

the lake route through Chicago was pointed out as the probable rival of the Southern route.

We have already seen, from statistics given, that the predictions regarding loss of trade for the Southern ports were after 1846 literally fulfilled. The thriving cities on Lake Michigan were the chief gainers by this change in trade routes. And it is sufficient in this connection to indicate very briefly when and how Chicago appropriated its share of the commerce of the West and of the lead trade of the Mississippi. In 1836 there was formed in Chicago a transportation company whose purpose was to carry goods between Chicago and St. Louis, and other Mississippi cities. A line of wagons was to connect Chicago with a tributary of the Illinois River near Kankakee, flat-boats were to run thence to the head of steamboat navigation, with a line of steamers to complete the trip. One hundred and twenty merchants in St. Louis and Alton entered into the contract to be supplied from the East by this route.¹

¹ The following, from the *Chicago American*, is quoted in the *Northwestern Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, Jan. 16, 1836: "*Transportation Company*.—The public will be gratified to learn that a company is now formed for the transportation of goods from Chicago to the Mississippi. A line of wagons is to be established from Chicago to the Illinois river, terminating, as we understand, at or near Kankakee, from which place flat-boats are to run to the head of steamboat navigation on the Illinois river, and steamboats will complete the line to St. Louis. The stock of the company is taken chiefly in Ottawa and Chicago. It is connected with one of the largest lines upon the Lakes and the Erie Canal. *One Hundred and Twenty* merchants in St. Louis and Alton alone have entered into contract to bring their goods this way. The company was formed for the accommodation of that portion of the country, the wants and business of which are so great as to make the undertaking profitable also to the stockholders. The immense advantage of Lake transportation over any other, in connection with this new arrangement, will enable merchants in the southwest to get their goods from New York at less expense through this channel than through the southern route. It should be understood that this important arrangement did not originate here, but with those merchants referred to who are directly interested, and who have calculated the advantage to be gained to themselves. If under the present circumstances this route is preferable,