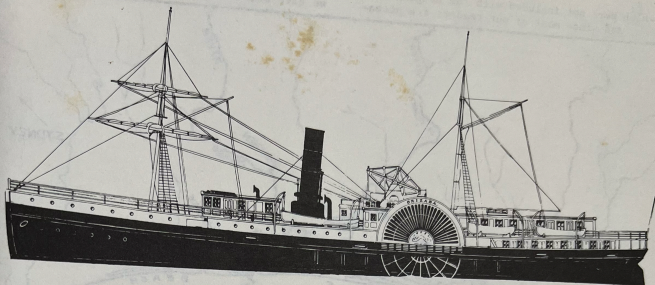


STEAMBOAT BILL

FIG-14
Spring 1960

OUTBOARD PROFILE, STEAMSHIP ORIZABA

ORIZABA

By Jerry MacMullen

Of all of the merchant vessels which have called at San Diego, it is unlikely that any left her mark more indelibly on the city than ORIZABA, which came in from San Francisco for the first time on Jan. 10, 1865¹ and ran until, old and outmoded, she left here early in 1887 to be broken up.

Her first master on the San Diego run was Capt. John S. Batters; best known of those who commanded her, however, was Capt. Henry James Johnston --- affectionately nicknamed "Ninety-Fathom Johnston" and "Uncle Henry" --- who first brought her into port on Nov. 7, 1868, fell in love with San Diego, dreamed of a home on the hills overlooking the bay, and was posthumously, if only temporarily, honored by the name of a street and a subdivision.

In a small way, ORIZABA is to San Diego what MAYFLOWER is to New England. "I came here from San Francisco in ORIZABA ---" or "My folks came here in ORIZABA ---" are familiar statements to anyone talking to old-timers.

Statistically speaking, she was a wooden, side-wheel steamer of 1244 tons, on dimensions of 246 feet statutory length, 35 feet beam and 18 feet depth of hold, with oak frames, and chestnut planking; her vertical beam engine had a bore of 65 inches and a stroke of 1 1/2 feet, and she was built in New York in 1854.² Data in the files of the Smithsonian Institution list Jacob A. Westerveldt as her builder. She was engineered by the Morgan Iron Works, her wheels were 32 feet in diameter, and her cost was \$240,000. She was, of course, a coal burner, and her boiler pressure probably was around 55 pounds. Like all ocean-going steamers of the period she carried sails "just in

case." Her paddle-boxes were of graceful construction, each with 32 wedge-shaped louvres; there was a sort of cat-walk atop each one, running athwartship, which constituted her bridge. The lunettes were flat, and decorated with a conventionalized carving.

A painting of ORIZABA by Joseph Lee, a San Francisco artist famed for his scrupulously accurate "ship portraits," shows her with her forward shelter-deck, paddle-boxes and superstructure in dark colors, and flying the house-flag of Goodall, Nelson & Perkins, the firm which later became the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. In 1912, however, a painting attributed to Lee came to light in a Seattle sail-loft which shows her with the shelter-deck above rail level, as well as the houses and paddle-boxes, in white. This painting, said to have been done in 1876, shows her wearing the familiar house-flag of P.C.S.S. Co. --- the red Maltese cross in a white diamond, on a blue field.³ A close inspection of the two pictures -- comparison of wave-forms, angle of walking-beam, etc. -- reveals that they are basically identical. The original painting probably was copied by Lee with the colors brought up to date; the original one is reported to have been destroyed in the San Francisco fire of 1906.⁴

At a later period, a hurricane-deck was added above her deck-houses and her life-boats were raised to this new level. It is probable that this was done in 1885 when alterations were made in her construction to permit the carrying of cattle -- an ignominious task at the same time by the larger and more modern SANTA ROSA.⁵

