

Learning the Ways of a Steamboat Crewman

One of my favorite aspects of writing *Undercurrent of Secrets* was the research. Exploring the life of a riverman—or in Hattie Louis’s case, a riverwoman—was important in order to make the story as genuine as possible. Those who lived upon the river were fluent in a language all their own. I had a lot of fun learning the terms of steamboats and waterways. For example, a steamboat captain wouldn’t say *left* or *right*, but rather *port* and *starboard*.

When the crew went *up the hill*, it meant they had to go to town. Instead of *kitchen*, they said *galley*. And so on. For Hattie, being raised upon the river, she would naturally think and speak along these lines.

For more information about steamboats and steamboat terms, visit, <https://www.steamboats.org>