

# S & D

# REFLECTOR

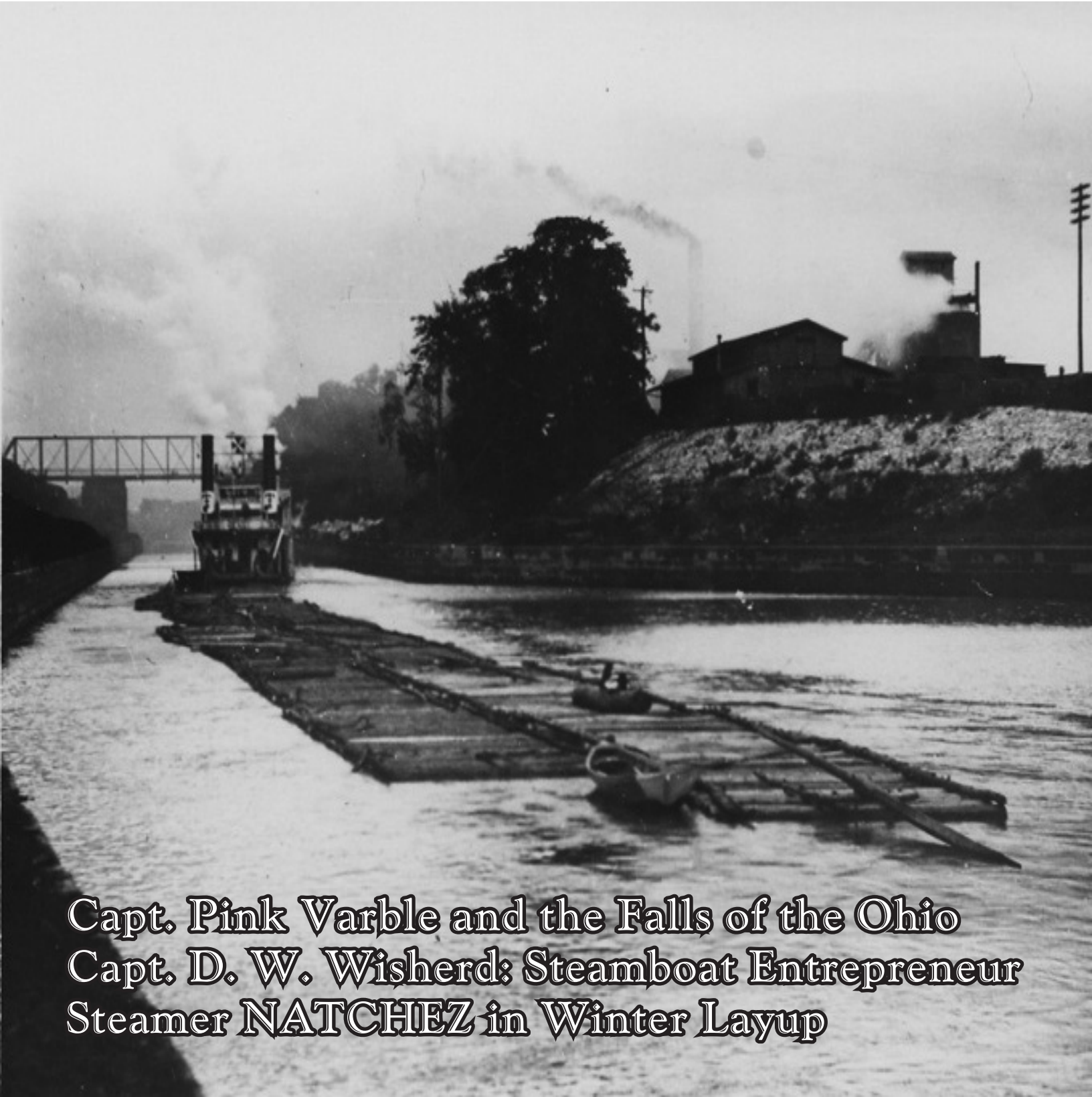
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Vol. 53, No. 1

Marietta, Ohio

March 2016



**Capt. Pink Varble and the Falls of the Ohio  
Capt. D. W. Wisherd: Steamboat Entrepreneur  
Steamer NATCHIEZ in Winter Layup**

## Front Cover

The Louisville harbor boat TRANSIT heads out of the Louisville and Portland Canal in the late 1880s or early 90s. In the foreground is what appears to be a lumber raft with a steering sweep to the right of the yawl. The Canal, along with a series of locks and dams built over a span of 170 years, provided passage around the treacherous Falls of the Ohio. Among the key figures who assisted boats and tows in making this transit were the Falls Pilots, chief among whom was Capt. Pink Varble. His story is told beginning on page 8 of this issue. The TRANSIT was "Pink's Pet," a boat built especially for the rigors of working in the Louisville harbor. In the spring of 1891 she sank while transferring cargo from the GOLDEN RULE, but was raised. Twenty years later, when piloted by the last of the Falls pilots, Pink's nephew Capt. Dan Varble, she sank again at the Louisville harbor, but was once more raised. *Photo courtesy of Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.*



## Reflections from Our Readers

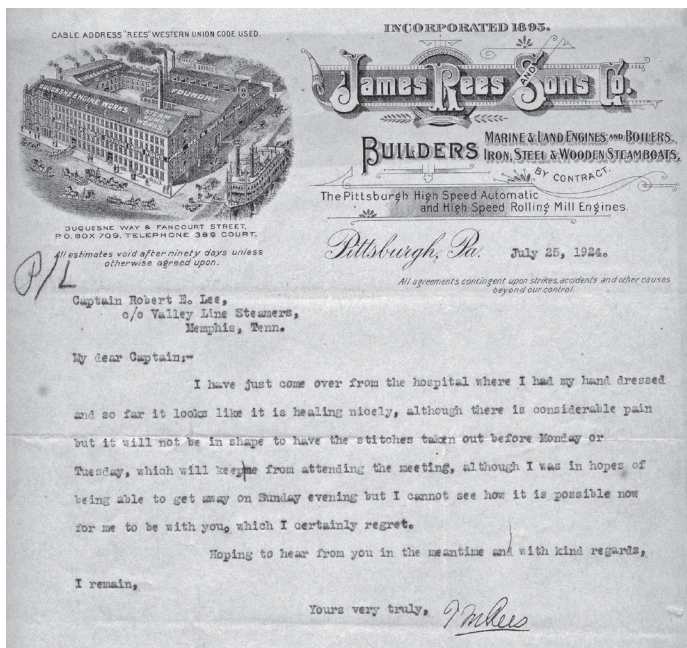
Capt. Bob Reynolds writes: "I have come up with a question, which you may or may not be able to answer. After reading Tom Dunn's book on the PRESIDENT, I re-read Annie's book and then re-read the White Brothers' ISLAND QUEEN book. Here's the question: I know D. Walter Wisherd was involved in the Coney Island operation. I also know he was associated with the Streckfuses. Did he provide the Streckfuses with any plans of the IQ as far as structural details, how the mezzanine was constructed, etc.? From what I've read and seen, the PRESIDENT was a bit nicer or more fancy than the IQ, but of course they were very, very similar in many ways. Do you have any insight on who may have contributed to the PRESIDENT's design? This is one reason I love history so much... we're always coming up with new questions, new discoveries! Anything you might know would be appreciated."

Bob's inquiry arrived coincidentally at the very time your editor was beginning to piece together a story about Capt. Wisherd. In his memoir, Capt. Wisherd makes mention of his major role in the design and construction of the ISLAND QUEEN, whose hull he had purchased from John W. Hubbard and then sold to Coney Island Company, and so he was privy to all those details in a unique way. Seven years later, he had already returned to the employ of Streckfus Steamers, at a time when their new flagship PRESIDENT was being designed and built. The knowledge and opportunity were both there if he wished to share design features with his former employer. For their part, the Streckfus family was unrivalled in knowledge of the excursion business, and were thereby prone to keep their own counsel. However, any opportunity to adopt practices or designs that would improve the family business were wholeheartedly endorsed, and any advantage or improvement to be fairly gained from whatever source was probably put to good use. The intriguing dynamic here is that the Streckfuses were justifiably proud of being masters at their own business without any outside help or interference, while Capt. Wisherd had the unique position of being the only "outside" non-family member ever entrusted with management and operations in the company. Interior decoration of both PRESIDENT and ADMIRAL were delegated to Mazie Krebs, but Capt. Joe Streckfus was adamant that each boat's overall design was strictly that of the family. Whether that included input from Capt. Wisherd or not will probably never be known, but if outside help did play a part, he was in the special situation of being the only living person who could have provided it.

James Rees Lee, Sr. writes: "I came across this old letter from Capt. Tom Rees to my Great Uncle Robert E. Lee and thought you might like to see this letterhead. The Lee's and Rees' were friends as witness by the use of Rees in my name. I also have a first cousin named Rees."

Jim kindly sent a copy of the letterhead and letter which appears in the photo on next page. The cordial relationship between these noted

river families was referenced at several places in Jim's recent four-part history of Memphis' Lee Line which appeared in last year's REFLECTOR. Also shown below is a family photo of Capt. James Rees and his sons, surfaced last year by your editor's son Jonathan.



Letter from Capt. Tom Rees, courtesy of James R. Lee, Sr.



THOM. M. REES

CAPT. JAMES REES, Sr.

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Rees Family L-R top: Thomas M., Capt. James Sr., James H.  
L-R bottom: William M., David A., and Charles S.

Reflections from Our Readers continued on page 35

# IN THIS ISSUE

## Columns

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Reflections from Our Readers | 2  |
| Getting Posted Up            | 5  |
| Meet Our Contributors        | 6  |
| Small Stacks                 | 30 |
| Final Crossings              | 35 |

## Features

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Capt. Pink Varble & Falls of the Ohio | 8  |
| D.W. Wisherd: Steamboat Entrepreneur  | 22 |
| Steamer NATCHEZ in Winter Layup       | 32 |

## Articles

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Stoughton Cooley: River Author<br>and Photographer | 6  |
| TWILIGHT Calendar Available                        | 35 |



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### Features

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### Images

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

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9

America's Steam & Diesel  
Riverboat Magazine

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# S&D REFLECTOR

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of Pioneer Rivermen

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

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

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

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## Getting Posted Up

### Telling Our Family Stories

Your March REFLECTOR has inadvertently managed to weave a theme throughout its articles and features: that of a decidedly biographical bent. Contained herein are glimpses of life stories of three river people: a pilot of legendary fame on the Ohio at Louisville's Falls; a master/pilot/manager/owner who left his wake on nearly all of the major inland rivers; and a river author and photographer who was brother to perhaps the last famous cotton packet captain on the lower Mississippi.

Upon reflection, this telling of "family stories" is vintage Capt. Fred Way, writing in the pages of the magazine he created. Cap was an artist at painting portraits and weaving varied bits and pieces into a fascinating tapestry of the men and women who lived and worked this nation's rivers. Years ago, Capt. Alan Bates had rightly observed that Capt. Way's REFLECTOR was not a journal about boats or historical events, but about people, all sorts of people. These other trappings were only incidental to the amazing parade of folks whose lives were in some way connected to our inland rivers.

Many of the episodes in the biographies sketched in this issue seemed to providentially fall into place. All of this began with an email from Steve Huffman alerting the editor to Capt. D.W. Wisherd's online memoir, followed shortly thereafter by the unexpected arrival of Bob Anton's package containing the October 1909 *Waterways Journal* article about the captain, and culminating in a visit by phone with Capt. Wisherd's interviewer of sixty years ago. Then Linda Claire's inquiry into publishing a 3-year old manuscript about Falls pilot Pink Varble opened up a flood of communications channeled through her from other Varble family descendants which she had gathered over the years. And finally a call from Walter and Dan Shrake in Savanna, IL last summer to come down for an open house at the old Capt. Stoughton Cooley mansion led to discovery of an obscure river novel authored by one of his ten children. Capt. Way would have been delighted to navigate all these channels!

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Which brings us back to where we began. The S&D REFLECTOR continues to invite and encourage its readers to share your stories, those stories that tell the lives of our river people: past, present, steam, Diesel, young and old. All of these are the "family stories" to which this journal is dedicated. 



## Meet Our Contributors

**Leland R. Johnson** (*Capt. Pink Varble and the Falls of the Ohio*, p. 8) has authored articles for the REFLECTOR many times in recent years. His tribute to “Louisville’s Lifesavers: Heroes at the Falls” was first published in serialized version in these pages over a three-year span, prior to its appearance in book form in 2014. In addition, Leland penned a narrative of the Steamer NEW ORLEANS’ pioneer voyage from Pittsburgh to New Orleans in 1811-12 for our Steamboat Bicentennial issues in June 2011.

Shortly after completing the Falls Heroes manuscript, Leland forwarded a copy of his latest research effort, the biography of Falls Pilot Pink Varble, with hopes that its chapters might appear in future issues of our magazine. Sadly, Leland passed away in February of 2014 just after his Falls Heroes book was published in association with longtime friend and collaborator Chuck Parrish, and so he did not live to see his last manuscript in print. With the approval of Dr. Johnson’s family and enthusiastic assistance and support from Linda Varble Claire, Capt. Pink’s great great niece, we are able at long last to share Leland’s story of this noted riverman as a memorial in honor of them both.

**Matthew Dow** (*Steamer NATCHEZ in Winter Layup*, p. 32), is one of S&D’s younger reader/members. His work was featured in the September 2012 REFLECTOR with his article about the MINNEHAHA, one of New York state’s steam-powered excursion boats owned and operated by Capt. Bill Dow’s Lake George Steamboat Company. Matt, licensed as a pilot by the State of New York since 2012, can be found each excursion season in the pilothouse of his family’s sternwheeler, with regular stints at the keyboard of her steam pianna.

In the MINNE’s off-season, Matt usually takes up residence in the Crescent City putting in time aboard the other steamboat run by his family, New Orleans’ exquisite NATCHEZ. Not surprisingly, Matt told us way back in 2012 that he intended to make the excursion boat business his life.

## Stoughton Cooley: River Author and Photographer

Last summer, your editor had opportunity to tour the “Steamboat House” built by Capt. Stoughton Cooley at 1019 N. Main Street, atop a hill overlooking the Mississippi in Savanna, IL. Capt. Cooley moved from near Athens, OH and settled in Savanna in 1851. Seven years later he constructed a Victorian Italianate residence with veranda and cupola, including decorative cast iron gates on the front entrance manufactured in New Orleans and brought upriver. The captain and his wife lived in this home where five of their ten children were born. The first of the children, William Wallace, was master of the TENSAS in the New Orleans-Bayou Macon-Tensas trade. The sixth child, La Verrier, would achieve some degree of notoriety by operating four packets named OUACHITA, as well as the AMERICA, last cotton packet in this country when she was laid up in 1926.

However, it was the Cooley’s eighth child, Stoughton Jr. (1861-1934), who caught the editor’s attention when a display at the Savanna Museum and Cultural Center mentioned that he had authored a book titled *The Captain of the Amaryllis*. After a quick online search, there it was: originally published in 1910 by C.M. Clark Publishing Co. of Boston, and available in reprint from Kessinger Publishing or at no cost as an eBook.

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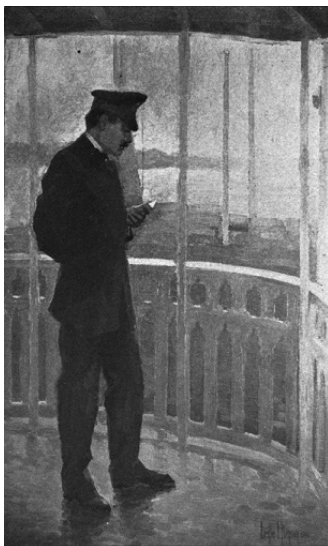
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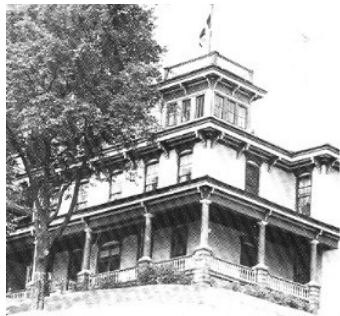
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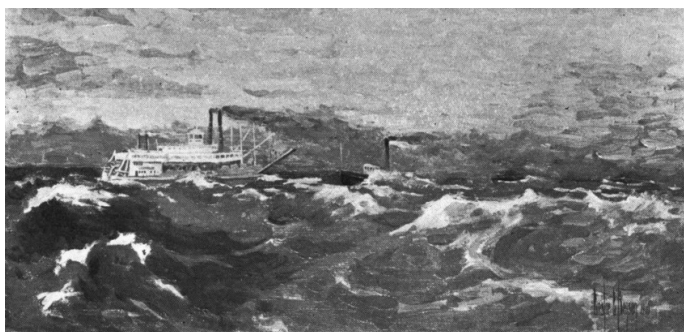
He re-read the few words on the paper a number of times



The Cooley House

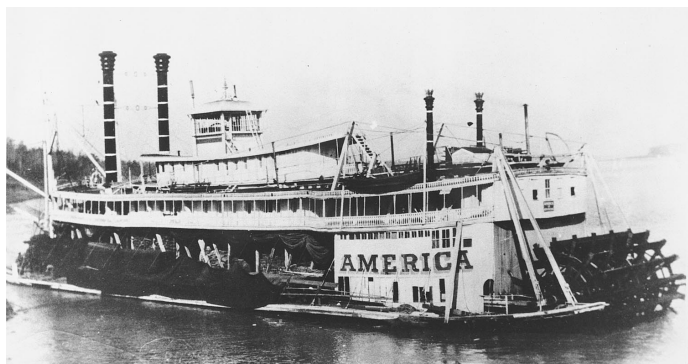
**Above: The Cooley family home in Savannah with caption "the captain had a lookout on the hill." Left: Capt. David Ingram, master of Cooley's fictional AMARYLLIS.**

The book is a fictional account of the life and struggles of Capt. David Ingram, master of the AMARYLLIS, "the regular Ouachita weekly packet, plying between New Orleans and Monroe, and known in the trade as the 'Wednesday boat.' She was a sternwheel boat with a capacity of forty-five hundred bales of cotton, and from one hundred to two hundred passengers, according to the degree of crowding. Being in the cotton trade, she seldom made any landings during the first hundred and thirty miles out from New Orleans, or until she




The Amaryllis snorted and puffed as she tugged her best.

**AMARYLLIS pictured in Cooley's novel above bears a striking resemblance to Capt. L.V. Cooley's AMERICA shown below. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, La Crosse.**



reached Baton Rouge. The intervening territory, known as 'the Coast,' was served by 'sugar boats,' which ran only as high as the capital, or at farthest, to Bayou Sara." Much of the description of the cotton trade and life on the steamboat carries a ring of authenticity, no doubt supplied by the author's association with older brother Capt. LaVerrier.

As early as 1893 while living in Chicago, Stoughton had published an article and a book for the American Proportional Representation League and from 1898-1913 was co-editor of *The Public: A Journal of Democracy*. Apparently his political and social interests also surfaced in another pursuit as recorded in Thomas Buchanan's book *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks and the Western Steamboat World*. Buchanan wrote: "In the mid-1890s, photographer Stoughton Cooley prowled the steamboats of the lower Mississippi. There had been thousands of pictures taken of steamboats since the invention of the camera at mid century, but Cooley tried a new style that was becoming popular in the cities of the region. Instead of taking distant landscape shots that celebrated 'picturesque' steamboats, he decided to portray the life of African American roustabouts. The images that resulted, now part of the Sophie Cooley Pearson Collection at LSU, reveal that in many ways working on the deck of southern steamboats had not changed much since slavery ... Though most of the young workers photographed would never have known slavery, their lives were intimately structured by the legacy of bondage." Some of those images were taken aboard Capt. LaVerrier's packets OUACHITA and AMERICA. Shown here is one snapped as the OUACHITA was being unloaded. *Photo courtesy of Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County.* 



# Capt. Pink Varble and the Falls of the Ohio (Part I)

by Leland R. Johnson

## PREFACE

As Falls City of the West, Louisville owed much of its commercial development to its location at the Falls of the Ohio, the steep and dangerous whitewater rapids where all boats stopped, rather than wrecking against rocks. Residents of the Falls City prospered by helping boat owners portage cargoes around the rapids, the principal obstruction to inland river commerce between Pittsburgh and New Orleans. At higher river stages, when swelling water partly submerged sharp rocks of the Falls, boats might float safely across the rapids, but only if highly skilled pilots took the helm and twisted the craft through serpentine chutes between the rocks.

To assure boat safety when passing the Falls, the states of Kentucky and Indiana appointed talented Falls pilots, licensed, bonded, and experienced, to guide vessels into the chutes through the whitewater. For more than a century, until a dam submerged much of the rapids, the two states appointed dozens of Falls pilots who escorted thousands of flatboats and coalboats, steamboats and towboats past the cascades blocking river commerce.

Of all the Falls pilots, Captain Pink Varble earned recognition as the most fearless, the most skillful, the best. Songs and poetry celebrated his prowess, his generosity, his devotion to the river, to the nation, to his city and his extensive family. Stories of his exploits on the Falls spread from Louisville throughout the Mississippi Valley and even to New York and San Francisco.

Falls pilot from the first, Falls pilot to the last, Captain Pink was the archetypical river captain – brave, loyal, generous to a fault. Whereas legends of rivermen as Mike Fink and Roaring Jack Russell were in part fictional, if not mythical, stories told of Captain Pink were rooted in fact. The legends

of Captain Pink survived him for decades, but in time old river captains and news reporters who remembered his exploits passed on across the river. Although handed down to sons and grandsons, gradually the Pink Varble stories faded and even memories of the hazardous Falls passage, submerged by dams and pools, shriveled to nothing. Before lost in time, the story of Captain Pink's fantastic life should be retrieved and retold.

When first studying the Falls of the Ohio during the 1960s, this author heard old rivermen, aged lockmasters, and river historians such as Thomas Clark speak with awe of Captain Pink Varble, the great Falls pilot, of how he steered thousands of boats safely through the rapids, protecting lives of travelers by the millions, of how he was always on call to rescue people perishing on the river, of how he led campaigns to improve river channels, especially at the Falls. The author dismissed much of this as legend, if not myth, until river captains and historians C. W. Stoll of Louisville and Frederick Way, Jr., of Sewickley contradicted his interpretation. They had seen scattered records proving that Captain Pink thrived as Falls pilot and accomplished what legends said of him. How wonderful it would be, they said, if Pink's story could be told—too bad not enough records survived to write it. During the following years, the author confirmed that Capts. Stoll and Way, as usual, were right: Captain Pink was all they said he was, but only meager records of his career had survived the century since his death.

Thus alerted to the significance of Captain Varble, Falls pilot, during four decades the author collected biographical information at every opportunity from multiple sources, aided by many scholars mentioned in the following acknowledgments. The legends of Captain Pink gradually became flesh, making possible this effort to illuminate the life and career of this formidable pilot. Paucity of manuscript




After sounding that distress signal, we turn again to the life of Captain Pink, when he shaped the Falls and they him, when he boarded a steamboat gleaming white in the sunlight, its reflection glancing off the river. It sported a flag from its jackstaff, and high up on the top deck stood a pilothouse perched between the twin smokestacks. Captain Pink seized the oaken pilotwheel with his brawny arms, steered the floating palace into the Ohio's powerful currents, and put on speed as the boat entered the mouth of Indian Chute, heading down whitewater rapids of the Falls to the south, or else to destruction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and its historian at Louisville, Charles Parrish, the author had opportunities to search the National Archives, finding a few Pink Varble papers amidst the red tape, and the author published them in Captain Fred Way's journal, the S&D REFLECTOR. In the papers of Will S. Hays at Kentucky Library of Western Kentucky University, Nancy Baird pointed to tributes Hays penned to honor Captain Pink, indicating Hays was Pink's close friend. James Holmberg and staff at Filson Historical Society produced a great treasure, copies of letters and a biography of Captain Pink written by Rachel McBrayer Varble, a talented Kentucky author married to Pink Varble III. She had graciously shared them with Mary Verhoeff at Filson Club, and thus a primary Varble collection was preserved.

Again, thanks to U. S. Army Corps of Engineers historian Charles Parrish during the 1990s, when researching engineering of the Falls of the Ohio, the author had opportunity to scan nineteenth-century Louisville newspapers, uncovering contemporary reports on Captain Pink's troubles and achievements. The advent of the internet during the 1990s also facilitated contact with Varble family descendants researching their ancestors, and these friends supplied information on the Captain's family and home life. Descendant Ann Cooper even offered letters about the Captain and his family penned by Major Pink Varble III and his wife in 1972. Steamboat historians Jack Custer of Portland and Gerald Sutphin of Huntington offered technical



**Capt. Pink Varble, Falls Pilot (1828-1892).** *Illustration from Louisville Courier Journal, reprinted courtesy of Leland Johnson and Charles Parrish from Heroes at the Falls: Louisville's Lifesavers.*

records, however, forced the author to rely heavily on newspaper reports of Captain Pink's activities. This skewed his biography, because news headlines typically highlighted Captain Pink's accidents on the Falls rather than his successes. A Falls pilot could steer a thousand boats safely down the Falls without notice, but just a single wreck received intense news coverage. Only one news reporter during Captain Pink's lifetime analyzed this issue, and after reviewing the Captain's personal logs he concluded Pink during his career established a success rate better than 99.9 percent; in fact the reporter calculated Pink's losses on the Falls at exactly .00055 percent of the total number of boats he steered through the chutes. It is impossible now to audit the reporter's computations, because the logbooks Captain Pink maintained have been lost to history; nevertheless, the Captain set an admirable record never to be surpassed.

insights to the author, and Sandie Custer shared her hard-earned knowledge of the life of Will S. Hays, Kentucky's greatest songwriter. Nathalie Andrews and staff offered access to Portland Museum's Falls Pilots collection, for which the author is grateful. These contributions and others made possible this study of the life of Captain Varble, his role in changing waterways technology, and his alterations to the Falls environment. It seems almost inevitable to observe that Louisville was made by the Falls and Pink Varble was made for the Falls.

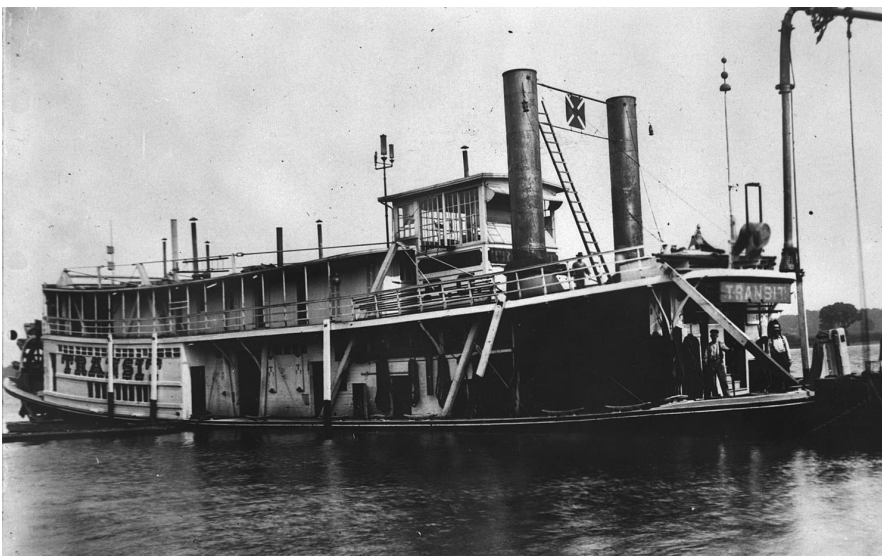
## CHAPTER I - PINK THE PIONEER

Captain Pink trod slowly up the stage plank, suppressing its bounce to appease his aching knees. At the top of the incline he stepped gingerly onto the deck of his harbor boat *TRANSIT*, sparkling with the fresh coat of paint he gave it after resurrecting it from the river's grasp. Holding his overcoat tight against the March wind and bracing with his gold-capped walking cane, he hoisted himself painfully up the steps and looked to the pilothouse. Seeing Fred Littrell had pilotwheel in hand and boiler steam up, Pink waved to him and bellowed, "Lay on the Wood!" Limping on to his cabin, he heard the pilot chuckling at the quip while pulling bell cords to the engineer below. They were bound across Louisville's harbor for the Pumpkin Patch where the great towboat *JOHN A. WOOD* awaited Pink's guidance safely down the Falls.

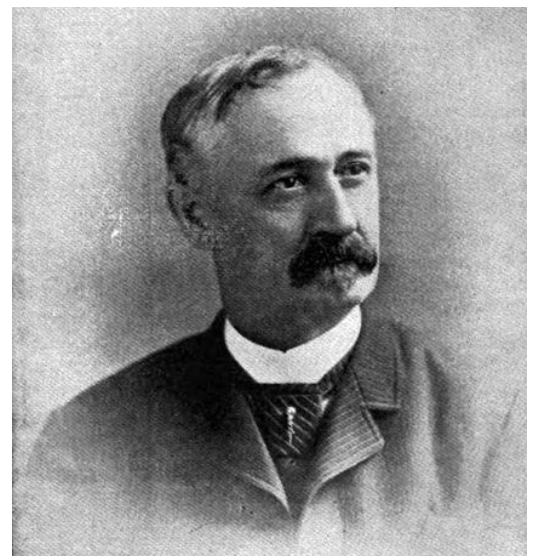
Entering his cabin, Captain Pink felt his harborboat tremble as her paddlewheel began thrashing the Ohio to a froth. Steadying his rocking chair in his hands, he lowered into its familiar contours and began rocking back and forth to flex his knees while resting. Plush blue carpet on the cabin's floor deadened sounds of the engine grumbling below, and its newly paneled walls shut out shouts of mate and crew as the boat left the wharf. Seeing colorful portraits of Mary Frances and his family gracing the bulkhead above the paneling, Pink smiled.

He retrieved a tattered newspaper lying on the ornately carved table next the chair, and thumbed it to the gift sent his way unexpectedly by Will Hays, a holiday tribute:

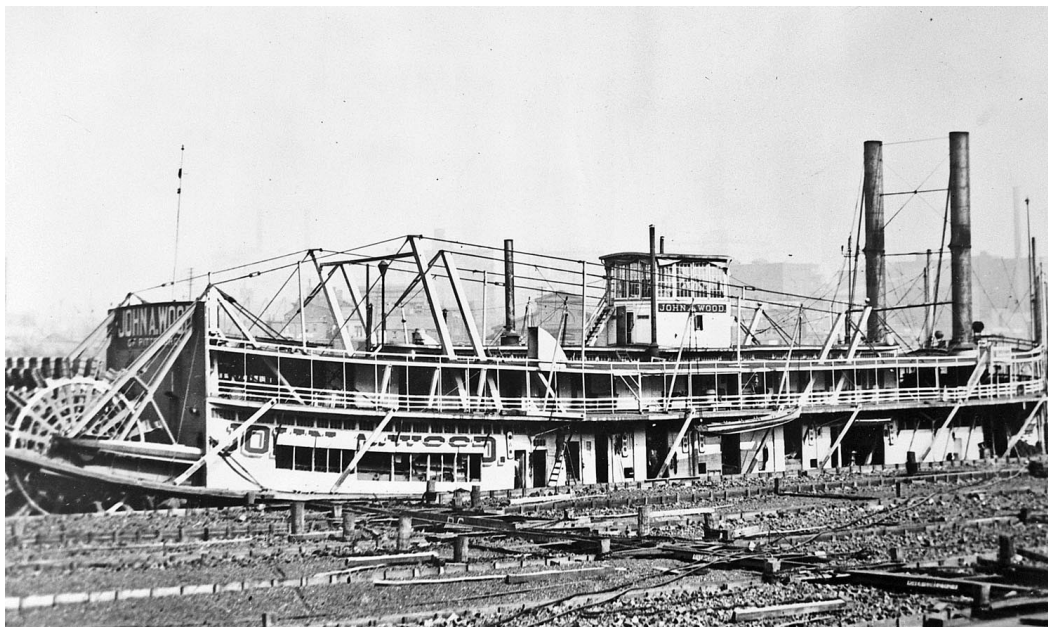
"There are few such men among the marines as Capt. Pink Varble. He is the oldest Falls pilot living, and is as nery and game today at the wheel as he was when he was a young man. He is a man among men—a man of energy, nerve and pluck—kind-hearted to a fault, and as good a pilot as ever grasped the spoke of a wheel, or pulled a bell cord. Although past the half-mile post in the race of life, he continues to keep up with the best of them on the home stretch, and promises to come out neck and neck with, if not ahead, when death taps the bell and the race is ended. There are few better men than Pink Varble—none braver."



*TRANSIT (T2463)* was built at Brownsville, PA at the Axton Yard in 1889. Her 122 x 24 x 3.9 hull carried engines 15½-5 ft. stroke. She was Louisville's harbor boat, later bought by the Combine, and ended her days as A.W. ARMSTRONG for Ayer & Lord Tie Co. in Paducah. Photo from Murphy Library, La Crosse.



Will S. (William Shakespeare) Hays, river reporter for the *Louisville Courier*, noted songwriter, pilot, and one of Capt. Pink's chief admirers.



*JOHN A. WOOD (T1391) built 1870 at Freedom, PA. 198 x 40 x 7, compound condensing engines 18's, 41's-8 ft. stroke (first compound engine towboat on the rivers) for John A. Wood & Sons, Pittsburgh coal operators. The biggest coal tow up until 1880 was handled by the WOOD when she took 21 coalboats and 8 coal barges to New Orleans that May. In her later years, she handled even larger tows. As fate would have it, the "Silent John" would be the last towboat Capt. Pink took over the Falls. Photo from Murphy Library UW-La Crosse.*

Mary Frances and the Varble family read the sentimental compliments by Will Hays and believed them. Pink knew the truth of age. He closed his eyes against his nagging headache and clutched at his knees with gnarled hands, twisted nearly closed by fingers broken on the wheels of a thousand boats. He nearly drifted off to nap when the jar of his harborboat landing against the gunwale of the JOHN A. WOOD shook him to action. Pushing himself up from the chair with his walking stick, he strode out from the cabin into the stiff March gale.

Waiting until the two boats rocked in unison, Pink stepped over onto the deck of the huge towboat, called the "Silent John" by rivermen because it sported the first condensing steam engines ever installed on a riverboat and ran strongly yet quietly in comparison to other steamers. Captain John A. Wood had the boat built in 1870 at the Freedom shipyard and installed its novel Hartupee engines at Pittsburgh—during the spring 1880 coal tide it had towed twenty-nine coalbarges to New Orleans, the biggest tow ever handled on the rivers. Later, it pushed even larger tows, engaging in a friendly rivalry with the towboat W.W. "Wild Bill" O'NEIL for the barge-shoving horns. The "Silent John" won fame second to no towboat in the nation, and in March 1892 headed the list as the most powerful boat of its kind. Pink's nephew Dan Varble had piloted the "Wild Bill" and its coal tow over the Falls the previous day, and it stood at Portland awaiting the "Silent John" for their usual race to New Orleans.

Captain John A. Wood had commanded his namesake towboat for seventeen years, nearly constantly. Although wealthy from his coal lands near Pittsburgh, Captain John loved boating the river. As Pittsburgh civic leader, his support had been crucial for the Army Engineers' plans to build locks and dams along the entire length of the Ohio River to make it resemble a slackwater canal. Alone among all coal barons, John stood up against opponents to the plan, even during their torchlight parades through Pittsburgh's streets in protest. John had won this campaign in 1878 when the engineers began building Davis Island Lock and Dam at Pittsburgh, the first movable wicket dam on the Ohio. After the first dam's completion in 1885, other towboat owners conceded it served commerce well and joined John's efforts to have fifty more locks and dams constructed to slackwater the Ohio from stem to stern. Standing at the pinnacle of his profession, whenever Captain John passed up or down the Ohio, he always employed Pink Varble to steer his prize towboat safely past the Falls, and Pink had never failed him.

Captain Pink forgot his pain, striding manfully along the deck cheerily greeting mate and deckhands, all old friends from flowing time. He stiffly climbed stairs to the pilothouse and entered it smiling broadly at Captain John. John and his monster towboat had arrived the day before and had already made up its barge tow, just a few of the barges hauling four-million bushels of coal from Pittsburgh downriver on the spring rise. Putting

these barge tows over the Falls had kept Pink on a steady run since Christmas.

Doffing his coat and standing his cane in a corner, Pink and Captain John exchanged greetings and news while Fred Littrell and crew lashed the TRANSIT to the front of the WOOD's massive tow to assist its passage around the twisting curves of Indian Chute. Pink leaned out the pilothouse window to wave a signal to Fred, then asked, "Are we ready, Captain?"

"Let's go, over the Falls, Pink!"

Standing left of the enormous oaken pilotwheel, Captain Pink pulled bell cords to signal the engineer below and firmly grasped the wheel's spokes, turning it as the towboat's churning paddlewheel pushed the barges from the Indiana shore. First, Pink flanked the six-hundred-foot-long tow toward the Kentucky bank, then deftly spun the pilotwheel the opposite direction to aim the tow like a giant arrow into Indian Chute, threading through the gap in the Falls dam and between the railroad bridge's forbidding piers. After thousands of passages, Pink could steer the towboat in one direction then another without thought, as a child rides a bicycle, and he focused instead on the coral reef's always shifting conditions. Each boat he steered had a unique feel, responding differently to the tiller; and each time over he saw the Falls change: currents dashed in new directions at varying speeds, they removed or added rocks to the chute, they cascaded, swirled, eddied, roared. Winds swept waves from all compass directions, pounding against passing boats, driving them to one side or the other. Smoke from city chimneys, fog, rain, snow, dusk and dawn, all could obscure light in Pink's eagle eyes, but on a sunny March afternoon, with a stiff breeze blowing away fog, Pink could not understand the haze clouding his vision.

Standing right of the wheel watching twisting, roaring cascades ahead, from the corner of his eye Captain John Wood saw Pink stagger as if to fall, then clutch the wheel and right himself.

"Something happening, Pink?" John inquired. When Pink did not reply, John dismissed his question and returned his gaze to the foaming white waves jumping high ahead of the tow.

A gasping noise alerted him Captain Pink had staggered again, his hands dropping from the wheel. John sprang to catch him, too late, and Pink crashed sideways, heavily onto the deck, sprawling legs akimbo. Seeing the loose wheel spinning freely, Captain John recognized he had to take the wheel, rather than kneeling to Pink's aid, or his boat would wreck against rocks frothing the waves on both sides. John slowed the wheel with the elbow of his coat, then grabbed onto the spokes as if his life depended on it, which it did.

Rushing current sent the tow headlong into the cascades, and Captain John saw he could not back the boat to stop. Even were it possible to back down the tow, he could not alert Fred Littrell on the TRANSIT, lashed to the tow's bow, in time to back as well. The tow would break up, barges would whirl into the rocks and sink, possibly ripping out the passing towboat's hull. Bulging from the water ahead lay what Pink had named Wave Rock, and the tow was on course for collision. Captain John could not remember: did Pink flank the tow right or left? Did Pink call for more engine power?

"Pink!" John called, glancing down where Pink lay on the floor. Captain Pink turned his head toward the sound and opened his eyes. "Pink, we're drilling straight into Wave Rock. What...?"

*The corn will grow, the river will rise, and Pink Varble will steer our boats over the Falls. Louisville was made by the Falls and Pink Varble was made for the Falls.*

Crossing the Falls of the Ohio River thousands of times, both down and upstream, Captain Pink Varble became most famous of all Falls pilots at Louisville, KY, and a legend in his own time. He remained legendary into the twentieth century as stories of his exploits passed down from flatboat master to steamboat pilot to towboat captain. Stories waxed larger with retelling, but in Pink's case exaggeration seldom did justice to the truth. Mike Fink's and Roaring Jack Russell's exploits on America's rivers, often fictional, always hyperbolized, paled in comparison with Captain Pink's feats, his fearlessness, his adventures through forty years at Louisville's Falls. Captain

Pink's story must be extracted from mythical mists of time, beginning with the fact that he was native neither of Louisville nor of Kentucky.

On a crisp North Carolina morning Pink Varble became the seventh child born to Henry and Alia Varble. The Varbles had Pennsylvania forebears who migrated south before the American Revolution to settle near Salisbury, NC on Yadkin River. Henry and Alia Locke married there in 1817 and their children were born where the Yadkin runs deep. When Pink was born to them on the fifth of September 1828, they named him Daniel Pinkney. Over his grandfather's objection, Henry and Alia called the lad Pinkney, but his brothers quickly shortened it to Pink; and so was he known to history: Pink Varble. As the family's seventh child, Pink had five older brothers—Alexander L., Rush, Ed, Billy, John and an older sister, Sarah—but he was not last of the Varble clan. His younger brother Richard was born in 1830, and with eight children to feed and clothe, Henry and Alia decided to move west on the frontier to a place where their children might find better opportunities—to the Commonwealth of Kentucky on the Ohio River.

When Carolina's leaves burnished gold in autumn 1831, Henry and Alia packed their eight children in a wagon with their household goods and started walking west, following the trace first blazed by Daniel Boone from Salisbury into Kentucky. With a wagon jammed full of household furniture, tools, and children, the Varbles ascended Clinch Mountain through Cumberland Gap, traversing the Wilderness Road into Kentucky. Pink was just three at the time and later had only vague memories of the long trek in freezing weather to the bank of the Ohio, where cousins had settled earlier. When the Varbles made their trip during winter 1831, the weather was the coldest seen in Kentucky since 1796, so keenly sharp the Ohio River froze from bank to bank. But in spring 1832 they finally reached a settlement called Varble's Landing in Oldham County, KY where relatives welcomed them. Varbles had relocated to Kentucky before Henry and Alia followed, and they were among Oldham County's founders; indeed, when Oldham County formed in 1824 its first courthouse in Westport was located on land owned by George Varble.

Varble's Landing overlooked the Ohio River near the village of Westport, a score of miles upstream of Louisville. The Varbles shopped and socialized at Westport. Founded in 1801, the village name reflected its founders' ambitions to build a commercial outlet for the advancing American frontier. As an Ohio River port and export outlet for Kentucky, the village was 580 miles downriver from Pittsburgh, twenty miles upstream of Louisville, and 400 miles above where the Ohio merged with the Mississippi on its way to the sea. Westport became Oldham County's seat and served until supplanted in 1838 by the larger town of LaGrange.

Westport's waterfront sported a wharf graded to ease boat landings and warehouses to store Kentucky flour, tobacco, hemp, and pork awaiting river shipment. The thriving village in 1832 had amenities needed by wayfarers: hotels, general stores, physicians, attorneys, wagon-makers, blacksmiths, coopers, ministers, and a Masonic lodge. Because neither railroad nor highway networks then spidered Kentucky, rivers remained the principal interstate thoroughfares; and riverboats landed often at Westport, bringing travelers, trade, and troubles.

In Oldham County young Pink Varble at age three first saw the Ohio River and here he spent the next ten years, growing up, watching boats pass, enjoying fishing and swimming the river afforded. With eight children, the Varbles counted among the founders of Westport's small school taught by local ministers, but Pink and his brothers gleaned most early education at their farm on the river, and, indeed during summers, in the river, developing expert swimming skills that later served them so well as Falls pilots.

Growing up beside the Ohio during the 1830s, Pink saw momentous changes in passing river traffic, the powerful steamboats soon to replace unpowered sailing ships and rowing craft that had plied the river since the eighteenth century. He saw the flatboats passing—rectangular wooden box-like boats with flat bottoms—crowded with pioneer families floating to new homes on the frontier. Carried freely by river currents, pioneers steered flatboats with long oars or sweeps on the sides. Seen from a distance, these oars resembled horns

on a bull; hence the nickname broadhorns used to describe flatboats.

Poorly suited for breasting river currents, flatboats usually were torn apart at destinations. Not so with keelboats, the long slender craft with pointed bow and stern and with masts and sails to help navigate upstream against currents. Keelboats carried much of the Ohio River's upstream trade until the advent of steamboats with engines.

The voyage of Robert Fulton's steamboat NEW ORLEANS from Pittsburgh down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans in 1811 marked the origin of steamboat commerce that dominated Ohio River trade for a century. By the 1830s steamboats thrashed powerful paddlewheels past Westport every week, and because they moved cargo much faster than keelboats, efforts to push keelboats manually uprivers soon ended.

The river brought commerce and also disaster. Two years after Pink and his family arrived in Kentucky, river travelers brought a smallpox outbreak afflicting the entire Varble family. Although the disease scarred all eight children, prostrating them for weeks, all the children survived and recovered, but their father perished.

Henry Varble's death by smallpox left his widow and children penniless, and the disease sapped the strength needed to work their riverside farm. Poverty forced Henry's widow Alia to move her young family from Varble's Landing into Westport, where she could find work and apprentice her children to craftsmen. In the village she later remarried to a river captain, widower Peter Krider. Of these trying times, young Pink Varble had few fond memories, and when questioned forty years later by a reporter about it, he had only a laconic story to offer: "Well, sir, I was born near Salisbury, NC on the 5th day of September, 1828. When I was 3 years old, my parents came to Kentucky in wagons by the overland route, crossed the Clinch Mountains, and settled near Westport, 25 miles above here, on the Ohio River. In 1834 the entire family were stricken down with small-pox. All of them recovered, however, except my father, who died with the disease. In 1836 the family moved to the town of Westport, and my mother married

Peter Krider, the father of Capt. Ed Krider, so well known as a commander in the Louisville and Evansville trade, and the father of Bob Krider, mate on the RAINBOW."

Poverty required the boys find paying work as soon as able and in 1841 Pink at age thirteen joined older brothers as apprentices to Westport craftsmen willing to teach them trades and provide room and board in exchange for their work. Pink became apprenticed to a Westport tailor while his younger brother Richard, called Dick, became a cobbler's apprentice.

Pink soon learned he could not cut it as a tailor. Clumsy with pinking shears, he ruined several fabrics. The master tailor then confiscated Pink's shears and gave him a goose, a heavy flatiron with long handle arched like a gander's neck. When the tailor finished sewing a frock, he handed it to his apprentice to press with the iron goose. Pink fired a wood stove, dropped the flatiron on the fire, then, holding the red-hot goose by its long handle, he pressed frocks until they were crispy wrinkle-free for sale. Pink so disliked this hot monotony that after a few months he gave up ever learning the tailor's craft, abandoned his apprenticeship, and fled into the country. When questioned years later about his abrupt departure from the tailor's craft, Pink joked he had too many irons in the fire and had "dropped the goose."

When he heard his older brothers Billy and John had found work in the growing city of Louisville, twenty miles away at the head of the Falls, he took a notion to go to the Falls City. His chance came when a farmer offered him fifty cents cash to drive two cows and their calves to market at Louisville. Thus Pink Varble hiked his way into Louisville in the spring of 1843 with fifty cents in his pocket. Except for a bell clanging around the lead cow's neck, Pink's arrival in the Falls City drew neither acclaim nor attention. Striding into the city from its east side, to city folk Pink must have seemed just another passing farm boy driving beef to market, although better dressed because he learned from the tailor how to mend his own ripped jeans and cottonade shirts.

Pink delivered the cattle to market, then searched

out his brother Billy's house. He found it amidst Butchertown's factories, slaughterhouses, and ramshackle homes clustered along Beargrass Creek. Pink learned his older brother John had taken a job as oarsman on a coalboat and left downriver on a boatload of coal bound for New Orleans. Billy had also found work at the river, unloading coal from barges into delivery wagons, and he expected Pink to find work as well at the head of the Falls.

To comprehend Pink Varble's career on the Falls of the Ohio, some understanding of their formation and environment is necessary. The Falls are inland shoals formed of fossilized limestone coral. Laid at an ocean's bottom by teeming marine life three hundred million years ago, then buried by rocky outwash from icy glaciers, the Falls are an ancient cemetery from a remote age. After interment for millions of years, the river's erosive forces exhumed the skeletons, revealing a subterranean garden of fossilized coral and shells, but these limestone remains proved so hard they partly dammed the river, holding a deep pool of water that cascaded down the reef, the water dropping twenty-six feet as it descended the two-mile-long rapids. An open window into prehistoric life, the coral reef at the Falls proved both a geologic treasure and an obstruction to people traveling the Ohio in boats.

Native Americans roaming inland rivers found at the Falls of the Ohio a delightful break in forest stillness, aswarm with flocks of birds, abundant game, and fish and shellfish. They feasted and left the Falls littered with fish hooks and sinkers and mounded shells of mussels they devoured in piles stretching along the Falls bank. At this bountiful reef amidst wilderness, they made their recreational resort, enjoying splashing water, harvesting fish and game, and testing their paddling skills against Falls turbulence. They learned the intricate channels small boats might follow safely through whitewater rapids, and they became the first Falls pilots, guiding the early French and British explorers attempting passage. European travelers therefore dubbed the deepest passage through the Falls along the northern bank as the "Indian Chute."

Falls of the Ohio proved a misnomer, leading strangers to visualize them as precipitous with

vertical drops such as at Cumberland Falls or Niagara Falls, but the Falls of the Ohio were better described as rapids. Although the river fell twenty-six feet at the Falls, it dropped as if down a staircase with no vertical fall higher than eight feet. In 1742 John Peter Salley with Virginian explorers boated downriver to the Falls. "The Falls," Salley reported, "are three miles long in which is a small island, the body of the stream running on the north side through which is no passing by reason of great rocks and large whirlpools." Lacking Indian guides, Salley stayed near the south bank for safety and descended through a shallow passage later called Kentucky Chute because it lay nearest the south bank within today's Commonwealth of Kentucky.

When British army engineers Harry Gordon and Thomas Hutchins mapped the Ohio River as a supply route, they observed the name Falls was a misnomer. "The Falls ought not to be called so," commented Captain Gordon, "as the Stream on the North Side has no sudden pitch, but only runs rapid over the ledge of a flat Limestone Rock, which the Author of Nature has put there, to keep up the Waters of the Ohio." Gordon warned that river travelers without Indian guides should always land above the Falls for safety and portage around the rapids. His good advice was not always heeded, however, and boats often wrecked when descending the Falls.

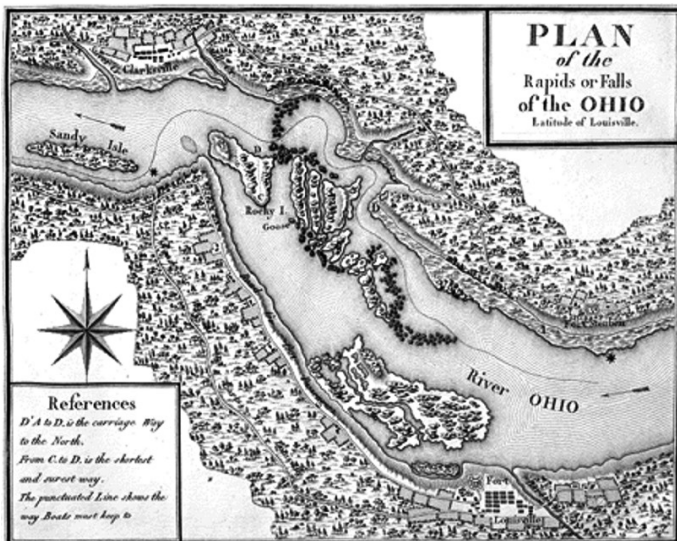
Although the Ohio River flows generally southwest, the limestone reef at the Falls forced its current into a sharp curve toward the northwest until it turned a bend and resumed its southwesterly course. In this riverbend, in downstream order, lay Corn, Goose, Rock, and Sand Islands. Corn Island at the head of the bend lay next to the Kentucky bank. Goose, the largest island, comprised a long rocky reef parallel with the northern bank. Below it lay Rock Island inside the river bend, and at the foot of the rapids was Sand Island, composed of sand washed from the Falls. Land inside the riverbend resembled a sort of peninsula and later became a fifth island known as Shippingport after a canal cut through the peninsula's base made it accessible only across bridges. These islands were part of a naturally dynamic Falls environment, constantly changing as the river flooded and receded, always presenting new challenges to boatmen seeking passage.

When the river receded, cascading water thundered down over rocks and boatmen sought out three natural passages through the Falls called chutes. These tricky channels were also called shoots, and boatmen sometimes described swift trips down these passes as shooting the Falls. Indian Chute, the deepest and longest of these, traversed a serpentine channel between the north bank and the rocky knoll known as Goose Island, bending sharply near its foot and there creating a swirling whirlpool called Big Eddy. In mid-river was the aptly named Middle Chute, passing between Goose Island and Rock Island; it was two miles long with most of the descent in its last 500 yards. Kentucky Chute passed between the south bank and Rock Island. When descending, boatmen preferred the deeper Indian Chute, while they ascended the shallow Kentucky Chute; this because in Kentucky Chute, inside the riverbend, currents were not so swift.

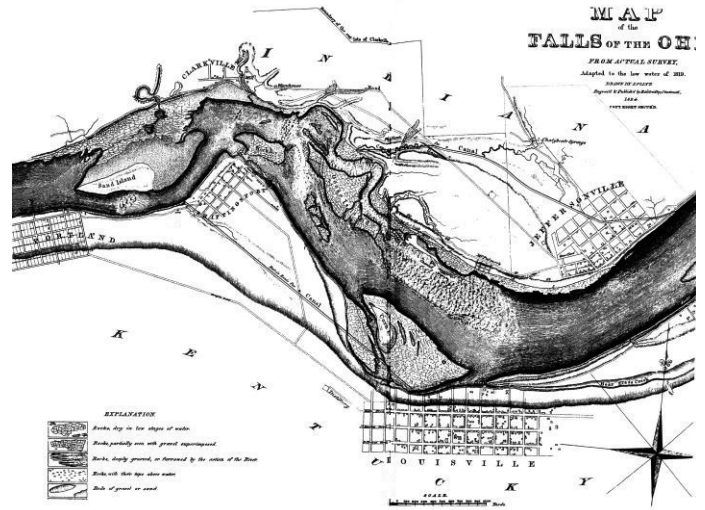
The natural Falls afforded safe navigation only about three months each year, generally during winter and spring high water. In the remainder of

most years, all but the smallest craft had to land to carry or portage cargoes around the Falls. Usually boatmen landed their craft on the south or Kentucky side for two reasons: Beargrass Creek entering on the south side offered safe harbor from passing floods or ice; moreover, the carrying distance across the inside riverbend was shorter and not so steep as portaging around the north bank on the bend's outside curve in modern Indiana.

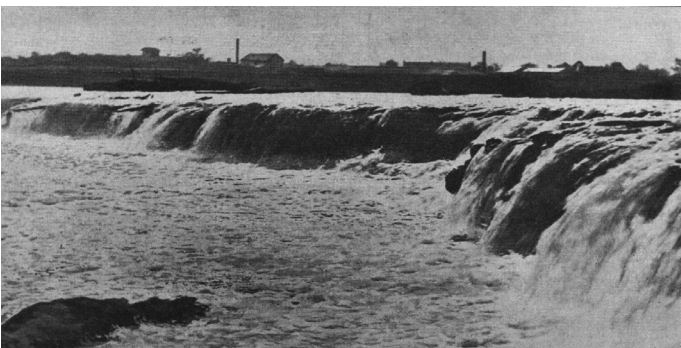
Because travelers broke voyages at the Falls to portage around the obstructions, communities formed to provide wayfarers lodging, overland transport, and supplies. These communities became the ports of Louisville and Jeffersonville occupying the strategic head of the Falls, while Clarksville and New Albany, Shippingport and Portland, competed to serve travelers landing below. By 1842 when Pink Varble arrived, Louisville was the largest and most prosperous of Falls cities, and it was work available there that attracted country youth like Billy and Pink Varble in search of employment and adventure.



Above: Victor Collot's 1796 map of Falls. Below: Falls of the Ohio. Courtesy of Charles Parrish, Triumph at the Falls.



Above: 1836 map of Falls drawn from actual survey showing (L to R) Rock, Goose, and Corn Islands and limestone bedrock.





## CHAPTER 2: PINK'S PROFESSION

Captain Pink Varble remembered years later when describing his first adventures in Louisville, "I got here all right, and hired to drive a wood wagon for Mr. John N. Collins." Collins purchased cordwood and coal by the bargeload at Louisville's wharf, then sold small lots to homeowners heating with it in winter and warming water for washing in summer. To supply his customers, Collins had delivery wagons constantly rolling from the coalboats through Louisville's streets to homes, and he hired Pink as a driver who loaded wagons, drove to customers' homes, and stacked wood or coal in yards or sheds.

Pink soon learned of dangers faced by coalboatmen and their craft. Built of heavy timbers and filled with coal, squatting eight feet down in the river, they waited at Pittsburgh until a "tide" came deep enough to float them over river shoals when descending 600 miles of river to Louisville. Some landed at Louisville's wharf to unload into wagons while others moored at "Pumpkin Patch" across the river near Jeffersonville to await Falls passage. Crews from Pittsburgh celebrated in Louisville's taverns and dens lining O'Neil's Alley before starting home to bring down another fleet, and new hands boarded the coalboats to steer them over the Falls and downriver. When coal fleets left bound for Memphis, Vicksburg, or New Orleans, Falls pilots prospered, guiding boats one after the other down Indian Chute. One pilot, Henry Barnaby, set a record by taking twelve coalboats across the Falls in a single day. Coal fleets, however, seldom passed the Falls unscathed. Their wrecks blackened the chutes and their drowned crewmen washed ashore at Shippingport, Portland, or New Albany.

Driving John Collins' wagons to and from coalboats lining Louisville's landing, young Pink Varble became interested in boating at the Falls. When the river reached boating stage he could see coalboats, saltboats, hayboats, apple and potato boats, and family flatboats following each other down into Indian Chute. Each boat teemed with alert crews, while Falls pilots and extra hands hastened to the boats in skiffs. Horseback riders, buggies, and wagons scurried to and from the

landing, hauling supplies for the boats or returning Falls pilots for another voyage down the Falls. It was a hubbub eyewitnesses never forgot.

When restless boat owners wearied of waiting for a Falls pilot to return, some turned into the channel, following behind boats with licensed pilots aboard. A few made the mad dash down the Falls safely, but others lost all, even their lives in the attempt. Always cautious, marine insurance companies therefore refused to insure any boat venturing across without an official Falls pilot at its helm. Prudence therefore dictated that boat captains employ Falls pilots licensed by either Kentucky or Indiana.

Skilled Falls pilots were constantly in demand and some became wealthy although governments set the rates charged. Kentucky in 1797 and Indiana in 1803 set pilots' rate at two dollars per boat over the Falls. If a pilot worked quickly enough and took a dozen over in a day he might earn twenty-four dollars, equaling a month's pay for many workers. Moreover, the legal rates did not include pay for the extra hands many boats needed for safe passage, and Falls pilots commonly employed the additional oarsmen.

The first Falls pilot James Patten was a founder of Louisville and invested his piloting income in real estate, building one of Louisville's first stone homes complete with rooftop cupola to watch for arriving business. Patten's son-in-law John Nelson, the second Falls pilot, built the city's first hotel at Water Street and O'Neil's Alley as lodging for river travelers. Falls pilot services were considered so vital that the state exempted them from military service during the War of 1812 to keep commerce and troops moving past the Falls.

The second generation of Falls pilots included George Gretsinger, Jake Funk, and the Vansickle brothers, and these men invested in coalboats. Because the fleets reached Louisville irregularly on high water, coal had to be stored for use during low water. Falls pilots bought coalboats entire and stored the coal afloat, anchoring them upriver at Towhead Island and Pumpkin Patch; when coal was needed, crews rowed a coalboat to a dock and emptied it directly into delivery wagons.

The Vansickle brothers, Jesse and Eli, both Falls pilots, invested in coal supply and employed men to bail water to keep their coalboats afloat, to row boats to docks as needed, and to unload the boats into wagons. While running wagons to and from Vansickle's dock, Pink Varble's steady work and constant good humor caught the attention of Eli Vansickle. Needing a man who would work to replace one who wouldn't, Eli offered young Pink a job at better pay than driving wagons. In 1844 therefore, Pink went to work on the river for Falls pilot Eli Vansickle. He bailed water from Eli's coalboats at Pumpkin Patch, wrestled them cross river to the dock, and moved coal into wagons one bushel at a time. A typical coalboat contained 12,000 bushels of coal, and unloading them was physically exhausting, dirty work.

Seeing only an uncertain future handling coalboats, Pink seized his bushel by the handles at Christmas 1844 with a visit to Captain Eli Vansickle. Vansickle's house sat on the Point with a grand view of the river in front and Beargrass Creek splashing behind. After exchanging season's greetings, Pink broached his business, telling Eli how much he admired him and explaining he wished to become Eli's apprentice to learn Falls piloting. When Eli asked if his mother approved this, Pink proudly announced he had passed his sixteenth birthday in September and could now sign documents and enter legal contracts on his own.

Eli and Pink hammered out the apprentice bond. Pink agreed to work for Eli four years essentially without pay. In return, Eli agreed to furnish Pink room and board, clothing, and three months of school in winter. During the four years' apprenticeship Eli would teach Pink his craft—how to pilot boats over the Falls. Thus, by the time he reached his twentieth birthday Pink would become a capable pilot and eligible for one of the Falls pilot's licenses granted by Louisville's City Council. Although Pink thus surrendered his chances for pay, driving wagons paid little and at the end of four years he would be eligible only to continue driving wagons. Apprenticed to Eli, he could rise to the rank of boat captain and the status of Falls pilot.

At New Year's 1845, Pink gathered his meager possessions and carried them into the Captain's

home on the Point to inaugurate his apprenticeship. Eli cleared a small room on the ground floor next to the stairs for Pink's use. Although Pink met Eli's beautiful wife, Elizabeth, he saw little of her; she spent her time upstairs with her baby and mostly ignored him. Eli had two servants, Maggie who managed housework and cooking, and Ike who handled yard work and drove the buggy bringing the Falls pilot back from Shippingport or Portland to Louisville.

Up before dawn each morning, Eli and Pink walked to the landing where Eli generally found a boat awaiting a Falls pilot for daybreak departure. Eli stood atop the cabin near the bow of flatboats or coalboats, where he had the best view of the river ahead, while Pink grasped the tiller where he could throw the boat toward one side or the other at Eli's signal. From Louisville's landing, boats went two miles upstream and crossed the river to gain entrance to Indian Chute. Rowing flatboats or coalboats upstream was a laborious task, and when their captains insisted on hiring Eli or another Kentucky pilot, they often tied to Indiana's bank and sent a skiff to bring the pilot over, avoiding the labor of forcing their boat upriver against the current. Steamboats, on the other hand, usually landed at Louisville because ascending the river two miles to Indian Chute entrance under steam power presented few difficulties.

All boats reaching the Falls from downstream ports landed on the Kentucky bank at Shippingport or Portland unless they had cargo destined for Clarksville, New Albany, or the Indiana interior. They awaited their turn to enter the Louisville and Portland Canal, or their captains hired drays and wagons to transport cargoes into Louisville. When river stages were suitable, they might employ a Falls pilot to guide their boats up Kentucky Chute because river current was not as swift in it as the other chutes; moreover, shallow Kentucky Chute offered easy anchorage for hawsers needed to help drag their boats up the Falls.

Under Eli's tutelage, Pink traversed the Falls hundreds of times, through all chutes, up or downstream, during his four years' apprenticeship. Driving a boat hard down the channel between the Indiana bank and the parallel ridge of rocks called

the Backbone, Pink learned to dodge around Rubel Rock lurking beneath the surface in mid-channel, rebound his boat off the water cushion at Wave Rock, turn hard to escape Willow Point, then press ahead through Big Eddy whirlpool into the final turn around Rock Island to Shippingport and safety. Aboard coalboats, flatboats, and small craft, Pink learned the Falls intimately, its craggy folds and creases becoming as familiar as the palm of his own hand. Eli proved an able mentor, and Pink soon shared the helm with him, even aboard steamboats.

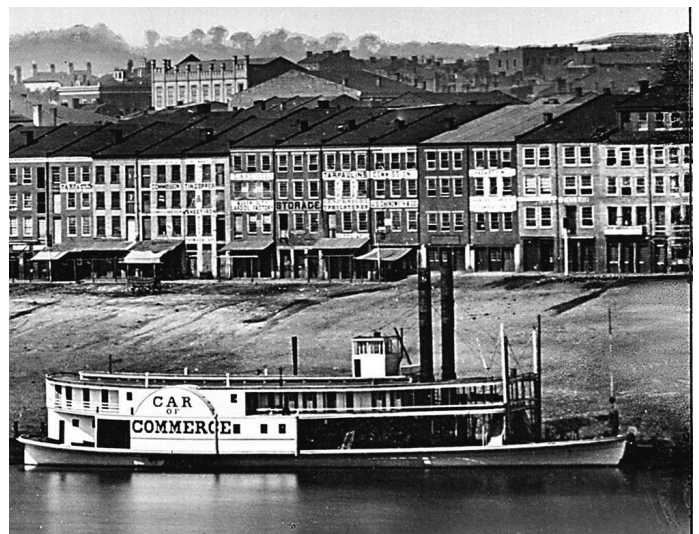
The Vansickles and Falls pilots prospered as Pink learned his craft during the late 1840s. To the surprise of many, downriver commerce carried in unpowered flatboats did not end after the advent of steamboats. Rather than supplanting flatboats, steamboats actually boosted the trade because flatboat crews no longer had to walk home over the notorious Natchez Trace; instead, they sold produce and flatboats at New Orleans and took steamboat passage home in style. Flatboat commerce continued, not peaking until 1845, and it persisted another half century. Each year during the 1840s, apprentice Pink could see 1200 flatboats go down the Falls, compared to just 500 steamboats descending.

Neither flatboats nor steamboats passed the Falls with certain safety even with Falls pilots aboard. Pink watched as winter ice drove a hundred flatboats and the steamboat GREAT WESTERN into the Falls where they wrecked on rocks or swamped in Big Eddy. In 1847 he saw a flatboat from Madison, IN strike rocks at the entry to Kentucky Chute and settle to the bottom near Corn Island, losing her cargo of 1600 sacks of corn, 1000 bushels of oats, 100 barrels of flour, and 30 barrels of lard. Although her captain had purchased marine insurance, he had attempted passing Kentucky Chute without a Falls pilot, meaning his insurance covered neither his boat nor cargo.

Steamboat wrecks on the Falls had been common since 1821 when the MAYSVILLE wrecked attempting to ascend against the current. She lodged on rocks in the midst of whitewater, and her captain lost his life trying to pull her free of the rocks with ropes. Even the famous Captain Henry Shreve of Portland lost his steamboat GEORGE WASHINGTON on the Falls in 1825 when he

hit Rubel Rock in Indian Chute. He grounded his sinking boat on Rock Island at Shippingport and saved her passengers, but lost the cargo and a herd of horses penned on her lower deck.

Pink Varble witnessed a similar steamboat accident in 1847 when the CAR OF COMMERCE went down with Captain Enoch Lockhart at the wheel. A licensed Falls pilot, Enoch, like Pink, hailed from Westport. Born there in 1814, he was fourteen years older than Pink and had become a Falls pilot in 1840. Enoch was at the helm of the CAR OF COMMERCE when she hit a rock in Indian Chute and began sinking. Enoch saved the passengers by deliberately grounding the steamboat on Goose Island and transferring them to the steamboat HUNTER that came to the rescue. But his boat and its cargo were lost on the rock mockingly known thereafter as Enoch's Rock.



**CAR OF COMMERCE (0844) built 1848 at Murraysville, VA and wrecked on the Falls December 17, 1848. Photo courtesy of Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County.**

Louisville and Portland Canal, completed in 1830 to pass boats around the Falls, failed to prevent all losses on the river's rapids. The canal was shallow and only fifty feet wide, studded with sharp rocks that cut into wooden boat hulls. Boats could not use it when the river flooded its locks, and receding high water left mud blocking the canal for weeks until it was dredged. Even when the canal was open, many boat owners preferred hiring Falls pilots because the canal charged high tolls to pay for its operations. At a standard rate of fifty cents per ton, the toll on a single large boat might amount to \$250, compared to

a tenth of that for hiring a Falls pilot. While canal locks were sized to pass the largest steamboats in 1825, by the 1840s new steamboats often were too large to enter 180-foot-long locks. Larger boats therefore either hired pilots to navigate the Falls, or did not pass them at all, trading only below the Falls.

Still, the canal cut Falls pilots' profits, and they urged widening and deepening Indian Chute to permit passage by larger steamboats. During pioneer days projecting rocks in Indian Chute were only twelve feet apart, and early Falls pilots carried sledgehammers along to bust off jagged rocks and widen the chute. In this fashion they gradually increased chute width to eighteen feet, but this did not compare with the canal's fifty-foot width. To meet canal competition, Falls pilots George Gretsinger, John Donne, and Jacob Funk pooled funds to further widen Indian Chute. Taking advantage of an extremely dry autumn in 1838, when low water exposed rocks at the chute, Falls pilots employed laborers to drill holes in rocks, pack the holes with gunpowder, and blast the coral reef to smithereens. When winter high water stopped their assault on the Falls, the passage was twenty-eight feet wide and a few inches deeper. Falls pilots thus could steer larger boats across the Falls during longer seasons each year and thereby regain some business. In response to this, canal company superintendent John Hulme began widening and deepening the canal "ditch," although this task was not completed until 1856.

With retirement of Gretsinger and Donne, the Vansickle brothers joined Jake Funk and Enoch Lockhart as the Kentucky Falls pilots, while Indiana increased its number of pilots to six. Among these six Hoosiers was the redoubtable Captain David Dryden, called Dave, descended from the family of poet John Dryden and with claim to an English estate. His father had been a Continental Navy captain during the Revolution, and Captain Dave had carried his father's sword into service during the Florida Seminole War. Dave had become Falls pilot during the 1840s and, renowned for his bravery, became leader of Indiana pilots. It was Dave who earned them the right to steer steamboats from Louisville to Portland. Kentucky claimed Indiana pilots could not board a boat in Kentucky, charge a

fee for piloting it over the Falls, and then land it in Kentucky without also holding a Kentucky pilot's license. Dave sued the commonwealth and won his case in federal court.

Although Captain Dryden fiercely competed with Vansickle and the Kentucky pilots, Pink Varble learned to admire Dave's talents. When General Zachary Taylor and troops bound for Mexico reached Louisville in 1846 aboard the steamboats CIRCASSIAN and MESSENGER, they turned to Dryden for help. Mud deposits in the canal then blocked boat passage, and their steamboats were too heavily laden to safely descend the Falls. Captain Dave arranged for the troops to march with their gear overland through Louisville to Portland, while he steered their lightened boats down the Falls. At Portland the troops returned to the steamboats to embark, and Dryden guided them downriver on their way to victory in Mexico.

Steamboats of the 1840s had such small engines they could not go up the Falls through Indian Chute where turbulent currents blocked their advance, but Captain Dryden devised ways to force them up the crooked channel. Pink Varble watched Dave try and fail for three days to get a steamboat upstream under a full head of steam, then saw him plant iron anchors on Willow Point and other rocky points. Dave attached cables from the anchors to capstans on the boat's bow, and the steam engine slowly cranked the capstan, winding up the cable. The capstan acted as a winch, inching the boat up the cable to the anchor, overcoming currents until the boat reached a place where its paddlewheel could thrust it on to the head of the Falls at Jeffersonville. Even with Falls pilots at the helm, however, no steamboats successfully ascended the Falls without the help of cables and capstans before 1852; the chute's riptides stopped, wrecked, and always delayed them.

While Dave Dryden's skills earned him admiration as the Falls' artful dodger, Pink Varble and Eli Vansickle considered him their competition both as pilot and as ferryboat commander. Dryden had won the right for Indiana pilots to steer Louisville steamboats across the Falls, and his growing reputation for piloting skills captured part of Eli's business. When Dave built a wharfboat at Jeffersonville and began operating a ferry to

Kentucky, Eli countered by entering Louisville's ferry trade.

As his ferry between Kentucky and Indiana, Eli Vansickle bought the new steamboat ADELAIDE for \$12,000 from Tom Nadal, who built her in 1850 at his shipyard on the Point in Louisville. A wide, shallow-draft steamer, she could load 136 tons of cargo on her lower deck, with room for passengers on the upper deck. Pink Varble thought her a magnificent boat, because Eli wanted him to be her pilot.


When Pink's apprenticeship to Eli ended, no man knew the Falls better than he. Yet, he sorrowfully learned he could not obtain license as Falls pilot because these plum appointments were political, and he had no friends on Louisville's City Council. Each Falls pilot had a friend on the council who advocated their cause; and the pilots in exchange lent councilmen their support at election time. Electing five Falls pilots for five-year terms, city councilmen usually reappointed old friends. Outsiders had little chance of becoming a Falls pilot unless an experienced pilot retired or died, and few did.

No matter how well qualified, Pink could not obtain his license, so he accepted Eli Vansickle's offer to pilot the ADELAIDE. While helping Eli pilot the Falls, Pink impatiently watched Nadal shipyard frame and build the ferry, then install steam engine and equipment. At last she was done in February 1851 and skidded down the ways to splash into the Ohio. Rejoicing, Eli took Pink up to the pilothouse atop the upper deck. Glass windows filled openings to the rear and on both sides of the pilothouse, but its front was entirely open—pilots wanted no glazed glass to distort their vision when underway. At the front, an oaken wheel with radiating spokes dominated the cabin, and cables around its axle extended down through the floor and aft to the rudder post astern. Dropping from the ceiling were pull cords, each with a purpose.

Eli showed Pink the ropes. Hanging beside the pilotwheel, most ropes rang bells on the lower deck, signaling the engineer to stop or start, slow or speed the engine. Thus the pilot gained remote control of rudder, engine, and paddlewheel to maneuver

the boat in any direction, forward or back. A foot treadle sounded the boat's whistle, an innovation replacing bells and cannon used on early steamboats to signal landings and passing boats. These and more appliances, Eli explained to Pink, teaching him the mastery of piloting.

Eli steered the sprightly ADELAIDE on her first run upriver past the sawmills at Towhead Island and on to Eighteen Mile Island, then turned back toward Louisville. He motioned Pink to the pilotwheel and, holding the steamboat steady in midstream, Pink played with the boat, feeling the wheel's response, the rudder's reaction, and the engine's throbbing roar when he pulled cords to the engineer signaling more power. Standing beside the wheel, pulling it over with its spoke handles, Pink was a steamboat pilot at last, master of the river. Only one thing in this world could be grander: piloting the Falls, his passion and destiny.

Captain Pink's career thus bookended significant technological design changes in Ohio River commercial craft. At the start of his river service, he witnessed the end of the manually powered upstream keelboat commerce, and its replacement by steamboats. He saw the downstream flatboat commerce peak in 1845, then enter a long decline that ended about the time his career ended. When he began his career, he took part in the coalboat trade, the unpowered vessels loaded with coal descending the Ohio from Pittsburgh to Louisville and then over the Falls and on to New Orleans. And by the end of his career forty years later, he saw the last of the coalboats, supplanted by great towboats pushing barge tows. At the end of his life he piloted over the Falls a towboat and barge fleet of the type that still dominates inland river commerce in the 21st century. 

*The remaining chapters of Leland Johnson's biography of Capt. Pink Varble will appear in four succeeding issues of the REFLECTOR continuing through March 2017.*

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# Capt. D. W. Wisherd: Steamboat Entrepreneur

Captain D. W. Wisherd was among the prominent rivermen featured in a special October 23, 1909 issue of *The Waterways Journal* published in connection with President Taft's inspection trip from St. Louis to New Orleans under auspices of the Deep Waterways Commission. The biographical sketch of the thirty-eight year old native from the Hannibal area appeared adjacent a notice that the brand new steamer G.W. HILL would host a party of railroad officials during the presidential flotilla. A year-and-a-half later, Capt. Wisherd and his newly chartered company would own that Calhoun County packet, just another of his many ventures in the steamboat business.



That article commented: "Capt. Wisherd, who holds both pilot's and master's license, received his master's license at the age of 22 years, being the youngest who had ever held such papers on the Western Rivers [at that time]. He has devoted much of his time to the excursion business on Western Rivers, making personal trips from Minneapolis, MN to the Gulf of Mexico on the Mississippi River; from the mouth of the Ohio to Pittsburg; on the Cumberland River to Nashville; on the Missouri River to Omaha; on the Illinois River to La Salle; and has visited every city and town of any consequence the entire length of these rivers. He has more personal experience of and more personal acquaintances in the excursion business than anyone else on Western Rivers, because he has personally visited them all, and very few people have conducted as thorough excursion business as he has."

Captains Doc Hawley and Alan Bates in a sketch of Wisherd for their book *Moonlite at 8:30* observed: "[He was] the most-trusted employee of the Streckfus Line during Capt. Joe Streckfus' tenure. At times he competed with them; at others he managed for them, and now and then he left the excursion business entirely. There are persons

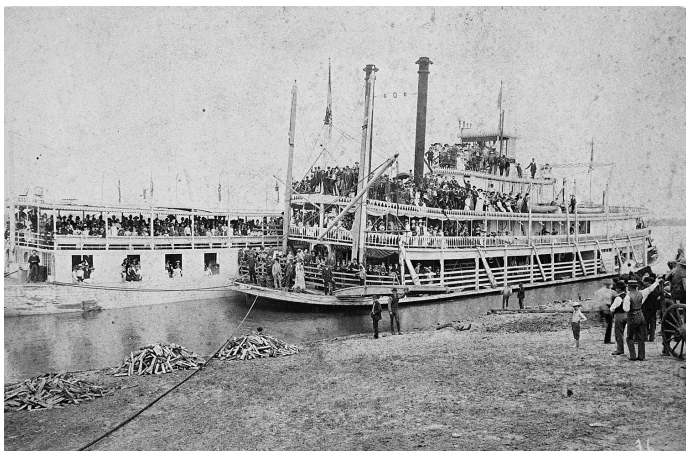
who believe that he was the brains behind the Streckfus Line ... and it was said of him that he would squeeze the chips out of the buffalo on a nickel ... During most of his career this man juggled two or more companies, managed for others who were occasionally his competitors, and overcame all obstacles with honor."

David Walter Wisherd was most likely born in 1871\*, the son of David N. Wisherd and Sarah Hamilton Wisherd. Nine years later his younger brother Henry Edgar was born. D. W.'s father ran a family business in Hannibal, MO, one to which both sons would return at various times in their lives as their fortunes in the steamboat business waxed and waned. Much in the early years of Capt. Wisherd's life has been lost to us, as a recorded interview made in 1955 at Cincinnati begins with his clerking on the JOSEPHINE in 1890. She was a Diamond Jo Line packet which in later years ran with the barge MAMIE E. Although this barge may have been used to haul freight (the JOSEPHINE's predecessor DIAMOND JO frequently towed a freight barge), it was most likely an excursion barge as shown in the accompanying photo. At this time, old rafters and small packets were often converted into towboats with excursion barges as the rafting business slowly began to fade away. This venture was undoubtedly the captain's first experience in his long association with the excursion trade.

Interviewer John Knoepfle preserved memories of Wisherd's life on the river in the captain's own words as these excerpts from tapes at the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County reveal.

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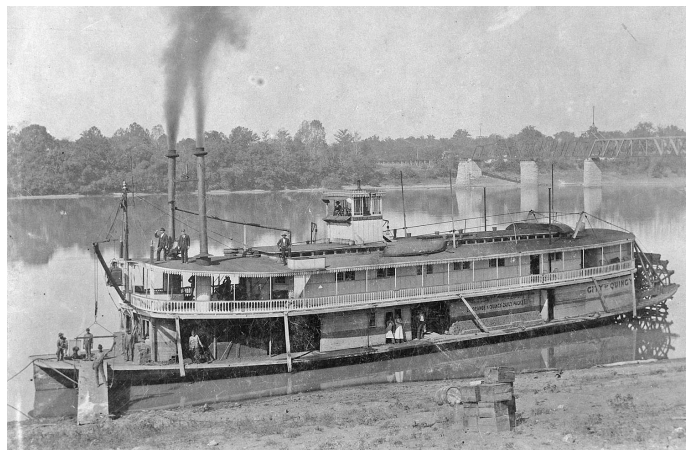
\*Online genealogical sites suggest he was born in 1879. However, this would mean his first river job as clerk was at age 11! By placing his birth around 1871, he would have been in a position to own and operate the VAN METRE as her master and pilot when he purchased his first steamboat in 1894.



**JOSEPHINE (3150) with excursion barge MAMIE E.** Built in 1878 at Dubuque for the Diamond Jo Line, she measured 155.2 x 28.8 x 5.6. Ran in the Fulton, IL - Burlington trade. In the later years of her life, she made excursions and did odd-job towing. Wisherd's first job as clerk was on this boat. Photo from Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

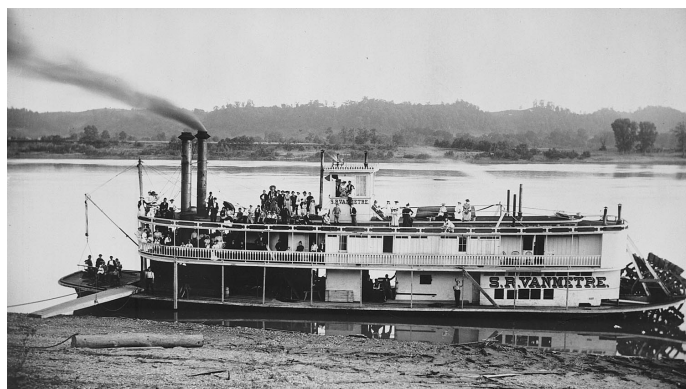
"I ceased operating the JOSEPHINE and went up to Chicago to operate a hotel called the Josephine. I got a position as purser and clerk on the steamer CITY OF QUINCY which was built by the Parmalee brothers at Canton, MO. She operated daily service between Keokuk, IA and Quincy, IL. I was on her in 1891 and 1892. Then she ceased operating due to the railroad competition. She was sold to Capt. Walter Blair at Davenport, IA. Capt. Blair said he was going to take the CITY OF QUINCY down to operate in the southern river, so I proceeded to buy the S. R. VAN METRE. Purchased her at Madison, IN in April 1894 from the Madison Monterey Packet Company.

"The VAN METRE was a hundred and twenty feet long, twenty feet wide and four feet deep. She had poppet valve cutoff machinery and one boiler which allowed a hundred and fifty pounds of steam. I started her in the Keokuk to Quincy trade and Capt. Walter Blair changed his mind with the CITY OF QUINCY and came back and we were in competition. After operating at cut rates for two years, we got together and drew straws as to which would stay in the Keokuk to Quincy trade or go up in the trade that he was taking care of between Burlington and Keokuk. I got the short straw. He stayed in the Keokuk and Quincy trade and I went in the Burlington to Keokuk. The railroads decided, the CB&Q Railroad at that time, they didn't want any boats to operate and they cut the rates to ten cents

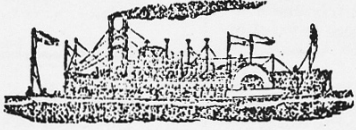


**CITY OF QUINCY (1128) 130.7 x 25.8 x 8** was built at Quincy in 1891, according to the Packet Directory. D. W. served as her purser for two years. After the Parmalee brothers sold her to Capt. Walter Blair of Davenport, Wisherd purchased the S. R. VAN METRE and found himself in competition with his former boat. Capt. Way also notes that she was sold to the Parmalees of St. Louis in March 1896 and wrecked two months later in the tornado there. Murphy Library photo.

a hundred for all freight including household goods, which is three times first class rates, about sixty-four cents. I met it by taking freight free of charge; made my income from the passenger business. Finally won out, and the railroads withdrew their rates and we continued in the trade at a profit. We operated the VAN METRE until March 1, 1899. Had her ready to open the season and some fire that had been built out on the island, the wind came up and blew fire onto the boat and she burned, completely destroyed. This was about one thirty in the morning. There wasn't anybody on board except the watchman. I went down to the boat but she was too far destroyed to my being of any benefit to her. After losing her, I located in Hannibal, MO, operating my father's



**S.R. VANMETRE (4899), built 1888 in Murraysville, WV and completed at Marietta for the trade to Zanesville.** Wisherd bought her in 1894, his first boat. Murphy Library photo.



**BURLINGTON,  
KEOKUK,  
QUINCY**

**PACKETS.**

**SILVER CRESCENT,**  
S. R. DODDS, Master.

—AND—

**S. R. VAN METER,**  
D. WALTER WISHERD, Master.

ply regularly between above and intermediate  
points as follows:

**SILVER CRESCENT.**  
DAILY.

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Lvs. Keokuk.. 6:30 am   | Lvs. Quincy... 3:00 pm |
| " Warsaw.. 7:15 am      | " LaGrange 4:20 pm     |
| " Canton... 8:00 am     | " Canton... 5:15 pm    |
| " LaGrange 9:45 am      | " Warsaw... 7:20 pm    |
| Arr. Quincy... 10:00 am | Arr. Keokuk... 8:00 pm |

**S. R. VAN METER.**

MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS.

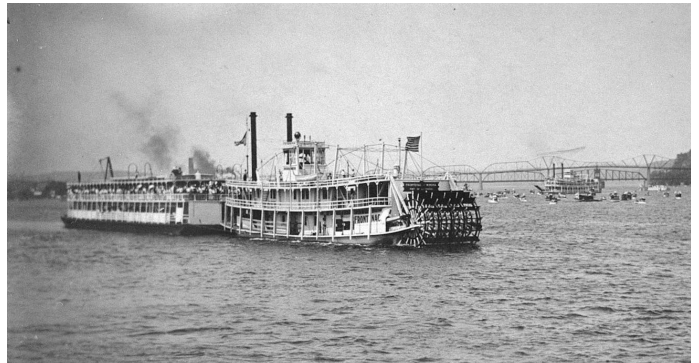
|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lvs. Keokuk... 2:30 pm  | Lvs. F. Madison 7:30 am |
| " Montrose.. 4:30 pm    | " Nauvoo... 8:15 am     |
| " Nauvoo... 5:00 pm     | " Montrose.. 8:45 am    |
| Arr. F. Madison 6:00 pm | Arr. Keokuk... 10:45 am |

For Freight and Excursion Rates, apply to  
**J. B. HUTCHINSON, Agt.**

*1896 ad for S. R. VAN METRE  
from collection of William Talbot.*

business. [At that same time I also] was agent for the Diamond Jo Line there. I decided to retire from steamboating. But Capt. John Streckfus of the Acme Packet Company in Davenport, IA in 1901 wanted me to put his steamer, the J. S., in the excursion business. He had been operating in the Davenport and Clinton trade, packet trade I should say, with the steamers J. S. and WINONA. The railroads started to operate on both sides of the river so that it detracted from this business being profitable. I went with him and started operating the J. S. in the excursion business on the Upper Mississippi River at points between St. Louis and St. Paul. Operated her in 1901-02. In the fall of 1902 took her to New Orleans to operate excursions daily on night trips out of there. Intended to operate her in the Upper Mississippi in the summer season and New Orleans in the winter - until she was destroyed by fire in 1910. We had no other steamer to take her place, so we decided to buy the Diamond Jo Line which was in the tourist and packet service between St. Louis and St. Paul. In purchasing the boats we secured the steamer QUINCY, SAINT PAUL, DUBUQUE and SIDNEY, wharfboats at St. Louis and St. Paul and warehouses at all the towns along the river. We converted the steamer SIDNEY from a packet boat into an excursion boat and operated her in the Upper Mississippi River in place of the former J. S. Later they converted - this is the Streckfus Steamers now - converted the QUINCY and renamed her the J. S. for Capt. John Streckfus. The DUBUQUE was converted from a packet into an excursion boat [the CAPITOL] and operated in the excursion trade on the Upper and Lower Mississippi."

Capt. Wisherd had relocated to Rock Island back in June 1903 as the General Freight and Passenger Agent of the Acme Packet Company with its steamers J. S. and WINONA. *The Waterways Journal* commented that he had previously been "associated with the Blair Line as commander of the line and later head of an excursion company in Rock Island, but afterwards connected with a Missouri River steamboat enterprise." According to Capts. Hawley and Bates, D. W.'s first official foray as excursion boat operator in his own right took place when he managed the former rafter turned excursion boat FRONTENAC and her barge MISSISSIPPI. When she was first converted into an excursion boat in 1907, she operated out of St. Paul on the Upper Mississippi. About five years later, she was renamed PRINCE and the barge became the PRINCESS. Capt. Way wrote that "the outfit was run by Capt. D. W. Wisherd." It would appear that he was managing the PRINCE while acting as agent for John Streckfus's two boats. One of those boats would soon bear the name of Capt. Wisherd, as he would discover with surprise.



*FRONTENAC (2165) with her excursion barge MISSISSIPPI at Dubuque. Built at Wabasha, MN in 1896, the rafter was 138.9 x 29.8 x 5 and operated in the lumber trade for 11 years before entering the excursion business. Her barge was big: 182 x 45. She also carried a Nichol steam calliope on the roof for a while. Sometime around 1912 she and her barge were renamed PRINCE and PRINCESS and operated by Capt. Wisherd out of St. Paul. Murphy Library photo.*

"In 1905 Capt. Streckfus abandoned the Davenport and Clinton trade and took the WINONA down to Paducah, KY, remodeled her into an excursion boat and named her the W. W. When I was getting ready to book her and advertise her for excursions on the Upper Mississippi, I asked him what he was going to name her and he said it wasn't any of my business, I would find that out soon enough. I didn't know what to advertise until





**CITY OF WINONA (1147 and T0428) was built 1882 at Dubuque as a rafter 126.2 x 25.5 x 3.5. She was rebuilt at the Kahlke Boatyard in Rock Island in 1894 with a new and wider hull and purchased three years later by Capt. John Streckfus for Davenport-Clinton trade. Capt. Way comments that sometime later the name on her bulkhead may have been shortened to just WINONA, which is most likely as it is that name by which she is called in Capt. Wisherd's memoir. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse.**

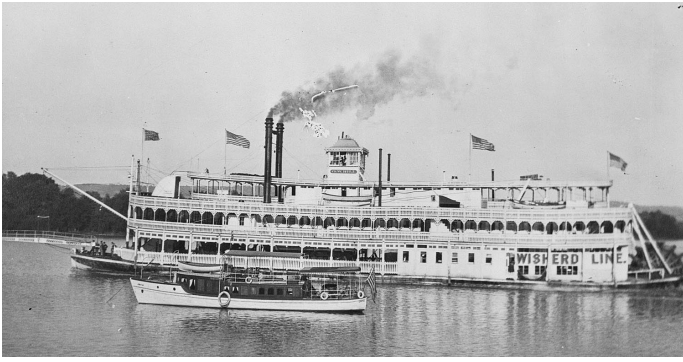


**The new Streckfus excursion boat built from the WINONA was renamed W. W. (5666) and measured 137 x 29.1 x 4 after rebuilding at Paducah in 1905. The company's two excursion steamers bore the initials of Capts. John Streckfus and Walter Wisherd. If you look closely, you will note that an umbrella shade has been placed on the roof above the keyboard of the steam calliope to shield the poor calliope player from the heat of the midday sun as he performed his pied piper duty. A similar umbrella was affixed to the landing bridge of the CAPITOL a few decades later to offer protection from the weather for Capt. Roy Streckfus. We call this photo to the attention of Capt. Doc Hawley, as he attempted a similar arrangement on the AVALON, with disastrous results as recorded on page 59 of our September 2014 issue. Murphy Library photo.**

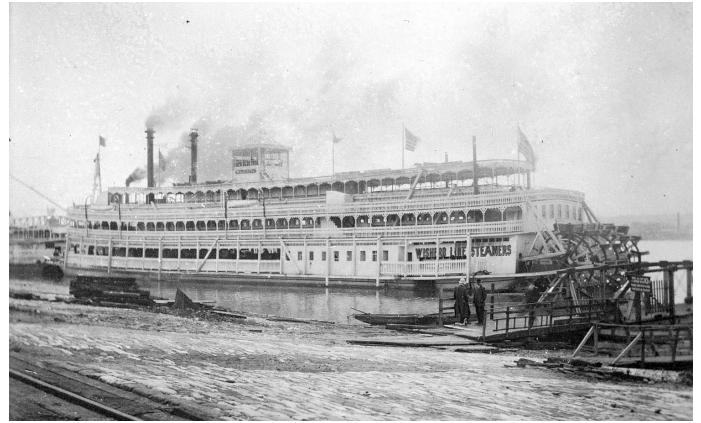
one day I was coming down over the levee and I saw a big W. W. on the pilothouse. I knew what it was. She was nicknamed by the people along the river as "Watch and Wait", the "Weary Willie" and similar names. She operated until I resigned my position as traffic manager with the Streckfus Steamers in the fall of 1911, having been with them for eleven years."

By this time, Capt. Wisherd had made plans to make his way in the excursion business on his own, and on March 11, 1912 he purchased the three year old Howard-built G. W. HILL. "I proceeded to organize my own company, the Wisherd Line Steamers. I purchased the steamer G. W. HILL which was a new boat built at Jeffersonville, IN as a packet to operate in the Calhoun County trade. Converted her from a packet boat at the foot of Market Street in St. Louis. This was the first excursion boat with a superstructure on the dance floor being supported by steel so as to remove ... the wood posts in the ballroom and other obstructions from the dance floor. The J. S. had those [wooden supports in the dance floor] too. I operated her [the G. W. HILL] in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois River until 1921. Tim Ward brought her over to the Ohio River in '22 and operated her from points along the Ohio between Cairo and Pittsburgh."

In the winter of 1913, the captain further expanded his fleet of excursion steamers in partnership with Capt. Sam Gregory. He recalled: "I purchased the packet steamer KEYSTONE STATE at Peoria and converted her from a packet to an excursion steamer, operated her only thirteen days on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers and renamed her the steamer MAJESTIC. [She ran] moonlite excursions out of Alton for the employees of the telephone company. She was on her way to St. Louis to come over and operate on the Ohio River between Cairo and Pittsburgh when she sank in thirty feet of water on what was being constructed as an intake tower for the city. This tower had no light on it and was right in what had been the channel for fifty-seven years. The steamer sank, but the lifeboats floated off the roof. The intake tower was being constructed at what is known as the Chain of Rocks above St. Louis. There was no lives lost. My brother Edgar Wisherd and my nephew Roland were employed on the steamer and when I got the word at my home over in Quincy, IL, I endeavored to get a train or some service down there to see if they were safe. I finally arrived about seven p.m. and found that they were safe on the boat. Endeavored to raise the steamer but the hull was so badly damaged we couldn't do it successfully. Continued to try it at different times until the fall of that year, and finally abandoned it." But that did not deter Capt. Wisherd, as next he turned his attention south to Memphis.



The Calhoun County packet G.W. HILL (2188) was the first excursion boat in the newly organized Wisherd Line Steamers of 1912. She ran for the company until sold in 1924, tramping St. Paul to New Orleans and all the way to Pittsburgh. Photo courtesy of Murphy Library, U. of Wisconsin-La Crosse.



The short-lived career of first excursion steamer MAJESTIC shown above at St. Louis and below less than two weeks later after sinking at Chain of Rocks on June 20, 1914 on water intake tower under construction. Murphy Library photos.

## A Day's Outing to GUTTENBERG

On Steamer SUNDAY

G. W.  July  
HILL 4th

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Leaves Dubuque . . . . . 10:00 A. M.    | Fare Only 75c<br>Including War Tax |
| Arrives Cassville . . . . . 2:00 P. M.  |                                    |
| Arrives Guttenberg . . . . . 3:00 P. M. |                                    |
| Leaves Guttenberg . . . . . 4:00 P. M.  |                                    |
| Leaves Cassville . . . . . 5:00 P. M.   |                                    |
| Arrives Dubuque . . . . . 8:00 P. M.    |                                    |

This is the Trip You Have Been Waiting For  
Arrange To Go.

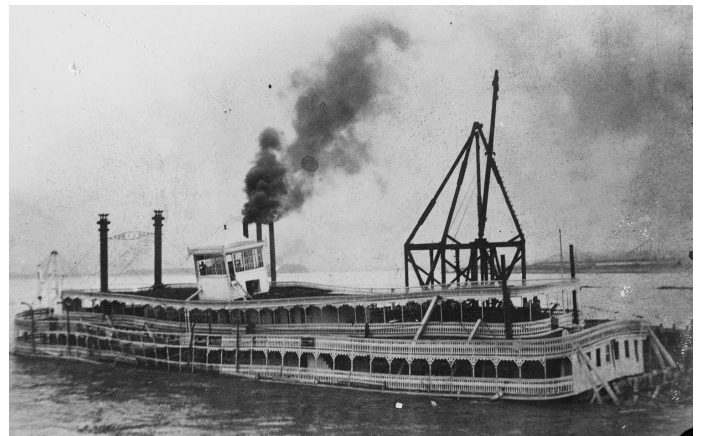
**RIALTO JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

Moonlight Leaves Dubuque 8:30—Returns 11:30 P. M.

1920 ad in Dubuque Telegraph Herald advertising all-day outing on the G.W. HILL with stops upriver at Cassville, WI and Guttenberg, IA. From editor's collection.



Knox Yard at Harmar, OH built KEYSTONE STATE (3288) in 1890 for P&C Packet Line. 225 x 37 x 6. After running various trades, Capts. Wisherd and Gregory acquired her at Peoria and converted her there in 1914. Murphy Library photo.



"I purchased half interest in the REES LEE, a steel steamer from the Lee Line Company at Memphis, remodeled her for an excursion steamer and named her MAJESTIC. After completing the reconstruction, brought her to the Upper Mississippi River and operated her on the Upper Mississippi, the Missouri and the Illinois. She had a capacity of three thousand passengers. We continued to operate her out of Kansas City as the business was very profitable, but the river got down so low that we could only operate between the two bridges. This was hardly fair to the patrons of the boat. At the lower bridge there was only three feet of water and the steamer drew four and a half. I said to the pilot and the captain of the boat, 'I believe if I went down there some evening and cut that chunk of sand and mud out of there, we could make the trip down the river.' This was my first experience on the Missouri River and the pilot said there would be less water there in the morning [if I were to do that.] However, I went down and dug it out and had seven feet of water when we left. Next



**Second MAJESTIC (3712) was originally S.S. BROWN, then REES LEE. Capt. Wisherd's partner in converting this 228 x 44 x 6.6 Ambridge, PA-built steel hull steamer was Capt. Peters Lee. Complete story of BROWN-LEE-MAJESTIC appears in June 1972 REFLECTOR. Photo from Murphy Library.**

morning went down to make the trip, had two and a half feet. So I finally decided to abandon operating out of Kansas City and came back down the Missouri to go up the Mississippi and the Illinois. Closed the season at Peoria in the fall of 1921. When preparing to get her ready for the 1922 season, moved her down to Havana, IL. I was on the G. W. HILL on the Ohio River when I got the word [that the boat had caught fire]. I went over to see to what extent the boat had been destroyed. I found that although she was a steel superstructure, the heat had destroyed her upper works, in fact, everything down to the hull. The hull was sold to some parties in St. Louis, no, in Memphis. Don't know what they used it for later. I was told by my friend Capt. Henry Leyhe that when I lost the wooden hull MAJESTIC, I should have known better than to name another boat by the same name beginning with the thirteenth letter of the alphabet, and furthermore what caused the fire was the red carpet


**Traveling Men's Associated Societies Excursion**



**Steamer Majestic**  
Saturday, July 23rd  
AFTERNOON—DANCING—EVENING  
BOAT LEAVES FOR BELLEVUE 1:30 P. M.  
EVENING EXCURSION AT 8:15 P. M.  
Adults 75c—TICKETS—Children 40c  
This Is The Popular Excursion Of The Season  
Police Protection For Automobiles At Leave

**Capitol STEAMER DE LUXE**

LET'S GO — LET'S GO  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS  
AFTERNOON EXCURSION  
Leaves Dubuque 1:30 P. M.—Returns 7:00 P. M.  
Tickets Adults 75c, Including Tax  
MOONLIGHT SAILING DANCE  
Leaves Dubuque 8:15 P. M.—Returns 11:30 P. M.  
Tickets 75c, Including Tax  
Special Rate of 25c for Children for the Afternoon Trip Only.



STRECFUS STEAMBOAT LINE - ST. LOUIS

in the captain's room. I admit I learned a lesson not to name anything MAJESTIC from now on.

"I had drawn plans to build a steel hull excursion steamer and was considering equipping it with diesel electric machinery. I was in Pittsburgh [in 1924] to call on the Westinghouse Electric people to complete the deal for the machinery, came in to see John W. Hubbard, told him what I was going to do, and he said, 'Don't do it. I'll sell you what was to be the LOUISVILLE.' He had completed the sister ship CINCINNATI and he had decided he didn't want to spend that amount of money on another one, the LOUISVILLE. He decided he would sell it to me and I bought what would have been the LOUISVILLE. Her hull was being constructed or finished in Midland, PA, where both hulls had been built. Her machinery had been bought from the Barnes Machine Company at Cincinnati and the boilers from the Acme Boiler Company at Gallipolis, OH. I was going to construct a boat for the Wisherd Line Steamers and in the meantime, Hubbard had decided to sell Coney Island to a new corporation in Cincinnati headed by Rudolph Hynicka as President, George Schott as Vice President and General Manager, and other leading men from Cincinnati. They did not have any boats to operate.

"George Schott come over to Cincinnati to see if I couldn't arrange for them to have boats to operate to the Island. In meeting with them, we sold them what was to have been the LOUISVILLE as I purchased it; also the G. W. HILL with the understanding that I would come here as their River Traffic Manager and complete the construction of what was to become the new ISLAND QUEEN. After the hull had been completed, I had it towed down here to Cincinnati, landed at the foot of Broadway. Proceeded to lay the plans for the superstructure, all of steel, hook up the boilers and machinery and other equipment. Originally she was to have been a coal burner but I decided to change it from coal to oil so as to avoid the smoke that comes from a coal-operating boat. She originally was to have five boilers. I added another, making it six so that she could be operated with three of the boilers while cleaning the other set. I did this to avoid having what is known as a "donkey boiler" for cleaning, to raise steam for cleaning boilers. I completed her

and had her equipped for four thousand passengers in 1924. She opened her season April 1, 1925.

“We brought the steamer G. W. HILL here from over on the Mississippi River and changed



*Hull of CINCINNATI with LOUISVILLE in background at Midland, PA. John W. Hubbard sold LOUISVILLE hull to Wisherd for a new boat for his line in 1924. However, within a short time D.W. sold it to Coney Island Company when he became their new River Traffic Manager and was given the job of constructing what would become their new flagship ISLAND QUEEN. Murphy Library photo.*



*IQ under construction at Foot of Broadway in Cincinnati. Photo from Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County.*



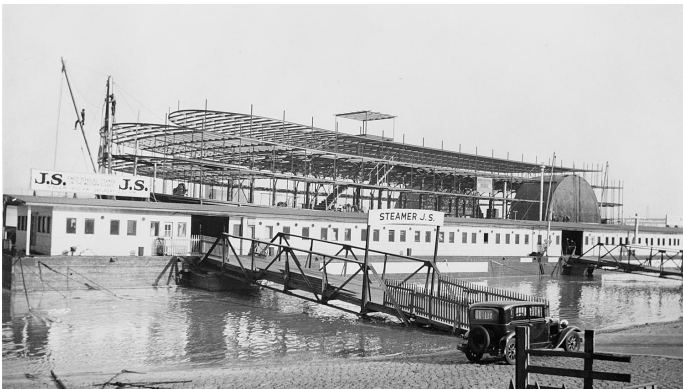
*Capt. Wisherd's G.W. HILL was part of the sale of the LOUISVILLE hull to Coney Island, and as ISLAND MAID she ran in consort with her larger sister to the amusement park beginning in 1925. Murphy Library photo.*

her name from G. W. HILL to ISLAND MAID, and she operated with the ISLAND QUEEN in the Coney Island trade. I told Freddie Dickow, who was the Chief Engineer, that I wanted to take her out the following morning and operate up and down the river with full stroke to make all sorts of tests such as turning around shortly, come ahead, and so forth. So if there were any defects of any kind, we want to discover them before we started carrying human cargo, meaning the passengers. Freddie said he wouldn't do it. He didn't want to take a chance. Those great big wheels was on there and he was afraid something might happen. I said, 'That's it. If anything would happen, I want it to happen now with just us aboard.' He said he wouldn't do it. I said, 'All right, I'll have the Second Engineer do it.' So I called the Second Engineer and told him what I wanted to do and we went out, moving down between these two locks and dams. We had her going twelve or fourteen mile an hour, stopped her real quick, and turned around. Freddie Dickow was sitting out on the bow of the boat and we brought it back and landed her. I said, 'Well, Freddie, the wheels are still on and we didn't crack a bolt.' 'That's all right. I wouldn't do it.' I said, 'That's what you said. Now I'm all ready to carry everybody I can carry on this boat.' So that's the way the thing took on. While Freddie Dickow was the best engineer I ever had on a steamboat – he would take care of everything very carefully – I didn't censor him too much for not wanting to make this. He was on her up until the time that she was destroyed at Pittsburgh. I was Traffic Manager for Coney Island until I resigned in late 1925.



*ISLAND QUEEN framed to third deck (balcony/mezzanine) level with ISLAND MAID landed below. Boilers had already been placed at Gallipolis and Barnes engines from Cincinnati were also installed. Photo by Murphy Library, UW-LaCrosse.*

“Then I went with Streckfus Steamers of St. Louis [in 1926]. Brought the steamer WASHINGTON over and operated her on the Ohio River for the season out to Pittsburgh, operated her out of there. During the summer season we played all the cities all the way down the river to Paducah, until 1931 when we moved to Pittsburgh. I was operating out of there the rear portion of the season. Brought the steamer SAINT PAUL over to run out of Pittsburgh in 1937. Operated the WASHINGTON at points along the river between Pittsburgh and Cairo. In the fall of 1939 we took the SAINT PAUL to Paducah, KY, remodeled and made her more modern and named her the steamer SENATOR. She had the capacity for three thousand passengers. Operated her at Pittsburgh until 1941. We had her booked for 1942 with a full crew employed: pilots, engineers, musicians and so forth and the government took our pilots, engineers and other licensed officers on towboats for towing between Pittsburgh and New Orleans. So we were compelled to close the season and lay her up at Paducah until the War was over. In the meantime, Capt. Streckfus took her over to St. Louis. Opened the season when the War was over, but decided later to abandon operating on the Ohio River. She was finally abandoned and destroyed by sinking her below St. Louis about 1953.”

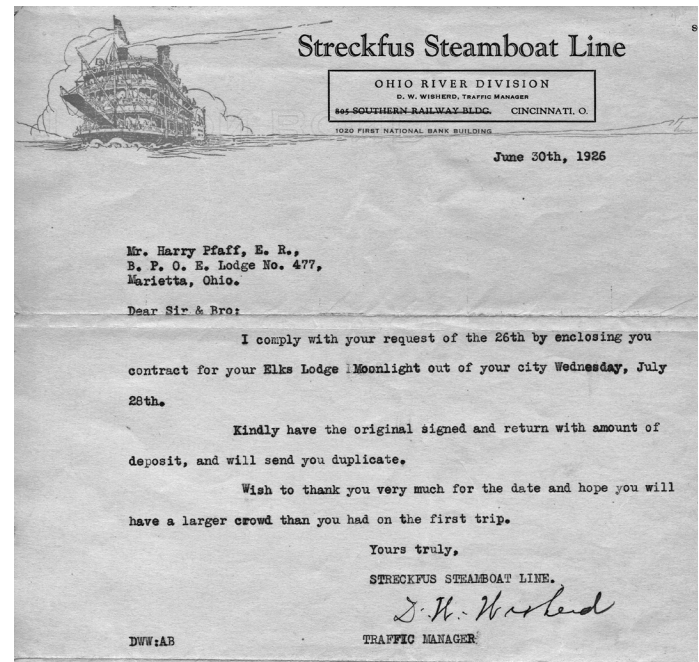


*Streckfus steamer PRESIDENT (4578) under construction at St. Louis in 1933 using hull and machinery from packet CINCINNATI. Capt. Wisherd was employed by the Streckfus family at this time, managing the WASHINGTON. Whether or not he assisted in the PRESIDENT's design based on his experience with ISLAND QUEEN is an intriguing question, but probably unanswerable. See Reflections from Our Readers on page 2. Murphy Library photo.*

While associated with the Streckfus Line as Traffic Manager of the Ohio River Division from 1926 through 1941, Wisherd made bookings and managed all affairs for the WASHINGTON, as

evidenced by the letter below from his Cincinnati office. He would do the same for the SAINT PAUL (later renamed SENATOR). Perhaps his most well-known letter of all time appears on page 45 of the March 1979 issue of the REFLECTOR.

**Capt. D. W. Wisherd story continued on page 34.**

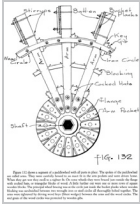


**Letter from Wisherd confirming a Marietta booking for July 28, 1926 excursion for the Elks Lodge. Courtesy of Judy Patsch.**



**The last two Streckfus boats managed by Wisherd on the Ohio were WASHINGTON (5711) through 1937 and SAINT PAUL (4965)/SENATOR through 1941. Both photos from Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.**





# Small Stacks

## Charles Cason's Steamboat Models

by John Fryant

The late Charles E. Cason of Ft. Thomas, KY was a prolific builder of steamboat models. Photos of them began appearing in the REFLECTOR in June 1985 with his model of the HATTIE BROWN. Another of his impressive models was a diorama of a Kanawha River coal tipple complete with the towboat LUCIE MARMET and barge. This was shown in the December 1987 issue along with a photo of his BETSY ANN model.

Impressed with these photos, I contacted him during one of our many visits to the Cincinnati area and arranged a visit to see his completed models of the ISLAND QUEEN II, the L & C packet CITY OF CINCINNATI, and the FALLS CITY. All were built to 1/96th scale (1/8 in. = 1 ft.) and were perfect in their appearance and proportions. Charlie also had a model of the Greene Line packet TOM GREENE, which was built to 1/48th scale, twice the size of the others. It was stored in his garage as there was no appropriate space for it in his house. Although unable to recall the exact date of this visit, I know that the model was donated to the Howard Steamboat Museum in 1988 and is still displayed there. Charlie continued to submit short letters to the REFLECTOR until his passing in 1992. His obituary appeared in the June 1992 issue.

In the ensuing years I had heard that the Cincinnati Historical Society had obtained some of his models, exhibiting them in a case at the Museum Center at Union Terminal. Then in 2014, the Museum Center was given a grant to repair and clean their collection of steamboat models, some of which had suffered dirt and damage during alternating periods of display and storage. This columnist was awarded the job, which included six of the Cason models. These were the ISLAND QUEEN, the CITY OF CINCINNATI, the FALLS CITY, the WEBER W. SEBALD, the BETSY ANN and the HATTIE BROWN. Prior to this I hadn't known how many of the Cason

models were in their collection. As of this writing, work has been completed on three of them.

All of Cason's models were made primarily of balsa wood, which is not the material of choice for museum models. However, it is lightweight, easy to work with and in plentiful supply at most hobby and craft stores. With careful handling and protection, balsa models can last many years. The unique thing about these models is not the collection itself but the builder. Charlie suffered from the eye disease Macular Degeneration.

In spite of this handicap he was able to capture the exact dimensions, shapes and appearance of each steamboat he modeled. He constructed several pairs of home-made magnifying lenses attached to ordinary glasses frames. One of these was amongst the tools and plans given to the Cincinnati Museum Center by his family.

As for the exact number of models Cason built, we may never know. Apparently his family has some of them, but no information has come to light as to the total number he created. The Museum Center owns the ones mentioned above, except for the LUCIE MARMET model, whose fate is unknown.

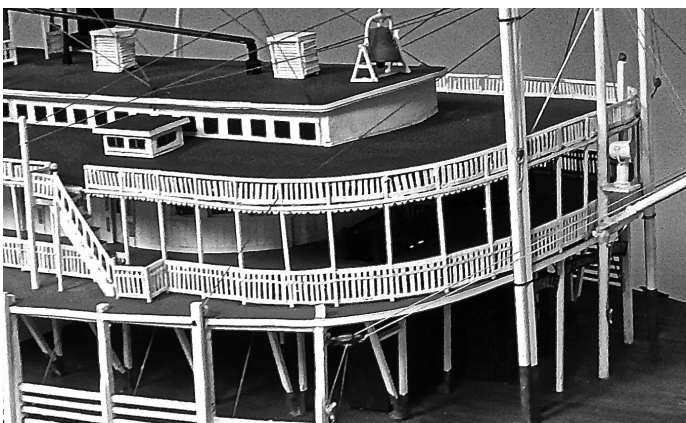
My hat is off to you, Charlie! May you Rest in Peace, for your models are in good hands.



**Above:** Here is the TOM GREENE model as displayed at Howard Steamboat Museum, Jeffersonville, IN. Photo by Travis Vasconcelos. All other photos by John Fryant.

**Next page top left:** Charlie's description of his ISLAND QUEEN model was: "That's how she looked on the day she died" [September 9, 1947 when she burned at Pittsburgh.]

**Next page three lower left photos:** My favorite of these models is CITY OF CINCINNATI, shown after restoration. A close inspection of the railings around the boiler



and hurricane decks revealed that they were made entirely of separate pieces. Totally amazing! The photo above shows how it looked before restoration began. Most of the damage was to stage boom and rigging which had to be completely replaced.

**Top right:** The towboat WEBER W. SEBALD, complete with "herringbone" sternwheel. This photo was taken in 1998 and was in Cason's collection when given to the Museum Center. As it was already cased, no repair or cleaning were required. (Photographer unknown)

**Second on right:** BETSY ANN model will require a minimum of work. The starboard cylinder timber has broken, allowing the wheel to fall off its bearing.

**Third on right:** The little HATTIE BROWN had damage to her stage, but there was no damage to the rigging. The boom was re-attached to its support and some of the warped cardboard railings along each side were replaced.

**Above:** Amongst the items from Cason's collection of materials were cardboard templates, tools and one of his magnifying glasses. Its right side sported a wire-framed magnifier.

# Steamer NATCHEZ in Winter Layup

by Matthew Dow

Everyone needs a little T.L.C. (tender loving care) from time to time. The same goes for excursion boats, and especially steamboats. While many boating seasons end at Columbus Day and resume the following Memorial Day, the same cannot be said for the Str. NATCHEZ. Her homeport of New Orleans boasts a very temperate climate during the winter months, and since the river does not freeze down in the “Sunny South”, the vessel offers cruises year-round. She stays busy during the fall months and through the Holiday season and New Year’s Eve. The new year brings the month of January, a decline of patronage for a few weeks, and the perfect opportunity to take her out of service for some well-needed maintenance. At the beginning of the month, the NATCHEZ leaves her berth at Toulouse Street and heads to the Morrison Road Wharf in the Industrial Canal for her layup.

2016 was no exception. On January 3rd, the NATCHEZ made her way into the Canal. While our layup period usually lasts 2-3 weeks, this year was different. A two-page list consisting of roughly 40 items required the boat to be docked for a period of no less than 5 weeks, a real pain for our Sales Department. A standard item on this list was painting. Everything from decks, railings and bulkheads to dining room walls, flagpoles, doors, windows, light fixtures, the pilothouse, the jackstaff and the paddlewheel all received a fresh coat. The stern name board and various signs around the boat indicating life jacket locations and fire stations were also spruced up by Capt. Don Houghton, the vessel’s relief master. Lots of wood work was completed as well. All the bar rails, a pilothouse name board, several tabletops, and the dance floor were completely stripped down to bare wood and layered with coats of semi-gloss varnish to bring out a wonderful shine.

While the above seems laborious, the real work occurred on the Main Deck. From stem to stern, one could not go 10 feet without encountering some sort of project. A new keel was installed on the

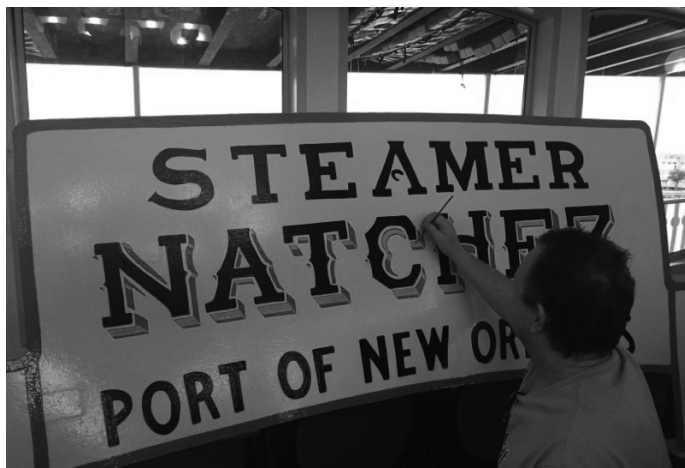
bow. The capstan (one of two obtained from the MISSISSIPPI QUEEN) received a new brake. 44 tubes were replaced in the port boiler, requiring a section of bulkhead to be removed so that the new tubes could be installed in one piece. A new emergency generator was purchased, replacing an older model with a much lower power output. In the engine room, the main throttle valve and steam stops were taken apart so that packing could be replaced. The two main generators were taken off the boat to be professionally cleaned, and the diesel engines powering them were thoroughly serviced. Also, the steam line connecting the high pressure cylinder to the low pressure on the port side was replaced. The largest project of the entire layup occurred at the forward end of the Main Deck in our Captain’s Salon. Steel around the perimeter of the room was found to be rusting in spots and needed to be replaced. Thing is: the room sits directly over the 60,000 gallon fuel tank. Before any work was done, the tank had to be emptied, professionally cleaned, ventilated, and properly tested and cleared for work before any welding could occur. Two surrounding ballast tanks also had to be emptied so that the work could be completed. Needless to say, once all three tanks were emptied, the bow sat pretty high out of the water for the length of our stay in the Canal! Since the room had to be stripped of everything for this work to occur, the decision was made to renovate the room with new furnishings, lighting, and a new bar located at the forward end of the room. At the time of this writing, the new room has not been completed. Once it is done, it will be a wonderful setting for smaller private events.

Countless hours of work by both marine crew and outside contractors culminated on February 6th at 11 a.m. when, after proper clearances from the USCG, the lines were let go and we headed for Toulouse Street (luckily, a lower river than we had left five weeks prior). A journey from the Morrison Road Wharf to the Mississippi River requires the boat to pass through one lock and under six bridges, five of which must be raised by their respective operators—a process which can be easier said than



done! After passing through the Industrial Canal Lock, the NATCHEZ entered the Mississippi River at 12:40 p.m. and steamed upriver towards the city. As the boat cleared Algiers Point, yours truly fired up the calliope and played a few songs to announce our arrival in the city. As “Hello, Dolly!” echoed over the French Quarter, it was obvious that the Str. NATCHEZ, crown jewel of the New Orleans Harbor, was back and ready for another year of cruising the Mighty Mississippi River. 🎵

All photos courtesy of Matt Dow.



*Above: Pulling tubes out of boiler, a laborious process.  
Below: Captain's Salon stripped bare of its furnishings.*

*Top: Looking good on an afternoon in the Industrial Canal.  
Above: Capt. Don Houghton touching up stern nameboard.*



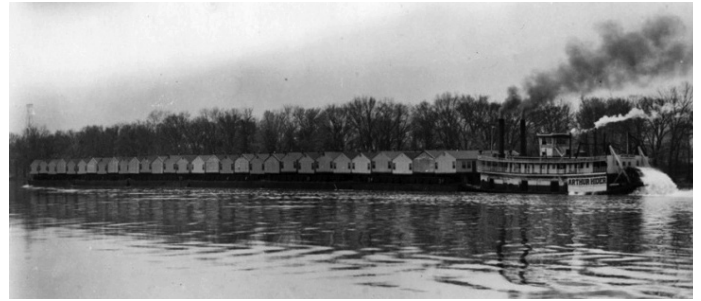
*Right: Matt's pet project: painting the manifold and polishing calliope whistles.  
Below (L to R): Removing old emergency generator; A rare look inside the NATCHEZ boiler. Old tubes have been removed and boiler prepped for the installation of the new tubes; Dance floor after stripping and revarnishing.*



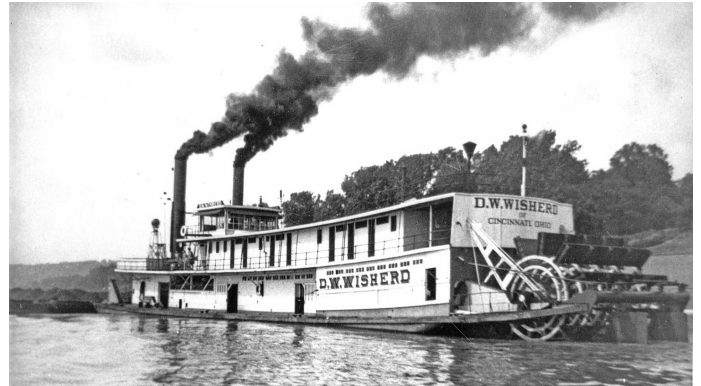
*Capt. D.W. Wisherd story continued from page 29.*

After leaving Streckfus Steamers at the start of the War, Capt. Wisherd opened another chapter in his long, varied river career. He recalled: "I was with Neare, Gibbs and Company as surveyor in the salvage business. I had a number of barges that sank, some with as much as a thousand tons of coal. We removed the coal and raised the barges and had them repaired so as to be in use again. It wasn't possible to get new steel at that time to build barges. So it was necessary to repair these so that they could be used at least until the War was over. I had barges to survey and move from Marietta, OH to southern rivers, on the Mississippi as low as Memphis. This was rather a cold job out in the middle of the river when it is five and six above zero, but we were successful in salvaging practically every one of these damaged barges and boats. In 1944 Neare, Gibbs had an inquiry for covering or insuring sixty government houses from Gallipolis to Uniontown. The houses were four rooms, twenty-four feet wide and fifty-six feet long and fifteen feet high. I checked with the people who had agreed to move them and found what they were preparing to do, the barges could not deliver the houses successfully. I arranged to have them put two barges, thirty feet wide, anchored together by braces and cables so there would be one hull. We then placed the houses across the barges and loaded thirty on ten barges. The first trip was in March 1944 and the towboat was the ARTHUR HIDER which is owned by Kirschner. The second trip was a short time later. The houses were delivered in perfect condition. When the U. S. government man came aboard down at Uniontown before they were unloaded, he said there wasn't a scratch on any of them. This was a job that took all the strength and nerve you could have, and I wouldn't care to be a Noah's Ark again soon. I retired from active service in 1946, but made special trips up until 1948. I would be very happy if I had a boat equal to the ISLAND QUEEN that was operating between here and Coney Island, if to do nothing more than ring the bells a few times. I still hope that can be done some day."

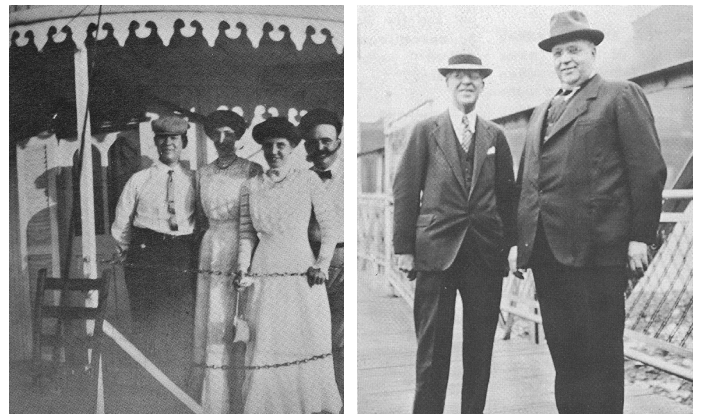
Capt. Wisherd passed away on March 25, 1959 at Cincinnati, and was buried in Gate of Heaven Cemetery. He was survived by his second wife, Alice Brauer Wisherd, his longtime secretary. ☺



**ARTHUR HIDER (T0168) delivering tow of 30 houses in March 1944 as arranged by Capt. Wisherd. Photo courtesy of Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.**

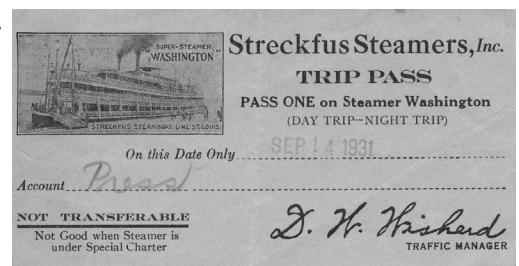


*Although not mentioned in the captain's memoir, he also owned a towboat named, coincidentally, D.W. WISHERD (T0553). Built by Howards as LORETTA HOWARD in 1929, she towed coal for Capt. Birch McBride until 1932. She was purchased in a Marshal's Sale by Wisherd in 1933 and renamed. He chartered her almost exclusively to Campbell Transportation Co., who eventually bought her from him. Photo from Murphy Library, Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse.*



**Left: Capt. Wisherd on left aboard packet QUINCY with passengers in late 1911. Right: With Capt. Joseph Streckfus on right at St. Louis on November 2, 1935 aboard PRESIDENT.**

Example of  
"Press" Pass  
for Steamer  
WASHINGTON  
signed  
by Wisherd.  
Judy Patsch  
collection.



## TWILIGHT Calendar Available



# Final Crossings

## Capt. C. Leonard Schlamp

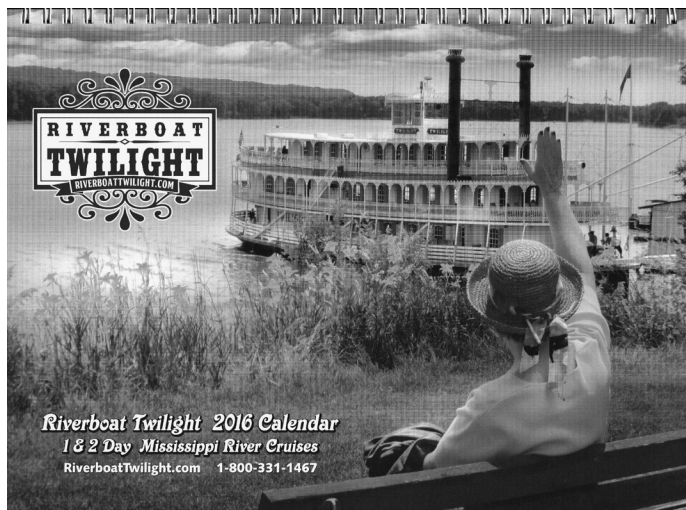
Captain C. Leonard Schlamp, 89, died on November 4, 2015, at his home in Evansville, IN of pulmonary fibrosis. He began his river career in 1951 as a deckhand for Commercial Barge Line, and retired in 1987 as a master and pilot for American Commercial Barge Line. He also served on active duty in the U. S. Naval Reserve, 1946 to 1950 as a radioman for U.S.S. LCI 962 homeported in Evansville. Capt. Schlamp saw combat action in both World War II and the Korean conflict. He was a longtime member of S&D.

*The REFLECTOR thanks Capt. Schlamp's niece Jane Kerber for providing us with this obituary information for her uncle.*

### Reflections from Our Readers continued from page 3

Carol Roth writes: "In case someone has not done this, I just wanted to make a correction to the article in the December issue titled "Steamer JBS Update." In the list of those who arrived in Dubuque on the TWILIGHT, the person you listed as Pat Carr was really Jo Ann Schoen. Thanks for all your work with the REFLECTOR, and hope to see you in May when we go to Le Claire for the CITY OF BATON ROUGE celebration."

📌 A sincere thank you to Carol for bringing this error to our attention, and with a somewhat red face your editor offers a chagrined apology to Jo Ann! Notwithstanding the confusion of names, it was indeed a notable group of river fans who gathered that day after disembarking from the TWILIGHT. An informal early evening gathering at the Grand Harbor Hotel was followed up the next morning with a visit to the River Museum in Dubuque prior to the boat's return to Le Claire. Carol's mention of the CBR Centennial Celebration this May prompts us to announce that a feature story on the boat and her engine builder will appear in our June issue..



Capt. Kevin and Carrie Stier's full color 2016 pictorial calendar featuring the Riverboat TWILIGHT is available from their office address at River Cruises, PO Box 172, Scales Mound, IL 61075; by calling toll free at 1-800-331-1467, or contacting them at [Info@RiverboatTwilight.com](mailto:Info@RiverboatTwilight.com) online. Cost is \$15.99 plus shipping.

In a recent email, Carrie advised us that the Centennial Celebration for CITY OF BATON ROUGE is set for Saturday, May 28 at 1:00 p.m. down at the Le Claire, IA riverfront landing. Several guests invited to participate in the ceremonies include Capt. John Vaughn and S&D members Judy Patsch, Travis Vasconcelos, and your editor. The boat will be dedicated in honor of Capt. Harry Alsman, last captain of the CITY OF BATON ROUGE. 📍

## Back Cover

Steamer NATCHEZ: a view from the top - of her jackstaff. Matt Dow wrote: "The NATCHEZ heads into the Industrial Canal Jan. 3 for her annual layup. She'll be out of service for 5 weeks and hopefully, that's enough time for the forecasted high water to pass through. There is not much of a change in water level back in the Canal, and the currents there from tidal motions are small. We have quite a bit of work to do on the boat, so I wanted to ask you a question. Would y'all like a story about the layup?" Our answer appears on page 32. *Matthew Dow photo.*

