

son's neighbors and friends taking stock in the enterprise, the steamboat was duly completed, and at the opening of navigation in the spring of 1834, commenced sailing. The name chosen for this steamer was the *Commodore Perry*.

An incident showing well the energetic and efficient character of the man may be given in this connection. Not knowing but there might be something in the way to endanger the boat at the launching, Captain Wilkeson stripped himself and went in personally and examined the bottom of the river or cove where the launching was to be accomplished.

Among those who had taken stock in the *Commodore Perry* was one Joe or Joseph Langford, a colored man who had been cook on the *Eagle*, and afterwards had the same position on the *Perry*. His wife, a colored woman, was one of the most lady-like and stylish women in Perrysburg. During one of the steamboat's trips, after nearly all the passengers had eaten their dinner and none were left at the table, Langford sat down and was eating, when he was interrupted by a passenger who chanced to be late for dinner. This person seeing Langford at the table, said, "I am not going to eat with a nigger." Langford felt quite indignant at the remark and curtly observed, "I should like to know who has a better right to eat his dinner aboard that boat than one of the owners."

In those early days of lake commerce, in the spring, or late in the winter, just before the opening of navigation, every one seemed busy along the docks in fitting out both steam and sail vessels. Sometimes, however, these would be delayed in commencing their trips until quite late in the season on account of the "ice blockade." I presume there are many now living who remember the delay caused at Buffalo by the ice, in the spring of 1837. All the vessels in the harbor had been for several weeks ready to leave, but found it impossible to get out. Boats would go out to the line of the ice and make an attempt to break through, but their efforts were in vain. They would have to work themselves back out of the jam and return