Sternwheeler *Jean* artifacts

Background:

Willamette River paddlewheel steamboats were inextricably linked with the development of this area during the 19th and early 20th Century. Howard McKinley Corning's *Willamette Landings* (OHS, 1973) lists 49 steamboat landings between Champoeg and Salem, including Beardsley's Landing at what is now Keizer Rapids Park and Kaiser's [sic] Landing near Palma Ceia Park.

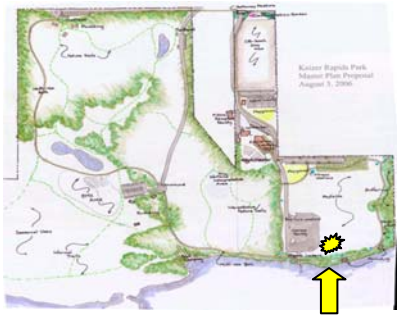
The *Jean* is the last semi-intact sternwheeler to have operated on the Willamette and the only one to have had split paddlewheels.

It had been in storage in Lewiston, Idaho, where that city had hopes of creating a maritime museum around it. Lacking sufficient funding, it was sold to a party in Cascade Locks who had visions of restoring it to operating condition for excursions. Again lacking sufficient funding, it was again offered up for sale. During this time, the RIVER Task Force was meeting, and Dr. George Sitkei promoted the idea of bringing it (the whole boat) to Keizer Rapids Park to use as the educational facility. Captain Richard Chesbrough offered additional information and Jerry Nuttbrock toured the boat during that time. The scope of the project (the boat is about 250 feet long and wider than the Oregon City locks) and the nascent stage of the park's development precluded any action at the time.

http://www.portlandground.com/archives/2006/04/paddlewheel_tug_on_the_co_1.php

Subsequently, it has been sold to Marine Services in Vancouver whose plans are to remove the large paddlewheels and the top two-story "Texas Deck" section (crew cabin, pilot house, and smokestacks) immediately and refit it as a barge from which to launch salvage operations in the Columbia this fall before high water.

This company has no use for the two large steel paddlewheels and has offered them free for the cost of hauling them away. Cascade Locks Historical Museum is interested in one and had first right of refusal, but they informed the company last week that they are unable to act quickly enough to take advantage of the opportunity. The company is in position right now to cut the wheels and lift them from the vessel onto a "low-boy" transport. Their primary interest is time as their window for salvage this fall is counting down.

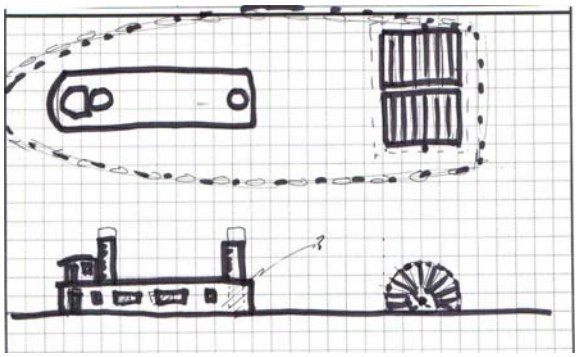


- The paddlewheels are about 20' in diameter side-to-side, 16' wide at the axle, made of wood, and are estimated to weigh as much as 10 tons each. The bottom third of the wheels has been cut away at the water line, so they are about 13 ½' high. The cowling around the wheels (shown in the photo above) has been removed.

- Once at Keizer Rapids Park, a location (temporary or permanent) would need to be established.
    - One suggestion is in along the river, east of where the marine facility is planned.
- A smaller, wooden paddlewheel from the *Henderson* is on display at Hood River County Museum with a concrete structure to support the axle and a simple interpretive sign.

The company is also willing to give up the upper two-story section ("Texas Deck" unit consisting of the crew cabin, upper pilot house and two stacks) for the cost of hauling it away and closing the resulting hole.

- It is approximately 50' long, 14' wide, and 7' high with doors and window openings. It is all steel, has no floor and could simply sit on the ground, at least temporarily.
- On it (the top level) are the pilot house (approximately 8' square and 8' high, with doors and windows and a floor) and two stacks (approximately 15' to 20' high above the lower cabin and 4' wide). It is all steel.



- This whole section would be cut loose from the rest of the boat in pieces, stacks cut off, and loaded on the transport. Marine Services (the owner) may require reimbursement for their cost to cover the resultant hole in the top deck.
- This large "Texas Deck" section could be situated on the ground in front of the paddlewheel(s), simulating the look of a vessel (much smaller than the original).

- The parts and stacks would need to be welded back together.

- Initially, this section would be part of the static display. The doors would be welded shut and window openings secured (e.g., with expanded metal mesh or plywood).
- Eventually, this section could be developed into an interactive display by allowing visitors inside one or both levels, incorporating all-weather interpretive features inside (such as screened photos of steamboating on the middle Willamette, steering wheel, etc.), and accommodating small groups for interpretive presentations in warm weather.

An interesting message string related to the *Jean* is at http://rypn.sunserver.com/forum/viewtopic.php?start=0&t=10391&topic_view=flat&sid=515c23d7f628262cd62a21f958fdc7a3

Themed Playground

Another topic of conversation at last Tuesday's Keizer Rapids Work Group meeting had to do with having a playground go along with this theme.

Timberform playground company has this themed playground pictured on their website: