

Capt. Wilson Hunt Daniel (1824-1914): 60 Years On River

By Jerry Long
c.2024



Capt. Wilson H. Daniel



The Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 5 June 1914, p.1:

CAPT. W. H. Daniel

One of the Oldest Steamboat Pilots Passes Away Friday Morning.

Was 90 Years of Age

Remains Taken To Troy, His Former Home, For Burial Saturday.

Captain Wilson H. Daniel, author of "Sixty years of Steamboating", a school mate of Henry Clews, the great New York banker and financier, died at the home of his son-in-law, Judge John L. Bretz, in this city early Friday morning.

The Captain celebrated the 90th anniversary of his birth Monday, May 29th and several of his children were present and made the last anniversary of his birth one of the most pleasant of his whole life.

Captain Daniel left Troy, Indiana on September 8, 1840 an apprentice as steersman to learn the river and become a pilot. After 11 months he was made a pilot and was steadily employed on the river from 1840 to 1896 and did some work after 1896 and spent in all, 62 years of his life on the rivers and there gathered the material for the book he wrote entitled, Sixty years of Steamboating.

The Captain had a personal acquaintance with many of the great names of sixty and seventy years ago. He was present when Zachary Taylor, Old Rough and Ready, who had not voted for forty years was notified of his nomination for president of the United States.

Marquis de LaFayette visited the home of John Daniel at Troy, the father of Wilson H. Daniel, on June 8, 1825 and took the future Captain Daniel, who was then a baby, into his arms and the Captain often said, "I am the only Hoosier living that was ever held in the arms of royalty."

He was personally acquainted with Abe Lincoln and also remembered playing with the epaulet on the shoulders of William Henry Harrison, who was at different times at the home of his father.

The captain was an incessant reader up to almost the day of his death, and was one of the best generally informed men in Dubois county.



Capt. Wilson H. Daniel

He leaves surviving him the following children, Rev. John N. Daniel, of Charleston, Ill., Mr. Charles Daniel, of Indianapolis, Mrs. Bettie D. Rogers of Denver, Colorado, Mrs. John L. Bretz of this place, William Daniel, music dealer of Owensboro, Ky., Walter Daniel of Troy, Ind. and Wilson H. Daniel of Roll, Oklahoma.

Captain Daniel was at one time very wealthy, but the civil war and the failure of some steamboat companies several years ago caused him to lose nearly everything he had, but regardless of that, he seemed to forget his losses and his troubles and lived in the future rather than in the past. He lived well. He did right, he was generous. He did not harm to any of his fellowmen. He did not believe it was right to charge a man interest on money loaned. He was a Mason and believed in fraternity.

He had a bright, sunny, happy disposition and got the full measure out of life.

The remains were taken to Troy Saturday morning and the funeral occurred there Sunday.



Graves of Capt. Wilson H. Daniel and his wife, Helen Protsman, in Troy City Cemetery, Troy, Perry County, Indiana

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Indiana State Board of Health.
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

PLACE OF DEATH
County of Dubois
Township of Bainbridge
Town of Jasper
City of _____ (No. _____ St. _____ Ward) [If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution, give the NUMBER (instead of street and number.)]

Registered No. _____

[If death occurs away from LOCAL RESIDENCE give facts needed for cause "Special Information."] **FULL NAME** Wilson Hunt Daniel

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
SEX <u>Male</u>	COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED (Write the word) <u>widower</u>	DATE OF DEATH Month: <u>May</u> Day: <u>29</u> Year: <u>1914</u>	
NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE (If deceased) <u>Helen Daniel</u>			I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from <u>April 1</u> 1914 to <u>May 29</u> 1914 that I last saw him alive on <u>May 28</u> 1914 and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>6:45 A.M.</u>	
DATE OF BIRTH Month: <u>May</u> Day: <u>25</u> Year: <u>1824</u>			The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Senility</u> <u>154</u>	
AGE <u>90</u> years, <u>7</u> months, <u>4</u> days			Contributory (Secondary) _____ (Signed) <u>Geo. H. Galt</u> M. D. 19 _____ (Address) <u>Jasper Ind</u>	
OCCUPATION (1) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work <u>Steamboatman</u> (2) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) <u>Troy, Indiana</u>			*State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or, in case of TRAUMA, CAUSE OF INJURY, and (1) whether external, or internal.	
BIRTHPLACE OF DECEASED (State or country) <u>Troy, Indiana</u>			LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For Hospital, Institution, or other cases) At place of death _____ Where and Cause contracted, if not at place of death _____ Power of final disposition _____	
NAME OF FATHER <u>John M. Daniel</u>			PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Jasper Ind</u>	
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>Virginia</u>			DATE OF BURIAL <u>May 31</u> 1914	
MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Elizabeth Wright</u>			UNDERTAKER <u>Schwartz Bros</u>	
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Troy, Indiana</u>			WHETHER BODY EMBALMED <u>18961011</u>	
*THIS ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Informant) <u>John C. Perry</u> (Address) <u>Jasper Ind</u>			ADDRESS <u>Jasper Ind</u>	
BURNAL PERMITS ISSUED BY <u>G. C. Thompson</u>			EMBALMER'S LICENSE No. <u>250</u>	
Date <u>May 29, 1914</u> Name and Address of Health Officer or Deputy				



Wilson Hunt Wright was born 25 May 1824 in Troy, Perry County, Indiana. He was the son of John M. Daniel (1793-1840) & Elizabeth Wright (1803-1884). He was the grandson of Peter Daniel (c1770-1821) & Nancy Hunt (1775-1816) and Joseph M. Wright (1765-1843) & Nancy Ann McDaniel (1774-1852).

Wilson's parents were married in Perry County, IN on 4 February 1819 four years following the formation of the county. His father, John Daniel, is listed in the 1820 & 1830 censuses of Perry County, IN and his widow, Elizabeth Daniel, in the 1840 census of Perry County, IN. John Daniel fought in the Battle of Tippecanoe and served as a justice of the peace.

Wilson H. Daniel appears in the 1850 census of Troy Township, Perry County, IN; 1860 & 1870 censuses of Huff Township, Spencer County, IN (post office Troy); 1880 census of town of Jasper, Dubois County, IN; 1900 census of town of Troy, Perry County, IN (Troy Township); and 1910 census of town of Jasper, Dubois County, IN.

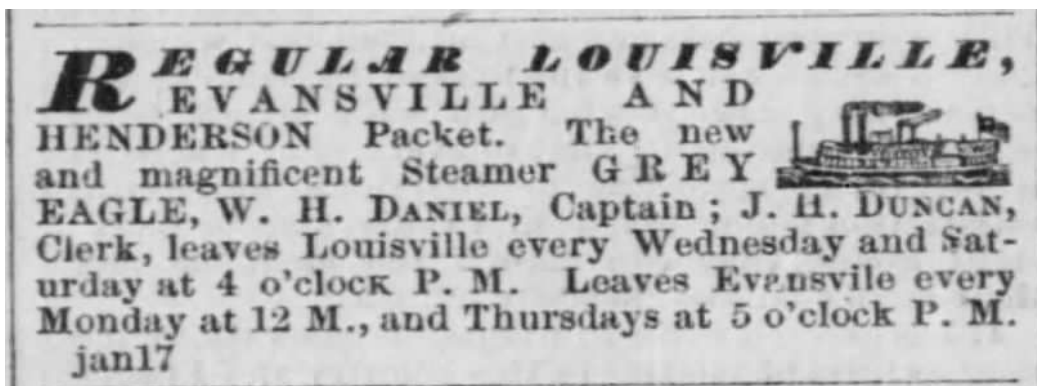
In the 1850 census Wilson Daniel's profession was given as boatman and in the 1880 census as steam boat pilot. During 1879-1885 he operated the Daniel's House Hotel, in Jasper, IN. Wilson H. Daniel died 29 May 1914 in Jasper, IN. He and his wife, Helen, were buried in the Troy City Cemetery, Troy, Perry County, IN.

Wilson H. Daniel married Helen Protsman (1830-1900) on 11 September 1847 in Perry County, IN. Wilson & Helen Daniel were the parents of: John Milton (1848-1920), Wilson Hunt, Jr. (1853-1855), Charles Wright (1855-1926), Helen Amanda (Bretz, 1858-1888); Dixie Bettie (Rogers, 1861-1935), Laura Lee (Bretz, 1865-1930), William Protsman (1868-1949), Walter Vivian (1871-1933) and Wilson Hunt (1871-1943).



Evansville Daily Journal, Evansville, IN, Tuesday, 24 January 1860, p.4:

STEAMBOATS.
Regular Packets.



Evansville Daily Courier, Evansville, IN, Tuesday, 2 November 1875, p.3:

STEAMBOATS.

FOR MEMPHIS, VICKSBURG, NATCHEZ,
NEW ORLEANS AND RED RIVER
DIRECT.


Through Without Reshipping

The new and light draught steamer,
ROBERT YOUNG,
W. H. Daniel, Master;
John M. Daniels, Clerk.

Will leave as above on
**Tuesday, November 2, at 4 p.m.,
Positively,**

Giving through rates and bills of lading to
all points as above, and goes through di
rect without transfer.

For freight and rates apply
to W. H. CONANT, Agent,
124½ Water street.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 9 November 1897, p.4:

Capt. W. H. Daniel, of Troy, is one of the oldest and best known steamboatmen in Southern Indiana. At the request of Captain J. C. Miller and other river men he will write his autobiography describing his early days on the river. He will endeavor to have reproductions of the steamboats on which he first piloted. Troy, Ind, can boast of a large number of old steamboatmen.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 25 March 1900, p.1B:

SIXTY YEARS AGO

CAPT. W. H. DANIEL LANDED AT THIS PORT.

He and the Late John W. Cannon Were on Their Way South to Become Pilots.

Editor Messenger: On the 8th day of April, 1840, I laid by at the foot of Frederica street on the steamboat Water Witch. Today (March 21, 1900) I was looking around, viewing old land marks, and it brought to memory this occurrence, and I thought it not amiss to call the attention of my many old friends and acquaintances to old scenes and names.

My dear old uncle, David Morton, was keeping a store at the foot of Frederica street at that time, and after supper on the boat I sallied forth to visit my Uncle Dave and Aunt Peggy, as we

called her, who were living on Front street, near the cellulose works. I remained with them till late at night, and when I was to go, my dear aunt presented me with a small, beautiful bible, which I have preserved to this day and prize very dearly. With it she gave me her blessing and good wishes for the future. I was then on my way South to become a Red river pilot. I accomplished my desire. On this same boat was the late John W. Cannon, of Hawesville, who was south-bound for the same purpose as myself, but for the Ouachita river. The name of Capt. Cannon is familiarly known on all the Southern and Western rivers as the builder, owner and commander of the finest and fastest boats that ever graced the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. He and I were partners at the wheel on several boats and were tried friends from boyhood.

I believe I am the oldest steamboat man now living and am writing up my steamboat life for fifty-eight years and hope to have the matter ready for the publisher in a few months. Capt. Cannon's ancestors and my grandparents were from the eastern shore of Maryland and neighbors before coming to this country.

W. H. DANIEL



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 3 December 1902, p.1:

AN OLD WAR CLAIM

Capt. W. H. Daniel Wants Pay for the Use of a Boat.

It Was Taken and Used by the Government When Such Action Meant Money.

Capt. W. H. Daniel of Troy is in the city for the purpose of collecting evidence in support of his claim against the government for the use of his boat during the war.

In 1862 Capt. Daniel was owner and commander of the Grey Eagle, one of the largest and finest of the Ohio river boats. There was danger that the Confederates would capture and hold Owensboro and the commander at Louisville decided to send a strong force here to prevent it. He accordingly seized the Grey Eagle and loaded it with troops, arms, ammunition and supplies and shipped them to Owensboro. When the boat landed here she was tied up at the wharf and was kept for several days being detained twelve days in all. The Grey Eagle being a large boat with an expensive crew and doing an immense business, this was a serious loss. Capt. Daniel made out his claim at the time, but it was not allowed, and from time to time since he has endeavored to secure what is justly due him.

Col. Holmes was in Owensboro at the time, but was not in command of the forces. Capt. Netter, who could have secured the payment on an order, did not give it, and was killed while the boat was tied up at the wharf. Capt. Daniel thinks he will secure the money in time, but he says it will have come before many years if it is to do him any good as he is getting old.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 7 December 1902, p.3:



Capt. W. H. Daniel, whose visit to Owensboro last week, for the purpose of getting data on which to base a claim against the United States for the use of his boat, the Grey Eagle, and her crew during the raid of Bragg into Kentucky, was duly chronicled in the Messenger of December 3, is a man rarely rich in reminiscences of the early days, and especially of those in war and ante-bellum times. The captain has collected many of these and is just slow making arrangements to have a volume containing them published. While in the city for this and the purposes named above, he talked quite freely with the writer and repeated to him many of the most interesting facts which will give the proposed volume its chief worth to the general reader.

Capt. Daniel's maternal grandfather, Joseph Wright, was a pioneer settler of Troy, Ind., having removed there from Somerset county, Md., in 1793, taking with him several negro slaves, though he knew at the time that the ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery in the Northwest territory, in which the present site of Troy was located. Mrs. Wright was a Miss Mary Hunt, whose father was a well known stock raiser, near Lexington, Ky.

Another Episode.

Capt. Daniel's father, Peter Daniel, raised a company of soldiers in the war of 1812 near his home, which was then at Winchester, Ky., and while en route to the seat of war in the West he camped at Troy.

It was then that he met Miss Wright, whom he afterward married.

Bevion Daniel settled at Hardinsburg and built there the noted stone house, which is still standing on the public square, and which bears on its front the date of its erection, 1811.

The town of Troy was laid off in 1811 and as that was the year when the last vestige of hostile savagery was driven from the Indiana territory, that fertile region began soon to fill rapidly with worthy immigrants, and a large share of them landed at Troy, either to remain there or to go to the interior of the territory, as that was then a convenient and popular point of embarkation.

Here Capt. Daniel was born May 25, 1824. One of his earliest recollections is of his parents telling of the earthquake of 1811. A wandering squad of Indians was known to be in the locality of Troy when the great earthquake took place, and when the very perceptible upheavals occurred the occupants of the Wright home thought the Indians were under the floor and bent on some serious mischief. It was some time before they learned better.

He had often heard flatboatmen, who were on the river at the time, tell of the seismic trouble. One of the best known of these was James Porter, whose home was at Troy. He afterward became a noted steamboat pilot and captain. When the earthquake took place he was a cook on a flatboat which was landed at New Madrid, Mo. Porter always told that he felt the first upheaval of the earthquake as he reached through the scuttle hole of the flatboat for a pan of water. A pebble was thrown into the pan, and this he took out and kept as a souvenir of the awful catastrophe. He brought it home and the family kept it many years as a memento of the happening that scared many and that is still a subject of deep interest much talked of in the Mississippi valley and in scientific circles throughout the world. Porter often said the night was the darkest he ever experienced and that he did not know what in the world was happening. He has a daughter still living at Troy. The general tradition there is that the earthquake "shook the chickens off the roost," it was so severe.

Robert Fulton at Troy.

Another very interesting episode relates to the coming of Robert Fulton, the builder of the first steamboat, and his brother, Abram Smythe Fulton, to Troy. Wright and his neighbors were in

the habit of going to the Tarascon Bros.' mill at New Albany, the nearest mill for their grinding." On one occasion when there they met Robert Fulton. He was quite inquisitive about down-river points, and especially about Troy.

The Trojans finally invited him to go with them to Troy. This he did and he was so well pleased with the place as a trade point and as a place at which to get supplies of wood for a steamboat, which he expected to launch at Pittsburg, that as soon as he returned to the latter place he at once built a flat boat, loaded it with a varied stock of goods and sent his brother in charge of it to open a store at Troy. The voyage was made safely and as soon as Fulton reached his destination he at once set about building. He selected for the site of his store the highest point at Troy. This is now well known as the spot on which stands the dwelling of Capt. L. F. Bergenroth. The house was of hewn logs and it was when the fifth round of logs was being put up that one of them slipped from the skids fell on Abram Futon, killing him instantly. He was buried there and his unmarked grave is still there, though the exact spot is now unknown. Capt. Daniels has recently corresponded with a grand nephew of the Fultons, whose name is Robert Fulton Ludlow, and who now resides at Claverack, New York, with a view to the having the grave suitably marked. and this nephew has signified his intention of having the matter attended to.

The death of a brother in this tragic way caused Robert to lose all interest in Troy and, though he had patented nearly every acre of land between Troy and Cannelton, he soon disposed of his interests and never returned to the place, except to come and take his brother's family away to Pittsburg.

Lafayette's Visit.

Another of the early and important events in the history of the country, of which Capt. Daniel has almost direct information, is the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette to America and his journey up the Ohio river. He, in company with his suite, was going north on the steamer *Mechanic* when that boat sank two miles above Troy, on June 8, 1825. The distinguished visitors were taken to Troy on a large hand-ferry boat and they remained there for several days. When told by Capt. Daniel's father of the death and burial of Robert Fulton's brother at that place Lafayette became greatly interested and went with him to view the spot where Fulton was buried and also the building in the erection of which he was killed.

Capt. Daniel was then a child not two years old and Gen. Lafayette was very much attached to him, taking him in his arms and fondling him caressingly. In speaking of this Capt. Daniel said he doubted not that he was the only "Hoosier baby ever handled by royalty."

In those days steamboats carried small cannon and fired them as signals of their approach, instead of blowing whistles as now. A few days after the *Mechanic* sank landing signals were heard from two boats, the *Highland Laddie* and the *Paragon*, both coming down the river and bound for New Orleans. They landed and soon it was arranged to transfer all of the passengers and freight from the *Highland Laddie* to the *Paragon* and thus permit the former to return to Marietta, O., to which place Lafayette was going, when the *Mechanic* sank.

Distinguished Passengers.

An occurrence in more recent times and one in which Capt. Daniel was an active participant took place early in 1861. When about to leave Louisville with his principal boat, the *Grey Eagle*, he received a message from Lexington, Ky., requesting him to hold his boat for two hours and a number of passengers would go down the river with him. It transpired that the party was made up of John C. Breckinridge, Humphrey Marshall and others, who were going South on a tour,

speaking at Kentucky points in favor of "armed neutrality." A contract was made to stop for two hours at each of the following places: Owensboro, Henderson, Paducah and Memphis, that speeches might be made. The meeting at Owensboro had been well advertised and a great crowd had assembled. People were, however, sadly divided in sentiment and those who opposed an "armed neutrality" policy for Kentucky succeeded in getting Archibald Dixon, then a noted orator and politician of Henderson, to come to Owensboro and answer Breckinridge. This caused the crowd to be all the greater. The Grey Eagle arrived on time and two of Kentucky's greatest intellectual giants went at each other most earnestly. It was a great battle and, of course, victory was not wholly with either. Even to this day local sentiment is divided as to which made the greater speech.

Last Shipment South.

But then, as now, there were business men in Owensboro, and while some were thinking of nothing but the speeches, Capt. Daniel had contracted with Robert Triplett to take 194 hogsheads of tobacco to Memphis for him, and this was, doubtless, the last tobacco shipment made to the Southern markets from Owensboro.

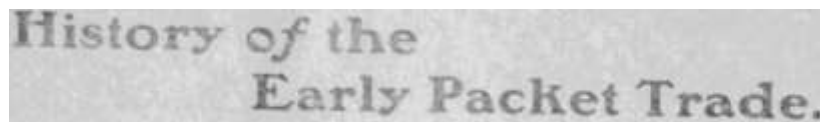
The Grey Eagle left somewhat late, but made all her agreed stops, and John C. Breckinridge made all his agreed speeches, but no where did he encounter such oratorical opposition as at Owensboro.

Capt. Daniel says it was on this occasion that he saw the first Confederate soldiers. These were a company here at that time in command of Capt. Jack Thompson.

Soon after this, while at Baton Rouge, Capt. Daniel attended a great meeting held there to give moral encouragement to what "was then known as the Crittenden compromise and from which many hoped peace would result. But Clay's successor could not fill Clay's shoes as a pacificator and late at night the message came from Washington, "No hope whatever." Then the meeting adjourned and war only was thought of by the men and all the women melted into tears.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 23 August 1903, p.11:



Editor Inquirer: There is always something or other floating around in print regarding the early days of steamboating on the Ohio river which is an injustice to the memory of those pioneers who made steamboating great and kept it great in their day. The history of the packet trade on the river is more misrepresented than any other phase and it is in this that I propose to set at rest.

The packet trade was conceived and born in the town of Troy, Ind., and Capt. Preston Lodwick was its father. He was a prominent merchant at Troy and saw that something must be done the river traffic. There were but light draft boats below the falls and consequently the merchants could get their goods from Louisville in summer and fall, when they were most needed. The merchants of Troy would band together and go to those cities on horseback or in wagons, there dispose of their animals, buy flatboats, put their goods in them and float them down the river

to their homes. The boats would then be reloaded with the products of the country and shipped to New Orleans.

On one of these trips to Cincinnati, while looking for flats they needed, the merchants discovered a small steamboat with a "for sale" sign hung on her. The owner was found, and an investigation showed that she was just the boat that was needed in their business. They bought it and two flats. All perishable goods were placed on the boat and the heavy stuff on two flats, and the run to Troy was quickly made. This boat was the Sylph and this trip was made in 1845.

I was a full fledged pilot in Red river at that time. Yellow fever had broken out in New Orleans and I concluded it was not healthy for me and came home. People from up the river were called "snow-diggers," and could not stand the fever. I took the first boat for the Ohio river. When I reached my old home I found the Sylph painted up and ready for business. I had not been back to my old home, and had not been back home for years, and I had something to do among the girls and old friends, and it was some days before I met Capt. Lodwick. When I did meet him the usual salutations were passed and he said, "Well Wils., I want you to come and see my boat and tell me what you think of her".

"All right," said I: "What trade will you put her in?"

"I don't know," he said: "how do you think she would do between Louisville and Yellow Banks. She can make two trips a week."

I replied that I did not know until it was tried but that I believed a lucrative business could be built up between those points. Capt. Lodwick said that he was not acquainted along the river, but that he had a great mind to try it. I told him that I had an uncle in Yellow Banks, who was an influential man, a large merchant and a tobacconist. I told him I would use what influence I had with him and would go with the boat and write my uncle and tell him of the plans. I did so and in about two weeks I received a letter from my uncle. He said he thought it was a bad venture, but that if we tried it he would do all he could for us. I showed the letter to the captain. "It does not look very encouraging," he said, "but we will give it a trial anyway. The adage says, 'A blind hog occasionally finds an acorn' and we will try it."

He wanted to know when I could be ready and I told him as soon as I could find an Ohio river pilot. Tom Gilday, of New Albany, came down and we made arrangements for the trial trip.

The Sylph was 130 feet long and drew five feet. I can't say what beam she had. The front cabin was open and in the ladies' cabin the bunks ran fore and aft, so you see the boat was quite different from the boats of today. There was a bar and no skylight. On the first trip Capt. Lodwick invited everybody in Troy to go and quite a number responded. With only one pilot we ran only in daytime. On our arrival at Yellow Banks we were introduced to everybody in the village by uncle David Morton. We gave a reception on the boat with a supper and I an old-fashioned dance. We had a nice time and met with some encouragement. We lay at the bank all night and the next day got some tobacco and other freight and a number of passengers. We left Yellow Banks in the evening and got some freight and some passengers at Rockport. We tied up for the night where Grandview is now, and the next morning proceeded on our way to Louisville. The Sylph was therefore the first packet on the river below the falls. The first trip was a success and business increased so that the boat could not care for it.

I remained on the boat for some time and soon became a full-fledged Ohio river pilot between Yellow Banks and Louisville. Capt. Lodwick sold the Sylph after a few trips to an Illinois river company and bought the Gallant, a much larger, faster and finer boat. Like the Sylph and a majority of the other boats of that time she was a single engine craft. He ran the Gallant for some time and found out that she was too small for the growing trade. He decided to have a running

mate for her. He had built at Portsmouth, O. the Swallow, which was larger and faster, and engine boat, the marvel of the waters. These changes took about three years, in which time there were two good, fast boats, with all the freight and passengers that they could handle on every trip.

Envious eyes viewed the situation and greed and avarice took the place of fair dealing between men. A company of capitalists with large means joined in to crush the man who risked his all to establish a trade that those capitalists were afraid to undertake. They knew that with the capital they had behind them they could drive Capt. Lodwick out of the river. They built the Fawn and chartered another boat and commenced cutting the rates at the start. Capt. Lodwick was a man of judgment and said that he could not fight against such odds. He told his friends that he could go into the war but he saw nothing but ruin. He said that he had built up a fine trade, but rather than lose all he had he decided to withdraw his boats and look for other trade. The new people did not have things all their own way. Until the Louisville and Evansville Packet company was organized there was all sorts of competition. Competition is the life of trade, it is said. The right sort of competition is really good for trade, as David Hamm said a reasonable amount of fleas was good for a dog. A reasonable competition would be good for the monopoly we have now.

After the Fawn, the James Pitcher, the Atlantic, Capt. Ayers, The Hibernia, Capt. Sim Sullivan, the Diamond, Capt. Weeks, the Diana, Capt. Protsman and the Clara Fisher. Capt. Ayers the latter a stem-winder and the fastest of them all. The Holcroft Bros. built the famous Rainbow, which held the trade for quite a while, but had considerable opposition. Finally she was withdrawn and was put into the New Orleans trade and was burned at the mouth of the Arkansas river many lives being lost.

The next boat was the H. M. Summers, owned by Ben and Philo Duncan of Cloverport. She sank at the Anderson bar above Lewisport. They replaced her with the W. A. Eaves, ran the latter some time, sold her and bought the Scioto No. 2, Capt. Aaron Ballard. Before this time Capt. Steve Paxton built the Reindeer. She was a magnificent boat. She made five trips when her owner withdrew her and put her in the New Orleans trade. She sank on her first trip at Raccoon Eddy. Several other boats made a few trips between Owensboro and Louisville and quit in disgust.

In 1859 Capt. Philo Duncan, Capt. Aaron Ballard and myself built the Gray Eagle and bought the Bracelet. We thus had a line of three boats.

Just as our great civil war began I made several trips with the Gray Eagle to Now Orleans. I sat in tile capitol at Baton Rouge and saw the Pelican state voted out of the union.

The Eugene and the Star or Little Gray Eagle, as she was called, were put in this trade, against our boats. Both were fast and fine, but they met with poor success, although they cost us much money by cutting rates. I carried thousands of people from Louisville to Evansville for \$2.50 for the round trip. Whole families in those cities shut up their houses and moved on the boats, as it was cheaper than boarding or keeping house. You see we had a hard fight to hold our trade but success perched upon our banner at last.

There was at that time a daily line of mail boats between Louisville and St. Louis, but the railroad, which had just been built through was killing them. They were trying hard to rid themselves of the U.S. mail contracts. They approached our company and proposed to make Evansville one terminus and Cairo another. They wanted us to carry the mail from Louisville to Evansville to connect with Capt. Bowen, who was running to Cairo. I told them that if they withdraw all other boats below the falls I would carry the mails three times a week for a given sum. They accepted my terms, so you see I carried the first mail on the Ohio river between Louisville and Evansville with the latter place as a terminus. This line or boats was made up of the Alvin Adams, Thomas Swan, Moses B. McClellan, Baltimore, Southerner, and Northerner all fine and fast boats.

After this there were several other boats to enter this packet trade, the Elnora, Capt. Bob Boyd, and the Lady Grace. I commanded the Norman in this trade until the government took her for military purposes. My company sold the Grey Eagle to the I. and E. packet company.

This is only a brief sketch of the history of the local packet trade, but I hope it may put to rest for time the controversy as to who first entered this trade with a steamer and where the idea was originated and put into execution. I am proud to know that it my old home, Troy, the place of my birth. I am also proud to say that I participated in the establishment of this magnificent and at one time splendidly profitable business, and was pilot on the first boat that ever turned a wheel below the falls of the Ohio as local packet.

W. H. DANIEL



**Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 25 August 1907, p.9
and Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 16 August 1907, p.1:**



While People on the Hudson Are celebrating the
Fulton Centennial Western People Recall Visits.

TROY TRAGEDY RECALLS FULTON

Fulton's Brother Was Killed at the Indiana Town
While Helping to Erect a Log House.

Jasper Ind., Aug 23 — While the people all along the Hudson river are celebrating the centennial of the sailing of Robert Fulton's steamboat, the Clermont, and while the bands are playing "Bonnie Doon," Robert Fulton's favorite song, the people along the Ohio river in southern Indiana will also rejoice over the event, because Robert Fulton is as dear to the people of Troy and Perry county as he is to the people of New York and Pennsylvania.

It was at Troy, Ind., that Robert Fulton began the erection of a residence on the most beautiful and picturesque spot that Robert's brother Abraham Smythe Fulton was crushed to death by one of the logs of the house he was erecting for his brother falling upon him; it was at Troy that the body of his brother is buried, and at Troy that Robert Fulton conducted a woodyard and started a store. It was in Perry county that Fulton bought a large tract of land, which extended from the present site of Troy to the new prosperous city of Cannelton.

At Troy, on the site where Robert Fulton's house was to have been erected and where Robert's brother was killed, a monument was to be erected to perpetuate Robert Fulton's memory. For this purpose \$18,000 had been subscribed, when Capt. Wilson H. Daniel carried a subscription list for that purpose.

According to the story told by Capt. Wilson H. Daniel, of this place, but formerly of Troy Robert Fulton came to Troy from Louisville with Joseph Wright, grandfather of Capt. Daniel, and

the first white man to settle below the falls of the Ohio, settling near the present site of Troy in 1793.

Fulton first visited Troy about 1805 or 1806. It was necessary in those days for people living at Troy to go to Louisville a distance of 130 miles, to Tarascon's mill, to get their corn ground. While Joseph Wright was at Louisville on one of these trips Robert Fulton happened by where Mr. Wright was unloading several canoes which were loaded with corn, and, after making inquiry as to where the corn was grown, fell into conversation with Mr. Wright about Troy and its surroundings and finally agreed to accompany Mr. Wright on his return home.

At the time he visited Troy he had his steamboat under construction and startled the people of Troy by telling them how his vessel would travel through the water propelled by steam.

A few years later, in 1811, Fulton proved himself as good as his word and reached Troy aboard the Orleans, the first steamboat that ever plied the Ohio river The "Thing," as the people called it, landed, and Robert Fulton put his brother, Abraham Smythe Fulton, his goods and his family off, while Robert, after planning a house for his brother to build for him on one of the most picturesque and commanding sites on the Ohio river, went to New Orleans.

The house was begun and was five logs high on the north, east south sides, but while putting the fifth log in place on the west it slipped and fell upon Abraham S. Fulton who was superintending erection of the building for his brother, and killing him instantly. His remains were buried in what is now the Troy cemetery, but his grave is unmarked and Capt. W. H. Daniel is the only living person who knows the exact spot where on the he is sleeping.

Robert apparently became discouraged with Troy after the tragic death of his brother and finally sold out his wood-yard and general store to Vivian Daniel and took his brother Abe's family back to Pittsburg and entirely abandoned the erection of the building where his brother was killed. The logs remained there and rotted and furnished homes for the lazy lizards, which the boys of the town including Capt. Daniel in his youthful days, endeavored to kill with their bows and arrows.

On June 29, 1825 the steamboat "Mechanic," bearing Gen. Marquis De Lafayette and suite of officers, who had been visiting Gen. Jackson at the "Hermitage," at 4 o'clock that morning ran on to a log embedded in the sand and sank, and there her hull remains to this day. All aboard the boat finally reached Troy, and while Lafayette was standing on one of the decaying logs of the old Fulton building, from which point he could look up the Ohio river a distance of nine miles and down the river a distance of twenty miles, he declared: "Right here on this spot should be erected some monument of that great man, Robert Fulton.

Capt. Daniel hoping to carry out the suggestion made by Lafayette, prepared and circulated a subscription list to erect a monument to perpetuate the memory of Fulton. The list was circulated In 1854 when steamboating was in its zenith and \$18,000 was subscribed by responsible steamboat men, but near this time one Ham Smith, Sr., superintendent of the Cannelton cotton mills, wrote an article which was widely published and in which he maintained that the monument should be erected on the hill at Cannelton, because Fulton at one time owned the land from Troy to Cannelton. This arrangement did not meet with the approval of men who subscribed the money and the whole matter fell through.

Many people in Indiana do not even know that Robert Fulton ever lived in Indiana, and this sketch is the published history of steamboating by W. H. Daniel. The townsite laid out by Fulton, where a coal bank was opened, still retains its name of Fulton, although the coal has been exhausted and only one house now marks the spot, which is about half way between Cannelton and Troy, substance of a chapter from the unpublished History of Steamboating by W. H. Daniel. The beacon light, which was established by the United States government thirty years ago, is still

maintained, the bar at that point being a great barrier to navigation and called after Robert Fulton, Fulton's bar.

The records of Perry county, these names and the memory of Fulton's visits to Troy are all that remain here to recall the memory of the great inventor, but the steamboats along the Ohio and the officers in command of them will duly celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Fulton's great invention next Saturday.



Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 29 May 1908, p.4:



Capt. Wilson H. Daniel

Capt. W. H. Daniel, who is now making his home in Jasper, though he still clings to Troy, the place of his birth, as his legal place of residence, celebrated his 84th birthday anniversary, last Monday.

Despite his advancing years, Capt. Daniel still takes an active interest in life and the progress of science and invention. He has a patent on a cultivator, and has invented several things which benefitted other people as Capt. Daniel had failed to secure letters patent.

He has a "History of Steamboating" written and still in manuscript form, which is very interesting, and which he hopes some day to be able to publish.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 2 November 1909, p.8:

A VETERAN STEAMBOATMAN

Capt. W. H. Daniel, Probably the Oldest Steamboatman of Western Rivers Is a Visitor.

BUILT AND RAN FIRST GREY EAGLE

That Boat Brought John C. Breckinridge Down
the Ohio on His Famous Anti-Secession Tour .

Capt. W. H. Daniel of Jasper, Ind., is in the city the guest of his son, Mr. W. P. Daniel. Capt. Daniel is well known by many of the older residents of the city. He steamboated on the Ohio, Mississippi and Red rivers for 60 years and is probably the oldest steamboatman on the western rivers living today. He is 85 years old.

He was in the business at same time as Mark Twain and knew. Mr. Twain in the early days of steam boating on Red river.

Capt. Daniel built the old Grey Eagle, one of the most popular Ohio steamers of ante-bellum days. It the Grey Eagle which John C. Breckinridge down the Ohio from Louisville on a speaking tour of the river towns against the secession of Kentucky from the union of states. Mr. Breckinridge spoke at the old courthouse, and the boat waited two hours at the wharf till he could make his speech.

Capt. Daniel has prepared the manuscript for a book entitled "Sixty Years of Steamboating on the Ohio, Mississippi and Red Rivers."



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 25 September 1910, p.1B:



At Mouth of Yellow Creek, On Ohio, Just Above Owensboro

CONCRETE CASKETS UNEARTHED IN 1843

By a Hurricane, and Were Sent to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington

There are but few people now living in Owensboro who are aware of the fact that near this city there is a prehistoric burying ground which is supposed to be of enormous size and which was discovered by accident.

There came a hurricane of considerable force, which crossed the Ohio river at or near the mouth of Yellow creek, a few miles above the city in the year 1843, which destroyed a great many forest trees. The uprooting of a large yellow poplar, the roots of which sank deep into the alluvial soil just below the creek unearthed two large caskets of enormous size, six feet and a half long by four feet wide and 30 inches in depth, composed of material similar to the concrete we are using at this age, and cemented with a substance as hard as flint.

One of the caskets was perfect. The other had a corner about a yard square torn off by the roots of this huge poplar, which was five feet in diameter. They were discovered by Mr. Walker R. Hawes, who first saw these singular prehistoric relics. He and others hauled them to the waters edge on a sled drawn by oxen. The writer was pilot on the steamer Sylph the first packet to ply between this city and the Falls how the city of Louisville, in 1845, commanded by Captain Preston Lodwick of Troy, Indiana, which is the second oldest town in the state of Indiana. Vincennes has priority.

The Sylph was a small sidewheel boat with an open cabin. She was 115 feet long and light draught. She was a tri-weekly packet and always left Owensboro at 9 a. m. and Sunday was one of the days on which it left. One Sunday morning I was at the wheel — September 1845 I answered a hail just below the mouth of the creek. I then saw lying near the water, these caskets and several people, among them being Walker R. Hawes and Thomas McCreery, who, with others, assisted in getting the heavy caskets on board the boat.

I hope some of those who may see this article may come to my aid in these facts. I was given these relics and sent them to the Smithsonian institute at Washington, D. C.

I mentioned this to Major Weebe Hawes, who is well known in this county, a few years before his death and in his mode of language, he said: "H — h! I know all about it. It covers a thousand acres and I believe that I can get men here to assist in excavating those old Indian relics."

All I know is that I have seen by the banks caving in considerably, but there was a second bank further back when these caskets were unearthed. I hope some enthusiast will make a new effort to make a thorough search and bring to light something prehistoric.

W. H. DANIEL.



Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 31 May 1914, p.10:

CAPT. W. H. DANIEL

Well Known Retired Steamboat Captain Dead

Father of W. P. Daniel of Owensboro and Had frequently Visited Here

Evansville, Ind., May 30— Captain Wilson H. Daniel, owner of the steamer, Gray Eagle, which plowed the Ohio river during the civil war, passed away yesterday morning at 9 o'clock at the home of his son-in-law, Judge J. L. Bretz, in Jasper, Ind. Death was due to the infirmities of age. He was in his ninethieth year and was planning to celebrate his ninety-first birthday next Monday. Captain Daniel was a newspaper man of no small ability, and many have read and enjoyed his column of river news. His son-in-law, Judge Bretz, is judge of the circuit court of Pike and Dubois counties. He was born in Troy, Ind., and leaves four sons, Rev. John Daniel, pastor of the Baptist church at Charleston, Ill., Charles, Wilson, Jr., W. P. Daniel of Owensboro, Ky., and Walter of Troy and two daughters, Mrs. J. L. Bretz of Jasper and Bettye of Denver, Colo. The funeral services over his remains will be held Sunday at his home in Troy and burial will take place in the cemetery at that place.



Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 4 June 1929, p.2:

HEARD ABOUT TOWN

W. P. Daniel has a very interesting window display at his music store in Third street in interest of Confederate Memorial day. American and Confederate flags are in evidence. Gen. Robert E. Lee's picture stands on one side of the window and on the other is a painting of the Grey

Eagle, a Louisville to Henderson U. S. mail packet, which played an important part in the War Between the States, as a mail boat operating between Louisville and New Orleans. It was built by Capt. Wilson H. Daniel, father of W. P. Daniel, in 1858 in the Howard shipyards at Jeffersonville, Ind. History of the boat is given with the picture. In the center of the display is a lighted poster bearing the words: "In honor of the loyalty and bravery of those who fought and lost."



See also:

“Gen Zachariah Taylor”, Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 16 January 1903, p.8.

“Historic Document: First Marriage Permit Issue in Indiana to a Relative of Capt. Daniel”, Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 30 December 1904, p.8.

“Wooden Shoes From Dubois County For Miss Roosevelt”, Indianapolis News, Indianapolis, IN, Friday, 16 February 1906, p.5.

“To Save His Own Life: Captain Daniel Was Forced to Fight Off a Frenzied Young Lady”, Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 16 October 1908, p.1.

“Popular Steamboat Excursion”, Jasper Herald, Jasper, IN, Friday, 25 December 1908, p.4.

“Men of War: Participated in the Hudson – Fulton Celebration Held at New Yor City the Past Week”, Tell City News, Tell City, IN, Saturday, 2 October 1909, p.1.

“Honest Abe Lincoln Was A. Trickster According To Story”, Tell City News, Tell City, IN, Friday, 29 May 1957, p.7B.



Troy City Cemetery, Troy, IN