

LIFE ON THE OHIO
Switzerland County Historical Society
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Life on the Ohio was very busy last year. This year is shaping up to be even busier.

In 2005 over 7,200 vessels locked through Markland dam. Of these vessels 4,838 were towboats pushing 46,425 barges. This was an increase of 326 towboats and 2236 barges.

On a commercial basis 53.8 million tons of cargo locked through Markland. This was a 3.8 million ton increase over 2004. Almost all of this increase was in the amount of coal transported in 2005 (22 million tons). While the transportation of coal saw a significant jump, only a slight increase in petroleum shipments was recorded. With the continuing rise in petroleum prices I expect this trend to continue.

Below is a summary of freight shipments on the river.

	2004	2005	Change
Freight totals	Million Tons	Million Tons	Million Tons
Coal	18.2	22.0	3.8
Petroleum	4.6	5.3	0.7
Chemicals	5.6	5.9	0.3
Crude Material	12.6	12.3	-0.3
Manufactured Goods	5.5	5.1	-0.4
Farm Produce	2.7	2.6	-0.2
Manufactured Machinery	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unknown	0.6	0.4	-0.2
Tonnage Totals:	50.0	53.8	3.8

Our section of the Ohio River also saw an increase in the number of excursion vessels last year. This is the result of the Ohio River being viewed by the excursion boat industry as the most popular and scenic of all of their tours. The Delta Queen passed Switzerland County 12 times and the Mississippi Queen steamed past 6 times. The River Explorer spent most of August, September and October on the Ohio. They passed Switzerland County 10 times and stopped in Aurora 3 times for public tours. According to the Corps of Engineers almost 8000 passengers and crew were on board the excursion vessels.

We were treated to visits by the replica of the Nina, the Chattanooga Star, the Belle of Cincinnati and the Natchez. The Nina was traveling on her annual tour of the inland rivers to bring history to life for school children. Chattanooga Star, a replica side-wheeler, also did schools programs. The Belle of Cincinnati traveled down river 4 times to participate in events in Madison and Louisville. The Natchez came to Cincinnati in 2005. She had not been on the Ohio River since 1982 and had never been above

Louisville. Although the Natchez safely avoided Hurricane Katrina her crew was not so lucky, most lost everything. The Natchez came to Cincinnati as a fundraiser to help her crew.

This year promises to be an even bigger year in the *Life on The Ohio*. The Delta Queen will make 6 cruises in and out of Cincinnati. The Mississippi Queen will make 7 cruises and the American Queen, which has not been on the Ohio since 2004, will make 4 cruises. The River Explorer will travel past Switzerland County 10 times and again will be on the Ohio from August through the first of November.

October will feature the 2006 edition of Tall Stacks. This year 17 riverboats will converge on Cincinnati. All but 3 of the boats will pass our county on their way to Tall Stacks. These boats are:

MAGNOLIA BELLE	port of	New Orleans, Louisiana
BELLE OF LOUISVILLE	port of	Louisville, Kentucky
CELEBRATION BELLE	port of	Moline, Illinois
CHATTANOOGA STAR	port of	Chattanooga, Tennessee
COLONEL	port of	Galveston, Texas
DELTA QUEEN	port of	Cincinnati, Ohio
GENERAL JACKSON	port of	Nashville, Tennessee
HARRIET BISHOP	port of	Saint Paul, Minnesota
MAGNOLIA BELLE	port of	New Orleans, Louisiana
MISSISSIPPI QUEEN	port of	New Orleans, Louisiana
MUSIC CITY QUEEN	port of	Nashville, Tennessee
MUSIC CITY QUEEN	port of	Nashville, Tennessee
SPIRIT OF JEFFERSON	port of	Louisville, Kentucky
SPIRIT OF PEORIA	port of	Peoria, Illinois

Recreational use of the river was also big in 2005. Conditions for boating and fishing were the best they had been in many years. On most summer weekends the river was full of pleasure boaters. Fishing also increased as two major Bass tournaments were held in Lawrenceburg. In addition several local tournaments were held each week spring through fall. Many of the fishermen traveled to Switzerland County to fish.