

Based on a traditional roustabout song as sung by Bertha Wenzel at the Four Rivers Folk Festival, 1990

First collected by Wenzel's aunt Mary Wheeler.

Tune: variant of *Dance, Boatman, Dance*

Adapted by Charlie Ipcar, 2016

Key: C (7/F)

Capt. Jim Rees and the *Katy*

C-----F-----C-----F-----C
Now de Captain said when de "Katy" was made,
F-----C-----G---C
"Arkansas City* gonna be her trade;"
F-----C-----F---C
She'd steam out from the O-hi-o;
F-----C-----G-----C
Down de Mis-si-ssip-pi she would roll!

Chorus:

C-----G-C
An' it's roll, "Ka-ty," roll!
-----G-C
Roll, "Ka-ty," roll!
-----F-----C
Roll all night in de pale moon-light,
----F-----G-----C
Be home with the gals in de morning!
F-----G---F
Hey, ho, roll and go!
C-----F-C
Rollin' down de river on the O-hi-o;
F-----G---F
Hey, ho, roll and go!
C-----G---C
Rollin' down de river on the O-hi-o!

Notes:

The "Katy" or "The Lovin' Kate" was what the roustabouts called a steamboat packet named the "Kate Adams" (1899-1927), built at the Howard Ship Yard and Dock Co. in Port Fulton, Indiana, on the Ohio River.

"Arkansas City" is located in the Arkansas Delta Region, about 115 miles southeast of Little Rock and 75 miles southeast of Pine Bluff on the Mississippi River; "Katy" ran between Arkansas City and Memphis for much of her life.

Now I met my woman by de do';
Cryin', "Honey, don't you go no mo";
It grieved my heart to leave her so,
But there ain't no work on de sho'. (CHO)

It's down de River to Memphis Town
Sing and dance de night aroun';
Load her down to de rails,
For Arkansas City we'll shake her tail. (CHO)

It's roll dem bales down de levee bank,
Heave dem up de long plank!
"Captain, oh Captain, would you be so kind,
Load all de cotton, leave de seed behind." (CHO)

Now I ain't gonna tell no one,
Wha' de captain of de watch has done,
But if I ever gets back to sho',
You won't see me here no mo'. (CHO)(2X)

Traditional roustabout song as sung by Bertha Wenzel at the Four Rivers Folk Festival, Paducah, Kentucky, 1990, as collected by Mary Wheeler.

Tune: variant of "Dance, Boatman, Dance"

Capt. Jim Rees and the Katy

Capt. Jim Rees said when the Katy was made,
Arkansas City planned to be her trade.

I met my woman in the do'
Says I worked down the river and, honey, don't you go.

Oh, Capt. would you be so good and kind,
Take all the cotton, leave the seed behind.

A heap sees, a few knows,
A heap starts, but a few goes.

I ain't plannin' to tell nobody,
What they've done to me.

But if ever I get to the long plank walk,
I won't come a-here no mo'.

The first *Kate Adams* was launched in 1882 and reached Memphis on December 14th of that year. She was named after the wife of one of her owners, Capt. John D. Adams. She burned on Christmas Eve a year later at Commerce Landing with a loss of 33 lives.

The second *Kate* was built and slid from her ways on March 15, 1889. For ten years she plied the river carrying passengers and freight. As a gesture of patriotism in the war of 1898 she was renamed the Dewey.

The *Kate Adams III* was launched at Pittsburgh in 1898, was 240 ft. long and had a 40 ft. beam. She made her maiden trip in the Memphis-Arkansas trade on Thanksgiving Day, 1899. Several years later her run was shortened and she plied between Memphis and Rosedale, Ms. In 1921 the run extended to Arkansas City and then Greenville.

She was used for scenes in the film, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Tradition tells that a youngster in Sunday School being quizzed said that Adam was the first man and Kate Adams the first woman.

A dear lady recalls she along with her brothers and sisters running to the bank of the great Mississippi to the sound of the sweet musical whistle of the *Kate Adams*. No other boat in the world had a sound like hers. There on the river was the gorgeous *Kate Adams*, sparkling in the sun a sight to behold. Even on cloudy days it seemed the whitest of white. There on the bank they stood, spellbound, watching the beautiful steamboat ease down the river like a graceful swan. **Credit:** ~ Marion Sue Thompson.

Artist:~ Marion Sue Bradford Thompson (1926-2007) was one of only two females known to be a steamboat artist.

Dave Thomson:

"The old cotton packet Kate Adams of Memphis was brought to the Upper Ohio in 1926 to try and get her share of the packet business that was running between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. Her stay in Pittsburgh was short as she returned to Memphis in the fall of 1926 to take part in the filming of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Notes by Michael Blaser:

The Steamer KATE ADAMS was affectionately known as "Lovin' Kate." Her steel hull was no match for the tiny boll weevil that destroyed the cotton trade and a way of life on the Lower Mississippi. In 1926, her owners brought her up to the Marine Ways at Paducah, KY, and had her cotton guards covered over. They intended for her to compete in the freight and passenger business along the Ohio River. Her large size and fuel consumption made her lose money, and she was laid up along the Memphis levee, where she burned later that year. Her whistle was dug out of the Memphis mud. You will find this wonderful essay, written by Capt. Frederick Way Jr., about the whistle's disposition. It is well-worth the read: "All of which is a long story and inadequate to those who remember the tremor of her decks and the deep hoot of her bull frog whistle, which could be heard for 30 miles back in the Mississippi Delta. Some years later, Capt. Dick Heirnaux brought out the towboat LEONA with a large single-chime whistle said to have come from the KATE, said to have been dug from the mud at Memphis. I doubted this. One day on the Cincinnati Wharfboat, an aged roustabout was half asleep on a freight pile and I was standing nearby. Unexpectedly the Leona blew a blast of that whistle while coming under the suspension bridge. Quite as unexpectedly I witnessed that old man awake and raise his head like a hound dog which has heard a wolf call on a still moonlit night. As the vibrant deep note died away

in the echoes, this old man cried plaintively: “COTTON PILE—COTTON PILE! DAT’S DE OL’ KATE MOANING FOR COTTON, GOD BLESS DE KATE ADAMS.” He shuffled to the doorway to look, half expecting to see two tall stacks, two swinging stages, a blue domed pilothouse, and Capt. Billy Hodge at the wheel. I walked the other direction a believer.”