

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ST. LOUIS CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649266777

Proceedings of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce by A. B. Chambers

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**A. B. CHAMBERS**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ST. LOUIS CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE**



PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
**ST. LOUIS**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,**  
IN RELATION TO THE  
IMPROVEMENT OF THE NAVIGATION  
OF THE  
**MISSISSIPPI RIVER.**  
AND ITS  
PRINCIPAL TRIBUTARIES AND THE ST. LOUIS  
HARBOR.

WITH A STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY

**A. B. CHAMBERS,**

*To the Chamber.*

---

ST. LOUIS:

Printed by Chambers & Knapp—Republican Office.

1812.

Transportation  
Library

HE  
394  
.M5  
S29

### Officers of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce.

WAYMAN CROW, *President.*

GEO. K. MCGUNNEGLE, *Vice President.*

F. L. RIDGELY, *Secretary and Treasurer.*

#### COMMITTEE OF APPEALS, FOR 1842.

J. D. DAGGETT,  
N. E. JANNEY,  
H. L. HOFFMAN,

JOHN STAGG,  
GEO. K. BUDD,  
WM. GLASGOW.

10-7-21

Trans. Lib.

Q. # 2474

1038658-236

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, }  
St. Louis, FEBRUARY 20, 1842. }

At a meeting of the Chamber, held on the evening of the 1st, the following preamble and resolutions were offered and unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS the further improvement of the harbor of St. Louis, and the navigation of the Mississippi river and its principal tributaries, are matters of deep interest to this community and to the whole West, and, whereas, it has been represented to this Chamber, that our fellow-citizen A. B. Chambers, Esq., has been for some time engaged, and is yet employed in collecting and arranging much important information relating to these subjects, and to the trade, commerce and improvement of St. Louis. Therefore, be it

Resolved, that a select committee of five be appointed by the President to wait upon A. B. Chambers, Esq., and request of him to submit for the consideration of this Chamber, a statement of such facts and information as he may have collected and arranged, relating to the subjects referred to.

Resolved, that said committee be requested to give such aid and information as may be in their power, towards perfecting the statements, statistical tables, &c., as are or may be in progress of arrangement by Mr. Chambers, and that they make a report thereof to an adjourned meeting of this Chamber, to be held on Tuesday evening next.

The President appointed as the committee of five, under first resolution:

- Messrs. JOHN D. DABOETT, Chairman,
- " W. D. BARRETT,
- " G. K. BUDD,
- " N. E. JENNEY,
- " W. M. MORRISON.

F. L. RIDGELY, Sec. C. of C.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, }  
St. Louis, FEBRUARY 8, 1842. }

At a meeting of the Chamber, held this evening, the committee appointed at the last meeting submit the following report and resolution, and also the statement of Mr. Chambers, which, after having been read and examined, were unanimously adopted.

F. L. RIDGELY, Sec. C. of C.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

Sir—Your select committee, appointed under a resolution of the 1st instant, requiring them to request of A. B. Chambers, Esq., for the consideration of this Chamber, a statement of such statistical tables and other information, as he may have collected and arranged in relation to the trade of St. Louis, and this portion of the valley of the Mississippi, and as would have the effect to promote the interests of said trade by being used in such manner as to induce the improvement of the Mississippi river and its principal tributaries, and also to afford Mr. Chambers such aid and information as they might be able to give towards perfecting such statements, and to report the same to this Chamber, beg leave to

REPORT,

That they have conferred with Mr. Chambers, as will appear by reference to the subjoined correspondence between the chairman of your committee and A. B. Chambers, Esq., which latter gentleman has very cheerfully furnished your committee a lengthy and able exhibit of the commerce of our City and adjacent country, and embracing a large amount of valuable and interesting information, upon the general accuracy of which your committee rely implicitly; not only from the fact that they very carefully consulted upon and revised the statistics, but in many cases, the aggregate amounts were supported by individual items, fully bearing out the correctness of the former; and your committee embrace this opportunity of expressing their acknowledgments to Mr. Chambers for the care and labor evidently bestowed upon the work by him, as well as for the facilities afforded the committee in presenting them to the Chamber.

Your committee in conclusion, herewith submit for the consideration of the Chamber the statistics, &c., above referred to, together with the correspondence between the committee and Mr. Chambers, also referred to; and recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

*Resolved*, that the President of this Chamber be, and he is hereby requested to transmit one copy of this report to the President of the United States, also one copy of the same to each of the heads of Departments at Washington City, and one to each Senator and Representative in Congress.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN D. DAGGETT,  
GEO. K. BUDD,  
WM. M. MORRISON,  
N. E. JANNEY,  
W. D. BARRETT, } COMMITTEE.

St. Louis, February 6, 1842.

St. Louis, February 2d, 1842.

Sir,—The Chamber of Commerce of this city has been informed that you were compiling from official documents and other sources, statistics of the trade and commerce of St. Louis, for the laudable purpose of showing to the Congress of the United States the great and pressing necessity of their taking some action to cause the navigation of the Mississippi river and its principal tributaries, as well as the harbor of St. Louis to be improved, and thereby to prevent the great loss of property, which must necessarily take place on those rivers, if nothing is done to improve their navigation.

At a meeting of the Chamber on the 1st instant, the undersigned were appointed a committee to confer with you in reference to these statistics, and, with your permission, to examine and lay them before the Chamber for such action as to it may deem advisable.

The undersigned will therefore wait on you in reference to this subject, at such time and place, as will best suit your convenience.

We annex you a copy of the resolutions under which we act, and remain

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

JOHN D. DAGGETT,  
GEO. K. BUDD,  
WM. M. MORRISON,  
N. E. JANNEY,  
W. D. BARRETT, } COMMITTEE.

To A. B. CHAMBERS, Esq., present.

St. Louis, February 3, 1842.

To the COMMITTEE OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, St. Louis,

Gentlemen:—Your note of this date with a copy of the resolution of the Chamber of Commerce of St. Louis, have been received.

It will afford me pleasure to submit the statistics I have collected, in relation to the trade of St. Louis, and the necessity of improving the navigation of the Mississippi and its principal tributaries, and also the harbor of St. Louis, to you at such time as will best suit your convenience, and shall be pleased, if thought to merit attention, to have them submitted to the Chamber.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

A. B. CHAMBERS.



TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ST. LOUIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

*Gentlemen*—In November last I wrote and published in the "Missouri Republican," an article concerning the improvement of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, having more particular reference to the necessity of freeing the channels of those rivers from *snags*. I then flattered myself, that the exhibit which was made of the extent of the trade on those streams, the losses which had been sustained by the snagging of boats, the population and States interested would have had the effect of awakening the attention of the national legislature to the subject, and of securing that consideration which the public welfare, the growing population and the increasing trade of the West demanded. Those hopes have not been fully realized, but there is reason to believe, that the spirit of enquiry has been awakened in the public mind, and, to some extent, on the part of the representatives of the West in Congress. Repeated demands have been made for the facts embodied in that article, which could not be supplied, the publication having been exhausted immediately after its appearance. At the instance of his Honor the Mayor and the officers of the Insurance Companies in this city, I have attempted to re-embody the facts then given, with such additional statistics, arguments and reflections as I have been enabled to collect, which are here presented.

I am highly gratified, that an opportunity has been afforded me, through a committee of your Chamber, to submit to your scrutiny and approval, or correction, the facts which I have collected. It will be seen that, from the absence of official information, as to the extent and importance of the internal trade of the West, I have, in most instances, been compelled to resort to individuals for facts; and, whilst I take pleasure in acknowledging a general disposition on the part of the business men of the city, to give all aid to my inquiries, I am compelled to confess the impossibility of arriving at complete statements in any case. Of the correctness of the information thus obtained, the Chamber will be able to judge. I am, moreover, gratified at the opportunity of having my statements examined, and, if believed to be erroneous in any particular, corrected. It has been my desire to present *facts*

*as they are*, neither magnifying the extent of our trade, nor the dangers and losses occurring on our rivers, but fairly and honestly to state the truth, as I feel conscious that the *whole truth* is all that is necessary to be laid before the public, or the national legislature.

Your action upon this subject, I trust, will have a wholesome influence in awakening public attention to it. I have long seen that the efforts of a single individual, however strong the facts by which he might be supported, were not sufficient to arrest the attention of the people, and of the public functionaries. The VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI has grown up in population and wealth by her own unaided advantages; and the work has been so rapid, yet so imperceptible, that ere the world was aware of the fact that the red man has disappeared from his native wilds—a white population, numbering many millions, are inhabiting their lands—combining intelligence and industry, and enjoying many of the luxuries of societies of longer standing. There being no *Home Department* connected with the general Government, and no means by which the multifarious ramifications of the inland trade can be known—as nearly everything that can be ascertained must be gathered from partial statements or from personal observation—the commerce of the Valley of the Mississippi has grown to an extent which astonishes even the most intelligent of those who daily mingle in it. From the paucity of means to arrive at any thing like a just estimate of its extent or influence, or of the dangers to which it is subject—a fact which says but little for the patronizing care of that government which, by the constitution, is invested with the exclusive power of regulating the commerce between the States—it is hardly matter of astonishment, much less of complaint, that our representatives in Congress, and other functionaries of the government, should be ignorant of the obstacles to, and careless about the protection of this trade. What the merchant, who is in daily connection with the trade, does not know, it is not to be expected that the Representative who, personally, is seldom brought in contact with it, should know. But the existence of this fact, the magnitude of the interests involved, and the lamentable ignorance which prevails, would seem imperatively to demand that Congress should provide some means by which this state of things might be remedied in future. Indeed, without information of this character, gathered from official sources, it is impossible for the press,

which should be the right arm of the people in securing attention to their wants, to accomplish anything; and I trust that the day is not distant when the force of public sentiment will awaken the attention of Congress to the propriety of establishing some system by which the statistics of our internal commerce may be collected and preserved.

In the consideration of this subject, I assume this position. *That the improvement of the Mississippi river and its principal tributaries, by the removal of the snags and whatever else may impede or obstruct the navigation, is a NATIONAL work—that the extent of territory, population, trade, and various interests dependent upon it, imperatively require that the work of improvement should be immediately commenced and vigorously prosecuted to its completion.*

Before proceeding to consider the facts which I will adduce in support of this position, it may be well, for the information of those who have not visited the west, to state the character and source of the principal impediment to the safe navigation of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, remarking that the Ohio and Illinois are comparatively free from dangers of this description, as is also the Mississippi above the mouth of the Missouri.

The bed and banks of the Mississippi and Missouri are composed of sand or alluvial deposits, which readily yield to the action of the stream, and frequent and repeated changes take place in the bed or channel of those rivers. The banks are mostly covered with large trees. When the direction of the river, by any obstruction in its bed, or by a rise, is changed, the banks wash away, and the trees fall in and are carried off by the stream. The sand and earthy substances adhering to the roots, after a time, cause that part to sink, anchoring it fast in the stream; a deposit of sand is immediately formed around the roots by the eddy created by the obstruction, and the channel is forced in another direction. In process of time, the branches of the tree are worn or broken off by the action of the water, ice, &c., leaving nothing but the stem, presenting up or down stream, just as it may have happened to sink, a sharp point. Some settle or sink so that the point is a few feet below the surface of the water at its lowest stage; others settle so that the point appears, or makes a break on the surface of the water; and others, again, are elevated above the highest water mark. The first are the most dangerous, as they cannot be seen,