

BIG BILL AND LEN'S CRUISE DRAWS SCORN

Hilarious Effect Achieved by Campaign Party on U. S. Barge, Showboat.

BY RAY TUCKER
Times Staff Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Oct. 5.—The broad bosom of the Mississippi has borne many strange craft since it was discovered by the Jesuits, and rediscovered by ex-Mayor William Hale Thompson when his exhibition of white rats in a cage became a bit shopworn as a Chicago political issue.

But residents along the river doubt whether this stream ever has witnessed a more grotesque voyage than that taken by Len Small, Republican candidate for Governor, in company with his political sponsor, "Big Bill."

The voyage was made possible by Patrick J. Hurley, secretary of war, who loaned the federal barge that was towed up and down the stream in this water carnival by the famous yellow-and-white showboat "Girardeau."

Though staged with the most serious of intentions, the showboat's part in the presidential campaign has had a hilarious effect.

Even Republican newspapers condemn it, and satirize such a venture in a year when grave economic issues should occupy the attention of all candidates.

Sponsors Are Gay

Even those who danced on the flat deck of the barge in the light of swaying Japanese lanterns and to the music of an excellent orchestra from a Chicago night club, seemed to feel they might well have remained on shore.

But no such misgivings worried the gay sponsors of the trip—Messrs. Small and Thompson and Frank L. Smith, national committeeman.

Of course, although the first two sat on deck as the craft left Chicago, they sent below the crooners, dancers, the band, and other paraphernalia of the sideshow. This restraint did not last long.

Soon, outdooring his parades of donkeys and camels through the streets of Chicago, Big Bill proved he had lost nothing of his originality or imagination since his defeat a few years ago.

Bill Cuts Capers

When, during the first part of the tour, crowds refused to step aboard the barge, Big Bill sang and danced and cut capers. He shook hands with himself.

The lights were strung up and their yellow gleams fell across the waters, even though no voters crossed the gang plank from the wharf. But as the vessel proceeded down the river, where opportunities for entertainment are fewer, the show became a paying proposition politically.

Each night the Cape Girardeau and its barge tied up to a wharf. The whistle tooted, the band blared, the performers sang and danced, the mayor's husky bass boomed out—and the crowds came.

The boys and girls along the quiet reaches of the river clambered aboard the barge and danced till the early morning hours, while Len and Big Small Bill looked on.

Small Bill beamed. And now and then the barge was towed alongside the showboat, and if political speeches drowned out the tooting and blaring, the swinging and the scraping of heavy boots, the dancers did not seem to mind.

"All was happy, and why bite the hand that's paying the bill? This was life—this was politics!"

Called Cheap, Tawdry

Some there were, of course, who thought the performance a "cheap and tawdry spectacle" as witness a few excerpts from an editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"There is no more reason why the United States government should furnish a barge for this political cruise than there would be for getting Jimmie Walker out of the country on a warship."

"But if the cruise is politics reduced to the ridiculous, it is also a disgrace to the state which produced Abraham Lincoln."

CINDER PATHS URGED FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

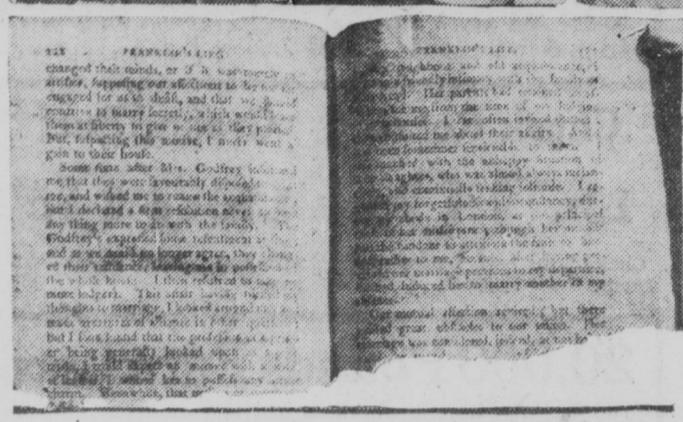
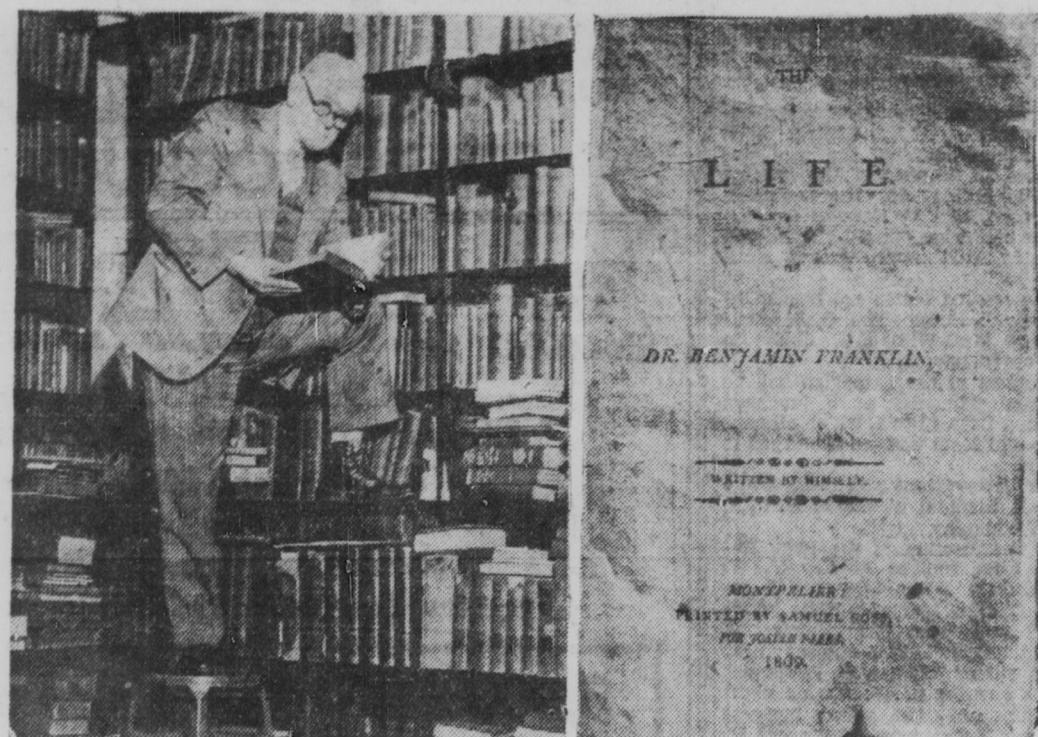
Northwest Civic League Also Suggests Other Improvements.

Construction of cinder paths along Thirty-fourth and Thirty-eighth streets in the vicinity of Keweenaw avenue, for benefit of school children will be sought by the Northwest Civic League, it was decided Tuesday night.

It was voted to ask the street railway company to use new buses on the Keystone-Millersville route.

Other suggestions included building of small bridges across streams in the vicinity for use of children, razing of the old school at Orchard and Thirty-fourth streets, erection of an automobile traffic signal at that corner, cutting away of a high bank there which obstructs motorists' vision, and installation of lighting at Thirty-eighth and Orchard streets.

Ben Franklin Tried to Steal Pal's Girl Friend, Old Volume Reveals



Upper Left—James R. Cole, 65, collector of rare books, in the library at his store at Indiana avenue and North street.

Upper Right—The fly-leaf of one of his oldest and most-prized volumes.

Lower Photo—A page from the life of Benjamin Franklin, written by himself. The page tells of his wedlock plans.

Benjamin Franklin tried to steal the girl friend of his pal.

The writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac," one of the most quoted books in the universe, had his own admission living in possible bigamy at the time he gained fame as a statesman and publisher.

Out of musty book shelves and the reek of bottles of drugs in a back room in the pharmacy of James R. Cole, Indiana avenue and North street, comes these pertinent sidelights on "Poor Richard" from a book written by Franklin and published following his death.

The memoirs of The First Printer of the Land, dated as being published in 1809, is just one of many valuable books and first editions collected by Cole in the last thirty-five years.

Turns Hobby Into Profit

Always a pharmacist by trade, Cole in the last few months of the depression, has turned his hobby, collecting rare volumes, into a business of buying and selling, with the result that he finds book shelves of impoverished families and those of the unemployed finding their way to his store.

He seems for antiquated bindings, out-of-date works, like a fisherman on the White river.

"And I wouldn't take \$5,000 for my catch," Cole asserts as he refuses to place definite sale prices on such works as "Suppressed Poems of Lord Byron" and "Perpetual Laws of Commonwealth of Massachusetts, printed in 1788."

"A book to be valuable must be wanted by some one," he added as he fingered several of the 500 first editions in his possession.

Human Side Is Shown

The human side of the philosopher who has served as a library of wisecracks over one hundred and fifty odd years is aptly demonstrated in the yellowed volume kept in Cole's safe.

It was printed in Montpelier, Vt., by Samuel Goss for Josiah Parks. The title page announces that it is "The Life of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, written by himself."

Historians and biographers of Franklin who have declared his fondness for the feminine gender have borne out in Cole's book by Franklin's own writings.

He tells of one episode where a friend of his, called "Ralph," left a Mrs. T.—in his care. The woman's name is discreetly left in doubt with the typographical dash.

Franklin says of the episode: "Meanwhile Mrs. T.—having lost on his account (Ralph), both her friends and her business, was frequently in distress. In this dilemma she had recourse to me, and to extricate her from difficulties I lent her all the money I could spare. I felt a little too much fondness for her. . . . She informed Ralph of my conduct, and the affair occasioned a breach between us. When he returned from London he gave me to understand that he considered all obligations he owed me as annulled by this proceeding."

"Poor Richard," however, consoles himself with the loss of his friend through his attempt to swipe his girl with: "I was the less afflicted at this, as he was unable to pay me, and as by losing his friendship I was relieved at the same time of a heavy burden."

The penurious slant to many of the adages of "Poor Richard" creeps from the memoirs.

On one occasion he became

so poor he had to sell his coat.

Franklin says of the episode: "I sold my coat to a woman who had no money, but who had a very good husband."

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