

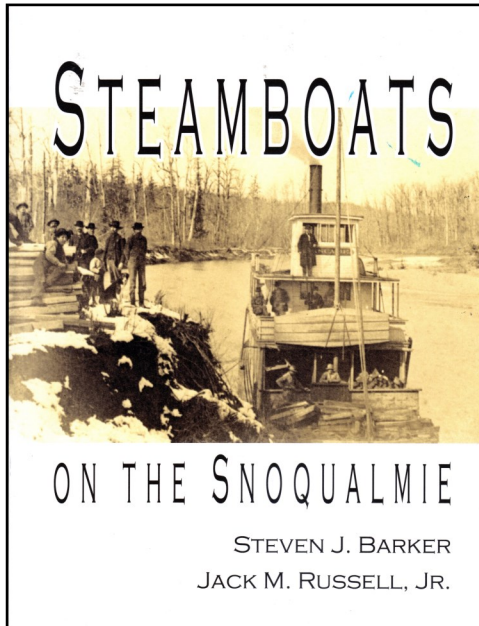
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Steaming on the Snoqualmie



Hot off the presses comes a new book, *Steamboats*, chronicling steamboat traffic in our area. Authors Steven Barker and Jack Russell met as fifth graders in the 1960s. Their fascination with steamboats has led to a lifetime of tracking down details of commerce on local rivers from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s.

Starting in 1859 with the side-wheeler Ranger, boats hauled goods up rivers and carried raw materials out. Stern-wheelers became the norm by 1871 trailing large log booms behind them. This was especially important when the Hops Craze hit the Snoqualmie Valley. Farmers across the valley read Ezra Meeker's book about raising hops, and soon hops was the major crop. A riverboat captain George W. Gove and partners formed the Hop Growers Association to run the Snoqualmie Hop Ranch (present day Meadowbrook.) His steamers hauled his crop and those of other's downstream to market. He recalled guiding his boat, the Cascade, through the many turns in the Snoqualmie



A milk boat on the Snoqualmie River

River often stopping at Hance Moore's warehouse for lunch while waiting for higher water.

By 1888, a regular schedule ran from Snohomish leaving at 8:00AM and arriving in Fall City at 5:00PM. The boat would stay over and return the next day. It brought passengers, groceries, hay, feed, and hardware.

In addition to managing sand bars, riffles, deadheads, and low water, there was the added drama of sabotage from rival captains and the occasional shooting. Steam engines exploded and boats got stranded—some even caught fire and sank.

By 1908, gas powered boats became popular, but it was the 1911 arrival of the railroad that sounded the death knell for the steamboat era. It was cheaper, faster, and more versatile to ship by rail.

The book includes maps, 100 photos, and detailed descriptions of the boats that plied the rivers. Also included is an interesting section on bridges of the area. They've done a great job of giving reference notes and a comprehensive bibliography. The book can be ordered from their website <https://www.barker-russell.com/>.



