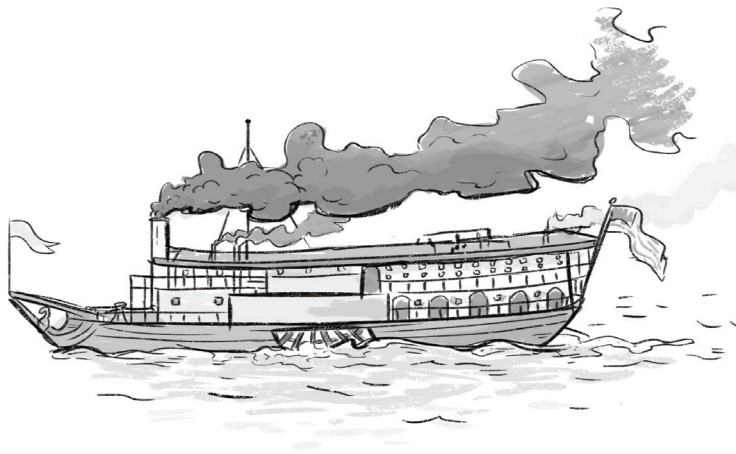


Adventures on the American Frontier

Pioneers on the Early Waterways

Part Three

Henry Shreve's New Steamboat



A Royal Fireworks Production

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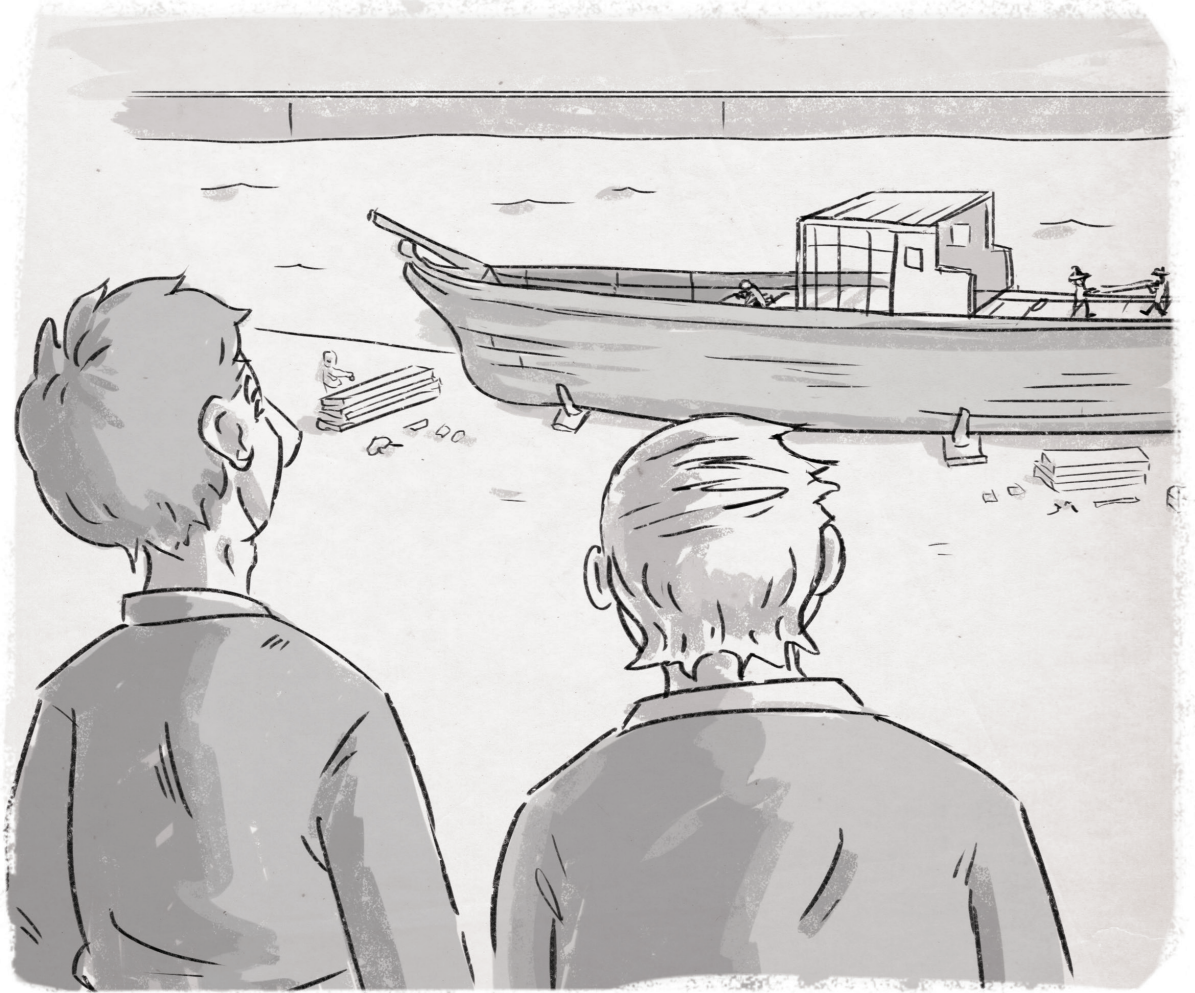
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Every day, people went to watch the boatbuilders in what is now Wheeling, West Virginia. One fall day in 1815, they saw something strange.



“Hey! Don’t close up the hold!” called one of the watchers to a carpenter on one of the boats. “The engine and the boiler aren’t in yet!”

But the carpenter kept right on nailing boards over the hold of the boat. The men watching laughed.

“What kind of boat is Henry building?” a man asked. “Everyone knows that a steamboat’s engines have to go in the bottom of the boat or else it’ll tip over.”

A second man chuckled. “First he builds



it to look like a big keelboat,” he said, “and then he floors over the part where the engine should go. I always thought Henry Shreve had good sense, but now I’m not so sure.”

Another man spoke up. “Henry has taken enough barges and keelboats up and down the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers to know what he’s doing,” he told the others. “He even piloted a steamboat—the *Enterprise*. Took it all the way up to Pittsburgh. But he’s not using his head now.”

The men laughed again, but the sound of a quiet voice stopped them. "No steamboat ever sailed up the Mississippi to the Ohio River without flood waters to help it, but this boat will go up the Mississippi River even when the water is low." The speaker was a tall young man with bright eyes.

One of the men who had been laughing said, "We didn't mean anything against your boat, Henry, but it does seem strange. Are you sure it will work? It is not like any of the Fulton steamboats."



Henry Miller Shreve's voice remained quiet, but it was firm, too. "Fulton's boats are built for deep water, and they don't have strong enough engines. That's why they won't go very far up the Mississippi River."

