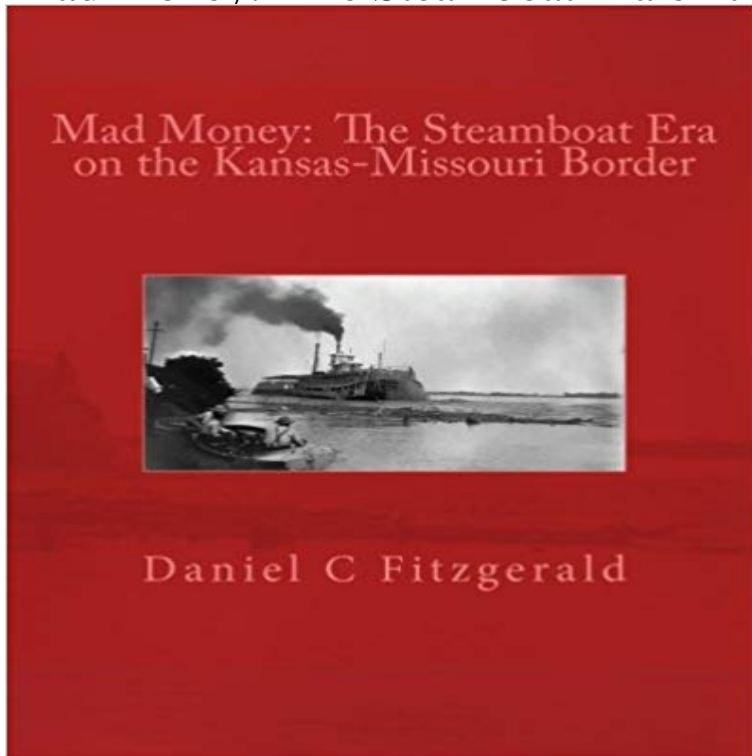


Mad Money: The Steamboat Era on the Kansas-Missouri Border



The steamboat was the great civilizer of the West. This transportation source was responsible for moving emigrants, settlers, and freight from the edge of the frontier. The Missouri River was the highway. For twenty years, 1840-1860, the frontier line of settlement moved up the Missouri River to the Kansas-Missouri border. Here it stopped briefly. In those two decades, a boom occurred that was fuelled by a variety of factors. Towns were established along every bend of the Missouri River that catered to the whims of everyone that stopped at their banks. This was the Golden Age of steamboat navigation. Everyone speculated in town lots and real estate. Some became wealthy but everyone tried. Then, almost as quickly as the boom hit, the Panic of 1857 took everything away. Towns, people, dreams, even the steamboat itself, came and went, leaving an empty void. The railroad took over, and any town built on a narrow line of track suddenly took over the boom. This book documents a fascinating age, a time that came and left in two decades, never to return. Using primary accounts and sources, historian Dan Fitzgerald documents this boom and bust era--the dreams, the fortunes, the profit, and the eventual loss. Come aboard for the ride.

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