The Delta Queen travels north Saturday on the Ouachita River between Jonesville and Harrisonburg.

**Delta Queen glides up the Ouachita**

JONESVILLE (AP) — People gathered along the banks, waving with delight at the first steamboat in generations to glide up the Ouachita River. "We have already got the ball rolling for the Queen's return in November," Mayor Billy Edmiston said as the Delta Queen's bright red sternwheel pushed the riverboat toward Columbia on Saturday.

Passengers waved back. They had made a long morning stop in Jonesville, where the Black River meets the Ouachita, touring an 1850s house, a bed and breakfast and Piggmore Plantation, a restored working farm with an 1884 steam cotton gin.

Sunday's stop was at Columbia, 36 miles away as the crow flies but a good few more when a river's bends are taken into account, and Monday's at West Monroe, another 28 miles due north.

The 265-foot Delta Queen, first launched in 1936, is now a national historic landmark — the last entirely wooden riverboat. Its average speed is a leisurely 6 mph.

Its capacity crowd of 174 passengers included Mervin Ballard, of Bowling Green, Ohio. He was looking forward to seeing Monroe, where he got his flight navigator training at Selma Field in 1944.

"I've been wanting to go back for a long time," he said. He especially wanted to see what the Selma Field Training site looks like now; and to get a look at Ridge Avenue Baptist Church in West Monroe.

Jack Keasby of Columbia, president of the Tensas Basin Levee Board, gave passengers an overview of the history of the Ouachita after the boat left Jonesville.

After he finished, a passenger had a question: "Why can't the litter and trash on the banks be cleaned up," she asked. "It looks terrible."

"Something should be done and something will be done," Keasby said.