

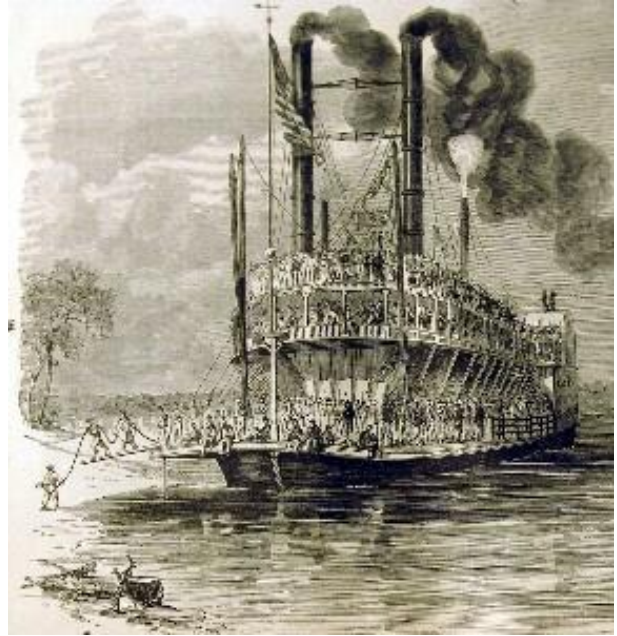
Early Kentucky River Towns

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We must consider the decisions our ancestors made in their travel to a new home or possible home location. Many factors contributed to the decision regarding the route an individual traveled to reach the western frontier. As we look at the various routes, we should consider the factors and origins that would lead groups along that route.

Just as travel routes change today, the 'best way' changed with time and technology. The earliest routes were those carved by the passage of buffaloes or other large animals. The rivers and navigable streams provided paths that allowed movement with the flow. The Indians followed these trails which were wide enough for a person. With the introduction of horses into the eastern colonies, the trails needed widening. As the desire to move westward continued, trails wide enough to support pack mules or horses were required. River routes were identified and towns along those routes flourished. Later, wagon roads were needed, and were followed by railroads. The roads & rivers traveled where people wanted to go, and money from the east was available to bring goods back to the population centers.

A study of a contemporary map with geological features will help you understand the obstacles that might impede the traveler. It might also give you an understanding of the native peoples who inhabited the land and perhaps interacted with early European pioneers. Although water routes were always available, it was much easier to float downstream. With the advent of steamboats, cheaper travel became available. The delivery of manufactured goods could be delivered to every river town.



Distance-

Safety-

Surface/Travel Quality-

Type of Traveler-

Knowledge of route-

Rumor-

Traffic-

Destination-

Advertising-

Companions-

COLLISION OF THE BELLE OF CLARKSVILLE AND LOUISIANA.

On the night of December 14, 1844, a disastrous collision took place on the Mississippi river, between the steamers Belle of Clarksville and Louisiana, the former from New Orleans, bound to Nashville; the latter, from Memphis to New Orleans. Both vessels were heavily laden. The Belle of Clarksville was completely demolished. The hull parted from the cabin and sunk immediately, the cabin floating off with a number of passengers inside, all of whom were saved. None were drowned but deck passengers, and some of the crew of the boat. The Louisiana was immediately brought around, and every exertion was made by the captain and crew to save those persons who were floating on small pieces of the wreck. The detached cabin grounded about half a mile below the place where the boats came in contact. All the cargo and the baggage of the passengers was lost. The boat was laden with sugar, salt, coffee, and molasses. Mr. J. H. French, one of the passengers, had with him three negro slaves, and three valuable horses, among them the celebrated Ann Hayes; these slaves and horses were all drowned. The iron safe containing \$12,000 was saved. The cargo was insured at New Orleans for \$28,000; the boat for \$8,000.

The following are the names of the persons drowned :

DECK PASSENGERS—W. Tabb, P. Linn, W. Linn, J. Ryan, A. Malisle, N. Sills, Wm. Jones, T. Whitley, N. T. Allen, A. Kirland, J. Askew, G. Hyer, a son of J. W. Hall, J. Peay, and four colored men.

BOAT'S CREW—John Holliday
ed firemen, names not given.

Lloyd's Steamboat Directory & Disasters on the Western Waters, James T. Lloyd. 1856.

Did our Ancestor HOP, SKIP, JUMP or make a GIANT LEAP?

Remember that there is some attraction that draws families or there is some event that repels families A study of the history of the area may reveal a "push" or "pull" reason. Often cheap or free land drew countless settlers from the eastern states. The chase of the law or taxman may have driven other folks to new territory.

In addition to the adventure quotient, remember than ***no one travels alone***. Often we find the coalition of friends, neighbors, churches or travelers agreeing to protect each other on an extended journey.

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