

These admissions by an avowed advocate of the southern route are significant enough of the relative commercial standing of St. Louis and Chicago. In the following year the same subject is repeatedly mentioned: "The difficulty in navigating the Upper Mississippi seems bound to drive our trade out of its natural channel into the basin of the lakes. The veto¹ is the pivot on which that trade is turning. So nearly balanced is the cost of transportation now, by the lake and by the river route, that if the lake route had the advantage of even 50 miles of railroad, which a comparatively small expenditure of money will give it, we should see all the lead, even from the wharves of Galena and Dubuque, moving off upon wheels to New York and Boston."²

Among the many elements which contributed to Chicago's success and brought her to the front as the leading city of the Northwest, none is more worthy of mention than the River and Harbor Convention held there July 5-7, 1847. Over 2,300 delegates, principally from Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania, assembled at this meeting to discuss the great questions of transportation and internal improvement so urgently pressing for settlement in the West at this time. The keynote of the convention was struck by a resolution previously adopted at a Chicago mass meeting: "*Resolved*, That we sincerely regret the action of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce in reference to the subject of the proposed convention, believing that the almost unanimous expression of the press in favor of Chicago, and the action of the meeting in New York, should determine the question in favor of this city, especially as the South-West have already held a convention [at Memphis] to advance river and peculiarly *South-Western interests*, and we deem it

rocks in the Rapids of the Mississippi will lie there forever, to testify to the tameness of the northwest in submitting quietly to be robbed by a veto."

¹ By President Polk, of the river and harbor improvement bill.

² *Wis. Herald*, May 7, 1847.