

“The Northern Indiana”

A Lake Steamer of 1852

[The following sketch, found in an old periodical, was kindly sent to us by Mrs. Emma Carleton, of New Albany.]

IN 1852, on Lake Erie, was a passenger steam-boat named “The Northern Indiana.” This boat is mentioned in a sketch entitled “An Excursion of One Thousand Miles Out West,” published in “The Literary World,” of July 10, 1852, and written by a New York participant in a “Stockholders’ Excursion” over the “Michigan Southern and Northern Indiana Railroad.” Says this writer:

“The company, when assembled at Dunkirk pier, numbered, we believe, some four hundred, all of whom found ample room and accommodation in the splendid and spacious cabins of the ‘Northern Indiana’ * * * Soon after we were settled on board, dinner, pleasant word to the traveler, was announced. Those of the gentlemen who were happy enough to have ladies in charge, were soon summoned to the dining-cabin, where tables, tastefully decorated with flowers, awaited their approach. * * It was well remarked by a gentleman that the bill of fare furnished a most gratifying argument in favor of railroads, for by no less potent an agent than steam could the varied excellencies of the fish, flesh and fruits of so many distant regions be brought together.

“The Northern Indiana is the ‘crack’ boat of the lake, having lately beaten her powerful rival, the Mayflower, in a run for the purpose of testifying their respective powers, from Buffalo to Cleveland. She is sharply built for speed, with engines of great power, and large and beautifully decorated cabins.”

Of the country in northern Indiana, as seen from the new railway, the writer said:

“The vast wheat fields of Indiana and the general look of thrift and prosperity of the region through which we passed excited universal admiration.”

Chicago was then seven years old.