

1889 journey proved White River was navigable

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er prompted the special outfitting of a flatboat owned by the White River Sand Company. According to logs kept by Knodle and Norviel, the result was a kind of houseboat, including a small stove.

At Gosport the crew was briefed on local history by "one of the oldest inhabitants," Dr. Jerry Wooden. Related the flatboat passengers, he... "was one of the men who went to New Orleans from

Gosport on the largest flatboat that ever reached the former place. It measured thirty feet by one hundred and fifteen feet. . . "

Perhaps the most unusual story learned in Gosport was the history of the bridge linking Monroe and Owen counties. The reporters wrote in their log: "The bridge here is a unique structure — half of the new-style girders and the other half the old-fashioned covered wooden kind. Owen County wanted the former kind as a protection against the sparks from locomotives, and

Monroe wanted something less expensive and 'high-falutin.' Each county got its kind, but each had to stand an equal share of the expense, and Monroe is beginning to discover that wood is not nearly as durable as iron."

The monotony of their trip was broken by an encounter after leaving Gosport. They related, "Half-way between Gosport and Spencer we came upon the first ferry we have seen. It is called the Shirley ferry, from its original promoter and captain, Marion Shirley."

The account of the trip sprinkled with the lore of local river names — The Rock Ripple near Worthington; the Upper Ferry near Edwardsport; and Kelly's Ripple and Tom's Hill between Edwardsport and the B. & O. bridge.

At the point when the *News* reporter left the expedition, he wrote: "I can well say that the trip so far as the object of the *News* is concerned, is at an end. We have reached navigation in fact. There is no question as to the river being navigable from here down. . . "