

Natchez and Delta Queen Race

Chorus:

C-----C*----F---C
Now the Natchez, she's a-com-in',
F-----C-----C7
Kicking up her heels,
-----F-----G---F
She's rolling up the river, boys,
G-----F-----C
How dat make you feel?
-----G-----G7-G
Just see the black smoke curl-in';
G7-----G
Hear her whistle blow --
F-----G7-F
Give a cheer 'long the lev-ee,
G-----F-----C
As you watch her go!

The pilot tells the engineer,
"We's gonna need more steam;
Churning up fast astern
Comes the *Delta Queen!*"
"Now the *Delta Queen*'s a fine boat;
I'll not deny that, son,
But the *Natchez* she's a flier,
And I bet this race is won!" (CHO)

They opened up her fire box door,
Heaved in more hardwood;
The boiler pressure surged up high,
An' her paddles dug in good;
Now the *Natchez* she's a-flyin',
The spray sweeps o'er her rail;
The *Delta Queen* she's turnin' green,
As the *Natchez* flashed her tail! (CHO)

The *Natchez* wheeled into N'Orleans,
Nosed up to the pier;
The deck-crew moored her stem and stern,
'Fore the *Delta Queen* drew near;
There's a set of antlers mounted
On her pilot house so high;
"The *Natchez* runs just like a deer,
It's a joy to watch her fly!" (CHO)

Wood Fuel: "Hardwoods such as Ash, Oak, Beech and Elm were called "class 1" wood. Pine, Birch and Poplar were included in "class 2" as they are softer less compact wood. The heavier and more dense hardwoods were preferred as fuel, however, class 2 wood was frequently used. Especially in later years when the supply of hardwoods grew more scarce.

In 1982 the *Natchez* won the [Great Steamboat Race](#), which is held every year on the Wednesday immediately before the first Saturday in May, as part of the [Kentucky Derby Festival](#) held in [Louisville, Kentucky](#). She has also participated in other races, and has never lost. Those beaten by the *Natchez* include the *Belle of Louisville*, the *Delta Queen*, and the *Mississippi Queen*.

Steamboat Races are as old as steamboats themselves. The history of the Natchez boats from the first to the ninth in the lineage includes many steamboat races. The latest race took place on Valentine's Day 2003 with the Natchez paired against the American Queen Steamboat, one of the fleet of the Delta Queen Steamboat Company. It was a charity race with proceeds going toward the renovation of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans.

On the 18th. of April (2007), the steamboats Natchez and Delta Queen will engage one another in a traditional steamboat race here in the New Orleans harbor. From what I hearing from the Coast Guard the race will be a relative short one from river mile 90 LMR ahp to river mile 95 LMR ahp. This stretch of river is in the general vicinity of the New Orleans General Anchorage and is in a fairly straight stretch of river. What will also make this race interesting is the fact that the river is expected to crest in New Orleans, at about 17 feet on the 16th. of this month and it's anyone's guess what kind of speed either boat will be able to make. I remember Capt. Harry Louden making some rather colorful and disparaging remarks, as only he could, one time about steamboat races in general and had something to do with a steamboat race being as exciting as watching a race between a pair of unenthused turtles. It's still unknown if the Coast Guard will close the river in this area and create what they refer to as a " Safety Zone", so as to eliminate other vessels and traffic in general from navigating in this area during the race. Also, it's my understanding that the purpose of the race is part of a fund raising project for the famous New Orleans, St. Louis Cathedral located in the heart of the French Quarter. To the best of my recollection the Str. Delta Queen has never, ever even come close to honestly beating the Str. Natchez in a "fair" race but as I am also sure many of you are also aware that the term "fairness" is seldom used or even thought of in steamboat races! May the best boat win!!