By JAMES V. SWIFT
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One of the landmarks on the Mississippi River below St. Louis for many years was the railroad car ferry Ste. Genevieve. The ferry crossed the river daily for years carrying its load of freight cars. Recently the excellent model maker Glenn S. Hensley chose the ferry as his subject for a model. As usual it was a great one.

As he told the WJ, "the model is 42 inches overall with a beam of about 13 inches, is electrically powered and radio-controlled. The original vessel operated under the name of the Missouri-Illinois Railroad Company carrying loads of limestone to railroad connections on the east bank of the Mississippi. I guess you could say she was one of the first 'containerships' to navigate the Mississippi.

"Plans came from John Fryant, who got them from the archives of the Charles E. Ward Engineering Company at Charleston, W. Va. Also, help came from Bill's Photo Lab, Ste. Genevieve, Mo."

Details On The Ferry

The Ste. Genevieve (second) was built in 1922. It was 286.3 by 43 by 11 feet, and the engines were 22 inches in diameter with an eight-foot stroke. There were six boilers, three on each side. The boat could carry 18 railroad cars per trip. The boat actually left from Little Rock Landing.

The starboard wheel was damaged in a collision with the towboat Walter P. Dolle the morning of April 6, 1944, and railroad traffic had to be rerouted through St. Louis until the wheel could be repaired.

The first Ste. Genevieve was built in 1903 by the Howard shipyard at Jeffersonville, Ind. It sank at the Kellogg Incline, in Illinois, March 1, 1918.

The day the second Ste. Genevieve made its last trip in 1961, a number of people went down to the landing to pay their final respects, including this writer and Joseph B. Vollmar. We took a number of pictures, of course, and, I believe, tape recordings of the engines.

Modern Model

Speaking of models, Larry Gene Geisler, at the Valley Boat Docks, Duffy, Ohio, tells us that he recently finished a model of the 6,000 hp. American Beauty with the Agri-Trans markings.

Geisler has it under a picture of the steam towboat Monongahela, making them, as he says, "the old and the new." He also picked up a big mistake in our Tom Greene article. The Greene burial plot is in Newport, Ohio, not Newport, Ky.

The St. Louis Scene

The view of high water we ran in the July 31 issue brought an interesting e-mail from Bernard McMackin of St. Louis, who has this commentary:

"The conjecture that the picture of the wharfboats at the top of the landing during high water was taken from the Eads Bridge is validated by a couple of sources. I pulled out my copy of Dry & Compton (Pictorial St. Louis-1875) and compared the buildings in the photo to those south of the Eads Bridge in Plate 2 of the collection. There is a near-perfect match.

"The view is also consistent with the Gary Lucy print of the reverse view, looking upstream and inland below the Eads

Model of the Ste. Genevieve made by Glenn S. Hensley.
Ste. Genevieve
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Bridge (St. Louis Riverfront 1876). I say consistent because the Lucy print only begins with the north side of the first tall (four-story) building in the picture. That building is identified in Dry & Compton as the Oxley Company, and the Lucy painting shows the letters ‘ey’ on the upper end of the building.

“The principal differences between the picture and the other views are the elevated railroad tracks and one building in the middle of the block. The building with the painting of a man in a black vest and white shirt was not present in 1875. The whitish building just a few doors below that new building is on the corner of Vine and the landing. Among other enterprises, this was the office of the Wiggins Ferry Company, whose landing appears just above the bridge in Dry & Compton.

“I notice a single pole of the type we now refer to as telephone poles alongside each of the wharfboats. It would be interesting to know if these poles supported wires of any kind, which is a notion that looks reasonable in the picture. Were these wharfboats enough of a leading-edge operation to have direct telegraph lines? Could they have been early adopters of the telephone? Or was it ordinary electricity—the wires for the buildings may be concealed by the elevated railway platform. Knowing the type of communication and the speed with which it appeared riverside might make a useful footnote for both the history of technology and of the river business.

“My recollection is that the St. Louis gauge has to push 40 feet before L. K. Sullivan Boulevard gets wet. It would be interesting to use the five maps, the construction date of the elevated railway, and records of high water to pin down the date of the photo. The river business looks active, though there’s no way to know about its financial health solely from the picture.

“I look forward to hearing other clues from the rest of the readers. I’m not going to be able to get to the Missouri Historical Society Library for a while, but I’m itching to scout some of the directories there. Good thing the WJ is right at hand there—wonder what the odds are that this picture may be in an earlier issue?”

Red River Waterway Work

The Vicksburg Engineer District has awarded two contracts to Tacon Company LLC, Bartlett, Tenn., for dike and revetment reinforcement and construction on the Red River Waterway. The first, for $1,744,984, covers the Hadden/Fort Derussey Dike between Miles 57 and 58, while the second, for $1,097,510, is for reinforcement of the England and Hudson revetment.