THAT RIVER LIFE FOR ME WAS JUST A DREAM

In 1856 the steamboat Arabia struck the stump of a submerged walnut tree in the mighty Missouri River just south of Kansas City. She went down in minutes, taking with her over 200 tons of cargo bound for general stores all over the American frontier. All crew and passengers survived. In 1988 River Salvage, Inc. found her and most of the cargo intact. Bob's song tells the story of a fictitious river man wannabe who lost his boat and career the first time out. He reluctantly returns to the farm, declaring the river life "just a dream". Today the Arabia Museum in Kansas City displays the salvaged boat and much of the lost cargo. ***Across the Water*** plays this song in **C** chord shape, capo IV. You can hear the song on Across the Water's second CD, ***Waterproof***, or on the HFMS Audio Archive.

THE ARABIA

-- by Bob Lahmeyer

C F C F C
Oh, Shenandoah, I hear you calling -- away, you rolling river

C
Well, I'm working on the sidewheel Arabia
F C
Away, you rolling river.
F C E F
Left my plough in the field, gonna be a river man
C G Am
And they say she'll sail on dry sand.
Am
Markin' line off the side of Arabia
Am G Am
The captain says she'll never run aground.

For the yard they made her broad and fat -- she draws four feet
Am G Am
We're loaded up and South Dakota bound.

All the landings on the way know Arabia
Away, you rolling river.
For she brings their winter stores, boots and coats, saws and bores
And they say she'll sail on dry sand.
At night on the deck of Arabia
I see the lights of Kansas City now.
In the morning we'll be knockin' down some trees for fuel,
But tonight we'll knock Kentucky's finest down.

Well, we're back on our way the Arabia
Away, you rolling river.
Kansas City's far behind, and I'm back to markin' line,
And they say she'll sail on dry sand.
Now we've trouble on the sidewheel Arabia
And the captain says the good boat's goin' down.
For we've hit a snag, it's breached the bow, the river's roarin' in
In minutes she's Missouri bottom bound.

Well, the river's claimed its prize our Arabia
Oh, damn you wretched river.
Well, the crew's swum ashore, but our riverboat's no more
And they said she'd sail on dry sand.
Well, I'm walkin' down this trace from Arabia.
How heartless that mighty river seems.
And the wheat between my toes, it will feel so fine
Guess the river life for me was just a dream.