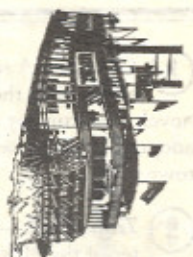
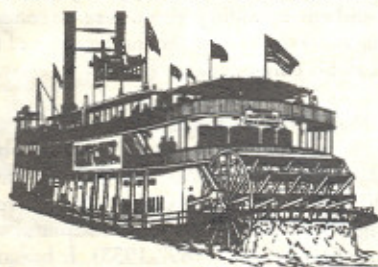


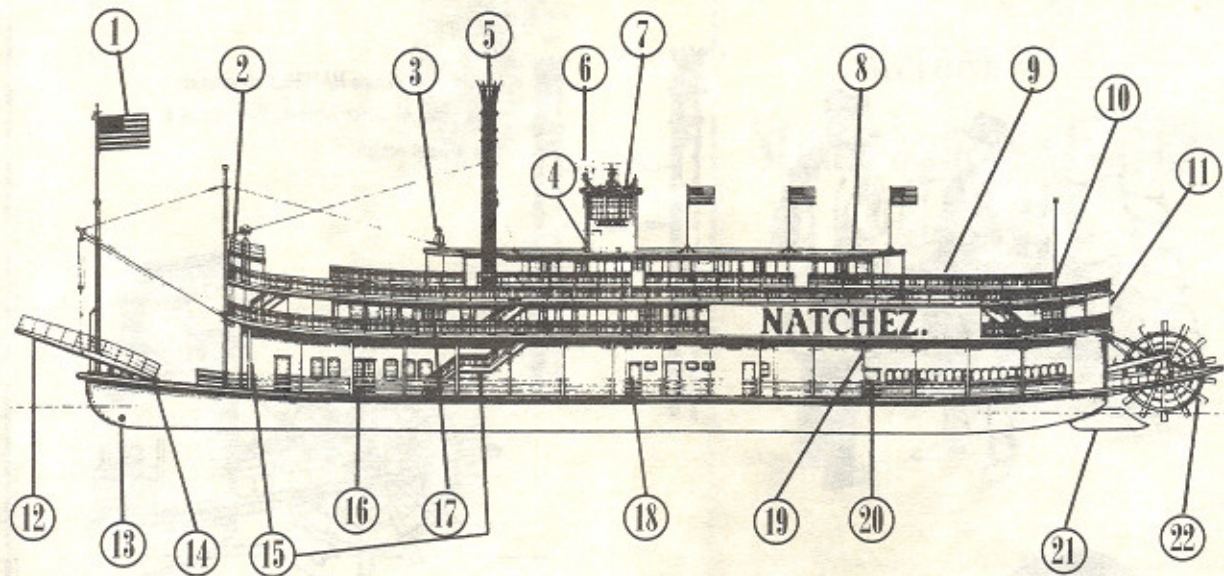
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A guide to the Sternwheeler Steamboat NATCHEZ



The steam sternwheeler Natchez was launched April 3, 1975 at Braithwaite, LA just 12 miles below New Orleans on the Mississippi River. Her dimensions are 265 ft. long x 46 ft. wide, with a 6 ft. draft, and weighing in at 1384 tons. It is the ninth of the famous steamers named Natchez, after the tribe of Indians native to southern Mississippi. Authentic steamboat styling is maintained, but materials are modernized and the entire boat is steel due to Coast Guard regulations. This Natchez is modeled after the packet boat Hudson which ran 1886 to 1905, from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati. Placement of engine room machinery and their original functions remain the same. The indestructible steam engines on old ships were commonly transferred to new boats for a new lease on life. Such is the case with the Natchez. The towboat Clairton (1927-1965) which belonged to the United States Steel Corporation supplied the engines and other engine room machinery for the Natchez. She pushed steel and coal from Pittsburgh to New Orleans until the modernization of diesel engines made the most powerful steam machinery obsolete. If your time left on the boat is very limited you would do well to directly visit the engine room (#20), the heart of the Natchez. The decks of the boat are designated by diagonal lines. The port side is pictured, the starboard is not. The bow is to the left under the jack flag (#1), and the stern is to the right at the paddlewheel (#22).



① **Jack Flag** — The U.S. Naval flag with fifty stars representing the states of the Union. It is flown from the jackstaff at pilot house level and is helpful in judging wind speed and direction.

② **Bridge** — This platform is strictly off limits. It is a vantage point used by the captain when leaving the dock and when landing. From here he can see all the mooring lines in action and judge the progress of the boat clearly, then call his commands to the pilot or crew.

③ **Roof Bell** — Used to signal the deck crew for various tasks. Originally mounted on the towboat J.D. Ayres, (1929-1956), the first tow boat to take barges from Pittsburgh to Cairo on the new Mississippi River lock and dam system. Atop the bell is an ornamental acorn from the steamer Queen City, (1897-1933). It has also adorned the Avalon (now the Belle of Louisville), and the Delta Queen while under the command of Capt. Clarke Hawley, a master of the Natchez.

④ **Antlers** — A symbol of supremacy for the fastest steamboats, used as a trophy, which must be relinquished if a steamboat race is lost. The tradition began when the owners of the speedy steamer Reindeer (1851-1857) offered their ornamental antlers to any boat that could beat it. In a race between New Orleans and Louisville, the sidewheeler Eclipse (1852-1860), took up the challenge, winning the race and the antlers. This Natchez has never lost a race (beating the Delta Queen, The Mississippi Queen and the Belle of Louisville).

⑤ **Smokestacks** — Functional in carrying off waste gases from the oil-fed boilers. Designed very tall to create a natural draft for the old style wood-burning boilers. They also carried live sparks away from the all-wood boats of that era and flammable cargo such as cotton.

⑥ **Steamwhistle** — Used to signal intentions of passing, departing and docking to river traffic as well as saluting other boats. It is the only legal signal recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard, the governing body of the inland waterways. Fed directly by the boilers, every steamboat whistle has its own distinctive sound. The Natchez whistle was taken from a steamboat which sank in the Monogabola River in 1908.

⑦ **Pilot House** — Strictly off limits to the public by federal law. From here the pilots steer the vessel through the harbor with the help of modern navigational aids such as radar and vessel to vessel/ship to shore radio. Also at their disposal is the computerized Vessel Traffic Service, which is manned on shore by the U.S. Coast Guard, servicing the marine community by tracking ship traffic through the harbor.

⑧ **Calliope** — A series of 32 graduated whistles powered by steam from the boilers, played with a small keyboard. A novelty instrument that debuted July 4, 1856, it was quickly adopted by packet and showboats to advertise their arrival into towns.

⑨ **Texas Deck** — This structure sitting directly in the center of the Hurricane deck traditionally was reserved for housing the crew when traveling on the river. If all the usual rooms for guests were full, rooms were turned over to the passengers until they reached their destination. The passenger cabins were named after the states of the union, the largest of which was on this deck, so it was named for the largest of the states at that time. Eventually the whole deck became known as the Texas Deck. On the Natchez there is plenty of deck space providing the highest point available to the public for viewing the harbor. Inside there is mostly office space except for a bar on the bow, a gift shop at the stern and a ladies room midship on the port side.

⑩ **Hurricane Deck** — An all-outdoor deck that supplies a bird's eye view of the sights as well as an excellent overview of the paddle wheel in action. The origin of this name is unknown.

⑪ **Boiler Deck** — The second deck on a steamboat despite the fact there has never been a boiler on it throughout river history. The reason for this may have to do with the fact that before the invention of air conditioning the boilers under the floor were constantly on people's minds. They kept the cabin warm in cool weather and boiling hot in summer. Most steamboats had room for passengers lining the sides of the cabin and were named after the states of the union, thus the term "state-room" began.

There is plenty of seating outside on the bow of this deck with even more room inside for sitting at tables. A buffet lunch or dinner is available near the bow, two bars are toward the stern plus men's and ladies' restrooms midship. The bulkheads of the cabin are decorated with prints and pictures of old steamboats, and at the stern is an authentic pilot wheel on display. Behind the pilot wheel is an observation desk for viewing the paddlewheel at close range.

⑫ **Stage** — Before the convenience of gangways that roll on and off ship from a wharf, the stages served as the only means of transferring passengers and freight from the steamboats. Swung to port or starboard by winches, the Natchez stages are only used during trips where there is a stopover away from New Orleans harbor. The nomenclature "stage" is derived from the time when a ship's crew would dance on the gangway to entertain the people on the plantations at which they were stopping to load cotton.

⑬ **Bowtruster** — A 3 1/2 ft. diameter tunnel crossing the bow, port to starboard, just under water level. It is fitted with an electrically powered (200 h.p.) propeller that draws

water from one side and forces it out the other, causing sideways motion. This is a modern innovation used mostly for docking and turning.

14 Capstan — A large electrically powered winch used for pulling the boat tight against the wharf. Steam originally provided the power.

15 Stairs — Leading to all the decks. Another flight is parallel with these on the starboard side.

16 Magnolia Suite — A private dining room.

17 Buffet Line — Open for lunch and dinner depending on schedules, featuring Southern specialties.

18 Boiler Room — Houses two Cleaver Brooks firetube boilers (800 h.p. each) that produce a steady steam pressure of 210 lbs. per square inch. Fed by #2 diesel oil, they are constantly watched by a man who ensures that the fire inside receives the proper amount of fuel, air and water. This earns him the title "fireman." Normally only one boiler is used at a time but the other is always kept ready in case of emergency.

19 Main Deck — In practical terms, the business end of a steamboat. It supports the paddlewheel, houses the boilers that provide the steam, the engines that move the wheel, the throttle that controls the engines, the galley which provides meals for crew and guests, and in later years the generators for electricity. When steamboats actively transported passengers and cargo on the inland waterways, the bulk of the freight was contained on their high-roofed main deck.

20 Engine Room — Kept in immaculate condition, this area is open and welcome to visitors. The focal points are the tandem compound condensing reciprocating steam engines from the towboat Clairton, which are pictured on the forward bulkhead. They are of the piston valve type with a 15 inch bore on the high pressure cylinder and a 30 inch bore on the low pressure cylinder. These engines have a 7 ft. stroke and produce 1600 h.p. combined, (400 per cylinder). The steering gear toward the stern is also from the Clairton as well as the large pitman arms that connect the engines to the paddlewheel.

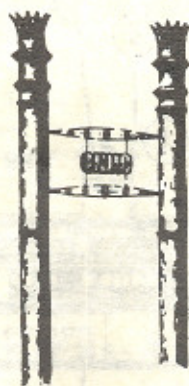
Our electrical power plant is just forward of the engine room. The Natchez uses two Cummins diesels, each producing 700 h.p., to power Kato generators of a maximum of 350 kilowatts.

21 Rudders — 17 ft. x 5 ft. is the dimension of all three rudders located in front of the paddlewheel. They are even with the keel, our centermost and lowest part of the boat. These facts combined make sideways and reverse steering most precise when backing, forcing water through the rudders. The design for a shallow and flat bottomed hull was required to circumnavigate sandbars during low river stages as well as landing at the bank to service river towns and remote plantations.

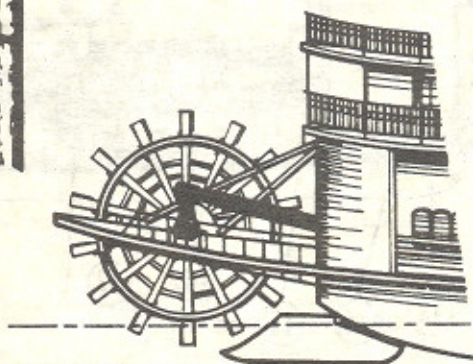
22 Paddlewheel — Made of white oak and steel, its dimensions are 25 ft. x 25 ft., weighing 26 tons. It is the sole means of forward and reverse motion, the shaft and cranks being from the Clairton.



"Cotton-Was-King!"



Ensign . . . all nine NACHEZ steamboats had a bale of cotton between their stacks as the official ensign.

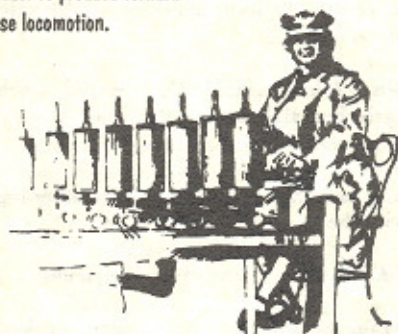
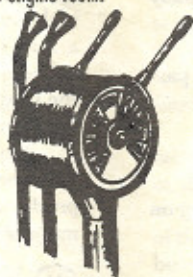


Sternwheel & Pittman Arm . . . work together to produce forward and reverse locomotion.



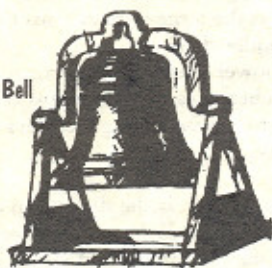
Capt. T.P. "Old Push" Leathers . . . captain of the NACHEZ VI, which raced the Robert E. Lee in June, 1870.

Telegraph . . . Pilot's communications system to the engine room.



Steam Calliopes . . . loud, happy music.

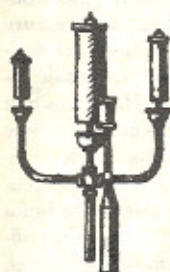
Clarion Bell



Capstan . . . used to haul in mooring lines.



Mississippi Playtime



Steam Whistles . . . each boat had its own distinctive sound and signal.

Captain's Helm

