



The Story of the Back Bar

The back bar at the Roxbury Tavern was crafted in Bavaria in 1836 by Hans Gresser and sons for the Saint Louis Steamship Company. It first resided in the saloon of the sternwheeler Marie Elena, which plied the Mississippi from Saint Louis to Saint Paul and occasionally the lower Wisconsin to Prairie du Sac carrying passengers and freight.

Passage on the Lower Wisconsin depended on higher water levels but in November 1893, the Marie Elena piloted by rookie Captain Benjamin Hook (to be heard from in another story) chanced the low water and ran aground near Ferry Bluff. No more rain fell that winter and in late December the boat was bound by the ice of winter.

Thomas Meier, the operator of the Roxbury Tavern from 1885 to 1902 coveted the back bar and one dark night harnessed his team of Morgans and enlisted a posse of drunken farm hands to capture the bar and install it where it resides to this day.

Meier was never pursued by the law because of jurisdictional disputes and the intervention of a barrel of Leinenkugel's beer (which was once brewed in Sauk City) - but that's another story.