

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

SHOW BOAT



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The Max Showalter Center for
Education in Musical Theatre

SHOW BOAT

Goodspeed Opera House
July 1 - Sept 11, 2011

MUSIC BY
JEROME KERN

BOOK AND LYRICS BY
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

LIGHTING DESIGN BY
JOHN LASITER

COSTUME COORDINATOR
AMY CLARK

ORIGINAL COSTUMES BY
FLORENCE KLOTZ

SCENIC DESIGN BY
MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT

CHOREOGRAPHED BY
NOAH RACEY

DIRECTED BY
ROB RUGGIERO

PRODUCED FOR GOODSPEED
MUSICALS BY
MICHAEL P. PRICE

SHOW BOAT

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Audience Insights for *Show Boat* was prepared by
Joshua S. Ritter, M.F.A, Education & Library Director
and Christine Hopkins, M.A, Education & Library Assistant

CHARACTER SUMMARY

MAGNOLIA: The eighteen-year-old daughter of Cap'n Andy and Parthy Ann, owners of the showboat. Magnolia begins the show as a naïve young girl, and grows into a sadder-but-wiser woman. She meets Gaylord Ravenal and eventually marries him. Together with their baby daughter, Kim, the couple leaves the show boat and moves to Chicago.

CAP'N ANDY: Mississippi River steamboat captain and owner of the show boat, Cotton Blossom. He is supportive of Magnolia's decision to marry Ravenal and later visits her in Chicago, only to find out that she was abandoned by her husband.

PARTHY ANN: Wife of Cap'n Andy and very protective mother of Magnolia. She is not supportive of Magnolia's decision to marry Ravenal and attempts to cancel the wedding.

GAYLORD RAVENAL: An avid gambler and gentleman of fortune. He becomes the Cotton Blossom's lead actor and marries Cap'n Andy's daughter, Magnolia. After many years on the Cotton Blossom, Ravenal wants to show his wife the big city so he, Magnolia, and their daughter, Kim, move to Chicago.

JULIE LAVERNE: The Cotton Blossom's lead actress and dear friend to Magnolia. She and her husband are forced to leave Mississippi because of a dark secret. Years later, Julie becomes an alcoholic nightclub singer and is abandoned by her husband, Steve.

KIM RAVENAL: The daughter of Magnolia and Gaylord Ravenal. She moves with her parents to Chicago when she is just a baby. Several years later, she moves back to the show boat with Magnolia. Kim follows in her mother's footsteps as an actress and performer.

JOE: A worker on the Cotton Blossom who suggests that Magnolia talk to "Ol' Man River" when she seeks his advice.

STEVE: The Cotton Blossom's initial lead actor who leaves Mississippi to stay with his wife, Julie, after a dark secret about her is revealed. Several years later, he leaves Julie.

"It was lucky we became so emotionally involved with Edna Ferber's characters, because love rendered us blind to all dangers our friends saw in the undertaking. People seemed to go out of their way to discourage us. 'How do you expect to make a musical play out of that?' they would ask. And they would look sorry for us. We realized that the story made several bad breaks with musical comedy tradition, but this was the very thing that endeared it to us."

-Oscar Hammerstein II



Charles Winninger as Cap'n Andy and cast of 1927 Show Boat

Show Boat

by Edna Ferber

PAGE TO STAGE

Edna Ferber



CHAPTER 1:

Bizarre as was the name she bore, Kim Ravenal always said she was thankful it had been no worse. She knew whereof she spoke, for it was literally by a breath that she had escaped being called Mississippi.

"Imagine Mississippi Ravenal!" she often said, in later years. "They'd have to cut it to Missy, I suppose, or even Sippy, if you can bear to think of anything so horrible. And then I'd have had to change my name or give up the stage altogether. Because who'd go to see – seriously, I mean – an actress named Sippy? It sounds half-witted, for some reason. Kim's bad enough, God knows."

And as for Kim Ravenal you doubtless are familiar with her. It is no secret that the absurd monosyllable which comprises her given name is made up of the first letters of three states – Kentucky, Illinois, and Missouri – in all of which she was, incredibly enough, born – if she can be said to have been born in any state at all. Her mother insists that she wasn't. If you were an habitué of old South Clark Street in Chicago's naughty '90's you may even remember her mother, Magnolia Ravenal, as Nola Ravenal, soubrette – though Nola Ravenal never achieved the doubtful distinction of cigarette pictures. In a day when the stage measured feminine pulchritude in terms of hips, thighs, and calves, she was considered much too thin for beauty, let alone for tights.

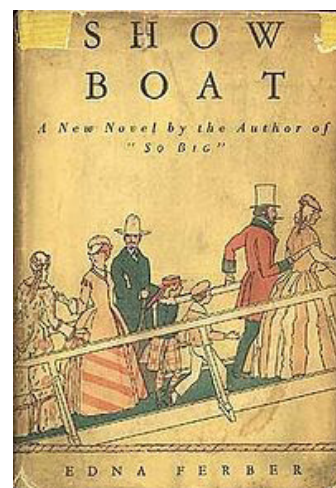
EDNA FERBER, author of the novel *Show Boat*, was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan on August 15, 1885. Spending her adolescence in Appleton, Wisconsin, Edna began her career as "personal and local" editor of her high school newspaper, the *Ryan Clarion*. When she graduated from Ryan High, Edna's senior essay so impressed the editor of the *Appleton Daily Crescent* that he offered her a job as a reporter. She was seventeen years old and started with a salary of three dollars per week.

Unfortunately, Ferber's time with the *Appleton Daily Crescent* was short-lived. After being fired from the newspaper she went on to write for the *Milwaukee Journal*, where she worked so hard that one day she collapsed from exhaustion. While recuperating, she wrote her first short story, "The Homely Heroine," set in Appleton. Later, in 1911, she wrote a novel entitled *Dawn O'Hara*, the story of a newspaperwoman in Milwaukee.

Edna Ferber gained national attention for her series of "Emma McChesney" stories. These tales of a traveling underskirt saleswoman were published in magazines throughout the United States. In 1915 Ferber wrote her first play, *Our Mrs. McChesney*, based on the McChesney stories. With collaborator George S. Kaufman, Ferber wrote other acclaimed plays such as *Dinner at Eight* and *The Royal Family*.

into several film versions. When asked about the musical version of her novel, Ferber responded, "The music mounted, and I give you my word my hair stood on end, the tears came to my eyes...."

Show Boat was born in a hotel room in New London, Connecticut. On Wednesday, August 30, 1924 Edna Ferber witnessed the unsuccessful pre-Broadway debut of her new play, *Old Man Minick* in New London's Lyceum Theatre. After the performance, she and the company joined veteran producer Winthrop Ames for coffee. During their time together, Ames mentioned floating theatres. From that point on Ferber's connection to show boats grew stronger.



Edna Ferber died at the age of 82 on April 16, 1968. In a lengthy obituary, the *New York Times* said, "Her books were not profound, but they were vivid and had a sound sociological basis. She was among the best-read novelists in the nation and critics of the 1920's and 30's did not hesitate to call her the greatest American woman novelist of her day."



In 1924 Ferber won the Pulitzer Prize for *So Big*, the story of a single mother living on a truck farm outside of Chicago. In 1926 she wrote one of her most famous novels, *Show Boat*. This story, about a girl's life on a floating theatre on the Mississippi River, was made into a Broadway hit and was adapted

MEET THE WRITERS

Jerome Kern



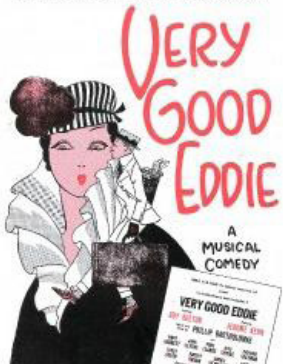
Jerome Kern

JEROME KERN composed the music for *Show Boat*. For most shows during that period, the style of music was written to appeal to the tastes of the general public. However, Kern's music was quite progressive for 1927. *Show Boat's* music helped convey themes such as bi-racial marriage and introduced compelling new and dark musical tones that were the complete antithesis of the more upbeat tunes popular at that time.

Kern was born in New York City in 1885. He studied piano with his mother and in high school was often asked to play the piano and compose music for school theatrical productions. In 1902, at the age of 17, Kern attempted to pursue a business career working for his father, who owned a merchandising house. His overzealous excitement led to an order of 200 pianos rather than the two that were requested by his father. The mistake almost cost his father his business. To Kern's relief, his father agreed that he should pursue a career in music.

In 1902, Kern was accepted into the New York College of Music. After his work at NYCM, Kern took his first job in New York with Lyceum Publishing Company. When British productions began to dominate Broadway, he landed a job with Shapiro-Remick. Kern was hired in 1904 to adapt and "Americanize" a new Broadway bound British show, *Mr. Wix of Wickham*. A year later, Kern took a job with a new employer T.B. Harms & Co., which published many of Kern's original musical scores.

A JEROME KERN MUSICAL



After his success at T.B. Harms and Co., Kern's career accelerated. In 1914 he released his first hit, *The Girl from Utah*. In 1915 Kern began writing original musicals for the Princess Theatre in New York. The productions, including *Nobody Home*, *Very Good Eddie*, *Oh Boy!*, and *Oh Lady! Lady!!*, were praised for bringing a new approach to musical theatre.

In 1927 Kern wrote his most esteemed work, *Show Boat*, with lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II. The musical, noted for its beautiful songs including "Ol' Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," and "Make Believe," has become one of the most influential productions

in Broadway history. After its premiere, Broadway composers saw *Show Boat* as a new model of writing for the musical stage.

After writing many hit musicals, Kern moved to Hollywood in the 1940's. From that point on, Kern devoted the remainder of his career to writing music for films. He wrote songs such as "The Last Time I Saw Paris," "Dearly Beloved," and "Long and Far Away." Kern's last score was to the film *Centennial Summer*, released in 1946, one year after his death.

For decades after his demise the majority of Kern's manuscripts were assumed lost. In 1982, however, hundreds of manuscripts written by Kern and other Broadway composers were found in a warehouse in New Jersey. Included among these manuscripts were the complete scores for "Very Good Eddie," "Leave It to Jane," and "Sunny." The manuscripts to many popular songs from *Show Boat* were also found, including "Ol' Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," and selections that were cut from the musical after the 1927 production. In 1988 the lost scores were added to a recording of *Show Boat*, restoring music from Kern's original version.



Hammerstein and Kern

MEET THE WRITERS

Oscar Hammerstein II



OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II wrote the book and lyrics for *Show Boat*. Known as one of the most influential lyricists and librettists of the American Theatre, Hammerstein contributed the words to musicals such as *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*.

Born into a theatrical family, Hammerstein seemed destined for a theatrical career. His grandfather, Oscar I, was an opera impresario. His father, William, was the manager of Hammerstein's Victoria, one of the most famous vaudeville theatres of its day. Oscar's uncle, Arthur, was an established producer. The Hammerstein name was already well known, but little did they know how famous it would become.

As a youngster Oscar, or "Ockie" (Hammerstein's lifelong nickname), participated in a variety of theatrical activities, but when it came to choosing a career, his father strongly urged him away from the theatre. Oscar chose to go to Columbia University to major in Law. It was at Columbia, however, that marked the beginning of Oscar's professional life in the theatre. At the age of nineteen the Columbia University Players cast him in a production called *On Your Way*. He became more involved with the Columbia University Players, first as an actor, and later as a writer. It was during his time at Columbia that Oscar first met the young Columbia alumnus, Richard Rodgers, who later collaborated with him on many award-winning shows.



Rodgers and Hammerstein

Following Oscar's first year at Columbia, his uncle Arthur hired him as an assistant stage manager. After just a few years, Oscar was promoted to Production Stage Manager for all of Arthur's shows. In his position as Production Stage Manager, Hammerstein was able to do a significant amount of writing. In 1922 he wrote his first successful libretto for *Wildflower* in collaboration with Otto Harbach. Two years later, Hammerstein and Harbach worked together again to create an even greater theatrical success, *Rose-Marie*. During their partnership, Hammerstein met composer Jerome Kern. Hammerstein and Kern both believed that the book, lyrics, and score should all contribute to the central idea and storyline of a musical. A few years later, Kern and Hammerstein used this idea of the "integrated musical" to create the landmark piece *Show Boat*. *Show Boat* established Hammerstein's powerful reputation as a writer and lyricist.

After writing the successful libretto for *Carmen Jones*, Oscar was contacted by his old acquaintance, Richard Rodgers. Rodgers had read Lynn Riggs' *Green Grow the Lilacs* and wanted to collaborate with Hammerstein on a musical adaptation. The two began work on the musical, tentatively titled *Away We Go!* Rodgers and Hammerstein continued working toward the concept of the integrated musical, with Hammerstein writing most of the lyrics before Rodgers wrote the score. This was the reverse of Hammerstein's normal process.

When the musical, renamed *Oklahoma!*, opened on Broadway in March 1943, it was an enormous success. The musical ran for 2,212 performances in its initial Broadway engagement. The team of Rodgers and Hammerstein collaborated on several other award winning musicals including, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*.



Oscar Hammerstein II died in his home in Doylestown, Pennsylvania on August 23, 1960. On September 1, 1960 at 9:00 p.m., the lights on Broadway were extinguished in his memory. To this day Hammerstein is fondly remembered as the "man who owned Broadway."

show boat: a form of theatre that traveled along the waterways of the United States, especially along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

miscegenation: marriage between a white person and a member of another race.

stevedore: one who works at or is responsible for loading and unloading ships in port.

A NEW JOURNEY FOR ZIEGFELD



A number from the Ziegfeld Follies

When *Show Boat* opened in December 1927 a new age began in the history of the American musical. Producer Florenz Ziegfeld had never produced anything like it before. His legendary *Follies* were vaudeville shows, featuring popular headliners of the times in unrelated scenes. Ziegfeld claimed he was “Glorifying the American Girl.” He also presented

light musical comedies such as *Sally* and *Sunny*, with music by Jerome Kern. These were shows with wispy plots and light-hearted musical numbers.

The glamorous opening night audience for *Show Boat* was decked out in the latest fashions for Florenz Ziegfeld’s new “All American Musical Comedy.” They were not prepared for what hit them. The story sprawled over forty years and it dealt with **miscegenation**, alcoholism, and a wife’s desertion by her ne’er-do-well gambling husband. These topics were considered taboo. Most 1920s musicals were light-hearted and focused on comedic events at a college, country club, or Long Island Estate. *Show Boat* revealed a new depth for the American musical and from that point on, the ‘book-musical’ assumed prominence on Broadway.

THE FIRST OPENING NIGHT

Many were shocked on opening night to see Ziegfeld’s newest production. When the curtain rose, there was a stage full of sweating black **stevedores** toiling under the hot Mississippi sun, juxtaposed by the sight of the pampered young Southern gentry gathering for the show that evening. From the opening number, until the curtain’s fall three-and-a-half hours later, the audience was unnerved and inactive. In order to reinforce the illusion that the audience was witnessing a story with real people rather than actors, no curtain calls were taken at the end of the show. The curtain came down and stayed down, which is something that the audience had never before experienced. The creator of the role Magnolia, Norma Terris, recalled that “the audience just sat there, sort of stunned.”

The actors and creative team were sure the show had failed. The audience shuffled out of the theatre into the New York night with few apparent remarks or enthusiasm.

The next morning the *New York Times* called the book’s adaptation “intelligently made,” and the production one of “unimpeachable skill and taste.” The review termed Norma Terris “a revelation,” Charles Wininger “extraordinarily persuasive and convincing,” and Jules Bledsoe’s singing “remarkably effective.” *Show Boat* proved to have had a legendary opening night, bedazzling critics and public alike.



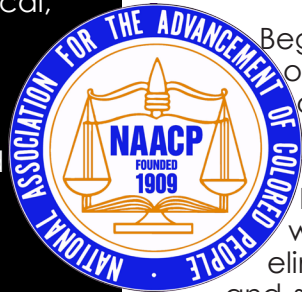
Oscar Hammerstein II, Florenz Ziegfeld, and Jerome Kern outside the National Theatre in Washington, D.C. before the first performance of *Show Boat* (Nov. 15, 1927)

segregation: Separation, for special treatment, of individuals or items from a larger group. In the United States, during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the term refers to the separation of individuals based on race.

Civil Rights Act of 1964:

A comprehensive U.S. law intended to end discrimination based on race, colour, religion, or national origin. It guarantees equal voting rights and prohibits segregation or discrimination in places of public accommodation.

NAACP: An organization that ensures the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.



INTEGRATION

After the United States abolished slavery in 1865, three constitutional amendments were passed to grant newly freed African Americans legal status: The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment provided citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the right to vote. In 1896, the Supreme Court approved legal separation of Caucasians and African Americans by its ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson. It held that separate-but-equal facilities did not violate the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment. Thus, in the southern United States (including Mississippi, where *Show Boat* begins), African Americans were officially citizens, but they were relegated to separate schools, bathrooms, theatres, buses, restaurants, and other public facilities.

Beginning in 1909, a small group of African American activists organized and founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). They waged a long struggle to eliminate racial discrimination and segregation from American life. It wasn't until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that discrimination against African Americans was legally outlawed.

THE IMAGE OF WOMEN

Between 1880 and 1930, public images in magazines and newspapers portrayed women in American society through idyllic gender stereotypes. The "real woman" had yet to be depicted in the theatre. Ziegfeld's attempt to emphasize the beautiful and talented American girl was the only feminine image that audiences had seen on stage.

When *Show Boat* arrived on Broadway it was the first time an audience had seen women performing the regular social functions of their time. Women, who worked, struggled, loved, and had families, were now part of the theatrical experience. The

striving "real woman" had emerged on stage and it was one of the first times she had been depicted as independent and betrayed.

CLOTHING

American fashion gradually changed throughout the early 1900s, as ready-to-wear manufactured clothes replaced those made at home or by a tailor. Social norms demanded that women and men dress in trends popular overseas, especially in France and Britain.

Fashionable women and girls covered their bodies from head to toe. Hats with tall feathers or wide brims shaded the face. Lace fabric was wrapped around the neck to make it look long and slender. For most of the decade, fancier dresses were made in two pieces. Ankle-length, bell-shaped skirts flowed from the waist. They attached with dress fasteners to blouses decorated with ribbons, lace, embroidery, and beads. Gloves made of suede or embroidered silk covered women's hands.

For men, three-piece suits were enormously popular. These suits were usually made of a dark-colored twill material. Later in the 1900s, more casual tweed jackets appeared. These became popular among men with office jobs.



Males of high social status often owned separate wardrobes for evening outings. These outfits included knee length overcoats and walking sticks. Underneath the overcoats, men donned dark pants and coats with tails. A gold pocket watch, fine leather gloves, and a high silk hat were popular eveningwear accessories.

Did You Know...

Laws banning the intermarriage of Caucasians and African Americans were enacted as far back as the late seventeenth century. These laws defined marriage between a white and a black as a felony.

In 1967, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. With this ruling, these laws were no longer in effect in the remaining 16 states that had not yet abolished them.

SHOW BOAT REMEMBERED

By Norma Terris



Norma Terris

FLORENZ ZIEGFELD had intended to produce *Show Boat* in 1926, and had, in fact, already announced several cast members. But it took so long for the authors to finish it that he had to release that cast and start all over again a year later. Ziegfeld was discussing the show with his staff and said, "The most important thing we need right now is a *Magnolia*" (they had already cast Helen Morgan as Julie).

dance too!" So Mr. Kern said, "Look, I'll tell you what – I'll send my car for you and I'd like you to come up to my home and let me hear you sing, and you'll hear my music, and we'll get acquainted" (so you see, it wasn't like a real audition at all). At that time he had a Rolls-Royce, so I rode up to the country in grand style. He had a big grand piano, and I sat down next to him on the piano bench and he began playing me the score of *Show Boat*. He played me the opening, and then he said "Now here you play the piano offstage," and played me *Magnolia's* little practice piece. He described the show to me at length, and was very determined as to how he wanted things. "You are Juliet, and he is Romeo, and you know the minute you see him that you are going to love this man for the rest of your life." And in that afternoon he almost injected *Magnolia* into me, because when I went home that day (on *Cloud 9!*), I was *Magnolia*, and I knew nobody else would ever be *Magnolia* except just me.

I was 23 at the time, and starring in J.J. Shubert's *A Night in Spain*, where I did sketches and a Zulu dance (!); and one of Ziegfeld's men said to him "There's a girl down at the 44th Street Theatre starring in a Shubert revue and I think you ought to see her – I think she'd make a good *Magnolia*."

Now, Ziegfeld and J.J. Shubert were not exactly bosom buddies, so Ziegfeld had someone buy a ticket for him at the box office, and he went in after the lights were down in the house and stood in the back of the theatre with his hat pulled down so no one would recognize him. Well, you know how things buzz backstage, and soon all the kids were whispering "Ziegfeld's out front! Ziegfeld's in the house!" – but it never dawned on me that he was there to see me. Later his staff asked him what he thought and he said "You're right, she's *Magnolia* – how can we get her?"

That's when he found out I was under a five-year contract to the Shuberts – and so began the battle to get me released. Finally, after it came to arbitration with Actor's Equity, I went personally to Mr. J.J. and pleaded with him, "This is my great chance." He was a dear man, like a father to me – and, finally, he released me.

Well, that was Ziegfeld – but now Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein had to pass me. So I went to meet Oscar and we sat down, and I talked to him and he talked to me (I don't remember what we talked about, particularly), and when I left I said I thought it was a beautiful part and that I hoped he would like me – and he just smiled quietly and said "I think I will" (he was so sweet).

Then I met Jerome Kern briefly, and he asked me "Can you play the piano?" I said "Yes, and I can sing and



Norma Terris & Howard Marsh in *Show Boat* (1927)

I remember negotiating my contract with Mr. Ziegfeld. We were standing in the back of the theatre when he told me I had finally been given the part, and he asked "How much do you want?" So I said, "Well, Mr. Ziegfeld, right now I'm getting \$1000 a week from Mr. Shubert, and I think that's what I would like, please."

SHOW BOAT REMEMBERED

By Norma Terris

To which he replied "Look, I'll tell you what. I'll give you \$900 to start with, and if the show's a hit, you'll get your hundred." I agreed, and to clinch the deal he took out a little notebook he always carried and wrote out a little note in pencil saying "I, Florenz Ziegfeld, agree to pay Norma Terris the sum of \$900 per week, to be increased to \$1000 when and if *Show Boat* is a hit." Later on, of course, he drew up an official contract for me, but oh, how I wish I still had the one he wrote for me in pencil that day!

I have mentioned that Jerry Kern was a perfectionist. Our company manager used to say that he was sure that when Jerry died and went to heaven he would tell all the angels they were singing off-key. For Mr. Kern everything had to be just so-but he wasn't above taking suggestions, and I was full of them.

When we were first rehearsing the New Year's Eve scene, Jerry wanted Magnolia to sing a famous song from the turn-of-the-century, and he had decided on *Ta-ra-ra-boom-dee-ay!* Well, I went to him and said "Oh, Mr. Kern! The boarding house scene has just finished – Magnolia is heart-broken-she's getting her chance – it's just got to be something with heart!" So, we all started looking for a replacement, and someone finally said "What about *After the Ball?*" – and we couldn't even find a copy of it! It had gone out of print! Well, we finally found a copy and put it in, and it was right.

Jerry Kern wasn't the only perfectionist. I remember dress rehearsal very well – I had a magnificent red dress in the World's Fair scene, topped with a beautiful (I thought) hat, with a high crown and a white bird in the middle of it. I thought I looked lovely. Well, I was thin, and I had this long chin, and Ziegfeld took one look at that hat and literally rolled down the aisle laughing at me. "Her chin's too long – get rid of that hat!" I was heartbroken, because I thought I looked gorgeous.



Norma Terris (on stage left) in *Show Boat* (1927)

Show Boat's opening night in New York was truly exciting. We could hear flashbulbs popping outside, and all the big shots (sic) and wealthy folks and anyone who could get a ticket was there. For all of us who had to wear stockings in the last scene, Mr. Ziegfeld had sent for silk stockings from Paris, which he kept in a refrigerator.

At intermission a knock came on my dressing room door – and there stood the great Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, both smiling from ear to ear. They had gone out and bought a huge box, as tall as I was, filled with a dozen of the biggest and most beautiful yellow mums I have ever seen.

I guess I had surprised even them. We had come a long way since I first sat on the piano bench beside Jerry Kern and he had played me the first act of *Show Boat*.

Old Lyme, Connecticut
September, 1982

THE NORMA TERRIS THEATRE

Goodspeed-at-Chester/The Norma Terris Theatre was inaugurated in 1984 and its focus is to promote the development of new musicals. Goodspeed Musicals named it in honor of the actress Norma Terris, star of *Show Boat* and devoted patron and trustee of the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation.

Miss Terris first performed for Goodspeed audiences in the 1970 production of *Little Mary Sunshine*. In 1987, she established the Norma Terris Fund to expand the talents of individuals and to foster the vitality, excellence and diversity of musical theatre at The Norma Terris Theatre.

The theatre was formerly a factory built in the early 1900s for Susan Bates, inc., which became a large manufacturer of knitting needles and needlework accessories. In 1982, after locating a larger facility, Susan Bates Inc., donated its abandoned factory in Chester to the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation.

The 200-seat performing space was fully renovated and opened its doors on July 10, 1984, with the new musical *Harrigan 'n Hart*.

THE TIMELINE

1927: The original production of *Show Boat* opens at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. It was produced by Florenz Ziegfeld and starred Charles Winninger as Cap'n Andy, Helen Morgan as Julie, Norma Terris as Magnolia, and Jules Bledsoe as Joe. This original production ran a total of 572 performances.

1928: The first international performance of *Show Boat* is performed in London at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. Paul Robeson, Kern's original choice for Joe, is celebrated in London. Robeson, who would be forever associated with the song "Ol' Man River," later played the role in the 1932 revival in New York.

1929: On May 5th, Universal Studios releases the first film version of *Show Boat* starring Laura La Plante, Joseph Schildkraut, Helen Morgan, Jules Bledsoe, and Tess Gardella.

1932: On January 5th, *Show Boat* returns triumphantly to New York at the Casino Theatre. Writer Edna Ferber sees the revival and marvels: "When Robeson finished singing 'Ol' Man River,' the show stopped. He sang it again. The show stopped. They called him back again and again. Other actors came out and made motions and their lips moved, and the bravos of the audience drowned all other sounds."

1936: Universal Studios releases another movie adaptation of *Show Boat* on April 30th, starring Charles Winninger as Cap'n Andy, Helen Morgan as Julie, Paul Robeson as Joe, and Irene Dunne as Magnolia. *The New York Times* hails the film as "the pleasantest kind of proof that it was not merely one of the best musical shows of the century, but that it contained the gossamer stuff for one of the finest musical films we have seen." In addition, three new songs including "I Have the Room Above Her," "Gallivantin' Around," and "Ah Still Suits Me" were written by Kern and Hammerstein especially for the film.

1946: A revival opens on January 5th at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York, running for 418 performances. *The New York Times* confirmed *Show Boat* as "still one of the real musicals of the modern American Stage...its music was unstaled (sic) by repetition; its familiar lyrics seemed new."

1951: A third film version of *Show Boat* arrives in theatres on July 3rd. This version stars Howard Keel as Gaylord Ravenal, Kathryn Grayson as Magnolia, and Ava Gardner as Julie.

1966: Lincoln Center mounts another New York revival with Barbara Cook as Magnolia, Constance Towers as Julie, and Stephen Douglass as Ravenal.

1971: A revival at the Adelphi Theatre in London opens on July 29th. In 1973 it became the longest running production of *Show Boat* having given a record-breaking 910 performances.

1982: Houston Grand Opera in Texas stages a revival production, later seen on Broadway, incorporating newly discovered material from the Rodgers and Hammerstein warehouse on West 52nd Street. In this same year, the complete original orchestral score – including material dropped during the show's tryout – is found in the Warner Bros. music storage warehouse in Secaucus, New Jersey. This discovery leads to the landmark 1988 EMI/Angel recording of the complete score.

1990: On August 1st, the Opera North/Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Show Boat* was premiered and presented for a season at the London Palladium, followed by a major regional tour. The production won the 1991 Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival.

1994: After a lengthy run in Toronto, *Show Boat* triumphantly returns to the Gershwin Theatre in New York. The show opens on October 2 with Harold Prince as the director. The cast includes John McMartin, Elaine Stritch, Rebecca Luker, Mark Jacoby, Lonette McKee, Gretha Boston, and Michel Bell. Prince's revival runs for 947 performances and wins five Tony Awards for best revival of a musical, direction of a musical (Hal Prince), choreography (Susan Stroman), costume design (Florence Katz), and performance by a featured actress (Gretha Boston) in a musical.



Joseph Schildkraut & Laura LaPlante in 1929 *Show Boat* film



Paul Robeson in 1936 *Show Boat* film



Buddy Ebsen and Colette Lyons (1946)



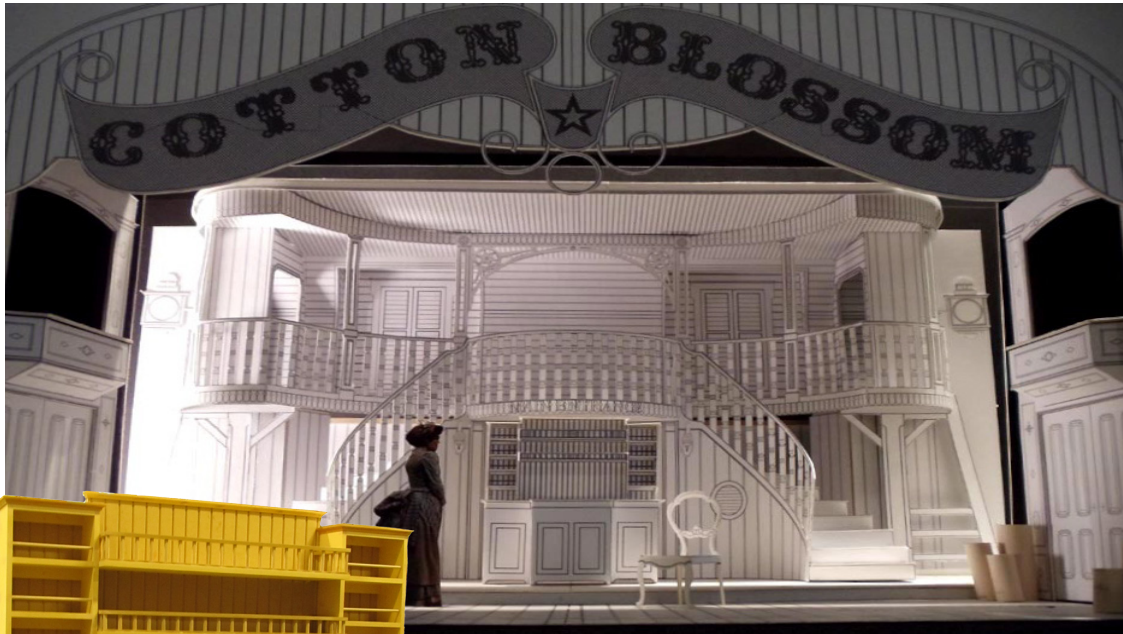
Constance Towers (1966)



Elaine Stritch and John McMartin (1994)

BEHIND THE SCENES Design

Julie's Dress



Set model

In Goodspeed's production of *Show Boat*, audiences will see various fashions representing the early 1900s-1940. Characters from the production will wear many of the garments and accessories mentioned on page 8 to add authenticity to the story and to set the time period.

Pieces of the set built in Goodspeed's Stillman Center



Frank's Jacket



Some of the many *Show Boat* costumes

Set model

