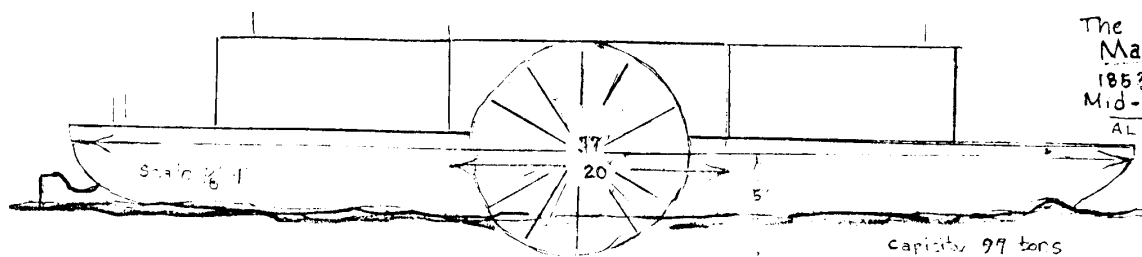
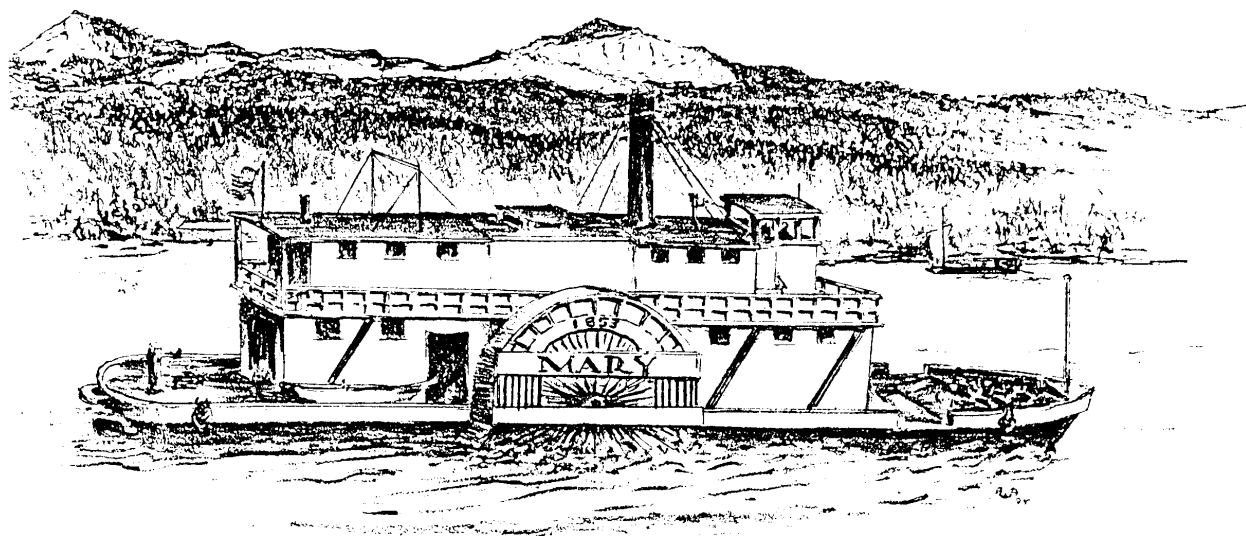


THE MARY

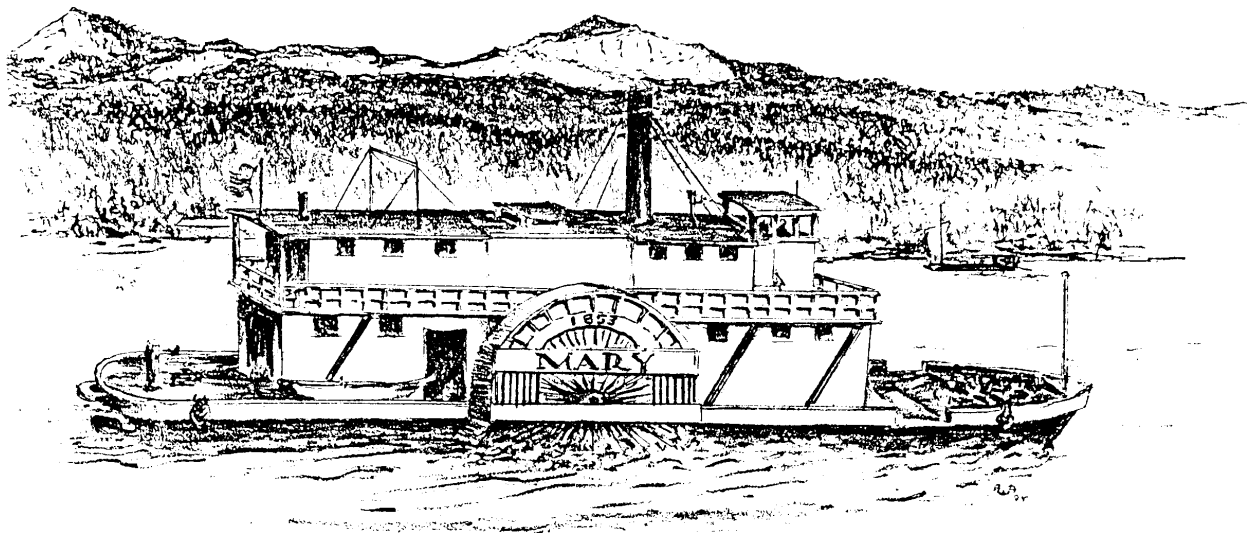


The Steamer
Mary
1853-1861
Mid-Columbia
AL ATTWELL '95

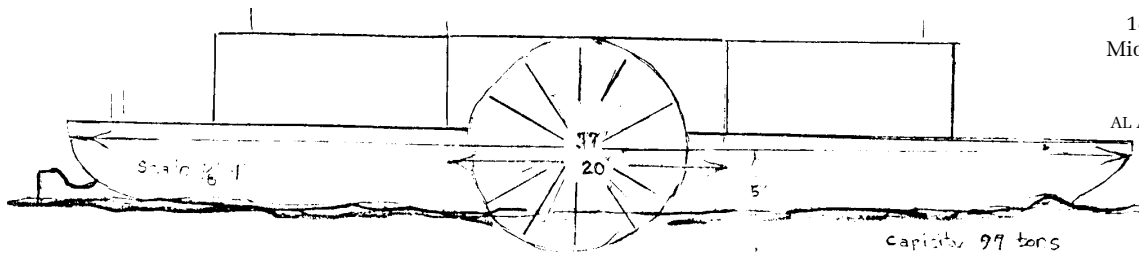
THE MARY

THE MID-COLUMBIA'S FIRST STEAMER

Story and Illustrations by
AL ATTWELL



The Steamer
MARY
1853-1861
Mid-Columbia



AL ATTWELL, '95
'95

The Mary was a side-wheeler steamer.
The first active steamer in the Gorge,
above the Cascade Rapids.
Launched Sept. 12, 1853

A Note From The Author

The side-wheeler Mary had an interesting and vital period of active service. Her time of service was during those early years of the Western Migration of America in the 1850's. A time of action.

Documentation at this time in this place was dependent mostly on verbal reports. Stories told and retold. The Mary was built partly from a resurrected hull, with structural additions made by my grandfather, Roger G. Attwell. At his boat yard and mill above the Cascade Rapids.

The Mary was sturdy and practical for a purpose. To carry people and cargo on a swift flowing river. Her real value was the reliable service she gave on this great river from 1853 to 1861.

Roger Attwell, a master carpenter and boat-wright, came west in 1852, to ply his trade. My father, Monty Attwell, became a river steamer pilot at the age of 27 years of age (1882). The Columbia River became a part of our lives.

Introduction

The Columbia River Gorge from its dawning was in the thrusts of changes over eons of time. It was and has been a passage for the elements of total nature. These elements of total nature in some measure have funnelled through this great geological phenomenon of nature with aesthetic force.

The Columbia River, the main natural force to pass through the Gorge of the Cascade Mountains and on to the Pacific Ocean. Its great volume of water creating a way for all creatures to travel. A river that ranks high among the great rivers of the world in length and volume of water.

In the period of expansion, after the migrations in the nineteenth century. Man divided the river into three geographic areas. The area from the mouth of the river to the first great cataract, the Cascade Rapids, was called the Lower River.

The area between the Cascade Rapids and the Celilo Falls, (The Dalles), was labeled the Mid-Columbia. From the Celilo Falls to the headwaters in British Columbia was called the Upper River of the Columbia.

Since the construction of the great dams on the Columbia. The River's navigation and complexion have changed from a swift flowing river stream to a series of river lakes.

This bit of river history takes place when man was wishing to develop means to use the river as a way to make transportation more efficient. The new demands on the volumes of freight and numbers of persons to be transported was becoming a problem. This was a driving force for traffic up and down the river. Money was available and profits could be great.

One main problem was getting the craftsmen with the know how to build adequate steam powered crafts that could run up river. The demand for skilled persons was great. With luck of the grace of good fortune this happened.

The rush was on and the action intense and confused . . .

The river for several miles from the head of the Rapids, down river, was a narrow gorge of deep and very swift currents. A river over a mile wide was to funnel into a gorge of less than half the width. Plus a drop of about thirty feet in the first half mile. The next few miles down river was a swift flowing channel, driven through an abrupt rock sided flume. With water over one hundred feet deep.

All up-river boats had to dock five miles below the head of the Rapids.

The local natives (Indians) had constructed portage trails. Adequate for their use. The natives who controlled these portage trails were also in the business of collecting toll for their primitive portages.

By 1849-50, several of the early pioneer men interested in transportation started on the tasks of building their own portages on both sides of the river. They knew as they were busy doing the difficult task to complete the portages they would need to have steam-boats for the Mid-river to The Dalles.

Should they try to drag one up over the Rapids? Or should they build one above?

The Solution to Their Task

In 1851, Putman and Daniel Bradford and B. B. Bishop worked out a deal with J. P. Flint to ship a small iron propeller vessel up river. The little steamer was moved or pulled up over the rapids. Only to be found unworthy for the mid-river. It was reported that a Captain Van Burgen took the little vessel back down the rapids. Only to hit a rock at the mouth of the Gorge at Cape Horn, where it sank. The J. P. Flint was raised and the engine was placed in a new craft called the Fashion. The Fashion ran on the lower-Columbia until 1861.

The Hudson Bay Company built a small steamer called the Allen in 1851. The Allen had a very short life. It was wrecked on a dark night near Mitchell's Point (Hood River).

The third steamer was a success. It was the construction and service of the Mary. A resurrection of a sunken hull into a savior. The Mary was the first active steamer on the mid-Columbia. Built as a side-wheeler. The Mary was 77 feet long with a carrying capacity of 97 tons. The Mary served well or eight busy years, from September 12, 1853, until she was dismantled in 1861.

The following is a brief story of this little Side-Wheeler, The Mary. The first of five steamers to be built at the head of the Cascade Rapids at the Attwell-Boat-Yard and Mill.*

The building of the Mary was the results of a community effort and team work. Many individuals in the community at that time played a role. Issac Bush, Daniel and Putman Bradford and F. A. Chenowith, all business men, who were building a tramway portage on the North Bank of the Columbia supplied the funds.

It was at Bradford's Landing that Mr. Bush met Roger G. Attwell, a master-carpenter and boat-wright. Roger had just crossed the plains on the Oregon Trail. He came with 500 pounds of the tools of his trade. Arriving at Bradford's Landing in August of 1852, ready to go to work. In Roger, Issac Bush, owner of the local hotel and interested in the transportation on

the river, had found his man to construct a steamer. Roger liked the looks of the possibilities and decided to stay.

* Steamers built at the Attwell Boat-Yard--1853 to60

Mary	side-wheeler	1853	77'	97 tons	dis-1861
Wasco	side-wheeler	1855	147'	265 tons	1861
Hassaloe	stern-wheeler	1857	135	?	1865
Idaho	stern-wheeler	1860	147	270 tons	up-river
Umatilla	stern-wheeler	1858	110	91tns	up-river

Roger Meets Mary

It was at this time that Roger met Mary Jane Hervey-Williams. She had also just crossed the Plains on the Oregon Trail. Roger and Mary got married and Mary also became a member of the team.

Roger and Mary Jane's first move was to establish a land grant. They chose 320 acres just above the Rapids on the Oregon side* Roger selected this location as the best spot in the area for the project in mind. There was a mountain stream suitable for water-power for a saw mill. Good timber was available. There was also a suitable landing and launch site.

The river had created a large sandbar that acted as a sand-spit in the river creating a long slough. The slough was large enough to float several vessels plus an adequate harbor for docking.

Mary had two sons by an earlier marriage, ages four and one, at the time of her marriage to Roger. The first act was to build a cabin and barn. As homes for themselves and the animals, oxen for work and cows for supply.

It was a very busy time. The need for a saw-mill was a vital part of the total complex, was also started. They needed quarters for their crews. Nearby was an Indian village of about 300 persons. This village had been located at this place for two main reasons. One, the good fishing and the the portage around the rapids. Really an ideal spot to start their project and to launch a new enterprise.

Roger G. Attwell and Issac Bush knew of a 57 foot vessel that was grounded near Eagle Creek, on the south bank of the Columbia. They both saw the possibility of getting this hull and constructing a usable vessel. Bush and Company bought the hull. Roger was sure it could be moved up river to the Attwell landing and mill. The vessel was secured and Roger got to work on the project.

The following information was gathered from Mary Jane Attwell's notes and other reliable sources.

Roger Attwell and his crew raised the hull of the small beached vessel from where it had been beached. It was too long and heavy to move in one section. So Roger had the crew cut the vessel in half. He was sure it could be made into a side-wheeler, by adding 20 feet in the mid-ship and in strengthening the hull.

After the hull was cut into halves, the problem was to move these two sections the five miles upriver over very rough terrain.

First Roger and his crew built a large wooden trucking dolly. This vehicle needed to be sturdy to move over the rough rock bound banks of the river. Moving the hull by land with oxen for power. In some places they needed to use pulleys with block and tackle and any other devise they could to move each half of the hull.

The wagon dolly was made by cutting two foot diameter wheels from Douglas fir stumps. The axels were made from yew logs, the frames of oak and fir.

Roger secured the services of Allen McKinly to direct the move. To move these structures up the river bank they needed to use a team of twelve yoke of oxen. Plus pulleys and heavy rope cables. In this manner the two halves of the hull were literally dragged up the river bank to the mill site. Each half taking several days. This was a major fete in itself.

The two halves were moved, without any major mishaps, to the boat yard at the Attwell site at the Rapids. Roger had selected a site by the river. The site was protected from the main stream flow by a large sandbar. This sand-spit created a long slough, with little current and ample water depth. An adequate harbor.

A great deal of construction was needed to make the new-resurrection structure worthy for its task. The hull was to be extended some twenty feet in length. This meant strengthing the hull. An interesting note here was the construction of the bow-stem and other like supports for the hull. These supports were made from large tree roots. Roger found two brothers who were willing to go into the forest and hew out the boat stems. This was a time comsuming work.

It was stated that they received one hundred seventy five dollars a stem. Roger was an expert with the axe and broad-ax. He would fit the stems to the hull with his skill and tools.

The Mary was far from a luxury steamer found in many of the models to follow. However, she was well constructed for the hard work in the swift waters of the Mid-Columbia River.

These boats of the mid-river needed to be of rather shallow draft. Especially when the need was to be able to land at many places along the river bank. To pick up and unload passengers, mail and freight. The pilots were keen at reading the river from all aspects.

The Mary was finished and ready for launching, September 12, 1853. Their was a big celebration held on board. This little steamer, a side-wheeler was named Mary, after Mary Jane Attwell. A strong and brave person who was a member of the group who built the vessel. The Mary — the first active steamer on the Mid-Columbia.

The Mary's home port was to be at Bradford's Landing. Her run was to The Dalles and back down river to the Upper Cascades. A duty faithfully done for eight years, 1853 to 1861. She was dismantled in 1861.

The Mary's Most Exciting Adventure

The Mary and her sister steamer, the Wasco, were making trips every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from the Upper Cascades (Bradford's Landing) to The Dalles. Often with a barge in-tow. Hauling a cargo of passengers, freight, wood and often troops and equipment of the U. S. Army, including horses.

It was on Monday, March 24, 1856, that Colonel Wright was moving troops to The Dalles from Fort Vancouver. On the return to the Upper Cascades, March 25, the Wasco and the Mary, returned to their ports. They had run light loads on the down trip. The Wasco docked at the Attwell Landing and Captain Baughman brought the Mary to the flat boat dock just above Bradford's at Mill creek. They killed the fires and tied down for

the night. Captain Baughman and a companion left for shore business. Leaving the pilot Hardin Chenowith and the engineer Buckminster and a light crew on board.

On Wednesday, March 26, 1856, about 8:30 A.M. After the men at Bradford's Landing had gone to work on the portage road and bridges. Near the buildings at the landing, the Indian Hostiles, Yakama and Klickitat warriors appeared and formed a long line overlooking the buildings. The line stretched from Mill Creek to a high point at the head of the Rapids. Overlooking the tramway and store.

The Hostiles started firing simultaneously down on the men who had just started working. At first fire, one of the men was killed and several were wounded. The crew ran for cover at the store and warehouse. Three ran down stream toward the middle blockhouse. A distance of about one and a half miles. Several families also ran to the store. Fortunately nine US Government rifles and cartridge-boxes plus ammunition were left at the Store. These, plus the individual support of persons inside the store, the battle was on.

The steamer Mary was lying at the mouth of Mill Creek. The east wind was blowing, so the shots around the Mary sounded very loud at the Store. The Mary lay just out of sight, however the people at the store could see smoke and thought the Mary was burning. The persons at the store and the crew of the Mary were separated, each had their own battle.

The people at the store were managing to hold their own. Even with the Indians throwing rocks and shooting or throwing fire-brands. Rifle-fire from the store kept the Indians at a distance. Those fire-brands that did reach the roof were extinguished with brine drawn from the food storage barrels.

From the store they could see the steamer Wasco on the Oregon side. The Wasco crew was loading wood and getting up steam. In this interval those members on shore were getting ready to board. Those men at the Mary were fired on and had to run for cover. On board the Mary, James Lindsay the fireman, was shot through the shoulder. The engineer, Buckminster, who had a revolver, shot one Indian, knocking him off the

gang plank. Johnny Chance with his old dragoon pistol killed an Indian. Johnny was shot in the leg. Two other men, Jesse Kempton and a breed called "Bourbon" managed to also get on board the Mary. Together the crew got the steam-up. Hardin Chenoweth ran up to the pilot house and they cast-off. Chenoweth had to lay on the pilot house floor to keep from being shot, as they backed out into the river. Chenoweth maneuvered the ship by getting commands, shouted-up from below, until they were well into the river. Out of gun range he stood up and blew the whistle several times.

They landed at the Attwell place on the Oregon side. Next to the Wasco. The Wasco was loading and about ready to go up-river. The crew and passengers of the Mary also took on wood. They even took the Attwell's cedar fence rails. While they were taking on women and children, some bringing food and other supplies for the journey. The Iman Sheppard and Vanderpool families got across the river in skiffs in time to board the Mary, as she was reading to take off, up-river for The Dalles.

The following excerpt is one of the many stories of the Mary's March 26th crossing. A viewer's experience.

"As we heard the firing on the opposite side of the river and saw the strange course of the steamer Mary as she staggered in the strong current, dropped down turned and trembled and finally made trifling headway upward. We were perhaps more calm than some when hurrying neighbors said it was Indians. The woods on the other shore are alive with hostiles: They have killed will kill everybody; Their hideous yells even now come across the water. But see! The Mary is nearing our shore. We are safe!"

The Mary and the Wasco got under-way from the Attwell Landing on their way up-river.

The Mary did have boiler problems and had to anchor for quick repairs, just above Wind Mountain. Both Steamers made it to The Dallas with their weary crew and passengers. All shouted with glee when they saw the lights at The Dalles.

Colonel Wright and his Ninth Regiment, Second Dragoons and Third

Artillery had started for Walla Walla. They were reached by messenger at 11 P.M. on the 26th and were able to return to The Dalles at day break the 27th. By the time the troops who loaded on the Wasco and Mary with flat boats in tow. Filled with Dragoon horses arrived at the upper Cascades, two days had passed. On the morning of the third day, as they were landing they fired twenty or thirty shots into the Indian positions.

By the time the troops and howitzers were onto the shore the Indians were deep into the woods. However, the Army managed to round up most of the Indians. Court was held and several Indian leaders were hanged.

Captain Baughman and his companion couldn't get back to the Mary. They had spent two days avoiding the Indians. They did manage to get back to safety.

The Mary, a rugged little side-wheeler. The first active steam-boat on the Mid-Columbia River. A hull raised from the river, was rebuilt to become a savior. This vessel played her role in the history and romance of the steamers in the Gorge of the Columbia River, from September 12, 1853 to 1861.

Mary Jane Hervey-Williams Attwell

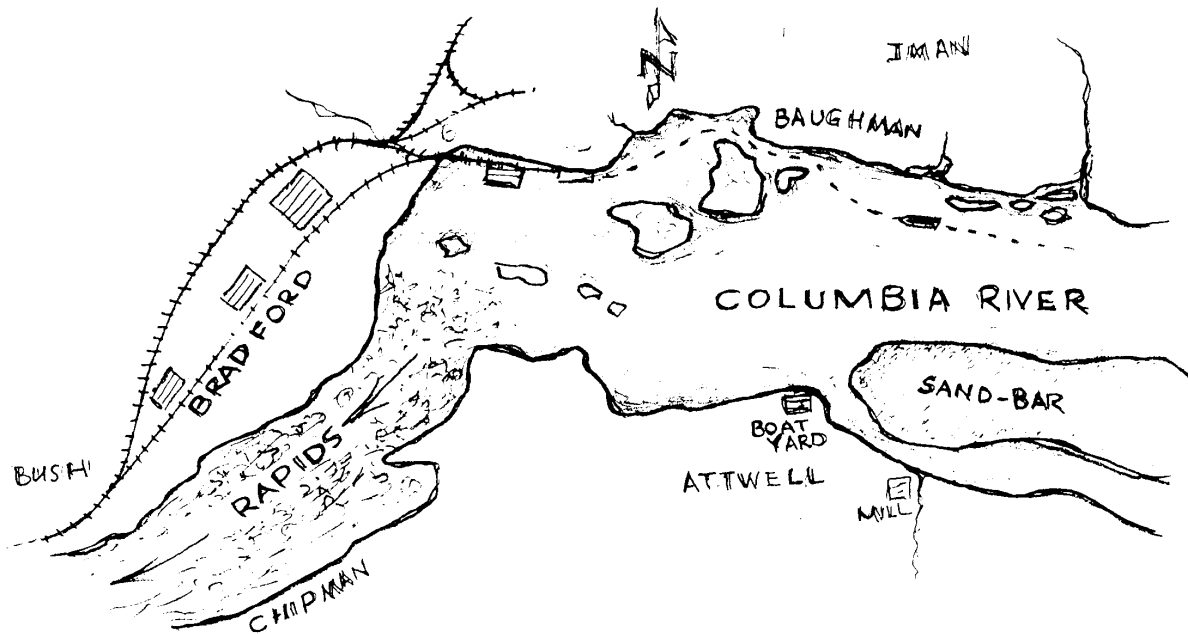
Mary Jane Hervey-Williams Attwell was born in Pennsylvania, the second child of Benjamin E. Hervey and Frances Holman, on November 7, 1820. She crossed the great western plains via the Oregon Trail in 1852. Her husband John Williams, died on the trail. She came the rest of the way with her 3-year old son Edwin. Driving her own wagon. When she arrived in The Dalles, she sold all of their guns, wagon and stock for ninety dollars. A nice sum at that time. With her personal items and young son, she took the first flat boat that would take her and headed down river. She decided that the upper Cascades was the place for her. She spent the next 49 years as a member of the Gorge Community. She died on December 7, 1901 at the age of 81 years. She was buried in the IOOF Cemetery in The Dalles. High on the hills overlooking the Columbia River she loved.

Besides, Charles Edwin Willians (1849) her first son. She had three other sons. Casius Marcellus (Celly) Williams (1852). By Roger G. Attwell, she had James Freemont (Monty) (1855) and John Wilbur Attwell (1858).

Mary Jane, managed the Attwell place for many years.

Besides the farm she ran a lodging house, was a nurse and mid-wife with Dr. Leavens. A pioneer medical doctor in the Gorge. She was a community leader, a true pioneer in the area during her life in the Gorge.

The Attwell Land Grant was located from the head of the Rapids at the eastern edge of the Chipman claim and extended east to about Herman Creek, on the Oregon side of the river. An area of 320 acres.



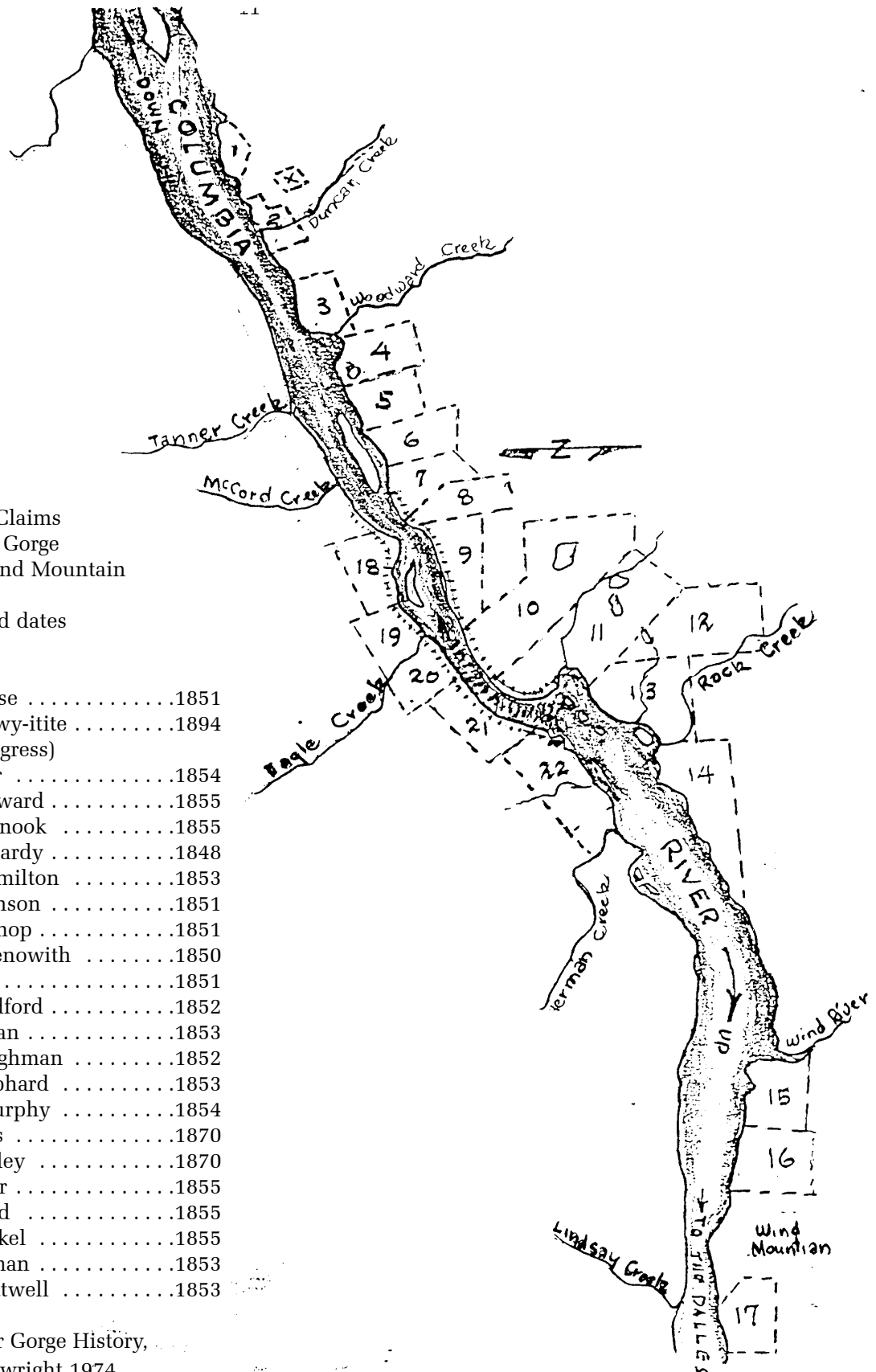
MAP SHOWING HOME PORT OF THE MARY

The above copy, sketched from an old map illustrates a section of the Columbia River, near the head of the Cascade Rapids, in the 1860's.

The map shows a section of the Northshore portage tramway at Bradford's Landing. Bradford's Landing was the home port of the Mary. It was selected because the several islands created a number of eddies, that made landings and departures possible.

On the south-shore, a mini-bay was created by a bed-rock projection on the west and a long sand-bar on the east. These projection created a place to launch crafts and a long slough for a secure harbor.

At this time most of the river islands have been inundated by the back waters of the Bonneville Dam.



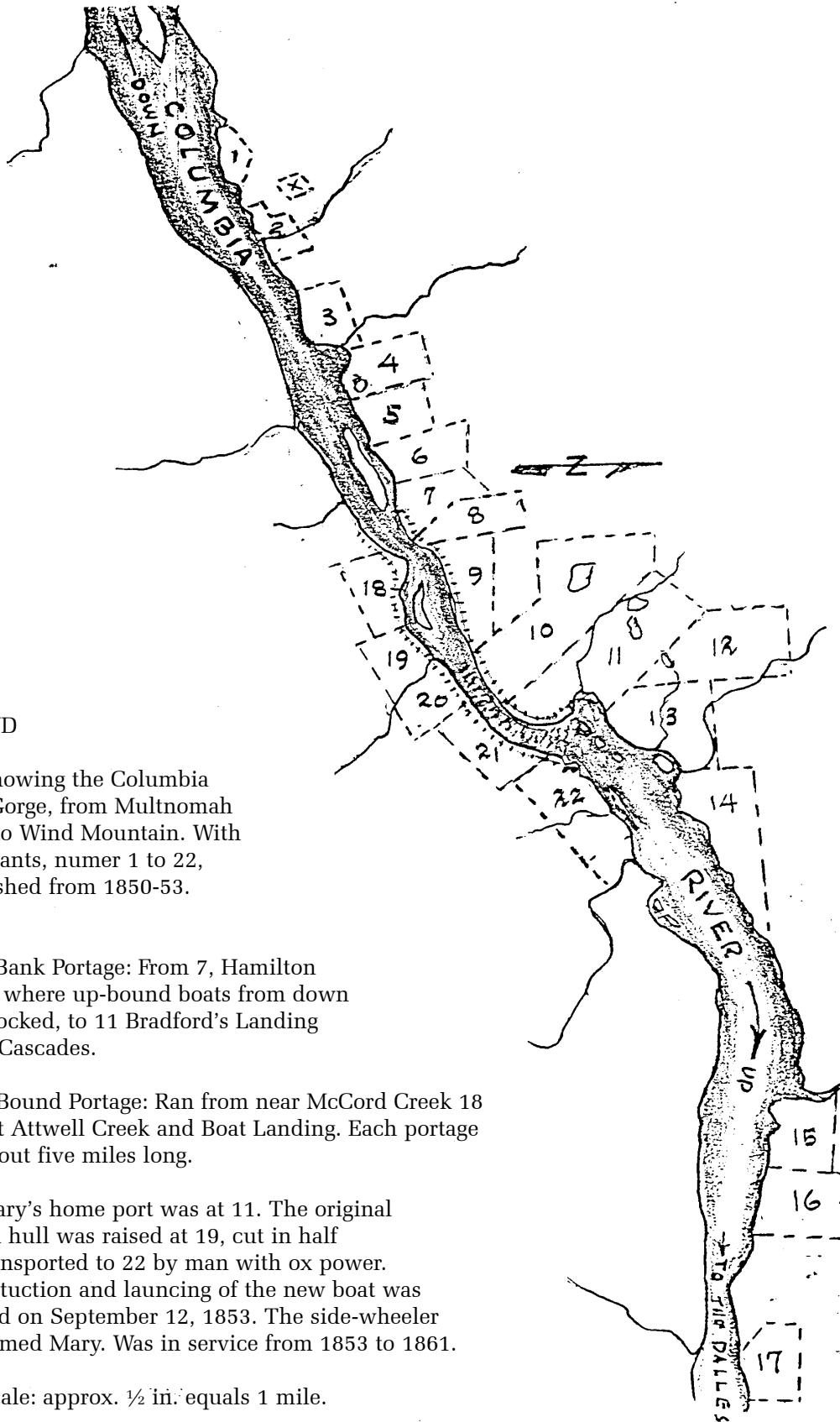
LEGEND

Principle Land Claims
Columbia River Gorge
From East to Wind Mountain
in the 1850's.

Land Claims and dates
of occupancy:

- 1. Charles Frese1851
- X. Mary Will-wy-itite1894
(Act of Congress)
- 2. Kenzy Marr1854
- 3. John Woodward1855
- 4. Elizabeth Snook1855
- 5. Ebenezer Hardy1848
- 6. Samuel Hamilton1853
- 7. George Johnson1851
- 8. Bolivar Bishop1851
- 9. Francis Chenowith1850
- 10. Issac Bush1851
- 11. Daniel Bradford1852
- 12. Felix G. Iman1853
- 13. Daniel Boughman1852
- 14. Henry Shephard1853
- 15. William Murphy1854
- 16. Joe Robbins1870
- 17. James Findley1870
- 18. John Tanner1855
- 19. H. Olmstead1855
- 20. Joseph Ruckel1855
- 21. John Chipman1853
- 22. Roger G. Attwell1853

(Columbia River Gorge History,
Volume 1. Copyright 1974.



LEGEND

Map showing the Columbia River Gorge, from Multnomah Creek to Wind Mountain. With land grants, numer 1 to 22, established from 1850-53.

North Bank Portage: From 7, Hamilton Island, where up-bound boats from down river docked, to 11 Bradford's Landing Upper Cascades.

South Bound Portage: Ran from near McCord Creek 18 to 22 at Attwell Creek and Boat Landing. Each portage was about five miles long.

The Mary's home port was at 11. The original sunken hull was raised at 19, cut in half and transported to 22 by man with ox power. Reconstuction and launcing of the new boat was finished on September 12, 1853. The side-wheeler was named Mary. Was in service from 1853 to 1861.

Map scale: approx. 1/2 in. equals 1 mile.

Attwell family letters, Vol. 14 pages 3472
Written by Dr. Albert W. Attwell, August, 1978 for the:
Seirei Gakuen Summer Workshop in English 8/1978
Glimpse of America

ONE AMERICAN PIONEER
Roger Gerard Attwell – Setting 1852
By Dr. Al Attwell, Educational Consultant for Seirei, Japan.
ONE AMERICAN PIONEER

More than one hundred and twenty years ago, a young man in his late twenties, set out from his home in Ohio. He headed west for he had heard of the great forests and free land in Oregon. He was a master carpenter by trade. To the carpenter, as with other artisans, his tools were important. This serious well trained young man, had secured several tool boxes with tools of his trade, five hundred pounds of tools! He started his journey alone. He had a good wagon and a strong team of horses.

He left Ohio in the Spring of 1851, and arrived two months later in St. Louis, with an idea of what he would need for his journey to Oregon. First he would need more cash, so he decided to ply his trade as a carpenter. St. Louis was a very busy growing city, located on the great Mississippi River. There was a need for boat builders, so carpenters were in demand. He went to work immediately. The work was challenging. The design for those boats to go up river needed creatively engineered ideas.

However, the young carpenter never lost sight of the vision of his own mill and boat yard on the swift waters of the great Columbia River in the Oregon Country.

He also knew that he must join a wagon train and that he should use oxen instead of horses for the long overland journey on the Oregon Trail.

From his childhood he had learned how to secure and train oxen. During the winter of 1851-52 he found four sturdy oxen and in his spare time trained the beasts. He also went about securing those necessary supplies for the westward trek.

In March of '52 he joined up with a group of 75 families and wagons getting ready for the journey. They started in early April. All told there were 257 men women and children in the caravan as it left St. Louis that early April morning.

This was the year of the first great migrations overland to the Pacific Northwest and California.

The trail was new, there was ample grass, the hunting was good, and the Indians were still friendly. The journey was hard and long but with no major conflicts, as in some of the later trains.

Their journey to Fort Hall on the Snake River had moved well. It was at Fort Hall where the Oregon and California Trails split. The California Trail wound its way across the great deserts of Nevada and part of Southern Idaho, to the Sierra Nevada, that great mountain barrier that guarded eastern California.

The wagon train of the carpenter divided at this point, with twelve families joining a group headed for California, and nine families from another train joining the Oregon group.

The next two months were the most difficult for both the Oregon and California trails. Both groups knew from reports of their scouts that there would be many rough miles of desert with very little water and grass. There was one major difference, the Oregon trail as it followed the Snake River would find water, but the terrain was very rough and harder on the wagons and animals.

The tools that the carpenter carried helped save many a wagon from disaster. Broken axles, tongues, and wheels were soon repaired. It was early October when they reached the great falls of the Columbia River at a place called The Dalles.

The Dalles was the end of the Wagon trail by land. Those wishing to go down the great river must go by raft. The carpenter managed to get his tools and personal clothing loaded onto a good raft bateau for the 30 mile journey to the Cascades of the Columbia, the last barrier to transportation to the Willamet Valley, the destination of most of the train.

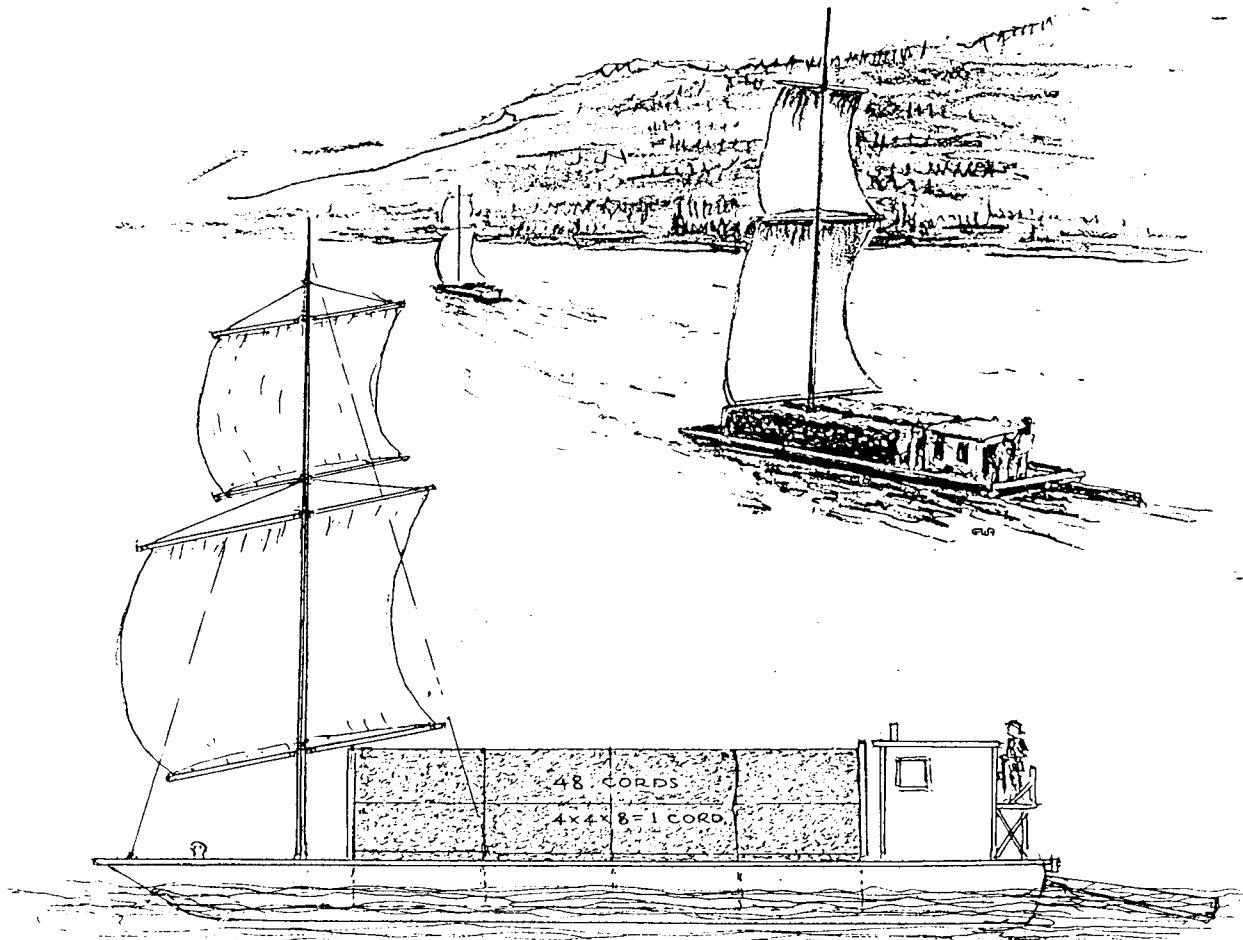
The carpenter was filled with great expectations on the second day of his journey down the Columbia. As the mountains became more towering and the river still flowed smoothly, he noted the great forests of timber. Greater than he had witnessed in his total life and travels.

The rafts were beached at the head of the great Cascades, for it was where the Columbia, a river two miles wide, narrowed into a gorge one half mile wide and had a fall in elevation of twenty-eight feet, in a one mile torrent. Neither man nor raft could survive the swift current of the rapids.

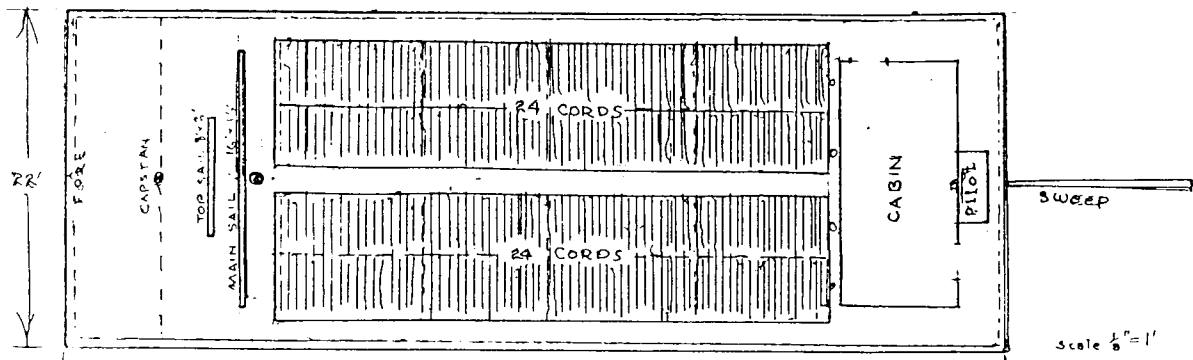
It was here the young carpenter saw his future. He would secure a land grant of 320 acres of this beautiful virgin timber land, set-up a mill for lumber and build river boats. So he did build the first steamboat for the mid-Columbia and named it "The Mary" after his wife.

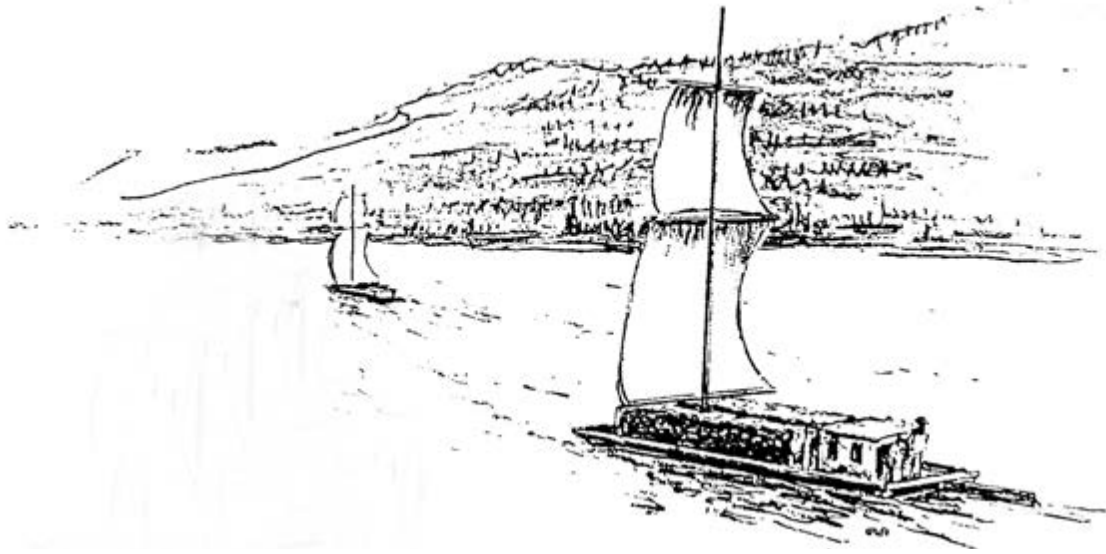
The carpenter's life, his kind treatment of the Indians, whose homes were on his river front and other adventures make a long story. The purpose of this story was to give you a glimpse of an American Pioneer in the west of America, my grandfather.

WOOD SCOWS OF THE MID-COLUMBIA 1860's-1910



Mid-Columbia Wood Scow
1860's-1910
scale: $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$





WOOD SCOWS OF THE MID-COLUMBIA 1860's-1910

by Al Attwell

The demand for stove wood for heating and cooking for the citizens of The Dalles, Oregon, from the late 1850's to 1910, created a thriving business. Especially for the people of Skamania County. A heavy forested area from the upper Cascades east to Wind River. That area from Rock Creek east to Shepard's Point, now the site of Stevenson was the prime source. Stevenson became known as 'Cord-wood City.

This spot on the north bank had two major advantages, one a beautiful stand of suitable timber and the other, there was a strong eddy above Rock Creek. An advantage for the landing and departure for these rectangular sailing vessels.

It was a thriving business for these 'cord-wood carriers. They paid a dollar and a quarter to the wood cutters and sold it for four dollars and fifty cents at The Dalles, a nice mark-up.

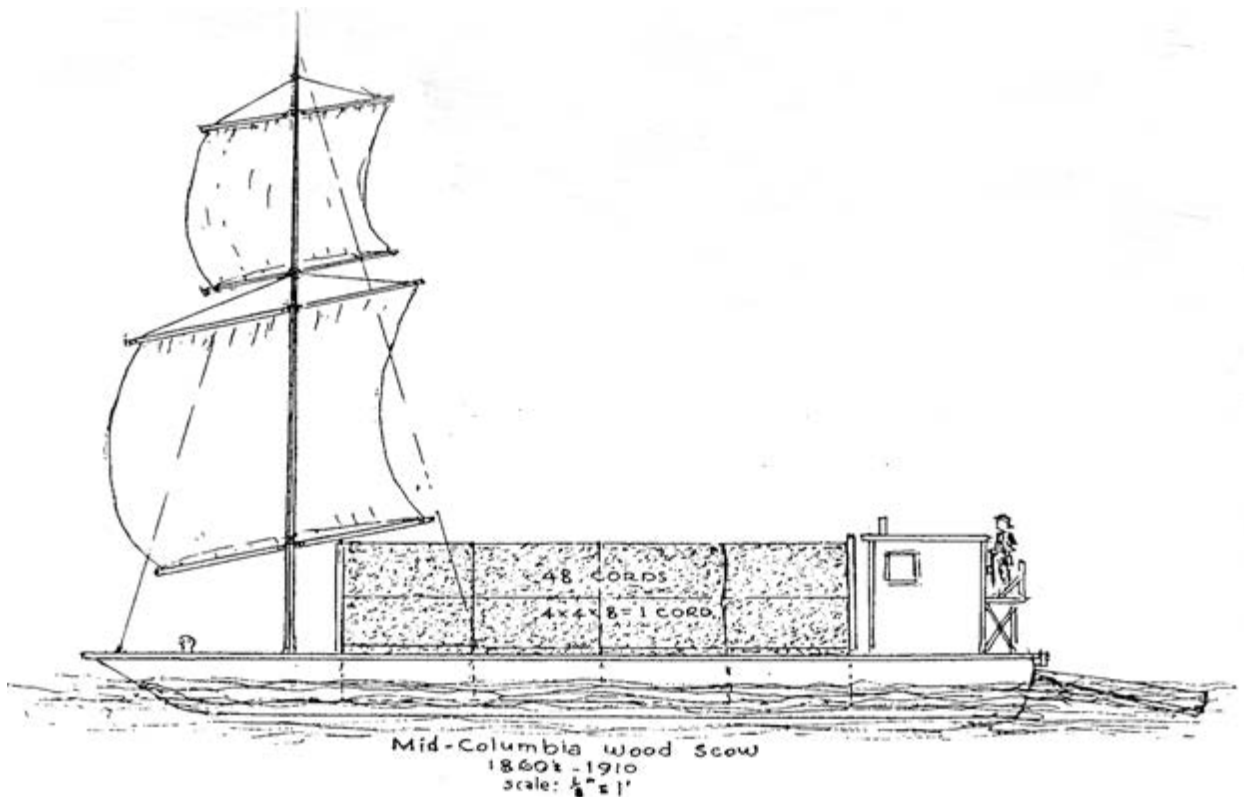
Several individuals ran cord-wood scows from the area. Those early pioneers, Amos Underwood and Felix Iman, worked at Roger Attwells' Boat Yard and Mill. Located at the head of the Cascades on the Oregon side of the Columbia. (now Cascade Locks, Oregon). Roger Attwell became their teacher. Amos and Felix boarded with the Attwells. Later Iman built

scows at Rock Creek. He launched them at the time of the Spring High-Water.

Records of individual scows are rather sparse. Most had given names but no real records. There were as many as fourteen barges that ran ofj the river at this period.

The barges ran in length from 60 to 90 feet. Carrying from 40 to 100 cords at a time.

Their power came from nature, wind and water current. Each scow had a small cabin aft. The cabin served as living quarters with a pilot wheel platform above and in front of the sweep.



The journey to The Dalles, depended upon the westerly winds. During a wind-calm or change to an easterly wind, the barges would need to set anchor and wait for a west wind.

The anchor was often a sack or sacks of rocks, heavy enough to hold the scow against the down current, or the east wind, or both on the up-voyage. At times the wait might be several days. So the barge crew lived on the barge and waited.

Down river was easier and with fewer delays. The top-sail was often rigged across the bow, loaded with a few rocks at the clew (corner of the sail) and lowered into the water. The braces (support ropes) from the yard (sail support rod), These formed what was called “water-sails”.

Cord-wood was also used to fuel the river steamers. This wood fuel was usually picked up at docks, two to four cords at a time. Public buildings also used cord wood for heat until the 1920’s.

Most of the cordwood went to The Dalles. It would be unloaded onto the beach where it was picked up by horse drawn wagons, where it was delivered to homes and places of business.

The best barges were built by J. T. Peters, who came west from Baltimore in the late 1800’s.

The mid-Columbia Wood Scows were built especially for the river. It was necessary that they drew less than five feet (depth). The river was swift and had several mini-rapids, with rock formations hidden below the water line. It was necessary for the pilot to be able to “read” the river. The barges also needed to land on the beach or bank so that they could load and unload.

Cord wood was brought from the forests by horse teams and in a few places by water flume. At The Dalles it was unloaded onto horse drawn wagons for delivery.

The wood scow business as such ended when fuel, coal from the mines in the east and wood could be transported by rail.

The real heros were the bargemen. They knew the river, every rock and eddy. Several became steamer pilots.

The currents on the river have been subdued by the great dams. The winds are still an important element on the great river as it flows to the sea.