

# TELLS OF FAMOUS RIVER BOAT RACE

## Woman Who Was on Natchez in Race with Robert E. Lee, Recalls Scene

Revival of the golden days of steamboat rivalry on the Mississippi, when great river greyhounds decided supremacy in spirited races, has in a measure been brought about as the result of recent contests and the breaking of the 59-year-old speed record set by the packet Robert E. Lee.

But the glories of the earlier race are missing in the modern runs, according to Mrs. Mary C. Brown of Fort Worth. She is the only woman, and one of the two persons now living, who were aboard either the Lee or the Natchez in the historic race of the '70s. For a half century she has claimed that if the Lee had "played fair," it would have been beaten, says a Central Press story from New Orleans. Former Governor H. C. Warmouth of Louisiana is the other survivor.

### Those Who Remember

Two Fort Worth men, E. W. Provine and Henry Gernsbacher, saw the race. Gernsbacher, 13 at the time, was bathed in the backwash of the Lee, as it passed St. John the Baptist, 13 miles up the river from New Orleans. Provine was one of those who built a great bonfire at Memphis to welcome the Lee, but made a mistake and cheered for the Thompson Dean, one of the slowest boats on the river, as it came into view.

Mrs. Brown, then 18, had intended to ride the Lee, during the race, from Natchez to Memphis, but the boat made no stops, and she boarded the Natchez, with her brother, the late Capt. B. B. Paddock of Fort Worth. "If the Lee had made all the stops, like the Natchez, it wouldn't have won," declares Mrs. Brown.

### Created International Interest

In the old days, before romance faded and the ornate river boats gave way to progress, the interest of the United States, and even Europe, frequently was centered on the Mississippi steamboat races. Millions of dollars were known to have changed hands in wagers at the time of the Lee and Natchez race, an international affair, and the greatest race of all times on the river.

"The Natchez made little preparation for the contest," says Mrs. Brown. "Captain Leathers, one of the most picturesque figures on the river, ordered fat pine distributed up the river, and that was all.

"Captain Cannon of the Lee refused all passengers and freight, stripped all excess weight from the ship, and hired another ship as a fuel tender.

"The race began on June 30, 1870, at New Orleans, and the excitement all up the river was intense. From the deck of the Natchez we could see the banks of the river lined with people all the way from Natchez, where I got aboard, to St. Louis, where the race ended, the Lee the victor.

"And not since the days I rode the Natchez have I experienced anything so exciting."

buddies and is offered the position

of chief of police, which he accepts.

Esther Ralston is the sister of his old pal, and knows his past, but Bancroft does not know this. They are in love. A big police picnic is given in honor of Bancroft and his successful clean-up campaign. The gang prepares to strike. In the middle of the celebration he learns of their plans. The gang sends an old sweetheart of Bancroft's to tell his new love about his past, if he interferes, thinking this will stop him.

He decides to cast his lot with his new "gang," and, leading two score of mounted police officers, he speeds to stop the wholesale robbery. Machine guns crackle, the officers attack with hand grenades and all the modern implements of peacetime war and Bancroft comes face to face with Warner Oland, the new gang leader.

In the cast are included Raymond Hatton, Dorothy Revier, O. P. Heggie, and Morgan Farley.

The stage at the Chicago Theatre for next week presents a colorful, tuneful jazz show called "Shades of Blue." Featured in the production are Art Kahn, well-known Chicago blues pianist, "Limberlegs" Edwards, eccentric dancer, and Serge Flash, juggling expert. A fast-stepping chorus completes the show.

### Jedge's Josh

An old country farmer who had been a teetotaler all his life died. In the course of a kindly obituary notice, the Parish Magazine concluded with:

"In his later years he might often have been seen on the steps of the Congregational chapel, drinking in the sun."

His relatives have been informed that there are scarcely grounds for a libel action. At least he was no secret drinker.

Shy Girl: "Oh, but mother objects to kissing!"

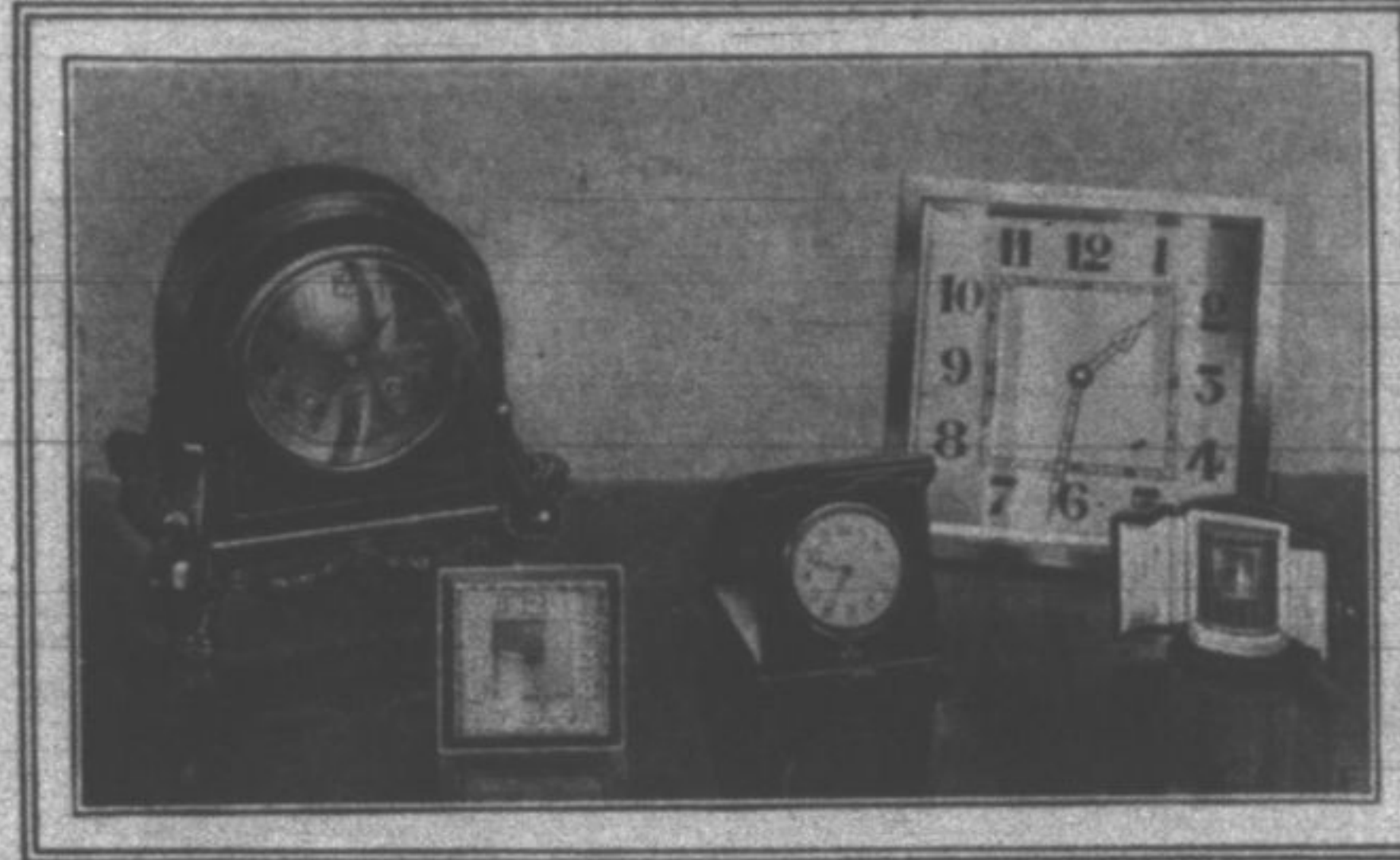
Bright Lad: "Well, that's all right; I'm not kissing her, am I?"

He: "I can tell by looking in a girl's eyes just what she thinks of me."

She: "How annoying!"

"Talk about a woman's sympathy! I told my best girl the other night that I was broke."

"What did she say?"  
"She said so was our engagement."



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