

Old and New Ways of Crossing the Willamette at Portland



FIFTY years ago all the freight and passenger traffic between Portland and East Portland was carried across the Willamette in a little ferry boat of 30 tons burden. The craft, a picture of which would be a curiosity nowadays, was propelled by mules, and Charles Frush was the captain, pilot, collector, engineer and part owner. His partners were Mrs. Frush and the late James E. Stephens. Many pioneers still remember that little ferry and also "Charlie" Frush as he stood steering the boat with an apron or and urging his pair of little mules to tread the wheels faster when swift passage was demanded by hurried patrons. "Charlie" has been in the government service for many years, and he is not following the strenuous life he led when master of the first big Willamette ferry. His presence in the city a short time ago called to mind the time when he was the steamboat magnate.

"I can see Charlie yet," said a pioneer the other day. "The ferry used to land at the foot of Stark street on the west side, and J street, now Oak street, on the east side. Charlie would keep the out-end of the boat out in the stream, and always kept his eyes on his two mules. The one on the north was yellow and the one on the south was a bay. It was wonderful how he had them mule trained. When they showed a disposition to get lazy, Charlie would 'k-i-p' at them and the yellow one would pick up its ears and the wheel would revolve faster. Sometimes shouting would do no good, and then Charlie would give them a little strenuous treatment. He always kept a box of rocks near the steering oar, and the mules would get a couple of stones in the flanks. He wouldn't always have to hurl a stone, though, for the mules kept their eyes on him, and when they saw him reach into the box they would strike a faster pace."

Portland's First Big Ferry.
The mule ferry was Portland's first big ferry. It carried a number of passengers and several teams. Before its advent, the ferries were sculled across the river by means of an apron oar. It was not until 1864 that the first steam ferry was placed in commission. Joseph Knott, father of A. J. and Levi Knott, who controlled the ferry business for years, had bought out the Frushes and Stephens and acquired the Portland, a side-wheeler, 30 feet long and 16 feet wide. The Black Maria, a boat built by the Frushes, was also bought by Mr. Knott. She was built before the Portland and was a smaller boat, with engine located on one side and the boiler on another, and when she began her run she was considered one of the best boats on the river.

Soon after the purchase of the ferries by Knott, Stephens made preparations to start another line. The improved service given by Knott made East Portland property valuable, and Stephens, who owned a donation land claim, built a number of houses on that portion of it nearly opposite the J street landing. At the same time, to obstruct the operation of the ferry, he drove a number of piles near the landing in the fairway of the ferry. Knott retaliated by changing the landing place to L street, now East Washington street. The result was a boom for L street property. Houses sprung up everywhere, and the tenants all came from the buildings erected by Stephens on J

BRIDGES AND FERRIES.
1850-64—Scully and mule-power boats, operated by James B. Stephens, Charles Frush and "Auntie" Frush.
1865—First steam ferry, Siss Ladd, built for Joseph Knott; tonnage, 68; master, John Douglas, Stark street ferry No. 2, built in 1864 for Mrs. Frush; tonnage, 55. Ferry Portland, built for W. S. Ladd, E. M. Burden, S. N. Argison and A. P. Dennison; tonnage, 60 (boat was sold in 1867 to Joseph Knott).
1870—O. & C. R. Co.'s ferry No. 1; C. F. Jones, master; tonnage, 658; length, 123 feet; breadth, 31 feet; depth, 9 1/2 feet.
1871—Katie Ladd, built at Westport for Joseph Knott; tonnage, 110.78; length, 100 feet; breadth, 23 feet; depth, 4 1/2 feet.
1875—Eliza Ladd, built for Joseph Knott; master, W. H. Foster; tonnage, 118.47; length, 90 feet; breadth, 30 feet; depth, 6 feet. Albina; S. E. Douglas, owner and master; tonnage, 77.72.
1879—Yates, built for W. H. Foster and E. A. Willis for Switzer's landing (now just outside of Portland) and Vancouver route; tonnage, 74.55. O. & C. ferry No. 2; C. F. Jones, master; tonnage, 414.82; length, 123 feet; breadth, 31 feet; depth, 9 feet.
1880—Stark street ferry No. 6, built for A. J. and L. Knott; W. H. Robertson, master; tonnage, 221.53. Milwaukee, built for F. C. Harlow for Portland-Milwaukee route; tonnage, 37.29.
1881—Albina, built for Hackett & Finch; A. M. Hackett, master; tonnage, 86.20.
1883—Daisy Andrus, built for the Jefferson Street Ferry company; master, C. E. Carr; tonnage, 60.50. Albina No. 2, built for M. A. and Nathan Hackett; tonnage, 150.51.
1884—Stark street ferry No. 7; A. J. Knott, managing owner; master, W. H. Robertson; tonnage, 299.36.
1894—W. S. Mason, built for the city; Henry Van Auken and D. G. Brunger, captains; tonnage, 322.
1894—Lionel H. Webster (Lower Albina ferry), built for the city; W. H. Robertson and John J. Jaggy, captains; tonnage, 342. John P. Caples (Seward ferry); George P. Ewry, captain; tonnage, 193.
BRIDGES.
1857—Morrison street; purchased for the city in 1895. New bridge built in 1904-5.
1888—O. R. & N. Co.'s bridge (the steel bridge); upper deck leased for the city in 1895.
1890—Madison street; purchased by the city in 1891; purchase approved by the bridge commission later.
1894—Burnside street; built by the bridge commission for the city.

street. The blow nearly ruined Stephens and it was several years before he recovered from it.
Carrying Passenger Cars.
The year 1870 saw a new ferry on the river. Traffic over Ben Holliday's railroad was increasing rapidly, and he had the O. & C. dock on the east side. It went out of service in 1879 but was tied up to the dock for several years afterward. It was the first trip of this boat, it is said, that suggested to Stephen Maybell his poem, "The Bridge Across the Willamette." Maybell, so the story runs, was loitering on the bank near where the east approach of the

The following year the Knott business necessitated the building of a larger boat. The Katie Ladd was constructed and four years later the Eliza Ladd, a sister boat, was launched. W. H. Foster, until lately master of the ferry Webster, and W. H. Robertson, a captain of the Webster, were captains of these boats. The ferries were large for the time, but within a few years their capacity for traffic was found to be entirely inadequate. On Sundays, when pliers were given as the East Portland park, a part of which is now the Hawthorne park, the two boats had to be tied together in order to carry over a load that could be easily accommodated on any of the present-day ferries.

Steam-Heated Cabins.
The great wind storm of 1880, which cut down the tall firs in the park as with a scythe, caused a lull in the picnic business for a time, but a bigger boat was needed for even ordinary traffic, and the Knotts conceived the idea of having a larger ferry with a center wheel. Stark street ferry No. 6 was the result. The cabins in this boat were on the sides and were steam-heated. In the smaller ferries the cabins were over the engine room. Four years later No. 7 slid off the ways. This boat also had a center wheel, but the cabins were over the engine room. Both these ferries were in commission when the Morrison street bridge and the Stark street and Albina lines were purchased by the bridge commission for the city in 1891.

steel bridge is now, when the ferry shot out into the stream with its usual load of cars. The sight suggested the lines. Little is remembered of the poem now except the refrain, "I see, I see it yet, the bridge across the Willamette." Maybell's poem was widely printed in the Oregon papers at the time and caused many a school teacher to apply the shingle to pupils who persisted in pronouncing Willamette as Maybell did when he took advantage of people in order to make a rhyme. Maybell, likewise, is almost forgotten. The last heard of him was in San Francisco, where it is said he abjured poetry in order better to fit himself for membership in the Salvation army.

the captains to keep her from butting into the big ships anchored in the stream on stormy days.
Driftwood also was something that early captains had to contend with. Captain Foster tells a story of A. J. Knott, who tried to shove a log out of the path of the Katie Ladd. The log got away from him, but he held on to his pikepole and plunged into the stream. He could not swim a stroke. The ferry passed over him and when he came up on the other end Captain W. H. Robertson ran a grabhook through his coat collar and hauled him aboard. "Man overboard" was not an unusual cry, and Captain Henry Van Auken had a record of having saved 23 lives during the eight or ten years he was with the Knotts.

Talking of Bridges.
Before the Stark Street Ferry company went out of existence, a determined effort was made to bridge the Willamette, and also to start an opposition ferry. William G. Beck and others incorporated the Willamette Bridge company to build a bridge at Morrison street, and W. S. Chapman, William H. Andrus and others incorporated the Jefferson Street Ferry company, to operate a ferry from the foot of Jefferson street, Portland, to the foot of U street, East Portland. The bridge company drove a few pigs, and was then enjoined from doing any more work by the Knotts, who alleged that they had the exclusive right to transport passengers and freight over the river. Chapman and Andrus bought the ferry Veto from Captain W. H. Foster and brought it to Portland, and after its first trip over the river in 1882 they also were enjoined. They gave bonds and continued the operation of the ferry until the case was decided against the Knotts. The ferry ran until the Madison street bridge was opened in the latter part of 1890.

Upon the termination of the suit in 1886 work on the Morrison street bridge was recommended, and the bridge was opened on April 11, 1887. The bridge was rebuilt of steel in 1894, and is now one of the finest in the west. The draw is 286 feet long, and the vessel channels are 165 feet in the clear on either side. The only accident that ever happened on the old bridge was in 1895, when the plank walk gave way and a number of people who gathered to witness a swimming exhibition were thrown into the river. Two were drowned.
The steel bridge, the only bridge not owned by the county, was thrown open on July 10, 1888, and on that day the O. R. & C. ferry and the O. R. & N. transfer boats, which had for years

been carrying passengers to the east side depot, went to the docks. The steel bridge draw is 240 feet long and the channel is 147 feet clear between the decks and the cylinder pier. The purchase by the city was made in 1890, and was acquired by the bridge commission in the fall of 1891. This was the first free bridge in the city. The draw of the bridge is 270 feet long, and it is said that next morning hundreds of people who had not read the papers hurried past the supposedly neglectful toll-collectors without paying their nickels, each fervently hoping that he had cheated a corporation out of a nickel. This bridge will have to be rebuilt within two years, as it is unable to stand the wear and tear of heavy team and railway traffic. The draw of the bridge is 270 feet long, and the channels 140 feet in the clear on either side. The most disastrous accident in the history of the bridges and ferries occurred on this bridge on the morning of November 1, 1892. While the draw was open, a car sped over the frosty rails and through the wooden gates and into the river. Fifteen people were drowned, and several injured or hooked.

Trouble With Mariners.
Each of the bridges is operated by crews of from six to ten men on eight-hour shifts. The principal trouble these crews have to encounter is from open draws. Under an agreement the river captains signed with the county court, the draws are never opened until the boats are within a reasonable distance from the bridge or when they have a heavy tow, such as a monster lumber carrier or a boom of logs where skillful maneuvering is necessary, but often a bridge will be "held up" by a steamboat master, either because of incompetency or from pure meanness of spirit. Such "holdups" have been noticed frequently on the Madison street bridge, where the draw machinery is old and worn and careful handling is necessary. It is not unusual to see a captain let his boat drift through the draw when the spans are lined with people in a hurry to get to work or to get home at noon or in the evening, and when the bridge operator expostulates to offer the children excuse, "I can't take a chance. If I stands up I'll have an accident." There are only a few of these captains left, and they have not much of a standing, but they make endless trouble, and the

bridge crews have to shoulder all the blame for the delays.
How many people pass over the bridges during a day is a matter of conjecture, but it is safe to place the lowest number at 24,000. On holidays or during the summer when there are attractions at the places reached by the railways on both sides of the river the number could safely be estimated at 100,000. Of the ferries the Webster carries the most passengers. Its daily average is about 1,900. The Webster carries about 1,000, and the Caples from 300 to 500. Team traffic on the Albina ferries is very heavy, and 500 teams a day is not an unusual number.

LIVING EYES IN PICTURE

How a Burglar Made Notes of Victims' Valuables.
A Russian official named M. Loktief, on returning home with his wife about 2 o'clock in the morning, was attracted by a strange noise in the drawing-room, as if a chair was being pushed. An examination by candle-light revealed nothing amiss, and a search in the other rooms had the same result.
They returned to the drawing-room, where a large portrait of Mme. Loktief's grandfather, in the uniform of a Ulan officer, was standing against the wall. The young wife glanced at the portrait, and, uttering a scream, rushed out of the room.
"What's the matter?" asked her husband, greatly surprised.
"I just thought the portrait was looking at me with real eyes," answered his wife, who was trembling violently.
Her husband laughed at her childish fears. Half an hour passed before Mme. Loktief came to herself, and then remembering that she had left her purse in the drawing-room, with 25 in it, she took a candle and bravely entered the drawing-room on her search. A wild shriek followed. Her husband rushed in and found his wife lying in a dead faint on the floor. With the cook's help he carried his wife to bed. While he was nursing her he told the cook to search the room carefully, but she did not find anything suspicious.
The next morning M. Loktief, looking more closely at the portrait, found that the eyes had been cut out and the portrait had been moved a little from the wall. Further investigations showed that many valuables were missing. The thief had hidden himself, it seems, behind the portrait, and was watching the couple all the time through the eye-holes of the portrait.