

Western rivermen, 1763-1861 - Ohio and Mississippi boatmen and the myth of the alligator horse

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Description: -

- Mississippi River -- Social life and customs.
- Ohio River -- Social life and customs.
- Folklore -- Mississippi River.
- Folklore -- Ohio River.
- Boatmen -- Mississippi River -- History.
- Boatmen -- Ohio River -- History.
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Americans of the Jacksonian and pre-Civil War period perceived the rivermen as hard-drinking, straight-shooting adventurers on the frontier. He also discusses the social and economic aspects of their lives, such as their cargoes, the river towns they visited, and the impact on their lives of the steamboat and advancing civilization.

Western Rivermen, 1763

Drawing on more than eighty firsthand accounts ranging from a short letter to a four-volume memoir he provides a rounded view of the boatmen that reveals the lonely, dangerous nature of their profession.

Western Rivermen, 1763

Their notions were reinforced by romanticized portrayals of the boatmen in songs, paintings, newspaper humor, and literature. Michael Allen explores the rigorous lives of professional boatmen who plied non-steam vessels flatboats, keelboats, and rafts on the Ohio and lower Mississippi rivers from 1763-1861.

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Allen demonstrates, however, that the actual lives of the rivermen little resembled their portrayals in popular culture. Allen contends that these mythical depictions of the boatmen were a reflection of the yearnings of an industrializing people for what they thought to be a simpler time.

Western Rivermen, 1763

Western Rivermen, the first documented sociocultural history of its subject, is a fascinating book.

Western Rivermen, 1763

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