tons. Worn out in 1824.

**YANKEE**

SW packet, wh b. Louisville, KY, 1819. 86 tons. Lost on Red River near Alexandria, LA 1822.

**ZEBULON M. PIKE**

SW packet, wh b. Pittsburgh, PA, 1815. 31 tons. Built by a Mr. Prentice of Kentucky. A small and homely steamer, she was the first to visit St. Louis in August 1817. There is a crude drawing of her in William Petersen's *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*. Sank on August 7, 1818.

*A spreadsheet of this 1811-20 index of Western Rivers steamers appears on our website: [www.s-and-d.org](http://www.s-and-d.org)* 

# 1948 Spring Pilgrimage Cruise on GORDON C. GREENE

Many of our readers will recall the Winter 2008 issue (Vol. 45 No. 4) of the REFLECTOR which featured a boatload of amazing full-color photos from a GORDON C. GREENE Cincinnati-New Orleans round trip. Those images were provided to editor David Smith through the kindness of Capt. Doc Hawley. Pictured in that issue were Capt. Mary Greene, Mate Doc Carr, the boat's master Capt. Joe Heath, and Head Waiter Mack Davis, along with many of her passengers. Those photos came from the camera of Ike Vern (1916-1987), a free lance photographer and one of the founders of the American Society of Magazine Photographers. Ike's work often appeared in Life, Look, and Holiday magazines, to name but a few.

Well, there's more to the story. Early this spring a large envelope arrived from Peoria with a brief note: "Thought you might like this. Very interesting reading. Best wishes, Bob Anton." Enclosed was the March 1949 issue of Holiday magazine, measuring a substantial 10  $\frac{3}{4}$  by 13  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches as befitting a magazine of its stature. And there on page 56 was the GORDON exactly as pictured on the back cover of the REFLECTOR, serving as lead-in to the feature article "Mark Twain Cruise: The twenty-day voyage over his old route down the Mississippi and back imparts a sense of having made a Grand Tour right in the U. S." The writer was Phil Strong (1899-1957), a native of Pittsburg - not the one in Pennsylvania, but the unincorporated one in Van Buren County of southeast Iowa. In addition to authoring free lance magazine articles and 40 books, Strong is best remembered for his 1932 novel State Fair, made into three movies and a stage musical. Six years after recording his trip on the GCG, he would write the book Mississippi Pilot: With Mark Twain on the Great River (still available on AbeBooks.com website for \$3.79)

The GCG was offering Greene Line's 1948 spring trips to New Orleans while the new DELTA QUEEN was being readied for her inaugural season to begin that June. The GORDON departed Cincinnati on Saturday, March 13 on her Spring Pilgrimage cruise, returning on April 1. On board were photographer Ike Vern and writer Phil Strong. Here is Phil's story.

The pilothouse of the GORDON C. GREENE is about forty-six feet from the surface of the Mescha Sebe or Missi-Sepe or Mississippi River. It is eight by ten, windowed on all four sides, with a great spoked wheel poking five feet above the floor. The wheel is unimportant in itself because the rudders are operated by two handles similar to the tillers in old ladies' electric coupés, at the pilot's right and left. This is a convenience, but the wheel does not know it, for it whirls about with every manipulation of the control levers. If both levers fell off, the pilot could still handle the rudders as they were handled in the early 1800's, by main strength and awkwardness, as the phrase goes, at the whirling spokes.

This night, below Cairo, IL, all the windows were streaming with a heavy fog. Four or five of us sat back on the padded bench which has been an appurtenance of the pilot house for more than a hundred years, to accommodate visiting pilots and kibitzers of press or politics. The pilot has a comfortable abbreviated high chair for his easier moments, but Walter Horn was not using it. He was standing and alert. Night vision made no difference in this fog. The pilothouse was in darkness, of course, except for the four cigarettes and the tiny lights over the engineroom telegraph.

Walter was spotlighting the shore bits of dead willow which anyone in an automobile would have passed without interest. These things were of interest to Walter. With his searchlight he made a kind of triangulation against a faint point above us and a tiny bay, slightly larger than a swimming pool, over in Kentucky. The big searchlight, by now, carried hardly a hundred feet.

"Tying up at that cottonwood above Hickman."

The captain must have been there on the stairs, though he was not visible in the darkness. But a few minutes later when Walter had swung the boat around to head upstream - the boat was downbound





*GORDON C. GREENE enroute to Lower Mississippi. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse.*

to New Orleans – the engines [held us] against the current, the landing stage fell with as much precision as if the boat were being docked in Liverpool, the lines were looped around a tree of unusual size, and all hands subsided to wait for the fog to clear, as it did in the early hours of the morning.

This is firm corroboration of Mark Twain’s statement that Mississippi River pilots have to apprehend the river, rather than perceive it. There are about 750 signals on the stream after the confluence of the Ohio, and there are about 750,000 signatures of guidance between the Coast Guard numbers and lights.

Good Lord! “That cottonwood tree above Hickman!” How many trees are there between Cairo and New Orleans – eleven hundred miles? Who knows how to approach them in low water, in high water, in varying currents, with five hundred tons of boat and anything from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty souls aboard?

Safely moored, we all went to bed. A fantastic person might have imagined a lean-faced, light-

browed chap with a dawning moustache, grinning us good night from the abandoned wheel. Mark Twain was twenty-four when he got his pilot’s license, and in his day the river was much more difficult; yet he knew it just as well as Capt. Horn does today. No better – just the same. A pilot is a pilot is a pilot.

We were twelve seconds late for the boat in Cincinnati because we had allowed ourselves only six hours for lateness or other misadventure. The bright and beautiful railroad conveyance which superseded the steamboats was exactly six hours late on the run from New York to Cincinnati. However, the self-confident boat, a relic of the olden days, waited five minutes or so for tardy passengers, and then had to lay up from time to time to stay on schedule.

This was quite satisfactory to everyone. There were extra minutes and even hours in places all along the cruise, Evansville, Cairo, Memphis, Baton Rouge – time is not of the essence. The boat could probably have made the cruise in seventeen or eighteen days, but it was supposed to make it in



*Heading Way Down Yonder to New Orleans . . . Courtesy of Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse*

twenty, which it did, to the dot.

For the people on this cruise are not going anywhere except from Cincinnati to New Orleans and back. Though the boat makes mail stops almost every day there is no radio communication, which may account for the fact that eight of the more than eighty passengers are doctors; the GORDON C. GREENE makes a perfect hide-out.

Our speed is about that of the average "low pressure" boats of Mark Twain's time. "Low pressure" signs on the wheel housings of the old boats guaranteed that the steam would be kept well within safety limits. This is not a "low pressure" boat but it is in more ways than one a "low pressure" cruise; the passengers are middle-aged to elderly people escaping the last weeks of a miserable winter in the North and anticipating spring. Later the passenger list will be progressively younger till the last New Orleans cruise of the season in May and June.

The amusements, of which a great deal more later, were calculated for the crowd. Bingo after breakfast, horse races in the afternoon when there were no shore stops, quizzes, a mock wedding, Virginia reels, bridge all over the place at all times, a poetry contest and - above all things - food.

This favorite diversion deserves a separate article and one hesitates to present a mere synopsis on such a serious subject. The dining room is the main salon of the boat; all the entertainments,

including eating, are held there. The tables, which seat four people, are spaced so far apart that each is truly a private table.

Mark Twain, in his piloting days, would not have understood the electric chandeliers, but he would have recognized the shades - oil-lamp chimneys which Capt. Mary Greene, co-owner of the Greene Line, found in an old furniture store in Memphis or Baton Rouge. They are genuine frosted and frilled Early American Petroleum of about 1901.

We had the tremendous good luck to be seated at a front table where the attendant was Mack, the headwaiter. Mack is a big man well in the fifties, with short-cut pepper-and-salt hair, great dignity mingled with great good humor, and teeth by the Radium Corporation of America. Very gently and deferentially he depletes the food stock of the nation by stuffing it down his clients.

Breakfast is the only elective meal - one can have pie or anything. Lunch and dinner are served on the plate, but if one doesn't care for the plat du jour - the heathen - he can ask for a small steak or a pork chop or anything reasonable that can be cooked quickly. He can have all he wants of whatever he wants. I remember in the first days baked ham, whitefish, Southern fried chicken, frogs' legs Creole, roast beef - I told Mack I wanted mine just thoroughly warmed in the middle and I got a perfect red piece - beautifully crisped pork chops and a succession of elaborate pastries that would have delivered a fasting saint to the enemy, charges prepaid.



In the meantime the insidious voice of Mack: “You choose that piece, sir? . . . I could get you another one? . . . You don’t fancy tomatoes? . . . I could get you some string beans or peas or carrots . . . That meringue too rich? What about a piece of cinnamon apple pie with ice cream?”

The kitchen is wide open all day and all night, with a big tank of coffee and makings for sandwiches in the refrigerators. At Cairo on the return trip, there was a general girdle census. It was appalling. One ascetic lady, on a diet, had gained two pounds; one unascetic gentleman had gained fourteen in seventeen days. The median was three to five.

Toward the end of the trip I found myself, a light daytime eater because I work late at night, chewing and swallowing things at six o’clock so that Mack would not be unhappy. And, on the whole, enjoying them. Mack was also the utterer of the classic remark one windy morning, “We have had the unfortune to delay to change the linen because of descendants of cinders.”

The first few days out of Cincinnati are marking time since everyone’s interest is in the Mississippi and not the Ohio, although the Ohio can produce a reasonable facsimile at places. Mid-March produced a flow of water that made the use of locks quite unnecessary over the rapids in the Ohio. The rapids are nothing like the rapids one sees in pictures – they are merely a long drop from the elevations of the Allegheny foothills to the calm levels of the Mississippi. Nevertheless, in ordinary water, they would snag the bottom out of even our steel hull.



*DQ passing Sewickley on Feb. 28, 1948 after Dravo drydocking, on her way to join the GORDON at Cincinnati on March 1.*

Our draft is six feet, empty, to seven-and-a-half feet, loaded. These boats were made for the river, broad-beamed and well weighted in the water – something on the order of a salt shaker that pops upright no matter how one sets it down. Above shallow, compartmented holds which contain nothing but air and buoyancy there are four decks and, above everything except the smokestacks and the mast, is the pilothouse. The first deck, whose rails are almost in the water, carries the engines. Now, in the days of diesels, the space that might have been used for coal or wood is a ‘rumpus room’ – forgive me, St. Sam’l Clemens – with card tables, space for dancing, an orchestra and a bar.

The next deck, the salon [cabin] deck, has the largest room and has the largest foredeck observation on the boat. One side of it is lined with rocking chairs. Above this is the texas deck – all the decks rise in terraces – and the texas deck was not common in the early boat days. Above the texas deck [on the sun deck] there is a row of cabins for the officer personnel. Still above the officers’ quarters is the little cubed brain of the boat – the pilothouse. It is parsimonious. Capt. Way in his book *Pilotin’ Comes Natural* (which my little woman won in the first quiz contest our second evening out), describes a bit of gold braid from one of the services inspecting the pilothouse.

“Where’s the compass?”

“We haven’t got a compass.”

“Where’s the sextant?”

“I don’t like rough talk.”

“Can I use your binoculars?”

“Never owned any – they cost money. And



*“Air-conditioned river liner” after mast and stage have been fitted, spring 1948. Both photos by Cincinnati Public Library.*

for goshsakes, mister, get out of the way! If you explicit explicits can't tell the difference between a point and a couple of dead trees without hiring an eye doctor what in the explicit explicit are you explicit illegitimates expliciting around this boat for, anyway?"

The language is slightly changed from that of Capt. Way, but the message is there. The only navigational instrument in the pilothouse was a barometer, made to stand in the corner by the stair, which faithfully registered 29.5 and falling, all the way to New Orleans and back. The weather was beautiful eighteen days out of the twenty.

In addition to eight doctors (seven of them passengers) on the boat there are eight captains. Every pilot is a captain per se, and we need four – two for the Ohio and two for the Mississippi; they have [two six hour watches a day.] Four times a year they have a month off on full pay; pay compatible with the education, experience and responsibility required of a river pilot by the Coast Guard, which now licenses river pilots. It takes three years of training to become a pilot – as much time as an extra bright student needs to become a Bachelor of Arts – and this is true whether one intends to haul two hundred people on the river or tow a barge of fence posts. There are two “top” captains on the boat: the master, Joseph Heath, and Capt. Mary B. Greene. This, with the four pilots, makes six. Capt. “Doc” Carr, the mate, and Capt. Albert S. Kelley, in charge of the watch, make up our roster of one captain and one doctor to every eleven passengers.

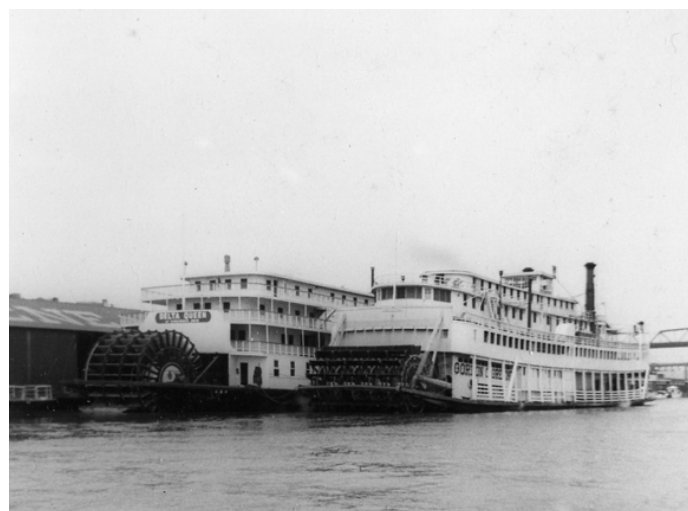
Capt. Mary B. Greene is the only licensed woman pilot on the river. She has a nice, round, apple face and she sits making large colored handkerchiefs into aprons, which she sells to the passengers for her church's Ladies' Aid. She got her pilot's license when she was twenty-two; she told me that she did her first piloting on the Ohio during her honeymoon. After that, Capt. Mary piloted on the Ohio and Mississippi for half a hundred years – 1948 was her 58th year as a pilot, but she gave up active duty about ten years ago – raised three sons, on the boat. One of them, Capt. Tom, is the business manager for the five boats of the Greene Line, though the GORDON C. GREENE and the new DELTA QUEEN are the only boats used for Mississippi cruises. Capt. Mary travels on the GORDON C. GREENE cruises as the principal hostess.

There are a good many sternwheelers in service on the river as towboats and utility boats, ferries, and so on, but there are just these two cruising boats, which cover five-sixths of Mark Twain's old route from St. Louis to New Orleans. It's somewhat over 1000 miles from Cairo to New Orleans, or 1200 from St. Louis. The round trip from Cincinnati to New Orleans comes to something over 3000 miles on paper – nearer 4000 with crossings, landings and various deviations.

The persistence of the sternwheeler over nearly a century and a half was explained graphically the other evening when the big wheel spluttered and cursed and resumed its throb. A log had slid under



*GORDON and DQ at Greene Line wharfboat, June 5, 1948. Both photos by Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton Co.*



*Although not mentioned in Phil Strong's article, it is probable that both boats were together at start and end of this cruise.*



the steel hull and jounced against our wheel. It must have been a fair-sized piece of timber, but I had no opportunity to gauge its size and now no one ever will. Whatever touched that machine is toothpicks and tinder, unless it ducked. The fragile fan which drives the boat is made of yoked two-by-tens, or twelves, of oak, bound every yard or so by heavy bands of welded steel. It would grind a man or an elephant into dog meat in one fifth of a second unless the boat happened to be backing, in which case some remains might be found in Buenos Aires. There is an awfulness about that monstrous, ineluctable machine, but it is appropriate to the waters. The paddles can use the great Mississippi and repel it. Many of the small boats on the river use propellers, but they can dodge drift. We saw one sidewheeler on the trip, a ferryboat in New Orleans. [We wonder how the author missed seeing the PRESIDENT on her frequent harbor trips during the GORDON's layover in New Orleans, and surmise that this reference is to her and not to the centerwheel ferries EDWIN N. or LEO B. BISSO - Ed.]

Owing to the arrival of our boat at Louisville at the eerie hour of 10 a.m., this reporter missed that city going downriver; a small game of poker had something to do with it (45¢ profit). The trip really settled down somewhere before Evansville, IN. The Ohio Valley, reminiscent of the Rhine Valley, was interesting enough but lamentably short of Loreleis. However, we did pass the famous old pirate cave at Cave-In-Rock in daylight and the clicking of cameras was terrific.

Nicholas Roosevelt, a great-great-uncle of Theodore, did one of the family's regularly successful circus stunts in getting steamboats on the river. He took one of Fulton's boats - he was in partnership with Fulton - down the river from [Pittsburgh] to New Orleans. This was a navigation which anyone could have managed on a well-seasoned shingle - but at Louisville he made a short loop and turned back to run against the current. That was when the River became the most important highway in the world.

Natchez is the South and it is curious to observe that the South is more Southern the closer it is to the North. It is the proximate trenches where the fighting happens. One does not wish to renew

the War Between the States, but in Natchez and Memphis one has the unhappy conviction that . . . this breach has healed lightly over eighty-five years. The courtesy is impeccable, the hospitality limitless, the deportment flawless, but you are a damyan vulgarian, privileged by your accumulation of wealth through manipulation of the price of cotton to spend a dollar to tread on gentle Southern carpets. At one house the soles and sides of our shoes were carefully brushed by a houseman before we were permitted to see the fair china and unnotable silver. Our handsome and obviously distinguished hostess on the bus gave us a pleasant lecture. It was the time of the March Garden Pilgrimage, and, quite true, several red buds were turning pink, and one could count more than seven leaves in four miles.

The trip down the river is not spectacular in March - colorless trees, colorless shores, flat land, an occasional dead house - till one begins to get the sense of the enormous, beneficent and dreadful sea beneath his feet. Dry this river finally, or pour it down the drain, and this colorless, drab-tanned gut of Middle America would carry one hundred years of the United States right along with it, and a thousand years to come. Without it the United States would be some Atlantic provinces, groping along the Allegheny.

The river is now far beyond the willows on its normal banks. Beyond Memphis it is more than two miles wide - perhaps more than three. This is not very high water, but it is deep enough to drown a man - in the channel as we hit Louisiana we had about 125 feet. I would give the best swimmer in the world two minutes in this stream. It is rivers within rivers - one could pour two Hudsons into the thing at right angles, and some observant person might wonder who let the bathtub overflow.

There are two points of importance in New Orleans, after all that has been written about the town. The first is Sazarac cocktails. Leading authorities say that these are never mixed the same in any two bars - a splendid idea since three of any kind will kill you. They make gin fizzes there with cream; take two of these buttermilks and a Sazarac and you can clearly hear Robert E. Lee addressing the troops at the Battle of the Argonne Forest just as the Hessians were deployed around San Juan Hill.

After our entertainment in the city it is horrible to have to say that the food has too much sauce, unless one likes sauce. French cooking clings to the old medieval tradition of covering fine essentials with blankets of sauce – or so it seemed to me. But New Orleans must be seen. Its three eras and their cultures are still as incompletely mingled after three centuries as those buttermilk fizzes.

The river is rising above New Orleans and the boat, shuttling between points of the river – that is, the jutting bits of land that toss the current from one side of the river to the other – is now making six miles an hour or so.

One of the charming things about this boat is its determination not to be a ship. The steward is a waiter and the stewardesses are maids. The gangplank is the landing stage; the companionways are the stairs, the davits are the boat pulleys, the funnels are smokestacks. The galley is the kitchen; and aft, or the stern, is simply the back of the boat. In orders it is, “Go back there and do so-and-so.”

The mate is a mate, as it says on his cap, but since one hardly ever sees Doc Carr without his arm or arms around one or more laughing old ladies, there is serious question about the nautical derivation of this title. Doc rose to this latter title because he ran medicine-man shows for years before he went on the river. He is still a mean lad with a megaphone at landings and departures.

The Captain is a captain, right enough, but imagine the feeling of the principal officer of the AMERICA or QUEEN MARY if he found seven other officers on the boat entitled to the same address, and the four captains who are pilots holding superior authority in navigational matters. The captain is supreme in everything except the speed and direction of the vessel. Our captain was Joseph W. Heath, who has the particular designation of “Master” among the other captains. He has what must be a very common rags-to-riches story of the river elite. Over thirty-one years, since he was seventeen, he has been on the Mississippi and Ohio, beginning as a watchman – the youngster who goes around plugging his stations and reporting everything from burned-out light bulbs to riot, arson, groans from Cabin 846 and bloody murder.

With this experience, if the lad is good, he goes to second mate, which is less than the mud beneath the paddle wheel, unless the captain and the mate are simultaneously seized with pellagra or cholera morbus. Somewhere about here begins, or perhaps, ends, the three-year study that qualifies one as a pilot, if he happens to be good enough, and the hero becomes a mate, qualified to yell orders on all ordinary occasions without the captain’s direction.

The captain is responsible for a sizable boat and all its possible difficulties, and for any extreme behavior on the part of 150 people. It is probably better to be a mate, land and launch the boat and pray for the captain’s health between times. If a pilot wrecks the boat the captain has to save all hands and as much of the boat as possible. If the baker wrecks the pie (perish the thought, as regards this boat) it comes to the captain’s attention and he sets inquiries at work on the matter. One does not envy a captain, but the gravely affable Capt. Heath seems to thrive upon stress.

However, he did turn up with an amusing bit of melodrama at Evansville. The river was at the forty-eight-and-one-half-foot stage marked on the bridge, and rising. The clearance [needed by] the GORDON C. GREENE is about forty-six feet. As we left the town Capt. Heath posted hands at the high smokestacks to fold them down if necessary – they have hinges and counterbalances – and this caused excitement on the boat and a crowd of passengers on the texas deck – all with cameras, as usual, to see whether we made it or not. It is probably the glory of our nation that these camera fiends, elderly people of sedentary habits, stood in front of the imperiled stacks to get a good shot if the bridge happened to knock them over.

The flagpole cleared – the stacks cleared – and from fifty or so people of our ages I have never heard such a yell go up. My own pictures of the incident, taken at an almost vertical angle, show the collision must have occurred, since the stacks appeared considerably higher than the bridge as we idled under it.

It was a shame to spoil it, but there was a suspicious detail or two. That evening, encountering an officer, I said, “What clearance did we have under



that bridge?" I added, by way of encouragement, "It looked like about three-quarters of an inch, from the top deck." He gave me a sad glance: "You know we'd never have taken that chance!" "Three feet?" – I [said], having done some simple arithmetic. "Not quite. She was up two or three inches after we left Evansville."

It was different above Cairo. There the stacks came down and no foolishness about it, but they came down well before we started under the bridge. After this, no one worried at all and everyone set to work on the concluding festivities of the voyage. The first of these was one of the corniest features ever included in entertainments provided by Ladies' Guilds, Girl Scouts, Rotary Clubs, Odd Orders of Plumbers and Chippewa Chapters of Redskins – the Mock Wedding.

It was also one of the funniest things one could hope to see. The participants were men only, except for the direction of Jeanne Edgcomb, the hostess in charge who borrowed most of the furnishings on the boat (they were all returned, laundered, the next day) to accouter the bridesmaids and principals. These included a doctor, a judge, two lawyers, a dentist, an engineer and a real estate man. It is not curious that every part was a star part. There was never such amusement in any of the infantile mock weddings that are regularly produced from a variety of versions that are sold for ten cents by a number of patter publishers. This was two-thirds extemporized by ripe people, accustomed to public performance, and it was very amusing.

The last night on the boat I talked to Mr. William A. Barron of Newburyport, MA. Mr. Barron was the only man on the boat who had known Mark Twain, for a time, down in Bermuda when Mark was a guest of Dr. Will Allen. He thought this was a year or two before Mr. Clemens' death, probably about 1908 or 1909. He was certain, however, of Mark's habit of greeting the BERMUDA from the headlands above Hamilton Harbor, then much narrower at the channel than it is now. Mr. Clemens, forewarned of the ship's approach, mounted this particular height and waved his panama; the captain, an old friend, replied with three toots of the whistle. This sounds like the crotchet of a retired septuagenarian, but it was merely good fellowship.

This inevitably brought about the question of how Mark Twain would have managed with this boat, in his piloting days, under present conditions and the question was referred to the pilothouse where young Capt. Horn (who was to be married Friday in Cincinnati – many happy returns, Walter) was on duty and Capt. Hughes, the oldest and the most experienced pilot on the Ohio and Mississippi, was standing by.

There are always two or three pilots in the pilothouse, for what is called a Dead Man's Stop on engines and street cars is no good in the full current of the river. I produced Mark Twain's license of April 1859, and the testimony of his tutor, Capt. Horace Bixby, supplied to me by Twain's cousin, Cyril Clemens:

"Unless Mark had been a damn good cub pilot he wouldn't have lasted a day on my boat. He did his work and was always prompt to obey orders. He didn't become the best pilot on the river but he did become one above the average. Yes, Sam could always hold his own with the river fraternity."

Young Capt. Horn said dubiously, "He'd have to learn the river all over again." That was obvious, since the river has shortened 150 miles or so, and is spanned by a dozen bridges since 1859 – in addition to having moved a mile or two towards the east in spots. The infamous Natchez-Under-the-Hill is now Natchez-Under-the-River. We landed four fathoms above it.

"And he'd have to learn the lights." The quiet voice of the older pilot came from the pilot's chair at the left of the wheel. "Scores of 'em – several hundred, in fact. They've all got names. He'd have to learn the names backwards and forwards. You can do it at night, in bed, like counting sheep."

There was silence. These river men are not afraid of silence. When things are still, you can think and after you've thought, you may or may not speak. "Must have been a mighty dark river in Clemens' day," said Capt. Horn. He was right about the name, of course. The Innocent Abroad at 21 Fifth Avenue and in Redding, CT and at Hartford was Mark Twain; on the river he was – and is – Sam Clemens. "Dark? Yeah, it musta been," replied

Capt. Hughes. “No lights – no Coast Guard to put ‘em up. You steered by points of land and houses and big trees, while you could see ‘em, by sun or by moon.”

“No searchlights on his boat, either,” said Capt. Horn, with a majestic sweep of his own light over sepia water, moleskin-colored sky, and the near bank, where the giant cottonwoods dragged their tortured roots up from the mud. “And no lighted-up towns. You know, like Baton Rouge, the other night.”

No, I thought, not like Baton Rouge. There’s nothing in the world like Baton Rouge at night, from the river – the long bright spectacle of lighted buildings and streets, of floodlights over the university campus and the glare of oil refineries, spotlights on the state capitol and the jeweled bridge across to the west bank. It almost made you forget that Huey Long set up this radiance of Baton Rouge.

“You couldn’t steer by towns back there in 1859. People had oil lamps and they put ‘em out and went to bed at nine o’clock,” said Capt. Hughes wistfully. “They got enough sleep, those days.”

“What did they steer by, then, without lights or a moon?” I asked. Both pilots chuckled. “They didn’t. Without a moon, they tied up. And they got some sleep too.”



*Capt. Jesse P. Hughes on watch in GCG pilothouse. Photo from Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse.*

Capt. Horn was still thinking about the question I had asked him. “I’d say it’d take your writer friend six months to get his license renewed, maybe a little longer.” “You’re thinking about Cincinnati,” said Capt. Hughes. “This fellow ran from St. Louis. He wouldn’t have to take more than eight round trips, picking up after all this time. That’s the rule for lengthy retirements.”

A lengthy retirement of ninety years. “What about all the new mechanical gadgets, and so on?” “Hell, anybody who can learn the river would pick those up the first day.” This really seems to be a Mark Twain cruise – or rather, a Sam Clemens cruise.

It seems unfair, after the comfort and security of the rocking chairs and the dining room, and the ever-available kitchen refrigerators, and the laughing maids who could make a peaceful haven out of the small hell of one’s cabin in ten minutes, and the pleasant, quiet officers, to mention that just above Louisville we had a smashup. It would be less fair not to mention it, because a generation may pass and go before it ever happens again, if at all.

Down at Greenville, MS, we had seen the marks of one of the worst river tragedies in many years – a smear of oil on a bridge pier. A week or two before, a towboat [the FBL steamer NATCHEZ, see September 2011 REFLECTOR – Ed.] with a long string of barges, had been swept into the concrete buttress, broken and sunk. A dozen men on the side away from the buttress, which was not a hundred yards from shore, jumped overboard. These men were riverwise – they did not struggle, for that would have been useless in the swift water and might weaken them for some fight with an eddy or tricky offshore current. They floated like flotsam, a few with cork jackets and some without, till they reached a point, and then to town and coffee and blankets.

Another group of 12 or 13 was on the opposite side of the boat toward the pier. And here the river did not produce one of its little whirlpools; it folded. Where the current, split by the pier, rushed together again, it was whipped down violently in a caramel-colored Niagara. The strongest swimmer in the world would never have surfaced in that water.



These matters were more interesting when our boat and a towboat [R. J. NUGENT] banged into each other somewhere above Louisville. The details were quite uncertain. About 12:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 31st, a large farewell party was going on in the rumpus room, two or three feet above the river. At around 12:40 every seated person – a dozen or so – on the bow side of the table fell over in his chair and hit the back of his head on the deck. Those more fortunately seated toward the stern fell over the long table, which was bolted down. Every loose thing in the boat slid toward the bow, with a single exception, which will be noted.

The GREENE was beginning to make way astern, but for two or three minutes the [party-ers] stared straight through the open side doors into the ruptured furnaces of the towboat. What a good revivalist with a 16mm camera could have done with that layout is appalling to consider.

Then one saw why men have pride in their work on the greatest highway in the world. In one minute or less, the crewmen were at their stations by the boats; the maids were ready at every passage to help you with a life belt; the captain and the pilot were jockeying the boat toward shore, but the cables of our [stage falls] were tangled with those of the opposing team – in a matter of two minutes an acetylene torch was arranging a divorce. No confusion, no excitement above the normal interest which might be occasioned by such an act of God: pilots cannot be blamed for those currents. Two of the people on the towboat were hurt badly but not dangerously, and the GREENE sent over a doctor or two: we had a lot of them to spare. The incidence on our boat was one lady with a nosebleed, but she had always had them.

The inanimate object which was not disturbed was this reporter, deeply asleep for thirty minutes or so since the decent hour of 12:00 in his upper berth. My wife left the shambles of the rumpus room to inform me that we were about to burn up or go down. I figured that my upper berth on the texas deck should average out against either contingency and was the best place to be, up in flames or down in the river, particularly with sleep hanging on the eyelashes; so I went to sleep again, in spite of her protests.

The boat turned back to Louisville for an examination of the damage and minor repairs. In the afternoon we went on toward Cincinnati where the solid repairs would be made, and they were making them when we disembarked. High water and the Devil – we were ahead of time. The boat was back on the river the next week, again a combination of a hotel with good service and table and a caravel pitted against the enormous vagaries of the river.

The river is the thing. Huck Finn, on his raft with Jim, would have been drowned a dozen times before he reached Cairo if he had tried his raft on the river at this flood. No LaSalle or DeSoto would ever have returned from his small boats on this tremendous artery in its swollen stage. It is not only an ocean but it is a dynamic ocean, driving toward its level in a sea which has only superficial perturbation.

One steps ashore at Cincinnati, a very sophisticated and elderly city of the early West, with a sufficient sense of having made a Grand Tour inside the States. 🕒



**R. J. NUGENT (T2093) built in 1912 at Cincinnati as U.S. Engineer towboat SCIOTO. 157 x 31 x 4.2, with engines 14's - 6 foot stroke. Capt. Harry Loudon, DELTA QUEEN Ohio River pilot of the 60s, 70s and 80s, served on this boat during his career with the Corps. Renamed by Nugent Sand Co. of Louisville when they bought her in March 1948. At the end of that same month, she collided with the GORDON at Twelve Mile Island, resulting in damage to both boats. Capt. Cuba A. Foster of the NUGENT suffered minor injuries. Sold in April 1951 to J. W. Menke of St. Louis, and then to Bernard Bros. Auto Supply of New Iberia, LA in 1953 for use as a quarterboat. Photo from Murphy Library, U W - La Crosse.**

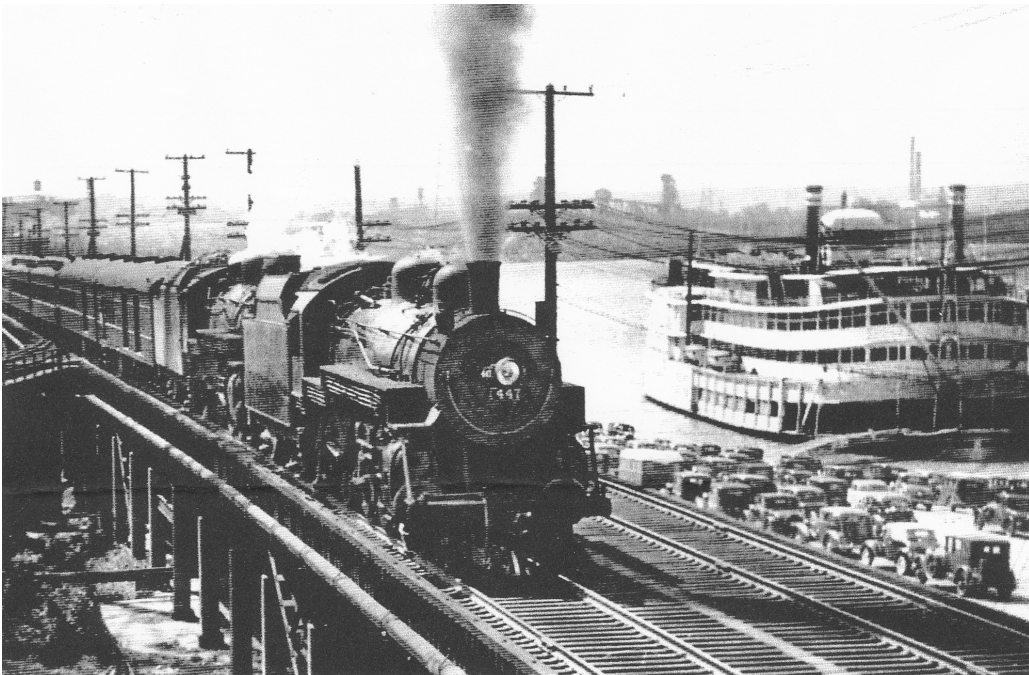
## ISLAND QUEEN Photo Discoveries

Two photos of the Coney Island excursion steamer ISLAND QUEEN landed in your editor's mailbox recently thanks to the sleuthing of Tom McNamara of Cincinnati. The first view shown below was taken as the boat was being finished in the early spring of 1925. Workmen are visible on the

scaffold in front of the lattice work at the main deck bow, while construction materials are strewn on the bank. Mouth of Licking River is behind the boat opposite her landing down at the foot of Broadway. She made her first trip on April 18, 1925, very likely a matter of days after this shot was taken. Original plans for this proposed sister boat to CINCINNATI were drawn by famed architect Tom Dunbar, with the new superstructure designed by another well-known Pittsburgh designer, Thomas Rees Tarn. The boat's tragic demise was told in our last issue by Capt. Ernest Wagner, her Mate in 1947.



*ISLAND QUEEN* nearing completion at foot of Broadway, opposite mouth of Licking River. Photo courtesy of Tom McNamara.



*ISLAND QUEEN* landed at Louisville on Kentucky Derby Day, May 7, 1938, with the C&O's *George Washington* in foreground. Photo courtesy of TLC Publishing, Inc. and The Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society.

The second photo appears in a new book *The George Washington: The Most Wonderful Train in the World*, and pictures the IQ landed at Louisville's city front on Derby Day, May 7, 1938. This shot was a revelation to your editor, as it documents Big Liz making a special tramp trip to the Falls City prior to opening her 1938 Coney Island season on Memorial Day later that month. Conversations with Doc Hawley and Jack White confirmed that she customarily tramped prior to her regular season, but neither were aware of any specific Derby Day excursions she had ever run. A third call to Jim Reising in Louisville brought a request to see what might turn up in Louisville newspapers by way of local ads for any excursions that week. We will report Jim's findings when he has completed his search. By the way, Lawrin won the Derby that year, ridden by a jockey making his initial appearance at Churchill Downs: the legendary Eddie Arcaro. 🕒



# *Incident on the* **ROBT. E. LEE - 1879** by John Gibbs, Steamboat Engineer

This is the story of a Mardi Gras trip I made on the ROBT. E. LEE [the second LEE, not the racer] in 1879. We left Vicksburg with the usual amount of freight and a number of passengers and continued picking them up at every landing until I was told that we had on board six hundred passengers. I always felt there were many more than that, because I did not get a chance to sleep in my bunk all the way down the river. A passenger would always beat me to it, and in those days I had a "heart" and would not throw him overboard. We reached New Orleans all right and had a good time laying over twenty-four hours behind our usual leaving time, knowing we could make up our lost time.

Everything went well until we were nearing Vicksburg. It had been raining all day and the decks were slippery with mud. The mate, Moses Gibbs [mate aboard the first LEE during her race with NATCHEZ in 1870, but no relation to the author of this piece] had a hose out on both sides and was having the decks washed before we reached port.

All of a sudden, a tremendous crash took place and a vapor of escaping steam threw the passengers and crew into a state of pandemonium. One of the forty inch by ten-foot stroke engines had "run through," tearing out the front end of the cylinder. The cylinder head struck the beam under five of the nine boilers and almost knocked it completely from under them. In its flight, the piston spider cut and closed the doctor pump exhaust pipe, cut the hose

in two and crippled several roustabouts who were sleeping under the boilers.

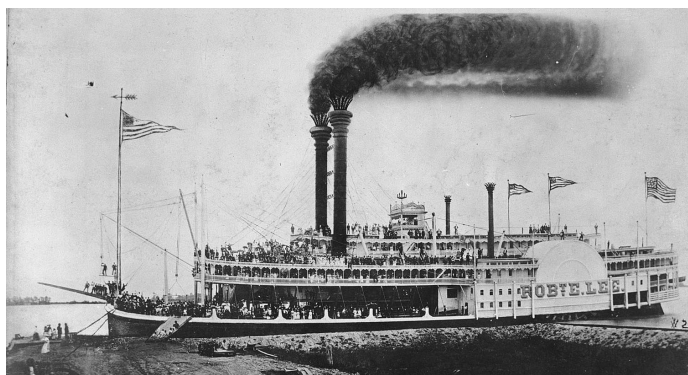
We had a hundred ninety pounds of steam, with the throttle wide open and the firemen were keeping the furnaces filled. You can imagine the confusion when the doctor pump stopped and those nine safety valves raised up and two short pieces of hose began slinging water over the hot boilers. The disabled engine continued to roll over from the momentum of the wheel and no one was able to get near it to close the throttle. The boat listed way over, for the other wheel was running to keep her under control. There was a fog of smoke and steam a mile high, and each time the disabled engine would run her valve on the broken end of the cylinder it would make such a piercing noise that it would chill the blood in the bravest.

It was a hard job to keep many of our people from jumping overboard. It was some time before the fires could be hauled and steam cooled down in order that the twelve inch throttle valve could be closed. They began picking up the injured and dead roustabouts. I was told there were two killed and four wounded.

That ended the busy season for the LEE. She laid up and had a new cylinder cast in a foundry in New Orleans. That same engine had worn out on the LEE which ran the race with the NATCHEZ, but there was a considerable difference in the boiler power of the old boat and the new. The old, or first LEE, had eight boilers, while the second had nine.

Neither the NATCHEZ nor the LEE had sufficient boiler power for their engines, and it may have been a blessing to both boats on the race and the balance of their careers, because in those days they hung grate bars on the safety valves after leaving port and took them off in or nearing port.

*Although Gibbs gives the year of this incident as 1879, it is likely that it took place in 1877. Shrove Tuesday, final day of Mardi Gras festivities, was on Feb. 13 that year. If the boat left New Orleans next day on Ash Wednesday, she would have been in Vicksburg by the 16th. On that date, Capt. Way notes that the LEE blew a cylinder head and was laid up until March 27. Our thanks to Dale Flick for providing this article.* 📷



**ROBT. E. LEE II (4778) built 1876 by Howards. 315 x 48.5 x 10.5. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, U. W. - La Crosse.**

# Summertime on the Ferry

## W. J. QUINLAN

These views of the Davenport-Rock Island ferry W. J. QUINLAN were brought to mind by Judy Patsch's recollections in our last issue of the old ferry landing at Rock Island. Davenport native Pat Welsh recalled those summers riding the ferry back and forth across the river at the Quad Cities.

"I was just a kid when I rode the QUINLAN, but this is what I remember. You walked up on the ferry dock and boarded on the port side [at Davenport.] Once on the boat there was a long stairway to the second deck, also on the port side. On the stair risers there were advertising and messages. I remember ... NO SPIKING ... I did not know what that meant, but thought it was like spitting! Once on the second deck you were in the ballroom with the bandstand at the back. Restrooms were behind the band. I never



**THE QUICKEST WAY**  
 BETWEEN  
**ROCK ISLAND AND DAVENPORT**  
 [ Good Until Used, for One Fare ]  
 VOID UNLESS PURCHASED FROM  
**ROCK-ISLAND DAVENPORT FERRY CO.**

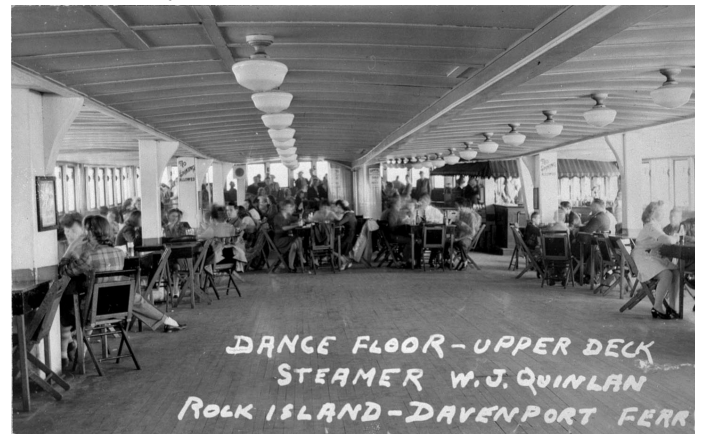
*A real bargain on this pre-QUINLAN ticket which pictures the boat as DAVENPORT in 1920s. Courtesy of Pat Welsh.*



W. J. QUINLAN (5643) built at Rock Island 1904 as DAVENPORT. 112.5 x 36.5 x 3.5, engines 14's - 5 foot stroke.

had or spent money on the boat except for a bottle of pop. All of my rides were in daytime. Les Swanson, who played piano on the QUINLAN, once told me that one of the band members would be positioned near the entrance to the women's restroom where he would attempt to collect a dime from anyone entering. Tony Catalano had his band playing on the QUINLAN in the 30s, and then played with his 12-piece orchestra on the first tramp run of the PRESIDENT on the Upper Mississippi in 1940. Some years after the boat was retired [1946] and before the fire [1965], Davenport TV station WOC took their cameras to the boat, filmed the interior, and talked to owner Fred Kahlke. Kahlke told the reporter that he wanted to get the QUINLAN cruising again, but that the cost was prohibitive: it was \$50,000."

The QUINLAN's last master was Capt. Art Quinn, who ran as IDLEWILD's mate during her one and only season on the UMR in 1947. 🕒



*Original of this photo was provided by Roy Wykoff, longtime Quad Cities correspondent for The Waterways Journal.*



*Pianist on far right is Les Swanson, whose river career began as calliapist on the WASHINGTON. Photo courtesy of Judy Patsch. QUINLAN photo to left from Murphy Library.*



## Notes from the NATCHEZ

A phone call during the last week of April brought news from New Orleans about the steamer NATCHEZ. Capt. Doc Hawley related an amazing story of the “heavy seas” encountered by the boat on her April 3rd cruise when the river was whipped into furious whitecaps by the same storm that tore the CARNIVAL TRIUMPH loose from her moorings in Mobile, AL. “At one point,” said Doc, “the water was actually jammed up inside the wheel and trapped behind the stern transom so that the wheel stalled out - it actually stopped turning. When the water receded, the wheel was left momentarily suspended above river level and spinning at 20 rpm.” Before the cruise was over, waves crashed completely over the main deck guards, ripping a lifeboat from its lashings and tossing it around the deck. Capt. Don Houghton, master of the NATCHEZ, kindly sent the picture shown here of a trip that will not soon be forgotten.

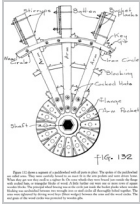
The following week, the steamboat hosted an uninvited hitch hiker wrapped around her wheel - a Texas rat snake, pictured above right. Mr. Reptile hung on for the duration of the two hour cruise, and



only after the boat landed was the guest extricated with a pike pole by crew. Your editor mentioned to Doc that had Ernie Meyer been managing the boat, the snake would undoubtedly have been charged the price of an afternoon ticket. “Oh yeah,” said Doc, “and an adult one at that!” Turns out the free rider turned a profit for the NATCHEZ after all. The specimen was sold to a local pet shop for \$20.

April 11-14 was the 30th anniversary celebration of the French Quarter Festival, and part of the crowd thronging the riverfront area adjacent the boat is shown in the aerial view below. All in all, April was quite an eventful month for the big excursion sternwheeler. Captains Hawley and Houghton have the editor’s thanks for keeping us posted up on the latest news from Toulouse Street Wharf. All photos shown here are courtesy of Capt. Don. 📷





# Small Stacks

## Foam Hulls and Feathering Wheels: Part Three

by John Fryant

Any excursion boat, whether model or full size, looks better with a good complement of passengers on board. (It's good for business.) And the use of figures on a model gives the viewer a better idea of the relationship of the size of a person relative to the size of the boat. 1/32 scale model figures are harder to locate than those of more commonly used scales, but finding some for sale on Ebay, I grabbed them up. They were made by the German firm Preiser, a producer of excellent figures in all the popular modeling scales. These made a nice complement of human "cargo," a total of thirty-five figures, including passengers and crew. The operating features on the boat include lights, horn and a rotating radar scanner. Recorded air calliope music would be nice, but some really lightweight components would be needed for this, as the weight of the model is becoming critical.

The model features some really spectacular lighting. Recent developments in the hobby industry have resulted in tiny LEDs with self-stick backings. These operate on from seven to twelve volts and consume very little current. They proved just the ticket. Installing the strips around the underside edges of both the main and second decks produced spectacular results as you can see. Further additions to these lights are planned, as I want to illuminate the paddlewheel and perhaps the stack. The searchlight and navigation lights will also be changed over to LEDs instead of the incandescent bulbs presently installed. As of this writing, there hasn't yet been a night run with the model, although the lights looked awesome in a demo pool at a recent model show. (photo 1)

Note the sign in photo 2 on the forward main deck bulkhead. I named my make-believe excursion company "Ramblin' River Line" in honor of a song written by the late Robert Schmertz, a Pittsburgh architect and S&D member who wrote many humorous songs about the rivers and the boats and

people who worked on them. S&D "old timers" will remember Bob and his banjo entertaining us in his hotel room after the formal Saturday night meeting was over.

The boat's namesake is Virginia Bennett, a well-known lady from the Cincinnati area who once worked for Greene Line Steamers and the Delta Queen Steamboat Co. Now well into her eighties, Virginia knew all of the local river captains and used to have a marine radio set up in her apartment overlooking the Ohio River in Ludlow, KY. She would communicate with all of the towboat captains who passed by her location. She eventually earned the well-deserved title of "Cincinnati's Harbor Mother." Several years ago a navigation light located below her apartment was named in her honor, and so it was an easy decision to name the boat for her, even if it is only a model.

Technically speaking, the VIRGINIA B. isn't fully finished. As previously mentioned, a few more lights plus some recorded music need to be installed. Two flagstuffs were recently added up on the roof, as I felt that there wasn't enough detail there. Two state flags are flown, Ohio and Kentucky. Although the VIRGINIA B. hasn't yet competed in any model regattas or fun runs, the model did take a first place in the Working Vessel class at the 2012 Toledo RC Model Expo. If anyone is interested in building a similar model, only these photos are available for reference, as there are no formal plans. I used only very simple sketches to fabricate the various parts. Photo 2 shows the model as it presently looks. In operation, she performs very nicely as shown in photo 3. By using a low camera angle with a distant background the VIRGINIA B. can look very much like a full size boat. (photo 4)

There is an historical precedent on the Western Rivers for the use of feathering versus radial paddlewheels. Back in the 1920s the Army Corps of Engineers installed a feathering sternwheel on their towboat NOKOMIS. Test runs were made with both types of wheels and extensive reports were published. Although not having copies of these reports available, I do remember that one reason feathering wheels were deemed impractical was that there was much trash in the rivers that would often foul the feathering mechanism.





*VIRGINIA B. with new LED lights aglow. One can only imagine what heart-stopping vision a scale model of the CAPITOL or ISLAND QUEEN would present using present-day lighting technology available to model makers!*



*Recent view of VIRGINIA B. after “improvements” made by the writer from original design. Proud flagship of the Ramblin’ River Line.*

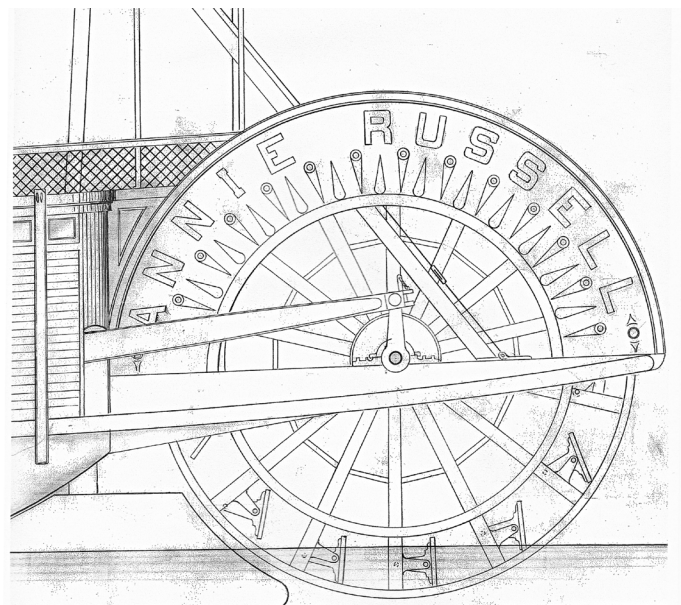


*The sternwheeler undergoing “river” trials answers her helm nicely after redesigned wheel and monkey rudders were installed. No bowthruster needed here.*



*Model or real thing? Only a carefully trained eye can tell. All photos courtesy of John Fryant.*

After studying many photos of NOKOMIS, your editor was unable to locate a shot showing her with a feathering wheel. John recalled that it was quite small, compared to typical radial wheel. NOKOMIS was built in 1899 at Dubuque Boat & Boiler, and boatyard shots clearly show she had conventional wheel. However, DBBCo did propose a feathering wheel on this January 8, 1902 blueprint for ANNIE RUSSELL. But a quick check on the back cover of our September 2012 issue reveals that she was not built with that type of wheel.





## Final Crossings

### George E. Woodward, Sr.

George E. Woodward, Sr., 84, of Gallipolis, OH, passed away on March 13, 2013 in Fort Myers, FL. He was born on Dec. 31, 1928, the son of Capt. Tom Fox Woodward and Sallie Estelle Sawyers Woodward. A native of Gallipolis, George graduated from Gallia Academy in 1946. After 28 years service, he retired from Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. George was a member of the Patriot Masonic Lodge and also a proud member of S&D, tracing his family history back to a long line of riverboat captains.

A lifelong member of Grace United Methodist Church, he also served on the Green Local School Board, and was active in Gallia County Cattleman's Assn. He was also awarded one of the Farm Families of the Century. His hobbies included farming, fishing, painting, wood carving, and music.

George is survived by his devoted wife of 61 years, Nona L. Henderson Woodward, six children, eight grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and a brother, Tom Woodward. Funeral services were held March 19 in Gallipolis, with burial in Mound Hill Cemetery alongside his grandfather, Capt. Edward Woodward.

*Our thanks to George's daughter Katie Maciag, and to Bill Wetzel of LeHigh Acres, FL for sending obituary information to the REFLECTOR.*

### Ann W. Shearer

Mrs. Ann W. Shearer, 91, of Charleston, WV, loving wife of the late Capt. Bert Shearer, passed away on March 17, 2013. She was born on October 31, 1921 in Allegheny County, PA.

Ann is survived by a son Edward and his wife Gayle of Seabrook, TX, members of S&D; by a son Mike and his wife Gabriel of Galway, NY; and by two grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

As per Mrs. Shearer's request, her body has been donated to West Virginia University for medical research. The family requests that any memorials in her honor be given to the Point Pleasant River Museum or to the Charleston, WV Humane Society.

*Thank you to Jim Bupp for providing memorial information for Mrs. Shearer.*

### Capt. Walter H. Maund

Walter H. Maund, 85, formerly of Charleroi, PA, passed away on April 11, 2013 in Washington, PA. He was born on January 27, 1928 in Rices Landing, on the banks of the Monongahela, son of Walter H. Sr. and Mary McMichael Maund. After graduation from Charleroi High School, he served in the U. S. Air Force in World War II and in the U. S. Navy during the Korean War.

Capt. Maund held a first class pilot license, and began his river career on W. P. SNYDER, JR. He piloted for several companies and for the Corps of Engineers, retiring after 37 years. He last served as captain of the m/v CHARTIERS for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District. He was a longtime member of S&D.

Surviving are daughters Linda Pecharka of Washington, PA; Amy (Frank) Mavrich of Canonsburg; and two granddaughters. Capt. Maund was interred in the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Cecil Township.

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### *Reflections from Our Readers - continued from page 3*

back to Pt. Pleasant where it is understood that he was buried. We are still looking for his grave site.

Son Edward had three children: Nell, Tom, and Edward S. My grandfather Edward worked on the OTTO MARMET. He was 49 years old with three children when he had a heart attack and died on the boat. He is buried on Mound Hill Cemetery in Pt. Pleasant overlooking the Ohio River.

My father, Capt. Tom Fox Woodward had just gotten his pilot license in May 1916 (his father Edward died the following August). My father took over the family and later moved them to Gallipolis, OH. My father trained and helped his brother Edward get his river license. My father worked on the SALLIE MARMET and then ROBERT P. GILLHAM. He later left the GILLHAM and started working on the sternwheel JULIUS FLEISCHMANN. I was about nine years old and got to travel with my father. I really thought that I was something to get to run around on that big boat.

When my father started working for the Ohio River Company he started on the G. W. McBRIDE. I recall him saying that he left the McBRIDE because she was unsafe to handle. As the story goes, the MCBRIDE later hit a bridge in Cincinnati and 22 lives were lost. When my father left the McBRIDE, he moved to the steamer OMEGA. I have fond memories of spending ten days on the OMEGA going up the Kanwha River with my father. On one of the trips the Ohio River Company had him take the OMAR down to Cincinnati with 28 barges loaded with coal. It was the largest tow ever taken down the Ohio at that time. I remember my father telling me that he had to start backing fifteen miles from Cincinnati to be able to get that tow stopped in open river.


In 1945 my father decided to retire. He had a heart attack earlier and recovered and bought a farm out in the country. Somehow the O. F. Shearer Company talked him into going back on the river. My father died on my 18th birthday at the age of 52.

My uncle, now Capt. Edward S. Woodward, worked on several boats with Union Barge Line. He

had two children and Edward died at 65. I think he was the only Woodward to work on a diesel boat.

With the history of my family, a wonderful river legacy, one can see why our generation never took to the river. It was a hard life and most died young. Capt. Edward Woodward was the last of many generations of river men in our family.

One day on the Gallipolis riverfront when they had featured a barge with museum memorabilia, I was looking at a picture of the Falls of the Ohio. There was a fellow standing beside me and I said to him, "My dad ran those falls." He looked at me and asked who my father was. I told him, "Capt. Tom Fox Woodward." Looking back at me he said, "Your father taught me the river." That is how I met Capt. Charlie Stone.

All three captains, Edward H., Tom Fox, and Edward S. are buried on mound Hill Cemetery in Gallipolis, overlooking the river they so dearly loved - The Ohio! 

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

### **Back Cover**

Our feature story on GORDON C. GREENE's 1948 spring pilgrimage cruise initiated a photo search which turned up this shot at Cincinnati sometime after 1937 and prior to the early 40s. The interesting thing is that she is pictured alongside the former Ohio River Transit Company's sunken wharfboat, according to information documenting the photo. In our March issue, Sharon Cunningham detailed the history of this company, quoting Alan Bates' WJ column that ORTC's fleet and assets were acquired by Greene Line Steamers in 1936. This photo is undoubtedly at the foot of Sycamore Street, with EVERGREENE (previously Cairo City Ferry Co.'s KIWANIS) landed at the big Greene Line wharfboat in the background, foot of Main Street. *Photo courtesy Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin. - La Crosse.*

