

GREAT RIVER RUMBLE '09
LaCrosse to Dubuque

Come Saturday we hit LaCrosse
And set up camp in Veteran's Park;
Were lengthly "briefed" by Rex, our boss,
Aft signing forms in blood on bark.

We ate in town -- each on his own,
And some less fortunates did wait,
And some the gaiety postponed
To rest for Sunday's wake-up slate.

We woke at 5:00 to Huey's News --
Like "Being square is seen as hip";
We packed and had to restaurant choose --
Most service didn't rate a tip.

The morning broke with weather fine,
With new and knowns attending boats.
Humm'bird slough our crafts' design;
In all, few barges we did note.

A tailwind gave our boats a shove
And we finished above a lock --
In Genoa -- there catfish love
And beans and slaw and lager bock.

Classic music was Monday's call
And our breakfast was catered in
But our lock was blocked by barge et al
So Pilates did begin.

Alas, this day we fought the breeze --
Up coming from the 'Sippi's mouth;

By bluffs and rocks we then were squeezed,
The towns now few and small on south.

We got to Lansing in the muck --
Ahead of a threatening storm;
We got some rain but kept our luck
As the sun did soon again warm.

And we ate in downtown Lansing --
Some beefsteak and earfuls of corn;
Awoke on Tuesday, banjos dueling,
A cowbell and cow mooing horn.

By bluffs once again we were bound
And tailwinds again gave us push;
Delightful Harpers Ferry we found --
The park and the trees and the bush.

Everywhere e'er there were golf carts --
It must be a town where they're made?
The Civic Center won our hearts
With meatloaf and ham marinade.

But Harpers Ferry's showerless --
All bathing was done with a hose,
But for else this town was the best --
A secret some underexposed.

Jim's wake-up was re shaving cream --
"We thought our baby's head be split" ...
" ... A shave each day you'll always gleam"
And an ice cream machine was a hit.

This Wednesday was the day for hats --
Our picture as a group for that;

A dozen miles we faced this day
In breeze and sun and sand and spray.

A porta-potty in the woods --
For gals, which life for them was good;
 McGregor did we step on land
 Then bussed to camp, to showers grand.

Then bussed to town for beer and brats,
An accordion man who young was not,
 Then bussed back to bucolic beds --
 Oblivious to rain ahead.

At 6:00 Jim played "Who'll stop the rain?" --
Our luck run out and some disdain?
 We bussed to town to wait and wait --
 1 cook, 2 help, one-fifty plates.

And in the rain were lengthly "briefed"
While here and there a boat was thiefed
 And trailered, adding to the crew
 Who'd ride the road and do their do.

'Bout 9:00 we left McGregor's dock --
Canoes and 'yaks, the mighty Shoq,
 And to the heavens God did speak:
 "Enough the rain on these this week!"

Again the wind on us did shove
And peeked at times the sun above;
 We stopped at Clayton for some lunch
 Where '06 Bill's we liked a bunch.

At Guttenberg we were to stop
Aft locking through another drop;

The harbor at this place was new,
We ate in town -- ice cream there too.

At night there were a zillion bats --
They're creepy some, but not all that;
And Friday woke to Krupa's drums
And breakfast was the best yet come.

From Guttenberg again pushed off --
In tailwind, sun, some clothes were doffed;
We stopped to break amongst P. I.
Which no one knows as well as thy.

We lunched at Cassville ('06 camped),
A few stout souls to town did tramp;
To Finley's Landing -- 19 miles,
And not much there 'cept Rumble smiles.

For supper we had catered ribs
With chocolate pie -- no need for bibs;
Just perfect this our last night out
But went to bed with weather doubts.

We woke to Wilbury's "It's all right" --
The forecast tempest not in sight;
The wind some fiercely at our backs
And soon the sky not quite as black.

Made Hawkeye Marina at 10 o' clock --
A some longer break because of a lock,
Then out on the water there arose quite a fight --
The Shoquoqon hit from the left and the right --
By a flotilla the war canoe blocked.

Then 10 miles we paddled in this last pool,

Being pushed by the wind with minds of a mule --
Thinking of nothing except to be done,
Being tossed by the waves as rivals and fun,
Respectfully thought of or possibly fools.

The banquet was held at Eagle Point Park
On a bluff beholding the lockage and dam;
Goodbyes were said fore sunset past dark
And rough guys were sirs and tomboys were ma'ams.

G. Kittell
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