
Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

Dec. 20, 2012

History

Early Steamboats On Pecatonica River Part 6 of 15

The club members owned several boats, which sometimes were sold and replaced. They were fifteen to twenty feet long and were powered with various sizes of inboard gasoline engines. The largest boat was built and owned by William J. Martin with a twelve hp two-cylinder two-cycle engine. This boat was called the Disturber. The next largest was the Restless powered by a Gray engine two cylinder two cycle eleven hp with built in reverse gear owned by Clarence B. Molter. This was one of three boats owned at different times by Mr. Molter. The first was a sixteen-foot Mullius steel boat with three hp Ferro Engine, afterwards sold to another club member and then sold by him to be used below the dam and there traded back to another member. It was finally sold below the dam again and was capsized drowning the owner. It was never recovered. After the Restless was sold it was replaced by another Mullius steel boat. These steel boats were named Mosquito I and Mosquito II. The Mosquito II was the last inboard boat run on the river after the dam washed out in 1931. Due to rusting out the hull and so many broken propellers due to striking bottom and snags in the low water the boat was scrapped.

The Motor Boat Club made many trips to the Farmers Picnic held in those days at Phillips Grove at Damascus. And some of the boats went up the river as far as Fishers Dam north of McConnell when the river was high.

The names of some of the boats in the club in the club were Babs Bunny, Disturber, Gypsy, Comfort, Mosquito I & II, Restless, Nimrod, Never and Marine.

Clarence L. Bolsar and Leonard Carter bought an Aerothrust air-cooled engine with airplane propeller. They tried it out on a pair of pontoons and then in a small boat but it proved too slow and they sold it.

Other persons who had motor boats on the river at various times were Thomas Rockey, Edward Bushelle Sr., Robert Eberle, John A. Clark, Red Haines, Martin Kroer, and the Balles Brothers who had a large boat built by Charles Klein which was named Damfino.

Written by Clarence B. Molter and Julian L. Molter.

Continued.