

Early Navigation on Willamette



BEN HOLLADAY

epoch, for Captain Hoyt's enterprise paved the way for the organization of the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company.

In 1857 he helped form the Columbia Steam Navigation Company, which was succeeded by the Union Transportation Company.

steamboats made their first appearance on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. He had gained much practical experience in his chosen line of work on the Mississippi.

and 19-dollar gold pieces, some \$200. I paid each of my six Indian boatmen \$10 for the round trip, and afterward carried a load to the same place, at the same rates, for George H. Murch.

Captains Taylor and Ingalls.

Captain G. W. Taylor owned a one-third interest in the Hoosier, the first boat on the Upper Willamette, and later was one of the company that built the E. D. Baker, at Vancouver. In 1885 he built the tug Oswego, in which he is still interested.

and returning by land to Portland sent up another boat to take off the United States mail from the Lurline, which then returned to Portland for repairs.

"There is," continued the captain, "a sort of wind suck down the Columbia at this point, and storms sweep down the gorge with a concentrated force which few boats are able to contend against.

traffic of the time. Canemah was then an important place, being headquarters, as it were, for the boats on the upper river. They all came to Canemah for supplies and cargoes for the up-river trip, and to discharge freight on their return.

"After the freshet of '61 carried away the primitive basin and canal at Oregon City," said Mrs. Coburn the other day, "a mule railway was constructed between the warehouses at Canemah and those below the falls. It hugged the bank closely, and one luckless day the mule that was drawing a loaded car up the incline somehow stumbled, lost his footing and fell overboard. This was in the nature of a calamity and blocked navigation for several days, for mules were scarcer then than now."

Inspired the Muse.

The doggerel which leads this article was supplied from Mrs. Coburn's memory, and was first printed in some early paper or pamphlet whose title has escaped her recollection. It may, or may not serve to convince the general reader that steamboating on the Willamette is a theme that lends itself to poetry, when approached with sufficient determination from a certain point of view.

There were more boats built in Canemah during the 15 years that Mrs. Coburn resided there than at any other point on the river. The pioneer builders and engineers, John Thomas and F. X. Paquet, were succeeded by the younger Paquet, John R. Coburn, William Mul-

the boiler in its celebrated flight toward heaven. It is said that he was blown so high that on his way down he looked through the smokestack and saw "Bas" Miller sitting on the bank. He alighted in the top of a cottonwood, and for 20 years afterwards, pilots and captains on the Willamette took special pains to point out this remarkable tree to tourists on the river."

The McCullys, of Harrisburg, were mainly active in organizing the People's Transportation Company which gave the steamer Clinton to the upper river, sending her as far south as Eugene.

Captain Alexander Sinclair Murray brought the steamer Washington from San Francisco on the bark Success, and ran her on the Upper Willamette. Captain Murray was regarded as an extraordinary character, and during the first years after his arrival in this part of the world, was looked upon as the "king of the steamboat fraternity."

Two Scotch Skippers. The portraits of this man show a typical sea captain's face, strong, clear-cut features and an open countenance. He was born in Scotland, as was also Captain William Irving, who was master and part owner of the Success, with which he, for some time, conducted a profitable coasting trade, running between San Francisco and Portland, and touching at intermediate points.

Captain Irving's first attempt at steamboating in these inland waters was made with the Eagle, a little boat which he brought up from San Francisco on the Success, and which he ran on the Oregon City route. He sold her, however, in the course of time, and bought the Express. Afterwards he sold out his interests here and joined Alexander Sinclair Murray in British Columbia, where together they built the Governor Douglas and the Colonel Moody, and later, the Reliance and the Onward, to run on the Fraser River.

Captain J. D. Miller was another of



The snug little Hoosier was first to be ready to show that "where there's a will, there's a way."

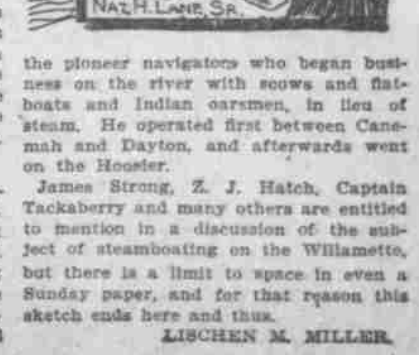
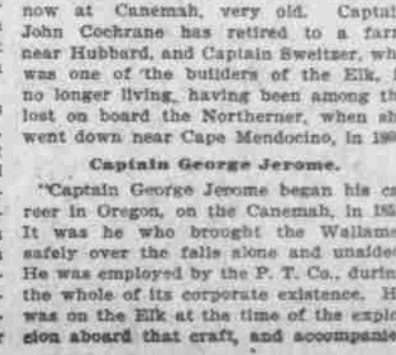
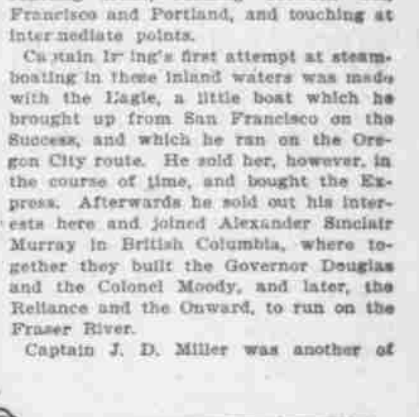
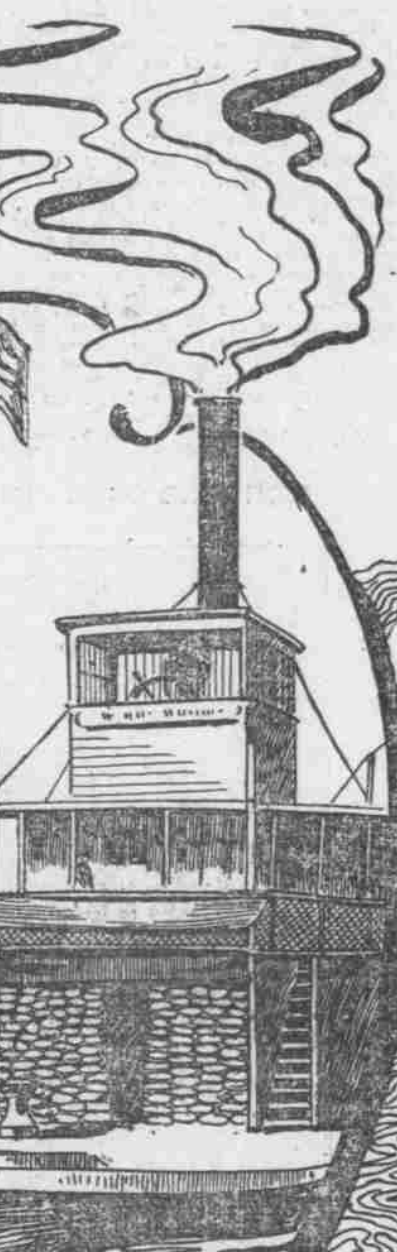
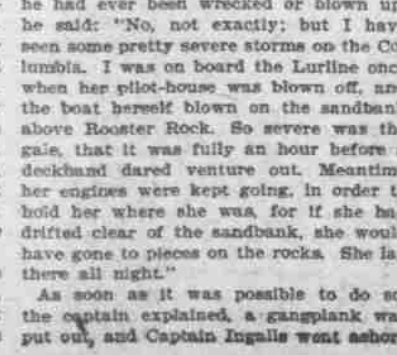
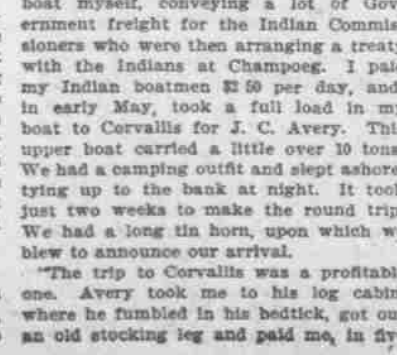
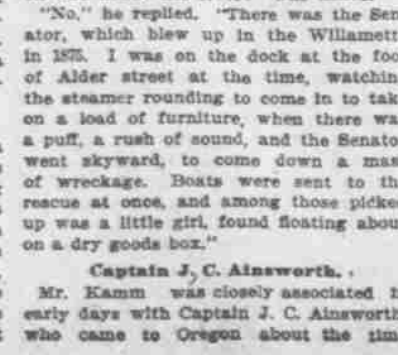
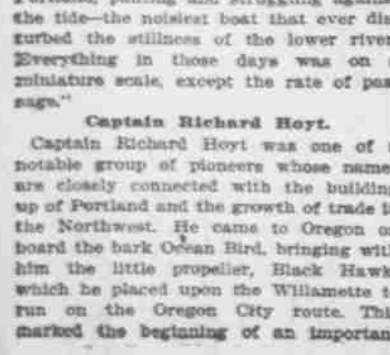
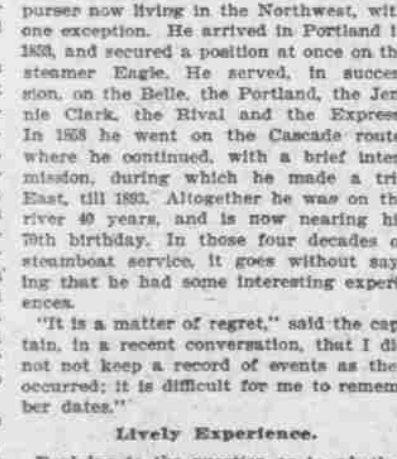
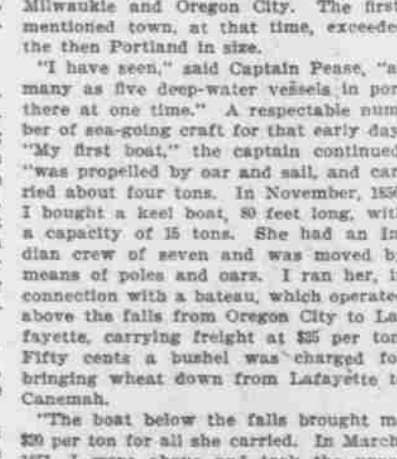
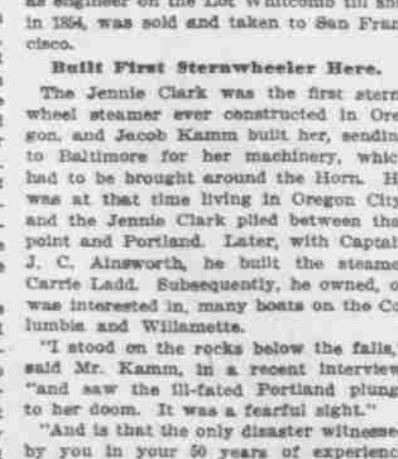
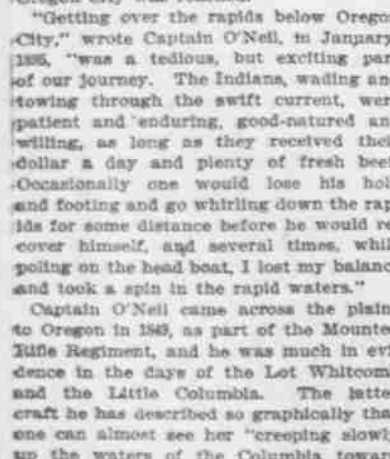
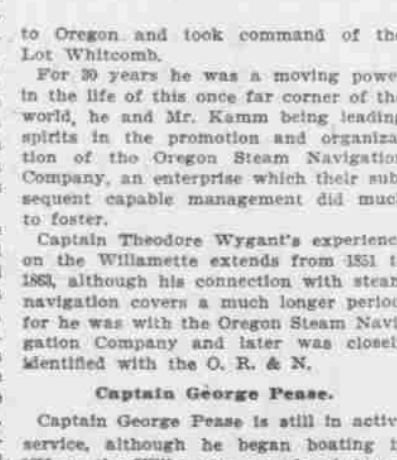
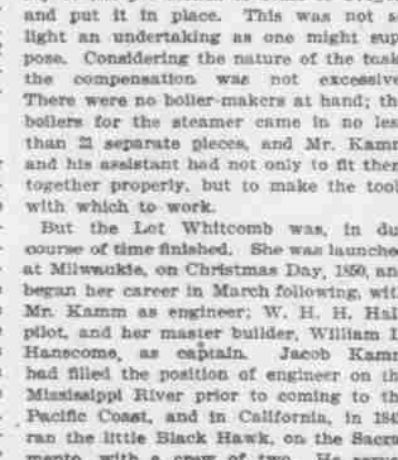
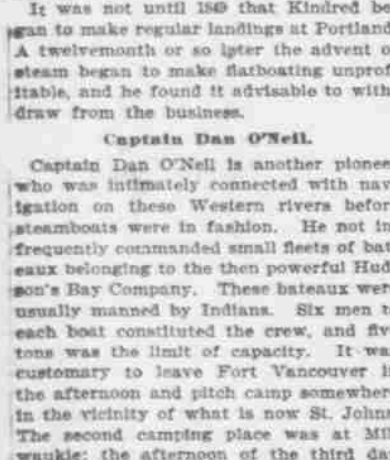
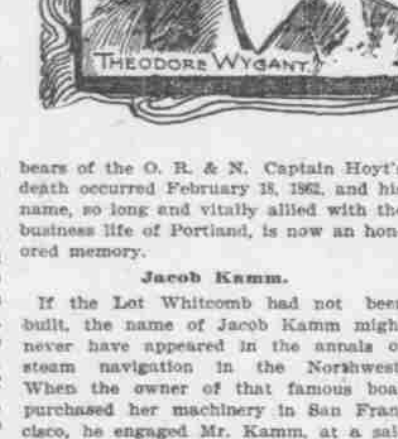
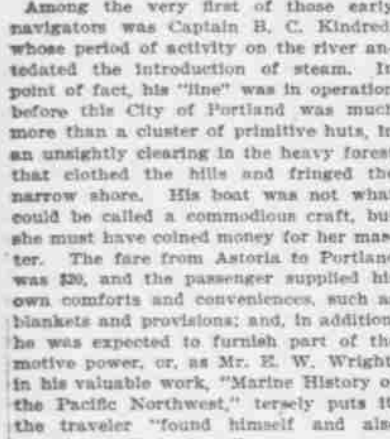
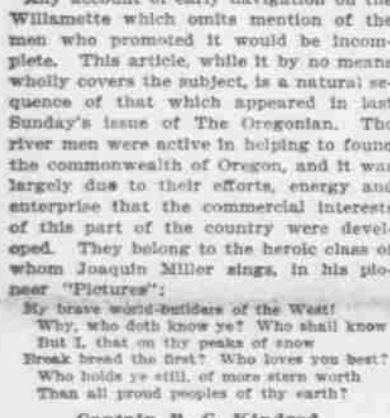
Any account of early navigation on the Willamette which omits mention of the men who promoted it would be incomplete. This article, while it by no means wholly covers the subject, is a natural sequence of that which appeared in last Sunday's issue of The Oregonian.

Among the very first of those early navigators was Captain B. C. Kindred, whose period of activity on the river antedated the introduction of steam. In point of fact, his "line" was in operation before this City of Portland was much more than a cluster of primitive huts.

Captain Dan O'Neil. Captain Dan O'Neil is another pioneer who was intimately connected with navigation on these Western rivers before steamboats were in fashion. He not infrequently commanded small fleets of bateaux belonging to the then powerful Hudson's Bay Company.

"Getting over the rapids below Oregon City," wrote Captain O'Neil, in January, 1855, "was a tedious, but exciting part of our journey. The Indians, wading and towing through the swift current, were patient and enduring, good-natured and willing, as long as they received their dollar a day and plenty of fresh beef.

Captain Richard Hoyt. Captain Richard Hoyt was one of a notable group of pioneers whose names are closely connected with the building up of Portland and the growth of trade in the Northwest. He came to Oregon on board the bark Ocean Bird, bringing with him the little propeller, Black Hawk, which he placed upon the Willamette to run on the Oregon City route. This marked the beginning of an important



beards of the O. R. & N. Captain Hoyt's death occurred February 13, 1862, and his name, so long and vitally allied with the business life of Portland, is now an honored memory.

Jacob Kamm. If the Lot Whitcomb had not been built, the name of Jacob Kamm might never have appeared in the annals of steam navigation in the Northwest.

to Oregon and took command of the Lot Whitcomb. For 30 years he was a moving power in the life of this once far corner of the world, he and Mr. Kamm being leading spirits in the promotion and organization of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, an enterprise which did subsequent capable management their much to foster.

bringing boats over the falls, but bridges are now in the way. In 1863 Captain Taylor came across the plains to Oregon. He was at that time 21 years of age, having been born March 8, 1842, on board a Mississippi steamboat, which fact may, in some degree, account for his liking for river navigation.

Lively Experience. Replying to the question as to whether he had ever been wrecked or blown up, he said: "No, not exactly; but I have seen some pretty severe storms on the Columbia. I was on board the Lurline once when her pilot-house was blown off, and the boat herself blown on the sandbank above Hoosier Rock. So severe was the gale, that it was fully an hour before a deckhand dared venture out. Meantime her engines were kept going. In order to hold her where she was, for if she had drifted clear of the sandbank, she would have gone to pieces on the rocks. She lay there all night."

Captain Theodore Wygant's experience on the Willamette extends from 1851 to 1861, although his connection with steam navigation covers a much longer period, for he was with the Oregon Steam Navigation Company and later was closely identified with the O. R. & N.

Captain George Pease. Captain George Pease is still in active service, although he began boating in 1850 on the Willamette, running between Milwaukie and Oregon City. The first-mentioned town, at that time, exceeded the then Portland in size.

Captain George Jerome. Captain George Jerome began his career in Oregon, on the Canemah, in 1852. It was he who brought the Willamette safely over the falls alone and unaided. He was employed by the P. T. Co., during the whole of its corporate existence. He was on the Elk at the time of the explosion aboard that craft, and accompanied

the pioneer navigators who began business on the river with scows and flatboats and Indian carmen, in lieu of steam. He operated first between Canemah and Dayton, and afterwards went on the Hoosier.

James Strang, Z. J. Hatch, Captain Tackaberry and many others are entitled to mention in a discussion of the subject of steamboating on the Willamette, but there is a limit to space in even a Sunday paper, and for that reason this sketch ends here and thus.

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