Big River

Reggie McLeod

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Spanning the River

Bridge Caused Conflict Between Boats and Trains

By Bill Jacobs

The stone with a bronze plaque near the Mississippi in downtown Davenport, Iowa, looks like a gravestone. Perhaps that is appropriate, because the modest monument commemorates a structure that 141 years ago symbolized the end of the riverboat boom.

The stone marks the location of the first railroad bridge to span the Mississippi River, a 1,575-foot-long, draw-span bridge. This bridge created the first of many links in a network of rails that wrested from the riverboats the profits of shipping. To the riverboats it was an obstruction, in more ways than one.

In court it set the railroad, represented by lanky Abe Lincoln of Springfield, Ill., against the riverboats.

Railroads vs. Riverboats

The bridge became the flash point for disputes pitting the North-east against the South a decade before the Civil War. In court it set the railroad, represented by lanky Abe Lincoln of Springfield, Ill., against the riverboats.

Oh, it would be grand, the railroad men explained as they began talking up the bridge in 1852, shortly after the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad actually reached Rock Island. The bridge would not interfere with riverboat traffic, they promised as they rounded up investors.

Riverboat owners weren't buying it. They had already suffered from railroads and canals in Illinois and other states siphoning off their freight revenues. Navigation obstruction or no, the bridge at Rock Island would link the grain farmers of the growing West to the markets in the Northeast, bypassing the "...common highway declared forever free to all the inhabitants...and citizens of the United States," and "inflict(ing) great and irreparable mischiefs upon the commerce of the section of the country," as U.S. Attorney Thomas Hayne put it in a

Holmes Landing Cafe

By John Sagan

When you are sipping a glass of Cabernet and looking out at the big river as it turns slowly from blue to deep grey at dusk, it would be easy to eat and enjoy nearly anything put in front of you. When the food enhances the view, as it does at the Holmes Landing Cafe in Fountain City, Wis., you can see paradise across the river.

Biting into the saganaki, an appetizer featuring sautéed kasseri cheese, Greek olives and chunks of tomato on grilled pita, I found the colors of the river deepened and

(Continued on page 3)
complaint he filed in a vain effort to get a court order to halt construction.

The bridge company, owned by the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad and its sister company in Iowa, the Missouri & Michigan Railroad, wanted to use the abandoned military reservation on Rock Island as a stepping stone across the river. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis (who a few years later became president of the Confederacy) denied it the right of way across the island, even though Rock Island masonry contractor John Warner's crews were already building the piers and abutments.

Ignoring Davis, the bridge company continued work on the island until Hayne filed his complaint in November of 1854, asking the federal court to halt the "illegal trespassing, destruction of government property, and obstruction of steamboat navigation."

In a sign of things to come, Justice John McLean sided with the railroad, saying the military was no longer using the island, and the state — under a federal act granting rights of way through public lands — was free to grant the right of way to the railroad.

More important, Justice McLean said "...railroads had become highways in something the same sense as rivers; neither could be suffered to become a permanent obstruction to the other." This became the foundation of an argument Lincoln was to use later, in another court test before Justice McLean.

Briefly Bridged

By the time the first train rumbled across the 1,575-foot wooden Howe truss bridge on April 21, 1856, it was clear that railroads were unstoppable. They had, after all, big advantages over riverboats for shipping grain: Ice didn't stop railroads, nor did low water or floods. Railroads didn't initially gouge shippers as riverboats were doing, although the railroads later took up this practice. Railroads gave direct routes to the markets of the Northeast, carried goods faster to and from those markets, and weren't in the thrall of independent and often arrogant riverboat captains who kept their own schedules and ignored the pleas of shippers and passengers alike.

Riverboat interests claimed the bridge increased hazards for riverboat pilots navigating the rock-strewn rapids above Rock Island. The bridge, with its oversize, 386-foot pier supporting the draw span over the Main Channel, was built at an angle to the current and made the passage even more dangerous.

How dangerous became clear two weeks after the first locomotive inched across the span. On May 5, Captain J. S. Hurd began moving his new boat, *Effie Afton*, upriver from Rock Island. The *Effie Afton* and at least a half-dozen other boats had been tied up at Rock Island waiting for a strong northeast wind to abate so they could run the bridge.

The boat never cleared the bridge piers. Caught in a whirlpool at the swing pier, the boat slammed into the piers three times before lodging against one of them.

The passengers and crew were rescued from the *Effie Afton* by the captain of the *J.B. Carson*. He pushed his boat against the *Afton's* afterguards so people could scramble to safety aboard the *Carson*.

Cook stoves upset by the collision with the pier had set fire to the superstructure, and it was clear that the *Afton* would burn to the waterline. The burning boat set fire to the bridge, which soon crashed down in a flaming mass onto the trapped boat. As the whole mass of burning timber, bridge and boat, began drifting downstream, the other riverboats in the area let out a triumphant chorus of whistles.

As the whole mass of burning timber, bridge and boat, began drifting downstream, the other riverboats in the area let out a triumphant chorus of whistles. One continued its trip upstream flying a flag bearing the legend "Mississippi Bridge Destroyed. Let All Rejoice."

The bridge was quickly rebuilt. Within four months, it was again serving freight and passenger trains.

Back to Court

Hurd filed a suit against the railroad company for the loss of his boat, and was supported in his fight by riverboat interests up and down the river, led by the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce. Hurd's case came to trial on September 8, 1857, before Justice McLean. Hurd and his backers hoped to recover enough money from the railroad company, and set
enough of a precedent for damages, to make bridges too expensive for railroads to maintain.

Lincoln trotted out the evidence of the importance of the bridge: In the year ending August 8, 12,586 freight cars and 74,179 passengers crossed the bridge, while river navigation was closed almost four months of that time. "This shows that this bridge must be treated with respect in this court and is not to be kicked about with contempt," he said, urging the parties to "live and let live."

He concluded with the same sentiments McLean had espoused in the government's attempt to halt the construction across the island: "There is a travel from east to west whose demands are not less important than those of the river," he said.

The bridge company won in court, but had to keep defending itself. A year later, a St. Louis steamboatman, James M. Ward, asked a federal court in Iowa to declare the bridge a nuisance and order its removal. Judge John M. Love did declare the bridge a nuisance in 1859, but the railroads appealed. By the time the Supreme Court ruled again in favor of the railroads, the country was concerned with more important matters. The Civil War had all but stopped trade on the river, and the railroads had become more powerful, and more unassailable.

Of course, the bridge at Rock Island was not the sole cause of the decline of the steamboat era. Steamboat traffic was already in decline when the bridge was built. It was, though, a symbol of the great change taking place in the country's trade patterns, and it served as a battleground for two economic forces. It would not be the last struggle between railroads and river shippers. 

Bill Jacobs is an associate editor of Big River. His last story for the newsletter was "Iowa Museums Capture the Magnificent River" (October 1994).

my palate primed. A Caesar salad touched lightly with habanero increased the desire for more. The filet of halibut pan-seared in porcini powder and served with a mushroom sauce was rich and smoky. A rice side and snow peapods grilled and mixed with blackened beans rounded out the meal. Brandy and a small dish of ice cream made it a delight to know that I can ride my bike to downtown Fountain City and get a great meal.

Speaking with other diners, I learned that the roast duck is scrumptious, the Idaho stuffed trout is fabulous and the sirloin is melt.

The cafe is open daily from 11 a.m. until the kitchen closes, usually around 10 p.m., although the bar can remain open until 2 a.m. On Mondays through Wednesdays the menu currently includes only appetizers, soups and pizza made with three or four kinds of cheese on a grilled pita round topped with pesto, tomatoes and just about anything else you can imagine.

Four years ago, John Krumholz was looking for a restaurant to come home to. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin—Stout with a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Business Administration, he worked in the Green Bay area, even setting up two restaurants, Sebastian's and Top Shelf, for his brother. John then managed a Sbarro's restaurant in Eau Claire, Wis. From there he cast his eyes homeward to Fountain City where The Fisherman's Inn was going through ownership changes.

In 1910 the brick building housed a saloon called The Palm Garden. It became Pappy's Chicken Little, apparently a saloon offering some food service. In about 1955 a new owner started serving sandwiches and lunches. A few years later Red Wantock installed his family in the upstairs apartment and made the place into a proper eatery, calling it Red's Palm Garden. Much later Red sold to long-time river restaurateurs, the Duvalls, and the business changed hands again over the next few years.

John Krumholz was watching, and when he saw another change coming he contacted the owner of the place, then called The Fisherman's Inn. In early 1998 Krumholz and family members gutted, painted, and restored the building and renovated the kitchen.

Krumholz hired a staff emphasizing experienced chefs. Steve Ketterhagen started cooking in Madison, Wis., then went to culinary school in Portland, Ore. From there he worked at resorts in Idaho, Oregon and northern Wisconsin. Dan Jonas, the other cook hired by Krumholz, attended cooking school in Madison, then worked in New York City, and later became a chef at a world-class establishment in Kohler, Wis. Krumholz's nephew, Matt, has become an apprentice to these two chefs.

With fine entrees and casual dining, the Krumholz family wants you to be a part of their growth, and promises to deliver fine food at good prices. From what I've seen and tasted, they have a great start, and I recommend the Holmes Landing Cafe as a fine dining experience to anyone working, living or travelling on the big river.

John Sagan is a freelance writer living in Fountain City, Wis. He aspires to become the Austrian consul to that river town. His last article for Big River was "Skiing the Backwaters" (February 1996).
Towboat Travelogue on the Mississippi River
By Pamela Eyden

Between the Saints: Louis and Paul, is a narrative by Kathy Flippo, the wife of a towboat captain and pilot who chooses to ride along with him now and then.

Like many river books, this one is structured around a journey up the length of the river, from Pool 27 at St. Louis to Pool 2 in the Twin Cities. Unlike some towboating books I've read, there isn't a lot of macho swagger here — how rough is the work, how tough are the men, how narrow the escape from disaster.

Instead, in each chapter you'll find a careful description of the work at hand (making and breaking tow or maneuvering into locks, for example), and bits of personal memory and local history. The subtitle of the book is "Towboat Travelogue on the Mississippi River," and Flippo has something to say about nearly every small town and scenic attraction along the river, such as the Piasa bird painting on the bluff near Alton, Ill., and the bridges over the St. Croix at Prescott, Wis. There are also profiles of crew and friends, and anecdotes of domestic life aboard the boat. She even throws in a few jokes for good measure. It's folksy, uncritical and reads like the conversation of a talkative companion.

"When I am on the boat, I keep the same hours as Pat. When he is riding as captain, he is on the forward watch 6 a.m. to noon and 6 p.m. to midnight. If he is riding as pilot, then he is on the after watch... I like the after watch better because I am a night owl. (Just out of curiosity, why do night owls always marry morning people?) It is fun to wake up and look out the window to see where you are..."

The chapters are organized by pool, which makes it a convenient read for travelers. Not surprisingly, the longest chapter is the one for Pool 14, which begins, "This is my pool. I was born and raised in this pool albeit up at the other end. Pat just nods, raises his eyebrows, and mumbles 'Um hum' when I go on and on about how wonderful Pool 14 is." Flippo's previous book was Beaver Island Remembered (see "Beaver Island" in the November 1996 Big River), in which she recounts hunting, fishing and community life on a floodplain island in the Mississippi.

"My life revolved around the river from Mile 515 to 517.5 from birth until I went to college in Minnesota in September 1960. You might have blood in your veins, but I have Mississippi River water in mine!"

Her enthusiasm for the river is obvious, and so is her appreciation for the company her husband worked for during this time. She makes it sound like one big, happy, river-going family, and she has no complaints about the working conditions. "The comfort of the crew is a high priority [for the chief engineer]. If the air conditioning goes kaput in the middle of August, the crew isn't going to get the proper rest and they won't be in shape to stand their watch. That's why accidents happen."

However, not all towboat companies operate with the same degree of careful regard for their employees' health and well being. Safe and decent working conditions are one of the demands of the tow pilots who went on strike this year.

This 275-page (plus appendices) book, was just published this year. Copies are available from the author ($29.95 plus $3.75 shipping and handling) at R.R. 1, Box 102, Morrison, MO 65061. — Pamela Eyden is a contributing editor of Big River.

For more information on this book, please visit the Big River website at http://www.big-river.com.
Terminal Worries

Brookings, S.D. — A small railroad wants to upgrade and expand its service over the next decade so it can haul as much as 100 million tons of Wyoming coal to Winona, Minn., every year. The Brookings-based Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern (DM&E) Railroad also wants to build a terminal on the Mississippi capable of loading five million tons of coal a year. (Based on a barge capacity of 1,500 tons, five million tons of coal would fill 3,333 barges, which would make up 222 tows of 15-barges each.)

A clear majority of citizens at a May public meeting in Winona, which is at the eastern end of the DM&E line, protested the project, which could double the number of trains travelling through town.

The coal would be bound for Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Chicago area and the Great Lakes. The low-sulfur western coal would be used to replace eastern coal to help power plants comply with newer, more stringent requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Noisy Refuge

Bloomington, Minn. — In a few years a new member of the chorus will join the trilling red-winged blackbirds and croaking egrets in the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. A new 8,000-foot, north-south runway at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport will attract other winged visitors to the refuge — commercial jetliners at altitudes as low as 500 feet...[could] alter the feeding and nesting behaviors of eagles, herons, egrets, pelicans and other birds at the refuge.

School Takes a Dive

Morrison, Ill. — It’s not unusual for a class of school children to take a field trip to the river. However, when an excavating firm took an entire school building to the Mississippi and Rock rivers it earned a $3,000 fine for violating Illinois’ environmental laws.

Lohman Excavating and Demolition of Hillsdale, Ill., pleaded guilty to charges of conducting a waste-disposal operation without a permit, open dumping and creating a water pollution hazard, according to the Quad-City Times (4-29-98).

Lohman hauled debris from the demolition of the old Erie High School to the rivers rather than taking it to a landfill. Dave Lohman, owner of the business, was also sentenced to 24 months of court supervision and 150 hours of community service.

The school district refused to pay Lohman for the work.

Mussel Mania

Controversy and indictments continue to swirl around commercial mussel harvesting on the Upper Mississippi River.

Illinois and Wisconsin ended the harvest of washboard mussels this year because of population declines (see Big River February and March 1998). Minnesota had already...
banned mussel collection.

The Iowa Legislature decided in May to allow harvesting until the end of the 1999 legislative session (Dubuque Telegraph Herald 5-14-98).

Spheres cut from mussel shells provide the cores, or seeds, that are placed into Asian oysters. The oysters coat the seeds with a pearly substance to create cultured pearls.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has become increasingly concerned about the health of native freshwater mussels. DNR studies of mussel populations over a period of years have revealed declines in all study sites.

Commercial clammers vigorously protested the proposed bans, claiming that mussels are still plentiful and accusing the DNR of acting on incorrect data. Many clammers believe agricultural runoff, barge traffic and river dams have harmed mussel populations far more than the divers.

"They don't like people who make money off the river," said Chuck Lawson, president of Empire Shell Products, Guttenberg, Iowa. "But these clammers have a knowledge of the river that the DNR people will never have."

In Iowa, plans for the ban this season were reversed based on an "exceptionally well-done scientific study by the shell industry," according to Lawson. The 13-week study, headed by La Crosse, Wis., malacologist Marian Havlik, calculated that 550 million washboard mussels are present in Iowa boundary waters.

These bans follow in the wake of various claming trials and indictments. Darwin "Butch" Ballenger, president of Mississippi Valley Shell, Muscatine, Iowa, and his wife Cheryl were among those who voiced opposition to the ban at an Iowa DNR public hearing in March. The Ballengers, along with three other individuals, were indicted in federal court the following month for illegally harvesting, transporting and receiving over $300,000 worth of freshwater mussels in six states (Rock Island Argus 4-28-98).

In 1997, a Brownsville, Minn., couple was charged with transporting illegally harvested mussels across state lines. In the same year, a La Crosse, Wis., commercial mussel buyer pleaded guilty in federal court to transporting and possessing a threatened mussel species. And in 1996, an Illinois man was sentenced to more than two years in prison for illegally harvesting and transporting clams and for breaking into a business to steal more molusks (see Big River, December 1996, March 1997 and March 1998).

Levee Breaker

Hannibal, Mo. — A man hoping to strand his wife in Missouri so he could party in Illinois has been convicted a second time of intentionally breaking a Mississippi River levee during the 1993 Midwest floods.

James Scott, of Fowler, Ill., removed sandbags from a West Quincy levee at the height of the flood, inundating 14,000 acres of farmland, destroying dozens of businesses and homes, and shutting down the Quincy bridge for 74 days. Scott was convicted in 1994, but an appeals court overturned the verdict last year because prosecutors failed to notify the defense of two new witnesses whose testimony implicated Scott.

In a new trial in April, the jury reached its guilty verdict in less than three hours. Sentencing is set for July 6, and Marion County prosecutor Tom Redington said he will recommend life in prison (Associated Press 4-1-98).

Fish or Frogs?

Wisconsin — Amphibians are losing out to aquaculture with the passage of a bill in the Wisconsin Legislature that permits the farming of fish for bait, food and stocking in "freeze-out" ponds.

In freeze-out areas, severe winter conditions or a lack of oxygen destroy fish populations at least two out of every five years. As a result of the bill, passed last October, one to 10 new freeze-out ponds might be converted to aquaculture each year, according to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimates (Isthmus 5-15-98). This loss of wetland habitat would stress already declining amphibian populations, which require fish-free environments for reproduction.

The bill also transfers fish farm regulation from the DNR to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), potentially limiting the DNR's environmental enforcement. However, the Wisconsin Legislature allowed the DNR only one-third the usual time to rewrite rules on the use of natural waters for fish farming. This rush prevented consultation with environmental groups, some of whom are now posing 11th-hour opposition to the proposed rules.

"The biggest reason for habitat loss in the Upper Midwest is the conversion of wetlands to aquaculture," says Michael Lanoo, U.S. coordinator of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force. In a letter urging the public to protest the bill, Lanoo says this legislation was "a gift by Wisconsin politicians to the aquaculturists, presumably for their political support."

Such support involves the vice president of the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association, who is a top...
Disagreement

The "Pilots Agree" towboat pilot strike continues into its seventh week without much visible effect on the Upper Mississippi. Representatives of the union have cited several accidents on the lower river, asking whether unqualified, inexperienced or exhausted pilots were at the wheel. But the Coast Guard claims otherwise, leading "Pilots Agree" to claim the Coast Guard is in cahoots with the towboat companies.

The FBI investigated an April 24th accident involving 137 runaway barges in St. Louis, and concluded that someone had cut a mooring line, but nothing has been proven. The bureau was looking at suspects on both sides of the picket lines, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (5-1-98).

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service has no plans to mediate the strike, according to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald (5-15-98).

Fishing Tourneys

Are high-profile fishing tournaments changing the image of fishing? Are the glitzy boats and big prizes changing fishing from a relaxing get-away-from-it-all participatory sport to a spectator event? Do big fishing tournaments underestimate fish mortality? The May-June issue of The Minnesota Volunteer explores these and other aspects of fishing tournaments.

Most scientific studies on largemouth bass tournaments have shown that 20 to 30 percent of the fish caught die. And made it complicated. Dean says that the message sent by tourneys is that "you need a decked-out boat and a lot of electronics to catch a half-dozen walleyes."

Sewer Suit

Bellevue, Iowa — Facing a suit by The Mississippi River Revival, Bellevue was told by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. The facility has been dumping sewage into the Mississippi for nearly 10 years.

The River Revival, a citizens' watchdog organization, steps in when it finds evidence that a state is not enforcing provisions of the federal Clean Water Act. According to Sol Simon of The River Revival, when the group gives notice of a civil action suit, the party has 60 days to report how the violation will be rectified.

The group has also started proceedings against Alcoa, Interstate Power and Kraft Foods/Oscar Mayer in Iowa; as well as against Waste Management of Minnesota, Cenex and GAF Building Materials in Minnesota.

In Bellevue's case, the DNR's order rescued the town from the citizens' group lawsuit. The Revival was seeking maximum fines of $25,000 a day for each violation, citing 73 violations of the city's standard effluent permit requirements, most occurring in 1996 and 1997 according to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald (4-13-98).

Simon says The River Revival isn't trying to collect the money, but wants the violations corrected.

Mark Lawson, city attorney, claims that the Revival's letter came as a surprise to them, and that the threatened suit cost the town a lot of unnecessary money and time.

Bellevue has been planning a new facility since 1987. Now it has until the end of 1999 to fix the problems in its treatment system, including plant bypasses and improper effluent levels, according to the Dubuque Telegraph Herald (5-1-98).

Corridor Gap

A portion of the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota will probably be left out of any designation of the big river as an American Heritage River. Using the veto power given congressmen under the Clinton administration's policies for the American Heritage Rivers Initiative, U.S. Rep. Gil Gutknecht, R-Rochester, filed a letter with federal officials objecting to any such designation of the river in his district, which runs along the Minnesota shore from below Hastings to the Iowa border.

That means that if the Mississippi River, or part of it, is named one of the 10 American Heritage Rivers later this year, the portion running through Gutknecht's district wouldn't share the designation.

Communities awarded the designation will qualify for special federal assistance for making use of existing federal programs for riverfront projects.

Opponents of the initiative, including property-rights activists, worry that federal officials will use it to meddle in river traffic and development.
Special Events and Festivals

**June**

1-7 National Fishing Week.
1-30 American Rivers Month.
5-7 Iowa Free Fishing Days, no license needed in Iowa for residents.
6 Bay City (Wis.) Days.
6 Fort Snelling Visitor Center Dedication, 1 p.m., St. Paul, Minn., (612) 725-2724.
6 Buffalo County (Wis.) Sesquicentennial, 10 a.m. - dusk, Merrick State Park, powwow, rendezvous, (608) 685-6209.
6-7 Take a Kid Fishing Weekend, Minn.
6-7 Hobo Fest, Marquette, Iowa, (319) 873-3735.
7 Fort Snelling Visitor Center Open House, noon - 4 p.m., St. Paul, Minn.
7 Minnesota State Parks Open House.
11 Great Mississippi Riverboat Cleanup, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., Twin Cities, (612) 297-5476.
11-13 Tour of Historic Homes, Galena, Ill.
11-14 Oct. 10 Mississippi River Landscape Painting, Twin Cities, (612) 290-4160.
15-20 Prairie Villa Rendezvous, Prairie du Chien, Wis., 1-800-732-1673.
20 River Cleanup, Miss. River Revival, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Latsch Is., Winona, Minn.
20 Summerfest Day, Maiden Rock, Wis.
20 Mississippi Bluff Prairie and Oak Savanna Field Trip, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Ferryville, Wis., (608) 266-1430.
20-21 Art in the Park, Clinton, Iowa.
20-21 Art and River Festival, Winona, Minn.
20-21 Stone Arch Festival, Minneapolis, Minn.
21 Ride the River bicycle tour, Moline, Ill., and Davenport, Iowa, (319) 322-2969.
21 Riverboat-a-Comin', Cassville, Wis.
25-28 Catfish Festival, Dubuque, Iowa, (319) 583-8355.
26 Muck into the Marsh, 8:30 a.m. - noon, Hixon Forest Nature Center, La Crosse, Wis., (608) 784-0303.
27-29 Water Ski Days, Lake City, Minn.
26-28 Moline Riverfest, Moline, Ill.
30-July 5 Steamboat Days, Winona, Minn.

**July**

1-5 Riverfest, La Crosse, Wis.
2-5 Riverboat Days, Clinton, Iowa.
3-5 Heritage Days, Bellevue, Iowa.
3-4 Craft Show, Marquette, Iowa, under the bridge.
4-5 Rockin' on the River, Prescott, Wis.
2-4 Mississippi Valley Blues Festival, Quad Cities.
9-11 Summerfest, Rock Island, Ill.
9-12 Wheels, Wings and Water Fest, St. Cloud, Minn.
10-11 Ferret State Park camping trip, Trempealeau, Wis., (608) 266-1430.
10-12 Catfish Days, Trempealeau, Wis.
12 Summerfest, Savanna, Ill.
17-19 Rivertown Days, Hastings, Minn.
18 Art Fair, Stockholm, Wis.
19 Stories of the Mississippi River, Fishing on the Mississippi, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m., Harriet Island, St. Paul, Minn.
24-25 Riverboat Days, Wabasha, Minn.
25 Mississippi Canoe Adventure, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., Twin Cities, (612) 222-2193.
26-Aug. 1 Great River Rumble Canoe trip, Wis. Dells to Prairie du Chien, PO Box 3408, Dubuque, Iowa 52004.

**Meetings & Hearings**

**June**

11 Lower Wis. State Riverway Board, 5 p.m., Mazomanie, Black Hawk Unit.
20 Bettendorf Downtown Riverfront Summit, 8 a.m. - noon, outlet center, Bettendorf, Iowa, (319) 344-4055.
21 American Fisheries Society - Rivers and Streams North Central, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m., Blackhawk Site, Rock Island, Ill., (309) 582-5611.
22-24 Steamboat Days, Winona, Minn.

**Exploration of the Mississippi River, hands-on teacher's workshops,** June 15-17 Nauvoo, Illinois, (319) 463-7673.
July 8-10 Wyalusing State Park, Prairie du Chien, Wis., (319) 872-4945.
**Rivers Curriculum Project teachers workshops,** (618) 692-3359.
July 19-24 Chicago, Ill. August 2-7 Edwardsville, Ill.■■

**Workshops & Conferences**

**June**

3-6 Who Owns America? How Land and Natural Resources are Owned and Controlled, U of Wis-Madison.
4 Wisconsin DNR boating education class, La Crosse, (608) 762-9622.
4-6 Partnering Conference, Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division, St. Louis, (601) 634-5794.
8-12 Mississippi River Climate Conference, St. Louis, (301) 426-2089.

**Almanac**

*By Kenny Salwey*

June is such a joyful month along the Big River. The sweltering south winds of summer arrived early this year, blowing upstream against the current to form large roller waves.

Bird songs fill the air from dawn to dusk. Robins, orioles, sandhill cranes, Canada geese, all singing at once with great joy. Some are background singers, like song sparrow, red-winged blackbirds, swallows and catbirds. Each sings a different song in a different key, yet somehow they blend into a beautiful chorus.

The fish are filled with joy and energy as well. Sunfish guard their spawning beds, swimming round and round in a tight circle over a bowl-shaped depression in the sand. Carp are bumping, wallowing and splashing about in the backwaters. Bass and catfish wriggle slowly back and forth along rocky shores, less frenzied than other finny folks.

I put the mower away and sit down, sweating, tired and dirty — cursing the bugs, the lawn and the heat. My wife and I grab our fish poles, call the dogs and amble down to the river bank to smell its scents, hear its sounds and watch its waters flow by. Is June a joyful month or what? ■■