

THE 1955 HISTORICAL TOUR

C. W. W. ELKIN*

Part 1

PITTSBURGH-KITTANNING

ON Saturday, July 23rd, 1955 the Fourteenth Annual Summer Tour of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh Summer Session consisted of a combined boat and bus trip up the Allegheny River from Pittsburgh to Kittanning. A group of 175 members of the historical Society and the University of Pittsburgh faculty, students and friends was taken up stream on a houseboat of the United States Steel Corporation and a barge of the United States Engineers Corps, towed by the diesel *Sara*.

Leaving the Allegheny River wharf just below the Sixth Street bridge at 9:00 A.M., the boat trip was made in nine hours. During this time hot coffee and cold drinks were available and at noon an ample box lunch was served.

After leaving the mooring at the foot of Stanwix Street a running account of the points of interest on the river banks was kept up over loud speakers by Captain Fred Way, Jr., of Sewickley who is an authority on the Allegheny River, and we are proud to add, one of our members.

Six locks were passed where slack-water dams are maintained. Captain Way noted the many efforts that have been made by the United States Engineers, various shipbuilders, industrialists interested in iron, salt, petroleum, sand, packet lines, and the Allegheny River Improvement Association in maintaining a more navigable stream. The homes of several past and present river-boat captains were pointed out along the river banks, as well as many camping sites and collections of the river's pleasure craft.

Our party arrived at Kittanning somewhat ahead of schedule having met with only slight delay at one lock. We were conveyed by bus to the Kittanning Country Club for dinner. At the dinner meeting James Henry presided and introduced several persons who have been active in the recently re-organized Armstrong County Historical Society,

* Editor's Note—This account as originally written by Dr. Elkin included a reporter's account of Captain Way's comments on historic spots, but when it was found that the notes Captain Way used were available, it was decided to omit the brief report and reproduce much of the detailed material as Captain Way had presented it. See following article.

of which James Perry King is president. The address of welcome was made by J. Frank Graff, president judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Armstrong County, after which Edward Crump, Jr., Vice President of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, introduced C. Stanton Belfour, program chairman of the Historical Society, Viers Adams, Director of the Summer Session of the University of Pittsburgh, Carroll Reynolds of the committee and Robert D. Christie, Director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Mr. Christie read letters from Dr. S. K. Stevens, State Historian of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Buell Whitehill, president of the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society, both of whom expressed regret at being unable to be present. He also conveyed an expression of appreciation and thanks from our librarian Franklin Holbrook, then in the hospital, for their kindly interest and words of encouragement. About 200 persons then heard an address by Mr. Harry C. Golden on "Historic Armstrong County" in which references were made to the historic significance of the Allegheny River and its importance in the development of the various enterprises located along its banks, the locks and flood dams along the river and its tributaries; the early settlement of Kittanning; and its court house. He dwelt on the importance of Armstrong's expedition (1756) in wiping out the Indian raiders and thus protecting other settlements in the Western Pennsylvania region. Colonel Armstrong was given little by the Penns—about 150 acres elsewhere but the claim was later transferred to Armstrong County. Kittanning was laid out in 1804, incorporated in 1821. Other towns in the County were referred to and their importance noted by the speaker.

At the conclusion of the dinner we bade good bye to our gracious hosts, boarded five buses, and returned to Pittsburgh dropping passengers along the way as we neared the city. The last bus arrived at the point of departure on schedule at 11:00 P.M. There is evidence this is regarded as one of our most enjoyable tours and it is hoped those who attended will be with us again next year.

Part 2

THE TOUR UNDER WAY

Imagine yourself seated on a forward deck of a spacious houseboat which has just cast off and is slowly heading upstream on the Allegheny River under the steady impulse of a sturdy little towboat. There is un-

obstructed view of both banks of the Allegheny and ahead one can see a succession of bridges. The day is clear and warm with the suggestion of a breeze from the motion of the boat. The voice you immediately hear is that of Captain Frederick Way, Jr., coming over a loud speaker behind you, set just inside the cabin door.¹ His voice will be heard intermittently during the next nine hours as we pass successive points of interest:²

Our towboat was built by Dravo in 1937. It is a six cylinder diesel of 350 horse power. Originally operated by their Keystone Division, it was sold to Captain Frank Valentine in 1949 and the name was changed from *Dravo 41* to *Sara*. Captain Valentine is at the helm today.

On the shore to your left which we call the right bank of the river stood the log house of James Robinson on what is today the foot of Federal Street. It was this cabin which is incorporated in the seal of the old city of Allegheny. James operated a ferry across here at Sixth Street. His son General William Robinson was born in that cabin, thereby becoming the first white child born west of the Allegheny. It was occupied about 1785.

The first bridge at Pittsburgh in the Allegheny was the St. Clair Street Bridge, built of wood, on stone piers. Built in 1819. This was a forerunner of the Sixth Street Bridge under which we are passing. The old Hand Street Bridge at what is today Ninth Street was built in 1837.

A structure which resembles a bridge, in the early pictures of the river, is in reality a canal which crossed the river, in an aqueduct 35 feet above the low water mark, close to the site of the present PRR bridge on Eleventh Street. This aqueduct of the Pennsylvania Canal was completed in December 1837. It was used until August 1843 and was then condemned as unsafe for canal boats. It was then that John Roebling rebuilt it using wire rope to suspend the tremendous weight of its water. It had seven spans of 160 feet, six piers and two abutments. It was completed June 2, 1845. In April 1861 it sagged between the third and fourth piers on the Allegheny side and was closed. Two canal boats were captive in Pittsburgh. When temporary repairs were made and water let in, the section between the abutment and the first pier fell. It

¹ Captain Way is the author of *The Allegheny*, a book in a series on the rivers of America by authorities who know them best.

² This account was prepared from Captain Way's notes on cards from which he spoke. We have taken some liberties as to arrangement and omissions, especially of names of river men. There are a few minor additions.—RDC

was then abandoned. It was torn down in 1864 and the stone used by the PRR. It should be noted that this was the first test of strength of wire rope in anything *resembling* a bridge. In 1846 Roebling used it in the Smithfield Street Bridge, and in 1859 the St. Clair Street Bridge was condemned and rebuilt using Roebling's rope with two spans of 350 feet each. The Niagara and Brooklyn bridges were to use it much later.

The famed old Fort Pitt Foundry stood near the end of the aqueduct. Three iron sea-going vessels were built here during the Mexican War. *The Jefferson* (went to Lake Ontario), *The John Tyler* and *The George M. Bibb*. During the Civil War many monster guns were made here. It furnished 80 per cent of the big guns for the Yanks. The first twenty-inch gun was built here, February 12, 1864. In 1928 the PRR bought the site, then owned by Mackintosh-Hemphill Company. Two war galleys were built on the banks of the Allegheny at Pittsburgh 1798-99 supervised by Major Isaac Craig. They had model hulls and were rowed. Named *President Adams* and *Senator Ross*, they were the first boats capable of sea voyage built at Pittsburgh. Commercial sailing ships were once built in the Allegheny—*The Dean* of 170 tons built in 1803 went to Liverpool with cotton; also built were the *Allegheny* of 150 tons, 1804; and the *Black Walnut* of 150 tons, 1806.

The Mechanics Street Bridge at Sixteenth Street, built in 1837, known as the Upper Bridge, burned in 1851 and was replaced by a wire suspension bridge.

Old Lock One above the Sixteenth Street Bridge opened on January 1, 1903. It was the first dam on the Allegheny and also the first one of concrete in the Pittsburgh district. It was removed in 1938 as unnecessary when the crest at the Emsworth Dam had been raised seven feet.

The Thirty-first Street Bridge is built across Herr's Island (It appears on a map of 1825 as Hare's Island). Prior to 1849 it had a saw-mill, and rafts were moored below it to avoid running the Pittsburgh bridges. Just off the northern end of Herr's Island along the eastern shore lay Wainwright or Garrison Island. It was completely filled in to the shore, narrowing the river. Opposite this island in pioneer days was the mouth of Two Mile Run. Nearby was the site of the Delaware Indian village of Loups otherwise known as Shannopin Town, named for a former chief. There was a good ford at this point and the Venango Path led from it to French Creek known as the Venango River. When Celoron came down the river August 7, 1749 the occupants had fled to Logstown and he found only three men waving a white flag. The

French buried three lead plates along the Allegheny; one at Warren; one at Indian God Rock, nine miles below Franklin; and the third probably at Two Mile Run. He found no habitation at Pittsburgh although an Indian village had been there earlier, known as Di-on-de-ga meaning "The Forks" in the Seneca language.

One source of Two Mile Run was near the junction of Butler Street and Penn Avenue at the spring where the home of William B. Foster (father of Stephen) stood. The Allegheny Arsenal was just below the Fortieth Street Bridge on land purchased from William B. Foster. Its buildings were erected in 1813-14. This section was known as Lawrenceville. It was laid out in 1816 and named for Captain Lawrence who fell in the War of 1812. The Arsenal was used for military purposes until 1926.

At Forty-third Street a covered wooden bridge crossed the river to Millvale, although in its last days it was uncovered. It was torn down in 1925 and was sold to the Diamond Match Company. The Washington Crossing Bridge replaced it. The Washington Crossing Bridge marks the probable spot where George Washington and Christopher Gist crossed in the floating ice December 29, 1753 returning from their mission to the French.

Millvale was the home of the little Kloman Axle Forge in which Andrew and Tom Carnegie became interested in 1863. It was the birthplace of what later became the Carnegie companies. Millvale was incorporated on February 13, 1866 from Shaler Township.

The narrowest part of the Allegheny in the vicinity of Pittsburgh is abreast of Fifty-first Street where it is 690 feet across. In 1858 this same location was measured and was 910 feet across. It has always been narrow here and has been scoured out to a depth of twenty-two to twenty-six feet. In 1861 the average width for the first seven miles above Pittsburgh to Aspinwall was 1,250 feet but by 1910 had narrowed to 1,040 feet.

Etna, originally Stewartville was incorporated September 16, 1868 from Shaler Township. It lies at the mouth of Pine Creek which flows south through Glenshaw. Here in 1820 Belknap, Bean and Butler made scythes and sickles by water power. Blooms were rolled in 1824. In 1829 the works were sold to H. S. Spang who rolled bar iron from Juniata blooms. Thus began Spang-Chalfant and Company. The Isabella Furnace named for Mrs. Herron, owned by a group rival to the Carnegies, stood here, while across the river on the site of Sears-Roebuck's

warehouse today stood the famous Lucy Furnace named for Lucy Coleman, wife of Tom Carnegie. These rival furnaces startled iron manufacturers of the world with their record production of iron. Both went into blast in the summer of 1872 and smoke from the stacks seen by the rivals across the river indicated what the other was doing in the production race.

Beyond Etna lies Sharpsburg named for James Sharp, original owner of the site, who located there in 1826. It was incorporated March 26, 1842 from O'Hara and Shaler townships. In 1850 Sharpsburg had a wire cable ferry with cable suspended. The *Clara Fisher* hit this cable, knocking her stacks off and wrapping the cable in her paddlewheel. In the suit which followed the *Clara* collected \$300 damages. The first Sharpsburg bridge better known as the Sixty-third Street Bridge was built in 1856. It burned in 1864. Rebuilt in 1865, it burned again in 1870 and was rebuilt in 1871. The fire department now has a special call signal for fires on that bridge.

About 1850 a passenger boat once operated between Pittsburgh and Sharpsburg and another ran from Lawrenceville. Both landed at the mouth of Pine Creek. The steamboat *Raritan* was built in Sharpsburg in 1940; the *Amaranth* in 1841; also two model barges of 200 tons which had cargo boxes. These barges were the first ever seen on the Upper Mississippi. They measured 140x20x4. Spang and Company had two towboats named *Wave*. Number 2 was very light and went up the river as far as Warren on occasion. The first meeting of the Allegheny River Improvement Association (A. R. I. A.) was held in the Home Hotel in Sharpsburg in 1897.

Aspinwall was incorporated from O'Hara Township in 1893.

Continuous flood records were not kept until 1858. The record flood at Pittsburgh stood at 46 feet on March 18, 1936. The next year it went to 35.1 feet on April 27. The latter was exceeded in 1762, 1763, 1810, 1816, 1907. The Johnstown flood crested at 27.2 feet at Pittsburgh but its great loss of life was due to other contributing factors. Annual precipitation is less in the Allegheny watershed than in the Monongahela Valley but snowfall is about the same.

Blawnox was incorporated from O'Hara Township in 1921. Verona was incorporated from Plum and Penn townships May 10, 1871.

The Allegheny Valley Railroad was opened in January 1856 between Pittsburgh and Kittanning. Prior to that time Pittsburgh and Olean were the only two places in the Allegheny valley reached by rail.

In 1860 the packet *Venango* connected with the Allegheny Valley Railroad at Kittanning. Passengers left Pittsburgh at 4:00 P.M. and were delivered at Emlenton at 5:00 A.M. in Franklin at 11:00 A.M. In 1861 much crude oil was delivered at Kittanning and reshipped to Pittsburgh and the East by railroad. The last regular packet to Oil City was the *Ida Reese* No. 2 and she quit May 24, 1861. The PRR leased the AVRR August 1, 1900 and took it over April 7, 1910.

At the mouth of Plum Creek Brintnall Robbins built two sailing ships in 1809-1810 but this was not a successful venture. He died in Greensburg, Pa., 1837.

Oakmont was incorporated 1899 from the borough of Verona.

Captain James Hulings lived near the mouth of Deer Creek (behind Twelve-Mile Island). He was a pioneer keelboat operator, (*Clipper* and *Lake Erie*).

Franklin and Pittsburgh were connected by telegraph in December 1861. The first message—"River too low for steamboats and falling slowly—Increased demand for crude oil in New York at advanced prices. Several hundred barrels passed through here today. . . ."

At Logan's Eddy Ed Honhart of Warren remembers seeing sixty rafts moored in April 1901. One of the problems of running a lumber raft on high water was to get it stopped.

Springdale was incorporated in 1906.

Old Lock Number Three opposite Springdale was opened November 29, 1907, the third completed on the Allegheny. The completion resulted in an order from the Secretary of War for the demolition of the old union low bridges at Pittsburgh. Consequently dams number 4 and 9 were not opened to traffic until after 1927. Emsworth dam was completed in 1923.

In 1778 Indians were fording at Puckety Creek. The name means "No good, or throw it away." Colonel William Crawford built a stockade fort above the mouth of the creek in May 1778. It was in business for the Indian troubles of 1791-1794. It stood on land of J. W. Logan.

Cobble stones known as "dobbler rocks" were gathered from these shallow places in low water. They were loaded in guipers and boated to Pittsburgh for paving, notably in Pittsburgh wharfs. Many people were engaged in this. The *Kangaroo* went to Cincinnati December 1874 with five barges loaded with Cobbles.

New Kensington "Aluminum City" was laid out in 1891 by Bur-

rell Improvement Company and became a borough on November 26, 1892. Parnassus was formerly a town named for Parnassus Church on the Logan farm. Laid out in 1872 it was annexed by New Kensington in 1931. During the Revolution Crawford's fort was located at Parnassus. It and Fort Armstrong were the only ones on the Allegheny but after the Revolution Coe's Station was built on the other shore a mile below Parnassus and Reed's Station was built above Parnassus. It was accidentally burned and then rebuilt at Freeport.

J. K. Davidson and Brother began operations as a firm in 1854. J. K. and Edward Davison, Jr., came from Lawrenceville district and owned the towhead at Nine-Mile Island (Verona). They sold sand in Pittsburgh. They got their first digger from Charles J. Stolzenbach in 1873.

Pittsburgh Plate Glass started digging in the 1880's. Sharpsburg Sand Company's sand diggers bring up relics sometimes. *Iron City* got a mastodon tusk at Aliquippa; and another at Fortieth Street, Pittsburgh; a bronze cannon was found opposite the Point, also a number of flint-lock muskets and arrowheads. The largest operators in Armstrong County were the Hudson family at Kittanning.

The Pittsburgh Reduction Company built their works at New Kensington for the production of aluminum in 1891. Early recognized as a durable metal they commenced rolling it in 1893. In 1895 the yacht *Defender* which won the international cup race had aluminum above the water line; deck beams and fittings. In 1895 this firm built a plant at Niagara. The first president of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company was Alfred E. Hunt, who was succeeded by R. B. Mellon. The names of George H. Clapp, Arthur V. Davis and Dr. George E. Hall we remember as pioneers of the industry.

Arnold, named for Edward Arnold owner of the site, was once part of New Kensington but separated in 1895. The first Allegheny River steamboat accident occurred near here. The *Forest* downbound from Warren collided with the *Pulaski* upbound. The latter sank. Some of the passengers were scalded and drowned when the boiler or steam line let go. The *Pulaski* was raised and taken to Pittsburgh where she burned—incendiary origin suspected, as there was ill feeling between the skippers. A second accident happened about the same location. The *Allegheny Belle* upbound and the *Ida* downbound collided and the *Ida* sank.

Captain John Baptiste Ford started a glass plant at Creighton in 1882 and at Ford City in 1889.

Kier's Crossing is at the glass plant at the lower end of Tarentum below the buoys. There were two salt works here in the 40's, owned by the Kier family. Thomas Kier and his son Samuel M. drilled salt wells at Creighton and were troubled with oil which they threw into the Pennsylvania Canal. It caught fire and they were ordered to desist. Sam Kier's wife was ailing and American oil was prescribed. Kier compared and then began bottling his own product in half pints advertised as "Kier's Petroleum or Rock Oil." Two barrels sold per day at fifty cents a half pint. He invented the camphene lamp and gave the illuminant the name "coal oil." His first refinery was at Seventh and Grant Streets, Pittsburgh, 1855.

Tarentum was first laid out as a town by Judge Henry M. Brackenridge. It was incorporated from East Deer Township March 7, 1842. A Shawnese Indian village once stood on this site where a good ford crossed the river. It was known as Chartier's Old Town. Peter Chartier, half breed son of Martin Chartier, came to this place as a licensed English trader in 1730 but in 1744 took sides with the French and Governor Thomas vamoosed him. Chartiers Creek at McKees Rocks is named for him. He lived there after leaving this place. Celoron found him gone but met six Englishmen, 50 horses and 150 packs of pelts en route to Philadelphia. He told them never to return.

Breckenridge was named for Henry Morgan Brackenridge, grandson of Judge Brackenridge, and incorporated in 1901.

Natrona was laid out by the Pennsylvania Salt Manufacturing Company which was chartered September 25, 1850. They made salt and soda. The name of the town is derived from NATRON, native carbonate of soda. The caustic fumes denuded the hillside in 1876.

The first steamboat to ascend the Allegheny to Kittanning was the *Albion* under Captain Pursall April 1827, in fact he went a couple of miles above Kittanning. His rate was four to five miles per hour but he came down over some of the rapids at ten miles per hour. One of his passengers was General William Robinson, Jr. An excursion was run for the citizens of Kittanning of whom forty were ladies, but the exuberance of certain of the gentlemen caused the excursion to be cut short and the boat returned to the landing. The *Pittsburgh and Wheeling Packet* in February 1828 went to Kittanning. The *William D. Duncan*, in February-March 1828, went up to Franklin and ran an excursion to

Oil Creek. These were side-wheelers. The *Allegheny* went to Warren April 1830 and in May to Kinzua, and on a third trip went to Olean, New York. The *New Castle* went to Olean in 1837.

As a result of a river improvement meeting at Kittanning June 18, 1835, a survey from Pittsburgh to Olean was made by Major George W. Hughes. This was completed, but all except the journal on which it was based was destroyed by fire. This showed that the greatest single fall was at Pithole, seven feet in one mile. Patterson's Falls was the most serious riffle in the entire river. It was fifty years before Federal funds were expended.

The towboat *Star* upbound at Karn's Island lost her captain May 27, 1848. He was sleeping in a chair and fell overboard. He had on a great coat and boots and was lost.

Freeport was laid out in 1796 by William and David Todd and was long known as Todd's Town. They insisted on the place being a free port for all river craft, hence the name. It was incorporated from South Buffalo Township in 1833. There was a fort here about 1790 commanded by Captain John Craig. The Bohlen brothers cut ice here and shipped it to the South in flatboats between 1830-1855. Ice was also cut at Franklin and shipped as far as Natchez.

The Ore Salt Works was at the mouth of Buffalo Creek in the 1850's. There were salt works also above Freeport—at Creighton and Tarentum. The steamboat *Rising States* was built in Freeport. It carried mail between Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Butler. It was well described by Josiah Copley in 1825. He was the father of the second wife of William Thaw and was one of the founders of *Kittanning Gazette* and later on was on the staff of one of the Pittsburgh papers.

The railroad bridge below the mouth of the Kiskiminetas was erected in 1863. It and the aqueduct of the Pennsylvania Canal which crossed the Allegheny at this point made a double hazard for descending steamboats. The towboat *Jim Watson* was wrecked here losing a cargo of 200 barrels of oil, February 2, 1863.

The Kiskiminetas River is the main tributary of the Allegheny. The name means "cut spirit." At one time it was called "Attique" in old French records. The Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal followed the Kiski and Conemaugh to Johnstown, a town which itself bore the name "Conemaugh" until 1834. There flatboats were built for emigrants. The Pennsylvania Canal was purchased by the PRR on August 1, 1857 for \$7,500,000. The canal from Johnstown to Pitts-

burgh was abandoned in 1864. The Western Pennsylvania Railroad ran from Blairsville to Freeport and extended on to Allegheny, Pa. (1866). It became known as the Conemaugh Division of the PRR.

The Pennsylvania Canal aqueduct was also used as a pedestrian bridge. It burned on May 13, 1848 and was rebuilt immediately. It went out in the flood of 1865. The *Petrolia* on November 18, 1864 had her pilot house carried away passing under the aqueduct, leaving the pilot and pilot wheel intact. The *Venture* spent the summer on the bar at the mouth of the Kiski in 1877. The Lucesco refinery was built at the mouth of the Kiski River and was refining 6,000 gallons of oil daily in the spring of 1859 before Drake drilled his well near Titusville on August 27, 1859. They refined oil for lamps and lubrication.

Pittsburgh's first local commercial salt supply came from Saltsburg on the Kiski and the first iron ore to reach the city came down the river on flatboats to supply Anshutz Shadyside furnace, 1792-1794. Pig and bar iron was hauled overland to Johnstown from Huntingdon and from Indiana and Cambria counties.

Murphy's Island was named for a riverman buried on a knoll overlooking the island. The first Federal funds for improvement of the Allegheny were spent in 1879 between Pittsburgh and Murphy's Island. Five hundred three large rocks, 109 snags, one wreck and a pier at Freeport were removed.

The keelboat *Olive Branch* around 1860 cost \$1,650 and on its first round trip to the oil region cleared \$1,100, hauling barrels and oil. The white rock opposite Clinton covers on 17 feet at number 5. The hull of the *Nellie Hudson* was built here in 1886, made three round trips weekly to Kittanning. The *Nellie Hudson* #2 had a calliope bought in Philadelphia. The *Nelly Hudson* #3 was built in Brownsville in 1893. The keelboat *Great Western* was built at Clinton 1854. It operated for seven seasons. I knew Captain A. J. Fry who went on the Allegheny River in 1854 driving horses for the keelboats *Mary Ann* and *Keystone*. A fort was maintained at Nicholson's Run about 1790 during Indian troubles. The steamer *Warren* hit a rock in Nicholson's Falls, broke several timbers and tore off bottom planks. She sank in May 1843 but was raised and on December 6, 1843 while backing away from Freeport she collapsed a flue and twelve persons were badly scalded.

Captain John Moore, Sr., was the first man to propel a keelboat upstream on the Allegheny by power. At Nicholson's Falls he hitched

a yoke of oxen to a keel but it did not work. He tried horses with success using a half inch tow line of flax 100 yards long, of home manufacture, hooked to a singletree on the horses, one horse per ten tons. Early keels were nine to twenty-five tons but were larger later. Subsequently the keels were pulled with three-quarter rope on a capstan, most of the capstans were built by James Rees of Pittsburgh.

A fort was maintained near Cadogan about 1790 during Indian troubles.

Ford City honors Captain John B. Ford, father of the plate glass industry in America. The town was incorporated in 1889 from Manor Township. Ford died in his eighty-third year, two years after a statue was unveiled to him here.

Manorville once had a tavern at which some Indians got lubricated on snakeeye and were put out. They ran a rope from their rafts around the tavern and threatened to pull it down by turning the rafts loose.

Kittanning is the county seat of Armstrong County which was named for Colonel John Armstrong. It was laid out in 1804 and incorporated April 2, 1821.

At the time Celoron came down the river (1749) there were 22 cabins standing in the Indian village on the site and it was an old settlement. Delaware Indians predominated. The name is corrupted from "Kit-Han-Ne" and means "towns at or on the main stream." In the French and Indian War it was a French stronghold and many English captives were held here. The Indians, Captain Jacobs and Chief Shingiss were in charge of a motley band of Indians here until it was reduced by Colonel Armstrong in 1756. By 1777 trading posts were held at Kittanning by Andrew and James McFarland and Joseph Speer. On February 4, 1777 Andrew was captured by Indians and taken to Quebec. He was exchanged three years later and returned. In 1779 Colonel Daniel Brodhead made an expedition by boat to Mahoning Creek ridding Indians up to Cornplanter where the reservation now is located. He did not lose a man. Indians for revenge attacked Hannastown, Old Westmoreland County July 13, 1782 and destroyed everything except the blockhouse. Even after the Treaty of Fort McIntosh it was unsafe for 20 years to wander on the Indian side of the Allegheny River.

Kittanning was once the center of a sizable iron industry. Many furnaces were located above the town as far as Franklin and Oil City. The Kittanning Rolling Mill, built in 1848, had 20 puddling furnaces using charcoal. The Great Western Iron Works at Brady's Bend used

coke. The first 'T' rail made west of the Allegheny Mountains was rolled at Great Western. It supplied rails for the PRR lines West—Pittsburgh to Beaver Falls. In 1851 there were 63 iron furnaces in Allegheny Valley and practically all the iron was flatboated out to Pittsburgh. Kittanning has the distinction of having produced the first visible typewriter in the world. Governor William F. Johnson was a Kittanning resident and was president of the Allegheny Valley Railroad at the time it was built.

An unusually severe winter 1855-56 ended in a flood on April 4th which carried the Kittanning bridge to Pittsburgh where it lodged on the Allegheny wharf. A notice was served for the owners to come and get it or pay wharfage. The Emlenton bridge from further north arrived at Pittsburgh at 4:00 A.M. March 4, 1865 without a stop. The bridge at Kittanning was also torn away about 1928-29. It was unusually low. When the steamer *Kittanning* left on March 30, 1928 for Oil City she had but one tenth foot as clearance. Another offender in the matter of clearance was the street car bridge at Big Rock below Franklin and it went out with the ice in 1926.

We are now approaching Kittanning and I will turn the microphone over to Mr. Belfour who may wish to make an announcement. I have attempted to give you some of the facts about the Allegheny which are of interest to those who know the river. The subject is by no means exhausted and what I have presented was prepared under pressure for which you must make allowance as it was still being assembled at 4:00 A.M. Thank you.

Part 3

OBSCURE FEATURES OF OUR TOUR OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

ROBERT D. CHRISTIE

When the good ship *Sara* shoved off on our 14th annual tour "towing" 175 of us to Kittanning, it was a departure in more ways than one. Historic trips of the past had been by car or bus on solid earth but that assertion is not intended to imply that water, as a medium of transport, had not been considered, discussed and rejected with periodic regularity. As the season approached, the committee of arrangements, consisting of Stanton Belfour of the Historical Society. Viers Adams of the University of Pittsburgh Summer Session and Carroll Reynolds of the

same institution, solicited the cooperation of two men who knew the river, Captain Fred Way and Captain Frank Valentine. From that time all worked with the enthusiasm of youth, tempered by the wisdom of past experience, to the reality. One by one their problems were solved but even so certain eventualities lay in the lap of fate until the outcome justified a belief that we led the proper life.

The Monongahela was seemingly the logical river for our tour because of deep water, industrial fame, and a wealth of historic interest but the voyage involved moving counter to the heaviest river traffic of the world. Possible delay or congestion at locks immediately discouraged its early consideration of favor of the Allegheny River. The latter offered beautiful water and scenery with many points of interest but above Kittanning problems other than navigation had to be considered. Where could we expect to find facilities to serve dinner to about 200 hungry tourists or perhaps secure accommodations over night and just how would we return? These considerations indicated that Kittanning was the logical terminus for exploration. It was there that the committee was made welcome by the local historical society and was offered their full cooperation and the use of the Kittanning Country Club for dinner, an offer which taxed its facilities to a record limit in the matter of service. The committee now knew where they wanted to go and had preconceived visions of how they would like to get there.

The first important step in the solution of basic problems had been the encouragement of Captains Way and Valentine, whose knowledge of boats, rivers and human frailties was invaluable. Nothing stumped them, at least not for long. With Captain Valentine came the use of his towboat Sara, as trim a little diesel as you will find on inland waters but it only pushes and in our case we did not know what. This idea was somewhat foreign to some of us, who, in the absence of prior experience or knowledge of expense, fancied that Captain Way might come burning up the river in the Delta Queen or perhaps the Homer Smith with calliope atoot. Others who had overheard the reference to barges thought that maybe one of the coal barges might be dusted off a bit for the event, and one lady, determined to come contrary to her husband's advice was told by him that no matter what she went in all river craft were roach-infested and overrun with rats. Be that as it may, the committee went out for a big airy double decker barge which seemed to meet all requirements dictated by fancy. They seemed to have the approval of top brass in the corporation which owned it but at water

level they were met with a flat refusal on the ground that it would establish a bad precedent. This discouraging news was in reality our first good break, for on the day of the event that particular barge was immobilized by a strike.

There was a craft owned by the U. S. Steel Corporation which now came in for consideration. It was a double decked houseboat open fore and aft but enclosed midship and of limited capacity. An enclosed craft was not exactly the committee's idea of the way to see the river but on second thought we were to gamble with the vicissitudes of weather. Supposing we were on an open barge and the heavens opened, what kind of a medical record would 200 historians make sitting in wet clothes for several hours? There was merit in that enclosure, not only as protection against rain but also sun. Through the services of our good friend E. Earl Moore and the generosity of the U. S. Steel Corporation we were able to obtain this houseboat and with it came the services of her affable captain, George Griffith. A more spotless craft never existed.

The men who were plotting the course and computing speed now calculated that the trip would consume nine to ten hours. The prospect of reclining in the sun while enjoying soft breezes was pleasing, except for the fact that it involved one hour in which our guests were accustomed to doing something else. This idea of eating in transit was complicated, first by the need for a suitable dining salon, and second by complete absence of food, plate, cup or spoon. This first need was met when the committee, through their university connections, was able to obtain United States Army Engineers' neat little inspection barge which though only a single decker, was equipped with benches and tables. In time the other requirements were met in proper form.

One might now visualize the sturdy little tow Sara in midstream, with the low lying engineer's barge lashed to the bow, nosing the double decked houseboat up the river. It was not as simple as that. The barge and the houseboat were not the same blood type. The hull of the latter towered five feet above the deck of the barge and it required some fancy carpentry to prevent our dining salon from submerging on the first push. This difference also posed a problem as to just how hungry passengers would negotiate that drop, when or if a lunch bell sounded. Perhaps some of our members noted the solid stairs which facilitated this movement but few considered that in their erection it was impossible to drive a nail into the deck of a boat built and owned

by the U. S. Steel Corporation and one can't weld wood. These boats were at widely separated points and as luck would have it, a dense fog prevented their assembly on the morning before scheduled departure. That resulted in other complications. The carpenters lost valuable time; the air-brakes, or whatever the union men connect, could not be rigged; the chairs which had been rented from a funeral home could not be set on board by the efficient students from Pitt who were enlisted to see that our equipment was not carried to New Orleans. There was delay but that was all, unless one includes the worry over a similar fog next morning. There was plenty of evidence of patience and good management.

The lunch problem was solved by a Gateway caterer, not far from the point of departure, who furnished a satisfactory lunch, in cardboard container, consisting of two sandwiches, pickles, olives, and tasty cake, all separately wrapped and accompanied by ice cream on dry ice and hot coffee with good cream. They also furnished an urn of hot coffee for use at any hour. All this was paid for and on board by 8:00 A.M. the day of departure.

The day dawned clear and warm with every prospect of being hot. This had been anticipated with a large supply of ice, Pepsi-Cola and Coke. Dr. Elkin was present with his kit to revive those who might need his services and with him was a nurse in uniform. When one young man saw her he immediately said he was sick but not sick enough for a doctor, all he wanted was a nurse, and Dr. Elkin seemed to diagnose the situation correctly. One of our friends from Pitt had offered his services and set up loud speakers to various parts of the boats and they became the medium for announcements and the running descriptive matter presented by Captain Way. Everyone had been briefed as to time of departure and general program up to the time of return. Minute instructions had been given, in printed form, how best to get down to the wharf. At the gangplank each person pinned on a card bearing his name in a form which could be read at a distance. Later they were urged to accept the statement of the committee that they were among friends and regard the name-plates as an introduction without further formality. When it became known that the Society had taken out almost \$200 worth of all kinds of insurance it could be truthfully said that the Committee had thought of everything.

At New Kensington one passenger was affected by the heat or maybe it was just from having sat up the night before with a baby, any-

how it was with regret that she and her father left the boat for a short stay in the hospital but nothing serious was involved. This was the only untoward incident on the trip.

On arrival at Kittanning we were met by a distinguished reception committee of the Kittanning Historical Society who escorted us by bus to the Country Club. After a clear hot day clouds were now threatening and as the last people entered the club a deluge of rain descended but we were then under cover. It was noted in passing that all cross-roads were manned by a special detachment of state troopers who were not there when the committee first visited Kittanning. No one raised the question but this *may* have been a special form of honor.

The rain and our arrival somewhat ahead of time placed a severe strain on the facilities of the club kitchen which had never handled such a large group but they met the situation admirably. An account of the dinner is to be found elsewhere.

When time came for departure the buses, manned by notably courteous drivers, were at the door and the rain having stopped we returned to Pittsburgh, arriving at the starting point exactly on schedule, or a little before 11:00 P.M.

This tour resulted in a rejuvenation of the Kittanning Historical Society and inspired them to take a river trip of their own later in the year. Our own society added at least twenty new members to our rolls. It brought many expressions of appreciation indicating that it had been informative and pleasant. The trip on water prompted a number to say they would have enjoyed a return trip on the river by moonlight. A report which gratified the committee, because of its obvious sincerity developed when someone had occasion to call Washington, Pa., by phone Sunday morning. No one from that town had been on this tour, so it was a matter of surprise to hear that it had already been reported as a great success. The report originated with a lady living in Waynesburg. The circumstance which lent color to it lay in the fact that in coming to join the tour she had missed the last bus out of Washington and had to sit in the bus terminal until 4:00 A.M. for the next one. The trip took an hour so she had only two hours sleep at the William Penn Hotel before coming to the boat, yet returning through Washington she had reported a wonderful tour. It was a high compliment.

The Historical Society regretted that in arranging the details, it was necessary to decline to accept a number of late applications, even from members, but the capacity of the boat decks, the number of din-

ners which could be handled in conjunction with the Kittanning club, and the seating capacity of returning buses imposed rigid limits. Certain charges were fixed regardless of how many came, but others such as lunches and dinners required exact orders well ahead. All items were paid for in advance and refunds on applications could not be made unless we were notified in time to make substitutions. The cost of the entire tour was \$2,163.00 but computation of expense was so close our deficit was only \$30.00.