

The
PALIMPSEST
NOVEMBER 1929
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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

VOL. X

ISSUED IN NOVEMBER 1929

No. 11

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United by Rail

On a day in mid-October, 1855, the shrill whistle of a locomotive echoed over Muscatine, its sound defiant, challenging, announcing the imminent defeat of the wilderness, the westward retreat of the frontier. It was the first time that such a sound had been heard in the city. Men, women, and children stopped in the midst of their activities, rushed to windows or doors, or if duties permitted, hastened to where the "iron horse" itself "snorted" impatiently to be off on its first "run" out of Muscatine. What did it matter if only six miles of track had been laid, or if the train consisted only of an engine with its tender and one construction car? This little train was prophetic of what was to come. Men and boys scrambled upon the cars until no more could get aboard, the wheels moved, the "chug-chug" increased in rapidity, and the train was on its way. There was a great shout from those left behind,

women waved their kerchiefs, and the office force of the *Muscatine Journal* gave three loud cheers.

The Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, the first in Iowa to take actual form, was beginning its main line from Davenport to Iowa City. A branch line was to extend from Wilton to Muscatine. Although the main line to Iowa City was not completed until the first of the year (1856), the road from Wilton to Muscatine was finished by mid-November, 1855, and thus Davenport and Muscatine, two of the ranking cities of pioneer Iowa, were connected by railway.

Such an epoch-making incident could not go unheralded. As early as August 23rd the *Muscatine Iowa Democratic Enquirer* suggested an appropriate celebration. On the evening of October 19th a preliminary meeting of citizens was held to discuss the propriety of a celebration. The next day handbills announcing a general meeting that evening were circulated, "a bell was rung through the city," the court house was lighted and heated in anticipation — and nobody came, nobody but a "baker's dozen"; so the gathering was adjourned. Nevertheless, the movement went on. By October 30th the city council had apparently voted funds to make the celebration a certainty. At a meeting in Hare's Hall on November 3rd, a communication from the railroad officials was read stating that the road to Muscatine would definitely be open by the 15th. Tuesday, November 20th, was then designated for the celebration.

On November 10th, the committee on arrangements, consisting of Joseph Bennett, Joseph Bridgman, A. O. Warfield, H. Q. Jennison, and William Stone, announces its plans. The train from Davenport, bringing invited guests from Davenport, Rock Island, Chicago, and elsewhere, is to arrive at noon; the mayor of Muscatine is to make an address of welcome; the guests are to be escorted to various dining places; and there are to be speeches at the courthouse. In the evening there is to be a free supper for the guests at Ogilvie's new hall on Iowa Avenue. Last, and perhaps best of all, there is to be "a grand free ball". But the celebration is not to end with the dance. On the following day, when the guests return home, they are to be escorted formally to the train; and on the day following, Thursday, a train of Muscatine people are to journey to Davenport, to be entertained there by the citizens of that city. It is to be a wonderful three-day celebration!

No city or village that is holding a celebration is indifferent to the weather. In the midst of preparation, on the thirteenth, the *Journal* pauses to say that the weather is "the most delightful ever known at this season." A promising indication, that! But who can predict the whims of the weather in a climate so variable as ours? Three inches of snow fall in Muscatine on the 16th, and Tuesday the 20th, the first day of the celebration, arrives "amid a sea of mist and rain". The earth "presents one magnifi-

cent mass of mud"! It is discouraging, yet we must not let our visitors receive an erroneous impression of our fair city. "And here let us remark," says the editor of the *Journal*, "that it is something unusual for our streets to present such a muddy appearance, especially at this season of the year. We do have mud, but we must say that this exceeds anything we have seen since we became a resident of the city." Perhaps California and Florida have learned their apologies from our Muscatine editor!

In spite of the rain and mud, noon approaches, and with it the train of visitors. First Street, near the Ogilvie House, and that spacious building itself, are thronged with people. Almost the whole population of Muscatine is there "to witness the advent into our city, of the First Train of Cars ever run in the State of Iowa, one of the most sublime triumphs of mind over matter that perhaps the history of the world records." It is an impressive event these people have come to witness. It is the beginning of "the Railroad era of our State, the beginning of a period in our history from which the present and future generations will ever date."

What historian can renew the enthusiasms of that expectant group of pioneers? There they are, in a little city of seven thousand inhabitants. Five years ago there were but two thousand; fifteen years, five hundred; twenty years ago — wilderness and Indians. But to-day, as the train rolls in, great distances are no longer barriers. Wealth and comfort

and culture are infinitely nearer. The struggle of the past has been worth while. Who can prophesy the possibilities of the future?

No, only a contemporary can tell the story to convey the original fervor: "At 1 o'clock the welcome snort of the Iron Horse announced the approach of the cars. They came, six of them, drawn by the new Locomotive — 'Muscatine' — gracefully and proudly, ornate with the ensigns of our country, the glorious stars and stripes, and crowded with invited guests and others who enthusiastically united in the general rejoicing. They arrived amid the stentorian shouts of the assembled people and the soul-stirring strains of music which threw a charm into the moment beyond the power of language to describe."

The train comes to a halt, the visitors alight. Mayor J. H. Wallace of Muscatine gives an address of welcome in which he plays upon the fancy of a "celebration of the nuptials of Chicago and Muscatine." Mayor Boone of Chicago, with apologies that he has not prepared a speech, replies to the welcome. Muscatine, he says, reflecting the common topic of Mormonism then in the air, is the fairest and most prosperous of Chicago's brides, one at whom Chicago has long been "looking wishfully as one worthy to be grappled . . . with hooks of iron." The intellectual feast at the courthouse, unfortunately, must be abandoned because the mud has made walking disagreeable; so the guests scatter until evening.

Toward evening the streets have dried, and every one is in good humor for the supper at Ogilvie's new hall. There are twelve long tables, "each graced with handsome pyramids of cake." On the main table is a mammoth work of art, a cake with a base three feet square, and at least five feet high, the handiwork of Mrs. Cummins, Mrs. Leffingwell, and Mrs. Palmer. One is almost overcome by the array of meats, of which there are twenty kinds, including turkey, quail, and venison. There are, too, that choice delicacy of the pioneers, oysters. Though the season is almost winter, there are peaches and pears and ice cream.

After the supper, with J. Scott Richman presiding, there are toasts. Mr. Hiram Price responds to "The Mississippi and Missouri Railroad — the first opened in Iowa"; Mayor Levi D. Boone of Chicago, "The nuptial ceremonies of Chicago and Muscatine"; Mr. William Bross of the *Chicago Democratic Press*, "The City of Chicago, the emporium of the west, the granary of the world"; Mr. Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, "The State of Iowa — Her natural beauty is only surpassed by the fertility of her soil"; Mr. Harper of Oskaloosa, "The farmer and the mechanic"; Mr. John F. Ely of Cedar Rapids, "The ladies — We are indebted to them for the 'better half' of our enjoyments upon the occasion"; Mr. J. P. Hornish of Keokuk, "The Union — A common interest prompted it, may a common affection perpetuate it." Others, too, are asked to speak, among

them Mr. Veile of Keokuk, Mr. S. A. Russell of Washington, Iowa, and Colonel N. B. Buford of Rock Island. Henry Farnam, president of the new road, addresses the group, but when Mr. Reed, the engineer who has built the road, is asked to speak, he stands only long enough to say that he would rather build railroads than make speeches. The Rev. James Tanner, an Indian clergyman, is present with six Chippewa chiefs. In his talk he says that only he and his six companions are true Americans, the others only foreigners. He hopes that the relations between his people and the whites will hereafter be characterized by "unity, love and peace".

The supper and the toasts ended, Unger's Brass Band plays. Their concert is but a prelude to the greatest event of the evening—the free ball, with the Cotillion Band of Le Claire, providing the music. "The hall is crowded, yet not to excess; there is room for all, yet not a seat yawns in lonely vacancy, and there is mirth and joy for all, with not a discontented look to cast a marring shadow amid the all prevailing merriment. And when, soon after the band 'strikes up' and seats are vacated, promenading ceases and flirting is for the nonce arrested, the floors resound to the pattering of feet, and eyes and hearts all dance, till the very lights shine with giddy lustre and the echoes of the music seem themselves to have gone delirious. It is a brilliant scene".

But we must hasten to the end. At nine o'clock the next morning (Wednesday), the guests are con-

ducted to the waiting train. In the afternoon there is an excursion to Wilton and return. The formalities at Muscatine close. Tomorrow Davenport is to entertain the citizens of Muscatine.

At ten o'clock Thursday morning a train of six cars bearing some four hundred passengers leaves for Davenport. It is, of course, a novel event. After the train has passed the groves near the city and has come out upon the glorious prairie, there is a rush to the windows, which present a mottled array of bonnets, hats, and bare heads of those eager to view the magnificent scene. In the prevailing excitement Judge T. S. Parvin drops his hat out of the window, and thereby becomes the center of merriment. When Dr. Henry Murray of Iowa City has a similar accident, the women scream and the men shout with laughter.

Arrived in Davenport at the corner of Brady and Fifth streets, the visitors are met by their entertainer, General George B. Sargent, who has secured the services of the Davenport Brass Band for the occasion. The band plays as the guests alight and find seats in the hacks, omnibuses, and other conveyances chartered for their convenience. Those unable to find seats form a procession led by two brass bands, the one from Davenport and Unger's from Muscatine, and march to the home of General Sargent. Here, after brief ceremonies of introduction, the ladies are ushered into the dining room, where the table "groans beneath a wealth of delicacies, a

profusion of good things embracing everything that Nature furnishes or the inventive genius of woman can create." The gentlemen eat later. At least four hundred people are served. Then there is music again by the two bands. Judge Parvin, in behalf of Muscatine, extends thanks for the generous entertainment, and General Sargent graciously responds. Brief addresses are given by Messrs. Ebenezer and J. P. Cook of Davenport, and by Jacob Butler of Muscatine. Mr. Farnam, president of the M. & M., closes his brief talk with this sentiment: "Muscatine and Davenport, twin cities: may their greatest rivalry consist in the effort to live above all petty jealousies and lead in the great railroad enterprises in the State."

It is evening when the train comes to a stop on its return to Muscatine. The youthful city has resumed its normal quiet, and the railroad celebration has ended. Low on the horizon, where the woods skirt the eastern bank of the majestic Mississippi, hangs an almost full moon.

HUBERT H. HOELTJE

Steamboats *Dubuque*

The afternoon of August 14, 1837, was blistering hot for the passengers aboard Captain Smoker's sturdy little steamboat, the *Dubuque*, bound from St. Louis to the lead mines. Sprawling about in their cabins or on the lower deck they drowsily watched the low-lying hills and sandbanks below Bloomington (Muscatine) slowly unfold before them. The *Dubuque* was running under a moderate pressure of steam when the flue of the larboard boiler collapsed with terrific force, throwing a torrent of scalding water and steam over the deck passengers. Screaming in agony, the wretched victims groped and stumbled to the bow of the boat. The pilot, with commendable presence of mind, steered for the bank and managed to effect a landing. Some of the scalded victims, mad with pain, sprang ashore and ran frantically through the woods tearing off their clothes, which in some cases pulled away the skin, and even the flesh, with them. Nor could medical attention of any kind be administered until the arrival of the steamboat *Adventure* from Bloomington several hours later. Twenty-two lives were lost in the explosion on the *Dubuque*, the first and most appalling steamboat explosion on the upper Mississippi.

In the realm of steamboat nomenclature the use of

the name Dubuque, or its sobriquet Key City, is surpassed by only one Iowa river town. Keokuk led them all in the number of times its name was chosen to grace the paddle-box or pilot house of an upper Mississippi steamboat. Between 1844 and 1907 six vessels bore the name "Keokuk" while her sobriquet, "Gate City", was chosen twice. Four boats were christened "Dubuque" while "Key City" was emblazoned on two others. Davenport rejoiced in three namesakes, while Burlington, Muscatine, and Clinton each had two. Even such small towns as Lansing, McGregor, Bellevue, and Le Claire were honored at various times. Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City, Maquoketa, and other inland towns also boasted their own steamboat namesakes. But Mississippi River towns that never had an opportunity to sponsor a steamboat were considered most unfortunate. In sheer desperation they sometimes vented their pique by inscribing their names upon their own ferry-boats. Thus, little Nezekaw, a paper town in Allamakee County, assuaged her ruffled feelings.

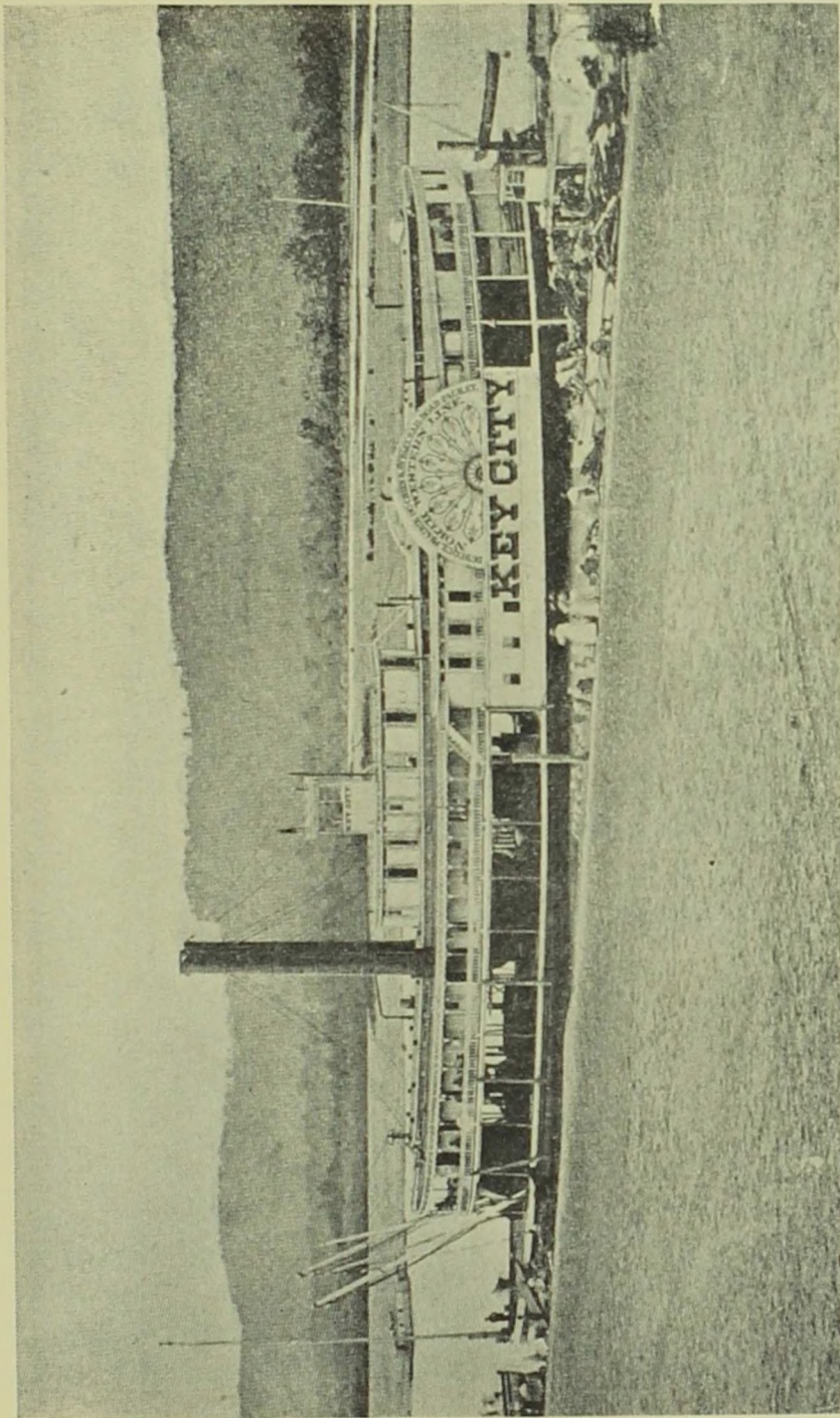
As a steamboat patronymic Keokuk was the most popular, but the boats named for Dubuque had the most eventful history. Built at Pittsburgh in 1835, the first *Dubuque* bore the name of a two-year-old mining community, the first Iowa town to be so honored. No doubt the chief credit for this distinction was due to John Atchison and George W. Atchison of Galena, Illinois, who with George B. Cole and

James M. White of St. Louis were owners of the ill-fated craft.

Unfortunately, the explosion of the first *Dubuque* left the embryonic mining community without a namesake for ten years. Finally, in 1847, a second *Dubuque* was built at Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, by George Collier and William Morrison and Company of St. Louis and William Hempstead and Company of Galena. Captain Edward H. Beebe who commanded the new boat received a hearty welcome upon his arrival at Dubuque. Late in the fall of 1855, after nine uneventful years, the second *Dubuque* sank opposite Mundy's Landing, Missouri.

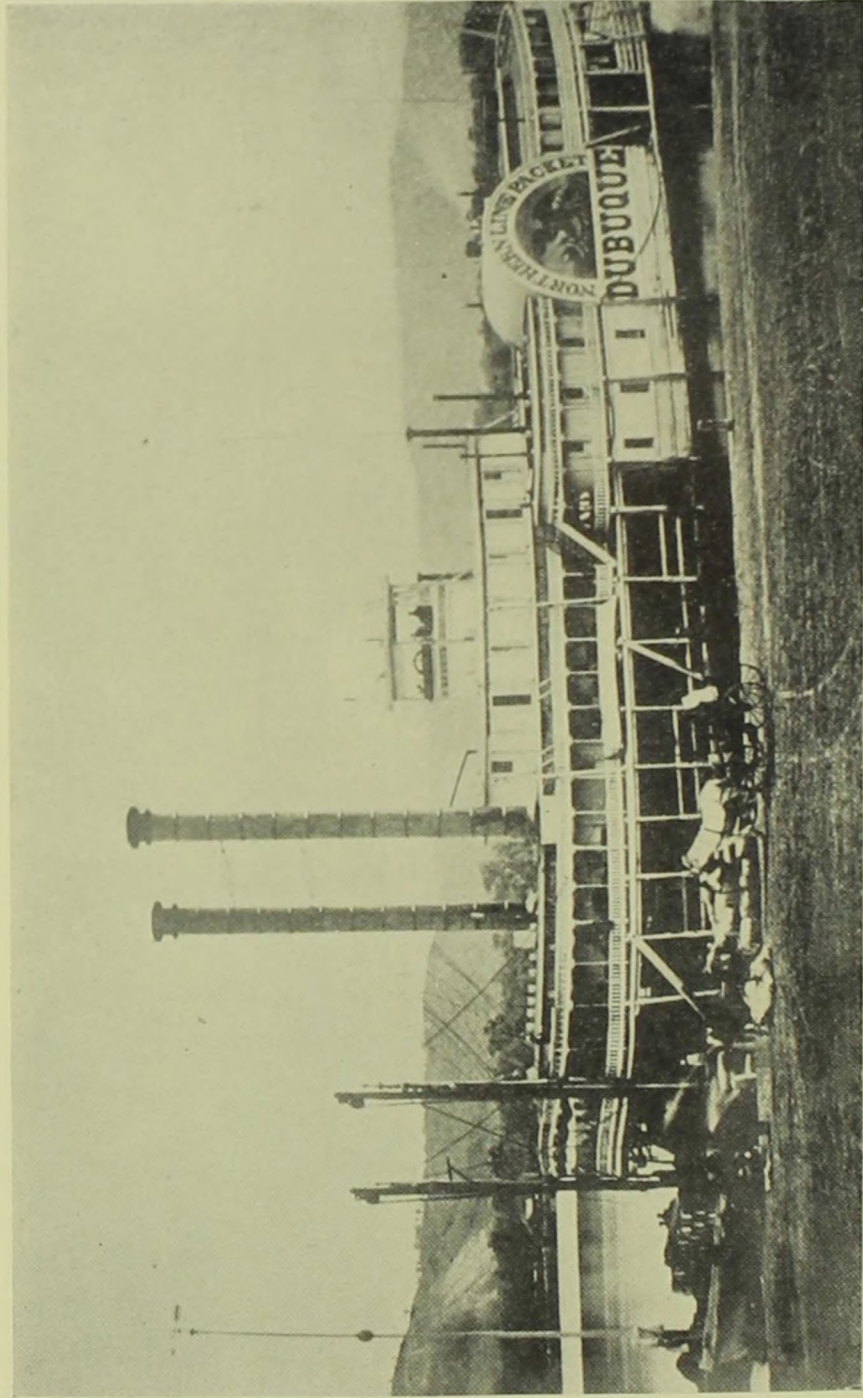
From 1847 to 1876 the name "Dubuque" or "Key City" was carried on some of the finest packets on the river. Only once, in 1856, did Dubuque go without a namesake. The first *Key City* made her appearance in 1857. Owned by the Minnesota Packet Company, the *Key City* saw service during the heyday of steamboating on the upper Mississippi and brought a useful and picturesque career to a close after twelve years of hard service.

Before the *Key City* was discarded, however, the third *Dubuque* made her appearance in 1867 under the Northern Line flag. For ten years this noble craft plied the waters of the upper Mississippi. She was burned while in winter quarters at Alton Slough in 1876. The tragic fate of the third *Dubuque* was a fitting end for a boat whose name is associated with the worst race riot on the upper Mississippi. Early



FROM THE COLLECTION OF WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

THE FIRST *KEY CITY*



COURTESY OF FRED A. BILL

THE THIRD DUBUQUE

in the morning of the twenty-ninth of July, 1869, the *Dubuque* left Davenport bound up-stream in the command of Captain John B. Rhodes. Among the two hundred deck passengers were many raftsmen returning to the harvest fields and logging camps. They had boarded the *Dubuque* at various points below and each landing had been the occasion for obtaining a fresh supply of liquor. By the time the boat left Davenport they were fluent in profanity and quarrelsome in their inebriety.

About eight o'clock the second clerk went to the lower deck to collect fares and examine tickets. To facilitate this task Moses Davis, a negro deckhand, was stationed at the head of the stairs with orders to permit no one to ascend while the fares were being collected. No sooner had the second clerk left than "Mike" Lynch, a pock-marked Irish lumberjack attempted to pass the guard — perhaps to secure another drink at the bar above. His way was blocked, a heated quarrel ensued, and Lynch returned cursing to his drunken cronies. They decided that they were opposed to negroes and concluded to put them all off the boat. Armed with knives and clubs, the raftsmen rushed at Davis and the riot began. The hapless negroes fled before them in terror, while the officers of the boat stood unarmed and helpless. Beaten with clubs and slashed with knives, five of the negroes were forced to jump overboard where flying missiles soon ended their struggles to swim ashore. A few managed to hide in the rooms of

officers and cabin passengers, while others escaped when the *Dubuque* landed at Hampton, Illinois.

News of the riot having been telegraphed ahead, a heavily armed posse boarded the *Dubuque* at Clinton and easily overpowered the rioters. About twenty were arrested. Unfortunately, however, Lynch and another ringleader had left the boat at Camanche. Ten of the rioters were indicted and seven were finally convicted of manslaughter. Lynch himself was eventually captured in an Arkansas lumber camp, returned to Rock Island, convicted, and sentenced to ten years in the State penitentiary at Joliet.

The second *Key City*, built at Dubuque in 1876, was only a ferry-boat which paddled back and forth across the river from Dubuque to Dunleith for several years.

The fourth *Dubuque*, originally named the *Pittsburgh*, was built at Cincinnati in 1879. Diamond Jo Reynolds purchased her in 1881 and she ran in his line under the same name until a cyclone completely demolished her top works at St. Louis. The wreck of the *Pittsburgh* was towed to the Diamond Jo Boat Yards at Eagle Point, where, under the direction of Captain John Killeen, she was given an entirely new upper works. She was then re-named the *Dubuque* and continued under that name until the Streckfus line converted her into an excursion boat. To-day, after fifty years of service, the *Capitol* or fourth *Dubuque* plies the upper Mississippi as far north as

Stillwater, Minnesota, during the summer months while in winter she withdraws to the warmer waters in the vicinity of New Orleans.

It was not merely civic pride which prompted a river town to sponsor a steamboat. It was a form of advertising that was supposed to produce material results. To have the name of a town constantly before the eyes of those who saw a proud steamer plying up and down the river each season was bound to attract favorable notice. Moreover, the name greeted the reader of steamboat advertisements in the newspapers, while the boat's arrival and departure was chronicled in the port events. Drownings and accidents, a spirited race or an exceptionally fast run between two ports, heavy cargoes, or notable passengers — anything, in fact, of distinct interest to the community — was reported in a column devoted to river news alone and immediately became the subject of local discussion and debate. Those immigrants who were trekking into the Northwest with no particular destination, doubtless gave sober consideration to those cities whose names were borne by the great packets on which they came.

While the value of such advertising was recognized, the results were often nebulous in character and difficult to measure. That the actual clink of coins in local cash drawers was directly connected with trade attracted by the name of a steamboat, however, was commonly claimed. "In a financial point of view," declared the *Dubuque Daily Express*

and *Herald* of April 10, 1859, "it may be safely asserted that through means of this boat alone [the *Key City*] a sum not less than \$12,000 is annually directed to the coffers of our enterprising merchants and mechanics, which would otherwise go to our rival city, Galena. And it ought to call forth an expression of heartfelt gratitude from every one who has the prosperity of our city at heart."

But steamboat captains and owners were equally enriched by this flourish of good will. Local merchants and travellers usually felt a strong attachment to their namesake and gave it the bulk of their patronage. Generally speaking, this feeling was best expressed in the local press where every one from the captain and clerk to the lowliest deckhand and roustabout was commended and extolled for their Herculean efforts to make the passengers on board comfortable.

Although great profits were reaped because of city preferences for their namesakes, the steamboats derived still other benefits. Scarcely had the third *Dubuque* splashed from the ways at Pittsburgh when a resolution was offered and adopted by the city council "that the steamer *Dubuque*, (Captain J. W. Parker) be permitted to arrive at our city landing the present season free of wharfage, and that the marshal notify the wharfmaster accordingly." The profit derived from such action varied with the tonnage of the boat, the number of arrivals during the season, and the rate of wharfage in effect

at the time. Assuming that a five per cent wharfage rate existed, a boat of six hundred tons would save six hundred dollars if it arrived twenty times during the season. The Northern Line of St. Louis was especially adept at taking advantage of this practice. In 1868, for example, five of their eight boats were the *Muscatine*, the *Davenport*, the *Dubuque*, the *Red Wing*, and the *Minneapolis* constituting a daily line from St. Louis to St. Paul.

Besides free wharfage it was also the custom of the citizens to present a set of colors to the vessel which bore the name of their city. These consisted of dozens of small flags made of the finest bunting. Whenever an excursion was planned, a race won, or the time and occasion demanded that the boat be adorned in holiday attire, the colors were run up the flagstaff and around the ship from stem to stern. Thus arrayed in gala apparel, an upper Mississippi steamboat of the middle period rivalled Coney Island itself.

The celebration of the arrival of the third *Dubuque* in 1867 surpassed all others. The progress made in building and launching the sturdy craft was chronicled by the local press with enthusiasm. Finally, on April 6th, the welcome news was heralded that the *Dubuque* was ready to leave Pittsburgh with an immense cargo of hardware. From that moment the new steamboat was the topic of the day.

While the loungers about the levee reeled off fabulous yarns about previous celebrations, the mer-

chants and leading citizens prepared for the present reception. A news item reported the daily progress of the *Dubuque* down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi. On April 10th the colors were ready for presentation and the boat scheduled to arrive within a week. Three days later it was announced that the exact date of arrival would be April 25th. On April 21st a detailed account of the grand reception was printed. There was some anxiety lest the boat might not reach the port of Dubuque on the appointed day on account of her heavy cargo and two cumbersome barges. But the *Petrel* was engaged to aid in towing the heavy load, and the *Dubuque* came in on time.

At last the grand event! "Yesterday," narrates the *Herald* of April 25, 1867, "a grand reception was given to the steamer Dubuque by the citizens and one that will be long remembered. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the gallant boat was first signalled and as soon as her smoke stack became visible a salute was fired from Capt. Hayden's battery on the bluff to which the steamer responded with her whistles. At the first signal given, pursuant to programme, the fire companies formed near the square in a procession and, headed by the Germania Band under the superintendence of Marshall Hyde Clark, marched for the levee, while every street leading there was crowded with hundreds of men, women, and children, all in holiday attire, and all intent on beholding the namesake of the Key City.

“By the time the boat reached the landing the levee was literally dotted with human beings and although the sky was overcast with angry clouds, and rain commenced to fall, they still kept coming, resolved not to be pulled off by an April shower. No sooner was the boat made fast and the plank thrown out than a living stream of humanity poured over it and into the spacious cabin of the *Dubuque*. Captain J. W. Parker, hat in hand, stood upon the hurricane deck and bowed recognition to many of his old friends, and to the multitude who had assembled to accord him this grand ovation in behalf of his boat.

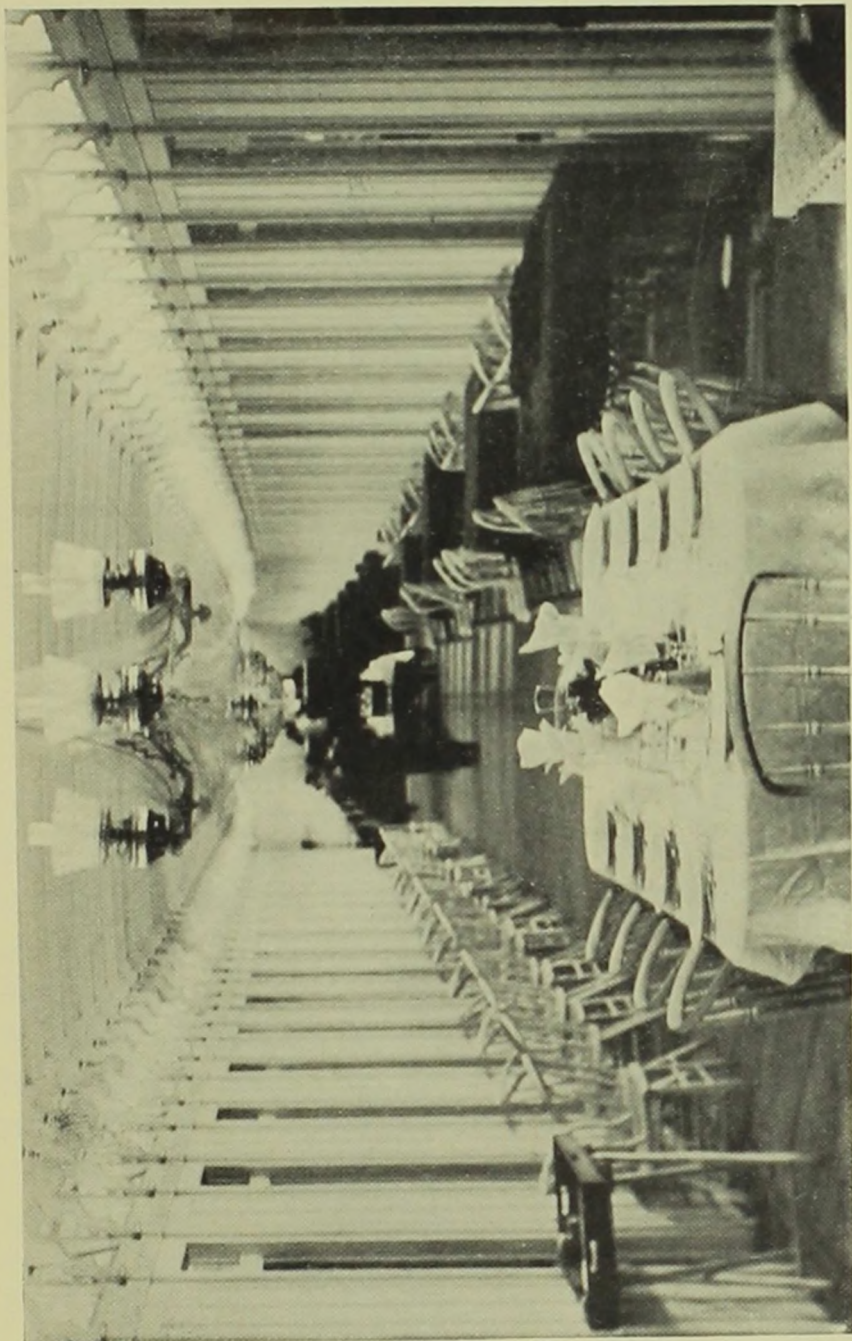
“The enthusiasm of the crowd was unbounded. From stem to stern, from hold to hurricane deck, was a perfect mass, in which beavers and hoops were strangely commingled. Everyone was delighted, everyone was surprised, everyone said she was a beauty, the calculating business man studied her capacity for freight, the artist and traveler extolled her symmetry, the ladies went into ecstasies over the sumptuous appointment of the cabin, and dirty faced young America, looking up into the countenance of his chum, whispered, ‘Golly, Bill, ain’t she a buster.’ In short everyone expressed themselves more than satisfied with the noble creation of man’s genius and skill that stood before them.”

The third *Dubuque* was not a showy boat. She indulged in no gingerbread or filagree ornaments. Built primarily for business, comfort, and speed,

under the direction of Captain Dick Grey, she was nevertheless by far the finest boat yet constructed for the Northern Line. Fully equipped and furnished the third *Dubuque* cost between ninety and one hundred thousand dollars. She was 230 feet long, 27 feet beam, 5 feet hold, had 4 boilers 30 inches in diameter and 26 feet long, and two engines 20 inches in diameter and 7 feet stroke.

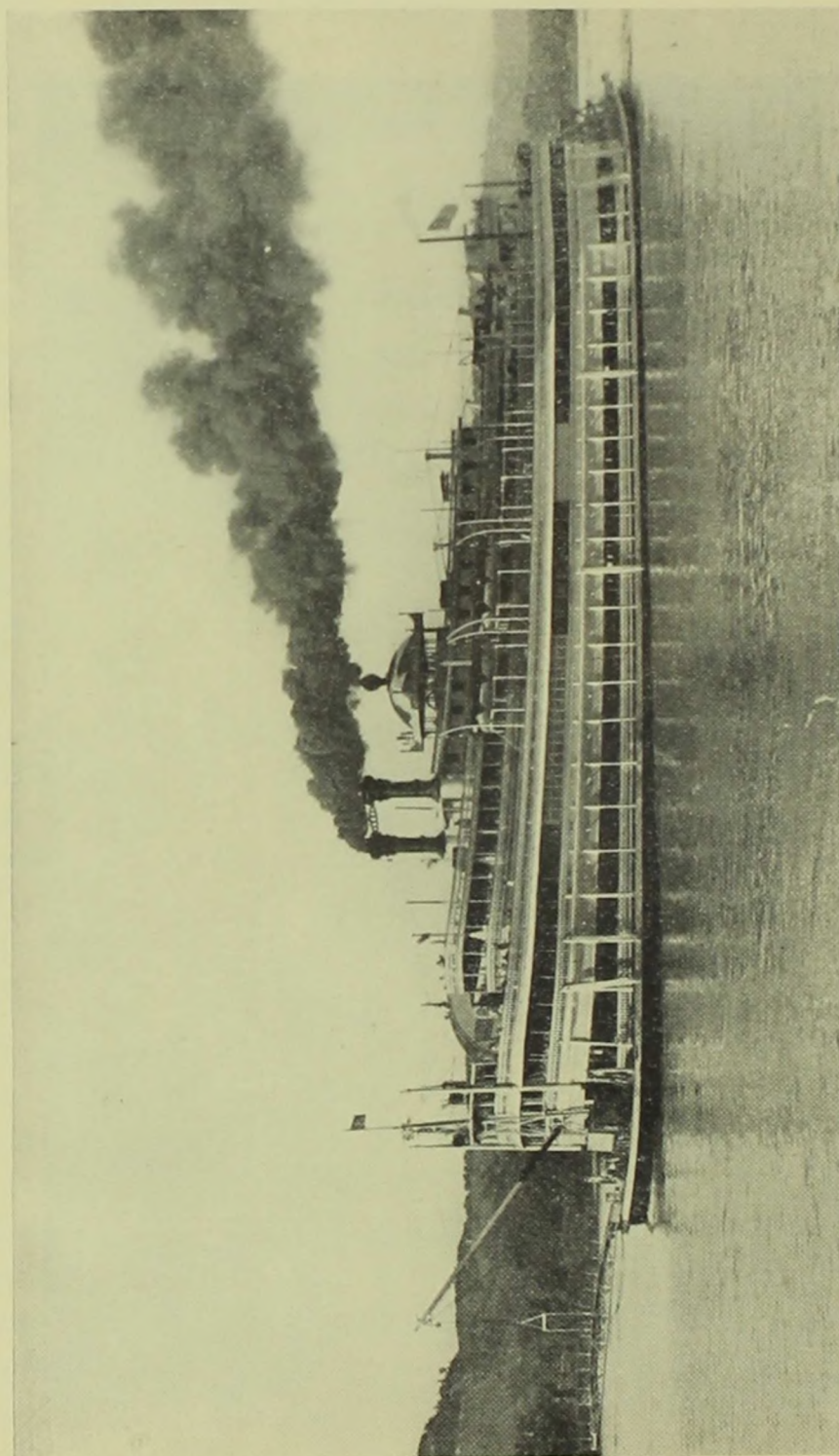
The cabin, 180 feet long, was luxuriously finished. Five Brussels carpets covered the floor, rich chandeliers hung pendant, and splendid mirrors adorned the walls. The mural paintings were of "unparalleled beauty". A landscape painting of the city of Dubuque in the rear of the cabin was especially noteworthy and attracted favorable comment. Equipped with all the necessary conveniences, the *Dubuque's* fifty-two "palace staterooms" were capable of accommodating one hundred and two cabin passengers.

"The Bridal Chamber", declared an enthusiastic reporter, "must be seen to be appreciated. It was furnished by Messrs. Raymond Bros., of this city, and speaks volumes for the good taste of that enterprising firm. It was painted and decorated by those well known artists, Newburg & Crummer. The Latin inscription '*Iti Sapis Potitis,*' is done in Joe's best style, and we venture to say can not be beaten in the northwest. The chamber almost makes us wish we were 'a bride', and we would advise all persons contemplating marriage to visit the *Dubuque* on her



COURTESY OF FRED A. BILL

THE CABIN OF THE FOURTH DUBUQUE



FROM THE COLLECTION OF WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

THE CAPITOL

return, and engage the bridal chamber for their marriage tour."

After a brief inspection of the boat, Mayor J. K. Graves stepped forward and presented the colors to Captain Parker. They consisted of six large bunting ensigns and fifteen dozen small flags purchased by the citizens of Dubuque at a cost of four hundred and fifty dollars. Captain Parker in a brief speech of acceptance thanked the citizens of Dubuque for the cordial reception accorded him and his boat.

A long and woefully dry oration by the Hon. J. H. O'Neil drove the less resolute to the barroom. The great majority, however, awaited with commendable fortitude the presentation of the horns by the inimitable Commodore Thomas Levens, who performed his arduous task in a manner not soon to be forgotten. Said he, addressing the Captain, "You see them horns, they are a nice pair, and have got the North Star stuck right between them. They are a horny set of fellows, and carry a good number of points. Captain, them horns were once worn by the proudest animal that brooks the conquest of a hunter, and it is proper that they should hereafter be borne by the proudest craft that walks these waters, the steamer Dubuque. I ain't much, Captain, on speech making, but I always try to do my duty, and entrust these antlers to your keeping, hoping that you will always cherish them. In conclusion, Captain, in the words of a distinguished friend of mine 'Take your damned old horns'." The effect

of the old Commodore's speech was electrical, he was the hero of the hour, and by general consent the crowd repaired to the barroom for further refreshments.

Invitations had been sent out to two hundred of the elite of the city to attend a private dance and supper that evening. Those who were slighted acted upon the theory that it was a free country and attended the festivities anyway. A splendid banquet had been prepared by E. Mainey, the *Dubuque's* steward, and the rich foods were reinforced by generous contributions from Bill Henderson's stock of finest wines. At the conclusion of the banquet, a dance was held in the spacious cabin of the *Dubuque* with music furnished by the ship's band. Dawn streaked the eastern bluffs before the last group of merry Dubuquers departed and allowed Captain Parker to proceed on his way.

Though the average life of a steamboat on western waters was usually estimated at five years, the steamboats named "Dubuque", except the first, far surpassed the allotted span of service. Altogether the second and third *Dubuque* and the first *Key City* plied the waters of the upper Mississippi for a period of thirty-one years, or an average of over ten years each. But the fourth *Dubuque* has eclipsed them all in the amazing longevity of her career. During the present season of 1929 she celebrated the golden anniversary of her wedding with the waters of the upper Mississippi and has thus run sixteen

years longer than the combined service of all the other namesakes of Dubuque, excluding the ferry-boat *Key City*.

One hundred and six years ago, in 1823, the *Virginia* made the first steamboat trip to Fort Snelling. The excursion boat *Capitol*, christened *Pittsburgh* and converted into the fourth *Dubuque*, has churned the waters of the upper Mississippi for almost one-half the period of time that steamboating has existed on that great waterway. Her record is without a parallel among the steamboats on the upper river.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Through English Eyes

Five hours after leaving Chicago, the train reaches the bridge which crosses the Mississippi. This bridge is nearly a mile in length, and is constructed partly of wood and partly of iron. The structure has a very unsubstantial appearance, and, as it creaks and sways while the train passes over it, the contingency of an unwelcome descent into the deep and rapid stream beneath is one which flashes over the mind.

Once across the bridge, the westward-bound traveller enters the young, yet flourishing State of Iowa, a State in which countless settlers may find pleasant homes on its rolling prairies. On either side, as far as the horizon, a few farmhouses alone serve to break the monotony of the prospect. To these vast tracts the epithet which Homer affixed to the sea may not inaptly be applied. They are literally "unharvested," awaiting the touch of industry to yield up their teeming treasures. The long, rank grass which waves on their surface, rots for lack of a mower to gather it in, or is converted into dust and ashes when the spark falling from the passing locomotive, or thrown by the heedless wanderer, kindles

[This description of Iowa was written by an English traveller who crossed the State on the North Western Railway in the autumn of 1869. It is here reprinted from W. F. Rae's *Westward by Rail*, pp. 62-68. — THE EDITOR]

the flame which no human power can possibly extinguish.

The spectacle of a prairie on fire is one of infinite grandeur. For miles on every side the air is heavy with volumes of stifling smoke, and the ground reddened with hissing and rushing fire. The beholder can with difficulty apprehend the possibility of the mass of flame being quenched till the entire country has become a barren and blackened waste. Much depends upon the strength of the wind as well as the quarter from which it blows. A lull will stay the conflagration, while a sudden change, by reversing the direction of the fiery waves, will sweep them back over the tract which they have devastated, and thus lead to their own extinction by what is known as "back-firing".

A scene less impressive, but far more enjoyable, is that of the moon flooding the silent prairie with silvery light. The smallest object then stands forth in bold relief and fixes the attention. Innumerable wild flowers perfume the air. The senses are at once quickened and overpowered by the impression of illimitable space.

As the mind is awakened to the thought that those who people these vast tracts of fertile land will enjoy a freedom hardly less complete, while far better ordered than that of the wanton breeze, balmy with perfume, it is not difficult to understand the proneness to exaggeration, which is the characteristic of the Americans of the West, and to sympathize with

their opinions of countries in which an untrodden wilderness is an impossibility, and every acre is cultivated like a garden. Nor is it unpatriotic to feel a longing that the thousands who earn precarious livelihoods in the United Kingdom by tilling the soil, of which their taskmasters are the lords, could be transported to a locality where the strength of their arms would not only win for them a comfortable subsistence, but would also enable them to become possessors in their own right of the soil which yields them their daily bread. If the Dorsetshire labourer, who hardly knows what it is to taste butcher's meat, or the Irish peasant, whose ambition is to possess a bit of land, could be convinced of the lot which he might enjoy as a settler on the prairies of Iowa, the former would soon cease to serve and reverence the squire, and the latter would turn his face to the setting sun with the same feeling which the Mohammedan cherishes for the sacred city of Mecca.

The picture is a bright one, but it would be unnatural were it unrelieved by shade. The State of Iowa has its drawbacks, in the shape of swamps, as well as its treasures, in the form of rolling prairies. Fortunately the prairie predominates over the swamp. From east to west this State extends 287 miles, and it is 210 miles in breadth. At its western extremity the line of the Chicago and North Western Railway passes through one of the worst swamps in the whole State. A few days previous to my journey

the rain had swollen the waters, and the rails were inundated. The train went along at a snail's pace. It was a puzzle to comprehend how the rails kept their places and the sleepers upheld their burden. The latter were resting upon what appeared to be liquid mud. It was well that they remained unbroken. Had they given way, the consequences would have been disastrous. When asked by an anxious and timid passenger what would happen were the road-bed to sink altogether, the conductor answered, "Guess the cars would go to hell's bottom." These swamps are veritable quicksands. Whatever enters them is engulfed for ever. As it happened, the only serious mischief was a detention of the train. Since then I have learned that the company has profited by the warning, and has renewed the line at this part in such a way as to render a recurrence of the flood danger almost an impossibility.

Several miles before Council Bluffs, the station on the eastern bank of the Missouri, is reached, a fine view is had of Omaha, on the western bank. The prospect is deceitful, as is not infrequently the case when cities are viewed from a distance. Situated on a rising ground, Omaha appears to be a city with fine streets and stately buildings. Seen more closely, the streets are found to be straggling and the buildings common-place, with but very few exceptions.

One of the disenchantments for which the traveller

by this line must be prepared, occurs when he has to be transported across the Missouri from Council Bluffs to Omaha. The accounts he may have read of palace cars running through from New York to San Francisco must have led him to underrate the discomforts to be faced and borne. One of these is changing from car to car and rail to rail. A short time ago I read in the New York *Tribune* a glowing account of the luxurious way in which a party had travelled without change of cars from Sacramento to New York. That this was the rare exception I learned before leaving Chicago; but I did not know that the arrangements were still incomplete for transporting passengers in comfort across the Missouri River, and my ignorance was shared by many of my fellow-passengers.

On arriving at Council Bluffs, we found omnibuses in waiting at the station. The morning was cold and raw. But a small proportion of the passengers could get inside seats, the remainder having the option of either sitting on the roof among the luggage, or else being left behind. In itself the seat on the roof was not objectionable, provided the time occupied were brief. As nearly an hour was thus spent, the feeling of satisfaction at having got a seat at all was supplanted by a feeling of annoyance at the treatment received. Through deep ruts in the mud the omnibus was slowly drawn by four horses to the river's bank, and thence on to the deck of a flat-bottomed steamer.

Seated there, a good view was had of the Missouri. It has been called mighty, which it doubtless is, considered as a stream, yet the appellation of "Big Muddy," which is current here, is the one which more truthfully characterises it. The banks are masses of dark mud, resembling the heights which line the sea coast at Cromer, in Norfolk, and just as every high tide undermines and crumbles away the latter, so does the river's current sweep away portions of the former. The peculiarity of the Missouri is the shifting character of its current. Now and then it suddenly abandons its old bed, scooping out a new one an hundred yards distant. A fellow-traveller who had seen it a month previously said that since then the river had shifted its course, and that what was now a vast bed of mud had then formed the river's channel.

The erratic career of this river is giving sad trouble to the railway company. There is no certainty that any particular spot chosen for the landing-stage will continue available for the purpose from hour to hour and from day to day. There is a plan for erecting a bridge over the Missouri, but the difficulty of finding a solid foundation has hitherto proved insurmountable. The bed and banks of the river are quicksands of great depth. These physical obstacles will probably be overcome, but the cost of success must assuredly be heavy. Moreover, the question of labour is one which adds an element of complication to the problem. It is proposed to bring

Chinamen from California in order to build the bridge. To this the Irishmen already employed make vigorous objections, threatening terrible things should their protests be unheeded. There is too much reason to fear that when the unoffending Chinamen arrive they will be the victims of dastardly outrages.

W. F. RAE

Comment by the Editor

TWENTY KINDS OF MEAT

What shall we have for dinner? though forever asked and answered daily, never seems to be decided permanently. The quandary appears to be universal — as pertinent to savage tribesmen as to sophisticated dilettantes, as prevalent in England as in India, as perennial among butlers as bachelors. Of course the nature of the menu depends primarily upon whether the question arises from famine or surfeit or appropriate diet. At the dinner in honor of the completion of the railroad from Davenport to Muscatine in 1855 there were twenty kinds of meat!

According to imagination and tradition the food of the pioneers was simple and frugal. Corn bread, salt pork, and hominy are supposed to have been the principal items of sustenance, though potatoes and gravy were staples in season. If a hungry farmer's appetite were not appeased with these he could have johnny cake, hulled corn, and spare ribs. For variety's sake the ingenious cook might serve maize purée, dodger a la corn, frumenty in milk, and belly of swine adipose garnished with dandelion greens. But at the Muscatine railroad celebration the guests had a choice of twenty kinds of meat!

No one has ever supposed that the pioneers were

epicurean. While they indulged their healthy appetites freely, the manner of their eating was not fastidious. Dainty dishes rarely graced their board. If salad was devised at all it was apt to be passed in disdain as an alien concoction. The people who conquered the prairie wanted bread to eat and plenty of meat — food that had substance and stayed a man's stomach from noon until night. Assuming that hunger was natural, the whole family ate boldly and with relish — nor stopped to count the calories or balance a ration. Starch, protein, vitamins, and iron they consumed in ignorance and bliss, but most of all they relished the protein. It must have been so because just seventy-four years ago the citizens of Muscatine provided the banquet table with twenty kinds of meat, including turkey, quail, and venison!

J. E. B.

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