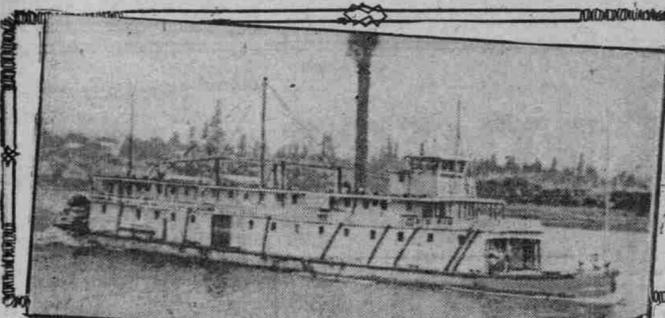
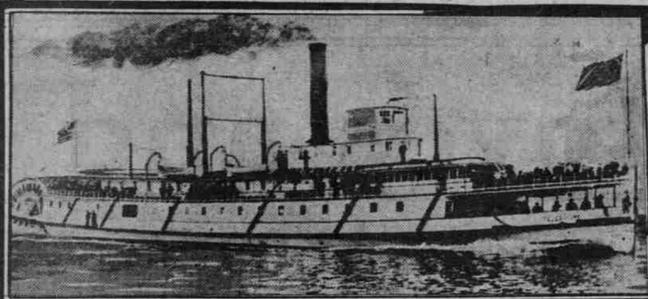


RIVER BOATS HAVE ROMANTIC HISTORY

Steamboating on Oregon Streams in Early Days Rich Field for Verse and Story.



WILLAMETTE CHIEF



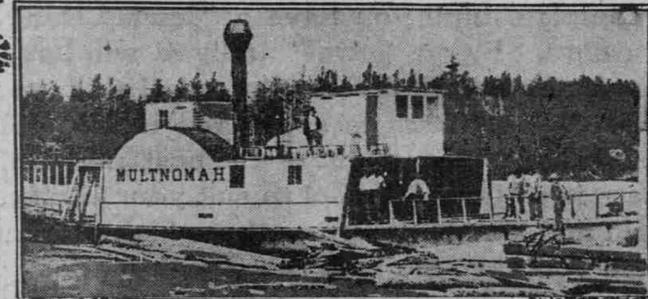
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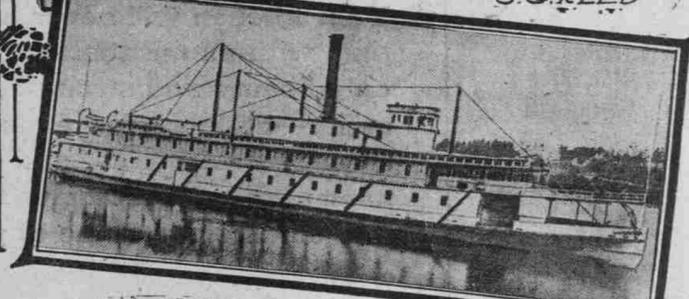
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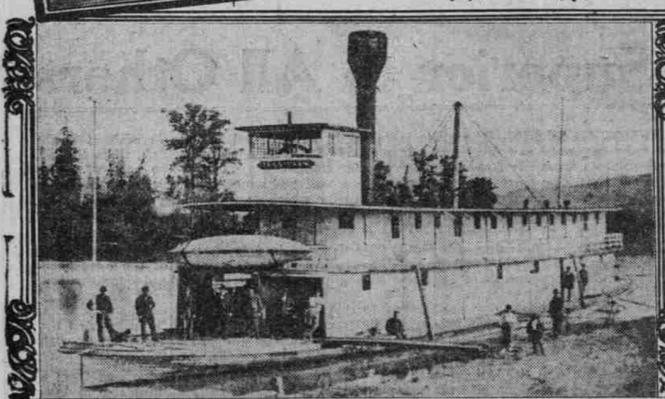
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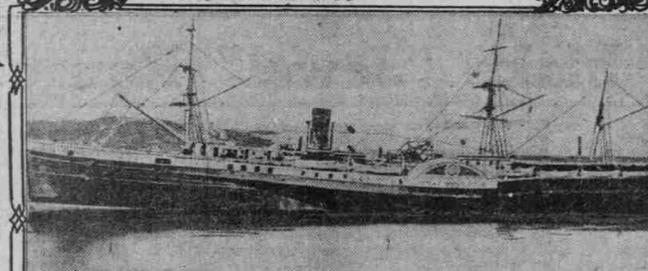
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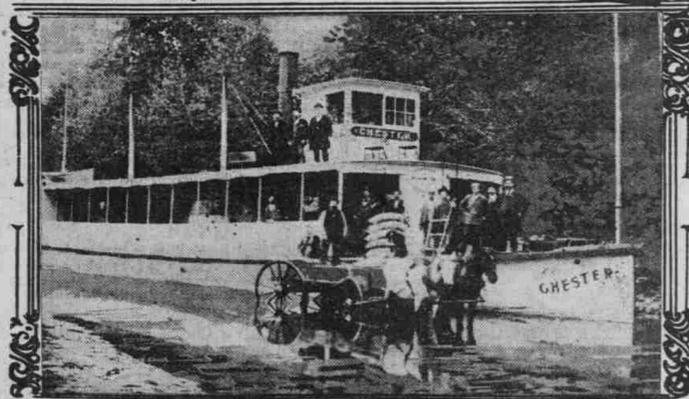
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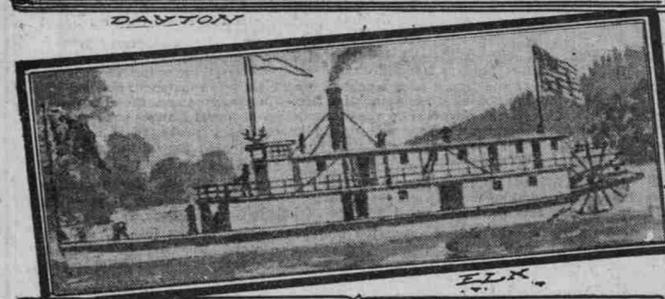
DAYTON



GREAT REPUBLIC



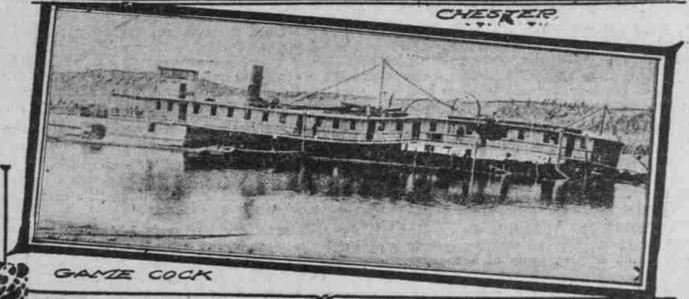
CHESTER



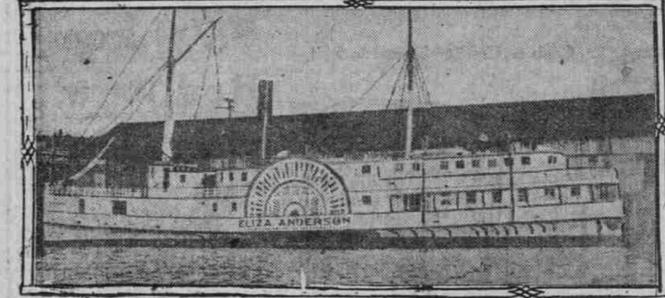
ELK



R. R. THOMPSON



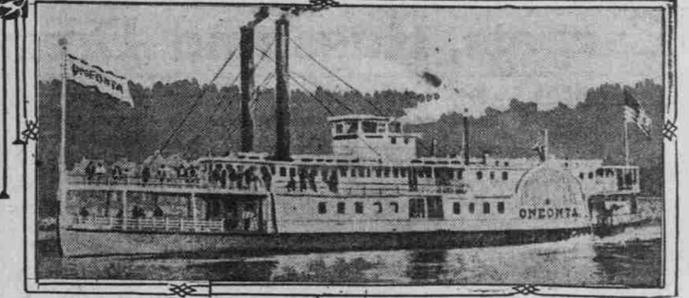
GAMIE COCK



ELIZA ANDERSON



STAGHOUND



ONEONTA

THE steamboat traffic of the Mississippi has been recounted in song, verse and story until now the famous old steamers plying between St. Louis and New Orleans are almost as well known by name as those crossing between New York and Liverpool, but there have been but few to tell of the glories and histories of the steamboats of the Northwest. With the exception of mention in histories and log-books, the story of the boats that plied on the Willamette and Columbia has yet to be narrated.

This gap, that probably will some day be filled, has attracted the attention of Frank Smith, of the Open River Transportation Company, and an old river man of Portland, who has compiled an admirable collection of photographs that pictorially tell the tale of the growth and development of the freshwater fleet of the Northwest.

While some are but reproductions of prints, many are original photographs taken of the boats when they were afloat at their best, as reclining hulks in obscure parts of the rivers, or as they are still fulfilling minor duties.

Old-Timers Still in Use.

For it is a curious and much-commented-on fact that even today there are many and many old-time river steamers still to be found taking their part in the carrying trade where railroads have not yet come to remind the riverman the day of his glory is almost past. Sea-going boats find their way in 20 years or so to the bonnyard, the river boat plies along until she breaks her back or blows up, and often, in either or both eventualities, they patch her up and force the groaning hulk to do yet a day's work. The river history is full of many such incidents.

And the river boats were highly specialized. There must be a light draft—although but few can approach the little Chester, with her draught, unloaded, of eight inches, and of 14 inches loaded with her 50 tons capacity—yet with powerful engines able to force the steamers against winter flood and spring rapids. Just how powerful the engines must be, those who have taken

the trip in the Gatzert to the Cascades, when she has had to buck the rapids below the locks, will appreciate. And with this power, the weight had to be light, and well distributed, mainly above the water level.

Probably it is due in no small measure to the steamboat traffic that Portland located where it did. The steamship lines had to have a logical meeting point, and while from divers other sources Portland was most suitable, it is more than probable that had there been unanimity in making some other port, Vancouver, for example, the City of Roses might have been delayed in gaining her present proud position.

Towns Made by Boating.

That the boats did make and unmake towns is unquestioned. The town of Milwaukie, Or., flourished with a large saw-mill and the reputation of being able to make a first-class hull, and when the hull was made, Jacob Kamm would be ready to fit in the engines right by the town that gave the boat birth. When this railroad came and missed Milwaukie, and the more important steamer traffic was driven from the river, the fate of Milwaukie for many years was in the balance.

In Mr. Smith's collection of pictures the gradual development of the river boat is shown; how it grew in size and speed; how stern-wheels and side-wheels came to take their final positions; and how boats almost buckled up in the mid-river were still made good for service by extra hot-frames and chains stretched fore and aft. While most of the pictures were taken by Mr. Smith himself, many were contributed by Attorney Chris Bell.

In the list of river boats are two that stand out paramount when the old river glories are up for discussion—the Wide West and the Telephone. As to which was the speedier when both were at their best is a doubtful question. But when the Telephone took her place on the river, the Wide West was rather past her prime and encounters between the two were somewhat apt to end in favor of the former—yet there are many old-time residents in Portland who will vigorously deny the implication.

A short life but a merry one was that

of the Wide West. Launched in Portland in the Fall of 1877, the steamer was palatially fitted up as a first-class passenger steamer, yet the need for her services was so great she was promptly pressed into service between Portland and the Cascades as a freighter, not being completely fitted up for passenger accommodation until the following year. When the last final touches were added, she was proclaimed a wonder, and steamboat men in the Northwest say she has not been equaled to this day.

In 1880 the Wide West made the Portland-Astoria record of five hours, which for many years remained undisturbed and was considered at that time remarkable. She remained on the Cascade route with occasional side trips to Astoria. In 1887 she was sent to the bonnyard and her engines and most of her fittings transferred to the new T. J. Potter. Two years later she was sold to Puget Sound owners, a weak engine was put in her, and in a few months she broke her back on Destruction Island, ending the career of perhaps the most romantic of the river boats.

While gambling never obtained the hold on the river boats of the Northwest that it did on the liners of the Mississippi, it is said the Wide West was one of the notable exceptions. Her palatial equipment lent itself to the art of professional card playing, and high stakes were not considered an exception aboard her.

Telephone Speedy Craft.

The career of the Telephone is no less remarkable. Made for speed and capturing two notable records, she carried the great bulk of the Astoria trade. Her record of 4 hours 54 1/2 minutes from Portland to Astoria and her round trip record of 11 hours and 4 minutes were long unbroken. In making the record run to Astoria the last 40 miles was in the teeth of an on-shore gale.

In November, 1887, the Telephone took fire and was run ashore at Tongue Point, Astoria. The efforts of the Astoria brigade left enough hulk for a second Telephone to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes of the old Telephone No. 2 is now in service on San Francisco Bay, being recently purchased. The picture of the

second Telephone accompanies this article.

In the Carrie Ladd the mighty Oregon Steam Navigation Company had its nucleus. A smart little boat with plenty of power, the Carrie Ladd did not go in for making records, but she could buck the Columbia flood right to the foot of the Cascade rapids. She was constructed by Jacob Kamm and Captain Answorth, both of whom were later financially interested in her. She was built at Oregon City and intended for the Oregon City traffic, but the Oregon Steam Navigation Company decided she was too valuable a property for anything other than the boom run—the trip to the Cascades. She was wrecked on a rock in the Columbia River, and was later raised and converted into a barge. Her strenuous life had weakened her and her later existence was short. The Carrie Ladd was at her prime in the early '80s.

For just a year the steamer Great Republic was a factor in the marine life of Portland. She entered the San Francisco-Portland trade in 1878, leaving the New York-to-China route. She was a vast side-wheeler and signified her advent by a period of cutting rates. The following year she was wrecked on Sand Island at the mouth of the Columbia. In two days she was knocked to pieces, the career of the largest vessel to enter the Columbia River up to that time being ended.

"The Snail" Makes Money.

The old side-wheeler Eliza Anderson made records in a way different from other boats. She was often nicknamed "the snail" by reason of certain leisurely propensities, but despite that she has a record money-making never equaled by so slow a boat. She was on the Olympia-Victoria run and had things march her own way for several years prior to 1870. From that date she ran as a spare boat till 1877. In 1882, she sank at her wharf in Seattle, was raised and put on the Victoria and New Westminster route. She is now lying in the Snohomish River, it is said.

One interesting incident connected with the Anderson was the marriage on board of her of Jacob Kamm and his wife. Young Kamm had gone to British Columbia to get married, but

according to the laws had to be a resident two weeks to obtain a marriage license. To escape this provision, the Kammes decided to get married on an American boat and going on board the Anderson, with a preacher, she put to sea. As soon as they were outside the three-mile limit, the nuptial knot was tied.

The steamboat men on the River Clyde in Scotland are apt to boast their light draft steamers can run on a heavy dowfall, but even at that they would have much to watch for from the Chester. The Chester was built at Joseph Supple's shipyard at Portland. The Chester runs on the Covitz, from Castle Rock up, and as can be seen in the accompanying illustration may be loaded from a cart alongside.

It was in anticipation that the whole wheat crop of the Willamette Valley could be placed in Astoria at \$4 a ton that the Willamette Chief was put on the run from Corvallis to Astoria.

Built in 1874, on her initial trip she loaded 200 tons at Corvallis, taking 130 tons more at Albany, carrying the load through to Astoria. Her first run was made the occasion of a considerable jollification on board and speeches were made indicating the salvation of the Willamette Valley had been found in a boat capable of taking great loads on a very light draught, for whenever freight might demand it was intended to take the Chief up to the head waters of the river. The year following that in which she was built the Willamette Chief was run up to the very foot of the Cascades, a full mile farther than any boat had previously been.

Willamette Chief Burns.

In 1878 she was sold to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company and in her later years rather degenerated. At any rate those who tell of her exploits prefer to dwell on her earlier doings. After being rebuilt at Oregon City, she was often termed the "barrel boat," because she was constructed of stave-like timbers, bound together outside. She was strengthened inside with a special frame.

The Willamette Chief achieved some little fame by badly beating the Oneonta in the only race in which the two

boats came into conflict. The Oneonta was built for the Oregon Steam Navigation Company after the pattern of the old Mississippi steamboats, and probably approached her models more closely than anything else on the Western rivers. Well fitted, and intended for passengers as well as freight, she was placed on the middle river until the decline of trade forced her owners to run her through the Cascades and place her on the Portland-Cascades run. The year after she was placed on this run she was used in a record-breaking competition between Portland and Vancouver and in this capacity carried passengers free and freight at the rate of \$1 a ton. Eventually her machinery was removed and the Oneonta was transformed into a barge.

With the Albany, the Dayton was built at Canemah, above Oregon City, and destined for service on the Upper Willamette route. They were both the property of the People's Transportation Company, which, in the early '60s, had the key to the Upper Willamette business by a private basin it had constructed at Oregon City. This transportation company, being a monopoly, made no attempt to reduce rates, but the very rich traffic then coming from the Willamette Valley which had not been invaded by the railroads, caused the formation of a company to build the locks, which was eventually state aided. The Dayton was a fine little steamer, but she remained only a few years in service.

Although there was a later Multnomah, built 1885, and one of the fastest boats on the river, the Multnomah shown in the illustration is the one of '61. The picture was taken at the foot of Washington street and illustrates the freedom of the east bank from buildings of any kind.

The Multnomah was what was termed a "hooped boat." Built in the East, she was sent out in sections in the bark Success, and put together at Oregon City. She was often termed the "barrel boat," because she was constructed of stave-like timbers, bound together outside. She was strengthened inside with a special frame.

For a longer period than any other boat, the Multnomah retained her pion-

eer reputation and was an excellent river steamer 25 years ago. Her first run was from Canemah to Corvallis. Indeed, the Multnomah was the first river boat to ascend as far up the river as Corvallis. The Multnomah enjoyed quite a profitable trade on the upper river, bringing down from 1000 to 1500 bushels of wheat every trip.

The frightful explosion and blowing up of the Elk is the incident by which the old-time steamer lives best in the minds of past river men. The Elk was a small sternwheeler intended to be placed in the Yamhill River trade. When one mile below the Yamhill River trade, there occurred a terrific explosion that tore the boat to pieces and sent much of the boat skyward. That every one on board was not killed was one of the marvels of the day. Instead, while there were a number injured, not one person was killed.

Captain Tossed Into Air.

Among the marvelous escapes was that of Captain George Jerome, who was blown to a great height. On the way down he was caught in the branches of a cottonwood tree and escaped scot free. Even now, it is said, the river men can point out the identical tree. Passengers sitting immediately by the boiler escaped free from injury, although flung a considerable distance. The Elk had been sold and was to be delivered to her purchasers at the end of the trip. Her purchasers were to collect the freight. Although the boat was never actually delivered, she had to be paid for.

The story of the Gamecock and the Staghound is comparatively recent. Built and sold to the Alaska Steamship company, they left the Columbia River in tow. They had barely got as far as Puget Sound when they had to buck their first gale and with but little success. Both boats were practically wrecked. Not strong enough to stand any sea they buckled in the center, but were successfully towed back. Both boats were built at Portland and although an attempt was made to repair them for use again, it was practically unsuccessful.

The S. G. Reed was built at Portland, in 1878, for the Portland-Astoria run. She

(Continued on Page 7.)