

CHIPPEWA RIVER NAVIGATION

Once after we had built the steamer Silas Wright I went with her to Chippewa Falls and carried some freight. The water was not at good stage, and I feared we could not get back with her, but we did, after scraping over some of the rocky places, and I decided that would be the last time we would try to run our boat to Chippewa Falls. We carried nearly all of the freight for Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls during the three years we ran the Silas Wright, and nearly all of the freight for points between Reed's Landing and Eau Claire. We also made an arrangement with the express company to carry the express between Reed's Landing and Chippewa Falls. One purpose of our building the boat was to get the raft-crews and their kits from Reed's Landing to Eau Claire. The second season we ran the boat we started about the first of April and made regular daily trips until about the first of August, leaving Reed's Landing at night and reaching Eau Claire about eight o'clock the next morning. We received 75c. per hundred pounds for freight from Reed's Landing to Eau Claire. The third year we ran the Silas Wright the water dropped so low, and so rapidly, that we succeeded in getting her down the river to a point near Rumseys Landing, where the water was so low we were unable to get any further. Capt. Lea in charge, tied her up and came back to Eau Claire by team. That year our company and the D. Shaw Lumber Company lost a good many logs, so we built a portable mill near where the Silas Wright was tied up. gathered our logs which had been carried by high water over the flats, sawed them, and rafted our lumber from there. I returned with Capt. Lea and we sawed timber for two barges, or lighters, each about ninety feet long and ten feet wide, making the sides of 4-inch plank and as long as we could get them, to have as few splices as possible. We then laid two lines of 3x10-inch plank both

lengthwise and crosswise, which gave us a stiff, strong bottom. We put these barges on either side of the Silas Wright and sawed 10x16-inch timbers long enough to reach across the boat to the outside of the barges. We put strips of iron on each timber on either side of the boat, giving the iron which was $3 \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches, a half twist, so that the lower ends would lay flat on the side of the boat's hull. With a short plank resting on the timbers of the boat on the inside, and by using rubber packing where the bolts went through the iron strips, we made the bolt holes water tight, then we bored two-inch holes in three places to let the water into the barges until they were sunk so the bottoms were even with the bottom of the boat; then we put in dry pine plugs and pumped the water out of the barges, which raised the boat so that she was drawing only twelve inches of water; then we put in longer arms to the stern-wheel, to let her buckets down even with her bottom. We were thus enabled to navigate the river and carry considerable freight on the boat and barges. In the fall, when merchants here were laying in their winter stocks, we chartered a larger barge we found on the Mississippi, and by running guy-lines from the outside corners of the barges diagonally across the boat to the outside of the barge, and drawing them taut, we held that barge straight ahead of the others. We were thus able to carry all the freight for Eau Craire, and the price made it a paying proposition, altho it took about a day and a night between Reed's Landing and Eau Claire. After putting the barges under the boat we didn't often carry the raftsmen, on account of the longer time it took, hence the men came to Eau Claire by team or afoot. Before we built the Silas Wright I had walked with the raft-crews. Once, in coming afoot between Luna and Rock Falls, Mr. Campbell, who now keeps a hotel at Chippewa Long Lake, then kept a hotel at Luna, told me of a farmer between Rock Falls and Luna whom he thought might like to hire some of the raftsmen to help him with his harvest; so, one time, when I was coming up with our

raft crew, this man was on the watch and wanted to hire two or three of us, and said he would pay \$1.50 a day. I and two of the men hired out to him, and after talking the matter over I told him I guessed I would not take his job. Before leaving him I told him who I was. I don't remember what he said, but I think he decided he wanted better men. Some men running from Chippewa Falls to Reeds walked from there to Chippewa Falls and carried pieces of line to aid them in tying their rafts. If men were now required to do what we did then, at the wages paid then, I think they would rebel or strike.

THE EDDY MILL

Before we got the dam built at the Dells we bought a mill at the "big eddy," from Mr. Sherman and his two sons, who had little room for booming logs. We took the mill down and rebuilt it at the head of the rapids, half a mile above the present dam, where we could have more booming room. When we bought the mill it had a circular saw and did not cut much lumber, as it could be only run a short part of the season. After moving and rebuilding it we put in a circular and a gang. We ran it only one year before the dam was built, and to give the dam the height it required we raised the mill eight feet. We did that by putting a solid frame under it after raising it that high, and we had to do that before the dam was closed. That cost us a good deal of money; but the fact of being able to hold logs in slack water above the mill justified us, as it paid well.

THE DELLS DAM

In getting the charter for the dam we were required to put in a lock, to lock boats through, and a slide for running rafts through, which added a good deal to the cost of it; but we were willing to concede almost anything the legislature demanded, to get the dam. I was elected president of the Dells Improvement Company and the city made a lease of the dam to the company, requiring the company to put in the necessary water-