

PHILLIPS COUNTY
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Volume 10 March, 1972 Number 2

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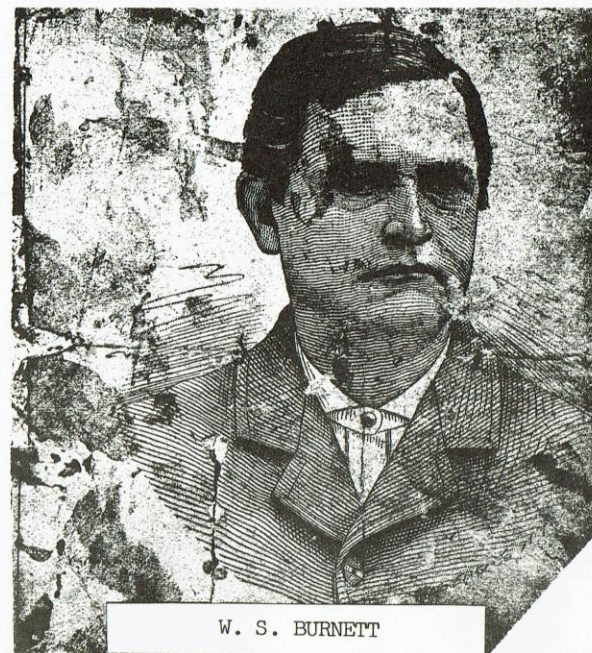
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WESTERN CLARION

HELENA, ARK., SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1865.

The Western Clarion, A
Weekly Newspaper, Pub. in
Helena, Arkansas, Every
Saturday Morning, By
William S. Burnett.
Office in the Brick Build-
ing, West Helena, Near
Fort Curtis.

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W. S. BURNETT

THE FLOOD.

The old Father of waters has really got his back up, and gone on a high. The citizens of East Helena will soon become web-footed. They are clearly aquatic animals. We have a fine water communication in all the streets in East Helena, and all the lower rooms of the houses. Pedestrianism is one of the lost arts; the carts are tied up to the fences, and the fences floated away; the mules have swam to the hills; and the denizens of the streets risen with the occasion, until they are up to the second story, on the question of dugouts and water crafts.

And such crafts as float languidly along the streets and thread the alleys. Shade of Barnum! Could it be known what originality of conception had escaped your show, and was doomed to perish unseen, what grief would be yours. Talk of Yankee ingenuity! Why, we actually saw a young man from Maine, shed tears on gazing at the manifest proof that in originality of conception the Yankees were no where by the side of the Helenists. Some on planks, some on hen-coops, some on dry goods boxes, some elderly ladies on the top of a chair, on top of a box which was on top of two planks; a dozen darkies on a piece of a bridge; and the Yankee, aforesaid, gravely insisted that one old negress paddled by on a cooking stove.

But all are happy and gay, making the best of the flood, and as the water is now falling we shall soon be back on earth again. The river, at this writing, is just up to the top of the levee in many places, and it is hoped that before another such inundation reaches us, we shall have some time to devote to repairing levees instead of forts, and be prepared for it.

RIVER NEWS.

The river at this point came to a stand on Tuesday last, at which time it was $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches below 1858, and 2 feet 3 inches below the great flood of

1862, which was the highest water ever known. The water up to this morning has fallen about one inch and a half, and from the news from above we may expect some feet of a fall before any rise from above can reach us.

In this connection we would call the attention of our military authorities and of our citizens and Cotton Planters to the necessity of closing the gap in the levee just below town. We fear that it may be with them like the backwoodsman in the "Arkansas Traveler," it rains so now that nothing can be done, and when the water goes down they will say, "Helena is as dry a town as any man's town," and let the levee alone.

The cost of the levee would not exceed fifteen hundred dollars, and the military could make it and not feel the cost. The damage to our merchants, certainly, far exceeds that amount to say nothing of the loss to our Planters. The money expended for boats here in town would almost cover the cost.

DROWNED OUT.

We learn with sorrow that the colony of Freedmen which has been for a year past so prosperously getting along at Island 63, under the zealous and able management of Chaplain Thomas, and which has gone so far towards demonstrating the capability of even the most helpless of the freedmen to earn their living, has been compelled, by the rise of the river to leave the Island. We hope it will be only temporary and that they may be back in time to make their crop on the Island.

M. M. CHAMBERLAIN & CO.
DEALERS IN DRY GOODS, GROCERIES.
RIGHTOR STREET (OPPOSITE COOLIDGE'S BLOCK)

Messrs. Chamberlain & Co.....their house is the only one of general merchandise, which at the present stage of the water has land and water communication.

PRODUCE AND GROCERIES.

We notice with pleasure that our enterprising and obliging friends, Messrs. Nixon and Fritzson, dealers in Groceries and Produce, since business has dried up over in East Helena, in consequence of too much water, have established a branch of their house over here, in the neighborhood of our office, which will be found exceedingly convenient to purchasers in this part of the city. And what is best of all, they are disposed to sell at fair, honest rates.

M. H. WYGANT
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW.
OFFICE IN RIGHTOR'S BLOCK.

THE BALL.

The party given on the 22nd March, at the wharfboat, to our Military friends was a perfect success. The ladies and gentlemen of the various committees seem to have had a prescience of what would add most to the beauty of the decorations, the pleasure of the company, and tempting character of the edibles.

Everyone appeared to be enjoying himself and herself, and for once our military friends seemed to have forgotten the absence of the Paymaster, and all went merry as a marriage bell. The company was very large, about two hundred persons were present as invited guests, and judging from the number who took the floor when the music struck up, dancing is not to be reckoned among the lost arts at Helena. There was no hanging back, no slights, no sour faces that we could see. By the help of the active committees every body was made acquainted with every body; and each one was bound to be happy, and make every one else so.

The supper has not been excelled in these parts for taste of arrangement or variety or excellence of fare, and was one of which our lady friends

may well be proud.

We were glad to see Genl. McCook and staff availing themselves of that opportunity to make the personal acquaintance of our citizens.

We had several very pleasant social parties this winter, for war times, but this eclipsed them all. To the thoughtful patriot, however, this party possesses a significance to which all its pleasures and festivities were as nothing. It demonstrated that the citizens of the Southern States and citizens from the North can treat each other with respect and cordiality, and to use a homely phrase, "live together." We saw that night, men in blue, and men who had worn grey; ladies from the South and ladies from the North; Federal officers' wives and women whose husbands and lovers had been in the Confederate service, all forgetting and forgiving the past and treating each other with cordial and happy greeting. We observed closely during the evening and failed to see one slight or uncourteous act, word or look, growing out of the war, and failed to see it.

We have got to stay in the same land, Yankee and "Southern man," Southern belles and Yankee school-mistresses, and there is no use of either taking on airs about it. Let us have more of the catholic and charitable feeling manifested at this party, and good will come of it.

SALUTATORY.

In no particular have the people of the city of Helena and Eastern Ark., felt the results of this insane rebellion more severely than in the entire suspension of newspaper publication.

It is now nearly three years since a newspaper has been published in this part of the State. During that time there has been no method of public communication except through the journals of a foreign State, or a paper published at Little Rock, between which city and ours communication is so tedious as to make articles sent there and published out

of date before they can be received here. Our merchants and business men have, also, severely felt the want of a medium of advertising.

The loyal Unconditional Union men of Eastern Arkansas, also, ask to be heard. For eighteen months before the arrival of the Federal army, under General Curtis, at Helena, no person unless so venerable and beloved as to be beyond reach of abuse, or so insignificant as to pass unnoticed, was allowed to utter, or any newspaper to publish, any article or sentiment which did not make the existence of the nation itself, depend upon the question of negro slavery, or which attempted to call in question the right or policy of that institution. The Press and people were muzzled.

In view of these facts and necessities, we commence the publication of the Western Clarion. We shall endeavor to advance, with the utmost ability we have, the interests of our State, our City and our business men..... And now, fellow citizens of Phillips County, we have showed our hand. Let us help each other.

William S. Burnett, publisher of the Western Clarion at the time of this issue of April 1, 1865, was a native of Coahoma County, Mississippi, and he came to Helena with his family as a young boy. Before the Civil War he had served as an apprentice printer for the Democratic Star of Helena and the Southern Shield of Helena and for a Memphis paper.

He had attempted to start the Western Clarion at Helena in 1864, but because Federal government officials had partly destroyed and also taken large amounts of newspaper type from a supply at Helena that the publisher had planned to use, then he had to wait almost a year before starting the paper in earnest. The Western Clarion was a four page paper, which was usual for the time.

After publishing the Western Clarion for perhaps a year or a little more, Mr. Burnett moved to Des Arc to manage a paper there, but by 1869 he had returned to Helena to publish the Helena Weekly Clarion in partnership with James B. Miles and with his brother, Oscar Burnett, in charge of the job office of the Clarion. This Helena Clarion was undoubtedly the Western Clarion with an altered name, but its activities during Mr. Burnett's absence from Helena are not known.

In November, 1871, he established the Helena Weekly World, and it is thought that the inspiration for this came from the Phillips County Democratic Central Committee. Publication of the Daily World followed in a short time. Mr. Burnett was publisher of the World for about three years, leaving it to start the Helena Daily Mail, and in a short time, he left the newspaper business for a period of nine or ten years. In 1885, he became publisher of the Helena World for a second time, purchasing it from William R. Burke, who also had some part in establishing the paper in 1871. Shortly before his death in 1892, Mr. Burnett sold his part in the paper to William M. Neal, who had already been with the World for some years.

Mr. Burnett was a member of the Arkansas Press Association, and was in regular attendance at its annual meetings. In point of years spent in the newspaper business, he was one of the oldest editors in the state. At the time of his death, Mr. Burnett lived in a house on Walnut Street at the present site of the Helena Wholesale Dry Goods Company. He was the grandfather of Mrs. W. G. Dinning, Sr. of Helena.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Additional Members For 1971-1972

J. F. Boyte	Memphis
Gere Carnathan	Helena
Mrs. Katheren S. Christensen	Little Rock
Fred Fielder	West Helena

For the first time in almost ten years of life, the Historical Society reached a membership mark of 200--and a few more.

Dues for the membership year of 1972-1973 are payable to the Treasurer as of May 1, 1972, Miss Bessie McRee, P. O. Box 629, Helena, Ark. 72342.

The Historical Society has had an active late winter and spring. Thomas Tappan, President of the Society, planned and held the January program, which was in two parts. Histories of the S. C. Moore and James A. Tappan homes were given, aided by a collection of early pictures of the two houses on Columbia Street. Following this part of the program, members and visitors were invited to tour the James A. Tappan home. Mrs. Moore Tappan, Mrs. Kies, and Mr. and Mrs. Jim Tappan were hosts for the occasion. Needless to say, everyone enjoyed the visit immensely.

On February 22nd, the Delta Queen stopped at Helena on its trip from Memphis to Little Rock. Two buses conducted the visitors on a tour of our area. Mrs. Tom Faust was in charge of the tour, helped by Mrs. Tom Choate, Mrs. Hal Nichols, and Mrs. John King, Jr. A reception was held at the Museum in the course of the tour, with refreshments offered by Mrs. Fred Faust, Sr., Mrs. James H. Pillow, Mrs. Floyd E. Curtis, and Mrs. Francis L. Thompson. The

man in the beret played the piano, and he should have known how, because he recovered the calliope used on the Delta Queen from the bottom of the Ohio River. This was one of the most successful parties on record.

The Historical Society voted to give a cash award in the historical articles category for participants in the Arkansas Writers Conference.

In March, a special meeting was held at the site of Battery D, scene of bloody fighting in the Battle of Helena. This is on property located on the Military Road, owned and developed by John Conaway. Gibson Turley gave as fine a talk on the military operations here, as he had given at the September, 1970, meeting held at Battery C on Reservoir Hill. Approximately forty people were in attendance at this meeting. The weather was perfect for the event, and the seating arrangement afforded a wonderful view of the river.

Last year the Fort Curtis historical marker suffered a direct hit when a large tree across Perry Street fell in a storm. The Historical Society paid to have the marker re-erected.

We note here the deaths of two of our members, Jesse P. Vineyard of Memphis and Mrs. A. B. Lewis, Sr. of Helena.

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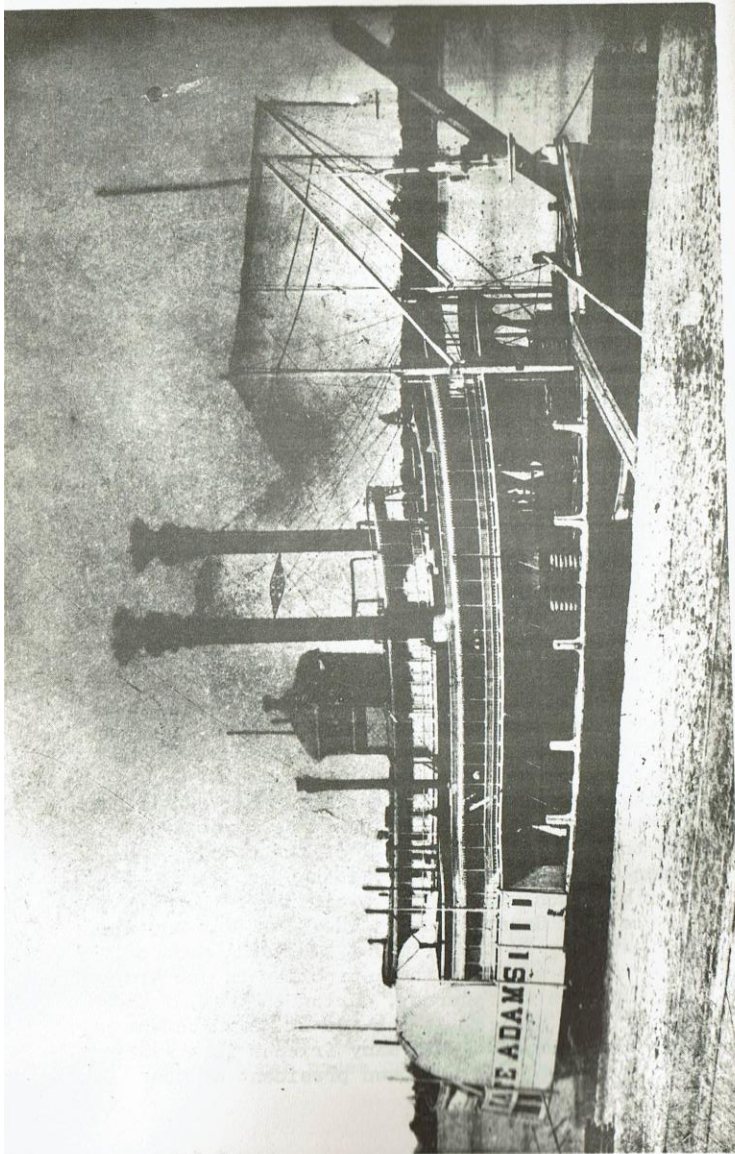
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Memphis and Arkansas City Packet Company.

Kate Adams, First

The first Kate Adams was built in 1882 by James Rees, of Pittsburgh, for the Memphis & Arkansas City Packet Co. Her cost was \$90,000, and her capacity 1,000 tons. Rees' description of her dimensions is as follows: "Length, 245 feet; beam, 37 feet; depth of hold, eight feet; shear, five feet. High pressure engines, diameter 24 inches, stroke nine feet. Rees adjustable or variable cut-off. Five boilers, diameter 47 inches, length 28 feet, seven flues each." This packet was a large sidewheeler, with a wooden hull, said to have been about the finest ever turned out of a shipyard, and her cabin was finished throughout in hardwood, with panels of birdseye maple, mahogany, walnut, etc. In appearance she was a typical Mississippi River packet of that period, but was the first steamer on Western and Southern rivers to adopt the Edison electric light system throughout every department, and was considered one of the fastest, most economical and successful packets that ever plied the Mississippi River. The memory of the first Kate Adams is still green among the steamboatmen of the lower Mississippi and the people of Memphis. She was their pride--always on time--and the fastest boat belonging at the port of Memphis. In the office of the firm of James Rees Son & Co., at Pittsburgh, hangs a picture of the first Kate Adams, and under it is the following inscription:

"The Kate Adams, designed and constructed in 1882, by James Rees, Duquesne Engine Works, Pittsburgh, Pa.--On her famous trip on the Mississippi River from Helena, Ark., to Memphis, Tenn., March 18, 1883, a distance of 90 miles, her time was 5 hours, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, and was and is, to this date, the fastest time on record between these points."

Record Run of the Kate Adams I

		h	m	s
1882	Belle Memphis	5	53	0
1882	City of Cairo	5	52	0
1882	James Lee I	5	33	0
1882	City of Providence	5	49	30
1883	Kate Adams I	5	18	30

The Record

Memphis, Tenn., Mar. 18, 1883.--This is to certify that we acted as timekeepers on the run made by the steamer Kate Adams from Helena, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee, on Sunday, March 18th, 1883, and that the time between the two points named was 5 hours, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, to wit:

		a.m.			Elapsed Time		
		H	M	S	H M S		
Lv. Helena.....	6	11	0				
Ar. Harbert.....	7	04	30			53	30
Ar. Ft. Bordeaux.	7	38	04		1	27	45
Ar. Hd. Bordeaux.	7	55	15		1	44	15
Ar. Ashley's Pt..	8	14	45		2	03	45
Ar. Commerce.....	8	32	15		2	21	15
Ar. Polk's Ldg....	9	03	00		2	52	00
Ar. Star Ldg.....	9	29	45		3	08	45
Ar. Hd. Cat. Is..	9	51	01		3	40	15
Ar. Harris Ldg...10	34	20			4	23	20
Ar. Ft. Pres. Is..10	52	00			4	41	00
Ar. Memphis.....11	29	30			5	18	30

Denny O'Neil, Sim L. Barinds, C. A. Walterhouse, A. C. Terrell.

The James Lee Gives Up The Horns

To the Steamer Kate Adams:

"Begotten by the same sire and foaled by the same dam, and as an evidence of the pride I have in the exhibition of your record, I take pleasure in presenting you these testimonials of speed, which I have worn, with pride to myself and honor of our

mutual ancestors. Hoping they may always be retained in the family, I am, your affectionate Brother, James Lee."

The Reply

"To Capt. James Lee:--I accept this beautiful and much coveted token of brotherly love and emblem of speed in the same generous spirit in which it was given. I promise you it shall remain as an heirloom in the family, and if my son, Dean, proves himself worthy of his family I shall give them to him. Steamer Kate Adams.

Our firm, the James Rees and Sons Company, built both boats, the first James Lee and the first Kate Adams. Yours truly, Thomas M. Rees, President."

The first Kate Adams on her 602nd trip burned at Commerce Landing, about 40 miles below Memphis, west of Robinsonville, Miss., early Sunday morning, Dec. 23, 1888. The boat was a total loss, but by the coolness and nerve of her commander, Capt. Mark R. Cheek, every passenger, except one, was saved, and all the crew.

Another account in the Commercial Appeal by Thomas Fauntleroy in 1928, forty years later, said 24 people were killed. Another version by J. H. Curtis in 1946, 58 years later, said close to 55 were killed.

It was the "Bonny Kate," as she was generally known when in her prime, who, garlanded with flowers and bedecked with flying colors, had the honor of bearing President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland to Memphis from the old yards of Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Memphis Railroad where they left a private car they had traveled in from Kansas City in from Kansas City to Memphis.

COPY OF A TYPICAL ADVERTISEMENT OF
 Kate Adams # 1 in
 Memphis Appeal of
 October 13, 1888

Memphis and Vicksburg Packet Company
 ---U. S. Mail Line.
 For Helena, Concordia, Terrene and Arkansas City
 ---the New passenger steamer
 KATE ADAMS,
 M. R. Cheek, master, W. C. Blanker, clerk.
 Leaves Memphis
 MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS at 5 P. M.
 Freight received at all times on the Consolidated
 Wharfboat at foot of Union Street.
 For general information apply at office.
 Telephone No. 286.

E. Walworth Agent

Chapter 2.

KATE ADAMS II

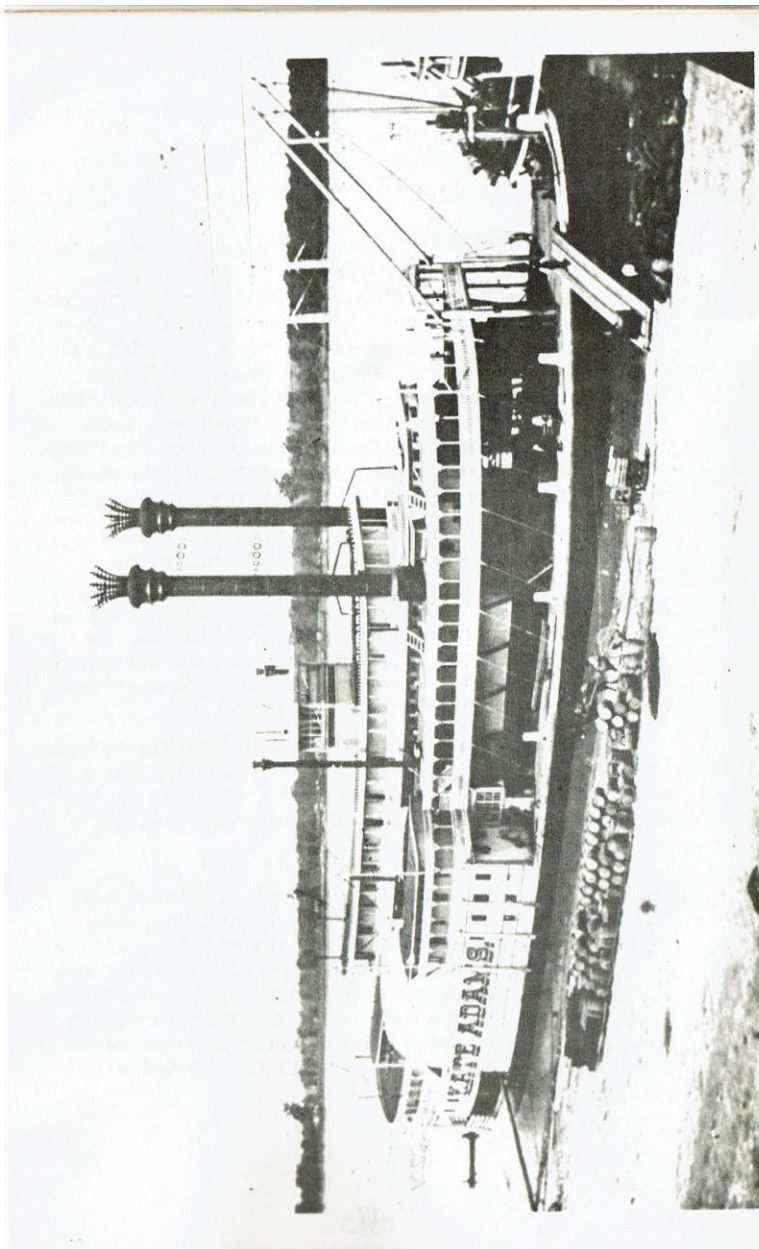
The hull of the second Kate Adams was built by the Howards, of Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 1889, for James Rees & Co., of Pittsburgh, who constructed the machinery. Like the first Kate Adams, this steamer was a sidewheeler, with a wooden hull, and was built for the Memphis & Arkansas Packet Company. Her cost was about \$80,000, and she carried 1,000 tons. Her length was 250 feet, beam, 36 feet, depth of hold $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. She had four boilers, 40 inches in diameter and 30 feet long; two cylinders, 22 inches in diameter, eight feet stroke.

She was too big for a Memphis and Arkansas city packet, so she was sold to a firm in New Orleans. She was renamed the Dewey in 1899 after Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet at Manila, in his honor. She ran for some time in the New Orleans and St. Louis trade but she proved too small for this long run. Captain Lee Cummings chartered her as a Memphis and Vicksburg packet.

Later she was sold to Captain Tom Sims of St. Louis, who changed her name to the Lotus Sims, and she burned in the St. Louis harbor October 29, 1903, with no loss of life, but all cargo was lost.

75 YEARS AGO July 4, 1889

"LOUISVILLE.--The Kate Adams, just completed here for the Memphis & Arkansas City Packet Co., made a trial trip yesterday and acted charmingly. Her cabin is one of the most handsome on the river and has 38 large staterooms, including six bridal chambers furnished completely with mahogany furniture. She has 12 large rooms on the after end for Negro passengers. The Kate Adams will be lighted with electricity."



WHEN THE KATE ADAMS OUTDISTANCED THE JAMES LEE

by

Albert C. Rightor

(This article appeared in the Arkansas Gazette of February 7, 1937, and was one of a series written by Mr. Rightor, based on and telling of his early life at Helena. The article was contributed by Mrs. John T. Caldwell, Jr., of Jackson, Mississippi, a kinsman of Mr. Rightor.)

Steamboat racing on the Mississippi between 1870 and 1890 was popular with the residents of the towns and cities along the river. The residents of the Mississippi valley regarded the steamers of that romantic stream and age almost in the same way and with as much esteem as the people of the Blue Grass section of Kentucky regard their race horses. They almost put them in the human class. Nothing, to them, made a more charming picture than a well-designed side-wheel steamboat on the Mississippi, and it was difficult for them to find a more pleasant way to enjoy a few weeks than to make the round trip from Cincinnati or St. Louis to New Orleans.

Probably the greatest steamboat race was between the Natchez and the Robert E. Lee. It would be difficult to find a more beautiful picture, in water colors, of that famous race, than the one drawn by Capt. William Rodgers, Jr., and which won first prize at the Phillips county fair, at Helena. Later it adorned the walls of his father's home. No artist was more familiar with every part of a river steamer than young Captain Rodgers.

In his pictures, every line of the hull, the wheel-house, cabin, pilot house, smoke stacks and wheels were perfect. Even the reflection from the furnace doors, as the firemen stirred the red hot

coals, and the steam from her exhaust pipes, and black, curling smoke from her furnace, that floated behind her and left a dark streak across the blue sky, was done with an artistry that would be hard to excel.

Another exciting race took place between two steamers that stopped at and passed Helena several times a week. One was the James Lee, of which Capt. Stack Lee was master. She ran from Memphis, 90 miles above Helena, to Friar's Point, 15 miles below Helena. The Kate Adams, the second boat, Capt. Mark R. Cheek, master, ran from Memphis to White River, quite a distance below Helena. Both boats were built for speed as well as carrying capacity and beauty. They were artistically designed and when under full speed resembled two great race horses. On this occasion, they reached Helena about the same time, on their return trips. The James Lee pulled out from the wharf just a few minutes ahead of the Kate Adams. The latter boat was splitting the river wide open in her effort to overtake the James Lee, which was churning the muddy water into a white foam leaving waves behind her which the Kate Adams had to plow through. But the Kate Adams was equal to the occasion, and was slowly gaining on her contestant.

As the "Katie" gained, a fresh volume of coal black smoke flowed forth from the crowned smoke-stacks and white steam spewed from her exhaust pipes. Finally she was alongside the famous James. The latter tried to crowd the "Katie" to the shore, but her pilot held his position and two boats came together and remained together for several miles. Some of the venturesome passengers stepped over the guards, from one steamer to the other. The deck hands and "rousties" engaged in a great "jawing" contest. Someone afterward remarked that "if all the hot air that passed through their razzing lips could have been applied directly to the wheels of one of the racers, she would have soon pulled away and left her rival far in the rear."

The pilot on the Kate Adams called the engineer on the speaking tube and said: "Can't you put on a little more steam, Bill? Put a weight on the safety valve and tell Sam to throw a few sides of bacon on the coals and I believe we will be able to pull away."

Bill replied: "All right, Steve, I'll attend to it at once." The engineer walked leisurely out to the furnace and whispered to Sam, the head fireman, and told him to have his assistant slip several sides of meat from the storeroom and wrap them up so the crew on the James Lee could not see what was going on.

The country bacon was slipped out of the crew's storeroom and taken to the furnace, and thrown in. The engineer put an extra 10-pound weight on the safety valve and in a few minutes the Kate Adams began to slip away from the James Lee.

The passengers began to scramble back onto their own boats. As the Katie gradually moved away from her contestant, the "rousties" on the former began their bragging afresh.

The Kate Adams continued to widen the distance between herself and her rival until she was fully a quarter mile ahead. Captain Lee went to the head clerk and said: "Charlie, haven't we about a thousand pounds of fresh salt pork that we took on at one of the country landings, consigned to some firm in Memphis?"

"Yes, Captain, we have a thousand pounds consigned to Brown and Company," he replied.

"Well, you make note on the bill of lading that the pork was used by the boat and ask Brown and Company to render us a bill for it when we reach Memphis."

What on earth was Captain Stack going to do with 1,000 pounds of fresh salted pork? They had

plenty in the labor pantry for the deck crew.

Captain Stack went down to see the head engineer and said, "Henry, the Kate Adams is fully a quarter mile ahead of us and we must overtake her. There's only one way we can do it."

"How's that, Captain?"

"The head clerk informs me that we have about 1,000 pounds of salt pork aboard that we took on down the river below Helena. I want you to slip out to the boilers and put an extra 10-pound weight on the safety valve so it won't blow off and scare all the passengers to death. While you are doing this, I will look for the mate and have him locate the pork and move it up to the firebox and then I'll tell old Johnson, the head fireman, to feed the furnace on 'hog meat' until we overtake the Katie."

The engineer smiled and said: "Good suggestion, Captain. I think the boilers will stand the extra 10 pounds without danger. Here she goes." He stepped out of the engine room and headed for the big boilers.

Captain Stack located the "swearing" mate, so-called because swearing was a part of the mate's profession. If they didn't swear, the roustabouts would think they were only joking, when giving orders, so accustomed had they become to the mate's "special vocabulary." He called some of the roustabouts by "pet names."

The pork was carried up to the side of the firebox and Johnson, the head fireman, began to feed "the hogs" to the furnace. The heavy, black smoke that had been rolling out of the James Lee's stack now turned to a light blue. Her steam gauges moved up.

The passengers who stood on the aft roof of the Kate Adams had noticed the change in the color of the James Lee's smoke and could hear the big paddles of her wheels striking the water faster and

faster. They noticed that the spray from her bow stem was shooting at least a foot higher. One of the passengers said to the other: "She's gaining on us."

"You are right, she is getting closer and closer," was the reply. Within an hour the James Lee was alongside the "Katie." The passengers on the James Lee now began to wave their hats and handkerchiefs.

The captain of the "Katie" knew why the James Lee had been able to overtake him. He rushed to the cabin and consulted his head clerk to see if there were any pork consignments on the boat and the clerk replied that Roberts & Son, on White River, had shipped 2,000 pounds to Denton & Co., Memphis.

"Charge it up to the boat, for 'special use,'" said the captain, and ran to the engine room.

"Bill, the clerk tells me that there is 2,000 pounds of salt pork on the deck, consigned to Denton & Co., Memphis. Have the mate move it up as quickly and as quietly as possible to the furnace and tell Sam to feed her pretty lively and be sure to put another 10-pound weight on the safety valve."

"All right, Captain, I'll attend to it at once."

Before the James Lee could pass the "Katie," she began to gain her lost position and in a short while the bow of the James Lee had dropped back even with the wheel house of the "Katie."

As Memphis came in sight, the Kate Adams still continued to widen the distance between her rival and when she landed she was fully 1,000 feet ahead of her rival.

HELENA WORLD
February 28, 1916

New Depot For West Helena.

The Iron Mountain Railway company is preparing to erect a depot at West Helena and already has the ground staked out and several cars of material on the ground. It is understood that the building will be up and ready for occupancy within the next sixty days. It will occupy the site of the old plantation building known as the Clopton house, and which was recently destroyed by fire.

HELENA WORLD
March 2, 1916

We are offering for sale in the Helena Veneer Subdivision on Plaza Street, a few choice business lots, unrestricted as to occupancy, in West Helena. These lots lie between the depot of the M. & N. A. R. R. and the site on which the Iron Mountain Railroad are preparing to construct their depot. Price and terms reasonable. We will be glad to show you these lots. O. R. Lilly, 124 Plaza Street, West Helena.

HELENA WORLD
August 11, 1915

Cherry Street Merchants Will Close Fridays.

With the signature of one dry goods merchant, who had up until today refused to sign the Friday Closing Petition, every dry goods and grocery store

on Cherry Street will be closed next Friday afternoon. J. L. Altman who has had charge of the petition since it was first presented the Business Men's League, reported the signature of every merchant in the above businesses on Cherry this morning, and while Mr. Altman has lost several pounds in weight, besides a number of hours sleep at night, he has nevertheless pulled through the strain and bore up well under the circumstances.

The petition signed by all of the business houses, is an agreement for all of the dry goods and grocery stores to close their stores at 2:30 each Friday afternoon and not open again until Saturday morning.

The movement was inaugurated by Ware & Solomon followed by the hardware stores of the city, then by all of the banks, and the above steps of circulating the petition by Mr. Altman put on the finishing touches.

The closing of the above stores will mean that over 200 clerks and proprietors will be able to enjoy a half holiday each Friday afternoon and will be more capable of performing the duties Saturday after the rest on Friday.

While this movement only lasts through the month of August this year it is understood that it may be circulated next year for both the months of June and July and there is a possibility of taking in May.

Every person in Helena considers this a good movement and while bouquets are due J. L. Altman for his diligent work along this line, he does not want any publicity.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A FORMER SUBJECT OF AUSTRO-HUNGARY

by

Watt McKinney
November 22, 1938

Simon Plattner, 68 years of age, lives about five miles west of Marvell, Arkansas in the Hicks community, on a small farm that he purchased and on which he moved and built his home thirty-five years ago. This community is populated by a number of families of Swiss people, most of the older ones of whom were born in Switzerland, emigrating to America about forty years ago. Among these families are the Inebnits, Tschabolds, Schaffhausers, Gschwends, Dubochs, Weltis, Heidlebergers, and Steiners and Freidleis.

Simon Plattner is a thrifty, prosperous, law-abiding and highly respected citizen of Phillips County. All of his children with the exception of one were born and reared here and have attended the public schools of the section. Though he has been in America for nearly forty years Plattner speaks English slowly and with considerable difficulty and in conversations with him he frequently hesitates and is unable to select from his limited vocabulary those words of the English language with which to clearly express himself. I have known Simon Plattner for nearly twenty years. He is always glad to see me, and as we sat on some logs by the side of a huge pile of firewood that he had just finished sawing with a portable, motor-driven saw, he told me the following story of his native land.

I was born and grew to manhood in the town of Petersdorf a small village of perhaps one thousand population. Petersdorf is in Transylvania, formerly a province of Hungary, but following the World War,

the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismembered and Transylvania became a part of Rumania and is still a part of that country.

In the "Old Country" where I was born, the people do not live on farms as in America. All live in the towns or cities and those who engage in farming, must go each day to work on their lands out from these towns, sometimes perhaps three miles away from their homes. All except the upper class of people are engaged there in agriculture and stock raising and wages are extremely low, being what would amount to about thirty-five cents per day in the money of the United States.

In my native country the class of people to which I belonged were allowed little opportunity to better their conditions, and denied many rights and privileges enjoyed in America. Land values were extremely high and none less than four hundred dollars per acre. The lower class of people were able to make no more than a bare living and never able to accumulate money or property sufficient to make themselves entirely secure. The right to vote was enjoyed by the lower class of the population, only in the selection of local officers and no voice was given them in choosing their representatives sent to the national body where the nation's laws were formulated and its affairs administered.

I came to America at the suggestion of several friends, who left the "Old Country" some months before I did. These friends had come to America and obtained employment at the steel mills in Niles, Ohio. In the letters they wrote to me it was mentioned the high wages being paid here and this is what induced me to come. I came first, and stayed only about six months and went back. At that time I was very much interested in getting married and could not speak English sufficiently well to obtain a wife here, so I went back to the "Old Country" and married one of my childhood sweethearts. I did

not visit America again until after the birth of our first child.

On my next visit to this country, my wife and child came with me and this has been our home since that time. We arrived in New York on Saturday before Christmas in 1904, having sailed on the steamship Frankfort from Bremen, Germany. The trip from our home to Bremen required two days and nights. We were required to submit to physical examinations by two doctors on the border of Germany and Austro-Hungary and again on the ship at Bremen and then again on arrival at New York.

In our country the standard of money was called a "Krone." On my arrival in Bremen and after paying our passage to New York, I placed eighteen hundred kronen in the bank at Bremen for transfer to New York and exchange into the money of America. On delivery to me of this money by the New York bank I found that I had only a little more than four hundred dollars in the money of the United States.

At the time of my arrival in this country, it was the custom and rule of those officials whose duty it was to receive and examine the emigrants to provide each one with a package of food for which a charge of seventy-five cents was made. At least this was done in the cases of those who were unable to speak the English language, for the purpose of sustaining them until they reached friends or their destination.

After living in Niles, Ohio for some months, we began to hear of the advantages and opportunities afforded in the Southern States. A large cotton mill had been established at Barton, Arkansas in Phillips County and numbers of people that I knew in Niles and who had formerly lived in my native land and in Switzerland were moving to Arkansas and obtaining employment in the Barton mill.

We then came to Phillips County where I worked

in the mill for several months and after that time was employed for some weeks by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company during the time this company was constructing its line from Helena to McGehee, Arkansas. During the time I was employed by the railroad company, I was afflicted with malaria and was forced to spend several weeks in the hospital. After recovering from this illness, I purchased the land where we now live. When I purchased this property it was entirely undeveloped, none of the acres in a state of cultivation and no house or other improvements. We cleared the land of most of its timber and built us a home, where we have lived and engaged in farming for many years.

I love my adopted country, feel that more rights and privileges are to be enjoyed here than in any other. We have reared a family here, sent our children to the public schools and endeavored to rear them to be useful and loyal American citizens.

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