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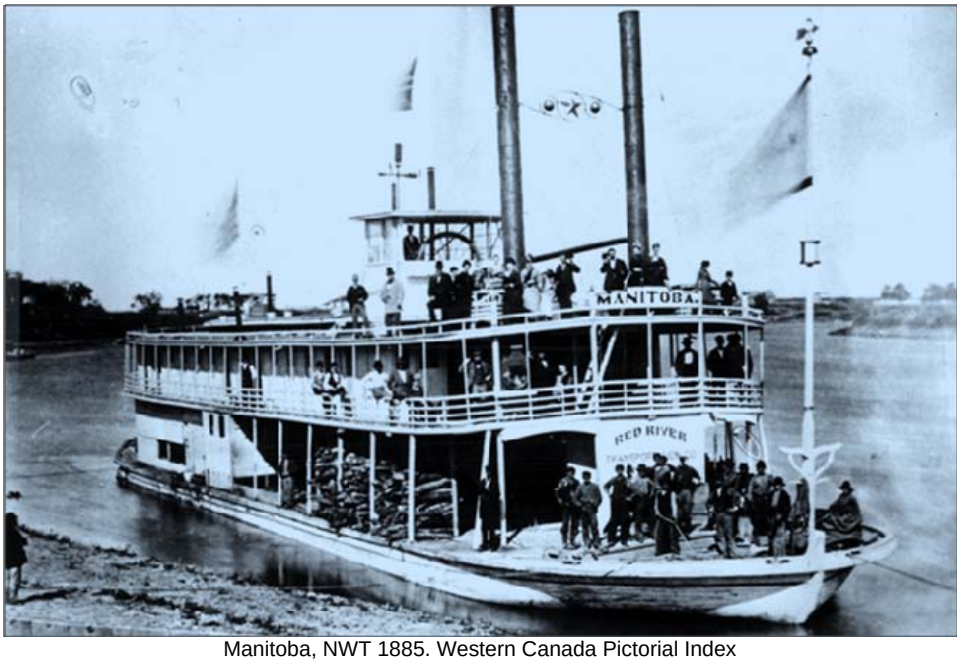
Economic History Theme Study

STEAMBOATS ON THE RIVERS AND LAKES OF MANITOBA

1859-96



Manitoba, NWT 1885. Western Canada Pictorial Index

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For centuries the rivers and lakes of the present province of Manitoba provided a transport route for native canoes, with many land portages to link the various waters. When European fur-traders arrived, they adopted this aboriginal method as the most practical way to bring in trade goods and carry out fur returns, and continued to utilize these waterways.

In the late 18th and early 19th century the North West Company competed with the HBC, using the old route of the voyageurs from Montreal, by the chain of rivers and lakes to Lake Superior, through Manitoba and far past the Saskatchewan into the Athabasca region. This transport route adapted the Native canoes to the purposes of the trans-oceanic fur trade, which linked Quebec to London. The large, heavy canots de maître were used on the Montreal to Grand Portage section of the interior route, while the smaller, lighter canots du nord carried goods far into the north and west, criss-crossing Manitoba en route.

With the amalgamation of the North West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, however, this old route of the voyageurs from Montreal to Red River cased to be used for freight, as the reorganized Hudson's Bay Company preferred its Hudson Bay entrance to the North West. Officials and missionaries from Montreal and Quebec continued to travel west by the water route from Montreal until the 1840s, entering Manitoba by the Winnipeg River; Alexandre Taché came this way on his first journey to the west in 1845, but thereafter traveled by way of St. Paul.

In 1857, the government of Canada (East and West) attempted to restore this route and in some way to reestablish the old "commercial empire of the St. Lawrence". But canoes were no longer adequate for the freight and passenger needs of the mid-19th century. The only effective way to connect Canada to the North West it hoped to control was by a through railroad or by a combination of steamboats on the Great Lakes and the proposed Dawson Road to Red River. In 1857, neither of these could be attained; the Red River Settlement remained for a time longer isolated from Canadian expansion.

The primary entrance for freight and for passengers from Europe going to Manitoba continued to be the Hudson's Bay Company's entrance by Hudson Bay. Ships from England carried the annual requisitions for the Northern Department to York Factory and returned to London with the year's returns of furs. This maritime link to England was then continued throughout the interior by brigades of York boats, which carried the individual district outfits and returns over the lakes and rivers, as far north as the Mackenzie District, and down Lake Winnipeg to Red River. These York boats, which carried much more freight than canoes could, had replaced canoes in the HBC transport system by the early 19th century. They were sturdy enough for use even on large lakes like Lake Winnipeg, where a sail could be hoisted to give added speed and convenience. With a great deal of arduous labour, the York boats could be tracked up rapids or rolled across a portage. This vast water transport route of the Hudson's Bay Company was the lifeline of its posts and essential to its economic survival. As well, the boat brigades provided much of the livelihood for larger numbers of Aboriginals and Métis who spent their summers "tripping" for the HBC.

In what is now southern Manitoba this water transport was supplemented by the overland use of carts in the 1840s. These distinctive Red River carts had been developed for use in the buffalo hunt, after horses had become available in the northern plains. They could readily be adapted to freighting, although oxen were preferred for that task. Horses were only used when speed was essential. Horses with a 400-500 lb. load could cover 50-60 miles per day, while oxen with an 800 lb. load could cover about 20 miles per day, in a travel time of about 10 hours. The cart trains were divided into brigades of 10 carts each, with three men to a brigade. One man took charge of the whole train and rode on horseback to supervise the entire length.[i] In some respects the organization of the buffalo hunt could be transferred to the operation of these cart brigades, with considerable responsibility attached to those in charge.

When Norman Kittson established himself at Pembina in the 1840s, his opposition to the HBC was strengthened by the fact that he could order trade goods from St. Paul in the winter

and have them delivered to him in summer by a combination of Mississippi steamboats and carts, whereas the HBC still depended on the two to three years it took to get goods from England delivered to York Factory and then down Lake Winnipeg to Red River. This forced the Company to keep a large reserve on hand, which cut into its profits and sometimes necessitated keeping unsaleable goods on inventory.

Free-traders and some individuals in Red River soon adopted the use of carts to freight some goods by way of St. Paul rather than by the old York Factory route. This land transport into Manitoba offered the first viable alternative to the York Factory route since the days of the old North West Company canoe route to Montreal. The water route, which lay between Red River and St. Paul, had never been used as a major transport system, because it would have involved portaging goods a long distance between the waters of the Mississippi and those of the Red. The land route over the cart trails was a more direct and efficient route, although flatboats on the Red were sometimes used in conjunction with the carts. This intensive use of an overland route for freighting into Red River introduced a new element into the life of the Settlement and established a new direction for trade, commerce and immigration. It was a north-south international route, following continental land lines rather than imposed boundaries or the predominantly east-west links of rivers and lakes, which had determined that boundary.

The Chippewa (Ojibway or Sauteux) objected to the establishment of these cart trails across their territory and protested that they had not given permission for the cutting of a road. In 1846, some complained that the cart traffic was frightening away the game on which they depended and threatened to impose a toll.[ii] In Aboriginal societies travel across tribal territory and the free use of resources while en route was the norm for friendly relationships. When this travel involved the establishment of trade routes or the depletion of the communal resource base, however, such actions required permission and compensation. Nothing appears to have been done officially to recompense the Chippewa for the development of the cart trails, although

individual brigade leaders may have made some payments. The presence of steamboats was to arouse a similar reaction in the 1860s.

Well-developed cart trails soon ran across country between Red River and St. Paul, and from Fort Garry west to Fort Ellice, Fort Pelly and Carlton. About 450 men, mostly Métis, were employed on the trail between Red River and St. Paul, many of them making two trips per season, while about 300 carts and 100 men made the trip to Carlton, which took about 70-80 days.[iii] Carting offered an alternative wage labour opportunity for the Métis, one which many preferred to the arduous labour of tripping in the boat brigades.

The use of the cart trails affected the economy and life of both St. Paul and Red River. By 1856, imports from St. Paul accounted for nearly half the value of all goods brought into Red River, while about four-fifths of the furs shipped from St. Paul originated in the Red River region.[iv] In 1858, the carts hauled the machinery for a textile mill from St. Paul; they also brought farm needs such as reapers and mowers.[v] It was by means of carts, then, that the first wave of mid-19th century farm and industrial technology reached Red River.

By 1852, the Chicago and Galena railroad was completed to the banks of the Mississippi; steamboats ran from there to St. Paul for seven months of the year and carts transferred these goods to Red River. This was a system which interlocked three different methods of transport, the railroads, steamboats and carts, into a route much more efficient and quicker than that of the HBC.[vi] Cart labour was easier to hire than men for the boat brigades; the freight costs to St. Paul were less than those to York; goods could be ordered and arrive the same year, ending the costly inventory carryover, and these goods would be the latest style. Moreover, this network could be expanded whereas the York route could not.[vii] All of these factors influenced the HBC to orient itself to St. Paul rather than to York.

In 1857, the transport of the soldiers of the Royal Canadian Rifles strained the York route beyond its capabilities. Much of the HBC trade goods had to be left behind, and this opened the door for the competitors of the Company to profit from bringing in a wider

assortment from St. Paul. The inadequacies of the York route, added to the increasing labour troubles in the boat brigades, induced Governor Simpson to try the Minnesota route for the HBC goods. Simpson's old friend, Ramsay Crooks, agreed to act as HBC agent in New York and managed in late 1857 to get the agreement of the United States Treasury Department to the transport of HBC goods, sealed and bonded, through the United States duty-free.[viii] With this arrangement concluded, London approved of a trial shipment in 1858 of about 40 tons of goods to be sent to New York, then by train and steamboat to St. Paul, and from there by carts to Fort Garry. To supervise this operation in St. Paul, the HBC selected the firm of J.C. and H.C. Burbank, two brothers who ran a commission and forwarding business, as well as a stage line from St. Paul to the railheads to the south.[ix]

This experiment was so successful for the HBC that it was repeated in 1859, although the goods then were sent from London by way of Montreal. Transport by either of these routes, Montreal or New York, to Red River by way of St. Paul proved to be 35-40% cheaper than by York Factory.[x] From then on increasing amounts of freight were sent by this route and the centuries-old entrance from Hudson Bay faded into insignificance.

The businessmen in St. Paul were pleased with the decision of the HBC to use their city as the transfer point for such a large volume of goods, especially when Sir George Simpson informed the Burbanks that he intended to import 150 tons of merchandise in 1859. This was to be carried by cart from St. Paul as far as Breckenridge, but Simpson expressed the hope that perhaps a steamboat would be available from Breckenridge down the Red.[xi] One small steamboat could carry this tonnage in a couple of trips, whereas it would take several brigades of carts. (Estimating four tons to a brigade of 10 carts, it would take nearly 40 brigades just for the HBC freight.) Steamboats were already obsolete in much of the United States, where they had been replaced by railways. On the Red River in the late 1850s, steamboats were still an advanced system of transportation, with considerable advantages to offer over the old cart or boat methods of transport.

This move by the HBC to import a large amount of its merchandise by way of St. Paul gave the added impetus necessary to secure steamboat transportation. The HBC and the private traders of Red River required an improved method of transport for the increasing traffic from St. Paul, while the St. Paul businessmen wanted to expand their commercial enterprises to reach from Red River through the Saskatchewan District and perhaps to the Rockies.

The opening up of such a water route also attracted those who owned and operated steamboats on the Mississippi. Steamboat transportation had been in use on the Mississippi River since the 1820s, gradually extending northward as far as St. Paul. These steamboats were especially designed for the Mississippi. Steamboat builders gradually increased the length and breadth of the hulls; this gave the boats a greater water plane area and the ability to sustain an increased amount of weight for their draught. A steady trend was made to lessen the draught of the steamboats, to enable them to use shallower reaches of water; to offset this, hog chains were added to strengthen the hull.[xii] Their captains and crews developed the skills necessary to run these shallow-draught, flimsy-looking craft over the shoals and rocks of the river. Some of the passenger steamboats became the ginger breaded floating palaces, complete with the riverboat gamblers who became stock characters in novels and movies.

By the 1850s, however, these steamboats were outmoded by the extension of railroad track to the Mississippi. The steam engines, which ran on land, were almost unaffected by the weather, unlike the steamboats which depended on water levels and could not run in northern areas during the winter. Railroads could cut across country in a fairly straight line, whereas the steamboats had to follow the windings of prairie rivers, which added many more miles to be covered. Steamboats were much more susceptible to the vagaries of nature than were rail engines and could not compete with the cheapness and efficiency of the railroad. The only choice for owners and crews was to take their boats and skills to places as yet untouched by the railroads.

The Missouri River was one of these. By 1857, when the Dawson and Hind Expedition surveyed the North West for the Canadian government, Hind noted that the **Chippewa** had left St. Louis and navigated as far as Fort Benton on the Missouri, a round trip of 6,240 miles in 80 days – a figure which indicates the number of miles added to a prairie trip by riverbends in comparison to the distance by land. Hind foresaw that a similar expansion of the Mississippi Valley trade would soon spill over into the Red River area and end its long isolation[xiii] -- much sooner than the Canadian government could extend its transportation network there. The Mississippi River steamboat owners and operators would be bound to look on the Red as another outlet for their highly-developed skills and technology, where they would have a grace period of some years before the railroads would again end their usefulness.

A first tentative attempt to build a steamboat for the Red had been made in 1856 at Red River. Subscriptions, primarily from the Anglican clergy and laity, were raised for this purpose.[xiv] This company, however, did not succeed in their enterprise; no further reference to its activities was made.

The realization of the dream of steamboats on the Red derived from the businessmen of St. Paul, Minnesota – a group and a city which had begun and prospered by the river traffic on the Mississippi and now looked to expand both of these, in combination with the westward thrust of the railroads, to a new northern market. This was a continental outlook, unaffected by questions of national barriers in trade, especially since this was the period of Reciprocity between Canada and the United States, when international free trade seemed possible. It was an era of “Saskatchewan fever” too, when St. Paul businessmen hoped to extend their economy, by means of steamboat transportation, far into the Saskatchewan region, perhaps onto the Saskatchewan River itself, where they expected increasing numbers of gold seekers and settlers to move.

In January 1859, the Chamber of Commerce of St. Paul was formed and set up a committee to investigate the cost of putting a steamboat on the Red River. This committee

recommended that a cash bonus should be offered to anyone who succeeded in launching a steamboat on the Red. Captain Anson Northup took up this challenge and purchased an old Mississippi steamboat, the ***North Star***. He dismantled this boat and hired 30 men with 13 yokes of oxen and 17 spans of horses to drag the machinery and fresh lumber over the snow, 150 miles from Crow Wing on the Mississippi to the mouth of the Sheyenne River on the Red.

There he reconstructed the boat into a tiny, shallow-draught steamer which he named the **Anson Northup**. In this boat, he successfully steamed down the Red River to Fort Garry, arriving there on 11 June 1859. From Fort Garry, he managed to run a brief excursion trip up to Lake Winnipeg, to prove that his steamboat could run the entire length of the Red River, and then returned to Fort Abercrombie.[xv] He left his steamboat there while he went to pick up the $2000 prize from St. Paul.

Northup hoped to capitalize on his opportunity, with the only steamboat on the Red, and therefore, set a very high rate for freight on the **Anson Northup**. Simpson refused to pay this price and arranged for the HBC merchandise to be carried by cart to Fort Abercrombie and floated down the Red on flatboats from there.[xvi] Without the HBC business, Northup faced ruin. Simpson suggested to the Burbanks that they, with the HBC as silent partner, should buy and operate the **Anson Northup**. The Burbanks would be assured of the HBC freighting business, while the HBC would gain a preferential rate on its goods, much lower than that paid by the general public.

The Burbank brothers, in their capacity as owners of the Minnesota Stage Company, had already undertaken to build a costly stage road between St. Anthony and Fort Abercrombie in June 1859 to link up with Northup's steamboat. This was done to take advantage of the amount of freight imported by the HBC and in the expectation that the Red River would soon be an entry for colonization of the North West of British North America. They had to grade and bridge the road, provide way stations and guest houses and forage for the teams.[xvii] But they expected that the steamboat would increase the carrying capacity of the Minnesota route over

the use of carts, and would lessen the costs and repay this initial outlay. If the steamboat did not operate, however, their costs could not readily be recouped.

Thus the joint arrangement with the HBC to run the steamboat on the Red fitted into the special interests of both the Burbanks and the HBC. The Burbanks already operated one section of the transport route and also acted as agents in forwarding the HBC merchandise from St. Paul. It was a short step to incorporate the steamboat into this already-existing business arrangement and to link the Red River to the road system in place, to the mutual advantage of both the HBC and the Burbanks. During the winter of 1859-60 Simpson advanced money to the Burbanks for improvements to the stage road. When these were made freight could be carried in heavy, canvas-covered wagons rather than carts.[xviii]

American laws forbade foreign ownership of steamboats on American waters but, with the Burbanks as official owners, the HBC could avoid this problem. As part of this arrangement with the Burbanks, Simpson bought about 1,000 acres on the east bank of the Red River and established a post there which he named Sheyenne, but which was soon called Georgetown in his honour. Georgetown for a few years became an important link in the Minnesota route to Fort Garry, the focus for trans-shipment from land to water carriage of HBC freight. Its fields provided forage for the horses and oxen of the cart teams. A sawmill and grist mill were established, as well as a warehouse and dormitories.[xix] The second steamboat on the Red, the **International** was built there in 1861-62. This post also permitted the HBC to trade, without a license, on American soil.

Sir George Simpson negotiated this contract with the Burbanks shortly before his death. Those who had to carry out its terms felt that he had been very shortsighted – a rare occurrence for Simpson. The contract held good for four years, from 1860 through the season of 1863, and bound the Burbanks to ship 250 tons for the HBC each year from St. Paul to Fort Garry at a price of $4.00 per 100 lbs. This contract did not prevent the Burbanks from dealing with the competitors of the HBC, however, even in the use of the jointly-owned steamboat.[xx] On the

other hand, the HBC could argue that the 250 tons of freight was a maximum amount rather than a minimum, and therefore, that the HBC could ship less than that, even if that jeopardized the Burbanks' position.

The Minnesota route saved the HBC time as well as money. The Burbanks could import British goods from Liverpool to St. Paul in 40-50 days.[xxi] The HBC could change its indent on short notice and maintain a greater variety of goods, without the expense of a large inventory. This service attracted other customers from Red River as well as the HBC. Bishop Taché made good use of the Burbanks as agents to supply his missions.

Throughout the 1860s, the steamboat on the Red was but one link in the chain which led from St. Paul to Red River. It was a weak link, frequently stalled by low water on the Red or by the dangers of Native wars, and carts continued to carry much of the freight for Red River. The Minnesota route in the 1860s balanced the old transport methods with the new, using rail, river and carts in fluctuating amounts, but ensuring that the Minnesota route would continue to be used in preference to the old York Factory system.

Although the steamboat did not immediately replace the cart brigades, even its irregular runs through the 1860s severely eroded the position of York Factory in the HBC transport system. In 1860, the Saskatchewan outfit came in by the Minnesota route, and in 1861, the Swan River outfit was added. When steamers were added to Lake Winnipeg and Saskatchewan River in the 1870s, the role of York Factory was further diminished. By 1875, all of the HBC outfits for the interior came to Fort Garry; only the small amounts for York and the Bay posts still came to York.[xxii]

In the 1870s, the Red River steamboats contributed to the long process of immigration, farm settlements, and railroads which was to change the old Red River Settlement into the modern province of Manitoba. Many of the early immigrant groups traveled by steamboat down the Red to Winnipeg – about 900 Mennonites in 1874, the Icelanders en route to Lake

Winnipeg, and individuals from Ontario. These steamboats also carried heavy loads of rails, cars and engines for the railway, which was to supplant them.

The operation of steamboats on the Red in the 1870s set the pattern for corporate action in this sphere throughout the remaining years of steamboat use, as competitor after competitor was swallowed up by a single transportation company, in this case, the Red River Transportation Company. Only in this way could profits be held to an acceptable high level – with a corresponding high charge for freight. The close involvement of the HBC in this transport company was also to be repeated in the later years of steamboats on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers.

In 1878, when the St. Paul Minnesota and Manitoba Railway was extended to St. Boniface, the usefulness of steamboats on the Red River became very minimal. As the earlier Mississippi River owners and captains had turned their attention to the Red, so now the focus of steamboat activity in Manitoba became the Assiniboine River. This river provided access along its winding length to a number of farming settlements, which were in need of both passenger transportation and the carriage of heavy farm machinery and other freight. For a few years, before the CPR extended west of Winnipeg, the Assiniboine gave opportunities for profit to steamboat owners and operators. Most of the steamboats previously on the Red were switched to the Assiniboine by 1880.

The Assiniboine was an entirely Canadian system and did not involve the same juggling of different national rules and regulations as had the Red. The steamboat operators and owners on the Assiniboine were primarily local Manitoba businessmen, although many of the captains, crew and builders of these steamboats came from the United States. As had happened on the Red, the steamboat traffic on the Assiniboine led to combinations of interests, to a sharing of the profits rather than outright competition, which always proved too costly to the owners. The Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company, the successor to the Red River Transportation Company, did not succeed in absorbing all its competitors on the Assiniboine,

but did manage to make “combinations” to ensure the same rates were charged. Again, steamboats helped to haul railway needs, although their main occupation was to supply the settlements in advance of the railroad. But the Assiniboine River offered a brief period of opportunity for steamboat use, since the railway followed close on its heels. In 1882, the major steamboat use of the Assiniboine ended and the three large riverboats in use there were transferred to the Saskatchewan, in pursuit of the last frontier for this type of boat within present Manitoba.

On the Saskatchewan, the HBC had operated its own riverboats since 1874. In 1882, these were transferred to the WWTC, which held a monopoly on the Saskatchewan and profited from that until 1885. This last year of profit was only made possible by the fact that the steamboats were used as troopships in the Northwest Rebellion, however, and after 1885, their use and profitability declined sharply. By 1896, the last of these big riverboats, the **North West** was laid up on the shore of the river.

Steamboats were also used on the three great lakes of Manitoba. Their use on the lakes took a different form from that of the riverboats, and the steamboats themselves were necessarily of a different design. The use of steamers on Lake Winnipeg at first was rooted in the HBC desire to improve its own transportation system. To do this, the HBC inaugurated the use of steam on Lake Winnipeg to carry its outfits and returns from Fort Garry to connect with the Saskatchewan River steamboats at Grand Rapids. But this initial impetus was transformed when increasing numbers of settlers and government agencies required the extension of this transport service beyond the Company needs. When this occurred the HBC quickly handed over its responsibilities and sold its lake steamers to the NWNC. The period of public use of this transportation route was a relatively brief one, however, for railways soon ended the use of lake steamers for freight and passengers into the Saskatchewan.

This did not end the era of steamboats on Lake Winnipeg, although it did transform their use. They still carried some passengers and freight but the primary function of these

steamboats on the lake became that of transporting enormous volumes of fish to Selkirk, to be sent from there by rail to the United States. Rather than carrying large amounts of imports as the earlier steamboats had, these lake steamers formed a link in the large-scale export of a primary resource and continued to do this until well into the 20th century. Smaller steam tugs were also used to carry lumber to mills in Winnipeg.

On the two smaller lakes, Manitoba and Winnipegosis, steamboats continued in use until the 1920s. These small steam tugs carried some passenger and freight traffic but were primarily used in the commercial enterprises of fishing, lumbering, quarrying and production of gypsum for local business enterprises, for which small tugs were sufficient. In the end, however, the extension of rail connections along the shore of the lakes ended this use of steamboats also.

Steamboats provided the first large-scale transport of passengers and freight into and around Manitoba in the years 1859-1896. They represented the onslaught of new technology, immigration, and advancing industrialization, which were to end the old fur trade era in the North West. Yet in many ways these steamboats also had similarities to the older transport system which they replaced. Like the York boats, they were dependent on existing water routes, perhaps even more so than the York boats, since the steamboats were so easily stranded by low water and could not be hauled over portages. Their operation was seasonal and ceased with the onslaught of winter. During the last 40 years of the 19th century, they kept moving into an ever-receding frontier, impelled by the advancing railroad network, which was so much more independent of season and weather.

By the end of the 19th century the railroad had completely replaced the old riverboats. The steamboats, which survived into the 20th century, were either used in commercial enterprises, such as towing lake resources to markets, or became the curious survivals utilized for moonlight excursions and dances on the rivers and lakes – a romanticized reminder of their previous utilitarian function.

Steamboats on the Red River

The Red River only became utilized as a transportation route for a large volume of goods in the era of steam transportation, beginning with the voyage of the **Anson Northup** in 1859. Although the Red offered a direct link between American territory and Fort Garry and on to Lake Winnipeg, most of the traffic before then had taken place overland, using carts rather than boats to carry goods. Steamboats had been a fixture on the Mississippi River for many years but could not cross the height of land dividing the valley of the Mississippi from that of the Red. These Mississippi steamboats contributed to the growth of the city of St. Paul and brought goods to it, which were ultimately destined for Red River, but these goods were transferred to carts in St. Paul in order to reach Red River. As steamboat traffic declined on the Mississippi due to the spread of rail connections, attention turned to the possibilities of the Red as a transport system for these unemployed steamboats and crews.

At the same time the Canadian government sent the Dawson and Hind expedition to report on the situation in the North West, including the transportation possibilities. According to this report, the rapids at St. Andrew's and the bars at the mouth of the Red presented the only serious obstacles in the HBC section of the river. Even the St. Andrew's Rapids (then referred to as the Grand Rapids) were an obstacle only to steamers over 120 ft. long.[1]

South of the 49th parallel the Goose Rapids posed another hazard. Other than these, the main difficulty with the Red River as a route for steamboats lay in its shallow waters and winding extent. The shallow waters required steamboats with very light draught – not an insuperable problem, since the Mississippi experience had already led to the development of such boats. In years of extremely low water, however, even these boats would be unable to operate, despite their captains' claims that they could run on a heavy dew. The coils of the river added many miles to the transport route as compared to a direct path by land; this increased the expense and time of steamboat travel.

Very few real attempts were made to alter the Red to make it more suitable for steamboats. It was 1873-74 before the Canadian government removed the large boulders from the St. Andrew's Rapids, for a total expenditure since Confederation (1870) of $6,234.90.[2]

When the HBC inaugurated large-scale traffic on Lake Winnipeg with its steamer **Colvile**, it besieged the Canadian government to dredge the bars at the mouth of the Red. The **Colvile**, despite her low draught, frequently got stuck on sandbars here, as it did while en route to pick up Lord and Lady Dufferin from Fort Alexander in 1877. A schooner usually had to go with the **Colvile** to carry part of her freight across the bar; this then had to be transferred to the **Colvile** for the trip up the lake. If the bar were dredged, the depth of water could easily be increased to about nine feet, rather than the present five or six feet, and prevent this costly interchange.[3]

In the first years of steamboat traffic on the Red, however, the main concern for the HBC was the upper Red, the link between Breckenridge (and later Moorhead) and Red River. The inauguration of steamboat traffic on the Red River did not arise primarily from the initiative of the HBC, however, but was undertaken by the merchants of St. Paul. The market at Red River and, more importantly, the future possibilities for Minnesota of access to the far north and west of British North America (where gold had been reported) influenced the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce to offer a $1000 (later $2000) purse to the first person to bring a steamboat down the Red to Fort Garry.

During the winter of 1858-59, Captain Anson Northup took up this challenge and dismantled a small (90 ft. by 22 ft.)[4] steamboat, the **North Star** (previously the **Governor Ramsey**), which had been running on the upper Mississippi River. He transported the sections of the steamboat and fresh lumber for the hull overland to the Red River, where he reconstructed it. Renaming it the **Anson Northup**, he launched it to make the first steamboat voyage to Fort Garry, arriving there 10 June 1859. This "small, shabby, stern-wheel boat, mean and insignificant in itself," was "important as the harbinger of new developments of what

Americans are pleased to call civilization."[5] It heralded the advance of new transport possibilities for Red River, the end of its long isolation, with all the attendant social changes, which would follow in its wake.

The career of the **Anson Northup** illustrated the strong influence of the Mississippi River steamboat experience on the later Red River era, both in actual steamboats used and in the men who operated them. In large part most of these boats, captains and owners moved their operation from the Mississippi to the Red, regardless of national boundaries or interests. Red River steamboat traffic was of its nature an international business, much more so than the later Assiniboine and Saskatchewan River trade.

Captain Northup attempted to profit from his advantage as owner of the first steamboat on the Red and offered to carry freight for the public (including the Hudson's Bay Company) at a high rate. The Hudson's Bay Company, with its enormous volume of freight, refused to pay these rates and, without the HBC freight, Northup could not survive financially. He was induced to sell his steamboat to the St. Paul firm of the Burbank Bros., who had a secret steamboat partnership with the HBC. The steamboat was then renamed the **Pioneer**.

The Hudson's Bay Company already operated its own transport system of carts from St. Paul and controlled prices and costs in cooperation with the Burbanks. It was not a large step, therefore, for the HBC to become involved in the operation of steamships itself, rather than hire a private operator such as Northup and be liable to his inflated prices. The HBC could not be the legal owners of the steamboat; this title could only be held by American citizens such as the Burbanks. But the HBC could profit from the arrangement with the Burbanks to ensure that the Company goods received a good discount (50%) on the freight rates charged to the general public.[6] This, plus the dividends from such a profitable business, would more than repay the initial investment of capital by the HBC.

When the accounts of the first year of joint steamboat operation were submitted by the Burbanks, however, the HBC showed a loss of $4,000. Burbank tried to persuade Governor

Mactavish that the steamer was worth this plus its original cost, but Mactavish was dubious.[7] Part of the financial statement of this year involved the Burbanks' purchase of the marooned steamboat **Freighter**, an expense apparently undertaken without consultation with the HBC. Captain John B. David had tried, unsuccessfully, to steam across country from the Minnesota River to the Red during the spring rise in 1859, in order to beat Captain Northup in the race to Fort Garry. His gamble had not paid off, for he had been stranded near Big Stone Lake when the water fell as rapidly as it had risen. When the Burbanks bought the **Freighter**, her machinery was transported to Georgetown to be used in a new steamboat to be built there.[8] This would increase the line of steamboats on the Red to two.

The **Pioneer** wintered at Georgetown in 1860-61, although she had difficulty surmounting the Goose Rapids on her way down and only managed to do so by taking off her cabin to lighten her. The Burbanks removed the engine from the **Pioneer**, intending to use it to power the saw for the lumber required for the new steamer.[9] In the spring, however, the engine of the **Pioneer** was still lying on the shore at Georgetown and the hole it had left in the steamboat was uncaulked. With the melting of the ice, the engine was covered with water and the boat also suffered some damage, which delayed the start of the 1861 season's work on the Red.[10] The HBC criticized the Burbanks' management of the joint steamboat enterprise and their discontent increased through the season. Whereas in 1860, the **Pioneer** had run on a regular schedule, in order to convince skeptics that it could be done, in 1861 the Burbanks held her up in order to have a complete load – much to the discomfort of passengers such as James J. Hargrave, who had to spend two weeks at Georgetown waiting for the boat to arrive from Fort Garry.[11]

After the 1861 season, the **Pioneer** was laid up for winter in Cook's Creek near Lower Fort Garry, while her crew returned overland to Georgetown. Within a few weeks, however, the steamer had sunk at her berth and efforts to raise her were frustrated by cold and ice.[12] The HBC blamed this on the Burbanks as well, and claimed that the man in charge had not been

properly instructed on how to look after the **Pioneer**. In the spring the steamer still lay submerged[13] in what was to be her final resting place. Her engine was removed at some point, however, for in 1868 Governor Mactavish proposed to use the engine of the **Pioneer** in a steam mill to be built at White Horse Plains.[14] In this way, part of the **Pioneer** (previously the **Anson Northup, North Star, Governor Ramsey**) survived for yet another reincarnation. Her boiler, which was also transferred to White Horse Plains, was reused in the HBC lake steamboat, the **Chief Commissioner**, in the 1870s.

On 25 May 1862, the new steamer, the **International**, arrived at Fort Garry on her maiden voyage.[15] She was a double-decked sternwheeler, 137 ft. by 26 ft., considerably larger than the **Pioneer**, and had cost $20,200 to build.[16] She carried 160 passengers, mostly Canadians bound for the Fraser River mines,[17] as well as such dignitaries as Bishop Taché and Judge Black.[18] With the loss of the **Pioneer** she was the only steamer to run on the Red.

Although the arrangement with the Burbanks was acceptable to the HBC so far as preferential freight rates were concerned, the London Board was not pleased with the extent of influence in its steamboat arrangements which necessarily accrued to outsiders such as the Burbanks, nor with the lack of HBC control over the joint operation. The agreement with the Burbanks had been worked out by Sir George Simpson shortly before his death and much of what he had arranged was unknown to Governor Mctavish, the local authority of the HBC. The Burbanks were able to act with little or no supervision, yet their actions bound the Hudson's Bay Company financially.[19]

In addition, the Burbanks' interests in the steamboating business differed from those of the HBC. They wanted to develop a wider market for the people, services and goods of St. Paul, whereas the HBC was primarily concerned with the transport of its own goods, and took little interest in the development of immigration and communication which might detract from its own priorities in the west. Both parties chafed at the restrictions imposed by their joint arrangement.

The agreement regarding the steamboat did not bind either the HBC or the Burbanks to consider each other's interests at all times. Both were free to act outside of the arrangement to manage their own businesses in whatever way seemed best. J.C. Burbank even considered entering into partnership with N. Kittson in Red River. This would have made him a rival (in the fur and merchandise trade) of his erstwhile HBC partners and would have allowed Kittson some use of the jointly-owned steamboat operation.[20] This proposed partnership of Burbank and Kittson did not take place and Kittson decided to bring in his goods by flatboat rather than steamboat.[21] Kittson soon sold his business interests at Red River, (although HBC Governor Mactavish found it hard to believe that Kittson had entirely withdrawn).[22] These intricate moves by Kittson paved the way for him to replace the Burbanks as the HBC agent in St. Paul, joining his interests to those of the HBC which he had for so long opposed.

Mactavish suspected that the Burbanks were also involved with Jas. McKenney, an independent entrepreneur in Red River, (and half-brother to John C. Schultz). McKenney planned to send a trading expedition into the Saskatchewan region, where he hoped to profit from the expected influx of gold diggers. The Burbanks delayed the steamer to carry McKenney's goods and shunted aside some of the HBC freight in favour of McKenney's.[23]

On several counts, then, the actions of the Burbanks raised serious questions about their partnership with the HBC. Under the strain of these suspicions and divergent interests, the HBC appointed Norman Kittson, their former foe, as special HBC agent, to act in all matters connected with the steamboat and the transport of freight,[24] even though the contract worked out by Sir George Simpson bound the HBC to the Burbanks until after the season of 1863.

This change of agent did not end all the problems with steamboat transportation, however. Led by Yellow Bear, a delegation of Chippewa at Pembina met the **Pioneer** in 1861 and complained of the steamboats driving away their fish and game, and the carts driving away the buffalo. They had, nevertheless, decided to keep the peace, because their Great Father (Lincoln) has promised them clothing, ammunition, and utensils. But the long-knives (U.S.

Military) spoke with forked tongues and thought the Chippewa were old women who could be mocked; they continued to cross Chippewa hunting territory, to mix up the river water to chase away the fish, and now were making an even bigger boat. The Captain said he had no authority in American waters, but offered them some payment across the border at the HBC post, where he put a barrel of whisky on shore for the Chippewa.

These Red Lake Chippewa informed the HBC officer at Georgetown that they expected to be paid by the steamboat operators for the use of the Red River and for the wood that was cut for fuel. The Chippewa appeared very angry and threatened to burn the new steamboat (the **International**) at Georgetown. Burbank took this seriously enough to ask the Governor of Minnesota to send 50 soldiers to garrison Georgetown over the winter.[25] Although the Chippewa demands were regarded as exorbitant by the HBC, they roused fears of damage to the steamboat or to the men involved in running it. The HBC again blamed the Burbanks for this situation because the Burbanks and the steamer captain (Bryant) had apparently promised rewards to the Natives and had also frequently given them presents along the route. This had raised the Chippewa expectations to a level the HBC thought impossible to satisfy.

The Red Lake Indians were only the most vociferous of the Natives opposed to the free operation of the steamboat on the Red River. Wm. Mactavish noted that Natives all along the river from Fort Garry to Pembina were “becoming troublesome and discontented” and he feared some evil would result.[26] Throughout the winter of 1861-62, the Natives all over the Red River country suffered from starvation to a greater degree than they had for many years.[27] This no doubt aggravated their outlook on the steamboats, the harbinger of their loss of livelihood as well as land.

In August 1862, the steamboat was unable to run on the Red River because of the Dakota uprising of that year. The anger of the Dakota was directed, however, at the settlers and the United States government, rather than against the steamboat or the Red River Settlement. In fact, many of the Dakota sought refuge in Red River, where they claimed

protection as their right, because their ancestors had fought on the British side in the War of 1812.

The situation was extremely dangerous for all travelers on the Red. Samuel Bruce, who intended to get to Fort Garry by the **International** from Georgetown, traveled by stage as far as Breckenridge. He felt himself very fortunate that his group had been heading west at the time; the other passengers he met there, who continued towards St. Paul or stayed at Breckenridge, were all killed by the Dakota. When he got to Georgetown, however, he realized the futility of travel by steamboat. The water was so low and the river so winding that the boat would go aground quite often and be exposed to attack. In such a case, her upper works, made of only one-half inch plank, would be useless as defense.

In addition, a mail carrier who arrived from Fort Garry said about 200 Chippewa were waiting at Pembina for the steamer and threatened to sack the **International** and kill her crew and passengers who, they said, had no right to be on the river. Kittson attempted to send the remainder of the HBC goods out of Georgetown by the steamer, but she was stranded within about five miles. The goods were then sent forward, some by flatboat and some by cart.[28] Near Grand Forks, however, these carts ran into a group of Chippewa waiting for the United States treaty commissioners to arrive. The commissioners had been prevented from coming by the Dakota Sioux uprising but had not sent any explanation. Consequently, the Chippewa had been waiting some time, had run out of food, and were extremely angry – so much so that they confiscated part of Kittson's freight and supplies.

The United States treaty commissioners, when they did negotiate with the Chippewa in 1863, used this incident to threaten the Chippewa with punishment unless they accepted the treaty terms offered them and ceded the whole of the Red River Valley from the Canadian border south to the Wild Rice and Sheyenne rivers for a payment of $510,000. Of this sum paid by the United States government to the Natives, $100,000 was to be transferred to Kittson, the HBC and the other traders whose goods had been taken. Several of the Red Lake leaders

refused to sign with this provision; eventually this amount was scaled down and the treaty signed.[29] Once the treaty was signed, the steamboat was not subject to any interference from the Natives. The upper Red River became a United States waterway, subject to its regulations.

The steamboat was unable to venture again onto the Red River in 1862. The trouble with the Dakota and Chippewa may have motivated the Burbanks to sell out their interest in the steamboat operation. They claimed that the uprising should be regarded as an act of God, which released them from their contract with the HBC. Although the contract continued in force for that year, after the 1862 season, the HBC was able to buy out the Burbanks' share in the **International**, as well as their half-share in the sawmill at Georgetown, a quantity of stores in the warehouse there, and the engine of the **Pioneer**, all for the sum of $7500.[30] This gave the HBC complete control of the only steamboat on the Red.

In 1863, the water was low and the **International** remained trapped at Fort Abercrombie. The Red River settlers carted in the freight for the settlement from St. Cloud, at great profit to themselves, although it was "a clumsy, slow and expensive process" for the HBC.[31] The settlers saw this as their opportunity and did not want the steamboat traffic revived.

In 1864, the danger of another Dakota outbreak was thought to be increasing around Georgetown and this, combined with low water, prevented the **International** from making more than one run.[32] It was impossible for the HBC to get carters to run between Fort Abercrombie and Pembina unless they had a military escort. One large train of wagons carried HBC freight under military escort, but Governor Mactavish was afraid they would not go further than Pembina, since if they carried the freight to Red River, their escort would not wait for them to return to conduct them back to Fort Abercrombie. The St. Paul cart trail to Red River was also threatened by the Red Lake Chippewa, who were angry that the treaty money promised them the previous year had not materialized.[33] But the freight did get through, and the Settlement and the HBC could make it through another year without steamboat transport.

Governor Mactavish feared that the Natives also might claim again for the use of the river and the wood cut for the steamer, multiplying the difficulties for the HBC. In any case, the low water on the Red gave the HBC no chance to use the steamboat for the next few years. In 1866, the water was so low that the steamboat was unable to make a single trip.[34]

In 1867, the **International** was able to make a trip on the early floodwater. She arrived at Fort Garry with all of the Saskatchewan goods on 3 May 1867, without incident.[35] The receipt of the Saskatchewan outfit at this early date was vital and proved the worth of the steamboat, which could carry all these goods in one trip. The trip to Carlton was a long one and the Saskatchewan outfit had to be sent off from Fort Garry as early as possible, because the men had to be back at the Settlement in time for harvest. If the Saskatchewan goods were delayed, it was difficult to find carters at a later date.[36] But the steamboat could not make any more trips in 1867; the water level in the Red fell rapidly and the rest of the freight for the Settlement had to be brought by carts. Rumours of Dakota attacks on packet bearers between Fort Abercrombie and Georgetown reached Red River and seemed to threaten the fragile link with St. Paul.[37] These rumours were apparently unfounded, however, and the Red River people had no trouble with the Dakota.[38]

In 1868, the **International** arrived at Fort Garry on 28 May, when the spring water was high. Governor Mactavish blamed the captain's timidity and stupidity for the fact that he had left 10 tons of goods stored in the Georgetown warehouse, because he thought it would be impossible to get over the Goose Rapids with such a heavy load.[39] Whether the captain or the governor was the best judge is unclear. The water level held high enough for the steamboat to make more trips and clear out the warehouse.

In 1869, the water on the Red allowed the steamboat to make several trips and to bring in most of the HBC freight ordered from England.[40] The steamboat replaced the carts as soon as the Red River allowed it to run, thus ending one of the wage labour opportunities traditionally available to the Métis of Red River. The **International**, wholly owned by the HBC, did not

usually carry freight for private traders, but did carry four tons this year for a young man called McArthur at six shillings per 100 lbs. from Georgetown, a couple of shillings cheaper than the carts.[41] The fact that the HBC was now willing to use its steamboat as a public carrier was an omen of the changing situation in the North West, as the transfer of title from the HBC to the new Dominion of Canada came closer, and brought with it the loss of the HBC monopoly of transport as well as of trade.

Over the winter of 1869-70, the **International** was extensively repaired and refitted at Lower Fort Garry.[42] In the spring, despite the "troubles" at Red River, she resumed her trips. On her way to Fort Garry from Georgetown, one of the passengers was Captain Wm. F. Butler, a Canadian military intelligence officer, sent to Red River by the Canadian government to ascertain the situation there. Riel was informed that Butler was on the **International** and awaited his arrival to seize him. Butler managed to get off the steamboat just before it arrived at the dock and made his way to Lower Fort Garry.[43] This was the closest brush the **International** had with involvement in the 1870 uprising. Afterwards, she resumed her normal civilian traffic.

In the 1870s, the water rose to unprecedented high levels. At the same time, immigration into the Red River valley increased dramatically. This combination provided the impetus for an expansion of steamboat traffic on the Red. In 1870 alone, the **International** completed more trips than she had previously during her entire career. By 1871, Native treaties were negotiated with all the bands along the river in both Canada and the United State. The Red River could now be regarded as a public highway, although access continued to be governed by the regulations of the two different countries involved.

The enhanced prospects of steamboat traffic on the Red ensured that the HBC monopoly on the river would not continue. James J. Hill, a young St. Paul merchant, had offered in 1869 to carry the HBC freight from New York to Fort Garry at very low rates which the HBC did not accept. In 1870, therefore, Hill joined with Chauncery Griggs to form a new transport company. The Hill-Griggs Company had a new steamboat built at McCauleyville,

across the Red River from Fort Abercrombie. Early in May 1871, this boat named the **Selkirk**, arrived at Fort Garry with 115 passengers and 125 tons of freight. The appearance of a competitor on the Red was greeted with such enthusiasm by so many that the costs of building the **Selkirk** were covered by the profits from her first trip.[44]

In addition, the Hill-Griggs Company obtained a monopoly on bonding privileges in the United States, which made it illegal for others, such as the HBC, to carry goods across the border. Since this cross-border traffic constituted the major amount of freight carried by the HBC steamboat, this action severely limited its affairs. On the other hand, the Hill-Griggs Company, with its effective monopoly of the Red River cross-border trade, could raise its freight rates to a new high, symptomatic of this position. The high rates charged, of course, made the Hill-Griggs Company very unpopular at Red River.

Faced with these high freight rates and its inability to transport goods across the border in bond, the HBC, with Donald Smith as prime mover, initiated a new transportation company in partnership with its old competitor and later ally, Norman W. Kittson. Kittson was the agent for the HBC in St. Paul and, as an American citizen, could receive a license to transfer goods in bond across the border to Red River. Kittson assumed nominal ownership of the **International** in 1871 and managed to secure a share in the bonding privileges, hitherto held exclusively by the Hill-Griggs concern. With this, the joint HBC-Kittson business could compete effectively on the Red.

A brief period of intense competition followed throughout the 1871 season but the traffic on the Red River was insufficient to sustain such a level of competition at a profit to the participants. The competitors then agreed to join together to form the Red River Transportation Company, which combined the interests of James J. Hill, Norman Kittson, and Donald Smith (acting for the HBC, although the stock was held in his own name to comply with the legal requirements). This set the standard for later steamboat transportation in Manitoba, when competitors continued to prefer to pool their interests and profits, rather than fight until one was

destroyed. The new company owned and operated both the **International** and the **Selkirk**, under the management of Kittson, while the public was led to believe that the unpopular Hill-Griggs Company no longer held any interest in the concern.

As the sole steamer transport company on the Red, the RRTC was able to push its freight rates as high as the traffic would bear, and the public had little recourse but to pay. The RRTC had the sternwheeler **Dakota**, with a very flat bottom adapted to travel on the Red, built at Breckenridge in 1872, and in 1873-74 had the sidewheeler **Cheyene** built at Grand Forks. With this fleet of steamboats of all sizes and descriptions, the RRTC appeared to be in complete control of all traffic on the Red.

Unrest grew, however, ranging from protests by Winnipeg's Board of Trade, which claimed that Manitoba's 40 million pounds of freight should have cost at least $300,000 less than the $750,000 charged by the RRTC,[45] down to the reports of a poor widow, done out of all her savings to cover the cost of freighting her furniture.[46]

Captain J.W. "Flatboat" McLane attempted to compete with the RRTC by building a new sidewheeler, the **Alpha**, at Breckinridge in 1873. This was said to be the fastest steamboat on the Red in the 1870s; it was built of Wisconsin oak, 105 ft. by 24.5 ft., with a draught of only 12 in. It appeared to be an ideal boat but McLane was unable to secure permission to operate it in American waters and was forced to sell out to the RRTC.[47]

Businessmen were unwilling to continue to pay the freight rates charged by the RRTC and sought some alternative. In 1874-75, a group of businessmen in St. Paul and Winnipeg joined together to form the Merchants International Line, their aim being to force the rates down by building and operating steamers themselves. Originally this scheme had involved only Winnipeg businessmen but the need to obtain navigation rights on American waters led them to bring in investors from St. Paul.

The Merchants International launched two sternwheelers in the spring of 1875 – the aptly-named **Manitoba** and her sister ship, the **Minnesota**. An intense rivalry followed through

the 1875 season as the RRTC steamboats vied with those of the Merchants International, each trying to outrun the other and carry more freight. The most spectacular episode of this season occurred on 4 June 1875 when the RRTC **International** collided with the Merchants steamer **Manitoba** and the **Manitoba** sank (although soon raised and restored to service).

This was an expensive way to bring down rates and the competition proved ruinous to the Merchants International. Its resources were soon exhausted and its stockholders deeply in debt. The **Manitoba** and the **Minnesota** (which had been badly damaged in a fire at Moorhead) were sold at a sheriff's auction in payment of outstanding debts in the autumn of 1875, after only one season of operation by the Merchants International.

Kittson seized this opportunity to buy the two steamboats to incorporate them into the RRTC line. The threatened lawsuit over the collision of the **International** with the **Manitoba** therefore did not ensue.[48] Some accounts have held that the American shareholders in the Merchants International had secretly contacted Kittson and were given shares in the RRTC in return for their surrender, while the Winnipeg shareholders were left out in the cold and lost their entire investment.[49]

In any case, the RRTC had triumphed and now ran the **International**, the **Dakota**, the **Cheyenne**, the **Alpha**, the **Manitoba** and the **Minnesota**. Other boats on the Red were R.P. Roblin's **Maggie** (whose machinery was transferred to the **Keewatin** in 1876), Peter McArthur's **Prince Rupert** and Captain James Flanagan's **Swallow**, none of which presented any serious competition to the RRTC.

But the opposition to the Merchants International was costly to the RRTC and forced it to increase its capital by 50% and issue new stock. 40% of this new stock was made up of the original stock held by Donald A. Smith for the HBC. To maintain control, the HBC would have to buy up more of the stock of the revised RRTC. Kittson advised Commissioner Grahame that the HBC should consider gradually selling off this stock and getting out of the steamboat

business on the Red River, even though money could still be made from freighting on the Red until the railway came.[50]

The shares held by Donald Smith were transferred in the fall of 1876 to Grahame to be held in his name, again on behalf of the HBC. The 800 shares were worth $40,000 and gave a profitable dividend of 60% in 1876 – a sum made possible because of the large amount of railroad iron carried by the steamers.[51] Kittson himself could foresee the inevitable disappearance of the steamboat business, which this initial profiting from the railroad would bring. He planned to sell his share in the RRTC but agreed to act in concert with the HBC on this.[52]

In 1875, the railhead reached Fisher's Landing on the Red River near Grand Forks and this became the port for the Red River steamboats for the next few years, eclipsing the previous Moorhead terminus. In these years profits could still be made from carrying railroad supplies for the Canadian Pacific Railway and from transporting immigrants to their new homes in Manitoba. Many of the Mennonites traveled to Manitoba via the **International** in 1874, and in 1877, the Red River steamers carried a large number of people from Ontario moving to Manitoba.[53]

Although these new immigrants represented an expanding market for the North West, it was to be a market served by the railroad rather than by the steamboats which brought them. The new immigrants also symbolized the new importance of the North West as a producer of grain for export; in 1876, the **Minnesota** carried the first large shipment of Manitoba wheat (856 bushels) to the United States.[54] Within a few short years, this too would be carried by rail rather than water.

Steamboats on the Red continued to carry passengers as well as freight. When the Governor-General of Canada and his wife made a goodwill tour of Manitoba and the North West in 1877, they had to travel from Minnesota to Winnipeg by steamer. Lady Dufferin described her experience on the **Minnesota** in vivid terms:

> "imagine sailing through hundreds of small ponds all joined together, the second concealed by the curve of the first, and you may form some idea of it [the Red River]…I can only tell you that we go from one bank to the other, crushing and crashing against the trees, which grow down to the water-side. The branches sweep over the deck, and fly in our faces, and leave pieces behind them. I had just written this when I gave a shriek as I saw my ink-bottle on the point of being swept overboard by an intrusive tree…We run against one bank, our steam is shut off, and in some mysterious manner we swing round till our bow is into the other. Then we rebound, and go on a few yards, till the sharp curve brings us up against the side. Our stern wheel is often ashore, and our captain and pilot must require the patience of saints."[55]

On her return journey, Lady Dufferin found the steamboat shaking so much that it was difficult to write her journal. In addition, the boat provided many distractions – a cinnamon bear, a tame pig called Dick, and a dog. The bear would hug the pig and the dog would rush to the rescue. Someone tied a bun to the pig's tail; the bear grabbed, but while he was preparing to eat it, the pig took it from him and ate it.[56] It must have seemed like living a nursery rhyme or entering like Alice through the looking-glass into a strange new world – but one which was on the verge of disappearance.

The engine for the first railway in Manitoba, the "Countess of Dufferin" reached its destination on a barge towed by the steamboat **Selkirk** in 1877. The completion of the St. Paul and Manitoba Railway in 1878 to St. Boniface signified the approaching demise of steamboat traffic on the Red. The steamboats, with their short season and dependence on water levels, could not hope to compete effectively with the year-round traffic by railroad, almost independent of weather and road conditions.

The railway line to St. Boniface gave brief importance to Robert Tait's small sidewheeler steam ferry, the **Adelaide**, which ran between St. Boniface and Winnipeg, carrying passengers, freight and horses across the river. This small vessel also offered moonlight excursion trips, which became a popular form of entertainment and a sideline for many steamboats in later years. When operating as a ferry, the **Adelaide** was attached to a cable which presented a considerable hazard to the flatboats on the river; in 1879, it caused one of these to upset and

one of the men in it drowned. The **Adelaide** was lost in the Red River in September 1882.[57] By that time, Winnipeg had its own rail connection and the ferry was no longer so important.

In 1878, although the RRTC declared a dividend of 80%, the HBC recognized that the time had come to get out of its investment in steamers on the Red. Grahame considered two options, presented to him by Kittson. One of these was to sell out for cash, at 60 cents on the dollar; by this, the HBC would get $24,000 for its $40,000 worth of stock. The other, more attractive alternative, was to exchange the RRTC stock for railroad stock, which was what Kittson intended to do.[58] The London Board favoured the purchase of railway stock and Grahame got in touch with George Stephens of the Bank of Montreal; Stephens agreed to the terms set by London, that is, the $40,000 stock in the RRTC held by the HBC could be exchanged for $50,000 stock in the St. Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba.[59] Grahame was glad to conclude this arrangement and hand over his steamboat stock to Stephens,

> Being very anxious that the history of the Steamboats from the beginning should not transpire as involving interests and questions of international law that might end in serious complications. The dread of anything of the kind is the reason for Mr. Kittson always being so reticent on the subject & constantly anxious.[60]

Kittson soon afterwards resigned his position as HBC agent in St. Paul, citing his advanced age and faulty memory as reasons. This ended the long and variable history of the HBC-Kittson connection, one which had so much to do both with the development of free trade in Red River and steamboat monopoly on the Red. For a time, the HBC replaced Kittson and St. Paul with an agent in Chicago, John Lauder; Chicago was considered preferable to St. Paul as the place from which to purchase HBC supplies.[61]

By this time interest in steamboat transportation had shifted from the already-disappearing market on the Red to the new and untried Assiniboine River, the Saskatchewan River, and the three great lakes of Manitoba and the North West – Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis. To take advantage of these opportunities a new company, the Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company, was incorporated 7 June 1878, with a capital of $50,000

made up of 1,000 shares at $50 each. This company combined interests from Montreal, St. Paul and Winnipeg. The first stockholders were John Turnbull, merchant, of Montreal, with 100 shares; Charles N. Black, Accountant, of Montreal, with 100 shares; A.G.B. Bannatyne of Winnipeg with 50 shares; Honourable Jas. McKay, contractor, of St. James with 20 shares; J.H. Ashdown, merchant, of Winnipeg, with 40 shares; W.H. Lyon, businessman, of Winnipeg, with 50 shares; Sedley Blanchard, of Winnipeg, with 40 shares; Edwin Van Buren Holcombe, steamboatman, of St. Paul, with 100 shares.[62] It was chartered to provide steam transportation on these rivers and lakes of Manitoba, but initially it concentrated on the waning Red River trade and the booming Assiniboine River route.

The RRTC, (including its HBC component), rather than competing with this company, or disappearing from the scene,[63] invested heavily in the WWTC. By September 1878, a few short months after the incorporation of the WWTC, the RRTC had acquired 314 shares of stock, and continued to add to this.[64] These stockholders of the RRTC were also the major investors in the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway. In 1880, Commissioner Grahame mentioned that this railroad group had sold the four steamboats (**Alpha**, **Cheyenne**, **Manitoba** and **Minnesota** to parties in Winnipeg (the new WWTC) for $44,000.00.[65] The old **International**, no longer of use, was dismantled at Grand Forks in 1880. The HBC continued its involvement in steamboat transportation. Grahame bought $7500 worth of stock in the WWTC at 75 cents on the dollar, plus the usual low freight rates, and the possibility of a “handsome dividend”.[66]

The HBC at first preferred to ship its Assiniboine River freight on the boats of the WWTC, rather than try to operate its own, or become heavily involved in the WWTC. In 1881, however, the HBC formed a joint company with the WWTC under the WWTC charter to operate steamboats on the Saskatchewan River, leaving the traffic on the Red and Assiniboine to other individuals. Thus from its initial investment in steamboats on the Red, the HBC continued to operate with other persons or companies to provide the most advantageous transportation

possible for itself, eventually switching to the railroad, a public carrier, when it replaced the private enterprise of steamboating.

A small amount of steamboat traffic continued on the upper Red River. The **Selkirk**, which had continued to run, was wrecked near Grand Forks in 1884 and in 1885, the **Cheyenne** was wrecked near Ste. Agathe. Only the **Marquette** ran between Winnipeg and St. Vincent, there to connect with the steamers of the Great Northern Railroad (which operated under the name of the old Kittson line, the Red River Transportation Company).[67]

Most of the steamboats on the Red were concentrated on the lower Red, on the connection between Winnipeg and Selkirk where a link could be made with the Lake Winnipeg steamboats. In 1875, Captain Flanagan and his **Swallow** made daily trips between Winnipeg and Selkirk; he continued this until she capsized in 1878. He even went so far as to build, at his own expense, a small wing dam on the St. Andrew's Rapids.[68]

The completion of a branch line of the railway to Selkirk in 1878 put an end to this. Thereafter, most steamboat traffic was concentrated on Lake Winnipeg, with Selkirk as the terminus for fishing and lumbering interests. Only a few of these boats continued to steam down the Red into Winnipeg. The steamboats on the Red in the 1880s and afterwards were primarily pleasure-boats, which took people on excursion trips, on Sundays and holidays, by day or by moonlight. The romance of steamboats lingered on, but without the accompanying necessary role they had played in the 1860s on the Red. No longer the workhorses of the river, they became a middleclass luxury.

Steamboats on the Assiniboine

The Assiniboine River was even more winding than the Red and even more difficult for steamboat navigation. Between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, a distance of about 96.6 km (60 miles) by road, the river had 78 bends, which made it 241.4 km (150 miles) by water.[1] It often had very low water levels, in part because of its width; near its mouth it was only 39.6 m (130 ft.) in breadth, while 6.4 km (four miles) from its mouth it was 45.7 m (150 ft.), a width

maintained for a distance of 211.2 km (130 miles).2 Hind suggested it might be possible to dam the South Saskatchewan River to send its waters down the Qu'Appelle River into the Assiniboine and open up steamboat communication from Fort Garry almost to the Rockies.[3] this was one of many schemes for the improvement of water transportation which never came to fruition before the advance of railroads made them obsolete.

The rapids near St. James, just west of Fort Garry, prevented navigation when the water was low. Farther west, the river was marked by other rapids, especially the Grand Rapids of the Assiniboine, near the present town of Brandon. These were not impassable to steamboats but delayed the boats considerably while they were warped up the rapids.

Some improvements were made to the river in 1879 for the sake of the steamboats. Boulders were removed near Armstrong's point in Winnipeg and two wing-dams were constructed at Silver Heights. One of these (73.15 m or 240 ft. long) was situated about 5.6 km (three and one-half miles) from Winnipeg and the other (65.63 m or 215 ft. long) was distant about 7.2 km (four and one-half miles). Both began at the south bank of the river and extended in a north-easterly direction to the navigable channel. It was suggested that a wing-dam should also be built at Sturgeon Creek.[4] Only a year after their construction, however, one of these wing-dams was in need of repair, where two gaps of 30 ft. each had broken through it.[5] It is uncertain whether this damage was caused by water or ice action, or whether it arose from poor construction.

A number of boulders still obstructed the channel of the river between Hall's rapids and the Big Bend, opposite St. Françoix Xavier and Baie St. Paul. From Baie St. Paul to Portage la Prairie and beyond, the difficulty for navigation lay in 'snags' and the many islands which dotted the river; a few short dams here would be helpful. From the mouth of the Little Saskatchewan as far as Fort Ellice, the river was unobstructed and good for navigation if the level was high. The navigation of the Assiniboine usually began the first week of May and was forced to end early in September because of low water; if these improvement were made, the season might

be extended to the end of October.[6] These difficulties of navigation for the most part persisted throughout the brief period of steamboat use on the Assiniboine.

As steamboats plied the waters of the Assiniboine, landings for cargo and passengers assumed a great deal of importance. Grand Valley, on the north side of the Assiniboine River, was one of these. It became a village 19 August 1879. The McVicar warehouse was the spot where cargo was stored and redistributed to places in the North West, which the steamers could not reach. This was a transitory importance, however, which waned very quickly with the coming of the railroad.

Grand Valley had hoped to become a major station for the railroad and its settlers expected a high price from the CPR for their land. Instead of paying this, the CPR chose Brandon, on the south side of the Assiniboine, and a swing bridge was built across the river for this purpose, with the track reaching Branch in 1881.[7] This almost ended the need for steamboats to that point and the use of landings as well. The **Alpha**, however, continued to use the Grand Valley landing until 1883.[8]

Warehouse facilities at landings were also a major item in the period of steamboat transportation and important to the preservation of control by steamboat companies. In June of 1881, Walter Pratt of Portage la Prairie, who had previously competed with the WWTC through his part ownership of the **Marquette**, agreed to accept only goods from the WWTC boats to store in his warehouse. For this he was to be paid $100 per month through the season.[9]

The steamboat traffic on the Assiniboine River derived largely from the needs of the growing settlements stretching westward along its length and along its tributaries. It was a very different situation from that of the freighting and transportation needs of the HBC and the Red River Settlement which had first called into being the steamboat traffic on the Red. Until the arrival of the railroad, these Assiniboine River steamboats carried a great many passengers and a great deal of farm machinery, flour, and household goods. In 1880, just before the railroad

reached Brandon, four steamboats plied the river and carried 3800 passengers. To get through the rapids, they towed most of their freight in two or three barges.[10]

One of these passengers in 1880 described his trip to Souris aboard the small steamer **Alpha**, which carried 14 passengers, while another 18 more were going overland. They had concerts in the moonlight while they steamed up the river. At some points they got off and walked to catch up with the steamer later, after she had negotiated the numerous bends. One night they took the ladies to visit a Native camp, where a dog-feast was being held to lament a death and the drums were sounding. Aboard the **Alpha**, 15 men slept in a little cabin only 3.6m (12 ft.) square.[11] The accommodation could not be described as luxurious nor the trip a speedy one, yet it held its own unique attraction.

In 1881, a young woman from England, traveled on the last trip of the season on the **Manitoba** to Rapid City. She described the steamer as "a most extraordinary erection, like a great barge with a tall house on it, or still more like a Noah's Ark with galleries all round and a tower in the middle".[12]

Her description of the difficulties of navigation on the Assiniboine rivals that of Lady Dufferin about the Red. On the Assiniboine that July, the river was so low that soundings had to be taken constantly and no traveling was done at night. The passengers spent the nights in the boat tied to the bank, where they provided a feast for the mosquitoes. In the dawn as the boat started off, it grounded on a rock, unable to get off under its own power. The men then tied a cable to a tree on shore, in an attempt to hoist the boat off, but instead the tree gave way and ended up in the river. As a result, the workmen had to spend five hours off-loading the boat's cargo into the barge; only then was the **Manitoba** able to get off the rock. Frequent stops were made to secure the ropes for the "nigger" engine to warp the boat up rapids. Between these stops the boat "careened zigzag over the river as a cart goes up hill". Many stops had to be made to cut wood, since not enough was stored along the river, and much energy was used up in steaming against the current. In going down the river the trip was easier. The boat did not

carry so much freight and passengers, and could run the rapids. The sandbars posed some difficulties, although the boat could usually get off with a little "judicious backing" but sometimes it swung steam stern foremost, and careened around and around before it could get off, although it was only drawing 20 inches water at the time.[13] It is understandable, in the light of these descriptions, that the steamboat companies did not publish any schedule of arrivals and departures in the contemporary yearbooks.

The Assiniboine River did not pose the difficulties of compliance with the laws and regulations of two nations, which had affected steamboating on the Red. The Assiniboine steamboats had to have a British registry, even if they were made in the United States, partially-owned by American investors, and operated by American captains. Canadian owners and operators soon dominated the Assiniboine traffic. In the years 1877-79, a total of eight steamboats were under construction for service on the Assiniboine, all of them destined for Canadian owners.

Those who operated steamboats on the Red River feared that the Assiniboine would prove unnavigable for their craft. But in 1873, the **Dakota** steamed 10 miles up the Assiniboine, and in 1874, she reached Portage.[14] Peter McArthur was quick to realize the potential business the Assiniboine offered for steamboats to serve the needs of the growing numbers of settlers along its route. As early as 1875, his **Prince Rupert**, the first steamer built entirely in Manitoba, which he had been using in connection with his lumber business on the Brokenhead River, reached Pratt's Landing, just south of Portage la Prairie.[15] In 1878, he had the **Marquette**, a double-deck sternwheeler 130 ft. by 28 ft., built at Moorhead for the Assiniboine River traffic. The WWTC soon began to move its boats to the Assiniboine, as traffic on the Red gave way before the railroad. In this case, the HBC utilized the services of the WWTC in preference to running its own steamer service. Competition on the Assiniboine continued to be dominated by the WWTC versus Peter McArthur and by the struggle to reach beyond the encroaching railroad lines to farther settlements along the Assiniboine.

In May 1879, the **Marquette**, jointly owned by Peter McArthur and Walter Pratt, made an exploratory trip as far as Fort Ellice.[16] This was made possible by the high stage of water at that time. The **Marquette** carried about 80 tons of the HBC Swan River outfit, and made the trip to Fort Ellice and back to Winnipeg in two weeks. The water was falling fast but it was hoped that the steamer could make another trip as far as Rapid City, where a large number of immigrants had settled.[17] In fact, the **Marquette** was able to repeat her journey to Fort Ellice. Since no hotel facilities existed there, her arrival meant that those near the terminus would again have a house full of strangers.[18] While the **Marquette** made trips to Fort Ellice during high water, three other steamers traveled between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie. These steamers could carry from 150 to 250 tons of freight; when light they drew only 14-15 in., but when loaded they required a depth of three to four feet. They also towed freight on two to four barges, which increased their capacity by about 300 tons.

In 1881, the **Marquette** again established a precedent by steaming as far as Fort Pelly. This was in part made possible by the breakup of a bridge which had previously prevented navigation beyond Fort Ellice. The Dominion government had ordered this bridge taken down, but spring floods had done the job. The river was high that July and the **Marquette** sometimes left the riverbed to steam across country. When she got stuck on one of these trips, the men had to off-load her cargo until the boat was freed. Since the boat was then 800 yds. From shore, they had to plant a dead man and back the boat, using the “nigger” engine, stern foremost into the lake formed by the high water. At the time there was only one foot of water at the bank. After this arduous labour, the captain had to hire three Natives from the reserve to work the boat to Fort Pelly, since the crew was exhausted. He also hired the Natives to cut wood for the steamboat to use on the return trip.[20] By 1881, when the CPR reached Brandon, the **Marquette** had begun regular trips between Fort Ellice and Fort Pelly, as the focus of steamboat traffic on the Assiniboine shifted farther west in advance of the railroad.

By 1880, although business on the Assiniboine was still booming, Peter McArthur was rumoured to intend to remove the **Marquette** to the Saskatchewan River. He was going to take her across Lake Winnipeg in the autumn and haul her over the Grand Rapids of the Saskatchewan before winter. Commissioner Grahame thought this an impossible project; the **Marquette**'s power was not enough to get up the Rapids, nor was she strong enough for the Saskatchewan River.[21] Walter Pratt, perhaps afraid of this prospect, sold his half-interest in the **Marquette** to W.H. Lyon in June 1881 for the sum of $8,000.00.[22]

The traffic on the Assiniboine was not large enough to sustain competing lines of steamboats, and in 1879 an agreement was outlined between the WWTC on the one part, and Peter McArthur and Walter Pratt, owners of the **Marquette**, on the other, to pool their earnings for the year. The **Marquette** would operate between Winnipeg and Fort Ellice, as would one of the WWTC steamers. McArthur agreed to sell the **Marquette** after that season, on 15 March 1880, to the WWTC in exchange for stock in the WWTC, provided that the majority stockholders in the WWTC (known as the St. Paul and Pacific stockholders) would agree not to use the boats of the WWTC for their own advantage or that of the St. Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba Railroad Company to the detriment of the WWTC.[23] This agreement was never concluded, however. When the WWTC sought to buy the **Marquette** in the spring of 1880, McArthur and Pratt set an impossibly high price for her. Instead of buying her, the WWTC made a further year's agreement with McArthur and Pratt to share the profits on the Assiniboine once again.[24] It was also agreed that the **Marquette** could not be sold without the consent of the WWTC.

During the 1880 season, the WWTC ran its four steamers – the **Manitoba**, the **Minnesota**, the **Alpha** and the **Cheyenne** – which produced a net profit of $29,563.27 for the WWTC. Unfortunately, this was offset by the heavy cost of repairs during the winter and by the large dividend declared by the WWTC the previous summer, so that the company ended up actually in debt that year.[25] A large part of this heavy cost was due to the fact that the WWTC had the **Manitoba** and the **Minnesota** each lengthened 50 ft. at Grand Forks over the winter of

1880-81 and intended to furnish them “in fine style” to ply the Assiniboine once again. (The **Minnesota**, in token of her new incarnation as a Canadian-owned steamboat, was renamed the **City of Winnipeg**.) At that time, the WWTC intended to run the **Alpha** on the Red River between Winnipeg and the boundary, connecting with the **Selkirk** which ran between Pembina and Moorhead.[26] But the **Alpha** continued to run on the Assiniboine, and indeed was the only steamer capable of running on the upper Assiniboine in periods of relatively low water.

The HBC considered buying the **Marquette** for itself in 1880, but this was impossible because of the “combination” between the WWTC and the owners of the **Marquette**, by which those owners could not sell their steamers without the consent of the WWTC. Commissioner Grahame, in any case, did not approve of seeking to buy the **Marquette**. The **Marquette** had cost only about $13,000 to build, but for sale purposes she was valued at $20,000, and would cost a great deal more to fit up for passengers,[27] a price Grahame considered far too high. Although her hull was new, it was not very strong, her machinery was second-hand and nearly worn out, and her accommodation for passengers very poor. Grahame could speak with some authority on this because he traveled on her to Fort Ellice in 1879. During that trip something was always going wrong with the machinery; as well, her power was inadequate for the rapids and led to long delays while she was warped up – even more prolonged because her windlass frequently broke down.[28]

Grahame believed there was too much competition among steamers of Canadian registry for the HBC to build another steamer at that time. The boats that ran against each other on the Assiniboine had lost money until they “came to an understanding” and if the HBC entered the field, this combination would oppose the HBC with one of their steamers, while the others would keep their rates up to a profitable level and share the proceeds.[29]

Rather than make the large capital investment in steamboats for itself, the HBC preferred to buy stock in navigation companies, along with a demand for preferred rates for itself as a large stockholder. By November 1880, the HBC acquired shares in the WWTC, 150

shares for a sum of $5,625 – much less than the $20,000 or so a new steamboat would cost.[30] The HBC managed to secure preferred rates for its freight, while at the same time, it reaped the benefits of the large dividend declared in 1881 – an amount which covered its initial investment.[31]

Another possible competitor to the WWTC on the Assiniboine appeared in 1881 when the North West Navigation Company was incorporated to carry on "a forwarding and trading business on the Red, Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers, and their branches, and on the Lakes, Manitoba, Winnipegosis and Winnipeg, and the navigable Rivers and Lakes communicating with them…"[32] A majority share of the initial stock of this new company was held by C.J. Brydges and Jas. A. Grahame of the HBC, but they were unable to secure the support of the rest of the stockholders to give the HBC the 15% discount on freight which it demanded. Peter McArthur for a time was connected to this North West Navigation Company but his opposition to the HBC demands held up the actual incorporation of the company, even after its charter had been granted.[33]

McArthur then began to build another riverboat, the **North West**, which he planned to run on the Assiniboine for a year and then transfer to the Saskatchewan.[34] The **North West** was the largest boat to run on the Assiniboine. It was constructed at Moorhead in 1880-81, and was 200 ft. by 32 ft., with entirely new machinery built expressly for her – unlike many steamboats which incorporated old machinery into a new hull, sometimes machinery very inadequate for the new boat. In addition, she was provided with two capstans, whereas most boats only had one, and was supplied with all the latest improvements of the Missouri River steamers.[35] McArthur had this steamboat built more for possible use on the Saskatchewan River than for the present declining traffic on the Assiniboine. She was much more suited to the Saskatchewan than to the Assiniboine and spent only one season on the Assiniboine. For that one season she was advertised, however, as "the new, luxurious steamer **North West**, largest on the river" to take passengers for Portage la Prairie, Grand Valley, Rapid City, and Fort Ellice,

making overland connections for Battleford and Prince Albert."[36] McArthur soon transferred ownership of the **North West** and the **Marquette** to the NWNC.

The **Marquette** and the **North West** under NWNC ownership continued to compete with the WWTC's **Alpha** and **City of Winnipeg** but competition proved unprofitable to both the WWTC and the NWNC. In July 1881, the parties agreed to pool their earnings on the Assiniboine for the rest of the season. At the time the WWTC had the **City of Winnipeg**, the **Manitoba** and the **Alpha** on the river, while the NWNC had the **North West** and the **Marquette**. The NWNC agreed to withdraw the **Marquette** while the WWTC would withdraw one of their steamers also. The **North West** and the **City of Winnipeg** would run from Winnipeg to Brandon, while the **Alpha** would run from Brandon to Fort Ellice.[37] Later the WWTC agreed to withdraw the **Alpha** from the upper Assiniboine River and permit the NWNC to substitute the **Marquette** for her.[38]

As profits declined, the WWTC sold the **Alpha** outright to the NWNC in 1882 for $4375. The two companies agreed to navigate the Assiniboine River in common, with the WWTC using the **Manitoba** and the NWNC the **Marquette**. The gross earnings were to be split with 55% to the WWTC and 45% to the NWNC. The NWNC agreed not to use the **Alpha** before 10 June 1882 on the Assiniboine and similarly with the **North West**.[39]

By this time the WWTC, in cooperation with the HBC, was prepared to end its business on the Assiniboine in order to operate steamboats on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River. Peter McArthur, no longer connected to the NWNC, became the General Manager of the WWTC for one year from 1 June 1882, at a salary of $2500 plus 5% on all the net earnings of the WWTC over 25% of the total paid-up stock of the Company; this total was not to exceed $5000.00[40] During this period of employment, McArthur took charge of the transfer of the **North West**, the **Marquis** and the **Manitoba** from the Assiniboine to the Saskatchewan River, an achievement of which he was justly proud. His employment with the WWTC was terminated

shortly thereafter, officially for family reasons, but he claimed it was because he refused to import liquor into the North West on the steamboats.

Wm. Robinson of the NWNC took over the monopoly of the Assiniboine trade, for what it was worth, along with the WWTC boats **Alpha** and the **Prince Rupert**, Peter McArthur's first steamboat. The **Prince Rupert**, **Alpha** and **Marquette** continued to operate through 1883. The **Alpha** tried to connect to Qu'Appelle, but found this impractical, since it required 300 miles of river travel to equal 20 miles by land. The **Prince Rupert** was withdrawn after the 1883 season. In 1884, the **Marquette** was transferred to the Red River.[41] The **Alpha** remained on the Assiniboine until she ran aground in 1885 in what is now Spruce Woods Park, where her remains still rest.

Steamboat traffic on the Assiniboine lasted only about ten years. This brief period was filled with activity while steamers slowly traveled the many miles of bends, low water, shoals and rapids, to maintain freight and passenger traffic to the expanding settlement frontier. Inefficient as steamboats were on the winding waters of the Assiniboine, the large volume of freight carried to new farms and settlements not as yet accessible by the railway provided a much-needed service. The railway followed closely behind the steamboats, however, and left little time for profit to the owners. Yet in this brief period, the steamboats bridged the vital gap between the use of cart brigades and the arrival of the railway.

Saskatchewan River Steamboats

The Saskatchewan River loomed as the "last best West" for steamboat traffic, for the influence of the railroad on its hinterland was bound to be long in coming. In the meantime, steamboats could carry the increased amount of goods needed by the northern posts of the HBC, in a way which was much superior to the York boats which had been the mainstay of the HBC transport system for nearly 100 years. The movement of the York boats had always required a concentrated effort to ensure that the boats from different directions reached their rendezvous at approximately the same time and transferred their cargoes as quickly and

efficiently as possible. Yet it was in the north that serious labour difficulties occurred, with strikes, work stoppages, and demands for higher pay, which jeopardized the well-being of the northern posts. Steamboats would reduce the labour demands of the HBC enormously, virtually ending the wage labour opportunities of the northern Métis and Natives within the HBC transport system. One steamboat could carry a greater tonnage of freight than several York boats and at a much higher rate of speed, thus saving the Company time as well. Although the initial cost of steamboats was fairly high, the costs of operation would in the long run be lower than the old system and the benefits proportionately much higher.

Navigation on the Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan presented some difficulties in navigation, however, which distinguished it from the previous experience with steamboats on the Red and the Assiniboine. It was fed by melting snow and glaciers from the foot of the Rocky Mountains and so was marked by three distinct phases of high water – one in early spring, one in June and another in August. During these periods steamers could run easily on the river, but the level often fell as quickly as it had risen. When it did fall, steamboats could be stranded by low water, because the river was marked by sandbars and rapids and obstructed by boulders.

In 1877, the Canadian government asked the HBC to provide a list of the improvements to navigation which it thought necessary on the Saskatchewan. Commissioner Grahame emphasized the hazards of the Demicharge and Rocher Rouge Rapids, within 48.3 km (30 miles) of the mouth of the river. These strong currents made it very difficult for the steamboats to ascend, even with the assistance of over 1525 m (5,000 ft.) of heavy manila cordage. If some of the rocks here were removed and strong piers built on which the steamers could fasten cables, the ascent would be much easier.[1] The HBC continued to press for these improvements while its steamboats used the lower Saskatchewan River. By the time government appropriations were made for the Saskatchewan, however, the focus of traffic had shifted to the

upper river and these rapids near the mouth were no longer regarded as so important an obstacle.

The next hazard on the river was the rapids above Cumberland House, which needed similar improvements. After that, navigation was fairly easy until the Coles Falls were reached. These extended for 19 km (12 miles) and were very crooked, so that the waves surged from bank to bank; large boulders also obstructed passage, completely preventing it at low water. These boulders could be removed in winter either by blasting them away or by removing them to one side. The St. Paul Rapids above Fort Pitt required similar treatment. If these improvements were made, Grahame thought the Saskatchewan would be navigable as far as Edmonton with safety during seasons of moderate as well as of extreme high water.[2] In 1879, Commissioner Brydges asked for some major improvements to be made by the government, primarily the removal of boulders at various points, especially Coles Falls and Tobins (Thorburn) Rapids, and the construction of a few wingdams to maximize the water level in the river.[3]

Although these remained the major points to consider in improvement of the Saskatchewan, familiarity with the river led the WWTC to describe many more difficult stretches by 1882. From Edmonton to Prince Albert there were many rapids with strong currents, but not strong enough to prevent steamers from going up unassisted. Some large boulders, however, weighing 225-450 kgs. (500-1000 lbs.) or more, should be removed. If this were done, it would deepen the channel at least .3 m (10 inches), which would enable the steamers to carry 100 lbs. more and make one more trip each season. Below Battleford there were very few boulders, but sandbars made this stretch difficult. The rapids from Edmonton were: Clove (7 miles downriver), Point of Pea Rock (18 miles), a Mile Below Barracks (26 miles), Sturgeon River (30 miles), Vermilion (45 miles), Sucker (50 miles), Waskaterow (57 miles), Victoria (67 miles), Grahams (71 miles), Crooked (86 miles), Snakehill (89 miles), Big Stone (91 miles), Saddle Lake (94 miles), Off Lake (104 miles), Dog Rump (114 miles), No Name (124 miles), First Frog (130 miles), Second Frog (132 miles), and Shoal (157 miles). From Prince Albert to the Cut Off,

the current was sometimes dangerously rapid and the boulders were very large; these might be removed with the assistance of the **Lily**, with her steam nigger and capstan. From Prince Albert, the rapids were: Crooked (14 miles), Old Wives (19 miles), Smith's Woodard (21 miles), No Name (22 miles), Demicharge (23 miles), No Name (26 3/4 miles), Big Stone (27 ¾ miles), Hamilton (28 ¾ miles), No Name (29 ¾ miles), Straight Shoot (30 ¾ miles), Big Bend (31 ¾ miles), No Name (32 ¾ miles), then the first of Coles Falls, which is a continuous rapid 17 miles long ending at the Forks (33 ¾ miles to 51 miles from Prince Albert), Fifteen Miles below Coles Falls (66 miles), 18 miles below Fort la Crone (84 miles), Arrow Shoot (87 miles), Cadets (107 miles), Upper Endowing (112 miles), Nepowin (114 miles), Third Nepowin (116 miles), Fourth Nepowin (118 miles), three Island (134 miles), Tobins (169 miles – a chain of rapids five miles in length).[4] This description from a captain well-acquainted with the Saskatchewan gives some idea of the difficulties it posed for steamboats. Although the HBC was able to use steamboats to overcome its previous transportation problems, the solution brought its own specific difficulties.

In 1880, C.J. Brydges of the HBC reminded the Canadian government of the considerable expenditure made by the Company on the tramway at Grand Rapids and on the wharves there to serve both lake and river steamboats. Nevertheless, Brydges offered to commit the HBC to put in piers at the Demicharge and Rocher Rouge Rapids, if the federal government would dredge the mouth of the Red River (for the sake of the lake steamers) and undertake improvements at Coles Falls and Tobins Rapids on the Saskatchewan.[5]

By Order in Council, 1882, the Minister of Public Works recommended that $18,000 should be assigned to the HBC to improve the navigation of the Saskatchewan, the work to be supervised by an officer of the Department.[6] In return the HBC was to be responsible for installing the piers at the Demicharge and Rocher Rouge at its own expense. Brydges, however, concluded that improvement of the Rocher Rouge and Demicharge Rapids would be a waste of time, since the CPR would render water transport obsolete in the near future, when it

reached the South Branch of the Saskatchewan.[7] But Brydges wavered for a time and decided again that piers at these rapids were essential, since the railway would not reach the South Branch for at least two years.[8] This phase of the proposed improvements was never done; instead, the HBC used the money to improve the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan at Coles Falls, and also removed the boulders between Coles Falls and Edmonton. This was the stretch of the Saskatchewan where steamboat traffic was still viable.[9]

The difficulties on the Saskatchewan River increased dramatically after 1882, when the river began to cut a new channel for itself near Cumberland Lake, at a place called the Cut Off. This new channel ran through a maze of swamps rather than a riverbed, and was extremely difficult for steamboats to navigate. Factor Horace Bélanger of Cumberland House was ordered to send an expert and assistants to clearly mark the main channel with buoys, for it was feared that the steamers, when loaded, would be unable to manage the Cut Off. Even though the water had been fairly high, the **Northcote** took nearly three days trying to get through the Cut Off, and only managed to do so after lightening her load.[10] Bélanger estimated that about two-thirds of the water of the Saskatchewan was then falling into Cumberland Lake by the Sturgeon River, instead of by the previous main channel, and this amount was increasing yearly. Unless steps were taken to prevent this, the river would soon be impassable for the steamers.[11]

James Turner reported to H. Langevin, Minister of Public Works, that the steamboats would probably have to abandon the original channel as far as the Big Stone River, for a distance of about 117.5 km (73 miles), and use the new channel by way of Cumberland Lake instead. This channel could not be depended on, however; moreover, the light draught steamboats designed for river navigation were not suited to such lake navigation.[12] This was one difficulty which the York boats had not had, adaptable as they were to either lake or river navigation.

Robert Bell judged the prospects of steamboats on the Saskatchewan during his survey of 1884. He reported that:

> Steamboating will for all times be precarious and uncertain on the lower Saskatchewan, and especially so for boats of large draught, which appears to be a defect of those now plying the river. The flat-bottom Upper Missouri steamboats are far better adapted for such water.[13]

In 1883, when the Dominion government commissioned the HBC to make improvements on the Saskatchewan, no attempt was made to improve the Cut Off and this held up much of the WWTC freight.[14] By 1887, the WWTC feared that the Cut Off would make the operation of its steamers virtually impossible and debated laying up the steamboats until something was done.[15] In the end, the WWTC continued to cope with these difficulties until the **North West** was finally laid up in 1896.

Fuelling the Steamers

The provision of fuel for the steamers on the Saskatchewan provided wage labour for men hired by the HBC post managers. An enormous amount of wood was cut through the winter and piled near the shore of the river. Pine and white poplar were preferred, cut in lengths of 1.2 m (four feet). Stations along the river were assigned where the steamer could load this wood for fuel. In 1876, the arrangements called for 21 of these stations between Grand Rapids and Fort Pitt. Grand Rapids was to provide 100 cords, while the other stations varied from 15 to 75 cords.[16] In 1883, the **Northcote** made three trips, of 29 days, 72 days, and 33 days duration, using 637 ¼ cords of wood, at a cost of $1,929.93.[17] For a few years, this consumption of fuel increased as the number of steamboats increased, but fell rapidly as these steamboats expired so quickly in or on the banks of the Saskatchewan.

Hudson's Bay Company Steamboats

In 1865, the HBC first investigated the possibility of using steamboats on the Saskatchewan when it sent Captain Munn and Pilot Hutchinson (presumably of the **International**) to study the river. Both these men had long experience on the Mississippi and spoke very favourably of the possibilities of steamboating on the Saskatchewan. They thought

the hull of the **International** would do for it but that her machinery would not be strong enough for the Saskatchewan.[18]

The following year a more complete survey was done by Mr. Schwieger, who had been a surveyor with the Telegraph line.[19] Schwieger reported that the river would pose great difficulties to steam navigation above Cumberland. In his opinion, the Coles Falls were a complete barrier to steamboats, because of the huge boulders which blocked the channel. Rapids and sandbars posed hazards to navigation almost everywhere above Cumberland and made it impossible to calculate the probable length of time required for a steamboat run from Grand Rapids to Edmonton. He estimated that the season when the water above Cumberland would enable navigation, would run from six weeks to three months, with an average of about two months. Then the water would fall, and perhaps strand the steamboat on a sandbar, for it had been known to fall 0.45 m (18 in.) in one night.[20] In addition, the risk of transporting the boat from Fort Garry to Cedar Lake would be considerable. Wood was scarce throughout the region, and what there was, was of an inferior quality. This of course would make it difficult for steamboat navigation, which depended largely on local wood for fuel.

This report was so negative that Governor Wm. Mactavish was tempted to recommend abandoning the whole idea of steam navigation on the Saskatchewan. It appeared too expensive for the minimal benefits to be derived from it, unless some way could be found to operate beyond Cumberland. If the steamboat could only run to Cumberland, the transportation beyond would still require the use of tripmen and present the same difficulties the Company already faced – “the Tripmen becoming unreasonable and impracticable from the knowledge that we could not do without them”.[21] Countering this, however, was the “certain scarcity of servants and tripmen, as well as the difficulty of dealing with them”,[22] which made it imperative to find some other method of transport. At this time Mactavish appeared to think that the Saskatchewan steamers would have to be towed up the Grand Rapids of the Saskatchewan by oxen on a towpath, or that a road cut from the entrance at Lake Winnipeg as far as Cedar Lake

would be necessary to connect with the steamboats there.[23] The prospect of building a tramway across Grand Rapids did not yet appear to be included in HBC plans for transport.

In 1868, the HBC faced the possibility of competition in the northern transport. Henry McKenney planned to put a steamboat on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan, where he expected a tide of emigration plus the carriage of HBC freight to finance him, although Mactavish thought his lack of capital would soon ruin him.[24] In the end, McKenney built a schooner for Lake Winnipeg and planned to use it for fish and lumber, rather than for passengers and freight. He shifted his steamboating interests to the Red, where he planned to run a smaller steamer which would be able to operate at any stage of water.[25]

Although McKenney's scheme was impractical for an individual, the combination of steamboats on the Saskatchewan to use in concert with those on Lake Winnipeg appeared to be the only possible solution to the transport woes of the HBC. Mactavish thought it would be impossible to increase the land transport system of carts between Fort Garry and Carlton. He also thought that labour problems among the carters would increase as better job opportunities appeared with the growth of settlement.[26] Thus neither the existing land or water transport of the HBC could function at any increased pace, yet the volume of transport needs was bound to grow rapidly.

By 1870, the difficulties of transport had increased to such an extent that the HBC could no longer function unless it introduced a well-organized steam service throughout the whole country.[27] The London Committee of the Board agreed with this estimate of the situation and hoped to have steamboats on the Saskatchewan by 1872.[28]

As yet, the HBC remained the major user of the northern waterways and was the party most motivated to improve its own transport system. Red River steamers had already vastly altered its transport network, causing the decline of York Factory as a major depot, as it was replaced by Red River. The linking of Red River to the northern posts by lake steamers was an obvious next step. But these steamers in turn would require a further connection to steamboats

on the Saskatchewan River to carry the large cargoes brought in by lake steamers. Thus the use of steamboats in a revised HBC transport system not only demanded steamboats specially-built for the Saskatchewan, it also required a completely different kind of lake steamboat. Although these steamers cost much more than a York boat to build, they could carry much greater amounts of freight with less manpower. They would in the end be cheaper than the York boats and would avoid the labour problems which had plagued the HBC transport system of the 1860s.

In 1873, the HBC had its first Saskatchewan River steamboat built at Grand Rapids. By building it there the Company avoided the problem of hauling a riverboat up the Grand Rapids for use on the Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, this steamboat sank in the Rocher Rouge Rapids, a short distance upriver from Grand Rapids, only a few hours into its maiden voyage, before it could even be given a name.

In the summer of 1874, a new Saskatchewan River steamboat was constructed at Grand Rapids. The dependence on expertise from the United States was still strong; the carpenters for this boat were brought in from the United States and sent to Grand Rapids via the **Chief Commissioner**.[29] This boat was modeled on the Mississippi River steamboats and was built under the supervision of Mr. Reeves, Norman Kittson's chief carpenter, who was familiar with those boats. Its hull was made entirely of oak, a costly procedure, but one which made this boat much stronger than the earlier one had been.[30] She was a double-deck sternwheeler, 154 ft. by 28 ft. The machinery from the 1873 steamboat had been salvaged and was installed on the new one, which was named the **Northcote** in honour of the governor of the HBC. The Captain thought, however, that these engines were much too small for the **Northcote**.[31]

The appearance of the **Northcote** caused a great deal of excitement along her route. At The Pas, Henry Budd, in charge of Christ Church mission there, noted that she was "the first steamboat going in this river since the Creation" and stirred conflicting emotions among the bystanders.[32] Many of the Natives objected to the presence of the steamboat in their hunting

areas, without their approval. This was one motivation for both the government and the Natives to negotiate Treaty Five in 1875 and 1876, and thus ensure peaceful passage along the Saskatchewan.

In 1875, the **Northcote** made only two trips, although the water was good. She left Grand Rapids on her first trip on 30 June 1875, reached Edmonton on 22 July and was back in Grand Rapids 5 August. Although this was a lengthy trip, she carried 125 tons of cargo for Cumberland House, Carlton, Fort Pitt, Victoria and Edmonton; she then returned with the furs from these places.[33] When back at Grand Rapids, she had to wait for the arrival of the **Colvile** on 19 August, and thus was delayed two weeks. She was delayed at Cedar Lake for three days by wind and took four days to warp up Coles Falls. The Captain decided not to risk descending Coles Falls and laid her up for the winter at Sturgeon River near Prince Albert.[34]

Jas. Grahame warned London of the dangers of dependence on this single steamboat on the Saskatchewan. "You may therefore judge by what a slight thread the whole of our Transport business hangs and the great necessity of our having another Steamer on the Saskatchewan."[35] In 1876, the **Northcote** failed to reach Carlton with the freight on which much of the west, including Edmonton, depended; as well most of the Edmonton returns had to winter inland.[36] In 1877, she was unable to run at all because of the extremely low water. In 1878, she broke 80 of her timbers while running the Coles Falls, but managed to limp into Grand Rapids for repairs.

In 1877, the HBC added a steel sternwheel steamer to supplement the **Northcote** on the Saskatchewan. The **Lily** was built by Yarrow and Co. of Glasgow, according to a model they produced for use all over the world.[37] Originally this steamboat had been intended for use on Lake Athabasca, but the difficulties of transport and the need to have a smaller steamboat to run on the Saskatchewan motivated the Company to assign the **Lily** to that river.[38] She was shipped in sections to Grand Rapids and reassembled there under the guidance of engineers from Yarrow and Co. The **Lily** was much smaller than the **Northcote**, only 100 ft. by 24 ft.; it

was hoped that she could run on the upper Saskatchewan when the water was too low for the **Northcote**.

Although the **Lily** was speedy, her steel hull was vulnerable to the sharp rocks and cold water of the Saskatchewan, In 1879, the hull was punctured and in the ensuing repairs a wooden sheathing was added to protect her steel hull. This, however, decreased her speed and was never very effective. In 1883, the **Lily** was sent to try the South Saskatchewan route, where she steamed successfully to Medicine Hat. On her way back, however, she struck a rock and quickly sank. Her machinery was salvaged but the **Lily** herself was never recovered and her brief career ended.

In 1877, the HBC built a tramway at Grand Rapids, which facilitated the use of both its Lake Winnipeg steamers and the Saskatchewan River boats. The tramway was a narrow-gauge railroad track which connected the wharf for the lake boats at the end of the Rapids with the dock on the Saskatchewan River above the Rapids. Horse-drawn cars carried freight and passengers across this 5.5 km (three and a half mile) track, making the transfer between the lake and river steamers much quicker and easier.[39]

The Saskatchewan River steamboats of the HBC not only carried the outfits for the northern posts and the returns back to Grand Rapids, they also carried passengers and goods ordered for the growing settlements of the interior. In January 1880, Commissioner Brydges made an agreement with the federal government whereby the HBC would offer much reduced rates on the Saskatchewan for both passengers and goods ordered for the growing settlements of the interior. In January 1880, Commissioner Brydges made an agreement with the federal government whereby the HBC would offer much reduced rates on the Saskatchewan for both passengers and freight; this would apply to the general public as well as to the government for its Native supplies. This proved so successful that Brydges foresaw the need for much more accommodation for the increasing number of people going into the Saskatchewan area. He thought two additional steamboats would be needed, one for the Saskatchewan and one for

Lake Winnipeg, in order to handle this traffic. Brydges told the government that the HBC would be willing to build these two boats during the winter of 1880-81, but only if the government committed itself to make the necessary improvements to the Saskatchewan River. Without these improvements, the boats were too susceptible to damage, which would result in heavy financial loss to the HBC.[40] If this were done, Brydges also promised to reduced the freight rates even more.

The pressure from the government and the public led Commissioner Grahame to recommend that the upper decks of both the **Colvile** (the Lake Winnipeg steamer) and the **Northcote** should be extended to accommodate passengers.[41] But regulations governing public carriers were more stringent than those for freight boats. The law prohibited passenger steamers from carrying more than 95 lbs. steam pressure per square inch – yet the **Northcote** could not ascend the rapids of the Saskatchewan River without a pressure of 140-145 lbs., besides using two capstans and a heavy cable.[42] In the end, Grahame was able to secure permission from the Government to use the **Northcote** with the necessary steam pressure. In 1880, the HBC altered both the **Colvile** and the **Northcote** to make their cabins suitable for passengers; this work was done under the supervision of the man who built the **Colvile**.[43] Thus the HBC transport system on the Saskatchewan River became somewhat of a public carrier as well as a private road. Once the Native treaties were made, the HBC also contracted to bring in supplies for the Indian Department and often for the North West Mounted Police.

Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company Steamboats

The HBC monopoly of the Saskatchewan River trade was threatened by the formation of the North West Navigation Company in 1881. This company planned to move its steamboats from the Assiniboine, where the arrival of railroad connections had ended the usefulness of steamboats, to the Saskatchewan, to take advantage of the last opportunities there.

As it had done on the Red and the Assiniboine, the HBC attempted to work out a deal with the NWNC, by which the NWNC would operate steamboats on the Saskatchewan and

Lake Winnipeg, while the HBC would contribute its steamers and tramway in return for $100,000 in paid-up stock and would subscribe to new stock in the NWNC to be used for operating costs, and would also receive a preferential freight rate.[44]

The NWNC and the HBC had different interests in steamboating on the Saskatchewan. The HBC was concerned first of all with the transport of its own goods and had built its steamboats for that primary purpose, with the carriage of public freight and passengers as subordinate functions. The NWNC at this time had no steamboats of its own, although it had two being built. Commissioner Grahame questioned whether the use of old engines in these new boats of the NWNC would not make their operation on such a difficult and isolated region as the Saskatchewan River impossible, where a breakdown would leave them far from the possibility of repairs. Some of the partners in the NWNC also objected to the special privileges of priority and reduced rates demanded by the HBC.

Grahame concluded that these matters made a full union impossible. He suggested that the status quo should be maintained, with the HBC continuing to run its own steamers and charging the usual freight rates. When the NWNC boats were ready they should be operated by the NWNC until they had proved their worth; the NWNC during this period should charge the same rates as did the HBC to avoid any competition. The HBC would allow the NWNC to use the tramway at Grand Rapids and any other facilities it erected at the rapids on the Saskatchewan. The two lines of boats would run in harmony with each other, to accommodate the public as much as possible and provide a reasonably regular service, charging the same rates. This accommodation would prepare the way for a closer union. In conclusion, Grahame suggested that the HBC and the NWNC might agree on the freight rates to be charged on the Red and Assiniboine rivers as well.[45] Since the NWNC never did establish a steamboat presence on the Saskatchewan, this particular proposed agreement remained a dead letter and was superceded by other arrangements. The suggestions made indicate, however, the usual

HBC approach to competition and the continued attempts to agree with the opposition rather than carry on a cut-throat rivalry.

When an agreement with the NWNC failed to materialize, the HBC turned of its old ally, the Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company, and persuaded it to undertake the operation of the Saskatchewan River steamboats. This arrangement was finalized in June 1881 when the HBC and the WWTC formed a new navigation company under the charter of the WWTC "for the purpose of running Steamers upon the Red, Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers and their tributaries and upon the waters with which they connect."[46] The HBC contributed its steamers (**Northcote**, **Lily**, **Colvile**), barges, and the Grand Rapids tramway, in return for $100,000 in shares; the WWTC contributed its steamers, (**Manitoba**, **City of Winnipeg**, **Alpha** and **Cheyenne** and could also put in one-half interest in the **Marquette**), its barges and warehouses in return for $62,500 in capital. The HBC also received a 15% discount on its freight rates and would receive priority for its freight – the terms which the NWNC had rejected. If Captain Robinson or his associates wanted to join, they could do so by contributing their lake steamers then building; the same arrangement was offered to the NWNC.[47] This appears to show that Captain Wm. Robinson was not as yet in full partnership with the NWNC, or that his own steamboat operations were regarded as a separate entity.

Although the NWNC had decided not to join in the new WWTC, it did agree in 1882 to divide up the territory with the WWTC rather than enter into competition on the Saskatchewan. For the following three years, the WWTC would monopolize the Saskatchewan, while the NWNC would monopolize the Lake Winnipeg traffic. The WWTC sold its lake steamer, the **Colvile**, and the lake barge then being built, to the NWNC. The WWTC would buy the NWNC river steamboat, the **North West** only when it was safely past the Grand Rapids in good shape – thus putting the onus of the transfer on the NWNC. The WWTC agreed not to conduct any transport on Lake Winnipeg for three years and to ship only on the NWNC steamers, while the NWNC would arrange with Peter McArthur not to put any steamers on the Saskatchewan for the

same period and would ship only on the WWTC steamboats. The NWNC agreed to transport the HBC freight to all its Lake Winnipeg posts and to give the HBC a 15% discount on freight.[48]

Captain Robinson was hired to use his new lake steamer **Princess** to bring the WWTC steamboat **City of Winnipeg** (formerly the **Minnesota**), which had been running on the Assiniboine River, up to Grand Rapids for transfer to the Saskatchewan. This steamboat had been lavishly refurbished and fitted up for the convenience of passengers, reflecting the perceived need for such accommodation on the Saskatchewan River, at least for the next few years. The machinery of the **City of Winnipeg** was taken out and her hold was filled with lumber to stabilize her on the voyage. On the lake, however, a series of storms hit the boats and the **Princess** was obliged to cut loose the **City of Winnipeg**, which went aground on the lake shore near Grand Rapids. Thus the WWTC began its operation on the Saskatchewan with the heavy financial loss of this steamboat, the pride of its fleet.

The WWTC also installed new machinery in the **Northcote** in 1882 at Grand Rapids[49] and continued to use her on the Saskatchewan. In 1883, the **Northcote** was sent up the South Saskatchewan as far as Medicine Hat. This branch of the river proved no kinder to steamboats than the North Saskatchewan, and the **Northcote** sank near Medicine Hat; she was refloated but wintered over at Medicine Hat. Again in 1885, the **Northcote** plied the South Saskatchewan, this time engaging in the Battle of Batouche, the only steamboat to be fired at. She was fortified with planking and with sides of bacon, but her smokestacks caught on the ferry cable and fell down, leaving the boat defenceless and drifting. She survived that battle and served as a troopship throughout the rest of the campaign. This proved to be her last year of operation and in 1886 she was beached at Cumberland House, where she was at last burned, because she presented too much of an attractive hazard to the local children. Her bell survives in the Duck Lake Anglican Church, while her whistle was used for years in Peter McArthur's lumber mill at Winnipegosis.[50] After the bad experience with the **City of Winnipeg**, the WWTC hired Peter McArthur to oversee the transfer of the **Marquis**, the **North West** and the **Manitoba**

to the Saskatchewan. The **Princess** was again called on to tow the three riverboats. By hugging the coastline of Lake Winnipeg, McArthur managed to tow the three huge riverboats successfully across the lake and up to Grand Rapids. There he faced the equally formidable task of somehow getting the boats up against the current of the Grand Rapids. The cost of his work was $5,073.24 for each steamboat,[51] and his accomplishment of this feat remained strong in his memory to the end of his life.

The **Marquis**, constructed at the foot of Bannatyne Avenue in Winnipeg in the spring of 1882, was expressly built by the WWTC for use on the Saskatchewan. Designed by a noted St. Louis builder, and modeled after the lastest type of Missouri River steamboat, she was the largest (201 ft. by 33.5 ft.) steamboat to travel the Canadian prairies. Her hull was made of white oak, while her upper works were of white pine. She was equipped with the most up-to-date machinery and furnished with carpets, piano, mirrors, and silverware. In fact, "she had everything except a draught adapted to the river she was built to navigate."[52]

At Grand Rapids, the **Marquis** used her "nigger engines" to get herself and the old **Manitoba** one-third of the way up the rapids, where the **Manitoba** was left. Then the **Marquis**, with the aid of two lines to the shore and another to the **Northcote**, which came as far down the rapids as she could, managed to ascend the rest of the Grand Rapids. This was not without some excitement, however, when one of the lines broke and the **marquis** threatened to go down the Rapids in a hurry. The other lines held, however, and the **Marquis** was saved from damage. When this was completed, the **Marquis's** machinery was installed for her work on the Saskatchewan. There, her career was often interrupted by water too low for her size, or difficulties with her machinery. She served as General Middleton's flagship in 1885 from Battleford to Fort Pitt but never saw violent action. After the Rebellion was over, she transported troops back to Grand Rapids.

In 1886, however, she was wrecked in Thorburn Rapids. The underwriters hired Peter McArthur to salvage her, for the sum of $20,000. McArthur chose 35 men to work on this

project. He brought them with their equipment from Qu'Appelle to Prince Albert, then downriver by scows to where the **Marquis** lay. By the time they arrived, the river had fallen so much that the men could work on the boat dryshod. The quarryman, Jim Young, removed the boulder on which the boat had foundered. Then the huge wreck was hauled on slipways, with the use of horse capstans and rope falls, to a site about 9.1 m (30 ft.) above water level, secure from winter ice and spring floods. McArthur's men had almost completed this task when one of the ropes snapped and then they all broke – and the great boat slipped back to the riverbed, in worse shape than before -- and with the loss of six weeks of backbreaking labour. This fall broke the main steampipe and the hogchains of the **Marquis**. The men jacked her up to a position of relative safety and had to leaver her there for the winter.

The following spring, McArthur and a picked crew of 10 men returned to the **Marquis**. Among these men was a skilled blacksmith, who was able to repair the broken steampipe and most of the hogchain. He could not manage to fix a truss-rod (an iron bar 12.8 m [42 ft. long], two inches in diameter, weighing about 700 lbs.) and had to take it in by boat to Prince Albert, where it was repaired, On the way back to the **Marquis**, unfortunately, this rod broke again. The blacksmith was able to weld these parts together, just in time for the inspection of the boat. The inspector approved the repairs and the regular steamboat crew took over the boat. The repair crew then traveled as passengers on the **Marquis** to Grand Rapids. Peter McArthur ended up with no profit at all from this contract.[53] The repaired **Marquis** was prevented from running by low water in the river above Coles Falls in 1887, and was beached at Cumberland House. In 1890, she was hauled to Prince Albert, in hopes she could be used on the upper reaches of the river, but was beached permanently there. For some years she was used as a dancehall while she slowly disintegrated on the shore.

Peter McArthur had built the **North West** for use on the Assiniboine River, to carry both lumber and passengers. She was a large ship, almost as large as the **Marquis**, and been fitted up with some luxury for passengers. She started up the Grand Rapids under her own power in

the summer of 1882 but, having received some damage, had to be towed the rest of the way by the **Northcote**, which came down as near to the Rapids as she could to do this. The damage to the **North West** was minimal and she was able to begin her runs on the Saskatchewan that same summer of 1882.

She was damaged again in 1883 and laid up for repairs at Grand Rapids. During the 1885 Rebellion, the **North West**, which had been recently overhauled and painted, served as transport for government troops. When Poundmaker and his band surrendered, all their guns were piled on her deck, some of them old flintlocks, red with rust and about six feet long; later the steamboat crew found these in their way and threw them overboard,[54] disposing of evidence of how poorly-prepared the Cree were for military action.

For the next several years, the **North West** was often the only steamboat in operation on the Saskatchewan. Her usefulness declined, however, as railroads extended into the area previously served by the steamboats. In 1893, her hull was repaired and new hog chains installed; as well she was given a good coat of paint to spruce her up for a few day excursions for which she had been hired.[55] In 1894, she made her last runs, making a return trip from Prince Albert to Edmonton, another from Prince Albert to Grand Rapids, and a third from Prince Albert to Fort Pitt. She was plagued by delays and accidents, however; a sandbar held her up for 14 days on the way from Edmonton to Prince Albert, while on her trip to Grand Rapids, she hit a rock in Coles Falls and sank in about 1.2 m (4 ft.) of water. She was raised and repaired, but the delay meant she was unable to take on all the freight at Grand Rapids and this caused considerable loss to the WWTC.[56] Her machinery was sent to the Vulcan Iron Works in Winnipeg for repairs.[57] The cost of operating the **North West** for the small amount of freight involved prevented her from running in 1895. In 1896, the **North West** was beached finally near Edmonton; in 1899 she was flooded out and disappeared.

The use of steamboats on the Saskatchewan reached its peak in the early 1880s and declined very rapidly after 1885. In 1882, the **Northcote** made seven trips, reaching Edmonton

from Grand Rapids, as well as making several shorter trips. After their haul up the Grand Rapids, the **North West** made three trips, and the **Manitoba** and the **Marquis** each made one trip. The steamers carried 2,906,631 tons of freight on these trips.[58] In 1883, the **Northcote** made three trips, the **Marquis** two, the **Manitoba** six, and the **North West** five, carrying 5,373,971 tons of freight up the river and 236,978 tons of returns down, earning $107,748.27 and $4,748.84 respectively; from passenger fares, they earned $3,756.00. Meals brought in $1,649.00 and extra baggage $104.70. The wood used cost $7,394.58. Wages bulked large in the expense sheet, amounting to $25,492.26. Total receipts to the WWTC from these steamboats amounted to $118,006.81 while expenditures reached $87,938.73 for a net profit of $30,068.08 in the 1883 season.[59]

Despite these many trips and the four steamers operating on the Saskatchewan, the service given was not always reliable. In 1882, 500 tons of freight were left undelivered at Cumberland House, while in 1883 operations were again severely curtailed. This lack of certainty over delivery by steamboat hampered the WWTC and contributed to its declining profits. Thus economic problems were added to the already severe navigation problems and frequent mishaps to the steamboats. Stringent economy measures were taken to counter the expenses. Superfluous officers were cut; for example, the office of Superintendent was merged with that of Captain of the **North West**, which was to be the only steamer running for most of the time. The crew was cut down “and all superfluous Servants, hitherto employed to meet an imaginary Passenger trade” were to be discharged.[60]

The steamboats faced intense competition in the Saskatchewan as the railroad continued to advance. The carters used this last opportunity to freight goods from the railroad junctions to the settlers. The carts, which ran between the railway stations at Qu’Appelle, Swift Current and Calgary offered a competition which the steamboats could not meet, either in price or in efficiency. It had been suggested that the Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids to the Saskatchewan route should be abandoned and that Medicine Hat should become the

steamboat terminus, to meet there with the railroad. This would give the steamboats a season six weeks longer than that derived from dependence on the Lake Winnipeg steamboats, but Clarke thought it still might be impossible to compete with the carts.[61] Although this had some attractive possibilities, Horace Bélanger of Cumberland House cautioned that the abandonment of the North Saskatchewan route would deprive missionaries and others of the transportation they depended on to bring in their necessities. Since none of them could afford to use a steamboat of their own, they would turn to private operators, opening the door to the competition so dreaded by the HBC.[62]

In 1884, the gross earnings of the steamers amounted to $59,725.79 while their gross expenses were $26,221.72. At the same time the WWTC had total gross earnings of only $61,768.80 (almost entirely due to the steamers, therefore) while its expenses were $67,294.42[63] – the beginning of its long slide into bankruptcy.

In 1885, the amount of freight carried to Grand Rapids from Winnipeg was only 1143 tons, a far cry from what it had been two years before.[64] The WWTC was enabled to make a profit that year, however, because of the use of its steamboats by the federal government during the North West Rebellion. The impact of the uncompleted CPR on the successful movement of soldiers into the North West to quell the Rebellion is a commonplace in history but the contribution made by the steamboats has usually been ignored. Although not able to provide rapid or strictly-scheduled movement of troops or supplies, the steamboats did in the end contribute greatly to the government cause and were paid accordingly.

In 1886, 1281 tons were brought to Grand Rapids by the lake steamers to go inland. Because of difficulties with the Saskatchewan steamboats, only 813 tons were delivered to its destination; the rest wintered at The Pas, Cumberland and Grand Rapids. The total receipts of the steamers ($50,957.93) were more than offset by the operating expenses ($26,263.30) and the cost of office expenses, repairs, insurance, tramway expenses and depreciation. The WWTC expected to show a debit of $12,000 - $13,000 in the Annual Report.[65]

Yet in 1887, the Lake Winnipeg steamers landed 1,486,495 tons of freight at Grand Rapids; 101,195 tons of this was Indian Department freight, 790,000 tons of HBC merchandise, while 416,900 tons was HBC flour.[66] These figures may not be accurate, for Jos. Wrigley, in his capacity as chairman of the WWTC as well as Commissioner of the HBC, reported to London that the WWTC had carried only half the usual amount of freight, because shippers were not inclined to send freight where there was great doubt about its time of delivery because of the uncertainty about the level of water in the river. "Under present circumstances I fear this uncertainty of water may prove an insuperable obstacle to the success of the Company".[67]

By 1886, however, the lack of improvement on the Saskatchewan was only a minor part of the difficulties experienced by the WWTC. The lack of freight traffic was the major obstacle, much more serious than rapids or boulders or low water, though to some extent it had been affected by these. The railroad extension throughout the west removed any possibility of real competition by the steamboats. The WWTC again considered the feasibility of sending its freight much of the way by railway – to Swift Current or Rush Lake – and then overland to the South Saskatchewan River, where the steamers could reach it and take it the rest of the way.[68]

These steps were not taken, however, and the North Saskatchewan continued to be used when possible. In 1888, only the **North West** was to run, making only one trip to Edmonton, as well as plying the lower part of the river to deliver the rest of the freight.[69] In 1889, the river was so low that no boats could reach Edmonton. Freight was to go to Calgary by rail and by carts the rest of the way.[70] Some attempt was made to use the **North West** that season, but the low water frustrated this and the boat was hauled out for repairs.[71]

In an effort to reduce expenses, the WWTC decided that it would no longer pay the men full wages while they were en route to the steamboat; this had sometimes taken a month or more. In 1887, the WWTC planned to hire men on half pay until they actually started working on the steamboat and, if held up by damage or low water, again on half pay.[72] The WWTC also decided not to hire any stewards.[73] These economy measures could not stave off the

inevitable. In 1888, Swinford recommended allowing the insurance policies on the **Northcote** and the **Marquis** to lapse.[74] In 1892, the WWTC refused to rehire Captain Smith, and replaced him with Julius Dugal of Prince Albert instead, at a much lower cost.[75]

Further contributing to the decline was the growth of railroad connections. This spelled the end of the Saskatchewan River steamboats, as it had already done on the Red and the Assiniboine. The opening of railway routes to Prince Albert and Edmonton by 1890 did away with the major use of the Grand Rapids route; the **North West** was the only steamer to operate, making only two trips. The **Northcote** by that year was in such poor condition that it was left at Cumberland House.[76]

Prince Albert assumed a pivotal role in the transport of goods by railroad and in the production of flour for the western and northern areas of the Saskatchewan. The completion of the CPR led to the HBC itself shipping the outfits for the Mackenzie, Peace River and Athabasca Districts by rail rather than by steamer by 1890. The Saskatchewan River was left to carry local freight only and this was insufficient to sustain the WWTC. Although it did not dissolve until 1900, the WWTC had effectively ceased to operate 10 years before that. On 17 May 1900, the remaining assets of the WWTC were transferred to the HBC in payment of debts owed by the WWTC to the HBC.[77]

By 1903 the HBC had combined the use of steamboats on Lake Winnipeg with a reversion to inland boats from Grand Rapids to Cedar Lake and a small steam tug with a barge from Cedar Lake to Cumberland House.[78] From 1905 to 1909 the HBC ran a small steamer, the **Saskatchewan**, to transport freight from the High Portage on Cedar Lake to Prince Albert. This was abandoned in 1910, however, and a small private steamer was hired to carry the HBC freight between The Pas, Cumberland House and Cedar Lake.[79]

Thus ended the HBC interest in steamboats on the lower Saskatchewan. The tramway, which had been pivotal to the transport of goods into the Saskatchewan, fell into disrepair, while the beautiful steamboats of the 1870s and 1880s littered the banks of the river, relics of the brief

period of intensive river transport by steam, superseded so quickly by the steam-engines of the railroad.

Steamboats on Lake Winnipeg

Lake Winnipeg, the great inland sea, was an obvious choice for transportation by steamboat. Although it offered long stretches of open water navigation, it also presented considerable hazards to navigation. The lake was shallow and winds could raise enormous waves very quickly. Its shore was rocky for much of its circumference, with rocky reefs extending far out into the lake. In some places this left only a very narrow channel for steamboats to pass through.

As late as 1890 no chart had been made of the lake. Only one lighthouse was in operation and it was of use only to the boats going to the Saskatchewan. No buoys or beacons existed except at the mouth of the Red River; this made it difficult to enter rivers, even in broad daylight. The captains of steamboats were forced to rely on their own knowledge of the lake – an inadequate basis for navigation on such a body of water, especially at night – and the excessive caution needed caused many unprofitable delays. The steamers had to run below speed and often stop altogether to wait for daylight in order to pass dangerous points in safety or to enter rivers and harbours.[1] These difficulties of navigation on Lake Winnipeg made it almost impossible to get marine insurance, which in turn deterred investors from shipping on the lake. Transport by steamer was generally unprofitable, and made it difficult to develop the resources of the country surrounding the lake.

Captain Bergman recommended the installation of six additional lighthouses at Gull Point, Black Bear Island, Cox's Shoal, Georges Island, Mossy Point and the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. He also wanted range-lights set up at the mouth of the Red River to add to the light-ship already there. A set of buoys was needed outside of Warren's Landing because the channel into the Nelson River was narrow and winding, through rocky shoals, for a long distance. As well, the mouths of some of the rivers into Lake Winnipeg needed to be dredged.[2]

Most of these improvements were eventually made, but to the benefit of fishing and lumbering tugs rather than passenger of freight steamers.

Hudson's Bay Company Transport

The Hudson's Bay Company had posts dotted around the shores of Lake Winnipeg, and river connections from those posts to inland posts. Other than Norway House, however, these Lake Winnipeg posts were all relatively minor posts in the 1860s and did not require the volume of freight which would make steamboat traffic profitable. Norway House itself was adequately supplied by York boats from Red River or from York Factory. Its harbour was almost inaccessible to steamboats, which had to unload instead at Warren's Harbour, some miles distant from Norway House.

Grand Rapids Post, at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River, was in itself a very minor fur-trade post, but its location made it vital to any steamboat operation on Lake Winnipeg. If freight for the HBC western and northern posts could be carried to Grand Rapids by steamer and transferred to steamboats on the Saskatchewan River, the HBC would gain an enormous advantage in the relatively quick transfer of its outfits and returns. This would also do away with the Company's long reliance on York boats and crews – a transportation mode which had become increasingly unreliable and subject to breakdown over labour troubles, which could have catastrophic consequences for the far northern posts.

Also, throughout the 1860s, an increased number of free-traders flowed into the Saskatchewan and Cumberland regions. Their line of goods and their competitive prices threatened the economic wellbeing of the HBC. Quick and reliable transportation of up-to-date goods to meet this competition was essential to the Company. Steamboats on Lake Winnipeg would offer the HBC the same advantages over its competitors in the transfer of bulky, heavy freight as the ocean route to the Bay had given its earlier rival, the North West Company canoes from Montreal.

Yet the first lake steamboat launched by the HBC on 7 May 1872 from Lower Fort Garry, the propeller steamer named the **Chief Commissioner**, was not designed for use on Lake Winnipeg. She was intended to ply Lake Manitoba, the Waterhen River and Lake Winnipegosis to the Mossy Portage, to connect from there to steamboats on Cedar Lake which would run on the Saskatchewan River. Because the steamboat was intended for the smaller lakes and rivers, it was built with a very flat bottom, suitable for use on both the lakes and the rivers.[3] This use of the steamer was predicated on the completion by the Canadian government of a canal across the Mossy Portage – a project which was quickly felt to be impractical. Without the canal, the use of a steamboat transport route on the two smaller lakes of Manitoba was virtually useless.

In any case, the **Chief Commissioner** could not be used on these lakes because it was discovered, after she was built, that she could not pass up the Little Saskatchewan River (Dauphin River) into Lake Manitoba to fulfill her original purpose. The HBC decided then to use the **Chief Commissioner** on Lake Winnipeg. The conditions of navigation on Lake Winnipeg were quite unsuited to the design of the **Chief Commissioner**, however, and although she made several trips between Winnipeg and Grand Rapids, she was considered very unsafe, both in design and in strength, for the heavy seas of Lake Winnipeg.

In 1874, Mr. Reeves, who had designed and built the **Northcote** for the HBC, inspected the **Chief Commissioner** and declared she could not survive more than three more trips on Lake Winnipeg. Her hull was so unsafe that the shaking of these trips would finish her. Reeves thought it would be impossible to strengthen and renovate her. Her machinery, though not the best, could be used in another hull, but her boiler, in his opinion, was too old to be reused.[4] Shortly afterwards the boiler was tested and found useful for another year or more.[5] This boiler had come from the first HBC Red River steamboat, the **Pioneer**. It had been sent to White Horse Plains for use in a flour mill there but, when the boiler for the **Chief Commissioner** proved too small, the old **Pioneer** boiler was installed instead. In 1880, this old boiler was installed in the **Colvile**, marking the end of its many manifestations.[6]

In 1875, despite the hazards, Commissioner Grahame decided to send the **Chief Commissioner** on two more trips to Grand Rapids in order to supply the **Northcote** with freight. After her return, she was dismantled for use in the new Lake Winnipeg steamboat.[7] The hull of the **Chief Commissioner** was used as a floating warehouse at Lower Fort Garry and was later moved to Colvile Landing at Selkirk, where her long and useful life ended.

The HBC decided to invest in a new steamboat specifically designed for use on Lake Winnipeg and Commissioner Grahame traveled to Chicago to consult a master ship builder, recommended to him by Kittson. After Grahame explained the special needs of a vessel on Lake Winnipeg, this builder agreed to design a steamboat with specifications for the sum of $100. He would also make the moulds for the steamer and send them to Grand Forks, where Grahame planned to have the boat built in the yards of the Red River Transportation Company, under the supervision of Mr. Reeves, Kittson's head carpenter, who had built the **Northcote**.[8]

The plans submitted called for a screw steamer with a keel 110 ft. long and an eight-foot hold, with a six-inch draught and a capacity of about 160 tons. She was also to be fitted with a square sail and jib. She was to be a vessel sturdy enough for the stormy seas of Lake Winnipeg, but she would also require a light draught for the shallow waters of the Red, through which she would have to travel to and from her berth at Lower Fort Garry.[9] The machinery from the **Chief Commissioner** could be adapted to the new steamboat. Some objections had been raised because the vertical cylinders caused great vibration and strain to the hull, but the HBC thought this could be overcome by placing the cylinders on strong frames.[10]

The replacement for the **Chief Commissioner** was named the **Colvile** and she proved well-suited to the navigation of Lake Winnipeg. She was not a pretty ship but she was sturdy and continued to ply the lake through the storms and transfers of ownership until she burned at the Grand Rapids wharf in 1894. She had an open main deck with a large deckhouse, over which were the pilot house and cabins. Soaring above the boat was her distinctive funnel, more like that of a contemporary railroad steam engine operated by the HBC, the **Colvile** burned

coal; in 1878 she used 184 tons of it as a cost of $3,207.70. Her total running expenses for that season amounted to $13,651.19.[12]

The **Colvile** could only use the Red River at periods of high water. Her berth was to be at Cook's Creek (Lower Fort Garry), where the old **Chief Commissioner** would serve as her floating warehouse. Here the **Colvile** could avoid the St. Andrew's Rapids, which would cause problems for her heavier draft.[13] On the high spring water, however, the **Colvile** continued to make trips between Fort Garry and Lower Fort Garry with the outfits for the year. On one of these trips in 1880, she struck the piers of the temporary railroad bridge at Point Douglas and carried some of them away, without damage to herself.[14] Since the HBC had objected strenuously to this bridge's interference with navigation, the damage caused by the **Colvile** was not greatly regretted.

Although not designed for passengers, the **Colvile** carried some eminent personages. On her maiden voyage, she brought Lt. Governor Morris to points around Lake Winnipeg to negotiate Treaty 5 with the Natives of Berens River, Norway House and Grand Rapids. In 1877, the HBC offered to transport the Governor-General and his wife, Lord and Lady Dufferin, to Grand Rapids on the **Colvile**. En route to pick up the vice-regal couple at Fort Alexander, the **Colvile** ran aground in the Red River. This delayed her a day but she finally got off and picked up the couple for their tour. The **Colvile** had been especially spruced up for this occasion, repainted and her hold turned into a beautiful dining room, entirely lined with green baize, while the companion ladder was covered in red. The whole boat looked quite different from its working aspect. Despite these amenities, however, the best efforts of the HBC could not counter the effects of Lake Winnipeg on the boat and it rolled continuously; even when anchored at night "she went on swaying from side to side."[15] Lady Dufferin was very glad to be quit of this ride.

Some competition in freighting on Lake Winnipeg occurred as early as 1877, when some businessmen of Winnipeg imported a small screw steamer, 50 ft. by 12 ft., from Ontario. This

steamer was carried by rail from Duluth to Red River and was sent to Berens River, towing a small schooner with supplies for the Indian Department. This boat was said to be useful only in smooth water, not strong enough to steam ahead in rough water – a severe limitation for use on Lake Winnipeg. But its introduction foretold the loss of HBC hegemony on the lake and "sooner or later every corner of the Lake will be as well known to outsiders as ourselves".[16]

The presence of the **Colvile** and the development of a railway line from Pembina to East Selkirk in 1878 helped to ensure that Selkirk, rather than Lower Fort Garry or Winnipeg, would be the depot for lake steamers. Freight could be brought by rail to Selkirk, thus avoiding the St. Andrew's Rapids and the low water of the Red. At Selkirk, the lake steamers could load these goods and bring them to the various points around Lake Winnipeg served by the steamboats.

By 1880, the **Colvile** was moored opposite Selkirk during the winter. Arrangements were made to have a branch line of the railroad run to this spot, appropriately named the Colvile Landing. At first, the hull of the **Chief Commissioner** was to be used as the warehouse, until a permanent one could be built. The HBC could send its outfits by rail to this landing, where they could be easily loaded on the lake steamer. Such an arrangement meant that Lower Fort Garry no longer served any useful purpose and could soon be abandoned.[17] The erection of elaborate facilities here, including a large store, was motivated by the expectation that the HBC would "be able to supply the wants of the vast amount of emigration which will undoubtedly avail itself of this route to the wheat-producing lands of the North-West."[18]

After 1883, however, Colvile Landing lost its significance.[19] By that time, too, the HBC was no longer directly involved in the steamboat business. East Selkirk faded in importance, replaced by Selkirk, and Lake Winnipeg steamboats concentrated on the fish and lumber trade, rather than general freighting and passenger traffic.

Selkirk also became the headquarters of Captain Wm. Robinson – the steamboat captain who took part in the Nile campaign in 1873. On his turn to Manitoba, Robinson became a steamboat owner and partner in the NWNC, as well as a fisheries developer and partner with

the Booth Company. Robinson played a central role in much of Selkirk's business history and most of his projects depended on transportation by his own steamboats. His first steamboat was the **William Robinson**, which he ran on the lower Red and Lake Winnipeg in 1879-80. In the fall of 1880, however, she was wrecked on Lake Winnipeg while towing lumber barges near Fort Alexander; the **Colvile** picked up some of this lumber after the wreck.[20]

The HBC, anxious to get out of the business of operating steamboats, had entered into an agreement with the Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company in 1881 by which it acquired stock in the company in exchange for its steamboats, including the **Colvile**. But the WWTC soon divided up its territory with the North West Navigation Company. Under the terms of this agreement in 1882, the **Colvile** was sold to the North West Navigation Company, which was to monopolize the freighting on Lake Winnipeg, while the WWTC would monopolize that on the Saskatchewan.

No price was set for the **Colvile**, however, and since the two parties disagreed on its worth, the settlement was taken to arbitration as provided for in the original agreement. The arbitrators set the value of the **Colvile** at time of sale (May 1882) as $6,854.80. She already showed some signs of aging, with dry rot on her deck. Her boiler, which had been replaced in 1880, was considered unsuitable for her engines. She was also uneconomical on fuel, burning about three-quarters a cord of wood per hour under full steam. About 30-35 cords were required to make the run to Grand Rapids with about 80 tons of cargo – a trip which took about 32 hours. One witness, Captain Adam Black, testified that the HBC always used coal on the **Colvile**, thus leaving more room for cargo.[21] The **Colvile** used three barges to increase its carrying capacity, the "Grand Rapids", the "Osprey" and the "Jessie". Even with the use of these, its net earnings in the season of 1882 only amounted to $1,628.81.[22]

In 1887, Robinson bought the **Colvile** from the NWNC[23], which apparently disappeared then as a corporate entity on Lake Winnipeg. Robinson used the steamer primarily for his

fisheries, rather than for general freighting. It was in this capacity that the **Colvile** met her end in 1894 at the dock in Grand Rapids, near Robinson's fish plant.

In 1897, when the era of passenger and freight traffic on Lake Winnipeg had almost disappeared, Robinson converted the **Princess** into a bulk-cargo freighter for his fisheries. With the decline of passenger and freight traffic to Grand Rapids, superceded by the railroad in the West, the **Princess** was altered in 1897 to conform to the new demands of intensive commercial fishing on Lake Winnipeg. Robinson of the Dominion Fish Company, with his close links to the Booth Fish Co., used his expertise as a steamboat operator to build up an extensive network of fishing stations, sailboats and tugs, freezer barge and a plant at Selkirk. Thus the **Princess** became an integral part of this large-scale business – her sleek passenger pioneer days far behind her. She was extended to 160 ft., her deck cut back, and a propeller engine installed to replace her side wheels. On 24 August 1908, the **Princess** sank in Lake Winnipeg near Warren's Landing, with the loss of six lives – the worst disaster to occur on the lake to that time.[24]

Steamboats on Lake Winnipeg were also used by the opposition to the HBC. In 1890, A.B. Bethune of Carscaden, Peck & Co., a Winnipeg-based firm, left on the **Red River** for a tour of inspection of his company's fur-trading posts in the Cross Lake, Oxford and God's Lake Districts.[25] On this trip or another that summer, the **Red River** ran aground on a sandbar off Sturgeon Island and lay there with her crew and passengers for three weeks.[26] The **Red River**, 125 ft. by 26 ft., had begun her career as a tow barge for the NWNC in 1882 and was converted to a steamboat in 1889. She was primarily a freighter, not a passenger boat, and was ideal for hauling logs on Lake Winnipeg. She sank in the lake in October 1900.

By 1889, the HBC freight to Fort Alexander was carried by a private company. Although the rate was somewhat higher (50 c. per 100 lbs.) than it had been in 1887 (30 cents per 100 lbs.), Commissioner Wrigley still considered it advantageous to the HBC.[27] Berens River also was supplied by steamer, although the landing was at the Big Island and goods had to be taken

to Berens River by boat.[28] The schooner “Polly” was also used to bring outfits directly to Berens River.[29] By 1883, however, the channel into Berens River had been buoyed and the steamer was able to go directly to the post.[30] After that, the **Princess** called frequently to bring freight or passengers and to take out returns. The steamboat and tugs, such as the **Lady Ellen**, were also used by the Indian Department and missionaries to bring in supplies for treaty and lumber for building.

At Norway House, the **Colvile** was able to reach the wharf of the post, provided the channel was properly marked with buoys and the water was high enough.[31] She did have some difficulty with this, catching on a rock in Playgreen Lake in 1876.[32] Shortly afterwards, the HBC decided to build a landing for the steamer at the site of the “Old Fort”,[33] which became known as Warren’s Landing. Only a temporary wharf was provided at first, but in 1879, a permanent wharf and a store were built.[34] In 1880, work was begun on a barge which could carry the freight from Warren’s Landing to Norway House, but it was not expected to be ready for use until 1881. It had to be equipped with sails in order to navigate across Playgreen Lake.[35]

Lumbering

Henry McKenney, in the spring of 1868, began lumbering on Lake Winnipeg. He bought a 25 h.p. steam engine and boiler complete with a saw carriage, lath saws and shingle machine – a variety of attachments necessary for a successful lumber business. He launched his new sailing schooner, the **Jessie McKenney** on 25 August and set sail for Manigotagan River on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. This river had a good stand of spruce trees and a fine natural harbour. McKenney continued his lumbering through the summer of 1869, but then abandoned this project. He had planned to use the schooner for fishing as well, but did not carry through on this.[38] McKenney was in advance of his time in his interest in the two great resource industries of Lake Winnipeg. But McKenney’s use of a schooner, which required a much deeper keel than a steamboat of similar size, made it difficult to carry a volume of lumber through the shallow

delta of the Red or up the St. Andrew's Rapids. Large-scale lumbering was not profitable for another ten years, when the introduction of steam tugs made it so.[39]

In 1870, Peter McArthur lumbered on the Brokenhead River, after he had obtained the permission of the local band and had given them appropriate presents.[40] By the end of the 1870s, McArthur used his small steamboat, the **Prince Rupert**, to tow lumber to Winnipeg from this area.

By the 1880s, several private parties had put steamers on Lake Winnipeg to carry their lumber to market in Winnipeg or Selkirk. One of these was the **Aurora**, which had been begun at the Icelandic River in 1885 and finished building at Selkirk. This was a screw-type steamer with side paddle. Used by the Lake Winnipeg Lumber and Trading Company, it towed rafts of wood sometimes a mile long from Black Island to Winnipeg, as well as some passengers. In 1889, Colin Inkster accompanied Native Inspector McColl on a tour of Indian Reserves on Lake Winnipeg; Inkster used this occasion to question the Natives on the effect that commercial fishing on Lake Winnipeg was having on them.[41] In 1890, Lt. Governor Schultz requisitioned this steamboat for transport to points on Lake Winnipeg.[42] It was very slow and easily overturned and was soon condemned at Selkirk, where it rotted in the slough.[43]

Fishing

By the 1880s, the use of steamboats on Lake Winnipeg was largely dominated by those involved in the fishing trade. In 1889, the Robinson Fishing Co. alone had seven boats and two tugs. The G.W. Gauthier Co. had nine or ten boats and two tugs, the **Miles** and **Glendevon**. The **Glendevon** spent most of its time towing the freezer barge to and from Selkirk. A new firm of that year, Roberts, Wright and Co., had a tug and a freezer barge plus four sailboats.[44]

The tugs were especially important in the fishing industry, because one tug could tow several sailboats to the fishing grounds. The North West Mounted Police detachment bound for Grand Rapids in the summer of 1889 noted the **Glendevon** towing 10 fishing boats from the

Little Saskatchewan River, bound for Grand Rapids.[45] The **Glendevon** also took occasional passengers.[46]

Industrial and commercial use of steamboats were the hallmarks of 20th century navigation on Lake Winnipeg. A few tourist excursions and a small number of passengers traveling around the lake continued as exceptions to this rule. Only a few sites on the lake were untouched by the complicated network of rails and still eager to hear the steamboat arrive. In other spots, even the memory of the steamboat whistle was replaced by the characteristic hoot of the locomotive engine.

Steamboats on Lake Manitoba

Although the Hudson's Bay Company in the early 1870s had intended to use Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis to transport its supplies to the Mossy Portage and thence to the Saskatchewan River, this plan had never materialized. The Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids route was utilized instead for steamboats. The Canadian Pacific Railway, originally scheduled to cross the Narrows of Lake Manitoba, skirted it to the south. Both Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis lay in between these major transport routes and relatively untouched by either. It was not until 1879-80 that Lake Manitoba witnessed the presence of steamboats, arising not from the transportation needs of either the public or the HBC but from the increasing amount of lumbering and fishing which began to dominate commercial interest in the smaller lakes of Manitoba.

At first, this interest focused on the small settlement of Totogan, at the junction of Rat Creek and the Whitemud River, near the town of Westbourne.[1] The HBC decided to close its small post at Totogan in 1878, because the summer trade was too small to warrant keeping it open once the spring hunts were collected.[2] Soon after closing the post, however, the HBC recognized that new opportunities altered the situation completely. A grist mill, the only one west of Portage, had been erected, and Totogan would become the spot where the western settlers would get their flour made. A sawmill was also begun at Totogan, a choice site for this,

since Hind in 1857 had reported that the oak and elm trees on the White Mud River were of the largest size.[3] In addition, a large gang of men were employed up on Lake Manitoba getting out logs for the sawmill and a steamboat was said to be planned for the following year.[4] Influenced by these factors, the HBC reopened its post at Totogan.[5] This adaptation to new circumstances reflected the HBC willingness to move from its old fur trade interest in the area to conform to the new demands of settlers and commercial interests. Its Totogan store would now become primarily a merchandising operation rather than simply a fur-trade post.

The rumours of a steamboat for Lake Manitoba were indeed founded in fact. Walter Pratt of Portage, who had been associated with Peter McArthur in running the **Marquette** on the Assiniboine, put the first steamboat, the **Lady Blanche**, on Lake Manitoba in 1879.[6] Pratt had a ranch at Perch Creek, besides the sawmill at Totogan; he used the steamboat to tow logs to the sawmill.[7]

But Totogan was un unfortunate choice for a settlement or mills at this time. In the early 1880s, Lake Manitoba flooded it regularly. The HBC post at Totogan was nearly flooded out in the autumn of 1880 and A.R. Lillie, in charge of the post, expected even more serious flooding in the spring of 1881, because of the heavy winter snowfall.[8] Lillie's fears were only too well-founded. A survey party for the federal government arrived at Totogan just in time to see the damage and to hear reports from the local settlers. These people claimed that the lake had been rising steadily for the previous five years and saw little option for them but to abandon their farms.[9]

The federal government had been asked to appropriate $2500 in order to deepen parts of the Waterhen River, so that timber from Lake Winnipegosis could be transported down to Lake Manitoba. The engineer sent to investigate this reported that such an action would have serious consequences on the level of Lake Manitoba. Only two rivers, the Whitemud and the Waterhen, drained into Lake Manitoba, while its only exit was through the Fairford River into Lake St. Martin and thence through the Little Saskatchewan River (Dauphin River) into Lake

Winnipeg. The flooding on Lake Manitoba was caused by the fact that the two rivers brought in more water than the one river could carry off. According to the investigator, Henry F. Perley, the Waterhen alone carried 25% more water into Lake Manitoba than the Fairford River carried out. Thus, if the Waterhen were deepened for the convenience of transportation, the flooding on Lake Manitoba would become even worse. The benefit of such an action to the timber merchants from Lake Winnipegosis should be weighted against the serious effects on Lake Manitoba settlers.[10] This was apparently enough to deter the government from action on the Waterhen River, for Peter McArthur in 1898 had great difficulty in working his small steam tug up through the Waterhen to Lake Winnipegosis.

Professor John Macoun also arrived at Totogan and reported that its situation was even worse than he had expected. On his arrival on 10 June 1881, he had to wade up to his knees in mud and water to the hotel door; two days after his party left, the water reached inside the hotel to the bar.[11] This flooding helped to finish off the sawmill, which was already proving itself unprofitable,[12] and Pratt's **Lady Blanche** no longer had a use. By 1890, Totogan was abandoned.

Peter McArthur, who had sold his large steamboats and quit his job as manager of the WWTC in 1882, turned his attention to his logging interests on Lake Manitoba. These enterprises were situated near the Ebb and Flow Indian Reserve on the west side of lake Manitoba, at Crane River south of Winnipegosis, and at Fairford. A spur line of the railroad would run from Westbourne to a landing on the Whitemud River; this would enable him to get his lumber to market. McArthur's friend, Wm. B. Sifton, had settled at the Narrows of Lake Manitoba in 1877, where he expected the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway to go through. This hope was never realized, but Sifton produced railroad ties and barged them down the lake to Totogan where they were freighted overland. In 1883, a spur line of the Manitoba and North West Railway was built to Westbourne from Portage, making his transport much

easier.[13] This railroad also altered the HBC method of transport to its Lake Manitoba posts and Westbourne replaced Oak Point as the place where the HBC freight was sent for distribution.[14]

Peter McArthur bought the 64.8 ha (160 acre) homestead of Charles Mair on the Whitemud River. There he used the sidewheeler **Saskatchewan**, (110 ft. by 24 ft., with a 6 ft. draught) and started the small settlement of McArthur's Landing, afterwards called Cawdor.[15] The origins of this steamboat are not absolutely clear. Agnes Medd, daughter of Peter McArthur, thought her father had it built, in 1883, but James Newlands, who worked on the **Saskatchewan**, thought it had previously run on the Red River.[16] The picture of the **Saskatchewan**, which clearly shows the letters HBC, seems to support Newlands' view.

Agnes Medd remembered steaming down the Whitemud River from Westbourne to the Landing where the family was to live. Among the passengers on this trip was Charles Mair. On board was a small rosewood piano, which had come from England by way of York Factory, perhaps to a family in Winnipeg. Her father took the children on some of his trips on the lake. To get from the Landing to the lake, the steamboat would have to back down the river a little way to Perch Creek, in order to turn around. Then it would steam down the nine miles to the lake, past Totogan. When they reached the Narrows, they would stop to give the Siftons their mail, and in return the Siftons gave them heaping dishes of wild strawberries and cream. On their way back up the Whitemud River, they always had trouble getting the **Saskatchewan** in, because at every bend her nose would stick in the soft mud. She was much too large for the river.[17]

The logs of the **Saskatchewan** from 1889-93 are preserved in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.[18] These give as complete a picture as is possible of the difficulties of navigation on Lake Manitoba and the Whitemud River. The **Saskatchewan** served as an all-purpose steamer, carrying freight, passengers, mail, and towing rafts of logs. The trip up the Whitemud was always a difficult one, and frequently marked by long delays while stuck on the bank. On Lake Manitoba, the steamboat faced winds which prevented it towing the rafts and also delayed

it. The men who worked on the steamboat also worked fixing rafts and loading lumber. On some occasions, the captain hired local Natives to help load lumber. The crew were also Natives; when they left the boat to take their treaty money at Fairford in 1892, the captain used the mill hands to load.[19] In 1893, the captain noted that no labourers could be hired, because it was treaty time.[20]

In 1889, the **Saskatchewan** moved McArthur's sawmill from its former location near the Narrows to a new location on Fairford Bay. On a site near Basket Creek, they built a landing and then unloaded the sawmill.[21] In 1890, the mill was again moved to another site on Fairford Bay.[22] In 1891, the **Saskatchewan** entered the Grassy Narrows entrance to Ebb and Flow Lake and up to Ebb and Flow Creek to load up the engine and saw machine from there, bringing these back to the Landing. [23] It appears from these ship's logs that McArthur had more than one sawmill in operation around the lake and that he moved these whenever the lumber in one area was exhausted.

The **Saskatchewan** carried a great deal of general freight around the lake, with the federal government as one of its customers. In 1892, the steamboat brought the lumber and timbers for the Sandy Bay school house.[24] In 1893, it carried lumber and lime for schools at Pine Creek and Waterhen.[25]

In September 1893, near the end of the season, the **Saskatchewan** picked up a load of sawdust, which filled its hold as well as the barge it towed. With this load, it proceeded to the fishing station six miles south of St. Laurent. On 16 September 1893, when the boat had picked up another load of sawdust, a fire began in the sawdust on the barge she was towing and was fanned by the wind so quickly that the ship burned to the water's edge and sank in 3.4 m (1.1 ft.) of water, two miles east of Manitoba House.

When the **Saskatchewan** sank, Peter McArthur purchased Walter Pratt's old **Lady Blanche**, installed a new engine and boiler and renamed her the **Isabel**, and used her for a number of years to tow lumber on a big barge.[26] In 1900, he built his mill at Winnipegosis and

moved the steam tug **Petrel** to haul limestone from his quarry at the Narrows on Lake Manitoba to the landing. In 1900, he sold this tug to the Manitoba Union Mining Co. (afterwards Manitoba Gypsum Co.), which carried wall plaster from the mill at Gypsumville, as well as carrying the occasional passengers. Manitoba Gypsum added other tugs to its fleet on Lake Manitoba – the **Marvel** and the **Victor**. In 1910 or so, the **Petrel** was turned into a barge, its boiler and engine removed; she finally sank on lake Manitoba with a load of gypsum. Her machinery was installed in the tug **J.R. Spear**. After the railway reached Gypsumville, the steamboats on Lake Manitoba were of no more use and any which could still operate were moved to Lake Winnipeg.[27]

The steamboat era on Lake Manitoba lasted a relatively long time before succumbing to the railroads yet, according to D.C. McArthur, son of Peter, not one of the steamboats on Lake Manitoba every operated at a profit.[28]

Lake Winnipegosis

In 1898, Peter McArthur built a sawmill at Winnipegosis and moved his business, the Standard Lumber Co., away from Lake Manitoba to Lake Winnipegosis. For a few years, he towed logs down the lake in booms but lost so many to storms that he built a little sawmill at Channel Island at the north end of the lake. Once sawed, he towed the lumber down in rafts. He then dismantled the big sawmill at Winnipegosis and turned it into a lumber shed. His planing mill ran from 1900 to 1930, and shipped as far away as Saskatchewan. He also made fish boxes.[29] This was work which used tugs, much smaller than steamboats, such as the ill-fated **Saskatchewan**. Several of these tugs ran on Lake Winnipegosis until the early 20th century.

Fishing on Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis

The fishery at the mouth of the Whitemud River as well as those on Lake Manitoba had been utilized by the settlers of Portage from a very early date. Commercial fishing on these lakes was so intensive in the 1890s that it caused fears of total depletion. By 1900, resolutions were passed forbidding the export of fish from these lakes, and barring the practice of fishing

from tugs. Summer fishing ended in 1906 when the tributaries of Lake Manitoba were all polluted with sawdust, killing the fish. At this point, the sailboats and tugs transferred to Lake Winnipegosis.[30]

In 1897, Peter McArthur and the Booth Fish Co. fitted out the old government tug **Victoria** to haul fish. The companies cleaned the whitefish out of the lake very rapidly, with little profit to the individual fisherman, who only received one cent per pound for number one fish.[31]

There was a great deal of competition and hard feelings between the fishermen and the loggers. The fishermen blamed the loggers for polluting the lake with sawdust; the loggers blamed the fishermen for sabotaging their saws with spikes and breaking their boom chains.[32]

In 1900, Booth Fish built the largest steamer yet seen on Lake Winnipegosis. The **Manitou**, 105 ft. long, had two steam engines to power her twin-screw propellers. She could carry 40,000 lbs. of crated fish from the fish camp at Whisky Jack Island to Winnipegosis.[33]

Steamboating on Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis throughout this period was primarily utilized by the lumbering and fishing industries. It was never really part of a transportation network to carry freight and passengers into an expanding settlement frontier, although these were subsidiary activities. The boats used on these smaller lakes of Manitoba were designed for these industrial uses. They were all, except for the **Saskatchewan**, small in size, used for towing rather than carrying freight themselves. They were a vital function in the source development of the two lakes until they were replaced by gasoline engines in the 1920s.

APPENDIX ONE

Steamer Specifications, Operation and Demise

ADELAIDE

Built by W. Godrey at Grand Forks, May 1878, at cost of $5500.

Owner: Robert Tait named boat after his daughter.

90 ft. by 30 ft., registered tonnage of 76.85.

Single high pressure engine, eight-inch diameter, 25 horsepower, made by North Star Ironworks in Minneapolis.

Single-deck, square stern sidewheeler. Wooden framework.

Room on each side with capacity for 25 passengers. Open seats on deck for 12 teams of horses. Machinery on one side of boat and boiler on other to secure unobstructed passage from one end to the other.

Operated as ferry at Red River from June 1878. Also provided moonlight excursions with dancing. Attached to cable on crossings – a hazard to other boats on river.

Demise: lost in Red River September 1882.

ALPHA

Built in spring of 1873 in Breckenridge, Minnesota by Captain Harrison of Wayzata, Minn. And Captain J.W. “Flatboat” McLane of Winnipeg. Launched there 5 July 1873.

105 ft. by 24.5 ft., with 12 in. draught. Gross tonnage 115.36, registered tonnage 113.93. Lengthened 1881-82.

Two horizontal high pressure engines, eight-inch diameter with three ft. six in. stroke and horsepower of 12.36. Made in 1869 by Linch and Larisse of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Single-deck carvel sternwheeler, made of Wisconsin oak. Square stern, two smoke stacks and one large boiler. Crew of nine, accommodation for 30 passengers. Another cabin added 1878.

Designed for strength, speed and light draught.

Operated by McLane on Red River. Unprofitable because McLane could not operate in American waters. Sold to Red River Transportation Company c.1873 and ran between Moorhead and Winnipeg. In 1875, when railroad reached Fisher’s Landing, ran between that point and Winnipeg. In 1878, ran between Pembina and Winnipeg (the **Manitoba** transported freight and passengers from Fisher’s Landing to border). On 18 April 1878, began trips on Assiniboine. Sold to Winnipeg and Western Transportation Company 20 June 1878 for $12,500 and operated on the Assiniboine River. Record trip between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie. Stayed on Assiniboine until 1885. Made regular trips between Brandon and Fort Ellice and went as far as Fort Pelly.

Sold to North West Navigation Company January 1883 for $4,365. Continued to operate on Assiniboine.

Demise: Ran aground in what is now Spruce Woods Provincial Park on 25 April 1885. Abandoned there. Pillaged. Hull of wreck can still be seen – rest lies underwater. Plans to salvage shelved when realized wood's decay would be hastened by such a move.

ANSON NORTHUP

Built by owner Captain Anson Northup 1859 from **North Star**, which operated on the upper Mississippi River. Dismantled **North Star** and hauled overland to the Red River during winter of 1858-89. Reassembled at Lafayette and renamed **Anson Northup**. Launched 19 May 1859. 90 ft. long with 22 ft. beam. Tonnage 50 to 70 tons.

Engines of 100 horsepower.

Overhauled and refurbished winter of 1859-60 at Netley Creek and renamed **Pioneer.** Cabin raised, skylights installed. First deck properly laid and boat painted. Fitted with smokestack, capstan, steam piping and rigging. Three decks. 24 berths and four staterooms (for 24 ladies). Operations: First steamboat to run the Red River to Fort Garry, arriving 19 June 1859. Sold to Burbanks (and Hudson's Bay Company as silent partner) 1859. Taken over by HBC 1861. Demise: Sank at Cook's Creek winter of 1861.

CHEYENNE

Built winter of 1873-74 at Grand Forks by D.P. Reeves for Red River Transportation Company.

120 ft. by 20 ft., two-foot hold. Registered tonnage 136.44.

Wooden carvel sidewheeler. Engine room measured 28 ft.

Two high pressure engines made in St. Paul in 1872 by Delorme and Company, eight and three-quarters in. with three and one-half foot stroke. Horsepower of 13.20.

Alterations near end of 1870s – second deck added, round stern, plain head, cabin, cookhouse and pilot house. Registered tonnage changed to 138.92. Now had 14 staterooms. Saloon renovated. Engines changed – now two high pressure horizontal engines made 1872 by Coming and Dupree of St. Paul, with 12 in. cylinders, three and one-half foot stroke and 27.84 horsepower.

Operation: On Red River for Kittson Line until 20 June 1878 when sold to WWTC for $13,000. Included in amalgamation of WWTC and HBC in 1881. Sold to Edward Janvier and G. Barridger on 24 April 1882. Resold to Douglas MacArthur on 25 March 1884. Carried freight and passengers. Helped transport 900 Mennonites in 1874.

On Red River between Winnipeg and Lower Fort Garry 1874. In late 1870s, ran between Winnipeg and Emerson. In 1878, ran between West Lynne and Winnipeg. In 1881, ran between Winnipeg and St. Vincent.

Demise: Stranded and sank near Ste. Agathe 2 June 1885.

CITY OF WINNIPEG (see **Minnesota**)

Modification and enlargement of old **Minnesota** in 1880-81 for new owners, the WWTC. Altered at Grand Forks, 70 ft. of hull and cabin and deck completely reconstructed.

190 ft. (hull 170 ft.)

10 new staterooms added. Facilities for carrying 100 horses. Hold 18 in. deeper in front. Draught eight inches less.

Operated on Assiniboine River. Pleasure boat for Winnipegers. But structural defects from alterations resulted in blowing heads off her cylinders at Poplar Point and towed back to Winnipeg by the **Manitoba**.

WWTC decided to move **City of Winnipeg** to Saskatchewan River for use there. Took machinery out at Selkirk, loaded her with 40,000 feet of lumber secured by iron bolts, then put in tow by **Princess** en route for Grand Rapids.

Demise: Storms on Lake Winnipeg put ship in danger. Captain Sheets stripped her of doors and other valuable parts, transferring them to **Princess**. Deck of **City of Winnipeg** broken by further storms. Eventually, her crew taken aboard **Princess**, lines cut, and she drifted ashore about 30 miles from Grand Rapids. Some of lumber salvaged, as well as parts of boat, the whole amounting to only about $2000, while the boat was valued at $20,000 and the trip cost $5000.

COLVILE

Built by John Reeves, creator of **Northcote**, at Grand Forks for the HBC. Hull transported to Lower Fort Garry. Machinery of **Chief Commissioner** transferred to **Colvile** by self-taught mechanic Edmund R. Abell.

110 ft. long. Gross tonnage 164.41. Registered tonnage 143.21.

Screw-steamer, square-sterned, carvel, double wooden framework, oak, three-inch planking on both sides of the framework.

Two non-condensing side-valve engines with link-valve motion and direct-action shafts. Made in April 1872 by C. Dumont of Cincinnati, Ohio, for use on **Chief Commissioner**.

Operated primarily as freighter on Lake Winnipeg. Launched September 1875. Carried Lt-Governor Alexander Morris and party to negotiate Treaty Five with bands around lake.

Carried freight to various points around Lake Winnipeg and especially to Grand Rapids for transfer to the Saskatchewan River steamers.

Transferred to WWTC in 1881 and sold to WWTC in 1882. After protracted negotiations sold to NWNC in 1884. Mortgaged to Wm. Robinson 19 August 1887 for $3000 – paid up December 1890.

Demise: On 15 June 1894, took fire in hold while docked at Grand Rapids. No equipment to extinguish fire. Ship abandoned and burnt.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Built for Hudson's Bay Company by D.W. Hewitt at Lower Fort Garry, winter of 1871-72.

Screw-steamer. Single funnel.

Two non-condensing, side-valve engines made in April 1872 by C. Dumont of Cincinnati. Diameters of 14 in. and 18 in. stroke, direct-action shafts and link-valve motion. 84 horsepower.

Operated on Lake Winnipeg. Had been designed for Lake Manitoba but could not proceed up the Little Saskatchewan (Dauphin) River. Used as a freighter on Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids. Flat bottom unsuitable for Lake Winnipeg and declared unsafe.

Demise: Dismantled in 1875 and engines transferred to new **Colvile**. Hull of **Chief Commissioner** became floating warehouse at Lower Fort Garry. Broken when laid up below Selkirk winter of 1876 but repaired for further service. In 1881, the floating warehouse was moved to become a storehouse on shore. Perhaps at Colvile Landing? The ultimate fate of this last remnant of the **Chief Commissioner** is unknown.

DAKOTA

Built at Breckenridge 1872 for Red River Transportation Company.

Stern-wheeler, two funnels, flat bottom.

80 passengers or more, 11 crew.

Operated on Red River most of time, from Winnipeg to Moorhead, until Fisher's Landing replaced Moorhead in 1875. In 1876, worked route from West Lynne to Winnipeg. Exploratory trip up Red Lake River from Grand Forks to Crookston 1872, followed by more such trips. **Dakota** was first steamboat to venture on the Assiniboine River in May 1873. In 1874, became first steamer to reach Portage la Prairie.

Freight and passengers.

Demise: Burned in midstream near Pembina in 1881.

J.L. GRANDIN

Built by Captain W.W. Allen for Grandin Farms in Traill County to carry the company's wheat to rail stations along the river. Hull lined in order to carry wheat in bulk.

125 ft. by 34 ft. with draught of 15 in. light. Gross tonnage of 217.

Accommodation for 25 cabin and 200 deck passengers.

Engines made by North Star Ironworks in Minneapolis.

Operated on Red River between Winnipeg and Moorhead 1878. In 1879 operated between the border and Moorhead, connecting with the **Marquette** at Pembina.

Demise: Sank in flood in 1897 at Halstead, Minnesota.

INTERNATIONAL

Began life as a Mississippi riverboat called the **Freighter**. Captain John B. Davis attempted to sail her across floodwaters from Minnesota River to Red River in 1859 to win prize of $1000 offered by St. Paul Chamber of Commerce. Flood receded too quickly and **Freighter** left high and dry. In winter of 1859-60 Burbank brothers bought the wreck of the small flat bottomed, square-bowed boat. Dismantled it in fall of 1860 and took it in pieces to Georgetown. New hull fashioned out of wood cut along the Red River at Georgetown.

Launched spring 1862. 137 ft. long, 26 ft. beam. Weight 133 tons. Draught 15 in. light and 27 in. full.

Double-decked sternwheeler. Cost $20,000.

Two boilers, crew of 22 deckhands plus officers.

Operated on Red River in 1862 between Georgetown and Fort Garry. Sioux uprising of 1863 prevented her from running. Low water prevented her operation on the Red until 1870. In that year she made several trips. HBC acquired ownership 1864-5. Transferred to Red River Transportation Company 1871-2.

Carried freight and passengers, including the first group of Mennonite settlers in 1874 and the first Icelanders in 1875.

Demise: Wooden steamboats had expected life of only about 20 years. By 1880 the **International** had reached this point. At the same time the railroads had ended her usefulness on the Red River. She was dismantled at Grand Forks in 1880. Her machinery may have been transferred to the Mackenzie River for use on a steamboat there.

KEEWATIN

Built in Winnipeg June 1876 by F.P. Roblin for himself and Mr. Hargrave. Hargrave later sold his half-interest to Jos. Radford.

Square-sterned carvel sidewheeler, wood.

71 ft. by 14 ft., hold three ft. deep. Gross tonnage of 24.86, registered tonnage of 23.24.

Single high-pressure direct action engine made in 1871 by F.G. Becket Company of Hamilton, Ont. and used in the earlier Maggie. Nine-inch diameter with 24 in. stroke and 22 horsepower.

Operated on Red River between Winnipeg and Selkirk and on to Lake Winnipeg. Freight and passengers. Also moonlight excursions.

Demise: Wrecked in storm on Lake Winnipeg in 1884.

LADY ELLEN

Built in Toronto, Ont. in July 1877 by John Dotz.

Carvel build, propeller style, 46 ft. by 11.5 ft. Gross tonnage 12.03 and registered tonnage 18.57.

Single deck, wooden frame.

Upright engine made by John Dotz of Toronto in 1877. Nine feet by nine feet, cylinders nine-inches diameter, nine-inch stroke and horsepower of four.

Changed hands 13 times. Nicholas Blacklace of Winnipeg purchased half-share on 1 April 1878. By 23 January 1880 owner was Selkirk merchant James Colcleugh. In 1883 Winnipeg merchants David Clarke and Daniel Fraser Reid bought it for $3000. On 29 November 1886 Wm. Robinson purchased her for $2200.

Operated on the Red River between Selkirk and Winnipeg, carrying freight and passengers. Used on Lake Winnipeg for Wm. Robinson's fishing interests.

Demise: Sometime in 1915.

LILY

Built by Yarrow and Company of Glasgow for the Hudson's Bay Company. Shipped to Manitoba in sections summer of 1876. Reassembled at Grand Rapids in 1877.

Square-sterned, double-decked sternwheeler. Steel framework.

100 ft. by 24 ft. Registered tonnage 130.42.

Two horizontal, non-condensing engines made in London by Yarrow and Company, diameter of 13 in. with three-foot stroke and horsepower of 31.80. Engine brass-fitted, copper steam and exhaust pipes.

Major renovations at Prince Albert in 1880-81. Steel hull coated with two-inch spruce planking to protect against rocks – but made her so unwieldy that was of little use. Saloon enlarged and renovated to attract growing passenger traffic.

Operated as intended on the Saskatchewan River. Problems with machinery. In 1879 steel hull punctured by rock near Edmonton. Attempts to overcome design problems. Impossible to overcome natural hazards of Saskatchewan River navigation, however. In 1881 new channel cut by river made it impossible to run **Lily** in 1882.

Attempt to transfer **Lily** to South Saskatchewan in 1883. Left Prince Albert for Medicine Hat in July, reaching there on 3 August. Left Medicine Hat on 28 August with 60 tons of freight in tow.

Demise: Hit rock near Drowning Ford on South Saskatchewan River and sank in three feet of water. Machinery salvaged but boat written off at $1621.13, though valued at $20,000.

MAGGIE

Built in Hamilton, Ont. for Captain James Bell of Perth, Ont. Sold to F.P. Roblin, Winnipeg businessman. Transported by train from Duluth to Moorhead and relaunched on Red River, arriving at Winnipeg August 1873.

Sidewheeler, 50 ft. Flat hull, draught 12 in.

Single engine, high pressure type, made in 1871 by F.G. Becket Company of Hamilton, Ont. Diameter nine inches with 24 in. stroke and 22 horsepower.

Operated on Red River and also on Lake Winnipeg.

Demise: Converted into a barge in Winnipeg in 1878. Engine used in **Keewatin**.

MANITOBA

Built in Moorhead in winter of 1874-5 by James Douglas for the Merchants International Line.

Stern-wheel.

165 ft. by 31 ft., four-foot draught. Registered tonnage 194.61.

Two horizontal, non-condensing engines made in 1875 at North Star Iron Works in Minneapolis. Diameter 12 in., four foot engine stroke, horsepower 29.2.

Altered after 1880 season. Lengthened nearly 40 ft. 10 additional staterooms added. Saloon renovated.

Operated on the Red, Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers.

Sold at Court auction to cover debts of Merchants International. Purchased by Red River Transportation Company 26 April 1876 for $9,446. In spring of 1879 WWTC bought the ship. Continued to use on Red River. Cruise on Lake Winnipeg in 1877. Plagued by accidents, including two collisions with the **International** and one with the Assiniboine bridge.

In 1880 began regular runs on the Assiniboine River.

In 1882 transferred to Saskatchewan. Hampered there by low water.

Demise: Laid up winter of 1884-5 just inside the mouth of the Sturgeon (Shell) River. Intended for use as troop transport during Riel Rebellion but when ice broke in spring the **Manitoba** filled with water and was soon covered by the rising river – a total wreck. At some point the boiler was salvaged and used in a succession of sawmills.

MARQUETTE

Built at Moorhead by John S. Irish in 1878 for Peter McArthur of Winnipeg. 130 ft. by 28 ft. with draught of 15 in. light. Registered tonnage 266.47. Double deck sternwheeler, square stern. 12 staterooms.

Two horizontal non-condensing engines made by Coming and Dupree at St. Paul. Cylinders diameter 12 in. Stroke 50 in. Horsepower 29.4. Two 16 ft. boilers to which was attached a new Funk patent water-back heater. Steamed to Winnipeg spring 1879. New machinery from La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1879-80.

Operated on Assiniboine River to new settlements along river, as far as Fort Ellice and Fort Pelly.

In October 1880 Peter McArthur sold a one-half interest in the boat to Walter J. Pratt. In 1881 Pratt transferred his share to W.H. Lyon, a major shareholder of the WWTC. Unable to oust McArthur from operation of the steamer, the WWTC sold its interest to him on 12 July 1881. In 1882 McArthur and his brother, now the owners, sold the **Marquette** to the NWNC of Wm. Robinson

In 1883 **Marquette** was moved to Lake Winnipeg and the Red River to work for Robinson's fishing enterprises at Selkirk.

Demise: In August 1894 the **Marquette** sank in the Red River.

MARQUIS

Built in Winnipeg, 1882, by Mr. Gregory for the WWTC. Cost over $50,000.

201 ft. by 33.5 ft. with depth of 5.3 ft. Gross tonnage of 453.76. Registered tonnage of 474.87.

Sternwheeler. Square-stern.

Two horizontal high-pressure engines built in 1882 at Iowa Iron Works of Dubuque, Iowa. Cylinders' diameter of 19 in. Six-foot stroke. Three boilers generating 125 lbs. steam per square inch. Horsepower of 83.74. Steered by four balanced rudders hung from the stern in front of the paddle wheel.

Operated on the Saskatchewan River. Towed across Lake Winnipeg by the **Princess** and arrived at Grand Rapids on 25 July 1882, along with the aging **Manitoba**. Using the "nigger" apparatus the mammoth boat managed to ascend the Grand Rapids successfully. At the upper end of the Rapids her machinery was installed and she was ready for use on the Saskatchewan River on 25 September 1882. Operated between Grand Rapids and Prince Albert but often hampered by low water or the cut-off of the Saskatchewan River. Used as General Middleton's flagship and troop transport during Riel Rebellion.

In 1886 season struck rock in Thorburn Rapids on 26 July 1886 and completely disabled. Underwriters contracted with Peter McArthur to repair the craft for the sum of $20,000.

In 1887 low water prevented the **Marquis** from navigating above Cole's Falls. From 1888-90 was beached at Cumberland House. Hauled to Prince Albert in 1890 by WWTC to use in 1891 season but was beached there and abandoned.

Demise: The **Marquis** deteriorated more and more as she lay unused at Prince Albert. The saloon was used as a dance hall for a number of years. A local resident then used the wood to construct his house. Parts of the hull were still visible in 1923 on the river bank but these were finally destroyed by a number of fires.

Some of the fretwork of the **Marquis** was salvaged for the pilot house of the **Saskatchewan**. The boilers were hauled away to support power poles erect in the Northwest Territories. The anchor is now in The Pas museum. The bell and part of the flue are in the

Prince Albert City Museum. The president of the Prince Albert Historical Society owns a gavel made of wood from the hull and the Peters Motor Company still uses a drive shaft from the machinery. The other drive shaft is in the Prince Albert Museum. A sternwheel hub from the steamer is kept at the Fort Battleford National Museum. The whistle was used by the Burns Meat Plant in Calgary until it shattered from vibration and age.

MINNESOTA

Designed by John S. Irish and built by James Douglas of Moorhead during winter of 1874-5 for the Merchants International Line.

128 ft. by 31 ft. with a three-foot hold.

Double-decked carvel sternwheeler, wooden frame.

Gross tonnage of 287.98. Registered tonnage of 181.43.

Two horizontal non-condensing engines made at North Star Ironworks in Minneapolis in 1875. Cylinders measured 12 in. diameter. Four-foot stroke with horse power of 29.16.

Operated on the Red River. Carried freight and passengers.

Damaged in fire at Moorhead. Seized by Court for debts owed by Merchants International and sold at sheriff's sale on 19 October 1875 for $2000.

Acquired by WWTC by 1880. Modified and enlarged at Grand Forks winter of 1880-1 and renamed **City of Winnipeg**. (See above)

NORTHCOTE

Built at Grand Rapids summer 1874 for HBC. Shipwrights selected from St. Paul by Norman W. Kittson, supervised by Captain J. Reeves of Grand Forks.

128 ft. by 28.5 ft., draught of 3.5 ft. when full.

Square-stern, double-decked sternwheeler. Minnesota oak frame. Carvel, modeled after Mississippi riverboats, forecastle cut down to main deck with two small smokestacks well forward and pilot house behind on the hurricane deck. Gross tonnage of 461.34, registered tonnage of 290.63.

Machinery salvaged from unnamed HBC steamer wrecked on first trip on Saskatchewan River. Two horizontal high-pressure engines made in 1872 by C. Dumont of Cincinnati, diameter of cylinders 14 in. with four ft. stroke and horsepower of 39.

Renovated ???? to provide accommodation for 50 passengers.

New machinery installed at Grand Rapids 1882.

Operated on the Saskatchewan River as far as Edmonton. Launched 1 August 1874 at Grand Rapids. Went as far as Carleton House but low water prevented further travel. Most profitable season in 1877 – made six trips upriver from Grand Rapids.

Ownership transferred to WWTC in 1881 by HBC. Sold outright to WWTC on 18 July 1882 for $25,000.

In 1883 struck rock and required repairs at Fort Pitt.

In 1884 on South Saskatchewan as far as Medicine Hat – sank there – had to be refloated and berthed for winter at Medicine Hat. Action in Riel Rebellion 1885 at Batoche – used as troop transport.

Demise: Beached at Cumberland House 1886. Slowly disintegrated. Officially declared unfit for service on 5 December 1899. Hazard to local children so burnt by local residents. Boiler and some engine parts mounted at Cumberland House as tourist attraction but now neglected. Bell used in tower of Anglican Church at Duck Lake. Whistle in tiny museum at Battleford.

NORTH WEST

Built by John Irish in Moorhead for Peter McArthur, spring of 1881. Cost of $27,000.
200 ft. by 33 ft. Hold 4.5 ft deep.

Sternwheeler. Wisconsin oak framework. 80 passenger berths. Saloon with $5,000 grand piano. Three decks. Capacity 400 tons.

Two horizontal non-condensing engines made in 1881 at Pioneer Iron Works of La Crosse, Wisconsin. Cylinders with diameter of 16 in. and five-foot stroke. Two solid steel boilers of 10 flues each, two substantial capstans and engines and pumps of strongest force.

Operated on Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Rivers. Freight and passengers. Shallow draught ideal for Assiniboine.

Sold to North West Navigation Company on 15 March 1882 for use on Saskatchewan River. Towed across Lake Winnipeg summer 1882 by Princess. Some damage on being hauled up Grand Rapids – repaired and ready for use – made three trips on Saskatchewan before winter of 1882. Accident at Victoria Rapids 1883 – repaired at Grand Rapids – beached at Cumberland House 1883.

Taken over by WWTC in arrangement with NWNC 1884. Low water levels hampered operations. Laid up winter of 1884-5 at Prince Albert. Served in Riel Rebellion 1885. Damaged August 1885 on shoal 50 miles below Edmonton. Reached Prince Albert and hauled out for repairs. Operated 1886 and 1887. Damaged 1887. No navigation 1888 because of low water. Repaired 1888. Traveled on upper river 1890 – railroad had reached Edmonton and Prince Albert, ending use of steamboats on lower river? Continued through early 1890s as tramp steamer, carrying freight and a few passengers.

Demise: Beached at Ross Flats at Edmonton 1896. Broke loose in flood of August 1899 – floated down river and struck a pier – continued on past Saddle Lake and disappeared. Whistle used for years at McArthur's saw mill at Winnipegosis.

PLUCK

Built by H.W. Alsop and C.E. Maklun in late 1870s. Originally a side-wheeler named the **White Swan** and built at Brainerd for use on the upper Mississippi. Transferred for use on Red River.

Alsop bought Maklun's interest – cut hull in two and moved pieces to Moorhead by rail in fall of 1878. There lengthened hull and rechristened it Pluck.

Tonnage 35.94.

Operated on Red River, primarily as freighter. Bought by Red River Transportation Company. Demise: Dismantled 1886.

PRINCE RUPERT

Built by John Smith at Brokenhead River winter 1872-3 for Peter McArthur.

70 ft. by 16 ft. Gross tonnage of 30, registered tonnage 28.

Double-decked, round-sterned carvel sidewheeler.

Two high-pressure, direct action engines made in 1873 by F.G. Beckett and Company in Hamilton, Ont. Cylinders – diameter 10 in. 30 in. stroke. Boiler built in Cincinnati. Horsepower of 60.

Operated on Red River and Lake Winnipeg, between Winnipeg and McArthur's lumbering operation at Brokenhead River. By end of 1870s was used primarily on Assiniboine River. Primarily freighter but also carried passengers. Transferred to North West Navigation Company.

Demise: Dismantled at Winnipeg 1881. Hull considered unseaworthy. Machinery put ashore and hull used as wharf boat.

PRINCESS

Built in Winnipeg spring of 1881 by Cyril Girard of Quebec for North West Navigation Company.

Renovated 1882 by Girard. Berths for 90 passengers. Six state rooms with accommodation for 24 passengers. Accommodation for 100 deck passengers – or 600 on single-day excursions.

Capacity 400 tons of freight.

Single deck, round stern sidewheeler, carvel build. Oak from Wisconsin and Minnesota in framework.

Two high-pressure engines made in 1881 by Gilbert and Sons of Montreal. Cylinders with diameter of 18 in. Six-foot stroke. Horsepower of 150. Boiler 11,000 lbs.

By 1897 hull cut, forward of the boilers, and extended to 160 ft. in order to become bulk cargo freighter for fishing industry. Machinery and paddlewheel assemblies removed. Steeple compound engine driving a single four-flanged propeller was installed. Main deck housing extended to bow and cut away aft for 30 ft. to allow the tow line freedom.

Operated on Lake Winnipeg. Launched 2 August 1881 by Governor General, Marquis of Lorne. Towed **City of Winnipeg** to Grand Rapids, but lost it near Grand Rapids. Passengers and

freight carried to connect to Saskatchewan River steamers at Grand Rapids. Then used for Wm. Robinson's fishing industry.

Demise: Sank in Lake Winnipeg 24 August 1906 near George's Island in storm. Loss of six lives made this worst disaster of shipping on Lake Winnipeg.

RED RIVER

Built as tow barge in 1882 by Wm. Robinson for North West Navigation Company.

125 ft. by 26 ft.

Single deck, carvel build, square stern and plain head. Registered tonnage of 160.

Converted to steamboat by Robinson in 1889 for use in fishing industry.

Single high-pressure engine made in 1878 by Wilson and Company of Dundas, Ont. Cylinders diameter 12 in. 16 in. stroke. Horsepower 4.8.

Operated on Lake Winnipeg as freighter. Slow speed ideal for hauling logs.

Demise: Wrecked on Lake Winnipeg October 1900. Crew in lifeboats landed safely at Warren's Landing. Later salvaged hull of vessel.

SASKATCHEWAN

Built by Peter McArthur c. 1883 (or perhaps used by HBC before that). Said to be 100 ft. by 24 ft. with 6 ft. draught (or 125 ft. by 30 ft.). Sidewheeler, two engines and boiler, cost $30,000.

Operated to tow lumber, carry freight and passengers around Lake Manitoba.

Demise: Burned two miles east of Manitoba House, 16 September 1893.

SELKIRK

Built by Hill, Griggs and Company of St. Paul winter of 1870-1.

Built at McAuleyville, just across the river from Fort Abercrombie.

Two decks, flat bottom, built of wood from Frazee River, floated down Otter Tail and Red Rivers. Tonnage 108, draught of four to five ft. fully loaded.

Machinery hauled by team from Benson, the end of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. Installed by J.D. Young.

Operated as passenger and freight boat on Red. Could haul three barges, one on each side and one ahead. Competed with **International** throughout 1871. End of rivalry 1871-2 put **Selkirk** in hands of Red River Transportation Company. Usual run between Fargo and Fort Garry. Later Grand Forks was southern terminus. Transported immigrants to Winnipeg. Brought "Countess of Dufferin", the first railroad steam engine for Winnipeg.

Demise: Wrecked at Grand Forks spring of 1884. Broke from her moorings and struck a pier of railroad bridge. Pilot-house recovered and used as play house for Captain Griggs' children.

SWALLOW

Built in Burlington, Iowa in 1868.

78 ft. by 14 ft., hold two ft. deep. Gross tonnage 38, Registered tonnage 33.

Sternwheeler, wooden framework.

Single non-condensing direct-action engine made in Iowa by Baker and Faucett. Cylinders' diameter seven and one-half inches. 16 in. stroke. 20 horsepower.

Sold in 1875 to Captain James Flanagan of Winnipeg.

Operated as freighter and passenger boat on Red River as far as Selkirk. Sank 4 May 1878 on way from Selkirk to Winnipeg near Point Douglas. Passengers and crew members saved. Upper works broke off and floated down river. Rest of boat ran aground near Kildonan ferry, where tied to bank for salvage. Valued at $4500 and not insured – was salvaged and put back in operation on the Red.

Demise: In 1879 caught and broken up in winter ice and then dismantled.

WILLIAM ROBINSON

Built in Moorhead 1878 for James Douglas. Sold 1878 to Winnipeg banker George Brown. Bought by Wm. Robinson spring 1879.

81 ft. by 25.5 ft. with hold 5.1 ft. deep.

Steam-propeller. Carvel build. Single deck square-stern.

Two vertical high pressure engines made 1878 by Robert (Sangent) of Chicago, Ill. Cylinders 10 in. diameter. One-foot stroke. Horsepower 12.72.

Operated on Lake Winnipeg and Red River out of Selkirk.

Demise: Wrecked on Lake Winnipeg in 1880.

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PAM MG11A4. St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Co.

PAM MG11A4. Ernest T. Leech Papers.

PAM MG11A8. John A. Dutton Papers.

PAM MG11A9-1. North West Navigation Line.

PAM MG11A11. Collection of John E. Parker [Steamboats 1859-1946].

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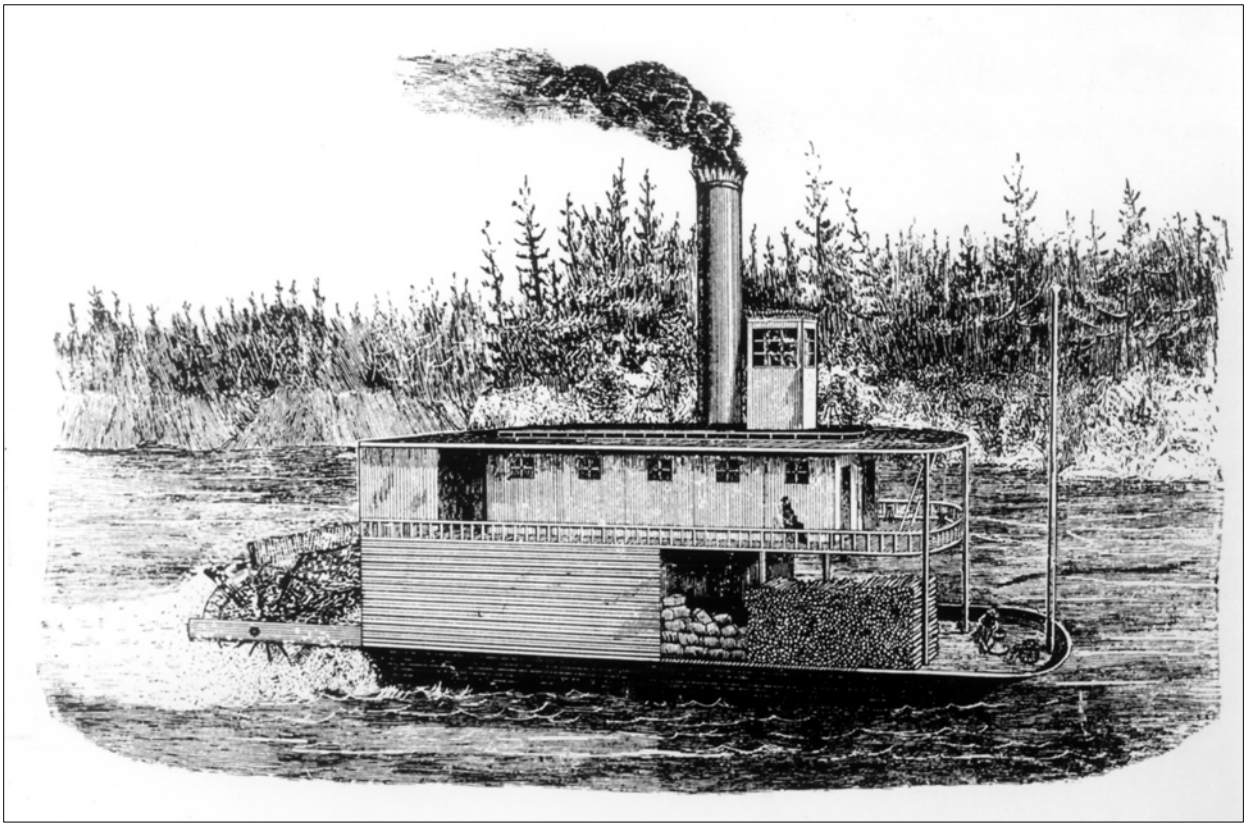

Figure 1 **Anson Northup**, 1859
PAM, from an engraving in The Winnipeg Country by A Rochester Fellow [S.H. Scudder]

Figure 2 Red River cart train with oxen grazing near St. Paul, Minnesota, 1866. PAM

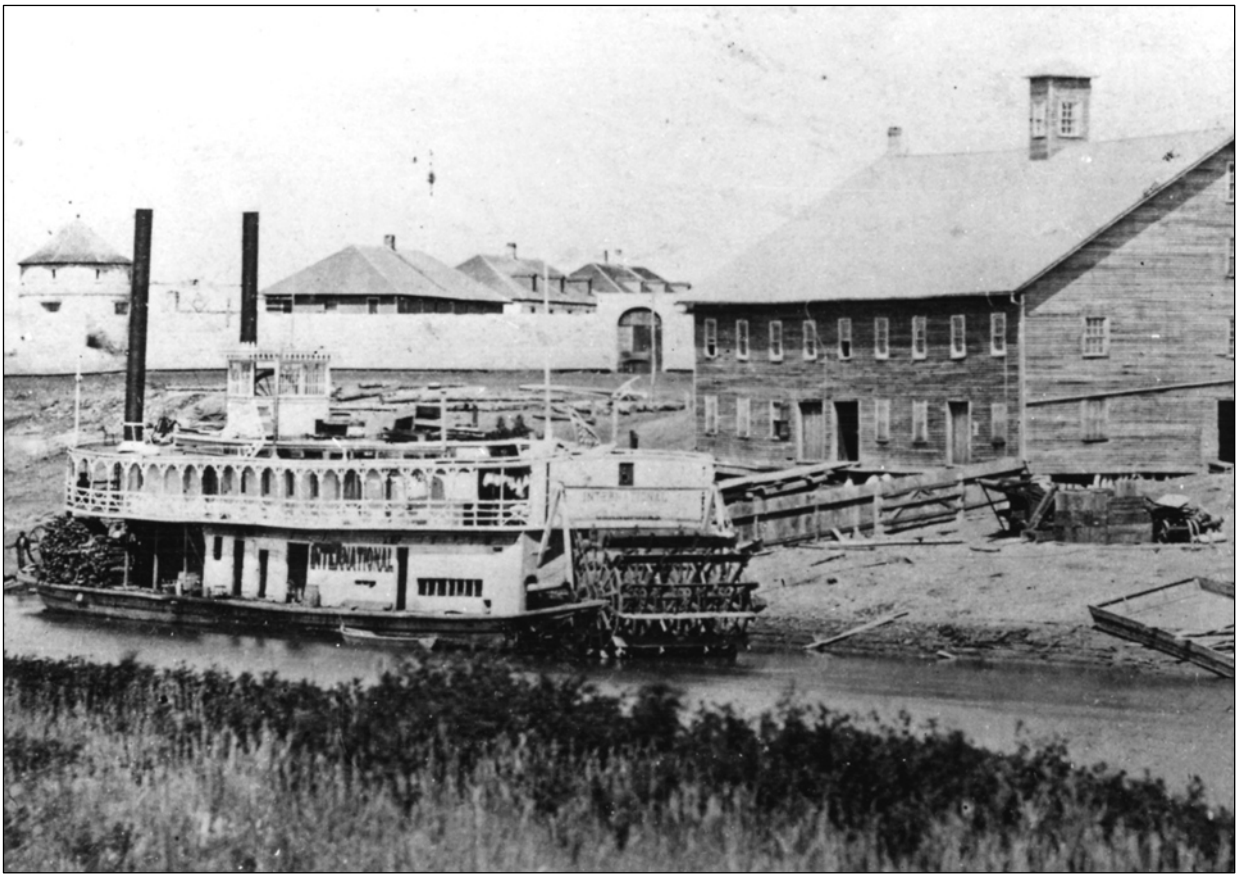

Figure 3 **International** at HBC warehouse, Upper Fort Garry, 1872. PAM

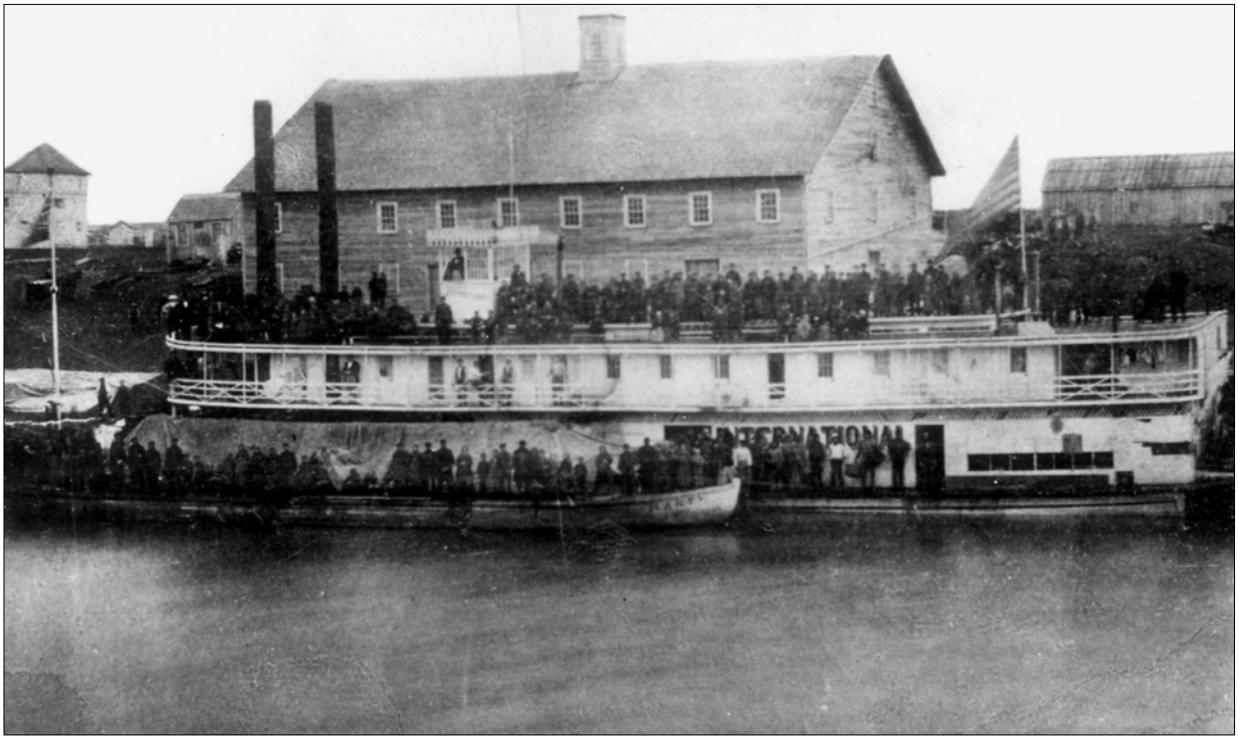

Figure 4 **International**, arrival of Mennonites, 1874 PAM

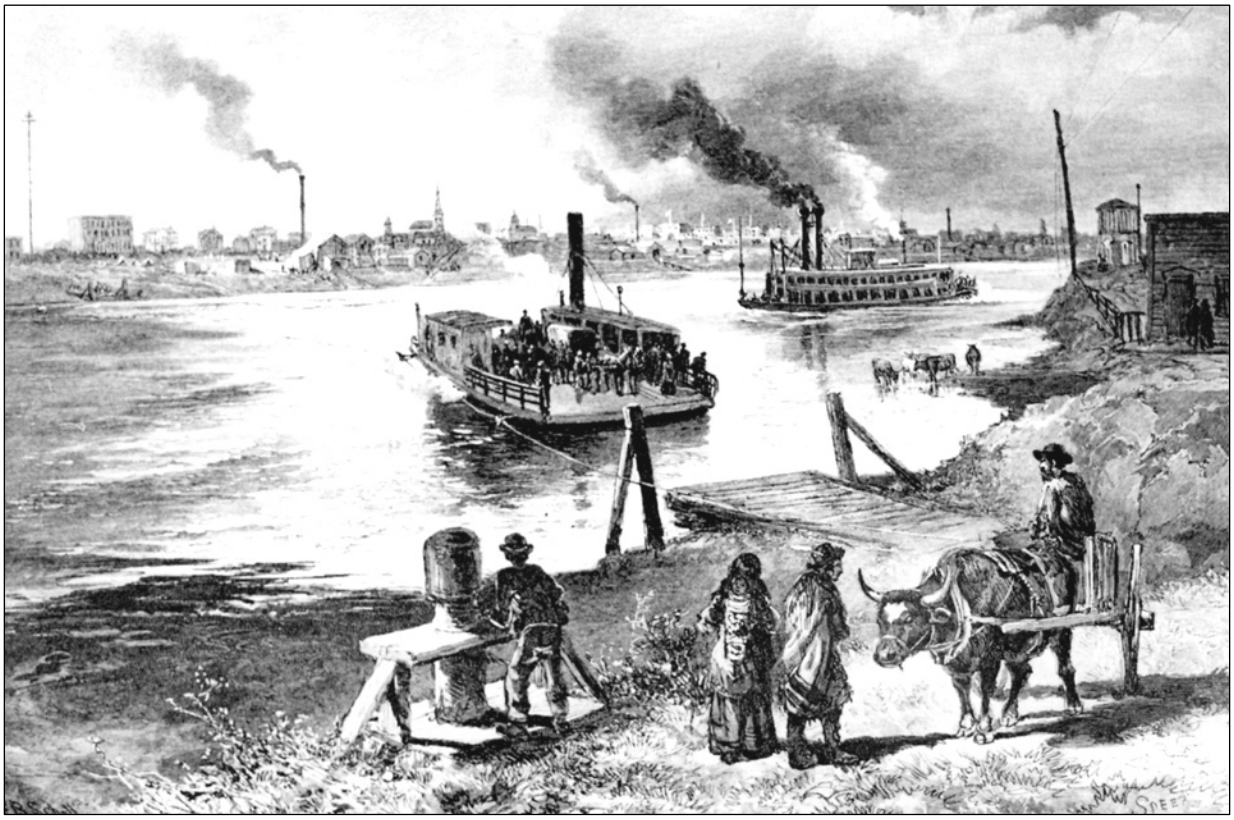

Figure 5 Winnipeg, from St. Boniface Ferry Landing from Picturesque Canada

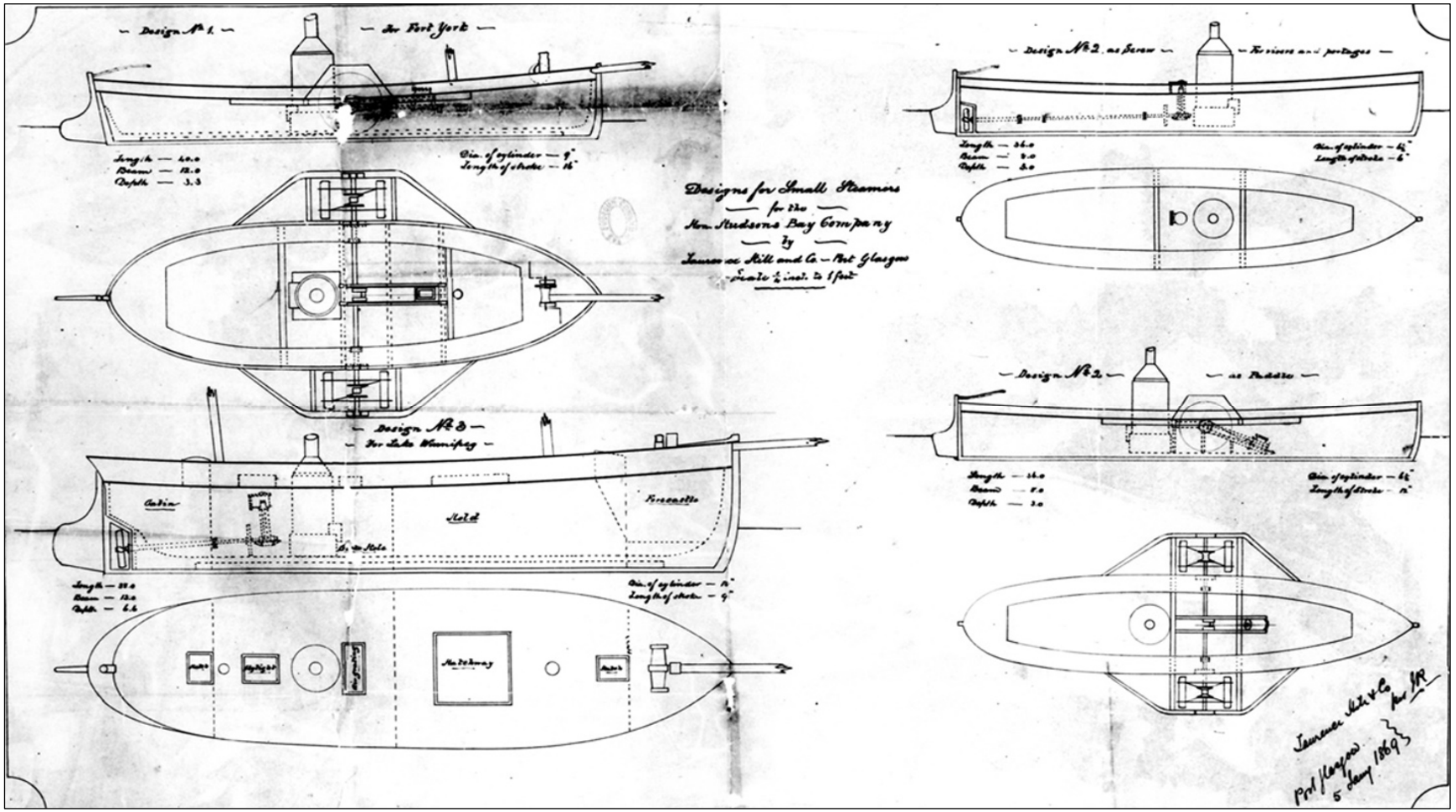

Figure 6 Designs for small steamers for the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company by Laurance Hill & Co. – Port Glasgow, 1869. HBCA A10/77 fo. 157.

Figure 7 **Dakota**, 1873, at Fort Garry. Photographer: S. Duffin. PAM N3456

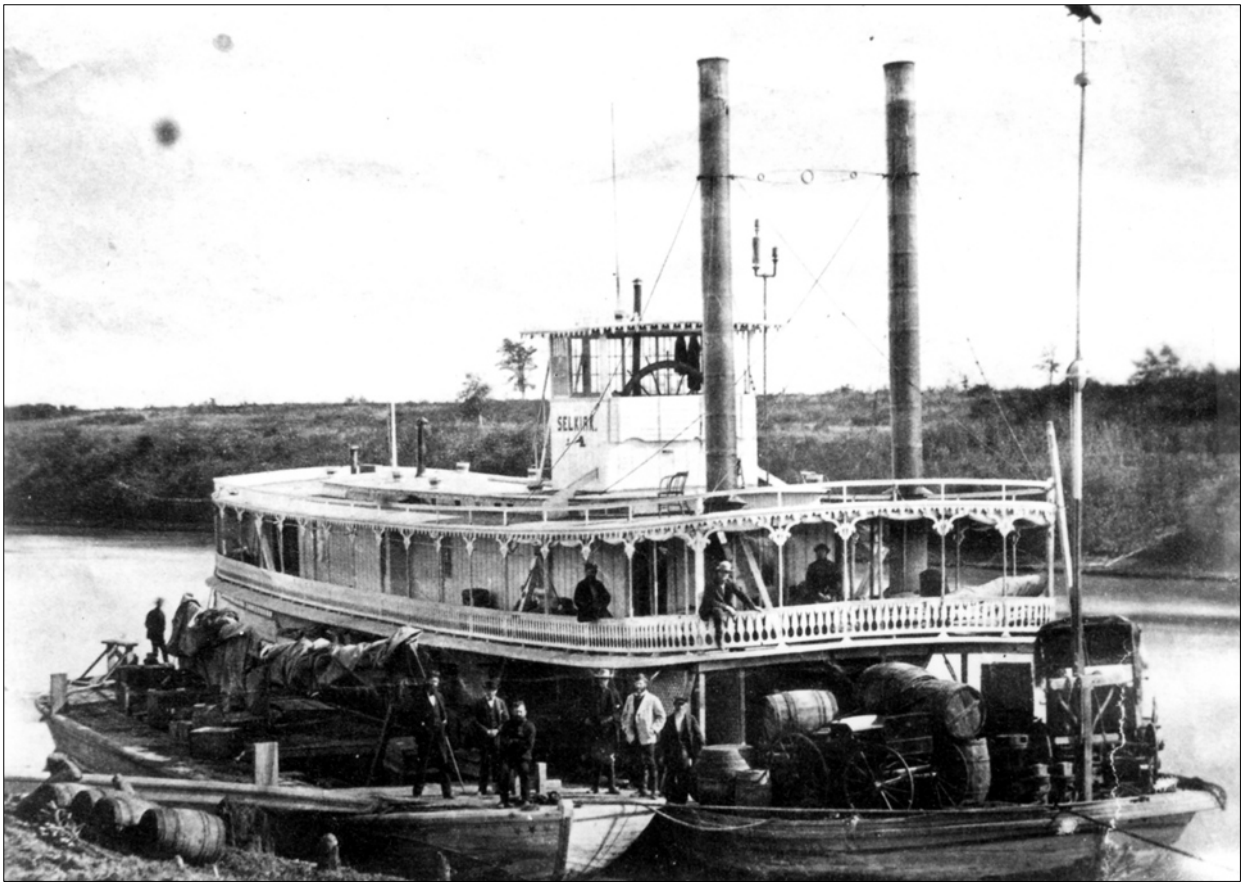

Figure 8 **Selkirk**, c.1873. PAM

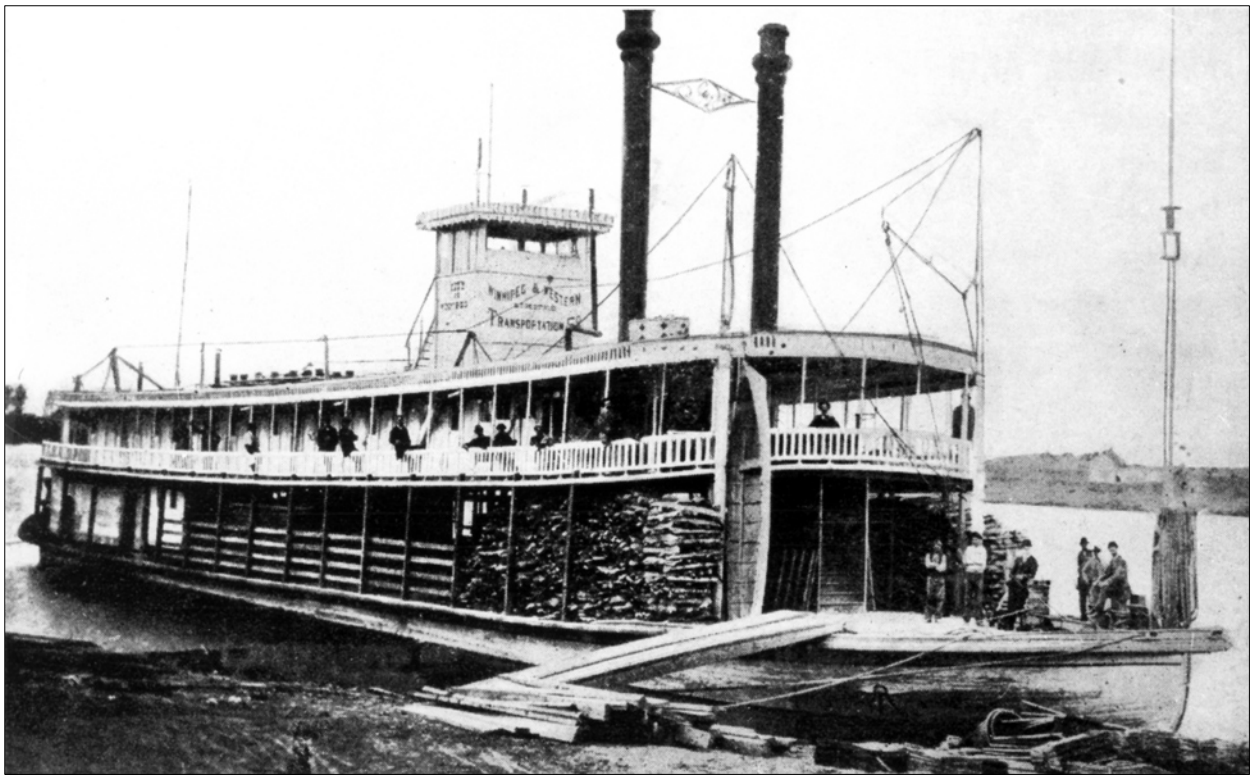

Figure 9 **City of Winnipeg**, 1881. PAM

Figure 10 **City of Winnipeg**, interior, [c.1881].
Photographer: Duffin & Co. (stereo) PAM

Figure 11 **City of Winnipeg**, interior. PAM

Figure 12 **Manitoba** at Winnipeg, 1875. PAM

Figure 13 **Red River.** PAM

Figure 14 **J.L. Grandin** at the Grandin farms, 1878. Photographer: F. Jay Haynes. PAM

Figure 15 **Wm. Robinson** at Moorhead levee, 1878. Photographer: F. J. Haynes. PAM

Figure 16 **Pluck** at Moorhead, 1878. PAM

Figure 17 **Cheyenne** 1890. PAM

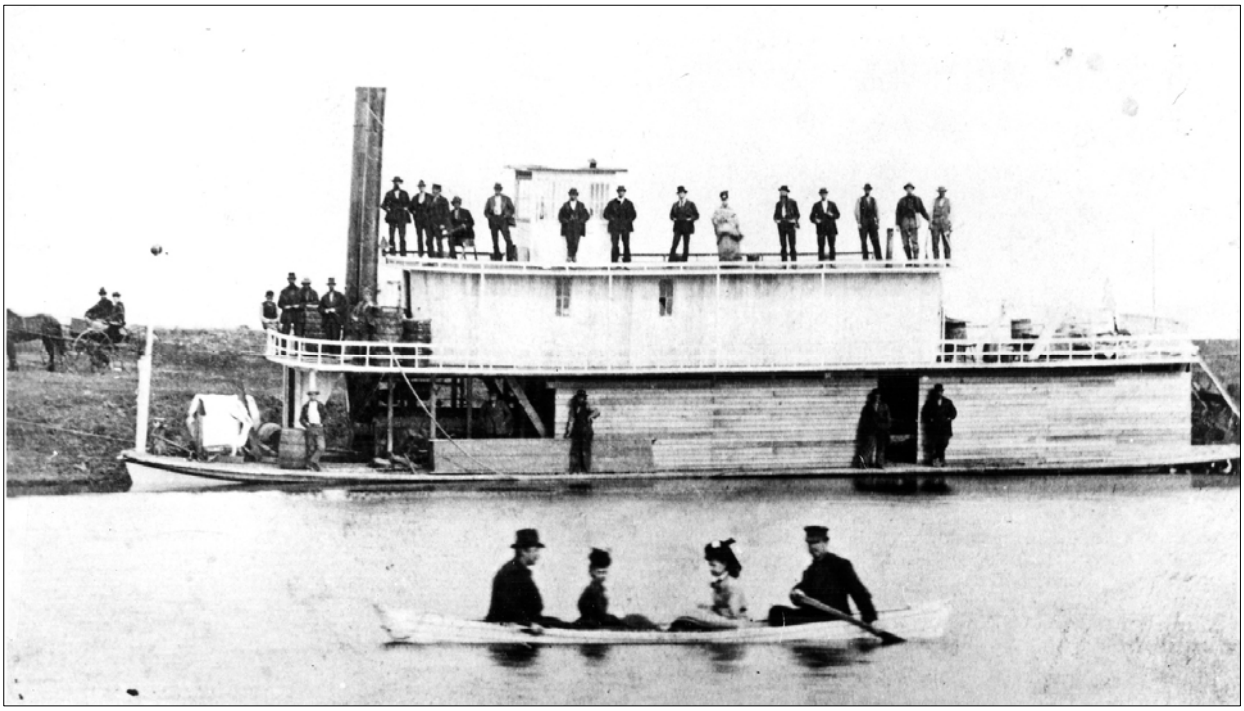

Figure 18 **Alpha**, c.1878. PAM

Figure 19 **North West** at Brandon, 1882. PAM

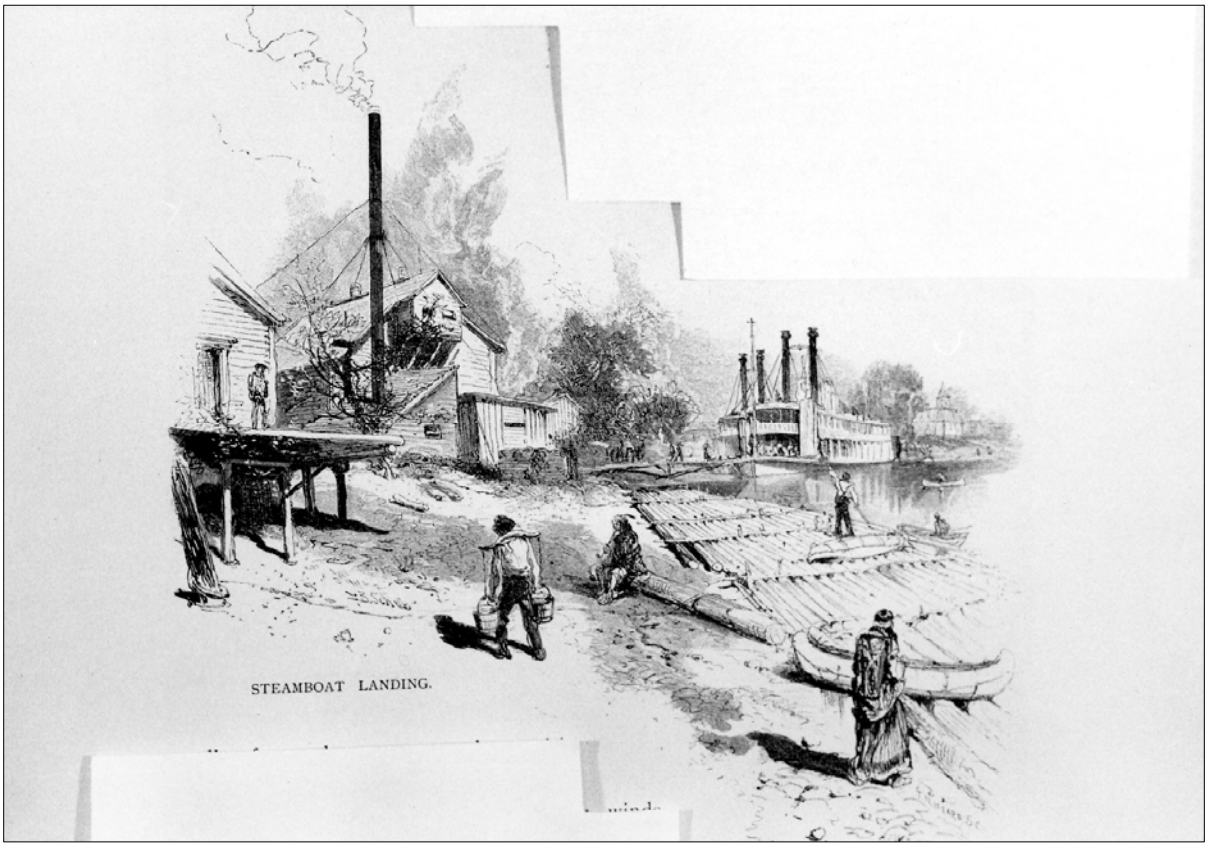

Figure 20 Steamboat Landing from Picturesque Canada

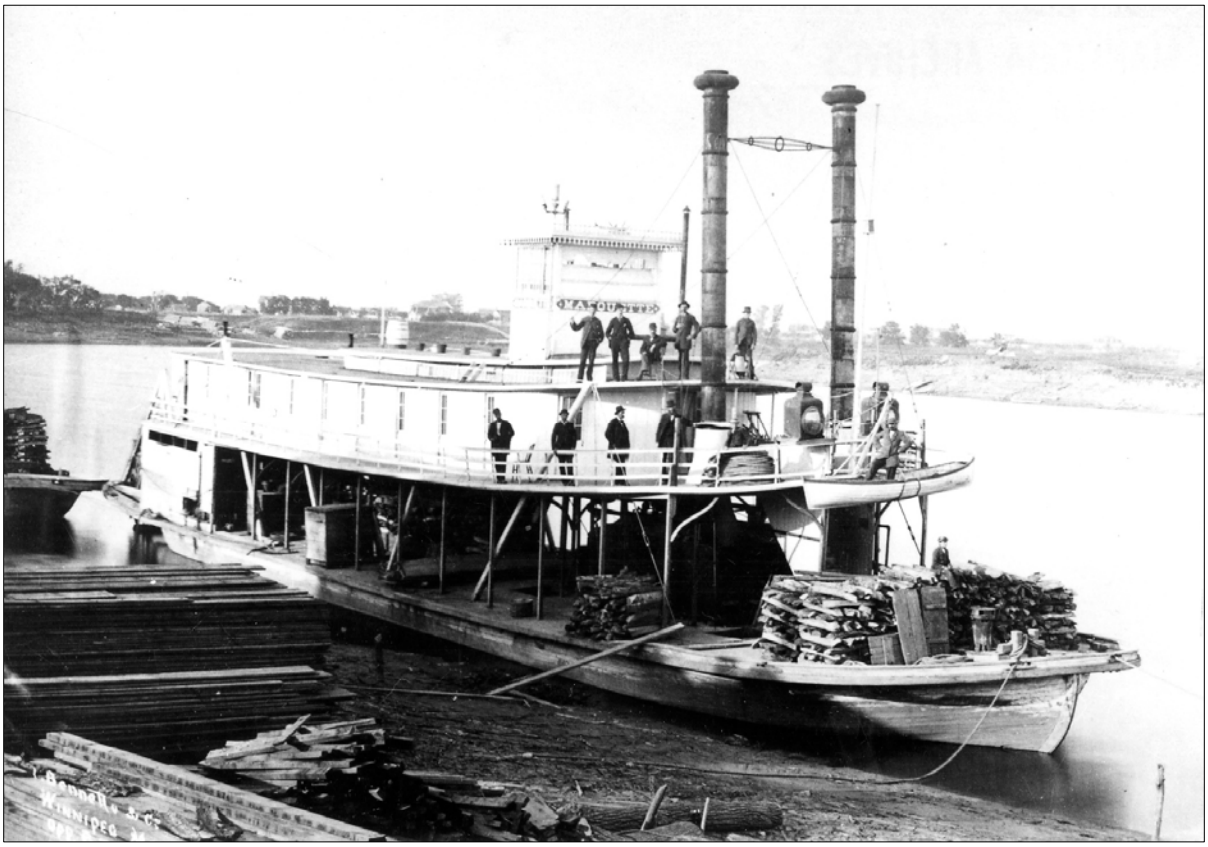

Figure 21 **Marquette**, c.1883. PAM

Figure 22 Steel Steamboat under construction Saskatchewan Archives Board Photograph R-B3371

Figure 23 **Marquis**, c.1884. PAM

Figure 24 **Marquis**, Prince Albert, c.1900. PAM

Figure 25 **Manitoba**, NWT 1885. Western Canada Pictorial Index

Figure 26 Norway House Landing, the **Colvile**, from Picturesque Canada

Figure 27 **Colvile** moored to dock made from (former **Chief Commissioner**) at Lower Fort Garry. National Archives of Canada, Geological Survey Collection

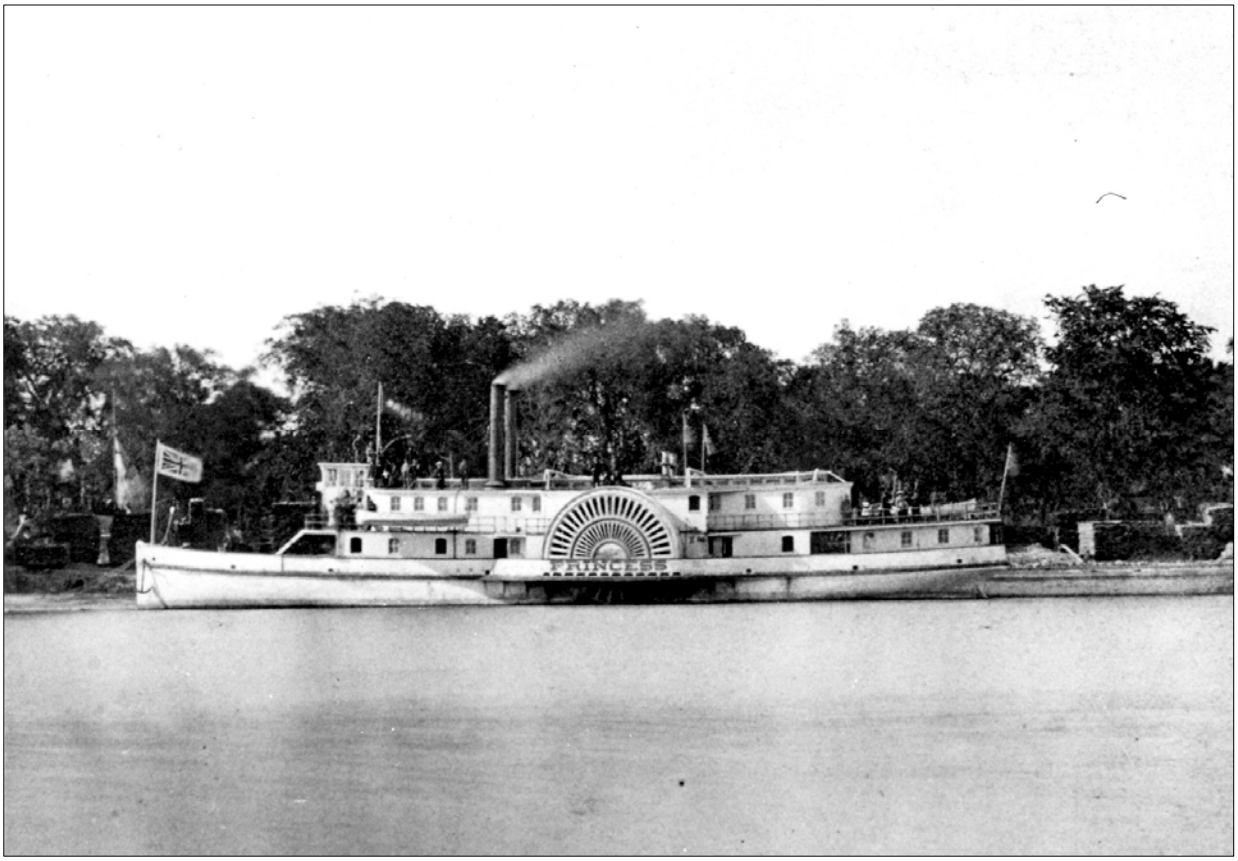

Figure 28 **Princess.** PAM

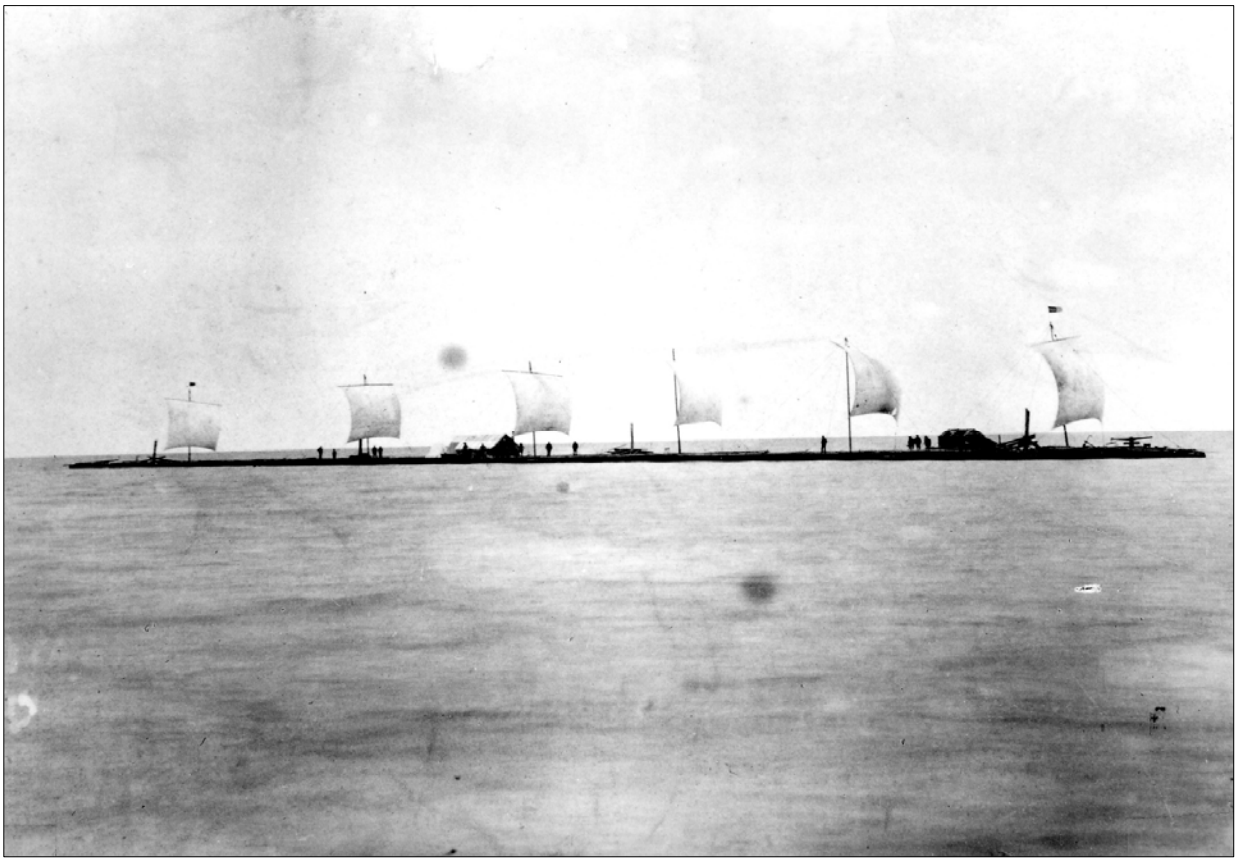

Figure 29 Lumber raft with sails, Lake Manitoba, 1891. PAM

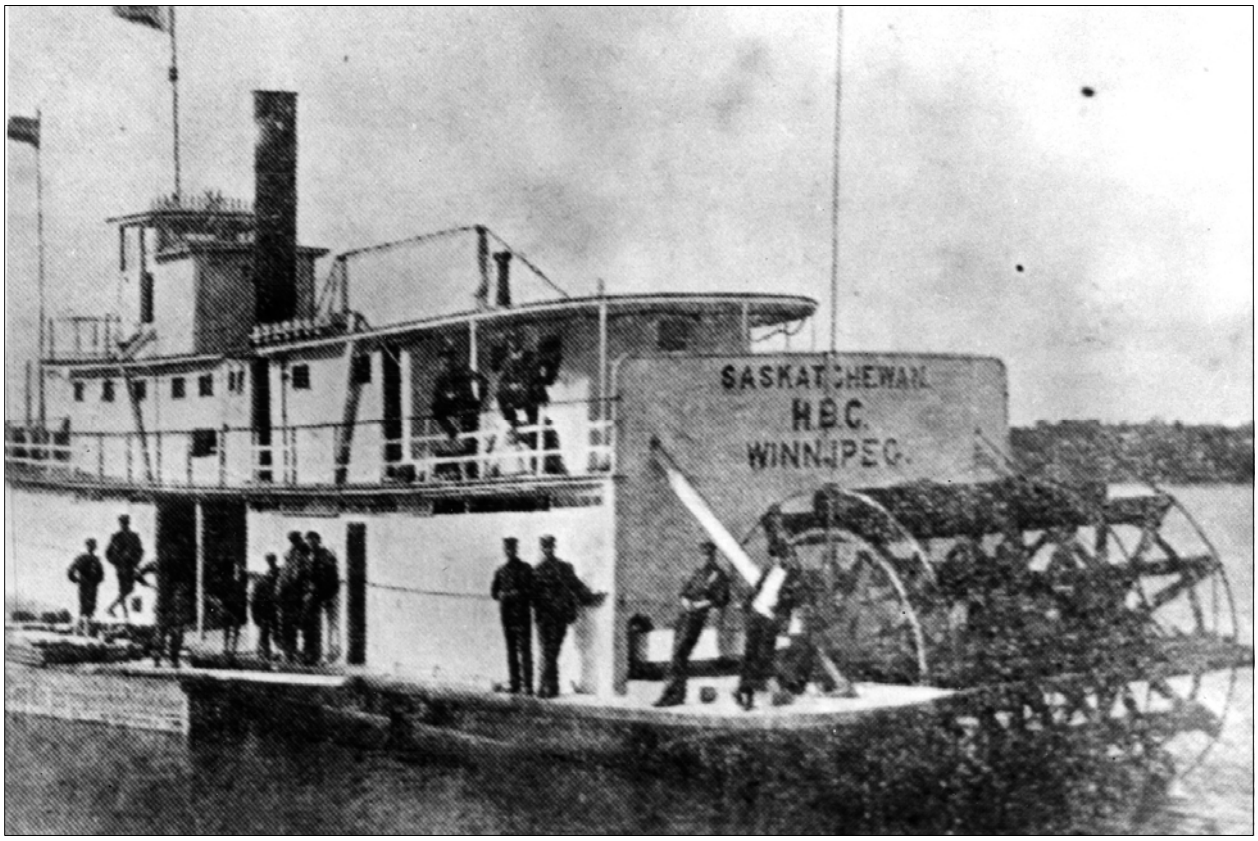

Figure 30 **Saskatchewan**, 1882. PAM

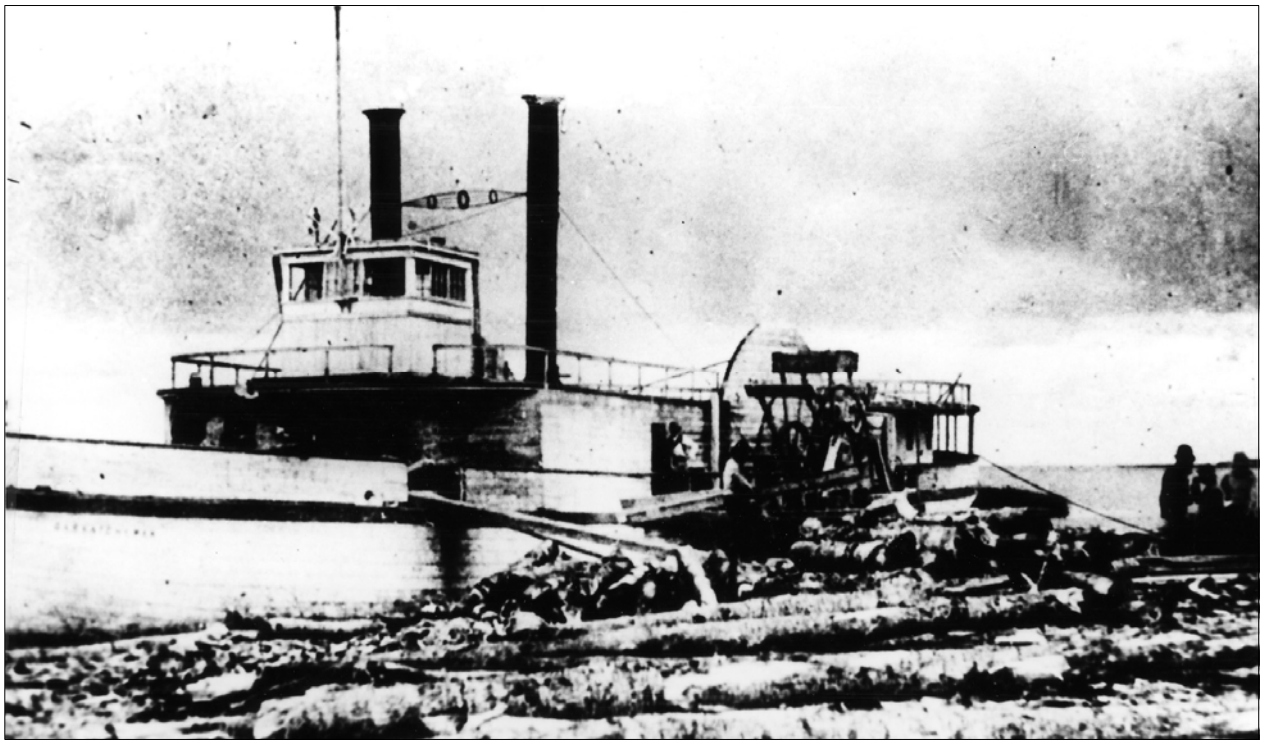

Figure 31 **Saskatchewan**, c.1890. PAM

ENDNOTES

Steamboats on the Rivers and Lakes of Manitoba 1859-96

[i] Gilman, Red River Trails, p. 10.
[ii] Jas. Hargrave, Red River, p. 59.
[iii] Hargrave, op. cit., pp. 167-8.
[iv] Gilman, op. cit., p. 14.
[v] Gilman, op. cit., p. 16.
[vi] Gilman, op. cit., p. 21.
[vii] A. Glueck, Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian North West, pp. 137-8.
[viii] Gilman, op. cit., p. 21.
[ix] Glueck, Minnesota…, pp. 137-8.
[x] A. Glueck, "The Fading Glory".
[xi] Gilman, Red River Trails, p. 14.
[xii] L.C. Hunter, Steamboats on the Western Rivers, p. 73.
[xiii] Hind, p. 251.
[xiv] PAM MG3C14, Ross Papers, #166 Wm. Ross to Jas. Ross, 10 March 1856 and #167, A. Ross to Jas. Ross, 10 March 1856.
[xv] A. Glueck, Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian North West, pp. 137-9.
[xvi] Glueck, Minnesota, p.
[xvii] Glueck, op. cit., p. 144.
[xviii] Gilman, Red River Trails, p. 22.
[xix] Glueck, p. 145.
[xx] Glueck, p. 145-7.
[xxi] Glueck, p. 149.
[xxii] Glueck, p. 145-6.

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[1] Hind, p. 131.
[2] Sessional Papers, Vol. XVI, No. 7(1883). General Report of the Minister of Public Works from 30th June 1867 to 1st July 1882.
[3] C.J. Brydges to F.H. Ennis, 19 September 1879.
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[5] Earl of Southesk, Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains, p. 34.
[6] Ross Leckow, "Retreat of the Frontier", HRB August 1981.
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[8] HBCA A12/42, fo. 31-3. Wm. Mactavish to London, 24 December 1860.
[9] HBCA A12/42 fo. 43-4. Wm. Mactavish to London, 29 October 1860.
[10] HBCA A12/42, fo. 85-6. Mactavish to London, 16 May 1861.
[11] Hargrave, p. 52.
[12] HBCA A12/42, fo. 160, 182, 192. Wm. Mactavish to London, 31 October 1861, 18 December 1861 and 31 December 1861.
[13] A12/43, fo. 26. Dallas to London, 28 May 1862.
[14] HBCA A12/45, fo. 11d. Mactavish to London, 24 February 1868.
[15] PAM MG2C13. Samuel Taylor Journal, 1849-63. 26 May 1862.
[16] PAM MG .
[17] HBCA A12/43, fo.26. Dallas to London, 28 May 1862.
[18] Nor'Wester, 28 May 1862.
[19] HBCA A12/43, fo. 33d-34. Dallas to London, 9 June 1862.

[20] HBCA A12/42, fo. 34d. Wm. Mactavish to London, 7 January 1861.
[21] HBCA A12/42, fo. 81-2. Wm. Mactavish to London, 1 May 1861.
[22] HBCA A12/42, fo. 125. Mactavish to London, 23 August 1861.
[23] HBCA A12/42, fo. 149d. Mactavish to London, 28 September 1861.
[24] HBCA A12/43, fo. 28. Dallas to Burbanks, 24 May1862.
[25] HBCA A12/42, fo. 182d. Wm. Mactavish to London, 18 December 1861.
[26] HBCA A12/42, fo. 162d. Wm. Mactavish to London, 22 November 1861.
[27] HBCA A12/42, fo. 207d. Wm. Mactavish to London, 25 February 1862.
[28] PAM MG1B4. Samuel Bruce, pp. 2-4.
[29] Gilman, op. cit., p. 23.
[30] HBCA A12/43, fo. 16. Dallas to London, 22 September 1862.
[31] HBCA A12/43, fo. 179d. Dallas to London, 28 January 1864.
[32] Glueck, op. cit., p. 164.
[33] HBCA A12/44, fo. 15-16. Wm. Mactavish to London, 10 September 1864.
[34] HBCA A12/44, fo. 145d. Mactavish to London, 13 June 1866.
[35] HBCA A12/44, fo. 302d. Mactavish to London, 8 May 1867.
[36] HBCA A12/44, fo. 274-5. Mactavish to London, 25 March 1867.
[37] HBCA A12/44, fo. 308. Mactavish to London, 3 June 1867.
[38] HBCA A12/44, fo. 329. Mactavish to London, 15 September 1867.
[39] HBCA A12/45, fo. 62. Mactavish to London, 28 May 1868.
[40] HBCA A12/45, fo. 261d. Mactavish to London, 7 June 1869 and fo. 277d, 10 August 1869.
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[44] The Manitoban, 6 May 1871. Cited in Ross Leckow, op. cit.
[45] M.H. Herriott, "Steamboat Transportation on the Red River", p. 249. Minnesota History, Vol. 21 (September, 1940). Cited in R. Leckow, "Retreat of the Frontier".
[46] H.H. Barnes, Journal of a Trip to Manitoba and Back, June and July, 1878 (Halifax: J.W. Doley, 1879), p. 13. Cited in Ross Leckow, op. cit.
[47] ???
[48] HBCA D13/1, fo. 24d. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 30 October 1875.
[49] Herriot, p. 256. Cited in Ross Leckow, op. cit.
[50] HBCA D13/2, fo. 93. Grahame to Armit, 19 May 1876.
[51] HBCA D13/2, fo. 167. Grahame to Armit, 1 November 1876.
[52] HBCA D13/2, fo. 167. Grahame to Armit, 1 November 1876.
[53] HBCA D13/2, fo. 254. Grahame to Armit, 27 June 1877.
[54] Barris, p. 37.
[55] Lady Dufferin, My Canadian Journal 1872-1878, ed. G.C. Walker. Don Mills, Ont: Longmans Canada Limited, 1969. p. 245-6.
[56] Ibid., p. 277.
[57] PAM MG4D9 #77793.
[58] HBCA D13/3, fo. 106. Grahame to Armit, 28 March 1878.
[59] HBCA D13/3, fo. 124. Grahame to Armit, 29 April 1878.
[60] HBCA A12/47, fo. 477-8. Grahame to Armit, 1 December 1879. In 1880, however, the HBC sold these shares to Stephens for the $40,000 purchase price, crediting that amount to the Northern Department. Cf. HBCA A12/48, fo. 439. Grahame to Armit, 5 November 1880.
[61] HBCA A12/48, fo. 295. Grahame to Armit, 10 April 1880.
[62] HBCA F41/
[63] Some historians of steamboats have predicted this disappearance. Cf. Ted Barris, Firecanoe, p. 52, Bruce Peel, Steamboats on the Saskatchewan, p. 78 and Herriot, p. 260.
[64] HBCA F39/3. Cf. also F39/5, fo. 10-21. Cited in Ross Leckow, op. cit.
[65] HBCA A12/48, fo. 388. Memorandum prepared for Governor Colvile by James Grahame, 23 September 1880.

[66] Ibid.
[67] Loudon Wilson, "Last Days of Upper River Trade", Steamboat Bill, December 1955.
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[3] Ibid, pp. 428-9.
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[5] Ibid., H.F. Perley to F.H. Ennis, 3 January 1881, p. 60 seq.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p. 29.
[8] Roy Brown, Steamboats on the Assiniboine, p. 71.
[9] HBCA F41/5. Agreement of Walter J. Pratt with WWTC, 20 June 1881.
[10] Sessional Papers, Vol. XIV No. 4 (1880-1). Henry F. Perley to F.H. Ennis, 3 January 1881.
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[12] PAM MG1B28 "Notes of a Journey to the North West Land", in The Sunday at Home, No. 1499, 20 January 1883.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Barris, p. 44 and Manitoban, 30 May 1874.
[15] HBCA A12/20, fo. 293. C.J. Brydges to Wm. Armit, 1 October 1881. Cited in Ross Leckow, op. cit.
[16] The log of this trip is reprinted in Roy Brown, Steamboats on the Assiniboine.
[17] HBCA D13/4, fo. 31. Grahame to Armit, 24 May 1879.
[18] PAM MG2C22, John Inkster Papers. Ellen Inkster (Fort Ellice) to Grandma, 13 July 1879.
[19] Sessional Papers, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (1880), p. 59.
[20] Reprinted from Manitoba Free Press 18 July 1881 in M. Kavanagh, The Assiniboine Basin, Appendix XVII. The WWTC steamboat the **Manitoba**, in spite of her large size, inaugurated the voyage to Fort Pelly in 1881 during the spring high water, but was unable to go further than Rapid City after that. Loudon Wilson, "The New River Trade", Steamboat Bill, June 1953.
[21] HBCA D13/4, fo. 320. Grahame to Armit, 22 June 1880.
[22] HBCA F41/2.
[23] HBCA F41/5, Draft Agreement.
[24] HBCA A12/48, fo. 282. Alex. Christie to Jas. Grahame, 10 March 1880.
[25] HBCA F41/1.
[26] PAM MG11A4, E.T. Leech Papers, from Times, 4 April 1881.
[27] HBCA D20/15, fo. 439d. Alex. Christie to Jas. A. Grahame, 10 March 1880.
[28] HBCA D13/4, fo. 243-4. Grahame to Armit, 4 March 1880.
[29] HBCA D13/4, fo. 248. Grahame to Armit, 11 March 1880.
[30] HBCA D13/5, fo. 16 and 23, Jas. A. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 29 October 1880 and 5 November 1880. Cited in Ross Leckow, "A Marriage of Convenience: The HBC's Involvement with Steamboat Companies in the Northwest, 1880-1882". HRB, typescript, July 1982.
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[41] Loudon Wilson, "The New River Trade", Steamboat Bill, June 1953.
[42] Manitoba Free Press, 27 August 1894.

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[7] Ibid., p. 18. C.J. Brydges to F.H. Ennis, 15 August 1882.
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[10] HBCA D14/28. L. Clarke to Jas. Grahame, 21 May 1882.
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[18] HBCA A12/44, fo. 83. Mactavish to London, 12 December 1865.
[19] HBCA A12/44, fo. 152d. Wm. Mactavish to London, 31 July 1866.
[20] HBCA A12/44, fo. 188-90. Wm. Mactavish to London, 8 October 1866.
[22] HBCA A12/44, fo. 234. Mactavish to London, 15 January 1867.
[21] HBCA B239/c/16, fo. 275d-276. W. Mactavish to Northern Department, 8 December 1866.
[23] HBCA A12/44, fo. 188-90. Wm. Mactavish to London, 8 October 1866.
[24] HBCA A12/45, fo. 12. Wm. Mactavish to London, 24 February 1868.
[25] HBCA A12/45, fo. 92. Wm. Mactavish to London, 1 September 1868.
[26] HBCA A12/45, fo. 148-50. Wm. Mactavish to London, 22 January 1869.
[27] HBCA B239/c/19, fo. 238. J. McTavish to Northern Department, 10 December 1870.
[28] HBCA B239/c/19, fo. 246. J.H. McTavish to S.K. Parson, 15 December 1870.
[29] HBCA D13/1, fo. 1-5. J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 8 June 1874.
[30] HBCA D13/1, fo. 13. J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 29 July 1874.
[31] HBCA D14/12, fo. 151. Robert Hamilton to Jas. Grahame, 24 August 1874.
[32] K. Pettipas, ed. The Diary of the Rev. Henry Budd, 1870-1875. Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society Publications, 1974, p. 172.
[33] HBCA F41/2.
[34] Ibid.
[35] HBCA D13/2, fo. 146. J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 11 August 1876.
[36] HBCA D13/2, fo. 164. J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 1 November 1876.
[37] Copy of letter from Yarrow & Co. to Thos. R. Smith, Dep't of Engineering, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 2 April 1957.
[38] HBCA D13/2, fo. 146. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 11 August 1876.
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[42] HBCA D13/4, fo. 144.J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 10 November 1879.
[43] HBCA D13/4, fo. 292-3.J. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 11 May 1880.
[44] HBCA D26/13, fo. 1-5. Memorandum of Provisional Agreement between the HBC and the NWNC, 23 February 1881.
[45] HBCA D26/9/1, fo. 78-9. Draft letter, Grahame to
[46] HBCA D26/13, fo. 7-10. 13 June 1881.
[47] Ibid.
[48] HBCA F41/5. Agreement between NWNC and WWTC, 9 March 1882.
[49] B. Peel, Steamboats on the Saskatchewan, p. 63.
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[51] HBCA F41/1.
[52] PAM MG11A1, Recollections of Peter McArthur, p. 8.
[53] PAM MG11A1, Recollections of Peter McArthur.
[54] A. Ballantine, "Steamboating on the Saskatchewan", p. 102.
[55] HBCA F37/4. R. McGinn to Wm. Clark, 14 May 1883.
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[57] Ibid., 7 November 1894.
[58] HBCA F41/1.
[59] HBCA F41/1. Consolidated statement WWTC Steamers **North West, Marquis, Manitoba** and **Northcote**, season of 1883, commencing May 5th and ending October 15, 1883.
[60] HBCA D20/30/2, fo. 121-5. L. Clarke to Jos. Wrigley, 6 September 1884.
[61] Ibid.
[62] HBCA D20/30/2, fo. 169-70. H. Belanger to Wrigley, 27 September 1884.
[63] HBCA F41/1, Operating Account 1884.
[64] HBCA F41/1.
[65] HBCA F37/1, fo. 215. H. Swinford to J. Wrigley, 8 November 1886.
[66] HBCA F41/1.
[67] HBCA D18/2, fo. 434d-435d. J. Wrigley to Wm. Armit, 26 March 1888.
[68] HBCA F37/1, fo. 283. H. Swinford to F. Tims, 20 January 1887.
[69] HBCA F37/1, fo. 660. H. Swinford to Captain Sheets, 13 April 1888.
[70] HBCA F37/1, fo. 813. L. Clarke to A. Raymer, 21 June 1889.
[71] HBCA F37/1, fo. 840. L. Clarke to F. Allan, 31 August 1889.
[72] HBCA F37/1, fo. 302. H. Swinford to L. Clarke, 11 February 1887.
[73] HBCA F37/1, fo. 315. H. Swinford to Burrows, 17 February 1887.
[74] HBCA F37/1, fo. 612. H. Swinford, Memorandum to Wrigley, 26 January 1888.
[75] HBCA F37/1, fo. 927, L. Clarke to P. Mowat, 5 November 1892 and fo. 930, Clarke to R. McGinn, 4 April 1892.
[76] HBCA F36/1, fo. 191-2. Report to Board of Directors, WWTC, 28 February 1891.
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[78] HBCA A12/FT 341/[13]. Chipman to London, 8 December 1903.
[79] HBCA A12/FT 341/[13]. Chipman to London, 31 March 1905, 6 April 1906, 8 June 1910.

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[1] PAM MG12E1. Schultz, J.C. #4889. Capt. J. Bergman to Schultz, 20 November 1890.
[2] Ibid.
[3] HBCA D13/1, fo. 15d-16. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 29 July 1874.
[4] HBCA D13/1, fo. 44d-45. Jas. Grahame to Armit, 24 August 1874.
[5] HBCA D13/1, fo. 92. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 11 November 1874.
[6] HBCA F41/3.
[7] HBCA D13/1, fo. 218 and 238. Grahame to Armit, 9 June 1875 and 28 July 1875.

[8] HBCA D13/1, fo. 69. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 7 October 1874.
[9] HBCA D13/1, fo.78. Grahame to Armit, 26 October 1874.
[10] HBCA D13/1, fo. 92. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 21 May 1882.
[11] Cf. L. Wilson.
[12] HBCA A12/48, fo. 349.
[13] L. Wilson, "Birth of a New Era", Steamboat Bill, December 1952.
[14] HBCA A12/48, fo. 353d. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 3 June 1880.
[15] Lady Dufferin, My Canadian Journal, p. 268.
[16] HBCA D13/2, fo. 284. Grahame to Armit, 13 September 1877.
[17] HBCA D20/16, fo. 141-152. C.J. Brydges to J.A. Grahame, 6 May 1880 and Reply from Government, 10 May 1880. Cf. also HBCA A12/48, fo. 326. Jas. Grahame to Wm. Armit, 14 May 1880.
[18] Manitoba Free Press, 24 March 1881.
[19] See Michael Payne, "Colvile or Colville Landing", unpublished HRB Report, 1981.
[20] HBCA D20/18, fo. 197d. Alex. Christie to Jas. A. Grahame, 12 February 1881.
[21] HBCA F41/3.
[22] HBCA F41/3.
[23] Port of Winnipeg Shipping Register #74022.
[24] L. Wilson, Steamboat Bill,
[25] PAM MG12E1, Schultz, J.C. #4473, 12 June 1890.
[26] PAM MG12E1, #4876-7. Inspector J. Begin to Schultz, 6 November 1890.
[27] HBCA B4/e/3, Fort Alexander Report, 12 June 1889.
[28] HBCA B16/a/8, fo. 13d. 18-25 September 1876.
[29] HBCA B16/a/8, fo. 35. 22 June 1878.
[30] HBCA D20/25, fo. 4. R. Ross to J.A. Grahame, 3 January 1883.
[31] HBCA D20/20, fo. 151. R. Ross to J.A. Grahame, 14 August 1881.
[32] HBCA B239/c/22, fo. 61d. R. Ross to J. Fortescue, 1 August 1876.
[33] HBCA B154/a/71, fo. 54d. 30 May 1877.
[34] HBCA B154/b/16, fo. 31. R. Ross to J. Grahame, 8 January 1879.
[35] HBCA D20/16, fo. 14d. R. Ross to J.A. Grahame, 3 April 1880.
[36] HBCA D20/16, fo. 426d. Rod. Ross to J.A. Grahame, 31 August 1883.
[37] HBCA D20/35, fo. 11. Ewen Macdonald to Jos. Wrigley, 3 July 1885.
[38] PAM MG10F2. Reynolds, G.F., pp. 44-9.
[39] Ibid., p. 50.
[40] PAM MG11A1, Peter McArthur, Reminiscences, p. 14.
[41] PAM MG12E1, #4079-83. Colin Inkster to Schultz, 6 September 1889.
[42] PAM MG12E1, #4543-6. Requisition, 7 July 1890 for Schultz and party.
[43] PAM Parker Collection.
[44] PAM MG12E1, Schultz, J.C. #4038A-4041A. John Cornish to Schultz, 6 August 1889.
[45] PAM MG12E1, Schultz, J.C. #3975. Journal of trip of "Keewatin" to Grand Rapids with detachment of NWMP [July 1889].
[46] PAM MG12E1. Geo. S. Orton to Schultz, [September 1889].

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[1] PAM, Molly Basken Collection, Box 1. D.C. McArthur to Mrs. Basken, 23 July 1953.
[2] HBCA D20/11, fo. 30d. G.S. McTavish to J.A. Grahame, 10 August 1878.
[3] Dawson and Hind, p. 439.
[3] HBCA D20/11, J.H. McTavish to J.A. Grahame, 24 December 1878.
[4] HBCA D20/12, fo. 102d. G.S. McTavish to J.A. Grahame, 30 January 1879.
[5] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1, Peter McArthur file. Letter of Jas. Newlands to Molly Basken, 10 July 1953.
[6] Ibid., D.C. McArthur Notes.
[7] HBCA D20/18, fo. 166. A.R. Lillie to J.A. Grahame, 9 February 1881.

[8] Sessional Papers, Vol. XVI, No. 6 (1883). "Annual Report of the Minister of Public Works for the Fiscal Year 1881-82", Mr. Guerin's Report, 29 January 1882.
[9] Sessional Papers, Vol. XVII, No. 6 (1884). Annual Report of the Minister of Public Works. Henry F. Perley to F.H. Ennis, 27 February 1882.
[10] Sessional Papers, Vol. XV, No. 8 (1882). Annual Report of the Minister of the Interior for the Year Ended 30 June 1881.
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[12] How the West Was Bourne, p. 397.
[13] HBCA D20/30/3, fo. 209-210. A.R. Lillie to Jos. Wrigley, 2 October 1884.
[14] PAM Molly Basken, Box 1. History of Peter McArthur by Agnes Medd.
[15] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1, Peter McArthur file, letter of Jas. Newlands to Molly Basken, 10 July 1953.
[16] M. Agnes Medd, "My Father's Steamboats", Manitoba Pageant.
[17] PAM MG11A9, North West Navigation Line.
[18] Ibid., 20 July 1892.
[19] 19 July 1893.
[20] Ibid., 14 June 1889 to 19 June 1889.
[21] 26 May 1890 to 30 May 1890.
[22] 22 August 1891 to 10 September 1891.
[23] 13 June 1892.
[24] 8 July 1893.
[25] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1, Peter McArthur file. Letter of Jas. Newlands to Molly Basken, 10 July 1953. Cf. also M. Agnes Medd, "My Father's Steamboats".
[26] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1. Peter McArthur file. Letter of Jas. Newlands to Molly Basken, 10 July 1953.
[27] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1. D.C. McArthur to Mrs. Basken, 12 July 1953.
[28] PAM Molly Basken Collection, Box 1. Peter McArthur file. Letter of Jas. Newlands to Molly Basken, 10 July 1953.
[29] Westbourne local history, pp. 75-77.
[30] Jas. Newland's letter.
[31] T. Barris, Firecane, pp. 215-16.
[32] Barris, op. cit., p. 216.