

The Mighty Barnum

AS THE MOST FAMOUS COMMENTATORS OF RADIO RECALL HIM TODAY

Brake Carter

TELLS ABOUT
"A Fortune, Mer-maid"

See the 20th Century Picture with WALLACE BEERY

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DO YOU believe in mermaids?
If so, do you think you could take your mermaid, mix in a little advertising and add a dash of your best imagination and with the combination make yourself \$3,000 a month?
True, you might be considered a lunatic if you tried. If you tried and failed, your failure would cause no surprise, evoke no sympathy. But if, by some strange quirk or fortune, you succeeded, then you most assuredly would be classed as a "rugged individualist" and a loud call put in for a code for mermaids!

Yet a young man from New England, with a deep sense of religion, but a smart sense of the gullibility of human nature, once took these three ingredients, combined them and upon the mixture, founded a fortune, became the pioneer of modern American advertising and served for himself an everlasting niche in the American hall of fame.
The young man was P. T. Barnum. The imagination was his own. He advertised as he created himself, but titillating, in subtle manner, the fancies of the New York newspapers of the middle 1800's weren't particular in those days of the source of their news, as long as it was news) and the mermaid was a hideous mummified creature he bought from the owner of the Boston Museum in the summer of 1842.
It was purchased originally by an old sea captain who commanded an American trading vessel plying along the coasts of China and Japan. He was convinced that it was a preserved mermaid found off the coast of Japan by Japanese sailors and the more he contemplated the subject, the more he wanted it. Finally he appropriated \$8,000 of the ship's funds and bought the mermaid. His employers punished him for making him work out the bill. Finally he died and the only thing he left to his son was the mermaid.
The son, finding himself with more than he could handle, without a penny in his pockets, drove a hard bargain with the proprietor of the Boston Museum in exchange for the mermaid. Barnum, with an eye to the bizarre and the eccentric, decided the mummy was a veritable gift from heaven and bought it—though not before he had had this gruesome oddity examined minutely from tip to tail. He was that he was, Barnum was nobody's fool. His boyhood days and experiences in New England, running store, selling lottery tickets, and publishing a newspaper, had turned him into a typical Yankee trader.

from out-of-town correspondents. All conveyed the news that a Dr. Griffin, of the London Lyceum of Natural History, would visit New York within a few weeks, en route to London, carrying with him "a most remarkable curiosity, a real mermaid," which he had found in Pernambuco.
Eventually Dr. Griffin, in reality a trusted aide of Barnum's, arrived in Philadelphia. With a show of well assumed reluctance, the bogus scientist permitted Philadelphia reporters to glimpse his mermaid. It was enough. The newsmen wasted no time in writing columns about this amazing monstrosity.
So, by the time Dr. Griffin arrived in New York, the fame of himself and his possession had spread far and wide. And greeted by many people curious to see the mermaid, the doctor again showed much reluctance to reveal the mummy and pretended that contractual obligations with the London Lyceum

were convinced they were looking upon the real thing.
Later, the exhibit was moved to Barnum's American Museum. And to help things along, Barnum, convinced there was no limit to the ways and means of "packing 'em in," ordered an 18-foot banner, designed as a mermaid, to be stretched across the face of his museum on the outside, so as to attract more patronage.

Stooge Revolts
But even Dr. Griffin couldn't stomach this colossal deception and he threatened to walk out on Barnum, if the latter persisted in carrying through his pennant scheme. Barnum backed down, because he could not afford to lose the "doctor." And in portraying the life of the promoter and famous showman, Wallace Beery makes his 20th Century picture, "The Mighty Barnum" a living vivid chronicle of a famous American's rise to fame.
How successful P. T. Barnum was in this early venture in hoaxing the public is attested by the fact that prior to the arrival of the Fejee Mermaid, his museum had been grossing but \$1,200 a month, whereas, during the four weeks that followed, Barnum's Museum took in \$3,341.93.
And the mermaid? Real? Of course not. Barnum never actually found direct proof of its origin, but he did believe it came from Japan. For he found in a scientific re-



Barnum had an eye to the bizarre and eccentric.

Mermaid Fools Experts
The examination of the mermaid by his experts disclosed not the slightest sign of joint or artificial manufacture. The creature was but three feet long, with an unbroken spine extending from the base of the skull to the tail. The shoulders were covered with hair.
The face was ugliness personified, with bestial teeth. Two skinny arms, hands and fingers like those of any human, and a fish's body and fish-like tail, completed this strange picture. Barnum's mermaid, it is clear, was not of that saucy, alluring variety of fish-like maidens who bespoiled themselves at the expense of the unfortunate sailors of Ancient Greek mythology.
Still, this discrepancy with the popular ideal didn't deter Pines T. Barnum, as is only too clear in United Artists 20th Century production, "The Mighty Barnum." He bought his mermaid and decided to make the American public believe in mermaids, too.
He had just put every penny he had and pennies he didn't have into the purchase of Scudder's American Museum in New York—the museum which afterward became Barnum's American Museum, Broadway and Ann Streets, an institution which no visitor to the growing metropolis ever failed to "take in" among the sights. It was just such a curiosity as this mermaid—the Fejee Mermaid he cryptically called it—that he needed to get the names of himself and his museum before the public.
Distinguished Stooge
So Barnum went to work. Soon letters appeared in the local press

prevented him from showing it publicly in New York.
In the meanwhile, Barnum had prepared 10,000 copies of a pamphlet describing the mermaid. He called upon the editors of three large New York dailies and in mournful tones, explained that he had hoped to prevail upon Dr. Griffin to exhibit his mermaid—but the doctor was adamant—he wouldn't yield, so the pamphlets were no good to him any more. Thus, out of the goodness of his heart for the journalistic profession, he, Barnum, was offering his pamphlets to the editors to print.
All were delighted and only the next day, when the various papers came out on the street, each bearing a different picture of the mermaid, did the editors understand how they had been thoroughly humbugged.
By this time the public interest had reached fever pitch. The public had seen the papers and read Barnum's out of town letters. In addition, Barnum had let loose a flood of pamphlets as handbills on the streets. Finally advertisements appeared that Dr. Griffin had relented and after all would consent to exhibit his mermaid for one week at Concert Hall on Broadway, hired especially for the occasion by the astute Barnum.
The crowd was immense when the doors of the hall were thrown open. Men, women and children streamed inside. Dr. Griffin told scholarly tales of the South Seas and the curious throngs gazed intently at the shriveled up, three-foot-long, Fejee Mermaid. They

search paper by a German author, dealing with Japanese customs of the 19th century, an account of how a Japanese fisherman joined the lower half of a fish and the upper half of a monkey so deftly and neatly that the joint could not be detected.
The Japanese fisherman then told his fellow countrymen that he had caught the creature in his net, but that it had quickly died. However, he added, it had spoken a few momentous words—begore gasping its final breath.
The mermaid, he said, had predicted a few years of prosperity for Japan, and then subsequent years of a fatal epidemic which would sweep the land. The only remedy offered by the dying creature, explained this Japanese fisherman, would be possession of a likeness of the prophet.
Whereupon thousands of Japanese bought crude likenesses of the mermaid. Finally it fell into the hands of a Dutch trader, who sold it to a shrewd American, who, in turn, exhibited it to the ignorant and gullible alike in Europe thirty years before Barnum tried the same trick in the United States.
And Barnum was quite convinced that this mermaid was his mermaid and he secretly hailed the Japanese fisherman as a blood brother in the gentle, but subtle art of spoofing the public.
Can you, then, take a mermaid, a little advertising and a dash of your best imagination and make \$3,000 a month? Certainly you can—even in 1934—providing you're another P. T. Barnum.

Fertilizer Needs Before Planting Time
At planting time, every farmer should make an inventory of the crops to raise and determine the kind of fertilizer needed, as C. B. Williams, head of the college agronomy department, will enable him to buy or mix fertilizer and have it ready before so as to avoid delays that result from waiting until the fertilizer is needed, he said.
As a guide to the fertilizers needed, Williams has given the following mix for use on one acre of land:
cotton in the coastal plain area, a mixture of 4-3-4 should be used just before planting.

Or the grower may mix his own fertilizer from 238 pounds of 16 per cent superphosphate, 70 pounds of cottonseed meal, 80 pounds of sulphate of ammonia and 33 pounds of muriate of potash. The latter mixture has the same fertilizer value as 500 pounds of 4-8-4 ready mixed.
In the Piedmont, he recommends 500 pounds of 4-10-4 to the acre drilled in before planting. Or a mixture of 304 pounds of 16 per cent superphosphate, 52 pounds of cottonseed meal, 83 pounds of sulphate of ammonia, and 88 pounds of muriate of potash.
For tobacco, on light and less productive soils, he recommends 800 lbs. of 3-8-6 per acre drilled in before planting, or a mixture of 388 pounds of 16 per cent supersulphate, 70 lbs.

of cottonseed meal, 44 pounds of animal tankage, 50 pounds of nitrate of soda, 39 pounds of sulphate of ammonia, 24 pounds of muriate of potash, and 134 pounds of sulphate of potash-magnesia.
On heavy or more productive soils, Williams recommends 800 pounds of 3-10-6 or a mixture of 488 pounds of 16 per cent superphosphate, 70 pounds of cottonseed meal, 44 pounds of animal tankage, 50 pounds of nitrate of soda, 39 pounds of sulphate of ammonia, 24 pounds of muriate of potash and 134 pounds of sulphate of potash-magnesia.
The local cheese factory at North Wilkesboro has increased the prices paid for milk with a corresponding increase in deliveries at the plant.

MODERN TOURIST CAMPS DEMANDED

Motorists Want Stopping Place to Have All Conveniences
The motor tourist no longer is content to pitch himself and family into any sort of a wayside camp for the night. He is demanding accommodations, conveniences, sanitary arrangements, etc.
In more prosperous times the tourist was content with what offered by the wayside. For that matter, he was always prepared to pitch a tent and look out for himself, even paying a fee for the privilege.
It was during this era that cabins and inns sprang up by the thousands. Farmsteads were converted to this purpose, many of them clean and attractive, but offering none of the comforts to which the city dweller was accustomed.
Now, the Better Housing movement of the Federal Housing Administration provides opportunity for the modernization of such lodgings. Grounds can be cleaned up and landscaped. Walks can be repaired and new ones put in. Extensions

to garages may be made and existing ones repaired.
The interior of the camp buildings proper should be overhauled. Wherever possible, running water should be installed, and baths, showers and toilets provided. At the end of a hard day's drive, this is of first importance to the tired tourist. Then furniture can be repaired and linen mended.
After everything else has been done, the entire place, including fences on the approach to the place, can be given a coat of paint in attractive colors.

Dr. J. W. Selig
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