



RAISED BY HAND—Abandoned by its mother, a two-months-old female kangaroo is bottle fed in Lincoln Park Zoo at Chicago by Zoologist Gene Hertz. The mother kicked the youngster out of her pouch four months prematurely and now faces abandonment charges in kangaroo court if she doesn't jump ball. The youngster is kept in an incubator simulating temperature and humidity conditions in the mother's pouch. (UPI Telephoto)

Showboat Docked For Brief Run Stayed for Years

St. Louis, Mo. (UPI)—It was 1937 when Capt. J. W. (Bill) Menke's Goldenrod showboat docked on the levee here to play what was to be a two-week engagement.

"But, business was so good we decided to stay," explained Capt. Menke.

Today, 23 years later, the Goldenrod, tied securely to the foot of Locust st., remains the sole survivor of a page that is now romanticized in song and story.

Here on the bank of the Mississippi, the former river queen still functions in the role for which she was created—a floating theater.

The old boat appears a little out of place, located just several hundred feet from where the city is constructing an ultra-modern aluminum arch, which will symbolize St. Louis as the Gateway to the West.

And, just 100 feet north of the Goldenrod, moored to a bank of the river, is one of the most modern river excursion steamers afloat, the S.S. Admiral, with its gleaming, metal body.

Forgotten Age
Capt. Menke, too, a robust man who appears much younger than his 81 years, is part of the tradition of an almost forgotten age.

He vividly remembers the "golden age" of the showboat, when scores of them used to ply the Mississippi, the Ohio, and all the rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, bringing entertainment and the theater to the people of the towns and villages along their routes.

Bill Menke is one of four brothers who took to the river when "showboating" was at its peak. He and another brother, Charles, still live aboard the Goldenrod.

It began for the Menkes in 1904 when Bill and brother Ben decided they had enough of life at a Jersey City factory. The two set out from Pittsburgh on the Monongahela and took a job advertising various showboats of the time.

"We used to travel a week ahead of the showboat distributing hand bills and put advertisements in the local papers," said Menke.

In 1911 Menke bought his first showboat, the Sunny South, at Parkersburg, W. Va. It was the first of seven owned and operated by the Menke brothers, and as he put it, "It was the beginning of 26 years of one-night stands."

"We would leave Pittsburgh in March and return the next March," he said. "During the winter months we would play the South. We'd visit each town along the route twice a year, once on the trip down, and once on the way back."

You had to be a "good picker" to get along, the captain explained. Stops were usually at the smaller towns.

In 1930 the New Sensation, fifth of a series of famous showboats bearing that name, was destroyed in a wind storm at Mound City, Ill. And another of his boats, the Hollywood, had its bottom cut out by ice in 1941 near Paducah, Ky.

The last of Menke's fleet, the Goldenrod, was the queen of them all. Built in 1909, it was the largest showboat to bid for the trade of the river towns. The Goldenrod, which seated 1,400 patrons, was bought by Menke in 1922.

Now, as in times past, performances are held nightly on board the showboat. Today the programs are melodrama, with the audience invited to boo the villain and cheer the hero.

"Business is still good," Capt. Menke said.

"We could go anytime we wanted to. We've got a steel bottom now."

He made no mention of a noticeable sag in the Goldenrod's top deck.

He made it clear he has no plans for retiring.

"They'll have to carry me out of here," he said.

When they do, it will be the end of an era.

Offshore Oil Flow Being Controlled

New York (Science Service)—The first offshore oil well to have flow equipment resting on the sea bottom has been completed.

Prior to this development, the equipment for controlling the flow of oil, called the "Christmas tree," was placed on a platform above the water. The Christmas Tree is guided to the ocean floor by remote control from a surface drilling platform.

Once the well is completed, the drilling platform is moved to a new site. The new technique, used by Shell Oil Company, will help obtain more oil and gas from the outer continental shelf of the United States.

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