



Vessels appear in the manuscripts presumably in the order that they were moored as Assistant Marshall Dawson made his rounds. Because the Louisville-Jeffersonville ferry “Indiana” appears early in these data (page 577, line 9 and is not included among these steamboat data), I surmise that these boats were moored in the vicinity of Bear Grass Creek, the landing for the Louisville and Jeffersonville ferry (see 188 US, 385ff: LOUISVILLE & JEFFERSONVILLE FERRY CO. v. COM. OF KENTUCKY(1903))—now Bandman Park near River Road in Louisville—as six ferry boats (not enumerated here) are included among the data.

Subsequent more careful and extensive review of the manuscript census records revealed one additional steamboat that I had initially missed so the definitive dataset has 46 steamboats. These represent about 7% of the nation’s steamboats at that time and some 10% of the total tonnage. They represent the largest known collection of quantitative data regarding Western River steamboats. I was able to locate each of the steamboats in the database of steamboats of the United States compiled by William Lyle (Mystic CT, 1952) and thus match additional data regarding the vessels’ tonnage, date of construction, and the date and manner in which each ceased service. These data have been appended to the information collected from the census of manufactures in the spreadsheet available here.

Data on the ferry boats between Indiana and Kentucky intermingled among the steamboat data were not collected. Most of the vessels had two engines though two had just one. All boats except the “Uncle Sam” reported both freight and passenger revenue. For the “Uncle Sam,” Dawson attached a note that the vessel had “no cabins” (though why this translated to no passengers is not clear). Two vessels, both engaged in the Louisville-Frankfort trade (on the Kentucky River), report lockage fees among their expenses. These, presumably, were levied for passage through the locks and dams built across the Kentucky River in 1836-42 at Lockport and Gest. Interesting, none of the vessels engaged in trade both above and below Louisville via the Ohio river report lockage although the two-mile Portland canal around the Falls of the Ohio did not pass from private to public ownership until 1855 (see Paul Trescott, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 1958), presumably because these vessels were too large to pass the canal's locks.