

Four Days at Davenport

KIMBALL HOUSE

Davenport, Iowa

September 21, 1881

The entire forenoon of September twenty-first was devoted to an inspection of the varied manufactures of Moline, and in the afternoon we dropped down to Davenport. Among those who shook hands with us at the landing was Colonel P. A. J. Russell, city editor of the *Democrat*, who was the first to greet me here during my horseback journey from ocean to ocean in 1876, and who now seemed doubly interested in my canoe voyage from source to sea. The colonel remarked that he had no intention of letting me intersect my old line of march without seeing at least one familiar face.

Stepping into a carriage which was in waiting at the ferry, we were driven to the "Kimball," until recently known as the Burtis House, where I had registered during my former journey. The chief topic of conversation everywhere at this time was the death and approaching funeral of President Garfield. Having an engagement to lecture at Davenport on the twenty-third, it was thought advisable by many to cancel it out of respect to the Nation's dead; while others urged that as a

large number of tickets had been sold it would be better to meet the appointment. I accordingly lectured at Library Hall, being introduced by Mayor Henry. I referred to the dead President before proceeding with my lecture, and gave my reasons for delivering it at a time when nearly all public engagements were either cancelled or postponed.

Less than fifty years ago the first cabin was erected here by white men. The retreating footsteps of the red man were still heard over the bluffs. The graves of his people were still fresh on the brow of the hills, but all of this, with the play-grounds of his children, have now been covered over with the habitations of the pale face. The mighty river that once bore the frail bark of a Marquette and a Joliet has become the thoroughfare of states. Where the light canoe of the savage once glided in safety, the *scu-ti-chemon* (or steamboat) of the white man now floats with majesty and splendor, and this magnificent river has become the highway of a mighty nation. The Mackinaw trading-boat, with its French *voyageur* has left its moorings on *As-sin-ne-Man-ess* (Rock Island), and old Fort Armstrong, that had stood like a watchful sentinel on the jutting rocks . . .

The bluffs of Davenport consist of a gentle rise from the river or bottom lands; not so steep but that roads are constructed up almost every part of them. The general elevation of these bluffs or highlands is about one hundred feet above the

Mississippi, covered now with residences, gardens and cultivated fields to their summit. Davenport Township differs from most others upon the river in the beautiful rolling prairie immediately back from the river, after passing the bluffs. Back of the city the slope from the top of the bluff to Duck Creek, covered as it is with gardens and fields, is one of uncommon beauty and richness.

At the close of the year 1832 there were no settlements of white men in Iowa. In this year, on the fifteenth of September, General Winfield Scott negotiated a treaty with the Indians of the Sac [and Fox] tribes for the purchase by the United States of the territory comprising [including] Scott County, bordering on the river. The city of Davenport was named after Colonel George Davenport, the first white settler on Rock Island, on the eastern shore of the river and immediately opposite the site of Davenport. The Government had appointed him Indian agent and he received a grant of land on the Island.

The first person that owned land in Davenport was Antoine Le Claire, the son of a Canadian Frenchman, born in Michigan in 1797. His mother was the daughter of a Pottawatomie chief. At this time the Territory of the Northwest, out of which half a dozen great States have since been formed, was peopled almost entirely by the red man, with here and there one of a different race, fearless enough to brave the perils of a frontier

life among the dusky denizens of the wilderness. The father of Le Claire was one of these. The claim upon which the City of Davenport was laid out was purchased by Le Claire for one hundred and fifty dollars! In 1835 Mr. Le Claire sold his claim to a company, whose object was to lay it out as a town site. They chose well, as the event has amply established. During the first year only some half dozen families came in, mostly from Saint Louis. The first hotel, the first store and the first saloon were opened this same year. The saloon was a log shanty and stood on Front street below Western avenue. The "Davenport Hotel," a frame building of small pretension, erected by Messrs. Davenport and Le Claire, occupied a lot on the corner of Front and Ripley streets; and the first store was the property of James Mackintosh, who sold to the scant population dry-goods, groceries, hardware and provisions. But, in addition to the dozen families in Davenport, purchasers came from the opposite shore of the river. Lumber was at that time brought up the river from Cincinnati. Flour at sixteen dollars per barrel and pork at sixteen cents per pound were also brought from Cincinnati. From this first year the ferry also dates its origin—a flat-boat propelled by oars. This, in time, gave place to steam, and, at present, a large and commodious steamboat is constantly employed in transferring freight and passengers between the Iowa and Illinois shores of the river,

which at this point is about a mile wide. The mortality of Davenport during the first year of its existence amounted to seven, with a population of less than one hundred souls. Stevenson—now Rock Island City, on the Illinois shore, which had been laid out in 1834—possessed at this time a population of nearly five hundred.

Davenport, in the beauty of its location, excels all the other cities in the State. Handsome homes dot the bluffs. River views, for residences, have been extensively occupied by the well-to-do citizens, and the scope of country brought within the range of the eye from some of these hill-top dwellings is scarcely to be excelled for beauty by anything I have seen on the river. The drainage is of nature's own making—the city being built on a declivity. There is much room for improvement in the sidewalks here. Possibly the citizens are too busy to give thought to a subject that concerns them only externally. Strangers, however, notice their defective, and in many cases dilapidated, condition, and make uncharitable remarks. The same applies to the County Court House, which is, without exception, the meanest I have seen in any city east of the Rockies and north of "Dixie."

The educational advantages are proportioned to the size of the city. Here are twelve school-buildings, including that of the High School, erected in 1874, at a cost of sixty-five thousand dollars. The annual cost of the twelve schools is

about seventy thousand dollars. Griswold College, belonging to the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Iowa, occupies a very picturesque site overlooking the river. The Roman Catholic Academy of the Immaculate Conception is conducted by the Sisters of Charity of the B. V. M. Located within the city boundaries, it is surrounded by beautiful grounds and appears as quiet and retired as if miles away from the hum of the restless city. The buildings are elegant and commodious, and a new addition, at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars is now in course of erection. This academy was opened for the education of young ladies in 1859. The churches are numerous and well attended. Grace Church, the cathedral of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Iowa, is a very fine, substantial edifice, erected at a cost of eighty thousand dollars.

Trinity Church has a chime of bells, awaking memories of young both grave and gay, and may be heard at a distance of several miles. The Roman Catholic diocese of Davenport, embracing the southern half of the State, has also its seat here in the residence of the bishop. Four Baptist, four Catholic, one Christian, two Congregational, four Episcopal, one Hebrew, three Lutheran, four Methodist, one Unitarian and four Presbyterian churches afford strong evidence of progress in the cause of religion.

The Public Library on Brady street, as a means

of education, should not be passed without favorable mention. It was founded by the late Mrs. Clarissa C. Cook, a lady of wealth and benevolence, and contains about ten thousand volumes; but the institution which has contributed most to the fame of Davenport, is its Academy of Sciences. This embraces a most valuable collection of rare curiosities, ancient and modern—relics from the mounds of Iowa and adjoining states, including many skulls and portions of the skeletons of prehistoric man, and of animals of an extinct race. The visitor to Davenport may spend a day very profitably in this well-ordered and attractive museum. Mercy Hospital is under the management of the Sisters of Mercy, and was opened in 1868. It has grown to large proportions and receives and cares for patients without reference to their religious denomination. It has the entire confidence of the citizens and all testify to its judicious management and great usefulness. The Home for the Friendless, founded and liberally endowed by the benevolent Mrs. Cook, is a shelter for destitute females. It supplies a want found to exist, in a greater or less degree, in most cities, but unfortunately supplied in few. It is to the praise of Davenport that such an institution has been provided for friendless women and girls, and that it is so well and carefully conducted.

The growth of Davenport has been mainly since 1850. Surrounded by a beautiful and fertile coun-

try, it affords good sanitary conditions and every facility for the development of industry of many kinds. The present population is about 25,000.

Rock Island Arsenal lies to the north of Rock Island City, the latter not being situated on the Island, as might be supposed by the untraveled reader from its name. The Island proper has been appropriated by the United States Government since 1804, though unoccupied until 1812, on the breaking out of the war with Great Britain. A fort was erected here in 1816, and named Fort Armstrong, in honor of the then Secretary of War. It was garrisoned by United States troops until May, 1836, when it was evacuated. In 1840, the Government established here an ordnance depot, but in 1845, the stores were removed to the Saint Louis Arsenal. In 1862, an Act of Congress converted the Island into an arsenal for the National Government, and such it remains to this day. General Thomas J. Rodman, the inventor of the Rodman gun, was appointed to the command of the Arsenal in June, 1865, and continued in command until his death in 1871. In March, 1869, Congress appropriated \$500,000 for the construction of a bridge across the Mississippi, uniting the Island with the city of Davenport, immediately opposite. General Rodman was succeeded in June, 1871, by Colonel D. W. Flagler, of the Ordnance Corps. This officer, since his appointment, has effected great improvements on the

DOWN THE GREAT RIVER;

EMBRACING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE

True Source of the Mississippi,

TOGETHER WITH

VIEWS, DESCRIPTIVE AND PICTORIAL, OF THE CITIES, TOWNS,
VILLAGES AND SCENERY ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER, AS
SEEN DURING A CANOE VOYAGE OF OVER THREE
THOUSAND MILES FROM ITS HEAD WATERS
TO THE GULF OF MEXICO.

BY

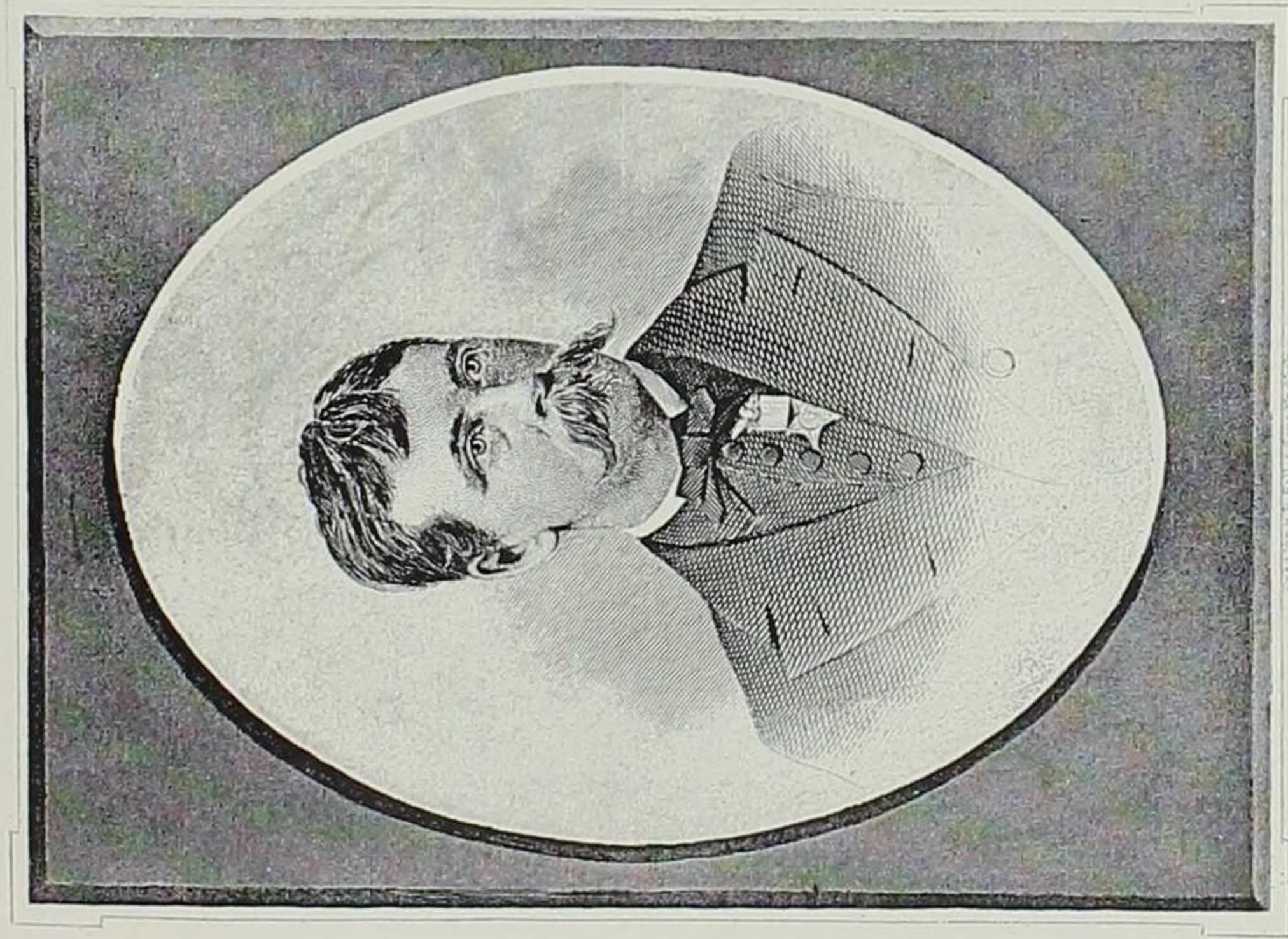
CAPTAIN WILLARD GLAZIER,

Author of "Soldiers of the Saddle," "Capture, Prison-Pen and Escape," "Battles for the
Union," "Heroes of Three Wars," "Peculiarities of American Cities,"
"Ocean to Ocean on Horseback," etc.

Illustrated.

PHILADELPHIA:
HUBBARD BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
723 CHESTNUT STREET.

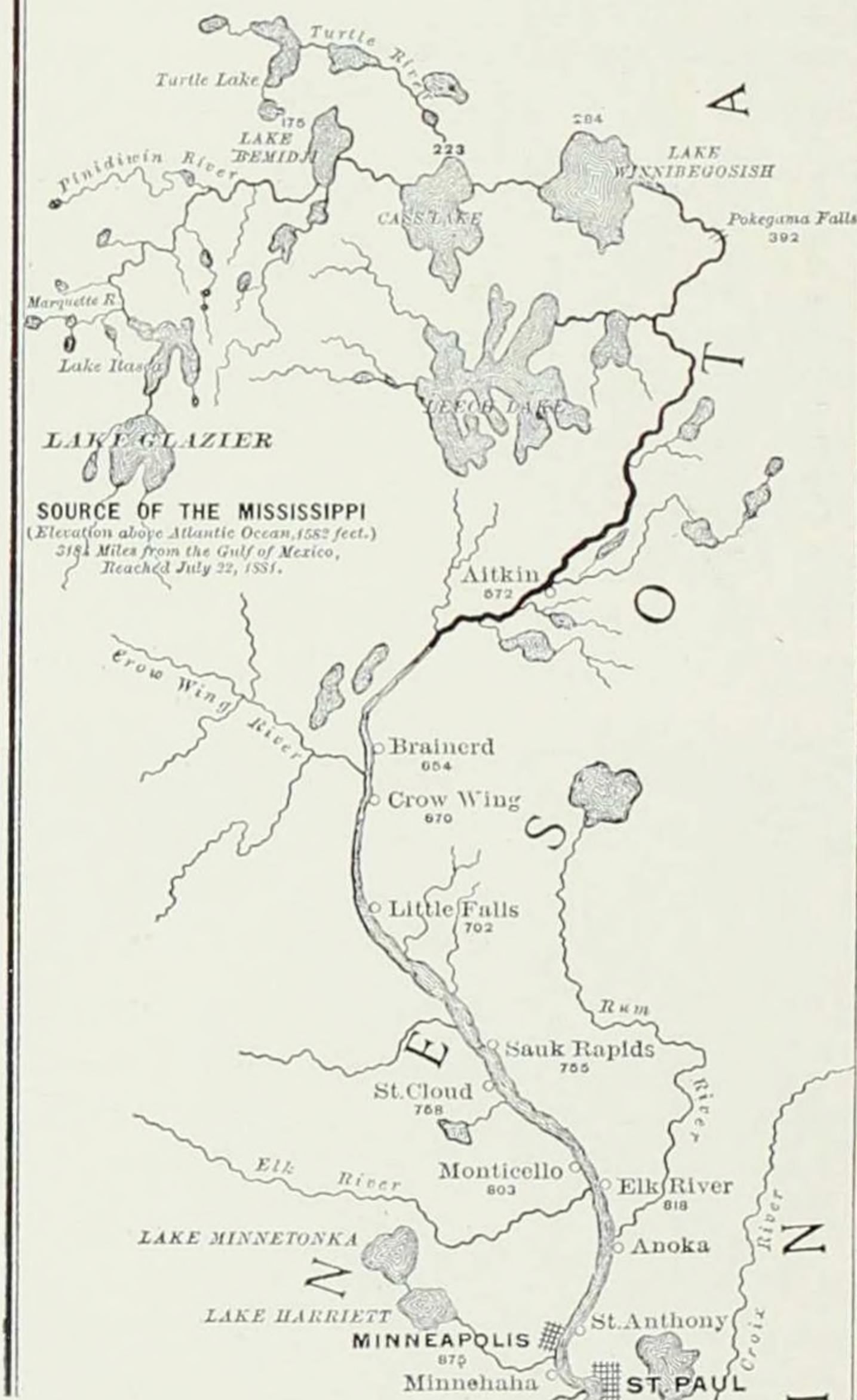
1892.



WILLARD GLAZIER

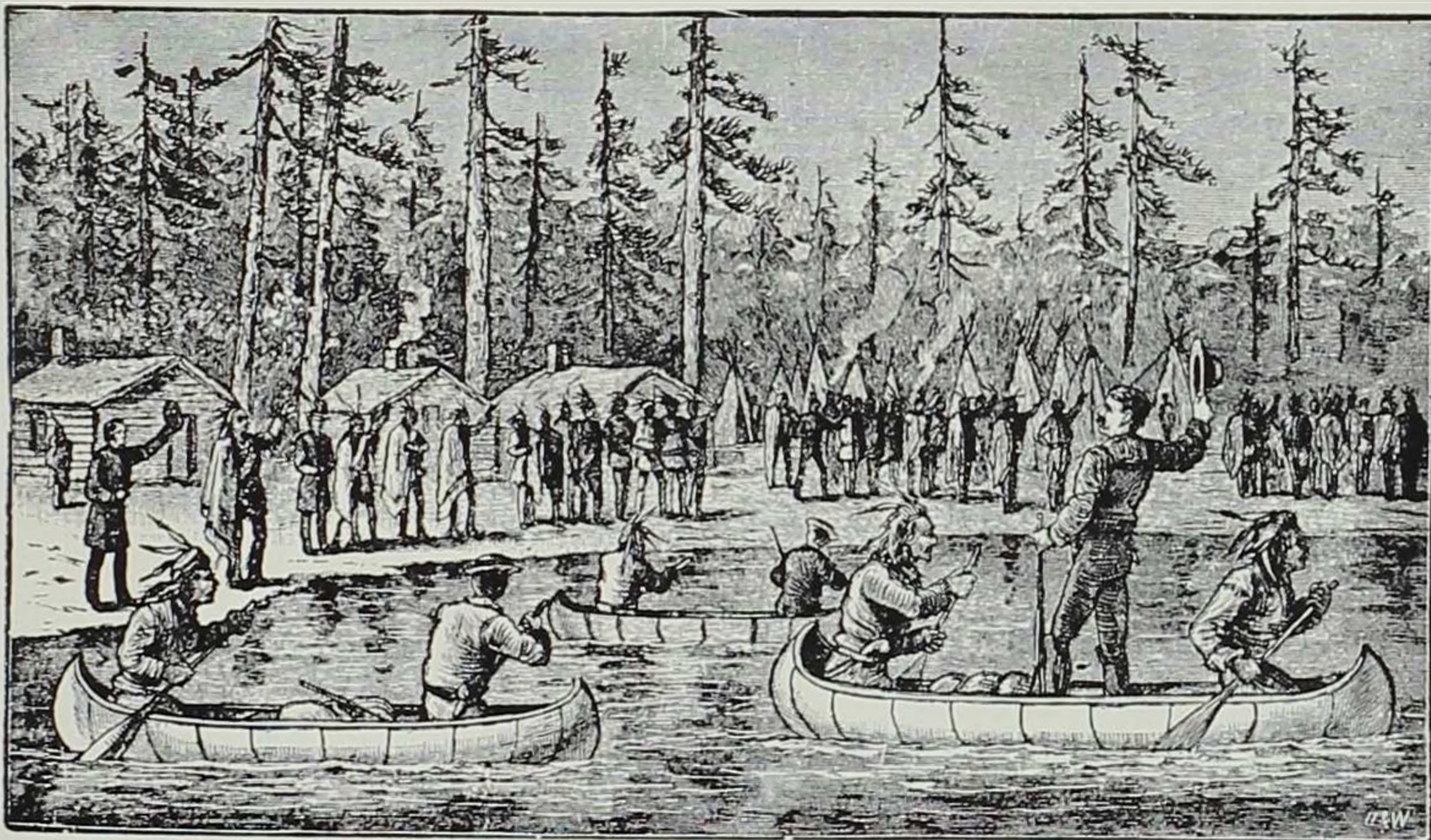
(Right) Title page of Glazier's book.

THE "FATHER OF WATERS"



A 38-inch long folding map locates the stops and landmarks recorded by Glazier on his trip from the source of the Mississippi to its mouth.

This section of the map locates what Glazier mistakenly claimed was the source of the Mississippi in Lake Glazier. It follows the canoeists from Lake Itasca to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Portion of the map on the back cover locates the stops made along eastern border of Iowa, most of which were in the Hawkeye State.

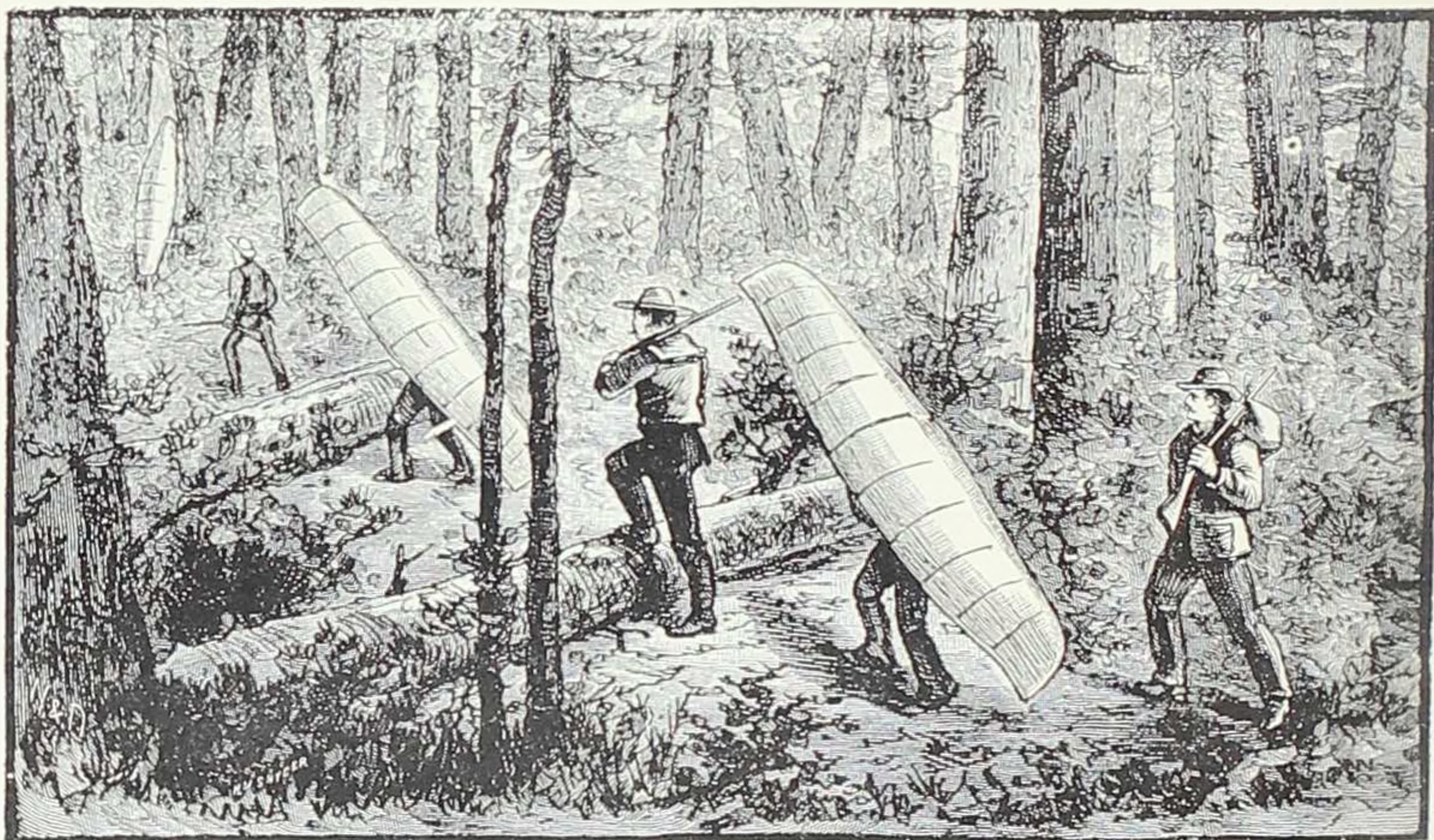


Embarking for the Source of the Great River.



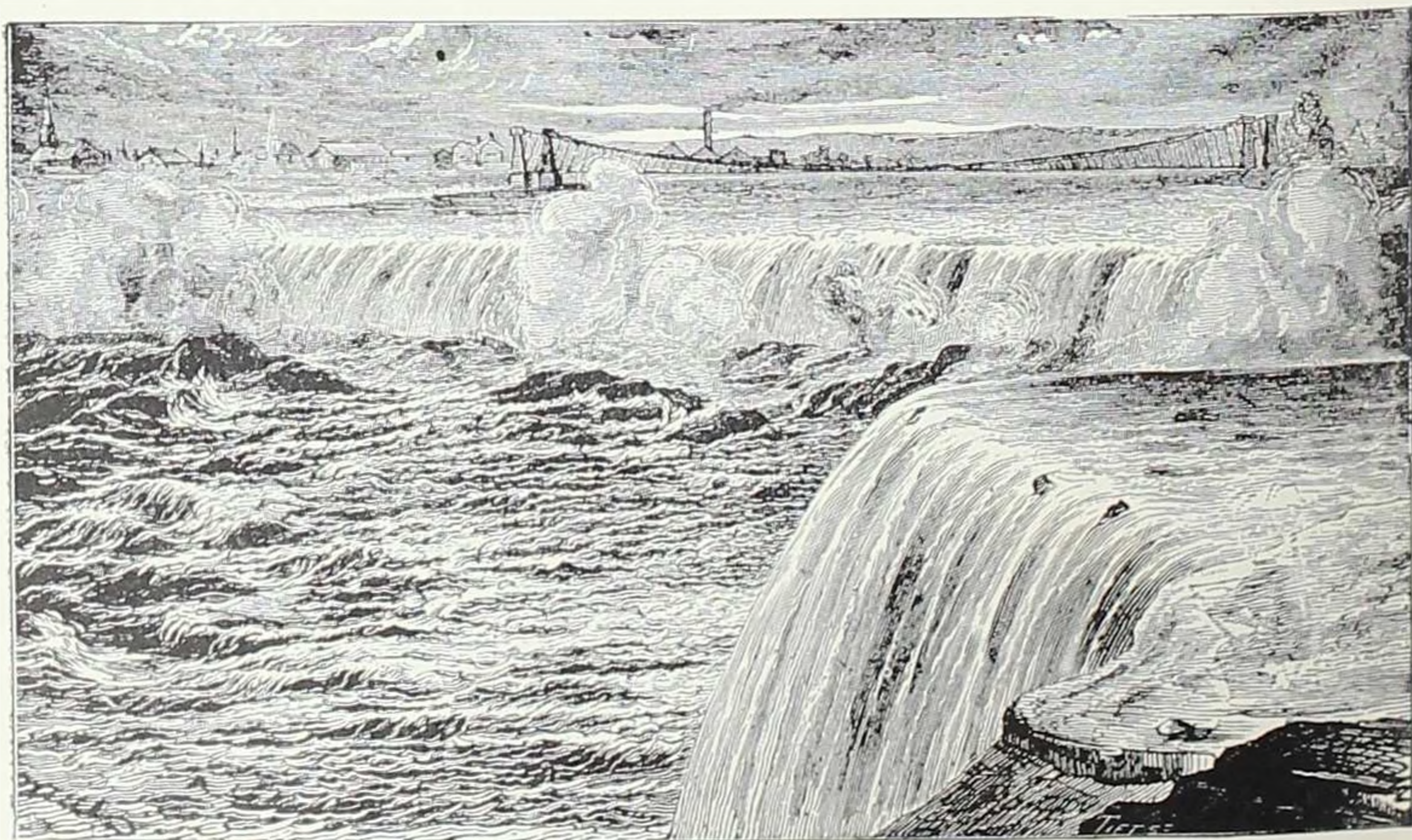
Source of the "Father of Waters."

Captain Glazier's claim to this honor has never been accepted by students of the subject. See J. V. Brower, *Itasca State Park*, Vol. XI, *Minnesota Historical Society Collections*.



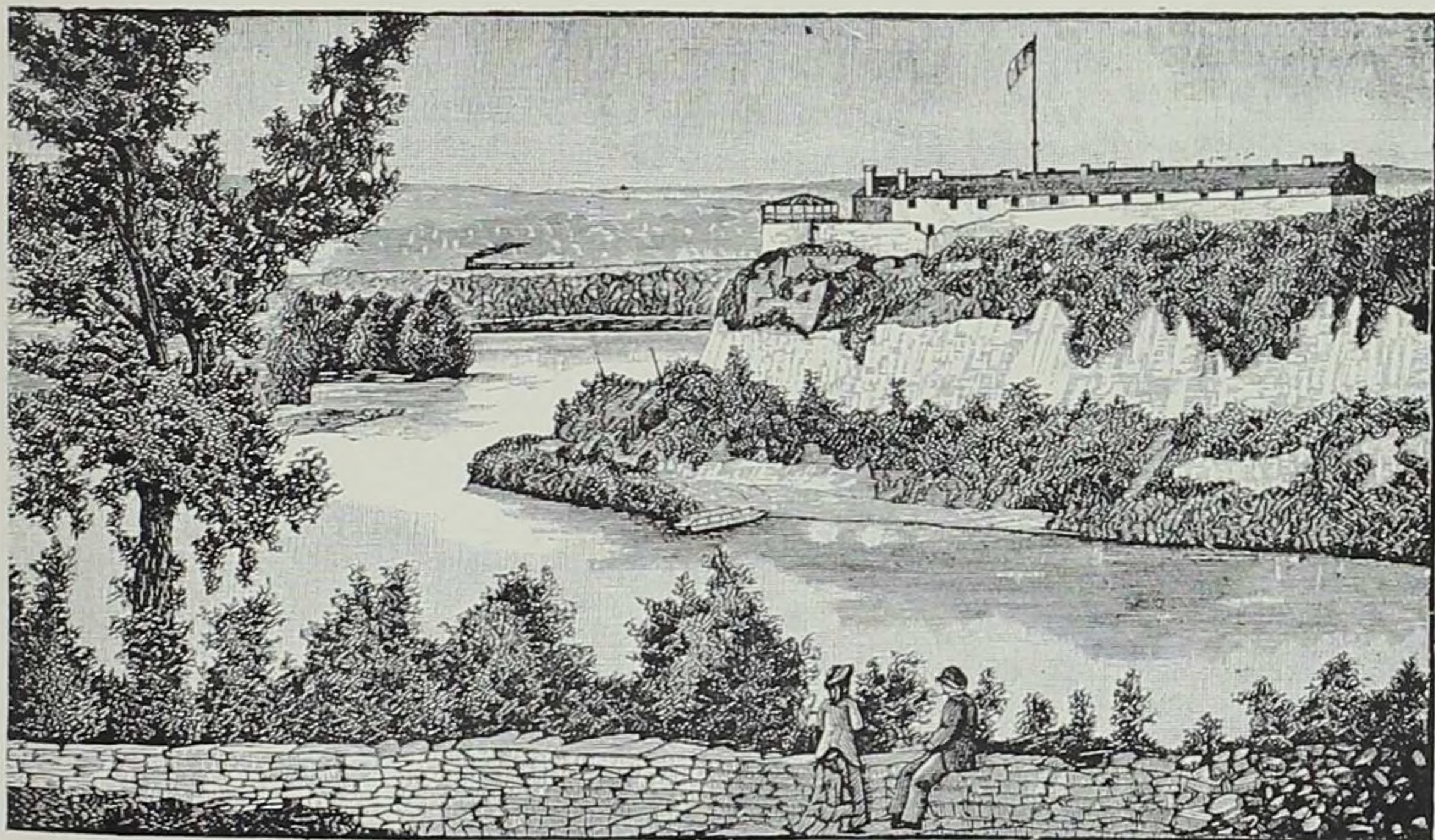
Making a Portage.

The explorers and fur traders who came to the Iowa country were quite often required to make portages. Joliet and Marquette portaged from the Fox to the Wisconsin River.



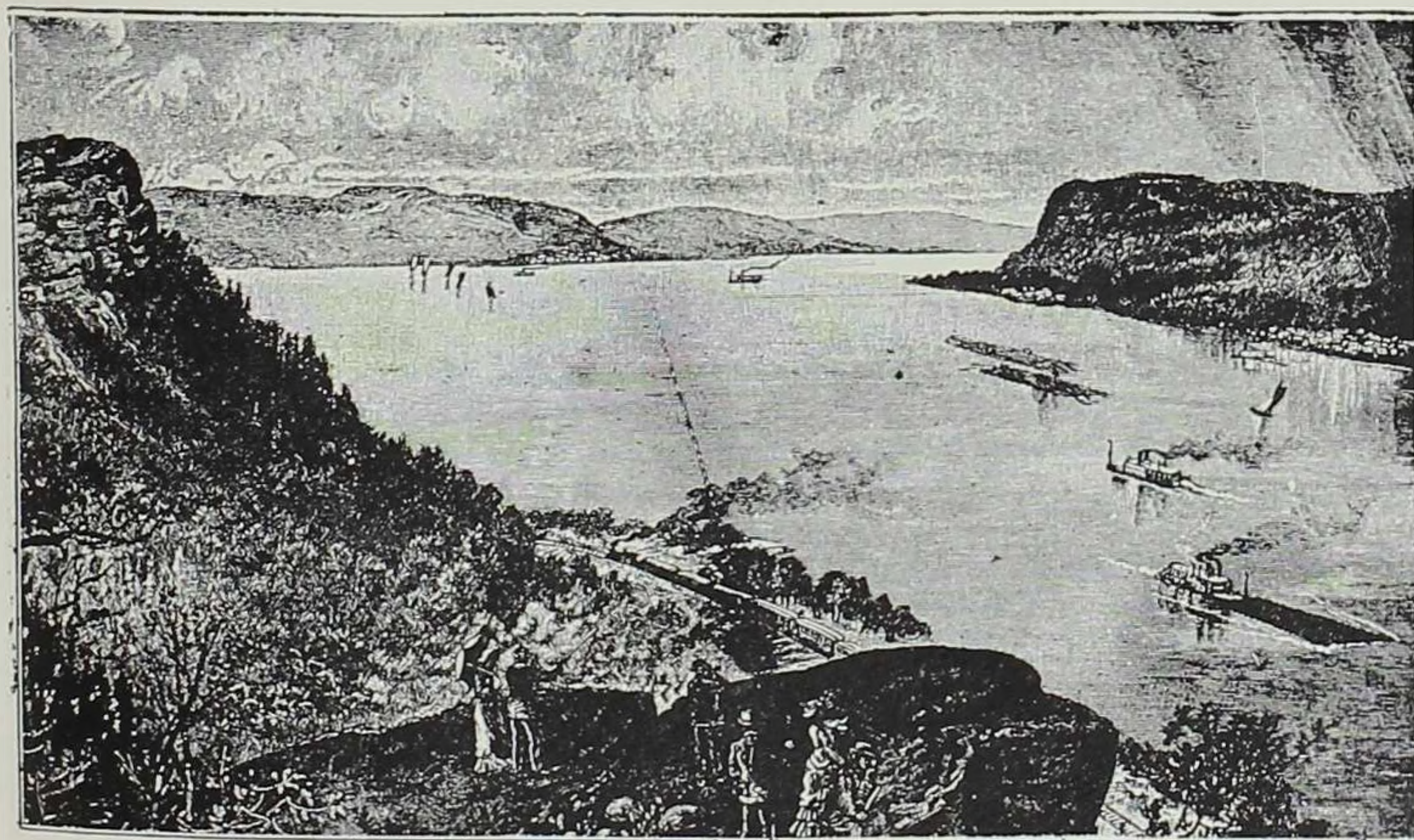
The Falls of St. Anthony in 1881.

This dramatic waterfall was the objective of thousands of excursionists before the Civil War. Indian Artist George Catlin referred to the trip as the "Fashionable Tour" in 1835.



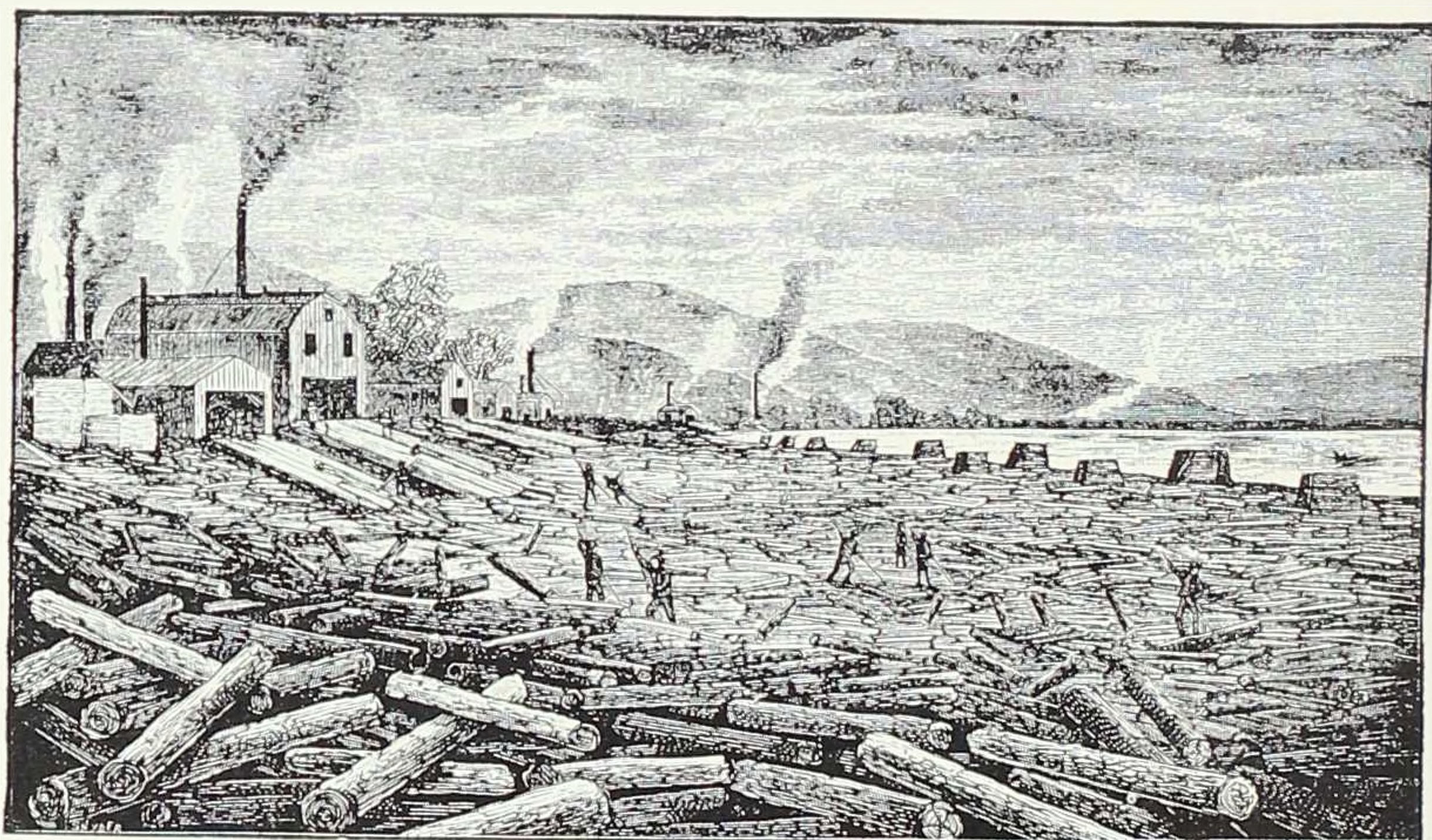
Fort Snelling, between Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In 1970 the Minnesota Historical Society took the lead in observing the 150th anniversary of the founding of Fort Snelling. It is in the process of being restored.



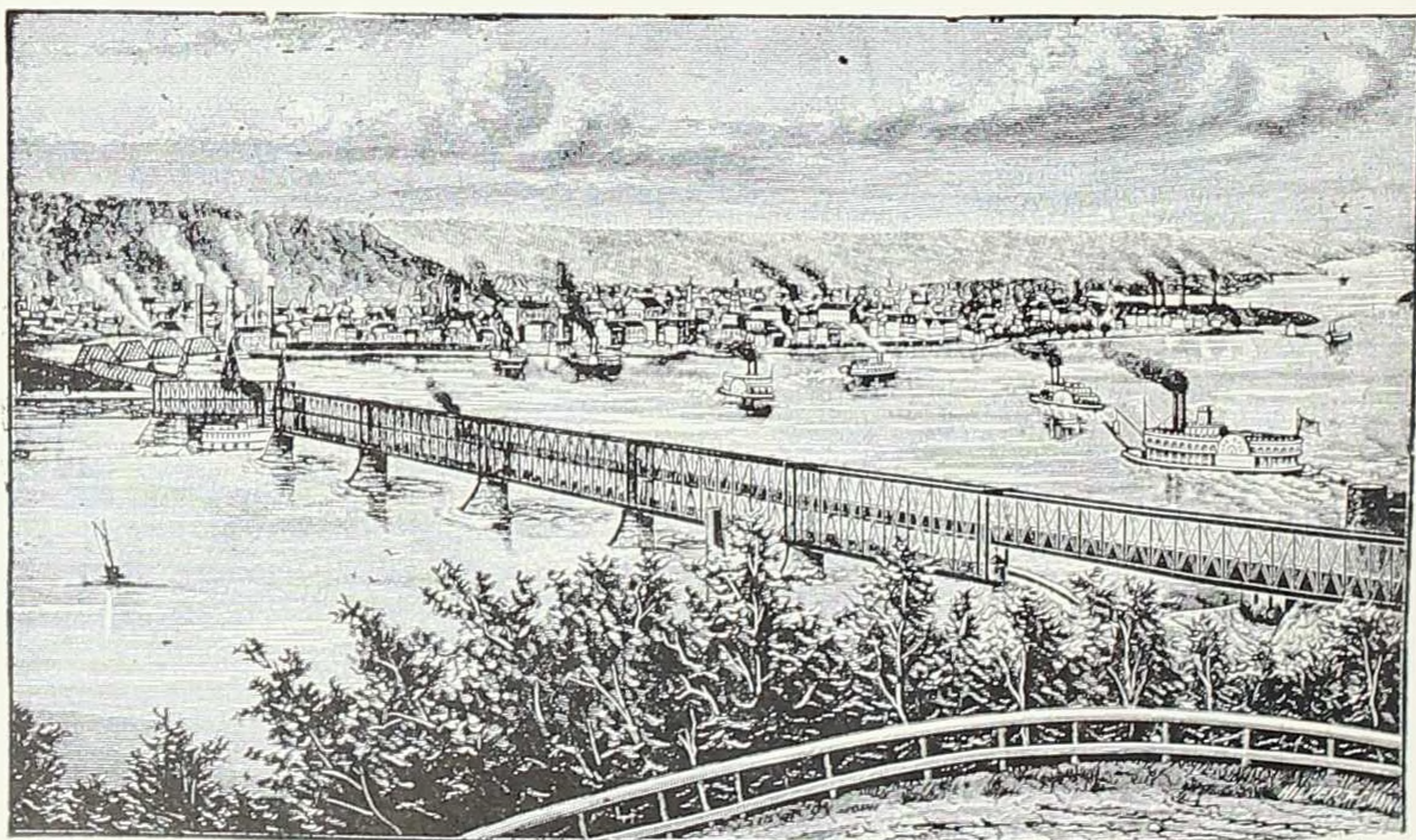
View of Lake Pepin.

This 22-mile stretch of the Mississippi was a picturesque and sometimes dangerous section to navigate. Lake Pepin is ice-locked each winter and late in opening each spring.



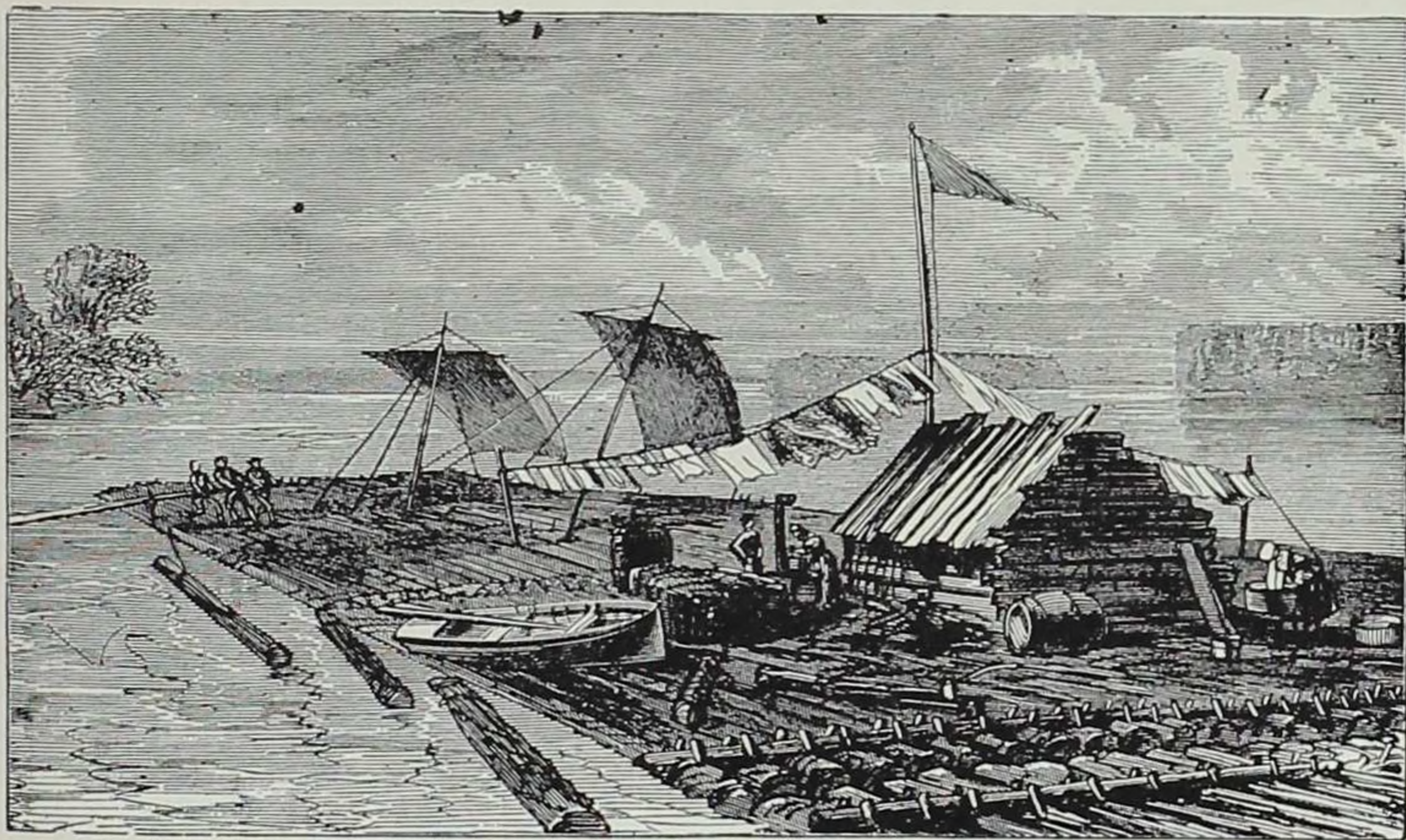
Log-Boom and Saw-Mill.

These saw-mills dotted the Mississippi from Lansing to Keokuk and played a vital role in converting Iowa from a log cabin and sodhouse frontier to a land of frame houses.



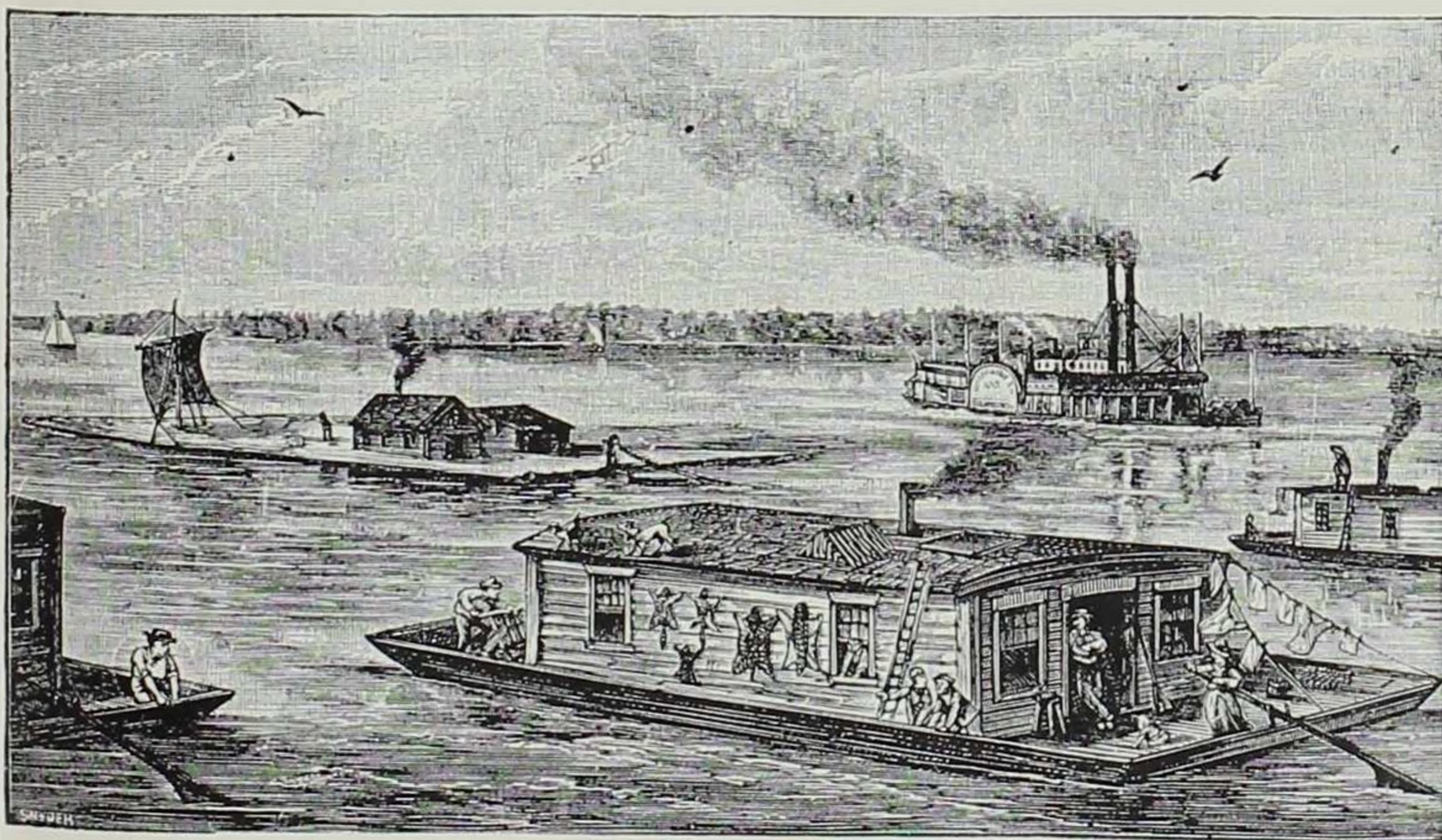
Government Bridge Between Davenport and Rock Island.

The first bridge across the Mississippi was built in 1856 and had been relocated and rebuilt when this picture was drawn in 1881.



Raft on the Upper Mississippi.

Although most log and lumber rafts were being pushed down the Mississippi by raft boats in 1881, occasional floating rafts still could be seen.



The Shanty-Boat.

Not as common on the Upper Mississippi as on the Ohio and Lower Mississippi, shanty-boats of the types depicted could be encountered.



An Iowa Tributary of the Mississippi.

Not identified by Glazier, but possibly the Upper Iowa, Yellow, or Turkey rivers.

Island, having converted it into a strong military post—in fact, the strongest on the Mississippi. He has erected substantial quarters for the commander and his subordinate officers, soldiers' barracks, a complete system of sewerage, a bridge, connecting the Island with the city of Moline; roads, streets and avenues across the Island; a water-power wall, powder-magazine, pump-house, and has introduced the manufacture of stores for the army and machinery for the various shops in which the material of war is extensively fabricated.

Rock Island Arsenal is united with the Iowa side of the river, as before stated, by a well-constructed and handsome bridge, 1,550 feet long; and with the Illinois side by two bridges, one leading to Rock Island City and the other to Moline. The one spanning the Mississippi on the north of the Island is a most durable structure, and is said to be one of the finest in the United States.

During the late Civil War, the Island was made available by the Government as a military prison, upwards of twelve thousand Confederate prisoners having been confined here. Of these, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one died during their imprisonment and were buried on the Island. About four hundred Union soldiers were also buried here, and on each recurring Decoration Day, the graves are strewn with flowers.

There is little more to be said of the Island except that it rests upon a substantial foundation of

rock of the limestone order and hence its name. The length of the Island is two and three-quarter miles, and its width varies from a quarter to three-quarters of a mile. A very pleasant day may be passed in wandering over this island, which seems intended to become the arsenal for the entire Mississippi Valley. When the works are completed, if crowded to its full capacity, it will arm, equip and supply an army of seven hundred and fifty thousand men.

Surrounded with the paraphernalia of grim war, Commandant Flagler has found time and opportunity for the cultivation of the science of ornithology, and has converted his island-fortress into an immense *aviary*! Here are to be seen, flitting about the dense foliage of the woodlands, almost every variety of American bird—nearly all song-birds, which build their nests and raise their broods on the Island unmolested. It is a singular adjunct to an arsenal and reflects credit on the taste and refinement of its gallant commander. The colonel wages war without quarter on the English sparrow, however, which he will not allow to alight and rest its little wings on his preserves on pain of summary execution by the shot-gun, without even a preliminary trial by court-martial.

The city of Rock Island is situated on the mainland at the extremity of Rock Island Arsenal, on the Illinois or left bank of the river. On its eastern side are some very picturesque bluffs, stretching

away to the sheltered valley of the Rock River, and including scenery of unrivaled beauty. Comfortable residences dot the sides of these hills, amid clumps of trees and miniature forests that afford shelter and shade to the well-to-do residents. Rock Island is about midway between Saint Louis and Saint Paul, and immediately opposite the more populous city of Davenport, Iowa. It is, as already stated, connected with the latter city by an elegant and substantial iron bridge, owned by the Government and open to the public free of toll. The famous water-power produced by the lower rapids has contributed largely to the marvelous growth of this city as well as of Moline, the city of factories, within an easy walk or horse-car ride of Rock Island City. Here is to be the terminus of the projected Hennepin Canal, by which it is proposed to solve the problem of cheap transportation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi, through the intervening great lakes. Recently a deep interest has been manifested in the construction of this canal, the accomplishment of which will doubtless be of vast benefit to the people of the North-west.

In Rock Island City we found numerous flourishing establishments for the manufacture of plows, cultivators and other agricultural appliances; of wagons and carriages, together with foundries and machine-shops. At night the streets are brilliant with the Brush electric lights; the sidewalks are well paved and clean, and generally in

a much better condition for pedestrians than those of the sister city of Davenport, across the river. Rock Island has a well-organized police force; a fire department, water-works, street cars, and a flourishing Public Library; free postal delivery, churches, public schools, and a commerce and trade second to no city of its size in the Union. In the interest of the growth of a city the transportation problem is, perhaps, the most important question for the consideration of the citizens, and Rock Island is very favorably situated in this respect, owing to her position as the centre of a system of railroads. Several lines pass through here and give the city a busy aspect at all times. It is on the line of the great transcontinental highway. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, passing through Rock Island, connects the eastern trunk lines with the Union Pacific at Omaha; and here also are depots of the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul; the Chicago and Northwestern; the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy; the Rock Island and Peoria, and the Rock Island and Mercer County railways. The population of this enterprising little city is at present about 16,000. The private residences have a neat and thrifty appearance, while some afford evidence of the wealth and taste of their owners. The shrubbery and flowers which cluster about the doorways of even the humblest residences are indications of the comfort and thriving condition of the tenants.

Three miles inland from Rock Island City is situated a very picturesque and romantic resort, which is frequented by the inhabitants of both sides of the river at this point, the traditionary name of which is *Black Hawk's Watch-Tower*. The tower is of nature's architecture, and is the summit of the highest hill overlooking Rock River, an important tributary, from which a most extensive and pleasing picture of the surrounding country is obtained. The look-out derives its fanciful name from its having been used by Black Hawk as a point from which he could survey his country for many miles round and the valley of the great, winding river. It is said to have been selected by the chief's father, and overlooked the tribe's first village near the banks of Rock River. Black Hawk in the account he gave to Antoine Le Claire, in 1833, says: "The Tower was my favorite resort and was often visited by me alone, where I could sit and smoke my pipe and look with wonder and pleasure at the grand scenes that were presented, even across the mighty river. On one occasion a Frenchman, who had been resting in our village, brought his violin with him to the Tower, to play and dance for the amusement of my people who had assembled there, and, while dancing with his back to the cliff, accidentally fell over it and was killed. The Indians say that at the same time of the year soft strains of the violin can be heard near the spot." He further relates that "in the year

1827 a young Sioux Indian, who was lost in a violent snowstorm, found his way into a camp of the Sacs, and while there fell in love with a beautiful maiden. On leaving for his own country he promised to return in the summer and claim his bride. He did so, secreting himself in the woods until he met the object of his affection. A heavy thunder-storm was coming on at the time, and the lovers took shelter under a rocky cliff on the south side of the Tower. Soon a loud peal of thunder was heard: the cliff was rent into a thousand pieces and they were buried beneath them. This, their unexpected tomb," says Black Hawk, "still remains undisturbed." The "Tower" is much admired, and the street-cars of Rock Island convey many hundreds of visitors to its summit in the spring, summer and autumn, where they picnic for the day and enjoy, with the pure, healthful breezes, a most sublime view of the country for many miles. The property is owned by the Davenport family and is made freely accessible to all.