

THE ST. LOUIS MERCANTILE LIBRARY

A REPORT TO MEMBERS

2001 – 2002

The Mercantile Library's Expanding Reach

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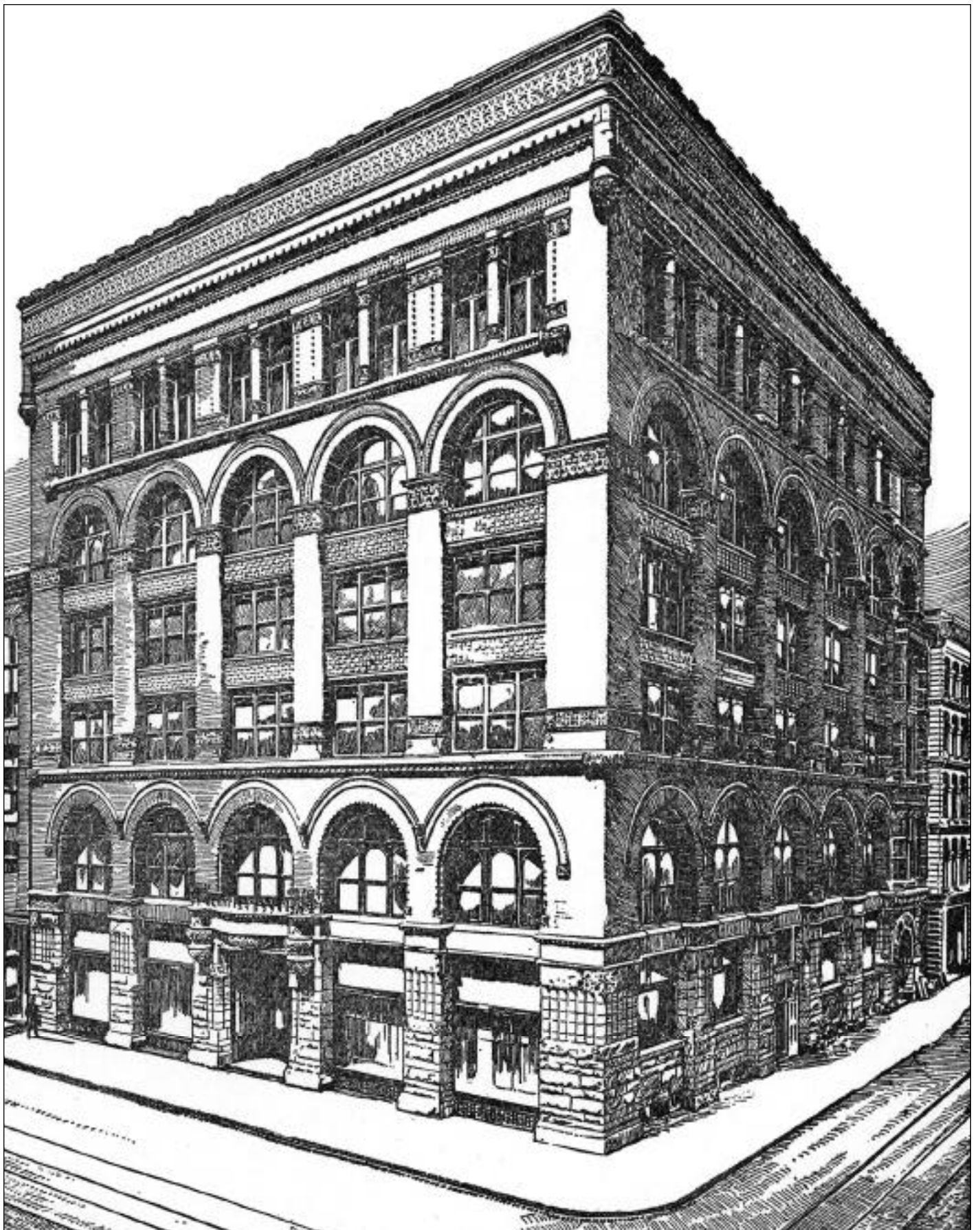


Illustration of the "New Building" of the St. Louis Mercantile Library completed in 1887, occupied by the St. Louis Mercantile Library until 1998.

The Mercantile Library's Expanding Reach – The Annual Report of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis July 9, 2001

The seventh librarian of the Mercantile Library, Horace Kephart, had a career which spanned the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. He was a great writer who published or edited numerous works of Americana based solidly on the Mercantile's collections, among them two classics, *Camping and Woodcraft*, still in print, and *Our Southern Highlanders*, the first appreciation of the history, society and culture of the Appalachians. He was an energetic force at the turn of the last century and he left a legacy of pride and heritage in the Mercantile which echoed down to successive generations of our staff. Our reference librarians revisit his influence everyday, because, in the expansive era just before the city's celebration of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, he had almost singlehandedly set in motion a new thrust to create the first and only true independent research library in our city at that time here at the Mercantile, based on his knowledge of history and the heartfelt wish to preserve the printed memory of the past. He did this by a careful analysis of our book collection, which had been built, technically, since 1824, (with the books of the St. Louis Library Association, which came to the Mercantile in its earliest days), and through subsequent, judicious collection building and stewardship.

The expansive era in which Kephart worked was marked by a new building, the second at 510 Locust Street, and new techniques in the management of information. He was thus for many reasons pleased to report to the membership of the Library and its Board of Direction at the Annual Meeting of 1901 a momentous development in the library world of those days which he characterized in his own words as a national project of immense dimensions: the beginning of the printing of library catalogue cards of American copyrighted works by the Library of Congress as distributed by the American Library Association to the nation's libraries. Kephart was jubilant. Now the Library, instead of preparing a single set of manuscript cards for publication at enormous cost of a published book catalogue of the holdings (something which had not been attempted since 1875, although the stacks were growing by thousands of books a year) could pay nominally for multiple sets to produce a card catalog which could be used by a score of readers at any one time on the premises of the Library, improving access to the collections, deeper associations between books which were cloistered away, and saving thousands of dollars and hours of staff time. Kephart saw the reach of the Library growing exponentially and he was elated by the prospect. In his report this pragmatic and scholarly

figure of the early days of the old, distinguished St. Louis book world noted "I am glad to announce that cooperative cataloguing is likely to be realized on a large scale in the near future through such national and international endeavors." I suppose an early librarian's true millennial vision – a card catalogue as commonplace as that must appear today, seemed about to be realized, something which would be a work horse in most libraries for a full century.

But it is very comforting that this visionary librarian, friend of early St. Louis mayors, a protégé of William Marion Reedy, and other St. Louis literati, a fervent writer and sponsor of then upcoming Worlds Fair and the history of our region on which the Fair was underpinned – it is very pleasing to think that Kephart's greatest work was in assuring that his library would grow, would expand in ways that he only could have had not much more than an imperfect glimpse into the future. A new age of learning, information and educational improvements was unveiled through the innovations of his profession and the support of the Mercantile's membership in reaching across time for a future which the Mercantile Library's founder, James Yeatman had once called boundless in its promise. Clearly, the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association would keep pace with the progress of our city and country.

There is a heritage here of expanding the reach of the Mercantile, of pushing back a veil to view and seize a future for this venerable institution that is evident in each epoch of the Library's long past, and in this report I wish to note the ways and activities of the past year which have illustrated this basic drive through collections and programs. But I also wish to characterize how this reach is fueled by the people of the Library, by its staff certainly, by its patrons – students, young scholars, general readers and advanced researchers – by its Board of Direction and most assuredly by its members. These groups are the lifeblood of this institution and help us understand our past heritage and allow us to unfurl our traditions of service and usefulness far into a future, allowing this most successful library a broader reach than it could ever exercise alone through its mere book collections, no matter their intrinsic worth to future scholarship. That is not to say that the collections are not of consequence to our future reach and potential – just the opposite as they are continuously reinvestigated for their historic truths and wisdom by the collective human mind of our readers. We at the Library have always maintained that, to be a great Library, an institution must collect dramatically, steadily, year after year

in its chosen fields. When the rail and river collections came to the Mercantile we did this, certainly when the *Globe-Democrat* collection was acquired this happened, likewise the Robert Campbell papers, and a score of other special collections of great volume which have come in the past decade. These collections have been entrusted to the Mercantile to be preserved and used, and as they have been catalogued and made known, new opportunities have arisen for the Library in its growth, and new ways of analyzing these holdings have led to new discoveries and knowledge of the past record of human achievement.

As the Library grew in Kephart's era over a hundred years ago the first of what came to be known as the Mercantile Library's "Reference Lists" were published to manage the growing information explosion here. These lists included by title "Manuscripts Related to the Study of Louisiana Territory and Early Missouri" and "Missouri and Illinois Newspapers from 1808, Chronologically Arranged." Librarian Kephart wrote in 1898 that "When we consider that a large part of solid study done by our members is carried on in our reading room and reference room, it is evident that the character of this Library is rapidly changing for the better. While still retaining its features as a pleasant retreat or club, the Mercantile Library is becoming pre-eminently an institution for higher education and scholarly research;" "During the past year," he continued, "our Library has been visited by an unusual number of scholars from a distance to consult works that they could find nowhere else and my correspondence with students abroad has grown to be almost a department in itself, and our lists themselves have been reprinted in other scholarly journals." That spirit and reliance on catalogues and other publications to manage huge, growing collections has reached down across three centuries for the accessibility we now offer through databases and the internet, which our staff are confident in turn will pass our holdings on to future technologies in an enhanced manner in years to come. (But quite charitably just as it would have been nice to muse of Washington coming back a century later to see the nation he created, I wish this, our ancestral librarian, could have used e-mail just once as we all do today for his many correspondents.)

I would like at this point to list briefly ways in which the Mercantile's expanding reach has been achieved in the past year. These accomplishments underscore a busy year for our affiliation with the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and one which illustrates the faith we all had in the University's proposal to aid our membership in its altruistic desire to make the collections of the Mercantile more accessible, and the Library's heritage assured for many generations.

This past year over 437,291 students and researchers passed through the doors of the Thomas Jefferson Library complex which includes the Mercantile Library. Almost two fifths of that figure includes use of the Mercantile for research, for study and orientation tours, for classes and special presentations and programs. If one were to add the combined figures of access to the Mercantile Library since we dedicated the new library on campus in the fall of 1998 it would be seen that nearly 600,000 individuals have visited the Mercantile in the last three years. This approaches a larger number of patrons of our Library in those three years than in the previous ninety seven – all the way back to Mr. Kephart's day. How proud would he have been to see this usage of the collections he built unfolding today!

In terms, specifically, of the use of the research collections, over 1000 historic newspaper files were consulted at the Mercantile. Almost 95,000 archival or special collections file folders of manuscript material were read in our rare book reading room. The *Globe Democrat* newspaper morgue continues to be used more heavily every year, almost 175,000 envelopes – or nearly 1,000,000 individual clippings having been consulted. In turn almost 25,000 photo files, or some 400,000 individual historic photographs were studied here at the Library. The reference department of the Library and the curatorial staff are to be congratulated for the tremendous work which these figures represent.

A key statistic to me when one speaks of a library's impact or reach is that concerning interlibrary loan of our printed holdings. With just over half of the stacks converted to electronic catalogue records, and thus able to be scanned worldwide, the Mercantile accounts by a conservative estimate to over 10% of the entire interlibrary loans of the three libraries on this campus. This is an extraordinary achievement due in large part to the hard work of our cataloguing department, which has finished the retrospective digital conversion of our open stack books on schedule, and now begun the second and even more significant phase of the electronic catalogue in deep earnest – that to add to this new catalogue the 80,000 rare books in the vaults of the Library.

Kephart, at the turn of the century, noted accurately how quickly over-consulted books bound in drying leather, ravaged by dust and heat, would damage a library collection and he began, unfortunately too late, to provide for many tomes here a cloth binding program. But the inexorable demand for information and knowledge continued to put terrible stress on the collections, compromising the integrity of any binding. Today if you walk the stacks of the Library you will begin to see many apparently new books freshly bound on the shelves – there are thousands of them, but most

are books from Kephart's era which he deferred and merely hoped with wringing hands could be passed down to us. I believe that through the new binding program which we have established we have kept faith with a 19th century trust in the worth of the many great books just barely passed down to our generation – and we are truly sending these books forward in time with new bindings and protective materials, considerably increasing a temporal reach for these volumes to posterity.

This year also saw great activity in promoting and organizing our archival and manuscript holdings for electronic access. The first step was to build three websites – Mercantile general holdings, Pott waterways, and Barriger railroad – which at their foundation would allow for continuous adding of searchable finding aids, guides and inventories to the wealth of primary research material heretofore known only in the now rare pamphlet guides which were inadequately distributed and woefully out of date from Kephart's day – the ones which he poignantly considered so gratifying to serve the researchers of his time. The behind the scenes project of inventorying and databasing long stored away transportation archives is moving forward at an acceleration directly related to the new ease of intellectual access and understanding of the Mercantile's holdings. A long awaited guide to the archives of the Milwaukee Road Railroad, our last trans-Continental line, is only now seeing the light of day for future usage; likewise the vast holdings of the Trans World Airlines collections now here at the Library will benefit from this program in the coming year, a collection which increased dramatically recently in cooperation with American Airlines.

A history professor from Brigham Young University studying the migration of Mormons to the early West; an art historian from Amherst College working on the artistic milieu of old St. Louis in the 1840's; a post doctoral scholar from the University of Illinois studying the politics of Western development from the perspective of the pioneer women passing through St. Louis just before the Civil War; another from the John Jay School of Criminology in New York studying the social history of railroad detective work, and another professor from Michigan State University devising a curriculum for honors students on the early women's suffrage movement, all of these topics are currently underway in a Mercantile Library Fellowship program which has quadrupled in size in only one year. In no better way can the promise of the Mercantile as a research center in Horace Kephart's time, and the reach of the our institution to future scholars – through new monographs and articles, through lectures, through the classroom – be shown to be thriving. When one couples this growing Fellowship program with the growth of

the Center for Transportation Studies and the first full year of work by the John W. Barriger III Professor of Business and Transportation Studies and the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association Professor of Western Studies, any member of our institution can be quite proud of the impact to campus life and study which our traditional educational mission wishes to augment.

In terms of programmatic outreach, the year just past was one of the busiest and most significant we have recorded. This year the Mercantile's series of symposia on topical trends related to collection strengths continued with a two day program dedicated to the role of American waterways in the cultural life of the nation. "River of the Humanities " attracted a national audience which was comprised of 700 people for the various events and lectures surrounding the subject. In the spring the Mercantile, having worked cooperatively with our old friends at the Campbell House Museum to help store precious artifacts of this great St. Louis fur trading family while the Museum is restored to its original grandeur, produced an extensive exhibition of fur trade diaries, papers, drawings, maps and paintings which depicted the *The Role of the St. Louis Merchant in Developing the American West*. The Mercantile received strong financial support from the Bank of America and was allowed to borrow its superb collection of Alfred Jacob Miller paintings and watercolors which strikingly depicted the world of an early, legendary mountain man, Campbell, as well as his success in his adopted home of St. Louis.

Over last summer, the Mercantile Library cooperated twice with the St. Louis Public Library (1) on an international exhibition comprising poster art on the history of beer, with financial support from Tom and Ulrike Schlafly and (2) on the transfer to our holdings of one of the largest collections the Mercantile has ever acquired, that of British, French and German patent reports for the entire past two centuries – a record, virtually, of the sweep of the rise and progress of the Industrial Revolution. These two programs were the largest cooperative partnerships between the two most venerable and historic libraries in St. Louis which have ever been attempted, and it was widely felt that they would become harbingers for even deeper cooperation between the St. Louis Public Library and the Mercantile in its new vantage here at UM – St. Louis. Kephart always spoke with deep respect of the St. Louis Public Library and the growth of the American public library movement and its impact on, for example, literacy and reading, but as he positioned the Mercantile into a special collections stance, he and his counterparts would have to wait for a new century and our increasing reach within the community of scholarship to effect such a deep, far reaching partnership .

In the fall, back to back exhibitions opened at the Mercantile. The first was on the origins of St. Louis and Missouri Banking strongly and generously supported by the major banking institutions of St. Louis, and in cooperation with the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Foundation. This exhibition's gala opening created the Ruth A. Bryant Fund in Banking and Business History at the Mercantile in honor of one of the Mercantile's great latter day leaders and of her chosen banking profession (the founders, themselves, almost always having been from the world of banking and other mercantile pursuits). A highlight of this exhibition was the presentation of the earliest known view of St. Louis, which appeared on an early Bank of St. Louis note in the 1810s from the Newman collection.

On the heels of this program the Library opened one of the most elaborate and cooperative programs in its history, *St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier*, supported generously by E. Desmond Lee as well as the Bank of America. This exhibition realized a long held personal dream of seeing many great icons of American art, many of which first hung in the Mercantile's early gallery as the Library in its earliest days nurtured the visual and performing arts in frontier St. Louis, return for a brief magical moment to the walls of our third building. The recognition of this program was international in scope, and was even viewed as an alternative to watching this year's past Superbowl by the *Wall Street Journal*, should one's steps have led at that time to St. Louis. But what impressed me the most was the wide eyed look of students on this campus who passed from one painting to another last winter, gaining a new appreciation for the role that St. Louis – and some of these students' great, great grandparents – played in the growth of the West, and even in the art which documented that West so eloquently that it is known by specialists worldwide.

The activities listed above were augmented by publications, books and articles, by an increasingly active staff in the world of scholarship, by lectures which continue to bolster the collection and the collecting activities at the Library, by special tours and receptions, by focused organizations meeting here and wishing their constituencies to become more familiar with the Mercantile's holdings, and by the basic activities of providing our greatest service – to support the educational mission of St. Louis' great and only land granted public University.

Most significantly this mission was supported by one of our truly most broad based and varied collecting years. Large transportation collections acquired included with the aforementioned TWA archives and patent reports, the great Pliny-Fisk Railroad Historical Economics Collection and the William Carroll/Streckfus Steamboat

papers and photos – prime St. Louis Americana of the highest significance. Important additions came to the *Globe Democrat* collections, as well as vast map and print collections; new holdings came to the manuscript collection with the addition of numerous early nineteenth century St. Louis letters and diaries, and to the rare book collection, with the addition of a dozen important early American Crockett Almanacs and Indian captivities. Perhaps as a result of the strong growth in the Library's art exhibition program, many excellent framed oils, drawings and watercolors, including many distinguished works which illustrate the continued importance of St. Louis as a twentieth century regionalist art center were acquired for the permanent collection. But the works by Benton, Sylvester, and Joe Jones which have been added in one mere year, as excellent and as far reaching as these are to our future work, even they pale by comparison with the development of the nineteenth century holdings. In one brief collecting cycle, the Library has added three portraits by the great St. Louis painter, Charles Deas, to the four native American portraits at the Library, making the Mercantile the preeminent location to study the development of the great skill of this key American artist in portraiture. The Mercantile now holds nine of the known paintings or prints by this great artist, one who increasingly ranks with Cole, Bingham and Homer in stature and critical assessment.

All of this collecting activity is underscored fundamentally by the partnership agreement which the Mercantile Library and the University have forged with the Woodcock Foundation for the Appreciation of Art and the Woodcock Museum. This multi-million dollar collection of Western and Regionalist Art and its truly interactive electronic museum and website were developed along very similar lines to the Mercantile's own art collection. Together the potential and opportunities for educational programming, scholarships and fellowships and exhibitions will have a far reaching impact on the Mercantile's art program. This in turn will enhance the ways in which Western art will be studied across America through a cooperative advisory committee of national authorities in this field based at the Mercantile.

The increasing art holdings remain highly indicative of the expanding growth, progress and reach of the Library. This has been noted not only on the national level, with detailed usage by newspapers, radio, internet and national cable and other networks but here as well at the University by many appreciative departments and programs, and by the University administration. It is most gratifying to announce our plans formally to the membership to develop a separate Mercantile Library museum building on campus, which will incorporate art of the rails and rivers, of the West, of St. Louis, of broad historical issues and treasures, as the Woodcock

and Money Museum collections. Through the vision of our partnership with the University, we will reach into a new century with a gallery of galleries which will become a forum for appreciating the growth of art in Missouri and will enhance the life of the students coming to this campus.

The Library has for the first time in our modern age reached out to the community with a broad based capital campaign to build on the progress outlined in my remarks and, thanks to the generosity of our Mercantile, Barriger, and Pott Library donors the campaign has begun aggressively and successfully with nearly 1.4 million dollars raised or pledged to the purposes of enhancing the art collection, developing the new museum building in its planning stages, creating new conservation and book endowed funds and adding endowed staff positions, and a long held dream, a map and print division to house great new acquisitions and previous holdings. This activity most assuredly is the way in which the reach of the Library will extend far into time in multiple programs on many planes.

I began these remarks in commenting upon the people of the Library – its members, its donors, its advisory boards, its staff, its patrons. These are the true arms by which the continuing, lengthening reach and reaching out and giving by the Library is achieved. I stand here in enormous gratitude to the founders who reached down to us with their initial vision, to the donors and advisors on our board who have given so much friendship, enthusiasm and support to the Library this

past year in reaching out to us, to the staff of the Library and the University who made the activities enumerated in this unique, millennial annual cycle possible, and to the members and students, scholars and general readers who also have supported us through allowing the Mercantile to serve the public. That public as an entity, as a community, is broadening, is truly increasing, just as the books and art of the Mercantile continue to reach out to the future. They relate to one another. This is truly a very special time to be associated with the Mercantile Library. No time in its past has the Mercantile been so active and I believe this is the case because of the involvement of our supporters on this campus, in our community and across the nation.

Just as one of our earliest Presidents back in the 1840s likened the Library to a cultural, swift moving iron horse of progress for the mind, and just as Horace Kephart saw through a glass darkly the growth that would come through steady progress in collection building, I see a proud heritage, a great collection, and an involved family of Mercantile members and students validating the expanding reach of this institution innovatively and successfully in what will be a key period just ahead for the Library. I welcome your involvement and support with much gratitude on behalf of all of the past, present, and future linked arms which have reached, are reaching and will reach across time here in this immortal institution. Thank you.

*John Neal Hoover
Director*





Robert Watts, Jr. (Fig. 1)

Portraits by Charles Deas

Carol Clark, Amherst College

At the time of its founding in 1846 the governing board of the Mercantile Library conferred membership on a twenty-seven year old local painter named Charles Deas in gratitude for his gift of a landscape painting. The painting was one of his largest (34 x 49 inches) and he must have selected a prime example of his work to go on public view in his adopted city. Because it is now lost, last recorded at the Library in 1858, we know it only by its tantalizing descriptive title as a view on the western prairie. Deas's association with the library might have been long and productive had he not left the city the following year and quickly passed from its collective memory. Until a few years ago, the only work of this remarkable artist in a St. Louis public collection was the rather stiff, formal portrait of Judge Luke Lawless in the Missouri Historical Society, which for some time carried a false signature of the better known artist George Caleb Bingham. Deas's work has been mistakenly attributed to other artists as well, and the Mercantile's own four distinguished portraits of Winnebago leaders were until a few years ago thought to be by George Catlin.

To those four, the Library this year has added three more portraits, painted in the years just before Deas came to St. Louis. This brief essay introduces them to readers of the annual report and celebrates the fact that of the 41 works by Charles Deas known today, seven are in the Library's collection.

An outline of Deas's life can be sketched in a few sentences. Born in 1818 in Philadelphia to a prominent South Carolina family, he experienced a privileged upbringing before his widowed mother, left without means to support her five children, struggled to help them make their way in the world. Two of his brothers went into the military, and when Deas was unable to secure a position at West Point, he developed an early artistic talent, moved to New York City and showed his genre works, many inspired by literature, to modest attention. Elected an Associate Member of the National Academy of Design, he enrolled for one session of the Academy's life class before taking a trip in the spring of 1840 to visit a brother who was stationed in Wisconsin Territory, at Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien. By the fall of 1841 he was exhibiting at the Mechanics Institute Fair in St. Louis, and he made that city his home for the next six years, which were his most productive. He showed his work in St. Louis and in eastern cities, where his greatest successes were at New York's American Art Union. He returned east in the spring of 1847 and within a year he was committed to an asylum for the insane in New York City. He lived there and at another institution until his death in 1867. Deas's career

was brief, limited almost exclusively to his youth: before his thirtieth birthday he was gone from society and painted only sporadically for the rest of his life.¹

The three new Library acquisitions mark the prominence of portraiture in the artist's career, for Deas made at least some of his living by commissions, such as that of Luke Lawless, undertaken in St. Louis about 1846, and one of Thornton Alexander Seymour Hooe (Collection of Gunston Hall Plantation), a United States Army captain whom Deas painted at Prairie du Chien in 1840. His portrait commissions also apparently extended to celebrated animals, for his largest known painting is of Henry Sibley's beloved hunting dog, an Irish wolfhound named Lion, whom Deas painted in 1840 at Sibley's Mendota house, across the Mississippi River from Ft. Snelling. (Collection of the Minnesota Historical Society, Sibley House Historic Site). Quite different from his commissioned works are his portraits of Indians, known from two small sketches in a private collection, and the four paintings of Winnebago leaders that have been in the Mercantile Library since 1869 and are now firmly identified as Deas's work.²

One of the Mercantile's new acquisitions is a portrait of the artist's young nephew. (Fig. 1). Although Deas's paintings are often signed and dated on the recto, or front of the canvas, they sometimes are inscribed only on the verso, as was this portrait. And when paintings are conserved, as this one was in 1960, these inscriptions can be lost, as this one was, under a new canvas during the process of relining. Preserved in a photograph, the inscription is in a old hand that I believe to be the artist's, and it reads as follows:

Robert Watts Jr

Painted by Chas. Deas

at Chesnut Lodge

[Nov ?] 1838

While portraits of family members often remain with descendants of the sitter, after more than a century any number of events – death or financial need, for example – can break those connections and a portrait leave the family. *This* portrait was sold in 1961 at an estate sale in New York City, and although I cannot uncover the name of the consignor, it is likely to have been a Watts descendent. It then passed through the hands of several dealers, was briefly in a private collection, and was sold twice at auction, the last time in 1974 after which it “disappeared.” In 2000 a web search yielded its digitized image, which I had known only through an old black and white photograph. The image had been posted by a New York organization called the Art

Collection, who would, or could, tell me nothing of its recent history.³ I detail this provenance because it gives an idea of how pictures disappear and are then “discovered” after many years. Although I can now locate forty-one works by the artist, I have records of at least sixty more, many of which, I hope, will come to light over time.

The young subject of this painting is Robert J. Watts Jr., the eldest child of Robert Watts, a physician, and Charlotte Deas Watts, Charles Deas’s only sister.⁴ They were married in July 1836 at Chesnut Lodge in Ulster, New York, the village on the Hudson River where the Deas family had moved, in quite desperate financial straits, to be near relatives,⁵ and it was this fortuitous marriage that offered some financial security for other members of Charlotte Deas’s family: Robert Watts, Jr. later paid for his brother-in-law Charles to stay for many years at a private asylum for the insane.⁶

This picture relives happier times, however, when a twenty-year old uncle painted his baby nephew at the family home. Deas shows the child wrapped in a white cloth that his right hand pulls up toward his chin, and directs our attention to his face, which is framed by light colored, tousled hair, one curl of which neatly defines his brow and emphasizes his large, dark, and widely set eyes. The child, whose body barely suggests volume, is vignetted against a mottled brown background. His large head, from which visible brush strokes emanate, is set off against the most darkly painted area of the canvas. Loosely painted with soft strokes, this portrait of a rosy-cheeked child owes a stylistic debt to the prominent Philadelphia artist Thomas Sully, whose work Deas knew from his childhood there. Just as Sully offered idealized portraits of children throughout his long career, so too did Deas show his nephew as cherubic, an image of innocence.

The identities of the sitters in the two other portraits acquired this year by the Library (Figs. 2 and 3) are as elusive as that of the child is secure. These pictures came onto the market in 1984 from a family whose oral history indicated that they might be images of their own family’s Atwater branch.⁷ While certainly possible, the sizes and dates of the portraits, and the sitters’ ages and attributes suggest to me that they might not be commissions but rather portraits of members of his own family.⁸ They seem to be a pair. Deas positioned each sitter’s body toward the other, which he then placed within the same oval *trompe l’oeil* stone frame embellished with similar foliage, and he signed each picture in the same way and place. Yet they are not of the same date, of exactly the same size, or on the same kind of support.⁹

If these are images of members of Deas’s family, the woman might be his widowed mother, Anne Izard Deas, who would have been sixty-one years old in 1840, the

date of this picture. The man might be one of Deas’s brothers, Edward or George, each of whom, in their twenties in 1839, the date inscribed on this portrait, were in the Army.¹⁰ The possibility that the subject of this portrait is one of the artist’s brothers is strengthened by his resemblance to Charles Deas in the self portrait he drew and presented to the National Academy of Design in 1840.

The portability of these portraits may signify a personal connection to the artist, for their small size suggests that he may have made them as gifts, taking them along with him in the spring of 1840 to visit his brother George at Fort Crawford. They gain poignancy in this context, as potent images of separated family members carried west by the brother who reunited them through his art.

But what, then, do we do with the last owner’s family oral history connecting them to someone called Atwater? One way to make sense of it is to consider that a commissioner treating with the Winnebago at Prairie du Chien about this time was named Caleb Atwater. It may be a stretch, but still possible that the portraits were sold to Atwater or that George Deas left them behind when he departed the fort and that, their identity later transformed into Atwaters, they descended in that family until their sale in 1984.

Whoever they are and however they came to be preserved, each painting is a beautiful example of Deas’s talent as a portraitist, revealing the artist’s attitudes toward gender distinctions and domestic life about 1840. The man is standing, the woman seated, each in a three-quarter portrait; he is out of doors, she on a loggia in front of a large, impressive base of a column. A mature woman, she fixes our view directly and brings us into her contained and comfortable world while the young man, his future ahead of him, looks abstractly into the distance and all that gaze implies of a masculine world of action. His clothing has a military look but may be the costume of a sportsman – a hunter or more likely a sailor, which would connect him iconographically to the background water scape. As was fashionable in the late 1830s, he wears chin whiskers, and his high-collared, waist-length jacket is closely fitted around the chest and arms. His face is framed by a high, white stock, and his hat, held in a hand that rests on the base of a tree or an outcropping of rock, is placed prominently in the foreground. Deas naturalizes the stark costume by unfastening three of the coat’s brass buttons and by indicating the way a tightly buttoned one wrinkles the fabric as it tugs it together. Similarly personalized, one strand of the man’s straight, dark hair breaks away and falls over his forehead. Such details bring him to life, but he seems unconcerned with details as homely as buttons and hair for he gazes into the distance with a deeply serious expression. His head is set against dark clouds



Fig. 2

that change to pink at the horizon where they meet the water of a lake or river, possibly suggestive of the Hudson on which the Deas family then made its home in Ulster, New York. Summarily and beautifully painted foliage appears behind his right arm and along the right side of the simulated oval frame, while the left side of his body is insubstantial, telling of the inexperience of the painter, just twenty years old.

The older woman, soberly dressed and of serious demeanor, is a fitting companion to the young man.

The full sleeves of her dark dress are gathered at the upper arm, then fall in soft folds before tapering to her wrist. The modest cape of her dress cloaks her shoulders and a small brooch closes her lace collar. Her hair, curled above her ears, is covered by a daycap of delicately painted, diaphanous fabric shot through with pink. Appropriate for an older woman, it is tied firmly at her chin. A red and green plaid shawl, which is fringed in red, drapes over the chair, one scrolled wooden arm of which is barely visible behind her right elbow. The



Fig. 3

bright fabric is a surprisingly bold counterpoint in her otherwise somber attire.¹¹

Her hands are folded demurely in her lap, the left crossed over the right hand, which holds wire-rimmed glasses undoubtedly necessary to see the tiny stitches implied by the piece of hooped embroidery under her hands. I cannot explain why her left hand displays no wedding ring, whose absence may rebut my argument that she is his mother, unless the unseen ring finger of her right hand carries a gold band. These hands are

important, for sewing is one of the themes of feminine accomplishment that Deas develops through the presentation of objects in her lap and on the tabletop, visually interesting itself as it is leather-topped with a dark green fabric skirt held in place by closely placed brass nails that gleam as themselves distinctive elements in the picture's design. Behind the spool of thread and open sewing box is visible the spine of a red leather book and a stemmed glass half full of glistening water that holds flowers, perhaps violets, that droop over the edge of the glass. These attributes reveal her education

as well as her skills with the needle and as a gardener, the accomplishments of a woman whose family had given her the opportunity to so polish herself. Although columns appear as backdrop to many portraits of both the eighteenth and nineteenth century in America, this one may have a specific reference to the column prominent in the background of the portrait John Singleton Copley painted of the artist's maternal grandparents, Ralph and Alice DeLancey Izard, in Rome (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). Deas places in the background a white house that looks small and fragile against a pink horizon. If it is Anne Izard Deas looking out at us, the loss of her social standing is clear from the contrast of this modest house to the structure in the background of the Copley double portrait – the Roman coliseum that symbolized wealthy Americans abroad.

With these portraits Deas showed off the skill and knowledge necessary to make his way as an artist. Very different from the more fluid, romantic style of the portrait of Robert J. Watts, this pair is more neoclassically restrained and owe at least some of their stylistic inspiration to the work of Charles Fraser and Samuel F. B. Morse. The demeanor and attributes of these sitters show that Deas understood culture and gender distinctions and that he knew how to generalize yet still represent personally and naturally without an excess of flattery. He could paint faces, clothing, domestic objects and landscape. He still struggled with some elements of the human body, difficulties he undoubtedly was then addressing in the life class at the National Academy of Design where he was enrolled at the very moment he painted these two portraits. Lastly, the presentation of each portrait – an oval frame of simulated stone – was a device by which Deas proclaimed his knowledge of European portrait conventions as adapted by the most renowned of American practitioners, giving these small and modest portraits a kind of grand seriousness befitting their handsome, sober sitters.

Each of these three portraits – child, young man, old woman – was painted in the east. Now, by their own journeys west from dealers in New York to St. Louis, the portraits recapitulate Deas's life journey. Together with the four Winnebago leaders, they reveal the range and depth of the artist's work in portraiture and provide an unparalleled opportunity to understand his perception of a changing world, from the social conventions of his own family in New York to those of a less constrained environment in St. Louis, reached through the transforming experience of travel through Indian land. The Library is privileged to care for and exhibit images that disclose these many sides of a complex life in art.

NOTES

¹Henry Tuckerman's early article on Charles Deas, "Our Artists-No. V: Deas." *Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book* 32 (1846), outlines his travel and provides the scaffolding for a biography. My 1987 essay "Charles Deas," in *American Frontier Life: Early Western Painting*

and Prints. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987) updates and extends the pioneering efforts on behalf of the artist by John I. H. Baur, "Unknown American Painters of the 19th Century," *College Art Journal* 6, no. 3 (1947), and especially by John Francis McDermott, "Charles Deas: Painter of the Frontier," *The Art Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1950). Dawn Glanz, *How the West Was Drawn: American Art and the Settling of the Frontier* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982) and Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991) offer important interpretations of key pictures. I am currently at work on an exhibition and catalogue of Deas's work, which will open in 2003 at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

²See my article, "'Four Oil Paintings of Indian Chiefs': Charles Deas and the St. Louis Mercantile Library" in *St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier, Proceedings of a Symposium, St. Louis: Cradle of Western American Art, 1830 - 1900*; Hoover, ed. St. Louis: University of Missouri – St. Louis, 2000.

³Oil on canvas, 17 x 14 inches. There is also a canvas-maker's stencil on the verso: PREPARED BY / EDWARD DECHAUX / NEW YORK. I am deeply grateful to Scott L. Wands, my former research assistant, for his rediscovery of this work through a web search. The provenance of the portrait may be reconstructed as follows: Estate [possibly Watts family] sale, Winegarden, New York; to Victor Spark and James Graham, February 1961; to Parke Bernet 84 sale February 26, 1969, lot # 196; to Peter Vogt; to William H. Bender, Jr., 1970; to Sotheby Parke Bernet sale January 24-26, 1974, lot no. 539; private collection; to The Art Collection, Inc., New York, by 2000; to present collection, 2001.

⁴Robert J. Watts grew up and lived in New York City where, in the only connection I know to his maternal uncle Charles Deas, he answered a research query in 1872, responding that he knew very little about the location of Charles Deas's works, except that many of his Indian paintings were then in St. Louis. (Lyman C. Draper manuscript 38162, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.)

⁵Record of marriage in *New-York American*, July 11, 1836. For the Deas family move, see letters concerning Anne Izard Deas's attempts to gain two of her sons appointments at West Point: 14 letters dated 1827, 1828, and 1835 concerning the applications of George and Charles Deas to West Point, U.S. Military Academy U.S. Military Academy, Cadet Application Papers, 1805-1866, Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives and Records Services, Washington, D.C.

⁶Records of the Bloomingdale Asylum, Medical Archives of N. Y. Weill Cornell Medical Center of New York Presbyterian Hospital. I am grateful to archivist James L. Gehrlach for his assistance.

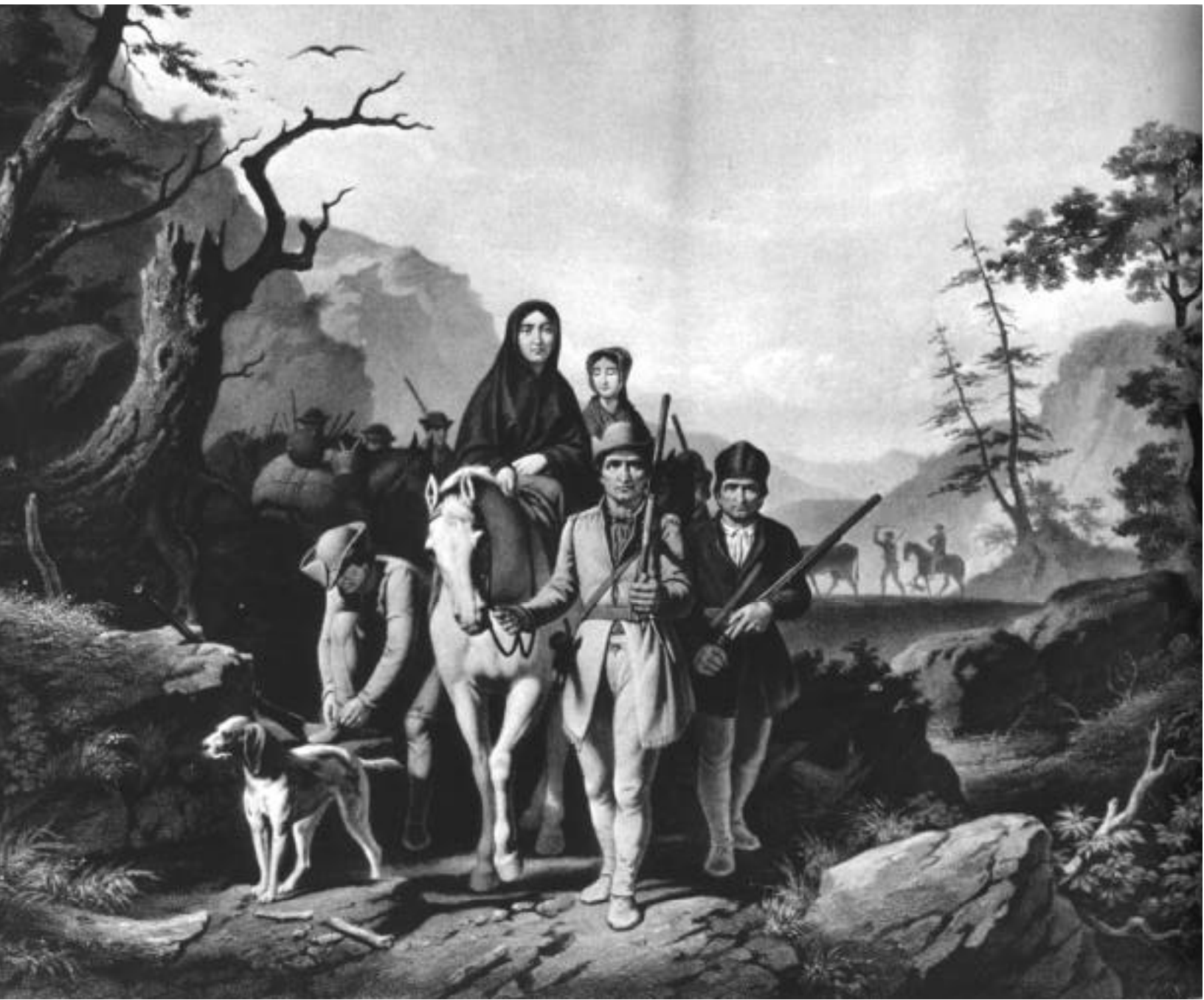
⁷Their provenance is as follows: Private Collection, Connecticut; to Berry-Hill Galleries, New York, 1984; to present collection, 2001.

⁸I am indebted to the suggestions of several colleagues, notably Bob Gibson and Bruce Chambers, as I sorted through the possible identity of these two sitters.

⁹The oil on canvas, 12 1/8 x 10 1/8 inch, portrait of the man is signed C. Deas and dated 1839. That of the woman is oil on paperboard attached to a beveled wood 11 x 9 inch panel, and is signed C. Deas and dated 1840.

¹⁰Edward Deas graduated from West Point in 1832 and for at least part of 1839 was stationed with the 4th Regiment Artillery near New York City where Deas could have painted his portrait. In 1839 George Deas was in the 5th Regiment Infantry. My thanks to military historians Michael E. Moss, Alan C. Aimone, and William P. MacKinnon for their help in locating information on the military careers of the Charles Deas's brothers.

¹¹An excellent source for information on the dress of middle-class nineteenth-century Americans is Joan L. Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900* (Kent, Ohio and London: Kent State University Press, 1995).



Printed version of *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap*
(From the Picture Files of the St. Louis Mercantile Library)

Frontier Art as History: *St. Louis and the Politics of Manifest Destiny Expansion*

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Rather than a confirmation of land hunger, partisan politics, and “might makes right” diplomacy as some critics charged, expansionists argued that U.S. expansion was a national imperative that reflected a commitment to women’s civilizing mission. It is for this reason that the image of the female ideal was prominent in both political and cultural expressions of Manifest Destiny ideology in the 1840s. Politicians – Democrat and Whig alike – deployed this gendered imagery in order to tie Manifest Destiny expansion to the unassailable values she represented: Christian charity, motherhood, selfless devotion to nation, home, family – essentially she was America’s moral conscience.

Early St. Louis city leaders, whose voices echo through the newspapers and manuscripts in the Mercantile Library collections, helped to create and took advantage of this conflation of advancing a gendered notion of “civilization” with nation-building to further their own local aims, which included attracting investment, railroads, river commerce, and, importantly, “civilizing” women to St. Louis. They promoted St. Louis as a city of refinement and progress, comparable to New York or Philadelphia, and boldly defended the character of St. Louis and the West against the slights of the “eastern press.” “With what grace can the East presume to instruct the West in matters of morality and political and social right?” asked the *Weekly Reveille*, continuing, “Even at this day, the great West is assiduously engaged in the development of its abundant resources – making such rapid strides to greatness and distinction.” According to this newspaper, “No where in the world is there a truer manhood, one that more clearly distinguishes between right and wrong, than in our western population.”¹ St. Louis community leaders understood that their charge was spreading American civilization westward, a project that was ideological, economic, and political. The nation’s “course of empire” was west, and it would be through St. Louis, the gateway to that western empire, that Americans would “manifest” their “destiny.”

That the spirit of Manifest Destiny expansion was very much alive in St. Louis in the 1840s is evident in the Mercantile Library’s exhibit, “St. Louis and the Art

of the Frontier,” which ran from November 20, 2000 to January 31, 2001, and the accompanying collection of essays, edited by John Hoover.² In fact, the west and the frontier were main themes in 1840s American art beyond St. Louis, in the same way that these same themes permeated both local and national political discourse. This exhibit (to say nothing of the Mercantile Library more generally) then is instructive for studying St. Louis, but it can also serve as the basis for more general inquiries into the symbiotic relationship between antebellum culture and politics.

During the 1830s and 1840s, visual art did not just commemorate the success of the national political agenda, it propelled that agenda. “Give me the control of the *art* of a country,” wrote one expansionist, “and you may have the management of its administrations.” “*Pictures* are more powerful than speeches,” he continued, and “Patriotism... is kept alive by art more than by all the political speeches of the land.”

The lens of gender exposes the political undergirdings in cultural images of the frontier. The “family” and the “home” were political concepts when discussed in relation to civilizing the frontier and westward expansion. Both were associated with women and the female ideal; therefore women too had a role to play in expansion. This role was not necessarily one of agency, but, whether as agent or symbol, gender analysis in interpreting the politics of westward expansion seems long overdue.

In St. Louis, the “Cradle of Western American Art,” it is not surprising that an artist such as George Caleb Bingham was conscious of the role of art for building “a superior unity of national character.”³ Bingham’s painting, “Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap” (1851-52) still resonates today as a celebration of the American spirit and as a testament to our romantic attachment to a mythical frontier past.⁴ Less obvious, however, was its political meaning, which may be seen through Bingham’s deployment of gendered imagery. Whether by politician or by artist (Bingham was both), this deployment suggests how deeply ingrained was the perception that the nation’s welfare was dependent on maintaining a gender hier-

archy based on sexual difference and societal convention, and which, then, made the family an instrument for carrying out U.S. political policy.

Depictions of women on the frontier reinforced men's roles in the family and as agents of civilization. Women needed men to carry out the mission to civilize the West, and men needed women (and what they symbolized) to justify expanding United States borders. That is, the presence of mothers, wives, and daughters in combination with the wilderness environment gave men an agency role in advancing civilization, and thus made the at times sordid business of claiming territory easier to swallow.

Daniel Boone had lived in Missouri and had become a state hero; Bingham had admired him since he was a boy. During the presidential campaign of 1844, Bingham proposed painting a Whig banner with Boone as the central character. Boone, Bingham argued, possessed the character and values of a Whig. Bingham had painted a banner for William Henry Harrison's campaign in 1840, in which he contrasted the pre-civilized wilderness with the civilization that Americans – most particularly Whigs – had brought to the frontier. This belief that the West must not just be discovered, explored, or passed through, but civilized, was a Whig Party theme in the western states. In a letter to his friend and fellow Whig James Rollins, Bingham described his vision for the Boone banner (1844):

I would suggest for the design as peculiarly applicable to your county [Boone County, Missouri], old Daniel Boone himself engaged in one of his death struggles with an Indian, painted as large as life, it would make a picture that would take with the multitude, and also be in accordance with historical truth. It might be emblematical also of the early state of the west, while on the other side I might paint a landscape with peaceful fields and lowing herds' indicative of his present advancement in civilization.⁵

Bingham never painted the banner, but "Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap" seemed to combine the two panels of the banner he had envisioned in 1844. Boone, in this painting, was "larger than life" and in leading his family west had secured America's "advancement in civilization." Bingham inscribed the painting, "To the Mothers and Daughters

of the West."⁶ Completed in 1851, shortly after the discovery of gold in California, which had inspired many of his Missouri neighbors – and their families – to move west, this painting reflected Bingham's politics and ideas about westward expansion as a civilizing mission.

In Bingham's "Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap," Boone and his wife led a line of settlers through a narrow path between jagged cliffs. The power in America's civilizing mission came through the procession itself: arrow-like, a sharp forward thrust of civilization. The viewer experienced the painting from the perspective of the Indian in the woods, studying the on-coming procession. The determined expression on Boone's face appeared to be a warning to that Indian: American civilization would advance; United States expansion was inevitable. The string of families following Boone faded without end into the distance and backed up Boone's determination – America's determination.

Viewers of this painting have repeatedly described his wife, Rebecca Boone, as "Madonna-like." Indeed, in addition to her appearance, the scene had some resemblance to visual representations of Bible stories, perhaps even Joseph leading Mary into Bethlehem.⁷ Mother and daughter (lower and to the right) were icons of civilizing womanhood in this painting. They sat high on horses, sidesaddle, and were the only two identifiably female figures in the painting. Bingham encircled the women with light, and the crisp white of the daughter's bonnet drew the viewer's eye. In contrast to her daughter's frontier bonnet, however, Mother Boone's wrap was not era-specific – it might have warmed the back of the Madonna herself.

Mother Boone wore the serene, virtuous, and trusting facial expression of the ideal woman. Dominating the center of the painting, she appeared to be *watching over* (more than *participating in*) the civilizing process. Light radiated off her as the caravan passed through the dark, forbidding, and savage wilderness. Boone, in buckskins, walked beside his wife, guiding her horse, with rifle in hand. This was certainly a civilizing expedition – as opposed to one for hunting, trapping, or exploring, all of which might have also featured Boone. In addition to the presence of Mother Boone and daughter, one man had an axe over his shoulder for chopping wood and building houses. Another was relaxed enough to stop and casually tie his shoe. We

see buckets, blankets, and packages of gear. The Boone family and its company were heading west to stay – to make the frontier their home.⁸

Her placement at the center of the scene, light play, facial expression, and clothing gave Mother Boone a universal appeal that allowed her to symbolize all womanhood. Bingham's depiction was not that of Mrs. Boone, a historical actor, who married Daniel, bore children, and raised a family on the frontier. That is, in this painting the female characters were symbols of civilization, rather than agents of civilization. Mother Boone was spirited west like a precious relic. She did not walk, she did not help carry gear; she was apparently not capable of leading her own horse. Even the dog seemed more focused on and engaged in its surroundings than Mother Boone.

Bingham's "Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap" usually brings to mind sentiments like the following passage from 1849, which appears in the companion book to the popular Ken Burns series, "The West":

In looking behind over the road just traveled...or forward over that to be taken, for an indefinite number of miles there seemed to be an unending stream of emigrant trains, whilst in the still farther distance along these lines could be seen great clouds of dust, indicating that yet others of these immense caravans were on the move. It was a sight which, once seen, can never be forgotten; it seemed as if the whole family of man had set its face westward.⁹

What does not immediately come to mind in either this passage or Bingham's "Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap" are the political implications of the "unending stream of emigrant trains." Yet, arguably more than anything else it was precisely that: political. There was no such thing as spreading American civilization without expanding U.S. borders (or vice versa). Like this passage, Bingham's painting would not on the surface draw one's mind to the politics of westward expansion. It is a cultural image, an image that evokes a romance with the past, national identity, progress, and confidence in the importance of America and American democracy. By concentrating on gender roles and their meaning, however, it is clear that the phrase "the whole family of man had set its face westward," is a political expression; likewise,

"Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap" is political, even when it captures American men in seemingly apolitical mode, as agents carrying out the American mission to civilize the frontier. The reality was more complex. To spread civilization brought up a host of other concerns, not the least of which was the question of extending slavery into new territorial possessions. That is, the very same *nation-building* objective promoted in the gendered language of Manifest Destiny expansionism as crucial to securing the future of American civilization and the United States as a *nation*, shortly proved to be instrumental in its destruction.

This short essay is an introduction to one of the themes I will be addressing in my study of St. Louis and the politics of westward expansion in the 1840s. It has been the Mercantile Library that has made this project possible, both in terms of its vast collections and dedicated staff. Indeed, my research interests insure that my ties to the Library, staff, and fellow supporters will continue to strengthen in the future.

NOTES

¹"The East and the West," *Weekly Reveille*, 13 October 1845, p. 614.

²"St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier, November 20, 2000 – January 31, 2001: An Exhibit of Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Sculpture and Books"; John Neal Hoover, ed., *St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier: Proceedings of a Symposium, St. Louis: Cradle of Western American Art, 1830-1900* (St. Louis: Chelmsford Printing, 2000).

³Ron Tyler, "The Prints of George Caleb Bingham," in *St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier* ed. John Neal Hoover, 74.

⁴For a reproduction of this painting, See Joseph Ketner, "St. Louis: Cradle of Western American Art, 1830-1900," in *St. Louis and the Art of the Frontier* ed. John Neal Hoover, Figure 5, xxvii.

⁵Nancy Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 24.

⁶*Ibid.*, 62.

⁷*Ibid.*, 61. Rash calls her "a Madonna by Raphael."

⁸Michael Edward Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, in association with The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1990), 136-139; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 468-469.

⁹William Graham Johnston (1828-1913), 1849, *Experiences of a forty-niner*, by Wm. G. Johnston, a member of the wagon train first to enter California in the memorable year 1849 (Pittsburgh, 1892); quoted in Geoffrey C. Ward, *The West: An Illustrated History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 131.



Jesse James by Thomas Hart Benton (Missouri State Capitol Mural Series), 1936. Courtesy: The Woodcock Foundation for the Appreciation of the Arts.

On the Track of – and with – Railroad Police: Separating the Real Cops and Special Agents from the Fictional Bulls and Cinder Dicks

By Dorothy Moses Schulz

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A visiting researcher's dream – four days with the run of the John W. Barriger III Railroad collection. But it is vast – where to begin? I arrived with an agenda and a list of articles to see, but a quick walk around the space and a glance at the volumes on the shelves assured me that I had undertaken a marathon that I could never complete.

I thought of the advice I have given first to my cops and now to my students: the scope of your investigation is too broad. Stay on track; start with what you know, and consider what you want to find. Now I had to abide by my own words. My topic – the history of railroad policing in the United States – is immense, probably too big even for the book it will become, so now I had to follow my own advice. But it was not that easy – my topic is me – I was a railroad police officer before my current career as an academic and police historian – and I wanted to learn all that I could in the few days available to me.

Many portions of the Barriger collection are one-of-a-kind; others difficult to find anywhere else. This is particularly true of the railroad newspapers and periodicals, including employee magazines from a number of railroads. Due to the vagaries of mergers and acquisitions, most of the magazines are difficult to locate; even subsequent railroads do not have complete collections from lines that are now part of their systems or their names. Making the hunt even more hit-or-miss, the magazines are rarely indexed. If you are lucky enough to find copies, there is no way of knowing what is in them without turning the pages of each issue. The tables of contents (or “consists” as one editor labeled the contents pages) are only partially helpful, since information is often hidden in the back sections amid news and gossip submitted by employee correspondents from offices throughout the system.

Finding out about railroad police is not the same as locating material for an institutional history of a local police force or of an individual railroad. Even without the comforts of a business car, I had spent the last few summers traveling to Omaha to view Union Pacific special agents' scrapbooks, to Baltimore to peruse the *B & O Magazine*, and to St. Paul to study Northern Pacific and Great Northern corporate records at the Minnesota Historical Society and to hunt for a mysterious gold badge at the James J. Hill Foundation. After tackling the Barriger collection, I was heading to Chicago (by train, of course), where Illinois Central and Burlington

records awaited me at the Newberry Library. So many railroads, so little time!

I decided to use the Barriger collection specifically to see how railroad police were viewed through their own eyes, and through corporate and industry eyes, by reviewing employee magazines and newspapers and periodicals written for railroaders. This would help me to explain not only how and why railroad police developed, but what they did and still do, and how and why they have continued to exist and prosper.

Getting the “insider” views on railroad policing was important to me not only because I had been an insider, but because most of what has been written about the railroad police has been by their adversaries. The Barriger is one of the few collections containing works where the railroads and railroaders speak for themselves.

Railroad police – even more than other police – are usually painted as brutal and bumbling “bulls,” men of brawn but few brains. Yet throughout most of their more-than-150-year history, railroad police have maintained a high level of professionalism. Despite working for competing companies, they were in contact with one another and they developed an array of impressive networking institutions. Relying on the telegraph, the railroads' private mail systems, and rail transportation, they undertook joint investigations and shared information on crimes and criminals, including photos, fingerprints, and *modus operandi* files. Their ability to cross jurisdictions encouraged police chiefs and chief special agents to form regional and national links, resulting in their participation in the first association of chiefs of police and in the development of their own associations and publications.

Images vs Reality

Marxist and labor historians attribute the creation of railroad police to labor unrest, but their origins are far more complex. While some did police labor disputes during major depressions, including 1873, 1877, 1893, and 1922, their portrayal as spies and strikebreakers is contradicted by archival research, which shows this role to have been most often played by outside undercover agents. Letters in the files of a number of railroads indicate that detective agencies were far more aggressive in offering their services than railroads were in soliciting them. Further, read by a trained police eye, many operatives' reports affirm that the railroads often received

Railroad Police Origins

very little of value for their money. Many reports are little more than itineraries of the meeting halls, bars, and hotel lobbies that the operatives visited, ostensibly in search of information but often resulting primarily in expense claims and recommendations on the need for further investigation.

In another contradiction, despite their portrayal in hobo literature from the 1860s to the present as particularly cruel and inept, railroad police were often criticized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by charity and social services agencies not for their cruelty in cracking down on tramps, but for their failure to do so with sufficient vigor. These groups urged the railroads aggressively to prevent tramps from riding free, for they feared that the idle poor, traveling from city to city or from harvest to harvest, would deplete funds for local, deserving poor. Policing vagrants has sometimes led the railroad police into conflict with municipal police, who often encouraged hobos to use the rails to leave town rather than tax local resources.

Yet another view of railroad police has been provided by the “bad guys.” Recall Robert Leroy Parker (Butch Cassidy) asking Harry Longbaugh (the Sundance Kid) as they flee the men on horseback who jump from boxcars to follow them: “Who are those men?” The answer: UP Rangers, created by E. H. Harriman to find and return, dead or alive, train robbers. Even though the UP Rangers are not identified in the film (most people think they were Pinkertons), frontier railroad police have a higher and more positive profile than those who labored on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Still, only a few aficionados are aware that Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp, both of whom served as U.S. deputy marshals and have been the subjects of biographies and TV shows, also worked as railroad special agents.

Just as railroad police have been overshadowed by public police, they have had difficulties separating themselves from the Allan Pinkerton publicity machine. An expert in the spin and sound-bite skills that J. Edgar Hoover and his G-men would master in the 1930s and beyond, Pinkerton’s reputation as a master detective assured that if he or his operatives were on the case, others would have to fight hard for a press notice or mention.

Today railroad police operate much like their public counterparts. Their primary responsibility is protecting more than 200,000 miles of track, and equipment and cargo shipments exceeding a net investment of \$55 billion. Mail theft has been replaced by theft of high-value goods; hobos have been replaced by fugitive criminals. Smuggling, including narcotics, and target-hardening against terrorists are today’s other major concerns.

Although individual railroads employed police officers prior to the Civil War, events often linked with the end of that conflict have become closely associated with the development of railroad policing. Tramps and hobos, some of whom were veterans heading home from the war, took to rail facilities in large numbers, setting up squatter camps, traveling at no cost, and often taking whatever they could along the way. But well in advance of an identifiable hobo culture, the construction of railroads contributed to trespassing and thievery. The layouts of yards and storage material contributed to placing valuable goods distant from established communities, many of which lacked organized police forces.

Train robbers have also been linked to the conflict between the northern and southern states. A number of famous train robbers, including Frank and Jesse James and Cole Younger, have been described as former members of Quantrell’s raiders. This status allowed them to be pictured as Southerners unable to get over the loss of the war, Confederate loyalists still fighting the war, or soldiers shell-shocked by the violence they’d seen, rather than, simply, thieves unable or unwilling to adapt to the life and rigors of harder and possibly less remunerative work.

Even before the Civil War, starting in the 1850s, cities on the Eastern Seaboard developed police forces in response to concerns over urban unrest, public disorder (some of which we today call quality-of-life crimes), thefts, and miscellaneous inconveniences that citizens now expected their local governments to correct. Police were general purpose employees who responded to whatever problems politicians felt needed attention; crime complaints were a very small part of their jobs. Depending on the size and urbanization of their communities, early police fought fires, supervised elections, directed traffic, inspected buildings, and maintained shelters for tramps and transients. They also maintained animal shelters, licensed pets and livestock, returned runaway animals to their owners, and stood by until the dead and dying (human or animal) were removed from the streets.

Railroads also faced a variety of problems, including, but not limited to the presence of hobos and other trespassers; battles with other railroads; labor disputes; thefts of railroad property and of shippers’ goods; robberies of express cars, employees, and passengers; vandalism; internal thefts; and liability stemming from crimes by and against, and injuries to, passengers, employees, and unauthorized riders. Many of these problems were viewed by managers as inter-related and they, too, turned to police for solutions. A uniformed police presence, it was decided, could prevent crime and disorder, while plainclothes

employees with investigative skills could determine the legitimacy of after-the fact (or often, after-the-fiction) injury and damage claims made against the railroads.

In 1847, the Baltimore & Ohio pioneered in the employment of police, when it appointed Thomas Hayes to keep order at the Pratt Street Depot in Baltimore. No record exists as to why the B & O felt the need to employ Hayes, but the city of Baltimore, the scene of more than a dozen mob disturbances between 1834 and 1860, did not create a viable day patrol force until 1857. Thus, there is ample reason to conclude that the B & O felt a need to protect its passengers and property.

The absence of dependable municipal policing was not confined to Baltimore. City building in the Midwest lagged behind the East, and railroads traveling out of Chicago were frequent targets of thieves and vandals. The Milwaukee Road had less than 200 miles of track in 1854 and didn't run its first train to Madison, until April, 1854, but by 1855 it employed special policemen whose first arrests were of two men placing obstructions on the track.

Also in 1855, when the IC had been in existence only four years, the president complained about vandals tampering with switches between Chicago and Calumet. Almost immediately after starting passenger service from Chicago north to Wisconsin and south to the Kentucky border, the IC's chief engineer reported a need for protection which could not be met by local authorities. To confront the problem, on February 1, 1855, the IC, the Michigan Central Railroad, the Michigan Southern Railroad and Northern Indiana Railroad Companies, the Chicago and Galena Union Railroad Company, the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad Company, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company jointly signed a contract for security services with Allan Pinkerton, who had already earned an enviable reputation as a public police officer, a private detective, and a special agent for the Chicago Post Office. The importance of security to the railroads is evident from provisions of the contract. In return for establishing an agency in Chicago that was to operate locally and in neighboring states and that was primarily and principally devoted to the service and business of the railroads, Pinkerton received between \$10,000 and \$11,000 for each of the first two years of the contract in addition to authorization to bill for any services resulting in costs in excess of this retainer. Although the agents initially operated with nothing more than citizen's power to arrest, Pinkerton's North West Police Agency was in full swing three months before the Chicago Police Department combined its day and night forces into a 24-hour police operation.

Even if the Chicago Police Department had been further developed, it would have provided no protec-

tion for the railroads once they left the city's limits. At a time when local police were new, state police non-existent, and the federal government relied on the military for policing, railroads were on their own in protecting themselves. Pinkerton understood this and prospered, devoting his personal attention to the railroads until 1860, when he went to Washington, DC, with another IC contractor who probably handled cases that Pinkerton had investigated, namely, President-elect Abraham Lincoln.

Pinkerton was closely linked to the railroads, especially the IC and the Burlington Lines, but when he turned the agency over to his sons, William and Robert, in 1869, operatives became more involved in industrial espionage and property protection during labor strife and more of the railroads formed their own police departments, which quickly received legal recognition. In 1861, Nevada territory passed the first law recognizing railroad police, granting county sheriffs the authority to appoint deputies for the railroad if asked to do so.

As early as 1849, a Vermont law that required railroad companies to fence their lines and put cattle guards at crossings provided for railroad regulation of their own police. In 1865, Pennsylvania became the first state to sanction railroad police legislatively. The Railroad Police Act authorized the governor to grant police powers to any individual for whom the employing railroad petitioned. Officers to whom commissions were granted had the same powers as Philadelphia police officers when detaining suspects or making arrests. Since the railroad traveled far beyond Philadelphia, railroad police actually had more power than city police, because they were authorized to arrest anywhere in the county or counties in which their commissions were recorded. In many states, the legislation was similar, permitting railroad officers to carry weapons, effect arrests, and enforce laws anywhere the railroad owned property.

Although railroad police are the largest group of surviving private police, they were neither the first nor the only such employees. In 1838, Boston had conveyed police powers on "special police" employed by local merchants; in 1891, Covington, KY, still relied on the merchants' police to maintain the police signal system and patrol wagon, for which the city reimbursed them \$150 per month. In 1866, Pennsylvania extended to coal and iron companies the same privileges given to the railroads a year earlier. While the power of the railroad and the coal and iron industries most likely influenced these decisions, state legislators may also have been aware of the inadequacy of local policing. Even Philadelphia, one of the nation's major financial and commercial centers, had only 15 detectives in its police force as late as 1898.



Interview with the Engineer, Harper's Weekly, January 2, 1875

Following the Tracks West

As the railroads moved West, the major concern was that they were entering no one's jurisdiction. Sparsely populated areas with few police were the rule. Except for Nebraska and Colorado, railroad service was available in each of the territories at least a decade before they became states, and in the case of the last five of the forty-eight contiguous states (Wyoming, Utah, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona) railroads preceded statehood by more than twenty years. More often than not, railroad secret service departments were the only, and certainly the best organized and best equipped, officers in the territories. The UP, Denver and Rio Grande, Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, and the St. Louis and San Francisco all had special agents operating in the plains territories and the far west by the 1870s.

Even where statehood had been won, public police were barely able to keep up with local activities and had little time or inclination to assist the railroads unless a monetary reward had been offered. California recognized railroad police during its 1877-78 legislative session. The state's law was similar to Pennsylvania's and typical of laws that would follow. As in the East and Midwest, because the deputizing authority was the state, rather than individual cities, frontier railroad officers frequently had wider authority than local police – a situation that still exists today.

Multiple deputizations allowed railroad police to cross state and territorial lines with ease, which encouraged many of them to concentrate on after-the-fact investigation of serious crimes, rather than on uniformed forces. This approach was also fostered by the types of crimes and the vast amount of territory in which offenders could seek cover. The wide-ranging exploits of many of the best-known train robbers have received wide factual and fictional coverage; suffice it to say, wherever the robbers went, railroad police were also to be found. Western railroad police were also

likely to work with sheriffs and U.S. marshals, and so they developed organizations that rarely relied on uniformed patrol. Some of these differences persist until today, with Western railroads more likely to have larger plainclothes, detective forces (usually still called special agents) while in the East, where uniformed police officers were a common sight by the 1870s, the tradition of uniformed forces developed, and officers went by the more municipal-police-influenced title of police officer, with "detective" reserved for those who did investigative work out of uniform.

Tracking Down Railroad Cops

This brief summary provides an idea of the scope of the project. Even the decision to limit my searching to the railroaders' view of railroad policing had to be pared down from the totality of what the Barriger offered. Frank A. Munsey's well-known *Railroad Man's Magazine* (under its various other titles) could be viewed in its entirety, but *Railway Age* (which has also changed titles through its 100+-year history) could not be.

I reviewed *Railroad Man's Magazine* from 1917 to 1966, except for a few missing years. Although the collection goes beyond 1966, I stopped when the publication seemed to have become more a railfan than a railroaders' magazine, a change that would make it less likely that I would find police-related material. Among the gems were an article in 1918 on Pat Kindelon, who spent 36 years with the SP, many of them as Chief Special Agent; and an October 1942 article authored by a Daniel O'Connell, another long-serving Chief Special Agent for the SP. There was also an article about Thomas Furlong, Chief Special Agent for the Gould Lines and author of *Fifty Years A Detective*, a now rare book published in St. Louis in 1912, which describes a number of the cases he'd handled.

An illustrated feature story that appeared in December 1943 on New York, New Haven, Hudson & Harlem police officers and their canines working at New Haven's Poughkeepsie, NY, bridge caught my eye for more than its photos. During my tenure as a captain with Conrail and then with Metro-North Commuter Railroad Police, I had worked in a division that covered Poughkeepsie. My colleagues and I had been told that our highly-regarded canine unit was a first for railroad police. Little did we know that huskies "Butch," "King," and "Rex" had protected the same territory well before "Major" and "Rex," two of our German shepherds. The story implied that the dogs were added during World War II primarily to guard against Axis saboteurs, but it reinforces how difficult claims to be the "first" can be in a field whose history is harder to find than abandoned branch lines.

Railway Age (and *Railway Age Gazette*, more name changes to drive a researcher to distraction), presented

a different set of research challenges than *Railroad Man's Magazine*. It is the ultimate industry publication; full of news of the railroads written for a railroad audience. Although *Railroad Man's Magazine* sometimes contained news snippets, it was more like a specialized *Reader's Digest* than a traditional industry news publication. Because of the huge number of small items scattered throughout its pages, *Railway Age* is another publication that calls for page turning as the only way to learn what's been happening in the industry. The Barriger has probably the most complete collection of these volumes anywhere and I was particularly pleased to be able to locate articles from the nineteenth century that were on my list.

Issues of *Railway Age* during the World War I years proved exceptionally rich in material about the police. Along with other segments of the industry, railroad police were nationalized during the war. The United States Railroad Administration issued reports and press notices on almost everything it did, and its activities to prevent crimes on the railroad, particularly theft of what was now federal property, received far broader attention than the efforts of individual railroads had warranted. Also, since *Railway Age* editorialized about the importance of curtailing wartime theft, its coverage of police activities was considerable. Time did not permit as detailed a search of the World War II years, but the knowledge that those volumes are available in New York, albeit on microfilm rather than paper, provided me with the comfort that I could review those years closer to home.

Not so the employee magazines, which I turned to next. It is difficult to make comparisons about how the different railroads covered the activities of the police because not all years are available for all railroads. Each periodically featured the police, and each reported on major personnel changes. This was helpful in creating a time line of chiefs' tenures, which will help illustrate themes that must carry across so many years and so much geography.

Since I am one of the few (I have become more careful now about saying the "first") women to have reached the rank of captain in a railroad police force, I am always searching for my foremothers, especially after reading about the B & O's World War II Guardettes. All the publications were surprisingly helpful in this search. I did not find any articles about women cops in *Railroad Man's Magazine*, but I did find many women featured in the fiction, although much of it seems to indicate a fascination with fancy ladies who fell for railroad guys or pretty but strong conductorettes, brakemanettes, and even engineerettes (who also often fell for railroad guys). In addition to these romanticized stories, though, there were articles on real women in jobs that were uncommon for them at the time, including station agents, telegraphers, engineer cleaners, dis-

patchers, an engineer and a motorman. There was even a patriotic poem during World War I dedicated to "The Railroadess" and, of course, stories on the ubiquitous Harvey Girls, including a "historical novelette" in March 1935.

Railway Age and the employee magazines didn't yield much on women railroad police and special agents, but did provide information about a small number of women flaggers and crossing watchwomen during World Wars I and II. *Railway Age* featured many articles on women railroaders during World War I despite its editorial policy calling for caution (today we'd call it foot-dragging) in employing women to replace men drafted for the war effort.

On a policing note, I was surprised to find the New York Central Lines *Magazine* reporting in 1926 that male and female detectives had broken a theft ring of abusers of family tickets, and that the police team had included a woman detective who had successfully rented a family ticket from a female teacher who was subsequently placed under arrest. I was aware that Pinkerton had used female operatives at least since the Civil War and that a number had worked on railroad assignments, particularly as spotters for conductor fraud, but this NYC story was the first mention I'd found of a woman who might have been employed directly by the railroad in an enforcement capacity. Of course, there is a strong possibility she was a clerical employee who was pressed into service as an undercover officer, a common occurrence before women were employed in railroad police departments. The Missouri Pacific Lines *Magazine* bragged in 1944 about having a "real, sure-enough, honest-to-goodness 'Pistol packing Mama'" in describing Thelma Morgan, who, in addition to serving as secretary to MoPac's Chief Special Agent at Houston, was also a Harris County deputy sheriff. Interestingly, MoPac, for all its excitement, had no intention of making Miss Morgan a special agent! Moving into the modern period, the Norfolk and Southern *World* in 1983 and 1984 for the first time mentioned female NW and Southern Railway special agents.

Conclusion

My time in St. Louis flew; although most of it was spent at the table where I had set up in the Library. Ever the transportation freak, though, I did manage to ride MetroLink and to stop by Union Station, taking a few notes on Mayor Bryan Mullanphy's use of his father's inheritance to set up what eventually became the Travelers Aid Society. I look forward to an opportunity to return to the Barriger, but the next time I will be more than a visiting Summer Fellow, I will be a full-fledged member of the St. Louis Mercantile Library with friends and colleagues at the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library – a most enviable position for a railroad historian.

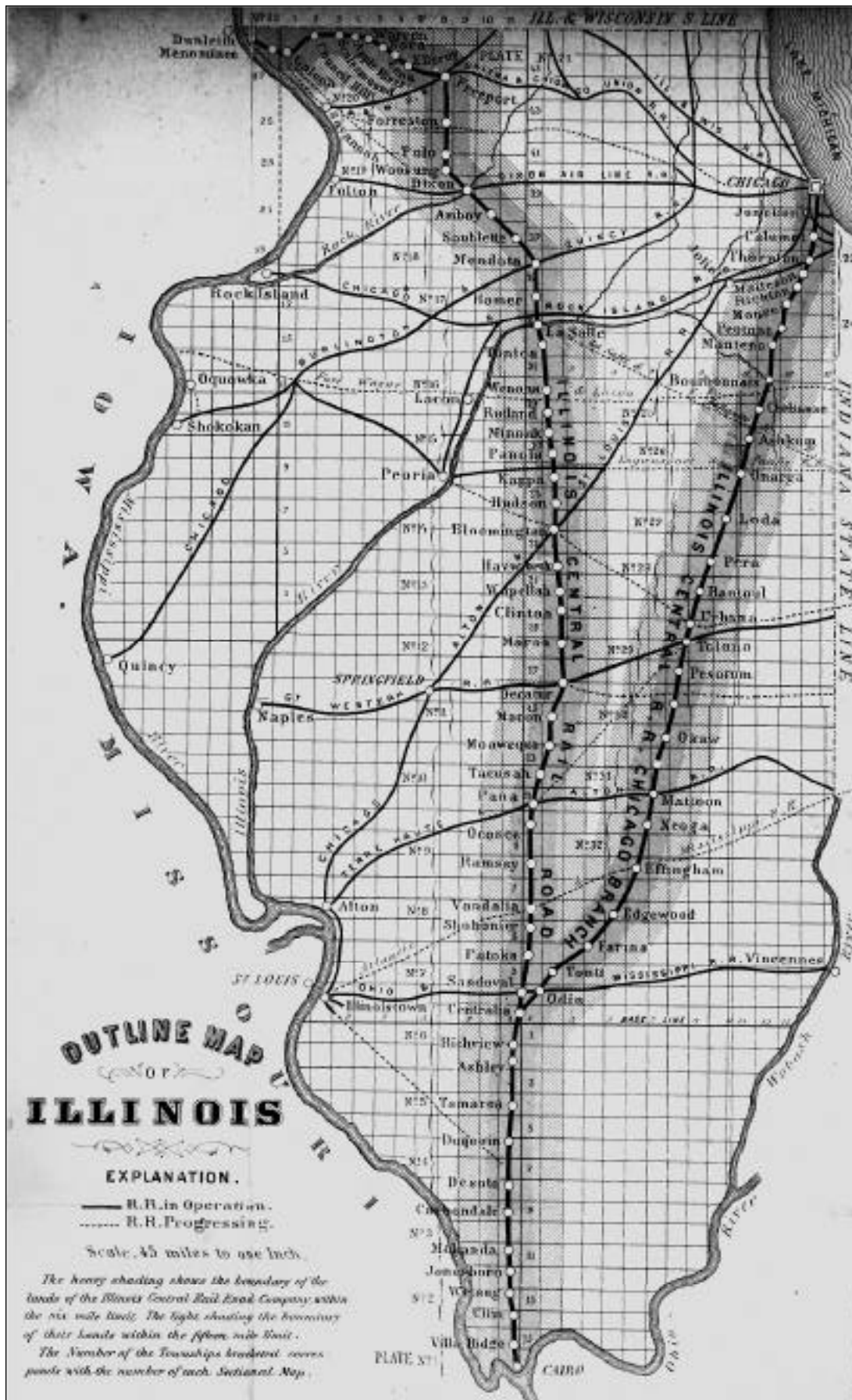


Fig. 2

Misplacing St. Louis & Other Railroad Map Mishaps and Mischief

By Gregory Ames

Curator, John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library



“It is...the unrolling of a new map,” enthused Samuel Bowles in 1869, fresh from a railroad trek across the continent from New York to San Francisco and back, “a revelation of new empire, the creation of a new civilization.”¹ The new map he praised was, of course, a railroad map. Millions of Americans were similarly moved

by railroad maps and the “new civilization” they helped create. Railroad maps were both the harbingers and chroniclers of our continent’s transformation. They were essential to the surveying and construction of railroads and they were often persuasive in securing investors for new lines. They helped attract business, agriculture and industry to locate trackside. They played vital roles in encouraging migration and promoting railroad travel as well as helping maintain the right-of-way and myriad other functions: legal, commercial, and environmental. Railroad maps were also – many of them – *wrong*, especially many of the railroad advertising maps that form the focus of this study. As railroads realized early on, advertising maps were too influential a tool to be permitted to reflect mere geographical truth.

Ambrose Bierce, our greatest wit and the grouchiest of 19th century social critics, would not have viewed railroad maps the way Bowles and his contemporaries did as maps to personal and social progress. In his *Devil’s Dictionary*, Bierce defined the railroad as:

The chief of many mechanical devices enabling us to get away from where we are to where we are no better off. For this purpose the railroad is held in highest favor by the optimist, for it permits him to make the transit with the greatest expedition.²

He would likewise have defined railroad maps as *the chief of many guides showing us the way to where we are no better off*. Bierce knew the elements and importance of mapmaking; he served as a topographical engineer during the Civil War.³ He was also an outspoken critic of what he called “railroques” and their deceptive business practices. A good dose of his skepticism will come in handy while looking at what I call railroad map mishaps and mischief. But we needn’t become curmudgeons like him. Railroads – and the maps that helped engineer their evolution and growth – more than made good on their promise to build this country, even if that worthy end did not always justify the cartographic means.

Railroad maps share with most maps a special power to convince us of their truth and accuracy. Even the discerning reader who has learned to question what he or she sees in a newspaper, magazine, or on the Internet, habitually takes on faith anything they view in a map. “It is interesting to inquire what gives the map this extraordinary authority,” wrote the economist and polymath Kenneth Boulding, “an authority greater than that of the sacred books of all religions.” He attributed this authority to the mapmaker’s superior feedback: “A mapmaker who puts out an inaccurate map will soon have this fact called to his attention by people who use the map and who find it violates their spatial image derived from personal experience.”⁴ This authority is reinforced by the map’s ability in turn “to have a profound effect on our spatial image.”⁵

As an example of the latter, a friend to whom I’d mentioned the theme of this article, told me it called to mind an unpleasant experience he had years ago on the Western Pacific Railroad. No stranger to railroads or maps, he knew that a straight line on a railroad map did not necessarily mean the track was without curves. Still, his spatial image of the WP was primarily as an east-west road, a notion reinforced by maps similar to (Fig. 1) “We were westbound, near the Utah/Nevada border,” he said, “and I was concentrating on a draft of a business proposal. Suddenly, through the left hand side window of our coach, I was startled to see a blazing setting sun. We were headed due north! For a moment, I thought sure I was on the wrong train.”

The great power and latent danger of maps is that they are often taken as literal transcripts of the environment they represent. This link is confirmed by many metaphorical references to maps as landscape and vice versa, such as Samuel Bowles’ dramatic description quoted above in which the landscape becomes a new map redrawn by Americans’ western railroad progress. So great is the power of maps that when cartographic errors or distortions are recognized – no matter how astonishing or ridiculous – they seem only to cast in greater relief our implicit faith in their accuracy and truthfulness, as if exceptions prove the rule.

The truth is that no map is perfect or can be. Mark Monmonier, in his book *How To Lie With Maps*, claims “there’s no escape from the cartographic paradox: to present a useful and truthful picture, an accurate map must tell white lies.”⁶ In the process of transferring a three-dimensional sphere, Earth, to a two-dimensional flat surface, a map, distortions inevitably result. When we consider the mapmaker’s need, for the sake of clarity, to be selective about what he or she includes in a map,

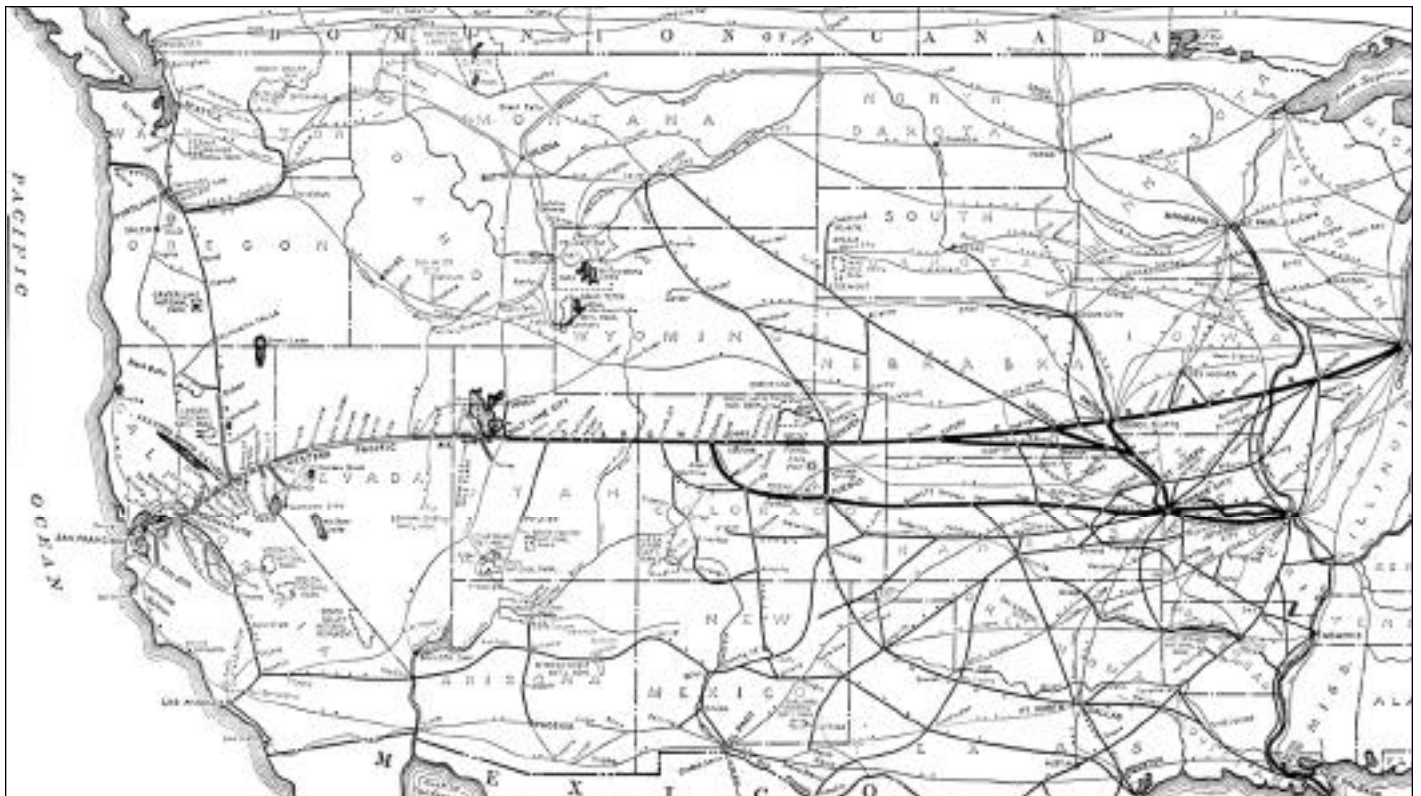


Fig. 1

and the perspective and partisanship of the persons commissioning the map – along with a host of other factors – it becomes clear that while most maps serve their purposes very well, many contain limitations or biases of which we should at least be aware if not suspicious. Mapmakers from antiquity onwards have relied on these “white lies” as well as prevarication of the more darkly shaded variety. Railroads’ intimate link with the land, the starkly competitive nature of railroading, and an unprecedented demand for maps by travelers spurred cartographers to sharpen their skills in creating maps that were specially designed to flatter individual railroad lines.

A prime example of how most railroad maps tell “white lies” is the depiction of railroad lines themselves. Our faith in maps allows us to gloss over the simple fact that railroad *lines* on maps, in order to be read as railroads, are drawn significantly out-of-scale. This is characteristic of many cultural and physical map symbols, which are often depicted – in terms of scale – much larger on maps than they are in reality. The width of railroad track is frequently represented on maps to be 80 feet wide or more,⁷ oftentimes giving the impression that railroads dominate the landscape far more than they really do.

Meriting further study is the contributing effect such distortion may have had historically on how railroads were perceived and on the development of public policy affecting them. Most of us when looking at the network of railroad lines stretching out across a map

see the spread of civilization across the land. Railroad lines symbolize economic health and the fulfillment of our Manifest Destiny. In Frank Norris’s novel *The Octopus*, however, San Francisco attorney Lyman Derrick has a different take on a California Railroad Commission map:

The whole map was gridironed by a vast, complicated network of red lines marked P. and S. W. R. R.... The map was white, and it seemed as if all the color which should have gone to vivify the various counties, towns and cities marked upon it had been absorbed by that huge, sprawling organism, with its ruddy arteries converging to a central point. It was as though the state had been sucked white and colorless, and against this pallid background the red arteries of the monster stood out, swollen with lifeblood, reaching out to infinity, gorged to bursting; an excrescence, a gigantic parasite fattening upon the lifeblood of an entire commonwealth.⁸

A turn-of-the-century congressman determined to pass railroad regulation bills might have formed a similar mental picture while contemplating a transcontinental railroad map.

Historians George Taylor and Irene Neu took the measure of railroad maps and the space between the rails and found both wanting. In their book, *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890*, they warn historians of the hazards of using pre-Civil War railroad maps, many of which give a false impression of a continuous railroad

network. In fact, the nation was not uniformly connected by 4 feet 8½” gauge track until 1886. The *American Railway Times* of May 11, 1861 reported that “only about 53% of railroad mileage in the U.S. and Canada utilized 4 feet 8½” gauge; the remainder used various gauges up to six feet. The wide variety of track gauges often impeded the cars of one railroad from traveling on another line. Intercity competition was the primary reason for the different gauges of railroad tracks; railroads were built initially to attract trade and wealth to specific, competing cities. No town wanted goods to travel on to another locale. Responsible maps of the period identify the track gauge of individual railroads. Taylor and Neu attribute deficiencies in lesser maps to “errors in execution and...the mapmakers’ lack of data.”⁹

After 1870, mapmakers’ errors, the “mishaps” of our title, explains an ever-decreasing percentage of incorrect railroad maps. This is a tribute to the growing abilities and professionalism of American cartographers of that era as well as improved information sources. Quality was a matter not only of good business sense, but of professional pride as seen in the following account, taken from an 1889 *New York Times* article on the challenges cartographers faced in a changing world. The J. H. Colton Company, one of the most respected of 19th century American mapmakers, found to its dismay that it had inadvertently omitted a major Midwestern city from a map of the region.

It was a railroad map that once caused the Coltons a world of annoyance some years ago...Five thousand copies of the map were ordered, and these were sent to the company wanting them. Then and not until then, it was discovered that the map-maker, who at heart must have been a Chicago man, had drawn State lines faithfully enough, but without any mark which would suggest that St. Louis had ever existed. When the error was discovered the railroad people were excited and the Coltons in despair. To remedy matters was the first thought of the firm, and as quickly as the telegraph could do it the maps were called in. Forty-seven hundred came back...and “St. Louis,” in red ink, was marked on every copy. The change made the map more conspicuous, and the railroad people were better pleased with it than they would have been had it been correct in the first place...“Was the man who put you to this trouble discharged?,” asked the reporter. “No, Sir,” was the reply. “He had been with us twenty seven years, was one of the best men in the business, and we were sure that this experience would prevent his ever making a mistake again.”¹⁰

Fortunately for St. Louisans, “The map is not the territory,” as the semanticist Alfred Korzybski famously pointed out.¹¹ At risk in such an omission was more than civic pride. Not to be “on the map” was economically and metaphorically foreboding for a town of any size.



Fig. 3

The unnamed railroad’s public relations were also at stake: about this time, “St. Louisans bitterly resented what they considered discrimination by the trunk line railroads in favor of Chicago.”¹² This was just one element of a long-standing rivalry, playfully alluded to by the *New York Times*, between the two cities.

The *raison d’être* of most maps is of course to show travelers their destinations and in this railroad maps excelled. Few maps, until the advent of the automobile age, showed as many towns as railroad maps. This was a point of pride as well as of commerce for the towns and a business advantage for the railroad. But in the haste to build railroads, towns were sometimes “on the map” before they existed on the ground. In 1864 Charles Perkins, the future Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad president (then a land agent for the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad), wrote home to his wife, referring to the towns of Batavia, Whitfield, and Agency City, Iowa: “towns they are on paper, meadows or timber land with here and there a house in reality.”¹³ Railroads could make or break a town as Confederate general Braxton Bragg found cause to lament. “He couldn’t find a place fellow general P. G. T. Beauregard had noted as being vital and strategic. ‘May it not have changed name or lost its place on the map in these railroad days?’” he reportedly asked.¹⁴

Beyond the “white lies” of mapmaking lies a province the prince of liars himself might regard as home, a place where cartographers’ skills make crooked railroads appear as straight lines, far away seems near, and railroad stations always provide a common junction for the next train in your journey. A “behind the scenes” account of this approach to railroad mapmaking is

presented by this lampoon from the New York Herald. It is a not unrealistic depiction of the railroads' relationship with commercial cartographers:

"This won't do," said the General Passenger Agent, in annoyed tones, to the mapmaker. "I want Chicago moved down here an inch, so as to come on our direct route to New York. Then take Buffalo and put it a little farther from the lake.

"You've got Detroit and New York on different latitudes, and the impression that that is correct won't help our road.

"And, man, take those two lines that compete with us and make 'em twice as crooked as that. Why, you've got one of them almost straight.

"Yank Boston over a little to the west and put New York a little to the west, so as to show passengers that our Buffalo division is the shortest route to Boston.

"When you've done all these things I've said, you may print 10,000 copies – but say, how long have you been in the railroad business, anyway?"¹⁵

Railroads transformed our continent physically and temporally; it was the task of railroad advertising maps to influence travelers' and shippers' perceptions of the railroad and the land it traversed. With the maturing of the railroad network in the 1880s and the increased competition created by parallel routes, railroad advertising became, according to business historian Alfred Chandler, "aggressive."¹⁶ Like all advertisers, railroads were motivated by the need to *differentiate*: to distinguish their product and maximize positive perceptions of it at the expense of their competitors. Andrew Modelski, formerly of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress, suggests that railroad officials' interest in the art of map deception was originally inspired by land grant maps, which used distortion to "emphasize one state, area, or line to the advantage of the advertiser."¹⁷ He points to a map contained in a book the Barriger Library is proud to have in its collections: *The Illinois Central Railroad Company Offers for Sale Over 2,000,000 Acres Selected Farming and Woodland* (Fig. 2), printed in 1856, as an early prototype for the kind of distortion later commonly seen in railroad maps: the closely-linked and evenly spaced towns along a railroad straight as a crow flies.

A frank avowal – professionally dressed – of the mischief cartographers resorted to is offered by the following, taken from a Rand McNally promotional booklet published about 1879. It is a marvel of candor and a meaningful key to the business philosophy underlying railroad map distortion.

Map "Designing," to other than a railroad official, might seem a peculiar phrase, but the majority of

railroad maps have some "peculiar designs" hidden under the careful pencil of the draughtsman. It requires a faculty only afforded by experience and a perfect knowledge of the railroad system of the country, to "design" a good railroad advertising map. The various friendly interests must be shown to best advantage, and the rival interests disposed of in a manner that "no fellow can find out." The drawing of a good map is a matter of considerable difficulty, but the "designing" of a good map involves the exercise of tact and ingenuity.¹⁸

The key phrase here is advertising map: advertising "legitimized" all manner of map distortion, though Rand McNally clearly took professional pride in performing this work "tactfully and ingeniously." Or wished us to believe that it did. The company whose name is now synonymous with maps enjoyed a long and prosperous relationship with railroads, beginning its railroad-related business by printing tickets.¹⁹ Though Rand McNally may have had misgivings about map mischief, more likely the company was concerned about how its image might be tarnished by distorted railroad maps. Following on the heels of the above quote is a proud statement suggestive of an effort to redeem those "peculiar designs:"

Probably more *original* map projections have been made by our map drawing room than have ever been produced in the United States. It is not generally known that our large railroad and county map...is the second *original* projection of a United States map ever made. Our United States and Canada Atlas is made from the same projection.²⁰

Conferring a kind of distinction, however, upon the distorted railroad map, John Snyder, President of the American Cartographic Association and the author of *Flattening the Earth: Two Thousand Years of Map Projections*, assigns the diverse and distorted creations of railroad cartographers their own generic place among more standardized projections such as Mercator, Goode, Robinson and others. Snyder cites their "detailed geographic information [which] gives a deceptively cartographic flavor that," he feels, "places them in the category of map projections."²¹

Snyder and other geographers and cartographers prefer not to grace the kind of product (Fig. 4) frequently reproduced in timetables and in the *Official Railway Guide* (a major source for passenger agents and others that provides train schedules and maps) with the word *map*. According to them, these maps are best referred to as *cartograms*. The cartographer Erwin Raisz defined these as "abstracted, simplified maps, the purpose of which is to demonstrate a single idea in a diagrammatic way."²² The stylized station map displayed in St. Louis Metro Link light rail cars is a good example of a cartogram.



Fig. 4

Few travelers, it might be argued, counted on such products to be reliable as maps. At least one contemporary observer, Oscar B. Ireland, quoted below, makes precisely that point. But even knowledgeable travelers could on occasion be duped by them. An anonymous correspondent of the *Railway Gazette* recalled:

...one Christmas eve, when, snowbound at a crossing in Northern Indiana, he with a number of other travelers, tramped in a snowstorm to a town which according to the map of the snow-bound road, the only accessible guide, should have been only two or three miles away, yet when Christmas morning dawned upon the tired travelers, who had found shelter at a farm house, there still lay 10 miles between them and their objective point.²³

The Magi can thank their lucky star they did not have to rely on railroad maps. Your average railroad passenger did not consciously make much of a distinction between railroad advertising maps and more “legitimate” railroad maps. But even the savvy traveler would have been surprised to learn that distorted railroad maps were not limited to timetables, brochures, and similar publications one might ordinarily expect to serve an advertising purpose. Distortions also appear in more sophisticated publications such as railroad annual report maps and wall-size maps. The latter naturally incurred the greatest ire among cartographic reformers such as Oscar Ireland. His lengthy and eloquent letter to the American Geographical Society in 1900 (from which we can offer only this excerpt) urged that organization to protest a specific type of distortion, the practice of using different scales for different parts of the same map in an effort to highlight a specific railroad and to show-up its competitors:

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad some time ago issued a map, printed by Rand, McNally & Co., of this character. Taking the distance from Boston to Chicago as a standard, the distance from San Francisco to Denver is shown in reliable maps to be about 1.12 of this standard distance. On the

map referred to it is only about .9 of the standard distance, or 80% of what it should be... This map is mounted on rollers and got up in such a manner as to adapt it to use as a wall map, and it is quite good enough in general execution to be preserved for reference... Of course, cheap sketches of railroad routes are not expected to be accurate as maps, but when our wealthiest corporations issue in large quantities maps of this kind, prepared by the leading mapmakers of the country, it seems to me that they are likely to do a good deal in the way of instilling ideas that must be afterwards unlearned if one is to get at the truth...²⁴

His call to arms remained unanswered. But contrary to what Bierce might have expected from his “railrooges,” not all railroad officials were sanguine about the propriety of cartographic distortion. George Heafford, General Passenger Agent of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, in an address about truth in advertising given before the General Passenger and Ticket Agents Association Convention in 1878 related the following:

As an instance of the good which results from the truthfulness in the depiction of the ordinary railroad map which we frequently find posted on the out-houses, dead-walls and fences of our large cities, may I be permitted to relate the following: When the Erie & Chicago line was first started, it ran from Chicago via Cleveland and Salamanca to New York, and its enterprising managers got out large posters depicting the route of the line in the broadest band of the blackest ink, and placing the names of a few of the largest cities in large letters about six inches apart and upon nearly the same parallel of latitude. One day four gentlemen of the Celtic persuasion, attracted by the appearance of the map stretched outside the Chicago office, called upon the gentlemanly agent and desired to know the price of second-class tickets to New York, and were informed that the fare was about \$20, which seemed to stagger them somewhat, and they went outside and recommenced the study of that wonderful map.

By means of a foot measure and the use of their knowledge of that mathematical term known as the “unknown quantity,” they discovered that Chicago and Cleveland were only about four miles apart, and that other stations named were about similarly placed as to distance. The final conclusion of the party was summed by the leader thereof with the brief and decisive remark: “Be jabbers, it’s not far, let’s walk!”; and they may be walking yet for all I know.²⁵

Heafford confessed he could not personally vouch for the truth of his Vaudeville-like tale. But he was in perfect earnest when he told the assembly: “to a great extent the Railroads have been the means for advance-



Ready for Delivery— 43 Million People



• 43,000,000 people—one-third of the country's population—live within 50 miles of Erie tracks. Here, in the Erie Empire, are your best customers.

Whether you buy or sell, ship or receive, you tap ready markets and convenient sources of supply when your plant is located on the Erie.

We can tell you of markets and materials, labor supply, taxes, real estate values, available factories or sites. We can help you sell these 43,000,000 customers—and many more—at lower cost. There is no charge or obligation. Write the Industrial Commissioner, Erie Railroad, Cleveland.



Fig. 5

ment of civilization throughout the world, and may fairly be called *educators*.” Because of their role in “promoting...a more universal knowledge of geography than any other class of instructors,” he declared it was incumbent on railroads to tell the truth, geographic and otherwise, “at all times and in all places.”²⁶

A fascinating document, submitted to the *Railroad Gazette* in 1898 by an unidentified correspondent and reproduced here as (Fig. 6) purports to graphically depict the variations in location given major cities in railroad maps in the territory between the Atlantic Ocean and the Midwest. The geographically correct location of major cities (identified by solid dots) is shown in comparison to their locations as represented by various advertising maps (shown as circles). Both the Vandalia and Wabash Railroads push St. Louis well into Illinois whereas the Big Four and Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern inexplicably tug St. Louis further back into Missouri. “Cincinnati,” quipped the *Gazette* editor, “was so far south that most of the lines lacked the courage to get anywhere near it...Four of the lines that aimed at Cleveland had to move the city out into the lake, one of them many miles, in order to be able to hit it.” Again, the railroad as educator card was drawn:

The writer knows of one town on a leading trunk line, in the schoolhouse of which hangs the map of this great railroad line. This is the only map there of the state whose name the road bears, and yet its lines are distorted in a seemingly purposeless way. If a pupil should compare this with a true map he would probably form a very unfavorable opinion of either the intelligence or the honesty of the railroad officers.²⁷

Fully aware of railroad efforts to standardize many aspects of their operations (eg: time zones and track gauges), this anonymous proponent of truth in railroad advertising asked, “In this age of uniform practices and standards, why shouldn’t the railroads of the country agree on a uniform railroad map?”²⁸ In response, the editor of the *Railroad Gazette* claimed, “The humors and absurdities of railroad maps are apparent to the ignorant and smiled at in easy toleration.” No change would be forthcoming, he asserted, until “the General Passenger Agents acquire a higher respect for the intelligence of the average man. We remember having seen the phrase ‘geographically correct’ on railroad maps now and then, though we cannot recall the names of the roads or of the courageous general passenger agents who issued the maps.” He concludes by relating a story that suggests how low the term *railroad map* might be considered to have fallen even among railroad officials themselves:

A General Passenger Agent of one of the lines from Chicago to Omaha, who once got mad at the way in which a competitor wiped out curves, got out a map showing his own road as a perfect air line, about five miles thick, for 500 miles, but then he relented and said in a note that this was a railroad map.²⁹

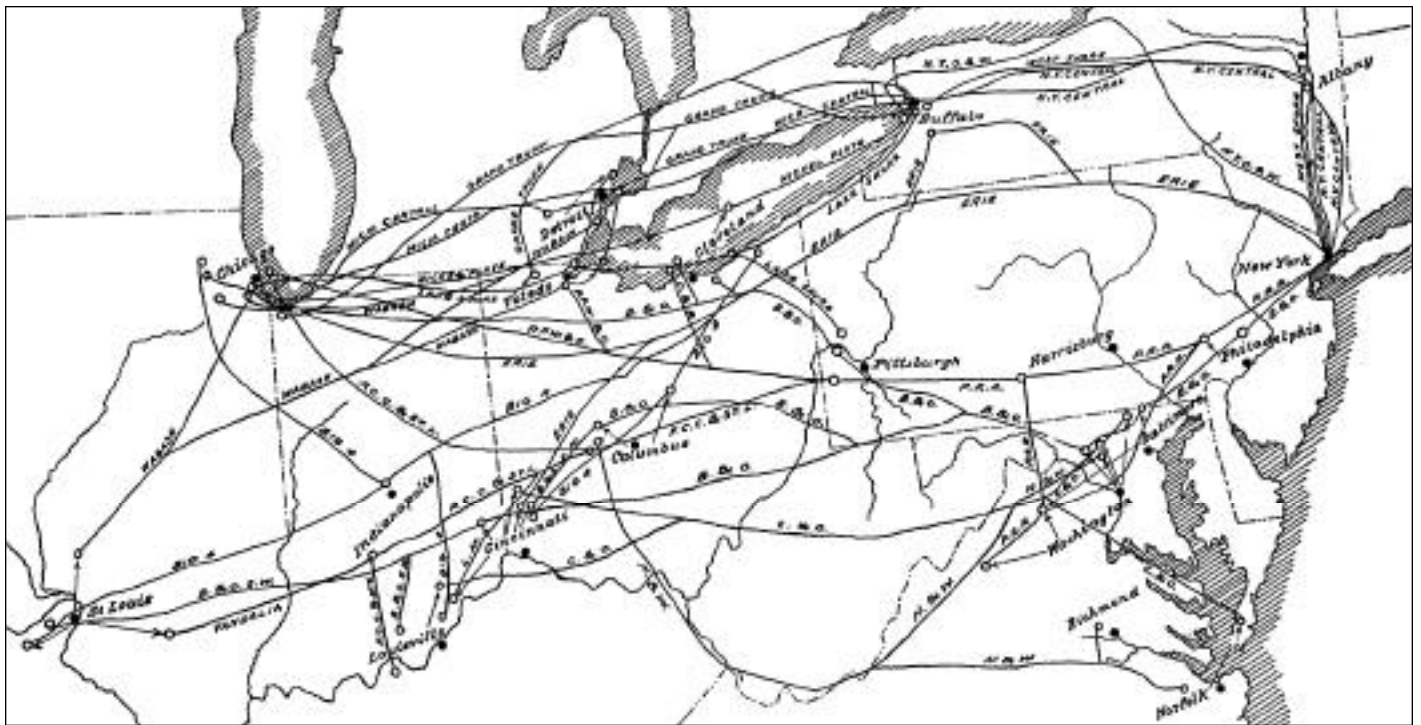


Fig. 6

Some railroads did indeed issue “geographically correct” maps (Fig. 7) and these were frequently labeled as such. But no railroad I’m aware of thought it worth the focus of an advertising campaign against the railroads that did not. In a highly competitive business environment, even roads that issued correct maps preferred to keep their advertising options open. The underlying concept was simple: if differences did not exist between your railroad and others, competition required that differences be invented; if comparative weakness existed in your railroad then it must be disguised. Commercial cartographers themselves, on whom railroads relied for most maps, had little to gain by conformance to standards that would have impacted the value-added charges applied to their creative mapmaking.

Beyond business stratagems, there was another factor in the widespread use of distorted railroad maps. If railroads in their advertising took full advantage of the faith all of us place in maps, it is worth observing that a distinction was conferred on maps by their connection with railroads. Over time, despite accidents, robber barons, and Ambrose Bierce, railroads earned a polished reputation for reliability and precision (the conductor’s watch, for example, is a well-known symbol of this public image). Reliability and precision are also two qualities commonly associated with maps. Railroad maps, then, were a marriage made in heaven and hell: the varnished image of railroading rubbed off easily onto maps and vice versa, producing in most Americans a suspension of disbelief in regard to both. American travelers, eminently utilitarian, eminently trusting in regard to maps and railroads’ proven track record,

were largely unaware that distorted railroad maps “violated their spatial image.” travelers were focused on their destinations and on the towns that stretched along their maps like beads on a rosary. Many travelers were fascinated by the landscape, that most magnificent map of all that unrolled outside their windows. Most were not interested in geography lessons, though Erwin Raisz rightly counted this as a lost opportunity:

It is...unfortunate that a great educational opportunity is neglected. Attractive railroad maps showing the nature of the country, its geology, products, and interesting features, would awaken interest in travel and would make the weary hours in a train an adventure in geography.³⁰

By 1928, the editor of *Railway Age* could write that the “movement of non-distorted and non-pictorial maps in railway timetables seems to be a time-honored cause.”³¹ A time-honored cause it may have been for railroad advertising maps of *all* kinds, but not one that was always honored in the breach.

Railroad maps, mischievous or not, are an important – though neglected – field of study, one the Barriger Library is particularly well-equipped to support. Not only part and parcel of railroad history, railroad maps offer interesting perspectives on urban development, migration, population and business growth, among many other areas of inquiry. Railroad maps also played a formative role in the development of the map printing industry in the U.S., even helping to confer on American maps their characteristic tendency to focus on transportation and towns to the comparative exclusion of other physical and cultural features. Certainly no maps,

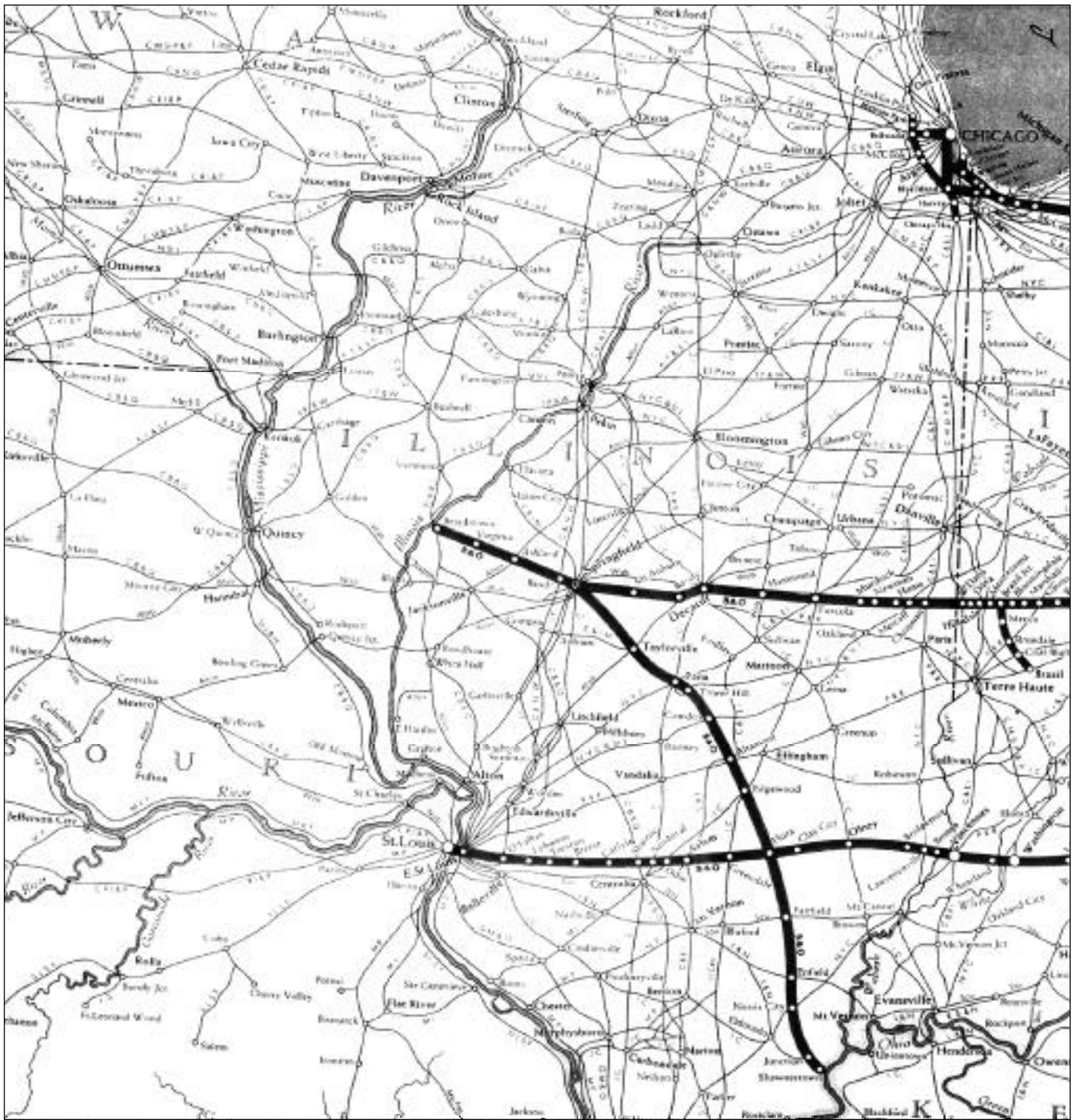


Fig. 7

until the advent of road maps, played so prominent a role as they did in the lives of so many Americans. Today, it is surprising how much a part of history they are: with the decline of railroad passenger travel in the United States relatively few maps depict the once omnipresent railroads.

In *Travels With Charley*, John Steinbeck suggests – in a passage cautioning against over-reliance on maps – that railroad transportation could not rival the kind

of freedom most Americans came to associate with automobiles:

For weeks I studied maps, large-scale and small, but maps are not reality at all – they can be tyrants. I know people who are so immersed in road maps that they never see the countryside they pass through, and others who, having traced a route are held to it as though held by flanged wheels to rails.³²

The iron rails that so impressed Samuel Bowles by opening up the West – that bestowed on Americans so much personal freedom – had by the 1960s become for most of us a metaphor for restriction, close-mindedness and insularity. This was something no cartographer, no matter how clever, could ever hope to disguise.

FIGURAL DESCRIPTIONS:

- #1 Is this map the missing link bridging the gap between distorted land grant maps and distorted railroad maps? Andrew Modelski, formerly of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, believes it is. From: *the Illinois Central Offers for Sale Over 2,000,000 Acres Selected Farming and Woodlands*, 1856.
- #2 A Western Pacific Railroad map from that company's 1951 *Annual Report* is representative of how railroads straighten curves in their advertising maps. Many investors knew a railroad comprised of more straight track costs less to operate – other things being equal – than a highly curved railroad owing to less wear and tear on locomotives, cars and track. Let's hope WPinvestors took their own inspection trip over the line and didn't depend on this map!
- #3 Many prominent railroad executives began their careers map surveying, among them Jay Gould and John Edgar Thomson. Thomas Scott, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad (1874-80) "often used to get up in the middle of the night to study a railroad map and to plan new enterprises." Judging from the map he's poring over, journalistic irreverence toward railroad maps has already set in. From: *Humors of the Railroad Kings: Authentic and Original Anecdotes of Prominent Railroad Men* by George Small, 1872. (Reproduced courtesy of the **Making of America Books** project, University of Michigan).
- #4 Creative cartography was generously applied to this South Dakota Central Railway map in order to accommodate the towns on its route, show the extent of its connections, and to make the railroad's namesake state appear more centralized in the west than it actually is. South Dakota is in reality 9% larger than North Dakota; here, the Coyote State is shown 53% larger than its northern neighbor. From: *the Official Guide of the Railways*, June 1916.
- #5 A stirring example of a pictorial map, one of many that create a dynamic visual link between a highly stylized "cartogram" and a landscape dominated by the railroad, in this case, the Erie. From: *Fortune*, May 1937.
- #6 A Composite Railroad Map submitted in 1898 by an anonymous correspondent to the *Railway Gazette* in 1898. It tracks the diversely placed locations of cities appearing on railroad advertising maps. The railroad routes depicted are not meant to be accurate representations.
- #7 A detail from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's *Geographically Correct Map of the Northeastern United States*, issued in 1944 by Rand McNally. Geographically correct it is and a good example of the cartographer's art, but the map is not without aspects of salesmanship: the route of the railroad is decidedly overemphasized. In terms of scale, the B&O railroad track is depicted as being over 2½ miles wide.

NOTES

- ¹Bowles, Samuel, *The Pacific Railroad – Open. How to Go: What to See. Guide for Travel to and through Western America* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869), 5.
- ²Bierce, Ambrose, *The Devil's Dictionary* (New York: Dover, 1962 reprint of 1911 edition), 106.
- ³Fatout, Paul, "Ambrose Bierce, Civil War Topographer," *American Literature* 26 (November 1954), 391-400.
- ⁴Boulding, Kenneth E., *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1961), 67.

⁵*Ibid.*, 65

- ⁶Monmonier, Mark, *How to Lie With Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1. A humorous, hypothetical case of railroad map making is offered on pp. 59-61.
- ⁷Greenwood, David, *Mapping* (Chicago: Phoenix Science Series – University of Chicago Press, 1964), 45.
- ⁸Norris, Frank, *The Octopus: a Story of California* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 204-205.
- ⁹Taylor, George Rogers and Irene D. Neu, *The American Railroad Network, 1861-1890* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1956), 3-14.
- ¹⁰"Woes of the Mapmakers: Geographical Changes Are Hard to Foretell," *New York Times*, 22 December, 1889, 14.
- ¹¹Wiley, Mark, "Map Making" in *Composition in Four Keys: Inquiring into the Field* by Mark Wiley, Barbara Gleason, and Louise Wetherbee Phillips (Mountain View, Cal.: Mayfield, 1996), 543.
- ¹²Martin, Albrow, *Railroads Triumphant: the Growth, Rejection, & Rebirth of a Vital American Force* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 73.
- ¹³Glaab, Charles N. and A. Theodore Brown, *A History of Urban America* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 114.
- ¹⁴McElfresh, Earl B., *Maps and Mapmakers of the Civil War* (New York: Abrams, 1999), 17.
- ¹⁵Woodward, David, *The All-American Map: Wax Engraving and its Influence on Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 33.
- ¹⁶Chandler, Alfred D., *The Visible Hand: the Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 123.
- ¹⁷Modelski, Andrew M., *Railroad Maps of North America: the First Hundred Years* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1984), xvii-xviii.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, xix.
- ¹⁹Ristow, Walter W., *American Maps and Mapmakers: Commercial Cartography in the Nineteenth Century* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 467.
- ²⁰Modelski, xix. Italics in original.
- ²¹Snyder, John P., *Flattening the Earth: Two Thousand Years of Map Projections* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 154.
- ²²Raisz, Erwin, *General Cartography* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), 221-222.
- ²³"A Composite Railroad Map," *Railroad Gazette* 30 (January 28, 1898), 59.
- ²⁴Woodward, 33-36.
- ²⁵Heafford, George H. In *Proceedings of the Convention of the General Ticket and Passenger Agents Association held in Jacksonville, Florida, March 8, 1878, 497-500*. Reprinted widely with emendations: "Weird Railroad Maps," *Literary Digest* 97 (June 9, 1928), 20; "Truth in Railway Maps," *Railway Age* 84 (April 14, 1928): 879.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, 498 [his capital letter and italics].
- ²⁷"A Composite Railroad Map," 59.
- ²⁸Only the Interstate Commerce Commission imposed map standards on railroads. This was for the production of valuation maps, a Federal project begun in 1913 to determine the value of railroad fixed plant, equipment and financial holdings.
- ²⁹"A Common Fault of American General Passenger Agents," *Railroad Gazette* 30 (January 28, 1898), 63.
- ³⁰Raisz, 222
- ³¹"Truth in Railway Maps," 879.
- ³²Steinbeck, John, *Travels With Charley* (New York: Bantam Books, 1963), 23.



Scanland Civil War era Water Service

Reflections on a Silver Pitcher: Captain Scanland's Civil War-Era Water Service

By Bette Gorden

Curator, Herman T. Pott National Inland Waterways Library

A shared goal of cultural historians, archaeologists, and museum curators is encouraging historical objects – be they monuments or the artifacts of our daily life – to tell their stories. Skilled as these experts are, they often find themselves wishing the objects of their interest could speak more clearly, more completely about their life and times. So it is especially noteworthy when an object like the Civil War-era silver water service (**Fig. 1**) – recently acquired by the Herman T. Pott National Inland Waterways Library¹ – reveals so much about its history and the lives of its contemporaries. This elegant, eloquent silver service reflects much of interest about St. Louis history, as well as of the Civil War and 19th century steamboating. The set also reflects the personal commitment and dedication its honoree, Capt. Robert Scanland, demonstrated during challenging times.

Accompanying the water service is a letter addressed to Capt. Scanland dated June 24th, 1864 documenting its maker and its presentation. “I have ordered Mess Jackard [sic] & Co to Ship you by express,” it reads, “Service set of Waiter [sic], Pitcher & Goblets Contributed by your Steamboat friends of St. Louis...” (**Fig. 2 and Fig. 3**) The St. Louis firm of E. Jaccard & Co. was established in 1829 as jewelers and watchmakers. By 1864 the firm were importers and dealers in watches and jewelry, occupying the same marble building built in 1859, located at 75 N. 4th.² The Jaccard firm advertised itself as a wholesale and retail watchmaker business. In 1863 Eugene Jaccard formed a partnership with two steamboat captains for the purpose of trading and steamboating on the river. This diversification prompted a disagreement with two members of the firm, Augustus Mermod and David Jaccard. They thought that business would suffer because steamboating was outside the regular jewelry business. They sold their interest in the firm on May 1, 1864 to start D.C. Jaccard & Co.³

The “Mess. Jackard [sic] & Co” in the letter is most likely E. Jaccard & Co., because of their close association with steamboating. Further, a silver pitcher shown in an E. Jaccard ad in the 1859 *City Directory* is crafted in the same style as the water pitcher acquired by the library. (**Fig. 4**)⁴ The water service includes an outstanding classical style footed [pitcher] 13.5” high, with chased repose floral decorations. In the center of the tray and on the front of the pitcher is decorated with a

large panel in front with scroll and floral surround on which the following rebus style inscription appears ‘Captain R.C. Scanland [sic] From His [with engraving of sidewheel steamboat] Friends of St. Louis.’ The set includes 2 matching 6.25” high x 3” diameter goblets with same engraving, without the rebus steamboat. The pitcher is marked ‘Jaccard & Co. St. Louis.’ The tray is marked ‘Roger Smith & Co. New Haven Conn.’”⁵

How Captain Scanland came to be awarded this elegant water service is linked to nothing less than the Civil War and the strategic importance of waterways. Shortly after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the first armed Union force in the west raced to Birds Point, Missouri, across the river from Cairo, Illinois. Both locations are at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and command the navigation of these waters; possession of them was a strategic necessity.⁶ Cairo boasted additional strategic significance, facts her leading citizens were quick to grasp. Among Cairo’s advantages: it was located on the dividing line between the Union and Confederacy and the city was the terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad and linked to all the cities in the north. Further, compared to St. Louis and other northern areas along the Mississippi River, Cairo was shown to be free of the obstructions of low water and ice. (**Fig. 5**)⁷ Through numerous proposals, the town’s fathers sought to serve the Union (and their own commercial interests) by recommending placement of major supply depots in their city. (**Fig. 6**)⁸

The first Union western navy yard was established August 1861 at Cairo, with the arrival of three Mississippi River steamboats that had been converted into gunboats. This marked the beginning of the Union’s western flotilla.⁹ Soon, the small city became the Union Headquarters for the Western Department and the supply depot for both the Army and Navy. Cairo was the most significant river port and military camp for western operations during the Civil War.¹⁰ The city was also the Army’s center for the defense of St. Louis. By assembling a large river Navy to support Army functions, the Union ultimately won control of the western waterways.¹¹ But skilled managers were needed to handle the transport of troops, supplies, and munitions if the war effort were to succeed. This was the job of the Quartermaster’s Department and men of the caliber of Capt. Scanland.

Capt. R. C. Scanlan
Cairo Ills

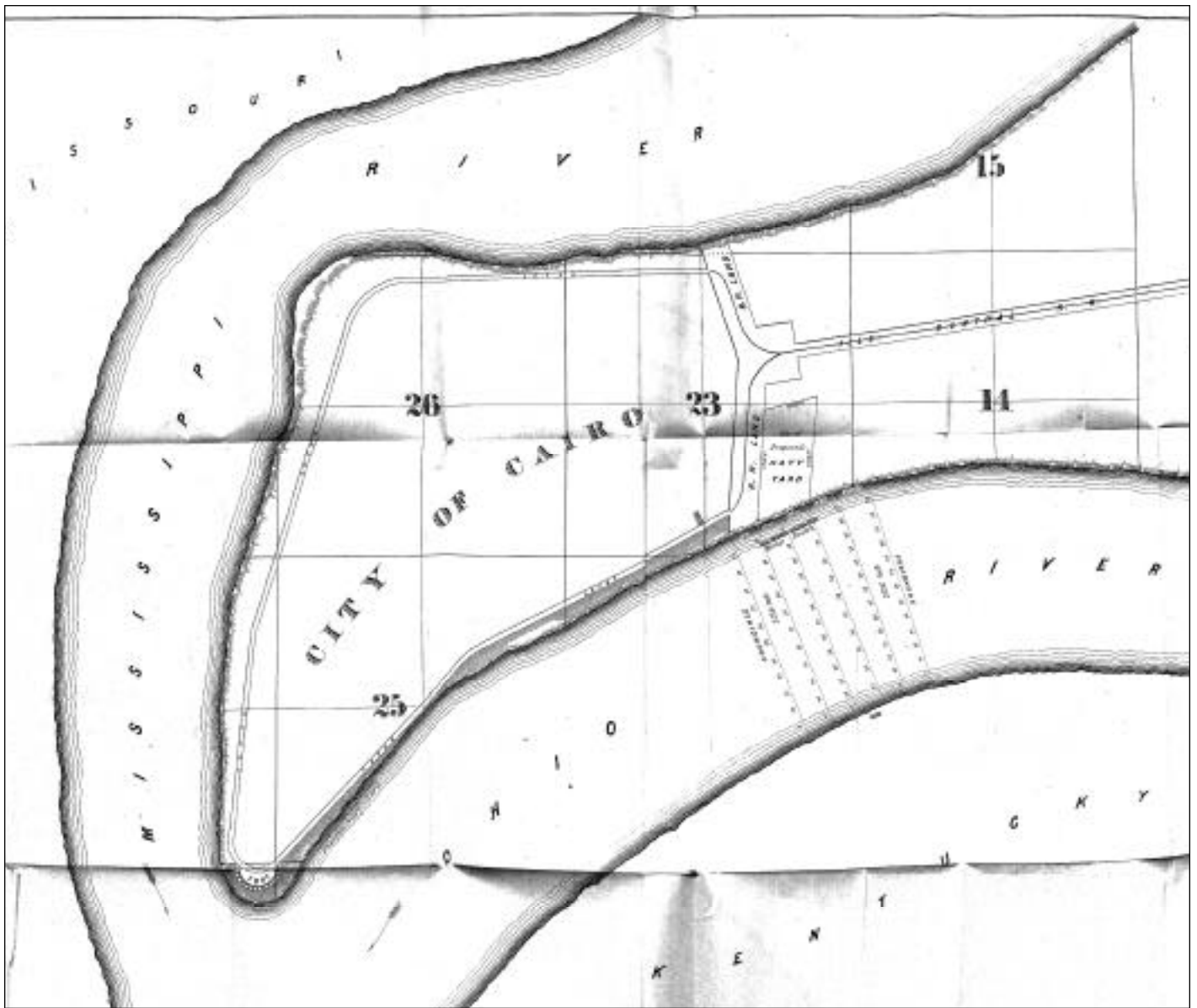
St Louis June 24th 1864

Dear Sir

I have ordered
Mess Jackard & Co to ship you by express. Services
set of Waiver, Pitcher & Goblets Contributed by
your Steamboat friends of St Louis in appreciation
of your Gentlemanly deportment and prompt
attention to business of the Transportation Depart-
ment at Cairo the impartial manner in
which you have transacted the same have won
you many friends among the Steamboatmen
Capt Dan Able of the Foreign Atlantic Mollie
Able & Arthur Capt Pegrum of the Olive Branch
Julia & Ida Handy Capt Sudder of the St Louis
& Memphis Packet & Capt Crawford of the Henry
Ames Capt Ferris of the City of Memphis Capt
O'Neal of the Edward Walsh and the Steamer
Albert Pease join in this testimonial of
regard to you

I am Respectfully
yours Truly
D. St. Greenleaf

Fig.2



E. JACCARD & CO.,
 Importers & Manufacturers of
FINE JEWELRY
 WATCHES, AND SILVER-WARE,
 No. 75 North Fourth Street, SAINT LOUIS.

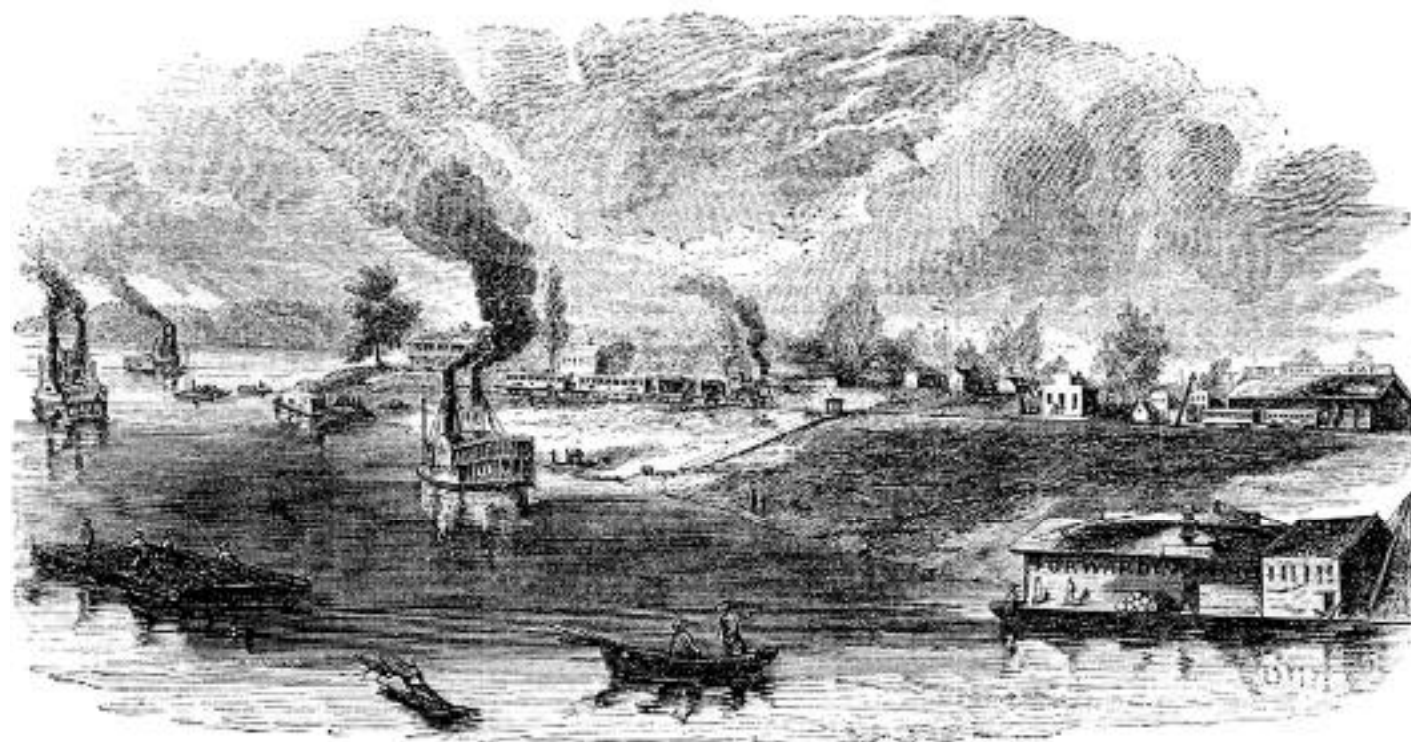
Above Illustrations: From the Pott Inland Waterways Library Collections, St. Louis Mercantile Library

The Quartermaster's Department functioned as the chief supply unit of the Army and had two duties to perform, the first being transportation and distribution. Transportation included railroads, wagons or pack animals on roads, and steamers, sailing vessels, boats by sea, on lakes, canals and rivers.¹² Steamboats were as important as railroads in their role of transporting troops and supplies, and they had the advantage of being able to stop anywhere along the river.¹³ On the inland waterways the Quartermaster's Department was not only concerned with purchasing, chartering, impressing, or capturing steamboats, they also built steamboats and gave assistance to such projects. One of the earliest of these was the construction of a fleet of seven ironclad gunboats for the Western Flotilla, four of which were built by James B. Eads at Carondelet, Missouri, and the remaining three at the dry docks adjacent to Cairo, Illinois. Also at Cairo, repair work on gunboats was carried out as needed. Some steamboats were purchased and others were contracted for Union service. There were 119 steamboats, 305 barges, and 109 coal boats and railroad floats belonging to the Union on the Mississippi River and its tributaries and at Mobile, Alabama. There were 1,750 steamboats and other vessels chartered on the Mississippi and its tributaries by the Quartermaster's Department.¹⁴

The second duty performed by the Quartermaster's Department was procurement or manufacture and custody. Navy funds purchased supplies that included clothing, chains, anchors, canvas, rope, cooking equipment, and food that, every third day, were loaded onto supply vessels for the Union troops. Coal and fuel supplies were also towed in barges from Cairo.¹⁵

Imagine a river congested with these heavily laden boats, each of them important in its own way. At the beginning of the Civil War, river transportation management was complicated by the large number of people operating steamboats, and because the government provided no centralized supervision. Local quartermasters, independent of each other, arranging for the shipment of supplies and transportation of troops made their own rules, regulations, and contracts.¹⁶ Abuses, corruption, and inefficiency were rife on all levels. As the war continued and hard lessons learned, the Navy developed and operated a better-organized, more efficient supply system for its complex, widely dispersed operations.¹⁷

In spite of problems and poor personnel, certain individuals, such as, Assistant Quartermaster, Capt. Robert Caldwell Scanland, distinguished themselves in their work at Cairo, serving the greater cause. Capt.



VIEW OF CAIRO, JUNCTION OF THE OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI RIVERS.

Fig. 4 (From the Pott Inland Waterways Library Collections, St. Louis Mercantile Library)

NOTES:

Scanland was admired and respected by the individuals with whom he worked and the water service presented to him reflects the great esteem in which he was held. The set was presented "... in appreciation of [his] gentlemanly deportment and prompt attention to business of the Transportation Department at Cairo. The impartial manner in which [he] transacted the same: have won [him] many friends among the steamboatmen..."¹⁸ Capt. Scanland was born in Gallatin, now Carroll County, Kentucky on January 23, 1825 and located at Pittsfield, Illinois in 1847. During the Civil War he was stationed at Cairo, Illinois and had charge of the forwarding of troops and munitions to the front, as well as the shipment of captured flags, supplies and cannon, which were sent north. Notable among his charitable efforts, during the war he collected \$1,000 (over \$17,000 in today's currency)¹⁹ among the steamboatmen to relieve the poor of the city. Capt. Scanland died Easter Sunday, April 14, 1895, and his possessions, including the water service and letter, and a gold watch from his steamboat friends became the property of his son, Dr. Robert M. Scanland of Peoria, Illinois.²⁰

The generous donors of the set, Capt. Scanland's seven St. Louis friends, captained boats carrying troops and munitions.²¹ D.N. Greenleaf, the writer of the letter, was Capt. David N. Greenleaf listed in St. Louis city directories as a steamboat and river captain and barge agent. Capt. James O'Neal (O'Neil) of the *Edward Walsh* and *Albert Pearce* steamboats was listed as a steamboat and river captain. It is known that Capt. Crawford was Capt. Thomas L. Crawford of the *Henry Ames*, but nothing more is known about Capt. Terrill of the *City of Memphis*. Capt. Benjamin Rush Pegram of the *Olive Branch*, *Julia* and *Ida Handy* was a well-known steamboat captain and businessman.²² Capt. Daniel Able of the *Forsyth*, *Atlantic*, *Mollie Able*, and *Arthur* besides being a steamboat owner, captain, harbor and wharf commissioner, and businessman, was one of the principals of the Atlantic and Mississippi Steamship Co. Capt. John A. Scudder became president of the St. Louis & Memphis Packet Co. (Anchor Line), and was a very successful businessman.

The Library's presentation water service of a pitcher and two goblets were given in friendship to Capt. Scanland as a useful and beautiful gift commemorating his abilities and fair-mindedness. It is not clear whether the donors or recipient were aware of the charming *double entendre* implicit in the term "water service." What is clear is that the set was very much treasured in the Captain's lifetime. It is now a treasure of the St. Louis Mercantile Library and of all those who know the story of Capt. Scanland's distinguished water service.

¹Cowan's *Historic Americana Auction*, May 24, 2001.

²The location of E. Jaccard & Co. is listed as 75 N. 4th in the *St. Louis Directory for 1864*, published August 25, 1863 and the *Edwards' Annual Directory...in the City of St. Louis*, for 1865, published May 1865.

³J. Thomas Scharf. *History of Saint Louis City and County*. Vol II. Philadelphia: Louis H.Everts & Co., 1883, p. 1320.

⁴*St. Louis Directory 1859: Containing a Directory of Citizens, including, also, a Business Mirror; Appendix, Co-Partnership Directory, &c.* [St. Louis, MO]: R.V. Kennedy & Co., 1859, p. 232.

⁵Cowan's *Historic Americana Auction*, May 24, 2001, p. 67. The tray was not part of the original gift from the steamboatmen.

⁶Landsden, John M. *A History of the City of Cairo Illinois*. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1910, p.131.

⁷A good example of their extant proposals is: [Proposed Navy Yard at Cairo, Illinois] [United States: s.n., 1864].

⁸"View of Cairo, Junction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers," Civil War magazine clipping from the Ruth Ferris Collection of River Life and Lore, Herman T. Pott National Inland Waterways Library, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

⁹Whitesell, Robert D. "Military and Naval Activity Between Cairo and Columbus." *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 1963, p. 109.

¹⁰After the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, Cairo was no longer a Union base of departure, but remained important as a processing base, site of naval courts, shipyard, and convalescent center and hospitals. Wright, Terri K. *The Upper Circle: the History, Society and Architecture of Nineteenth-Century Cairo, Illinois*. Carbondale: Dept. of History Dissertation, SIU, June 1995, p. 104-105.

¹¹Merrill, James M. "Cairo, Illinois: Strategic Civil War River Port." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 4, Winter 1983, p. 256.

¹²Sharpe, Capt. Henry G. *Prize Essay: the Art of Supplying Armies in the Field as Exemplified During the Civil War*. Kansas City, MO: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1899, pp. 189-190.

¹³Risch, Erna. *Quartermaster Support of the Army: a History of the Corps, 1775-1939*. Washington D.C.: Quartermaster Historians Office, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1962, p. 405.

¹⁴Sharpe, p. 197.

¹⁵Merrill, p. 250.

¹⁶Risch, p. 407.

¹⁷Anderson, Bern. *By Sea and By River: the Naval History of the Civil War*. New York: Knopf, 1962, p. 297. On October 1, 1862, the Navy acquired control of the gunboats from the War Department.

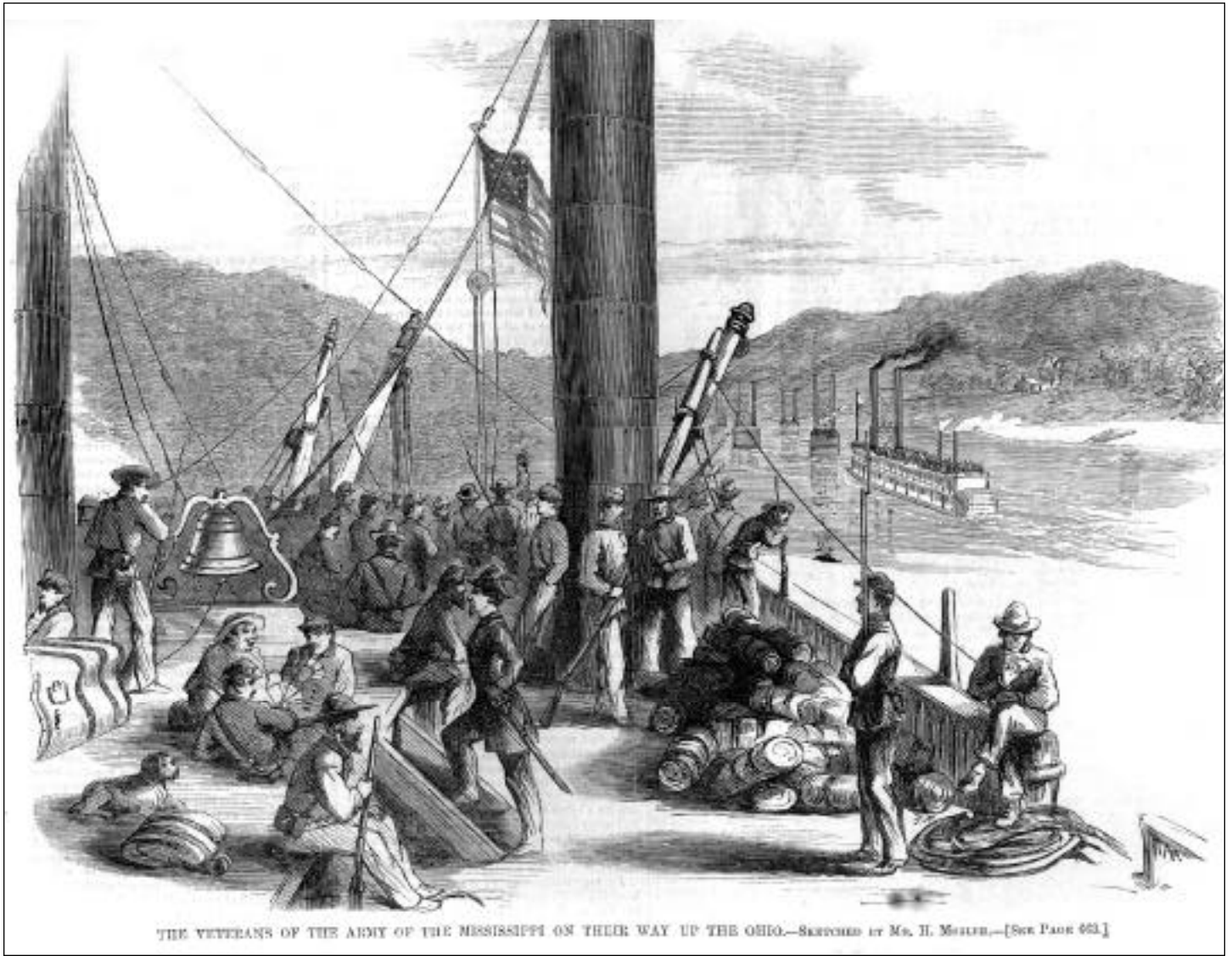
¹⁸Greenleaf, D.N., letter to Capt. R.C. Sanlan [sic], June 24, 1864. (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3)

¹⁹Derks, Scott, ed. *The Value of a Dollar: Prices and Income in the U.S., 1860-1999*. Lakeville, CT: Grey House, 1999, p. 2.

²⁰Peoria Journal, February 18, 1896.

²¹*Dictionary of Transports and Combatant Vessels, Steam and Sail, Employed by the Union Army, 1861-1868: an Annotated Compilation Containing 4,033 Operational Entries...* Camden, ME: Ensign Press, 1995. The Civil War service history of the steamboats listed in the D. N. Greenleaf letter are fully described based on primary and secondary sources in this volume.

²²Gould, E.W. *Fifty Years on the Mississippi; or Gould's History of River Navigation...* Columbus, OH: Long's College Book Co., 1961.



THE VETERANS OF THE ARMY OF THE MISSISSIPPI ON THEIR WAY UP THE OHIO.—SKETCHED BY MR. H. MEYER.—[SEE PAGE 663.]

(From the Pott Inland Waterways Library Collections, St. Louis Mercantile Library)

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 Mr. Andy Myers
 Mrs. Gladys Myles
 Dr. and Mrs. F. Thomas Ott
 Mr. James R. Potter
 Ms. June Schwankhaus
 Dr. Carlos A. Schwantes
 Mr. and Mrs. Bill Shrader
 Ms. Jackie Spector

Saint Cloud State University
 Saint Louis Academy of Gemology
 Saint Louis Public Library
 Saint Olaf College
 St. Louis Business Journal Corp.
 Mr. James V. Swift
 Mr. Robert J. Wayner
 Ms. Phyllis L. Weber
 Mr. J. N. White
 Mr. Bill Williams
 The Honorable Robert A. Young
 Mr. Ric Zaber
 Mr. James L. Zarucchi and Dr. Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi
 Mr. Oliver Ziegler

*Deceased

All gifts and memberships current as of June 30, 2001. If your name is not on our list, it is possible that your membership or donation was received in or credited to fiscal year 2002.

St. Louis Mercantile Library Staff, 2000 – 2001

John Neal Hoover,
*Director and Associate Director of
Libraries for Special Collections at
University of Missouri – St. Louis*

Gregory Ames,
Curator, Barriger Collection

Elisabeth Baron, Clerk

Charles E. Brown,
Assistant Director

Laura L. Diel, Administrative Assistant

Judith R. Friedrich,
Head, Technical Services

Bette Gorden, Curator, Pott Collection

Voncele Ingram, Head Security Guard

Lisa Mosby, Research Assistantship,
Museum Program

John Mulderig, Accounting and
Financial Services

Jessie Nay'lor, Security Guard

James V. Palmer, Coordinator,
Member and Donor Services

James Rhodes, Assistant Manager
of Reference Services

St. Louis Mercantile Library Librarians, 1846 – 2001

Josiah Dent	1846	Horace Kephart	1891-1903	John Neal Hoover	1988
William Allen	1847-1848	William L.R. Gifford	1904-1941	Gerald Lee Brooks	1989
William Curtis	1847-1859	Clarence E. Miller	1942-1958	John Neal Hoover	1990
Edward William Johnston	1860-1862	Mary Dorward	1959-1965	Jeffrey E. Smith	1991-1994
John N. Dyer	1863-1889	Elizabeth Kirchner	1966-1986	John Neal Hoover	1994-present
William H.H. Anderson	1890	Charles F. Bryan Jr.	1986-1988		

St. Louis Mercantile Library Presidents serving from 1846 – 2001

James E. Yeatman	1846-1847	William E. Guy	1893-1895	Charles D. DePew	1948-1949
Alfred Vinton	1848-1849	Isaac W. Morton	1896-1897	Stratford L. Morton	1950-1951
Hudson E. Bridge	1850-1851	Horatio N. Davis	1898-1899	William G. Pettus Jr.	1952-1953
Henry D. Bacon	1852	Robert McK. Jones	1900-1901	Harry W. Henry	1954-1955
Joshua H. Alexander	1853	George D. Markham	1902-1903	R. Walston Chubb	1956-1957
John T. Douglass	1854-1855	Alfred L. Shapleigh	1904-1905	William Charles	1958-1959
William M. Morrison	1856	Henry C. Scott	1906-1907	Oliver M. Langenberg	1960-1962
John W. Luke	1857	John Lawrence Mauraan	1908-1909	John H. Lashly	1963
Matthew V. L. McClelland	1858	Charles W. Scudder	1910-1911	Lemoine Skinner Jr.	1964
John B. S. Lemoine	1859-1860	Edward Mallinckrodt	1912-1913	Frank A. Dunnagan	1965-1966
Alfred Carr	1861	Harry B. Wallace	1914-1915	William G. Heckman	1967
John H. Beach	1862-1863	Hugh McKittrick	1916-1917	William E. Rench	1968-1969
Charles Miller	1864-1865	John T. Davis	1918-1919	John L. Davidson	1970-1971
George R. Robinson	1866-1867	George C. Hitchcock	1920-1921	James H. Williams	1972-1974
Lafayette Wilson	1868-1869	Hugh McK. Jones	1922-1923	George S. Rosborough Jr.	1975-1977
Richard M. Scruggs	1870-1871	John B. Kennard	1924-1925	Gerald T. Dunne	1978-1979
Charles Speck	1872-1873	Theron E. Catlin	1926-1927	Landon Y. Jones	1980
Samuel M. Dodd	1874-1875	William C. Fordyce	1928-1929	Nicholas V.V. Franchot III	1981-1982
Edwin Harrison	1876-1877	William G. Pettus	1930-1931	James M Canavan Jr.	1983-1984
R. A. Hutchinson	1878-1879	Eugene S. Klein	1932-1933	Evelyn E. Newman	1985-1987
Thomas E. Tutt	1880-1881	Charles H. Morrill	1934-1935	Alan E. Doede	1988-1990
Robert E. Carr	1882-1883	Harold T. Jolley	1936-1937	Stuart Symington Jr.	1991
Robert S. Brookings	1884-1885	Ernest J. Russell	1938-1939	Leon P. Ullensvang	1992-1993
William L. Scott	1886-1887	Stephen B. Sheldon	1940-1941	Ruth A. Bryant	1994-2000
Robert S. Brookings	1888-1889	Alfred Fairbank	1942-1943	Walter F. Ballinger II	2000-present
James A. Waterworth	1890-1891	Daniel Bartlett	1944-1945		
Benjamin B. Graham	1892	Richard Baldwin	1946-1947		