

I.G. Baker

May 10, 2022

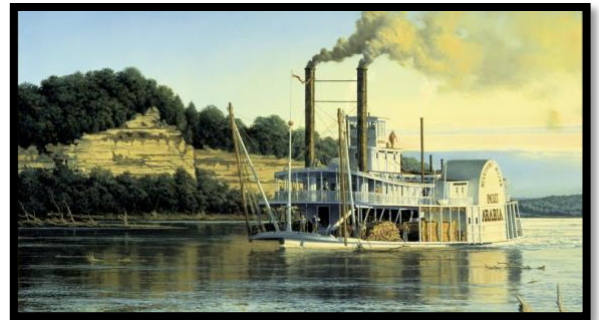
Missouri River, USA

We have all been affected by supply chain issues recently. Autos, electronic gear, some consumer goods, even toilet paper, aren't always immediately available when we want them. Some of us have had to switch brands, wait a week or two, or order items online when we can't find *off-the-shelf* products. It is an inconvenience.

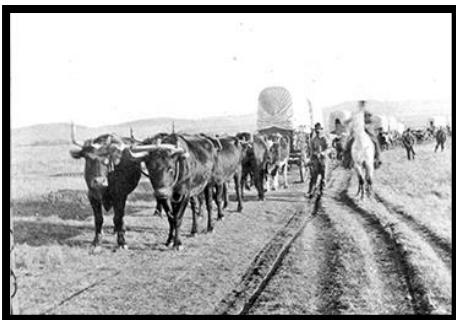


But consider this. If you lived in Calgary in 1880, before the railroad arrived, and you needed a new Winchester rifle, this is how the supply chain worked...

Winchester rifles were manufactured in New Haven, Connecticut. To get one, you would go to an I.G. Baker & Co store in Calgary. If they didn't have the model you were looking for in stock, they would place an order. The request would be sent by wagon train from Fort Calgary to the I.G. Baker depot in Fort Benton, Montana. From there, your rifle order would be transferred onto a paddle-wheeler and sent down the Missouri River to St. Louis. In St. Louis it would be transferred to a larger riverboat and paddled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Your order would then be placed on a ship sailing up the east coast to New Haven.



A foot courier would deliver the rifle order from the wharf to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.

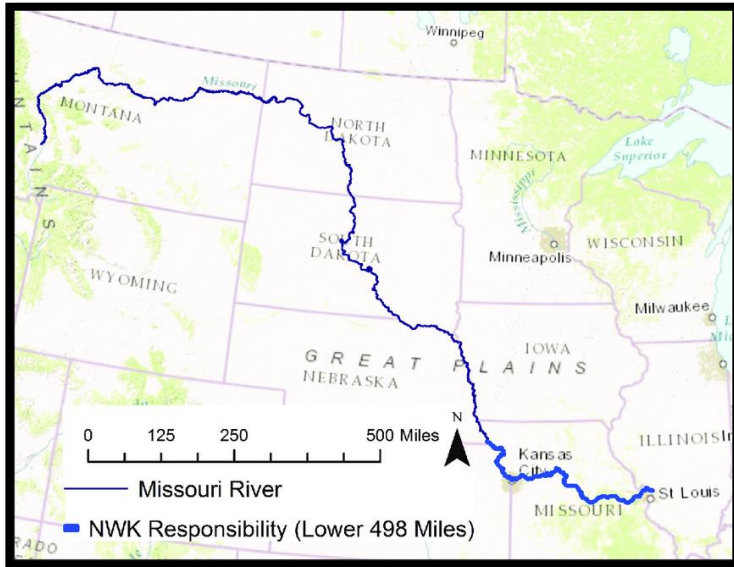


Winchester would build the rifle and ship it by the reverse route, from New Haven to New Orleans by ship, up the Mississippi River to St. Louis on a paddle-wheeler, transferred to a freighter and paddled west along the Missouri River to I.G. Baker's warehouse in Fort Benton. The rifle would then be packed onto a wagon pulled by a team of oxen and carted along the Whoop-up Trail to Fort Macleod, and on to Calgary.

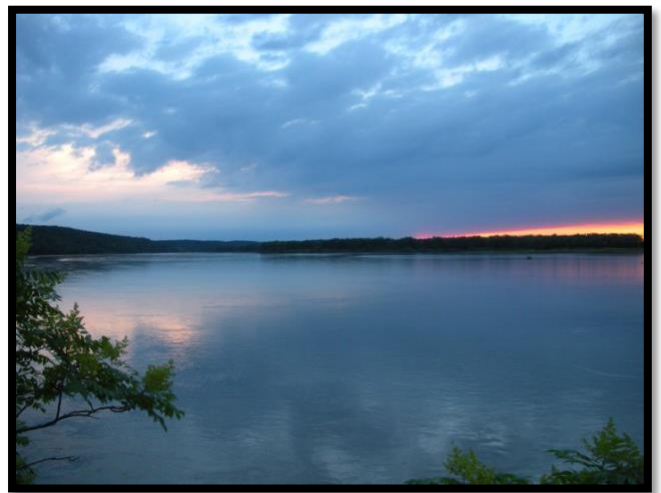
Provided everything went smoothly, you could pick up your rifle at I.G. Baker's store on 8th Avenue, roughly six months from the date you placed the order.

So, if you can't find the brand of toilet paper you are looking for, on the day you want it, try,...

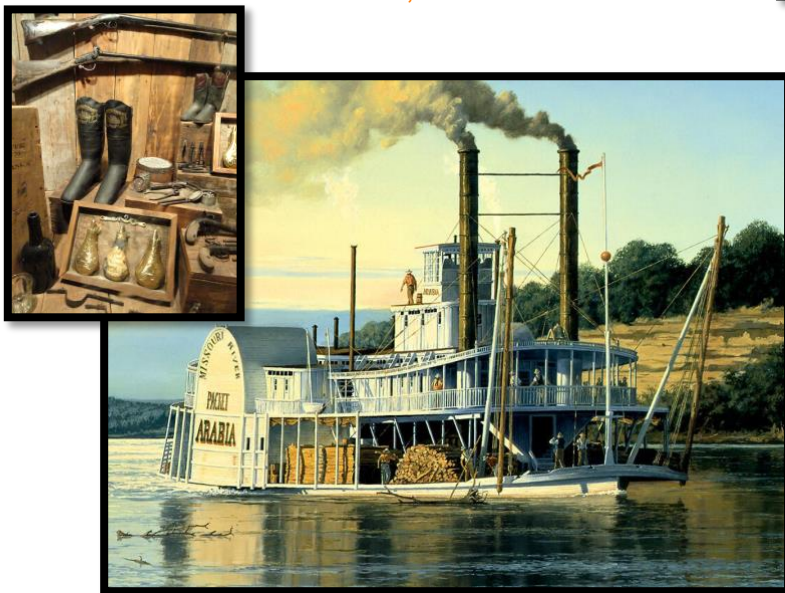
... I.G. Baker



We have been crisscrossing the Missouri River all along our route to Kansas.



This beautiful tributary was once the essential artery by which all goods passed, to develop the western USA, as far north as Alberta.



The steamboat Arabia, carrying settler's supplies, shipwrecked on the Missouri River near Kansas City in 1856.



Wagon Train on the Whoop-up Trail.

"The Missouri River – too thick to drink, too thin to plow" – Arabia Steamboat Museum