

10/8/73

Dear Jerry:

Enjoyed your letter and photo about BERKELEY in Sea Breezes.

Had an interesting surprise. Once a week I try to show a film in my classes and I've been getting them from the Whittier City Library. Well, that library closed temporarily for enlarging and I went to the Downey City Library.

Found a 40-minute film listed under title of "Huckleberry Finn." When I showed it, it turned out to be the 1931 version with Mickey Rooney and what looked like the CAPTAIN WEBER (she was called RIVER QUEEN in the film). I had never before seen the 1931 Huck Finn movie; assume the one at Downey may have been cut a little to bring it down to 40 minutes.

I didn't see "Steamboat 'Round the Bend" until 1949. And it wasn't till about 1955 that I found out by looking at one of Mathilda's displays that the 2 main steamers in the film were the LEADER (as CLAREMORE QUEEN) and the CAPITAL CITY (as PRIDE OF PADUCAH). In the race they added the CHEROKEE and T.C. WALKER under their real names.

You mention the CAPTAIN WEBER fire of 1943 and add that "her cold and sodden hulk was towed away to Rio Vista to be converted into an elevator barge." Do you know what her subsequent career was? We moved to Rio Vista in 1945 and I couldn't locate her then, unless she was disguised and no one knew enough to tell me.

It was her sistership, the DAUNTLESS (later motorship x SAN JOAQUIN) that got me interested in steamboats. The bridge-tender at Rio Vista told me she had been a sternwheeler and I could find out more about her in a new book (yours), which I promptly got.

The DAUNTLESS seems to have had bad luck in a number of ways. You mention a fire about 1910. Even before that, I found out in the Stanford law library, she had collided with a launch in the Mokelumne River, had sunk, and stayed on the bottom almost a year. She did have her happy days and I judge from your accounts of her that you rode her on the river. However, bad luck returned in November 1951 when she had a bow-on collision with the tug SOLANO near Collinsville, sank, and had a cargo of rice swell up and literally burst her out of existence.

I remember Bob Parkinson showed me a photo of DAUNTLESS and CAPTAIN WEBER shortly after they were built, and they looked identical then. Later, however, as CAPT WEBER improved her passenger facilities, the DAUNTLESS shifted more to freight.

Best, *Keith*

