



UPRIVER BY STEAMER TO IDAHO

Reflections on the Evolution of a Water Highway

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Since October 1991 I have made a dozen journeys by boat along the more than 400 miles of waterways that extend inland from the Pacific Ocean to the port of Lewiston, Idaho. Ostensibly, I traveled along as a "naturalist" to help tourists retrace the route paddled by Lewis and Clark, but the process of "locking through" eight huge dams invariably underscores for me just how significantly the Columbia and Snake rivers have changed in 200 years. Nonetheless, the two waterways continue to function as highways of history. In the Pacific Northwest, in fact, it would be hard to trace two more significant corridors of history—whether that history is written in terms of exploration in the early 1800s or of endangered salmon populations today and the proposed breaching of several dams on the lower Snake River. Time and again, these two rivers have showcased the important issues of an era.

Among the many decades that comprise Pacific Northwest history, perhaps the one that ranks first in terms of human drama is the 1860s, when numerous gold and silver discoveries in the northern Rocky Mountains inspired steamboaters to probe the farthest navigable reaches of the Columbia and Snake rivers. When the mineral bonanzas first burst into newspaper headlines in 1861, steamboats had regularly plied the lower Columbia River between Portland and Astoria for about ten years, the "middle river" between the Cascades (future site of Bonneville Dam) and The Dalles for eight years, and the "upper river" for three years transporting soldiers and freight through Wallula Gap to a supply depot for Fort Walla Walla. All such activity was good preparation for the pioneering ventures of the 1860s when steamboats, together with ubiquitous stagecoaches and freight wagons, effectively defined the rhythms of daily life across a vast interior portion of the Pacific Northwest. That was true at least until 1883 when tracks of a northern transcontinental railroad were finally spiked into place. In some remote places it remained true until the opening decades of the 20th century.

One steamboat pioneer whose life effectively mirrored a half-century of transportation evolution was Captain Ephraim Baughman. On July 11, 1860, the United States government awarded him the first federal pilot's license for Pacific Northwest waters. All along the upper Columbia and lower Snake rivers, Baughman became a familiar figure to two generations of travelers. He displayed his treasured pilot's license in the wheelhouse of every steamboat he commanded until he retired in 1915 (ironically as an employee of the Union Pacific Railroad, which owned his last vessel).

In March 1861 the Portland-based Oregon Steam Navigation Company dispatched Baughman (then 26-years old), together with Captain Leonard White, into the sparsely settled interior of Washington Territory to build a small boat at Colville and explore down several hundred miles of

the Columbia River to The Dalles. Their assignment was to determine how far inland a steamboat might safely travel with a heavy load of freight and passengers. The pair completed their reconnaissance in two months and delivered their findings to company officers in Portland. Within days the boatmen-explorers received a new assignment. This time they were to sail a steamboat east from the Columbia River to the base of the Rocky Mountains where promising new finds of gold had been reported.

On May 1, less than a week before Arkansas and Tennessee sided with the Southern Confederacy in the widening national crisis, the indefatigable Baughman and White steered the unpretentious little steamer *Colonel Wright* up the Columbia above Celilo Falls and through the swift, turbid waters of its major tributary, the Snake River. Members of the Lewis and Clark expedition had paddled five dugout canoes along the same route in 1805, and countless fur trappers and traders had followed in their wake, but until then the staccato beat of steam power had never reverberated from the walls of these remote canyons.

On its historic voyage to the Rocky Mountain gold country, the diminutive *Colonel Wright* carried a crew of 14 men in addition to its officers, White and Baughman. Their navigation of the lower Snake River would be mainly a matter of trial and error. There were no government charts or maps to aid navigation, and Indians living near the Snake's confluence with the Columbia, when asked for information, would only say "Oh, hias skookum chuck" (very strong water). There were, of course, the journals and maps of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, although by then those documents were already almost 60 years old.

One of the three names commonly given to the river in the early 1860s honored Captain Lewis. The other two, Pohogava and Snake, were descriptive of the waterway's forbidding character. Early fur trappers claimed that Pohogava was an Indian word that meant "Sage Brush River." Freighters and packers insisted on using the name Snake, "since a more snake-infested stream than this does not perhaps exist this side of the tropics." They told tales of huge rattlesnakes that would crawl upon travelers resting along the river's banks or into their bedrolls at night. Other pioneers, reminisced a writer in Boise's *Idaho Daily Statesman* in 1924, claimed the river's name described its own tortuous course—always crooked and bending—or recalled the local Indians, the Snakes. Which appellation was most appropriate was something the crewmen of the *Colonel Wright* would soon learn for themselves. In any case, in the forbidding Snake River country it was their good fortune to serve under two of the most experienced steamboatmen in the far Northwest.

Perhaps White and Baughman prepared themselves for the voyage by reviewing published accounts of early exploration or by seeking out experienced voyageurs from the fur-trade era who had retired to the French Prairie settlement on the Willamette River above Portland. White does seem to have used a skiff for some preliminary exploration (and some accounts claim he had earlier guided the *Colonel Wright* 60 miles up the Snake, as far as the mouth of the Palouse River), but neither boatman left much of an account of their historic 1861 voyage. Only this much is certain: White and Baughman already knew that any surprises awaiting them on the Snake River would not alter the fact that navigating a single steamboat from Portland through to the gold fields was physically impossible. A series of natural obstacles called the Cascades, the Grand Dalles, and Celilo Falls narrowed the Columbia River in three separate places and seemed to turn its waters on edge. It thus would require at least three separate steamboats and two

difficult portages to extend Portland's commercial reach by water to any new settlements along the Snake River.

Constructing portage roads or railroads around the Columbia River's major obstacles to navigation was a tactical consideration. Extending Portland's economic hegemony over the interior Pacific Northwest and northern Rocky Mountains was an intriguing strategic challenge that energized directors of the newly formed Oregon Steam Navigation Company who envisioned nothing less than a Portland-based commercial empire of the Columbia. Not without a good fight would they permit San Francisco to establish a competing line of freight wagons and stagecoaches running overland to the interior mines of what would become southern Idaho. The Portlanders were willing even to compete with the long-established St. Louis merchants who ran steamboats up the Missouri River to Fort Benton to serve the mining-camp trade of the northern Rocky Mountains.

Considering that Portland had only 2,874 inhabitants in 1860 (though it was still the largest population center in the northern West), compared to 56,802 for San Francisco and 160,773 for St. Louis, the confidence of its early merchants seems to have been based almost entirely on fantasy. Yet the Oregon Steam Navigation Company's desire to probe the navigable reaches of the vast Columbia River system derived from an entrepreneurial vision that encompassed the entire northern West and assessed the money-making potential of freight wagons and stagecoaches no less carefully than that of steamboats.

Corporate strategy was probably not uppermost in the minds of White and Baughman as they methodically threaded the *Colonel Wright* along the twisting canyons of the Snake River. So intently did they study the unknown waters before them that neither man apparently took time to reflect on how steam power came to this remote part of the West in the first place, although both almost certainly knew the story well from firsthand experience. The brief history of their own *Colonel Wright* perhaps summed it up best.

Prior to 1859 only Indian canoes, the bateaux of the Hudson's Bay Company and, most recently, a few flat-bottomed sailing craft called schooners had navigated the Columbia River above The Dalles. Boatmen used these vessels to haul freight inland to Wallula, the first white settlement along the banks of the Columbia above Celilo Falls. At Wallula in the late 1850s an army quartermaster used an old adobe fur-trading fort originally built by the Hudson's Bay Company as a military warehouse. This landing became the main jumping-off point for the army's newly established Fort Walla Walla, an outpost situated 30 miles farther inland in the shadow of the Blue Mountains and the forward base of operations during a series of Indian wars that convulsed the Columbia Plateau during the late 1850s. Some military freight reached Fort Walla Walla via pack animals that plodded inland from the portage around Celilo Falls, a stretch of white water located on the Columbia River near Dalles City (The Dalles).

When Lawrence W. Coe and R. R. Thompson, two frontier entrepreneurs, won a federal contract to supply Fort Walla Walla, they hauled their military cargoes in bateaux or schooners like everyone else. Soon, however, their growing freight business justified building a small stern-wheel steamboat at the mouth of the Deschutes River, close to the upper end of the portage around Celilo Falls. Steamboats were a common sight along the lower Columbia River by the late 1850s, but none had yet appeared on waters above The Dalles. Mindful that their freight business depended heavily on carrying supplies for the army, Coe and Thompson wisely named

their new craft for George Wright, colonel of the Ninth Regiment, United States Infantry, in command at Fort Dalles.

On October 24, 1858, Coe and Thompson launched the *Colonel Wright*. It was a homely vessel about 125 feet long. The pioneer steamer made her maiden upriver trip the following April and quickly settled into regular service between Celilo and the mouth of the Walla Walla River at Wallula. As was typical of all early steamboats, the *Colonel Wright* burned wood—enormous quantities of it—but that presented a challenge to boatmen along a hundred-mile stretch of desert river where even driftwood was scarce. To keep up a head of steam they had to haul along enough firewood for a round-trip from Celilo, and thus fuel often comprised the bulk of their cargo. Perhaps Coe and Thompson had that predicament in mind when they ingeniously rigged the *Colonel Wright* with a mast that carried a huge square, or lug, sail to provide extra power during those seasons when prevailing winds blew up the Columbia.

Without the added power the lug sail provided, White and Baughman could never have ascended the Snake River in the *Colonel Wright* in May 1861. Captain Baughman (for the Oregon Steam Navigation soon rewarded him with that title) recalled the historic trip in *An Illustrated History of North Idaho* (1903), "As pilot, I directed that we travel very slowly and only during the day time, for rocky reefs and shoals were numerous and the waters were not deep. Each stream which we thought had not theretofore been named we took it upon ourselves to christen; likewise every other natural feature, and even today many of the landmarks and creeks bear the names which we gave them."

A reporter for the *Oregon Weekly Times* who happened to be in Wallula the day the *Colonel Wright* commenced its "voyage of experiment" up the Snake River supplied some of the details Baughman left out. Lawrence Coe, having become the local agent of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, invited him along for the ride. The *Colonel Wright* cast off from the Wallula landing at three o'clock. During the next two hours it paddled up the Columbia as far as its confluence with the Snake River, a distance of about 11 miles. The little steamer continued another six miles before tying up along the bank for the night. Starting out early the next morning, the *Colonel Wright* paddled slowly up the Snake River as far as the Colville Road ferry. There the operator tried to dissuade Captain White from attempting to proceed any farther upstream.

White persisted, and the operator thereupon lowered the cable his tiny ferry used to traverse the river. However, he did not drop it deep enough below the surface; when the steamer attempted to pass over, the cable snagged and damaged the paddlewheel. This forced the boatmen to remain at the landing overnight to make repairs.

By sunrise on the morning of May 3 the *Colonel Wright* had churned upriver as far as Palouse Rapids, one of several challenges on a waterway that stair-stepped its way down from the Rocky Mountains by means of foaming cascades alternating with long, relatively tranquil stretches of water. Using its full 135 pounds of steam, the vessel walked up the Palouse Rapids without difficulty, but at Tucannon Rapids the boatmen needed to extend a rope and tie one end to a large rock and set their lug sail. Before White or Baughman could take advantage of the strong wind blowing upriver, the rope broke loose and tangled in the paddlewheel. Fortunately, the lug sail held the steamer steady against the current while its wheel was stopped to permit crewmen to cut the rope away.

The humble lug sail proved a lifesaver on more than one occasion, and by this union of wind and steam power the *Colonel Wright* worked its way inland as far as the Clearwater River, about 150 miles from Wallula and 375 miles from Portland. At the confluence the bank was much gentler than in the canyons downriver, and large numbers of horses and cattle belonging to Nez Perce Indians grazed there. In a few weeks a new town arose on the site and was named for Captain Meriwether Lewis—today's Lewiston, Idaho.

In the normal course of events Baughman should have been back in Illinois piloting a plow through the dark soil of the corn-country farm where he grew up, but here he was on the uncharted waters of the Snake and Clearwater rivers in the far Northwest, attempting to thread the *Colonel Wright* past obstacles where no steamboat had gone before. Reflecting on his early years, Baughman recalled that life was never the same after he attended a Fourth of July celebration back home in Fulton and heard Senator Stephen A. Douglas extol the golden opportunities awaiting ambitious young men out west in California. Fifteen-year-old Ephraim saved \$91 during the next nine months, bought an ox team, and headed for the gold fields with two other teenagers. The three reached San Francisco after three months of hard traveling but soon split up to seek their individual fortunes.

Eph tried placer mining around Hangtown in the mother lode country but quickly discovered that earlier arrivals had claimed all the most promising sites. Discouraged but still willing to pursue other opportunities out west, he headed north to Oregon aboard a sailing ship where after a month at sea he reached the village of Portland. There the teenager worked at a number of odd jobs. He even farmed for a year in the fertile Willamette Valley before discovering the real love of his life. That was when he hired aboard the steamboat *Lot Whitcomb* as a fireman. A decade later, in the early 1860s, Baughman became a pioneer participant in yet another of the Pacific slope's great gold rushes, but the claims he staked this time around would be to navigable waters, not to mineral-rich mining lands.

Baughman's own recollections, as preserved in *An Illustrated History of North Idaho*, fail to mention the difficulties of the historic 1861 voyage but dwell at length on the ordinary pleasures of the task assigned to him.

In due time, we swept around the big bend in the Snake just below where Lewiston now stands and were met by the rushing waters of a stream clear as crystal and broad enough to be classed as a river. Before us spread out a beautiful bunchgrass valley, or rather a series of plateaus, reaching away to a high prairie to the southward: This Indian paradise was occupied here and there by a teepee. Several Nez Perce Indians loitered about and a few bands of ponies grazed contentedly upon the luxuriant grass. The picture was indeed a pretty one.

Baughman noticed that "the sound of the steam whistle and the pounding of the engines naturally attracted the attention of the Indians, who flocked to the water's edge to gaze on the wonderful fire boat." He steered the vessel's prow into the crystal-clear waters of the Clearwater River.

Slowly the little steamer propelled itself onward in the direction of the Oro Fino mines. We had to line the vessel over the Lawyer and several other rapids, and about thirty miles up the Clearwater we found an obstruction which we could not pass. This was what has since come to be named Big Eddy. Throughout our entire journey on the Clearwater thus far we were accompanied by Indians riding along the shore on horseback. By many little acts and signs did these children of nature

manifest their friendliness, no one of their number, so far as I can now remember, giving the slightest evidence of other than kindly sentiments.

At Big Eddy on May 6, 1861, the *Colonel Wright* could make no headway through the foaming rapids. "Twice we lined her and moved slowly up stream but the vessel did not have power enough to keep herself in the channel, so finally we gave it up for the time being, came on ashore and began making explorations. The result was not favorable." The steamboatmen had climbed to within 45 miles of the mines but were unable to surmount these rapids. "There was therefore nothing to do but to unload the freight."

Most goods carried aboard the *Colonel Wright* belonged to Seth Slater, one of several businessmen who tagged along as passengers. Slater had been so confident of reaching a landing within easy distance of the Oro Fino diggings that he brought along 10 to 15 tons of merchandise to sell to the miners. "Slater thought the site a good one as it was the apparent head of navigation so he and a few others remained there establishing Slaterville." The village of five tents and 50 inhabitants lasted only a few weeks, until Slater relocated to Lewiston.

Having accomplished its mission, the *Colonel Wright* turned around for the trip back to its home base above Celilo Falls. Along the way the vessel paused briefly at the mouth of Lapwai Creek and most of the crew went ashore to visit Chief Lawyer, whose lodge was on benchland overlooking the Clearwater River. From the steamboat, recalled Baughman,

We could see his teepee and before it a tall pole on whose top the Stars and Stripes floated in the breeze. This display of patriotism by the brave and friendly old chief touched a responsive chord in our hearts and we never forgot it. Lawyer, who had been educated in the East and could talk good English, received us most cordially and we chatted with him a long time. His hospitality was especially praiseworthy when it is remembered that we were invading his territory and opening the way for thousands to follow.

Indeed, thousands of miners, merchants and eventually settlers did follow in the steamer's wake. They traveled aboard the *Colonel Wright* as well as on the *Okanagan*, *Tenino*, and other vessels built in rapid succession to profit from the largest gold rush to agitate the Pacific slope since California's in 1849. As the officers of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company had hoped, Portland served as the newcomers' main West Coast gateway to the mines.

Despite its historic consequences, the voyage of the *Colonel Wright* went almost unnoted outside the far Northwest. With the Union in crisis, most Americans cared little that a steamboat had opened a distant waterway to passengers and freight. In any event, even after the Pony Express shortened the time between Missouri and California to ten days in 1860, news from remote corners of the northern West still required almost a month to reach the East Coast, and passengers and freight took even longer.

The arrival of any East Coast news in remote pockets of the northern Rocky Mountains was hailed as one of the marvels wrought by steamboats. Prior to the 1861 mining rush, messages, people and goods all crossed the northern Rockies no faster than a horse or canoe. The advent of steamboats changed that by bringing in their wake the improvements that some observers equated with civilization. Not 15 years earlier, the Clearwater Valley "was a howling wilderness, and a white man carried his life in his hands, who dared to venture in these parts." Now in 1861,

noted a reporter for the Portland *Oregonian*, "gentlemen seated on the forward guard view the scenery, smoke Havana cigars, and quaff Champagne cock-tails. The daily papers penetrate here, and St. Louis news is read here in seventeen days after date." It was a strange feeling, observed Fitz-Hugh Ludlow in the December 1864 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, "that of whirling along by steam where so few years before the Indian and the trader had toiled through the virgin forest, bending under the weight of their canoes."

Idaho mining traffic dwindled to a trickle by the end of the 1860s, but replacing gold dust and nuggets was new traffic consisting of golden grains from the ranches of the Columbia Plateau and also fruit grown in the orchards that once dotted the bottomlands along the river below Lewiston. Wheat producers in the Walla Walla Valley began to compete with growers in the Willamette Valley as early as 1867. At first the Oregon Steam Navigation Company did not want to haul the grain, complaining that it could not make any money on such a cargo. Yet, only a year after the initial downriver wheat shipment from the Walla Walla Valley, the first British vessel hauled grain from the Pacific Northwest to Liverpool, a market 16,000 miles away. Within five years a fleet of 85 tall ships was required to transport the golden grain to distant markets.

Grain-growing spread from the Walla Walla Valley to the fertile hills of the Palouse country north of the Snake River. From there the first wheat was hauled to Almota, a steamboat landing on the lower Snake River, in 1876. The following year almost 25 wagonloads a day headed to Almota for shipment downriver. Other tiny river settlements evolved at Penewawa and WaWaWai, all pressed against the river's edge by the steep walls of a narrow, winding canyon. Along the lower Snake River, grain warehouses sprang up.

The area's first orchards dated from the early 1870s when growers planted millions of trees along the river's edge. They would bear apples, peaches, pears and other fruit for nearly a century until dam building on the lower Snake flooded the benchlands. By the late 1870s steamboats like the *Spokane* and *Harvest Queen* brought settlers, agricultural implements and soldiers upriver and returned heavily loaded with cargoes of wheat and fruit. At one time as many as 16 steamboats plied the lower Snake River, and all of them contributed to the growing wealth of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, which monopolized the river's commerce.

Because harvest season in August and September occurred when low water on the Snake River often prevented steamboats from reaching the landings, the task of hauling grain by water was never simple. Yet nothing changed the region's basic transportation geography until a network of railroad lines reached into eastern Washington during the 1880s. Completion of a direct railroad line over the Cascades to Puget Sound in 1887 finally made it easy to ship carloads of wheat from the inland Northwest to the upstart ports of Tacoma and Seattle.

During the heyday of the grain and fruit trade, Captain Baughman became a near-legendary figure along the lower Snake River, and soon joining him as a steamboatman was his son Harry. Just as railroading ran in families, so too did a love of steamboating. The occupation often passed from father to son. That included sharing the dangers of the trade. One of the region's more spectacular steamboat explosions occurred on August 14, 1893, as the *Annie Faxon* made her regular trip downriver from Lewiston to pick up loads of fruit and passengers waiting at various landings in the canyon. In the pilothouse Captain Harry Baughman rang for the engines to stop for a landing below Almota. Almost at the same instant a blast of steam pressed up from the lower deck, buckling the vessel first in and then out as the boilers let go. Baughman watched

in horror as flying wreckage beheaded his companion in the pilothouse. The next thing the captain recalled was lying on shore, dazed and lamed.

Captain Eph Baughman was in Pierce, Idaho, inspecting some mining claims when word of the tragedy reached him. He immediately secured a horse and dashed almost 60 miles back to Lewiston, where he reportedly secured a rowboat to continue another 40 miles downriver to check on his son. "Heads were cut open and legs and arms smashed, and scalds and blisters were plentiful," reported the *Lewiston Teller*. The explosion killed eight people and injured nearly every member of the crew: "To look at the wreck as it lays, the wonder is how any person escaped alive."

As an increasing number of rail lines reached Lewiston around the turn of the century, the mainstays of steamboating in the area became freight and a growing traffic in excursion passengers. Steamboat excursions were organized for all kinds of special occasions—from Sunday school picnics to political rallies. Lewiston residents from the 1880s until the 1920s enjoyed picnic outings by steamboat to Grand Ronde, Asotin, Lapwai and even Kamiah, far up the Clearwater. There was always an Independence Day excursion. Children would race up and down the long decks of the *Almota* or some other steamer, descend into the engine room, or climb a ladder into the pilot house "where we received a warm welcome from the genial, smiling" Eph Baughman.

In the middle of May 1897 a writer from the Grangeville, Idaho, *Free Press* described a typical excursion party that left Lewiston aboard the handsome new steamer *Lewiston* for a day's voyage. Chartered by the local Presbyterian Church for a leisurely trip up the Clearwater, the boat had a band aboard to play popular music, sometimes to the deep-throated accompaniment of the steamer's immense chime whistle. "Everybody had been filled with good things to eat and drink when they arrived at Big Eddy." With Captain Eph Baughman at the wheel "we all felt safe," unless a passenger wandered onto the bow of the upper deck in search of a better view of the scenery and obstructed Baughman's view of the narrow channel. Then a man was liable to have an ear shot off (verbally) by the captain. He crossed the famous eddy, tied up and allowed everybody to go ashore to gather flowers and stroll in the woods until the whistle called them to return. The day "was perfect and everybody returned happy and well pleased with the trip."

The captain in those days was "a tall, broad-shouldered man, a bit on the heavy side," recalled a writer in the *Lewiston Tribune* in 1941. "His almost bald head was surrounded by a fringe of snow-white hair, and his ruddy complexioned face from which peered bright blue, far-seeing eyes, which required no glasses, was adorned with a long white beard."

The end of scheduled steamboat service in the 1920s by no means eliminated all river traffic between Portland and Lewiston, nor did it end the quest for better waterways, although the popular demand for inexpensive hydroelectric power and irrigation water was far louder than the old cry for government aid to river transportation. Bonneville, the first of the great Columbia dams, was completed in 1937. Ten years later work began on another major dam, McNary. It created slack water from Umatilla Rapids all the way to Pasco to form an impressive river highway for tugs and barges. River transportation, even so, remained in the shadow of the railroads until the Army Corps of Engineers completed a total of eight dams and locks on the Columbia and Snake rivers in the 1960s and 1970s that rejuvenated the water route. After the last one opened in 1975, railroads actually found themselves at a rate disadvantage with barge

lines for grain traffic from the interior Northwest as far east as Montana, where grain traveled by truck across the Bitterroot Mountains to Snake River ports.

Portland today remains the hub of the Columbia, Snake and Willamette river transportation system, a total of 534 miles of certified navigable waterways. In Oregon's largest city, barges meet the oceangoing ships that still transport grain coming from the fields of the inland Northwest to distant markets. Approximately 60 percent of the grain reaches Portland by train; the rest arrives by barges and towboats, some of which have threaded the 14-foot-deep channel that extends down from Lewiston, Idaho. Whereas each lock on the Mississippi River typically provides 10 to 25 feet of lift, the John Day lock alone lifts barges 113 feet and is reputed to be the highest lift lock in the world. The locks at Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental dams on the Snake River each lift over a hundred feet.

As of the mid 1990s about 600 people worked aboard the Snake and Columbia rivers' fleet of 40 towboats and 175 barges. Every year they collectively transported nearly 5 million tons of grain, 3.7 million tons of forest products, and sizable additional quantities of petroleum, fertilizer and intermodal containers. Barge traffic normally navigates the Snake and Columbia rivers a full 12 months each year. In 1995 a large diesel-powered paddleboat, the *Queen of the West*, began carrying as many as 149 overnight passengers on tours along the Columbia and Snake rivers. Like several smaller motor vessels operated by other companies, the *Queen of the West* is part of a noticeable revival of tourism between Lewiston and the sea that began in the early 1990s.

In one sense the Columbia River is more fortunate than the upper Missouri River with whose steamboats it once competed. On the Missouri, barge lines are able to reach only as far inland from St. Louis as Sioux City. The romance and adventure of Missouri River steamboats remains a part of the American consciousness, but a series of massive earthen dams—all without locks—prevents a revival of steamboat navigation along the upper Missouri.

As for Captain Baughman, during the summer of 1943 the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation christened its 199th Liberty ship the *Ephraim W. Baughman* to honor a transportation pioneer of the steamboat era. Yet, just 20 years after his death, few people could recall Captain Baughman or tell of his significance. He belonged to another time, only dimly recalled as the pre-railroad era—and yet what an era it was on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

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