

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE MURPHY LIBRARY



PRESENTS...

The Artist and his Work

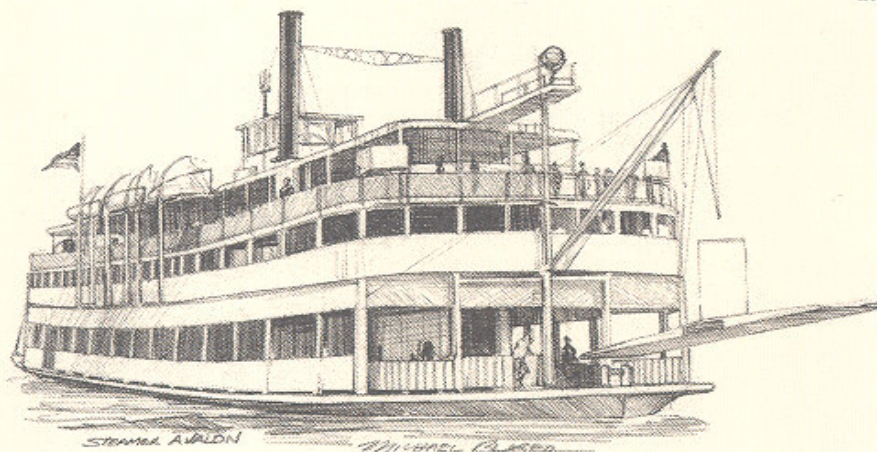
As a little boy, I sketched and painted imaginary ships with hopes and dreams for my own escape. I only had to look at the end of my pencil to find a miniature kingdom heading down the river or across the deep blue sea. The grey world I lived in faded away in coal smoke and pencil dust as my great packet steamer headed round the bend.

Children grow up. Some run away to sea. The rest of us remain behind to become adults with responsibilities, a family and children. As an artist who paints the ships and memories of yesterday's America, I've kept that secret treasure of my youth. It is the wellspring of my ability. I read, I see, I try to understand and reorganize onto my canvas the cities, people, and ships of yesterday's America. In my files, I have wondrous photos of long dead sailors who dreamed as I have; what the other side of the world looked like. I'm glad I stayed home. I got to watch my sons grow to be men.

I've lived along the rambling shores of the Upper Mississippi all my life. I've mostly given up the dream of running away to sea. Through my commissions, I've traveled enough. I specialize in the inland rivers and the Great Lakes. I've painted New Orleans, Mackinac, Chicago, Cincinnati, Memphis and Cleveland to name a few. The list is long. I'm pleased when I think about it. I've brought a lifetime of adventure home to my studio.

Michael Blaser

For more information - www.michaelblaser.com



The Print

The print is done on the finest rag and PH balanced paper available to the fine art market today. Michael Blaser feels his work should be reproduced on museum quality stock. Beneath the image area is the title and callouts of the interesting parts of the painting. The margin is printed with a very light creme-colored hue to soothe the transition from image to matte colors. The image size is 16 1/2 x 32 inches plus margins.

The Artist Remarque

In the margin of the 25 Artist Proofs is the hand drawn sketch known as the REMARQUE. Fitting for this painting of La Crosse we have selected a view of the famous steamer AVALON.





August Moon
The Steamer Avalon Arrives at La Crosse, 1950

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The Steamer Avalon Arrives at La Crosse, 1950

**Murphy Library at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
Announces Publication of a Fine Art Collector Print
Celebrating La Crosse's Great Maritime and Architectural Heritage**

*"The Mississippi River
a mile wide tide
shining in the sun
rolling home to the sea"*
Mark Twain

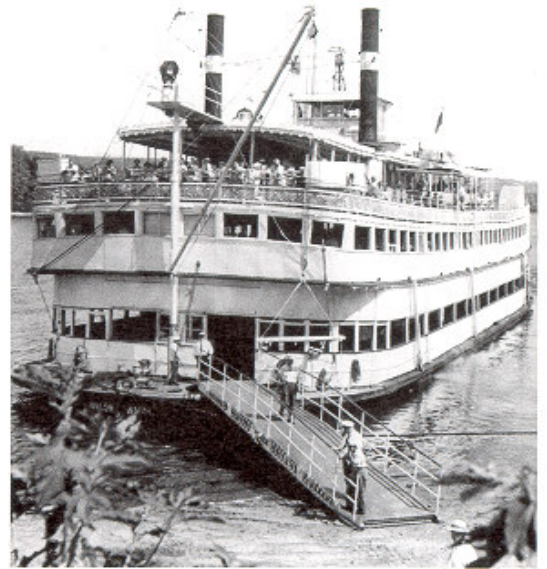
Early in 2001, through the auspices of several generous donors, the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Murphy Library and the University Foundation commissioned a historic original oil painting of the city of La Crosse. The canvas (shown above) will be on permanent display in the Library's Special Collections area. **August Moon** was painted by Michael Blaser, one of the finest riverboat painters in the country. His paintings of western rivers and the Great Lakes are prized by collectors through the region. Partially funded by Mr. Blaser, fine art reproductions of this painting are being offered to print collectors, businesses, supporters of

UW-L, and all those who are intrigued by the lore and scenes from America's great inland rivers. Sales of these fine prints will benefit the Murphy Library Endowment Fund to further the Library's collections and program. **THIS PAINTING HAS A MISSION!**

In the painting, the **Avalon** is shown returning from an excursion cruise and coming into Riverside Park on a warm summer evening in 1950. Her spotlight on the bow is shining on the levee, illuminating a classic Old Style beer truck and the signature roofline of the former Palm Garden, by this time renamed the Old Style Inn. A modest bar by 1950, the Palm Garden had been elaborately furnished and was the toast of the town in 1900. Looking closely at the buildings in the shadows, you can see what once had been the banking and commerce center of the city. By mid-century these buildings were used primarily as warehouses and

storage areas as the business center moved several blocks to the east. The buildings had been flooded many times by an unforgiving river, but in 1950, the old facade still stood. In 1968 the city decided to remove all the old buildings along the levee in an urban renewal project. These have been replaced with the modern buildings you now see. Riverside Park still exists along with the grain elevators and the La Crosse Convention and Visitors Bureau that formally had been the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Lab. The Cass Street bridge, completed in 1939, still is silhouetted in the moonlight.

The **Avalon** has outlived most of the levees where she once tied up. She was renamed the **Belle of Louisville** in 1962 after she was purchased by Jefferson County Fiscal Court in Louisville, Kentucky. Today you can still ride the same riverboat that once graced the Mississippi River by La Crosse.



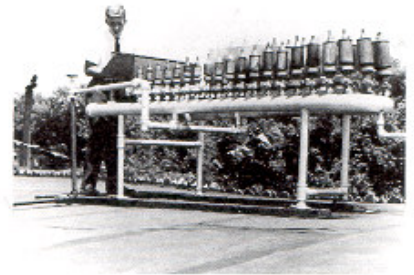
MURPHY LIBRARY ENDOWMENT FUND

In 1989, Murphy Library at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse established the Murphy Library Endowment Fund to support those special needs of the library outside of what could be funded by the regular university budget. Over the years the library has used the earnings from the Endowment to purchase adaptive technology computer equipment, specialized furniture, multi-cultural materials, fine press books, and to sponsor lectures and workshops by a nationally recognized book designer, illustrator, and poet. Among other areas and programs benefiting from the Endowment Fund is Special Collections:

money has been used for the prominent inland riverboat photographic collection - a source of historical documentation and inspiration for Michael Blaser's paintings.

The Endowment Fund and its many generous donors make a difference. The sale of these fine limited edition prints will benefit the Endowment Fund and help Murphy Library continue a tradition of excellence in serving the campus, the community, and beyond. We invite you to visit Murphy Library personally or at:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/>



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The Steamer Avalon Arrives at LaCrosse, 1950

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"They mark our age as a race of men; earth shall not see such ships as these again."
John Masefield

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