

Navigation of the Des Moines

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Navigation of the Des Moines." *The Annals of Iowa* 29 (1947), 63-63.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.7006>

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decade when oil and gas reserves will approach exhaustion, and thinner veins of eastern coal are worked, the Iowa coal industry will again prosper. Many operators who were forced to close their mines during the war will reopen in 1946. Several other companies plan to sink new mines.

NAVIGATION OF THE DES MOINES

The *St. Louis New Era* says: The steamer *Iola*, Captain Devinney, started from this city about three weeks since with a cargo of assorted merchandise for Fort Raccoon, some 300 miles up the Des Moines river, Iowa. The boat returned last evening, and we learn from her officers that they succeeded in reaching the Fort with less difficulty than was expected. Fort Raccoon is some distance higher up the river than any steamboat has ever gone before¹, and the appearance of the *Iola* was hailed at Keosauqua, Fort Des Moines, Ottumwa, and a number of other points she passed as the harbinger of wealth and prosperity to that country. The *Iola* visited and discharged portions of her cargo at Fort Des Moines, Keosauqua, Ottumwa, Fort Raccoon and several other points above what has been heretofore considered the head of steamboat navigation.

Among her freight was a steam engine and machinery for a flouring mill which is being erected at Ottumwa. She also carried up some machinery for a steam sawmill which is in a state of completion at Keosauqua. Captain Devinney thinks he could have ascended 150 miles farther had not the river commenced falling and for fear of being detained he was compelled to return. From Fort Des Moines² to the mouth of the river, on his return, the soundings were never less than two feet in the channel, and the river was not considered very full.—*Bloomington* (Muscatine) *Herald*, July 19, 1844.

¹One year previous to this, May 9, 1843, the *Agatha*, Captain J. M. Lafferty, landed at Raccoon Forks, bringing the soldiers under Captain Allen, when the fort was established.—Editor.

²The *New Era* reflects the uncertainty in the minds of the people at that time about the name of the fort. Raccoon Forks was the popular designation of the locality, and Captain Allen recommended the fort be called Fort Raccoon, but the war department ruled it should be Fort Des Moines.—Editor.

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