

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 20, 2005

John Benge's Experience on the *Republic*: The Steamer *Republic* (continued): John Benge (1864-1936), owner of three Stanleys and superintendent of the Marshall Brothers paper mill, took his family on the *Republic* for a day's outing to Cape May and return. Going down the bay, John was standing on the crowded deck. A well dressed man brushed against John and whispered in his ear, "pick or carry?" John didn't know what the stranger meant and thought he was joking, so he replied "carry." The man disappeared into the crowd. In a few minutes, he returned and shoved his hand into John's coat pocket. Inventory soon showed that John's wealth was gaining rapidly. This procedure happened several times in the next hour or so. John didn't know what to do. If he reported the pick-pocket, he himself would be implicated in the crime. Obviously his devious friend mistook John for an accomplice. John decided to do nothing, so he wound up somewhat shaken but financially much better off than he had planned.