

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 18). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name MAJESTIC
other names/site number Showboat MAJESTIC

2. Location

street & number Ohio River below Central Bridge not for publication
city, town Cincinnati vicinity
state Ohio code OH county Hamilton code 061 zip code 45203

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
RECREATION AND CULTURE—Theatre

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
RECREATION AND CULTURE—Theatre

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Majestic is a showboat moored on the riverfront of the Ohio River at Cincinnati, Ohio. It is owned by the City of Cincinnati and is on lease to Downie Productions.

Hull

Majestic was built with a wooden scow-form barge hull. The old wooden hull was 120 feet long, and 28 feet wide, with a 3.9 feet depth of hold. [1] Designed for operation in shallow waters, the hull drew only 12 inches of water. [2] Majestic had a scow-form bow and stern and possessed a graceful sheer. She was planked athwartships and had a number of longitudinal stringers along her bottom and ends. The wooden hull, now preserved in a steel hull, shows evidence of damage and replacement of parts over time. Showboats saw very hard service and their hulls required renewal periodically.

In 1967 the City of Cincinnati bought the old showboat and refurbished her for performances on the waterfront. The hull was leaking badly and a new hull was again needed. Rather than replace the wooden hull completely, the hull and superstructure were placed in a new steel outer hull. The new steel hull was placed in a floating drydock, filled with water, and the wooden hull floated over the opening and held in position. The drydock was then emptied, allowing the leaky wooden hull to settle safely into the sound new steel hull.

The new outer hull is built of heavy steel plates welded to steel angle frames. The hull measures 135 feet long, with a 40-foot beam, and a 5-foot depth of hold. The hull has a raked bow, flat bottom, and a square stern. A 12-inch diameter, 30-foot long spud at the stern moors and steadies the boat. Internally, Majestic is divided into eight watertight compartments. [3] The new steel hull contains most of the old wooden hull and several water tanks.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History

Performing Arts

Period of Significance

1923-1942

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Reynolds, Tom

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Between 1831 and the 1920s, more than 50 showboats carried circuses and dramatic productions to large and small towns on the rivers of America. [1] Showboats were perhaps the most unique American adaptation of barges. They evolved to become a theater on a large scow-form barge pushed about by a separate towboat. Two preserved showboats, Majestic and Goldenrod, survive. Goldenrod was designated a National Historic Landmark on December 24, 1967. Majestic was listed in the National Register on January 3, 1980. Majestic retains the historic interior arrangement that Goldenrod lost when she was partially converted to a restaurant. Majestic was built in 1923 for showman Tom J. Reynolds to replace an earlier showboat of the same name. She served on the Mississippi, Ohio, and a number of tributary rivers. During the Second World War, Majestic was laid-up at Point Pleasant, West Virginia. After the war, showboats could not operate as before and several colleges leased Majestic for Summer performance seasons. Today Majestic is owned by the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, and leased to Downie Productions. Majestic is a floating, working example of a unique type of American watercraft, and a nearly vanished form of entertainment. The preceding statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements that follow.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A

1	6	7	1	5	8	0	0	4	3	3	0	2	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All that area encompassed within the extreme length, beam, and draft of the vessel.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary incorporates the entire area of the vessel.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kevin J. Foster, Historian

organization National Park Service (418) date 10 July, 1989

street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone 202-343-9508

city or town Washington, state DC zip code 20013-7127

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Superstructure

The wooden superstructure of Majestic has two decks and is protected from distortion by a Western Rivers hogging truss system that also supports the roof over the theater. The truss system is present, but because of the strength of the new steel hull now serves only to support the roof. The roof has a barely noticeable crown athwartships but exhibits considerable sheer. The ends of a scow-form barge are identical but the superstructure of a showboat determines which end is the bow and which is the stern. The entrance is always at the bow end and the stage at the stern end. [4]

Outside passageways to port and starboard allowed cast members to walk around to the other side of the stage or from the box office end of the boat to the stage end on the main and second decks. The passageways on the barge deck were originally narrow but the new hull is broader allowing wider passageways. The passages around the second deck are narrow and have wooden rails. Inside the boat, passage is restricted. Crew members ascended to the second deck by a stairway at the stage end and a ladder at the box office end.

Main Deck

The main deck is at the level of the steel deck of the barge. Majestic originally seated 450 patrons in a two-tiered theater interior with a modest stage and orchestra pit at the stern and box office at the bow. Because of current fire-safety regulations the boat is now permitted to hold 233 persons. Theater patrons boarded the boat at the bow over a wide gangplank called a landing stage. The main entrance is a double door set into in the center of the bow end of the superstructure. The box office is to starboard and toilets are to port of the entrance. Inside to starboard a stairway leads upward to the balcony. Carpet covers the wooden deck inside the showboat structure. [5]

The stage and proscenium at the stern were enlarged during operation with college theater companies. A platform added to the stage now covers the orchestra pit, which rested on the hull bottom timbers. Some of the theater equipment is modern but most of it is original. Roll drops with painted scenery are hidden by the proscenium. Three screens on each stage wing shield the off-stage area from patrons. Box seats are located to each side of the stage. Doors lead to the deck outside from both sides of the stage and from behind center stage. Two dressing rooms are located above the stage. A single staircase to port leads to the second floor outside of the stage door. A mechanical equipment room is located to starboard of the backstage door.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Second Deck

The second deck houses the balcony, cabins, dressing rooms, a kitchen and dining area, and storage rooms. Hired actors berthed in several rooms over the rear of the stage. The double-hung sash windows are covered by wire screens. A narrow covered walkway runs around the house on the second deck. The owner's family lived forward on the second deck. The living room was to starboard, the kitchen to port, and three bedrooms just behind. One bedroom has been converted into a dressing room, and one into storage. The remainder of the family space is now an apartment for the caretaker. Modifications for a previous watchman to live aboard are minor but detract somewhat from this area of the showboat.

A large balcony fills the rear of the interior and extends along each side of the theater to the proscenium. Entry is by way of a single, stairway to port. Safety concerns led to the closing of the balcony to patrons in the early 1980s. The balcony box seats have been painted black but remain. The balcony now holds a computer control station for light and sound but is slated to be removed and returned to the original arrangement. The pressed-tin ceiling, which was always painted white to reflect dim theater lights, is now painted black. Access to the roof is by way of a ladder from the porch above the box office and entrance. A small hatch at the top of the ladder is the only entryway to the roof.

Pilothouse

A pilothouse is perched atop the center of the second deck roof. No steering or engine controls were mounted but commands were relayed to the towboat astern. The towboat pushing from astern had only limited visibility ahead, because of the size of Majestic, and required directions from the showboat pilothouse in handling.

Notes

- 1
United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Customs, Merchant Vessels of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958) pp. 378.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

2

Philip Graham, Showboats: The History of An American Institution (Austin, Texas: University Of Texas Press, 1951) p. 126.

3

Captain David E. Hammond, "General Overview and Recommendations: Sternwheel Towboat Winifred as Sole Propulsion For Movement Of The Showboat Majestic" (Typescript marine survey, August 3, 1982, from Inland Marine Service, on file City of Cincinnati Real Property office).

4

Alan L. Bates, The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopoedum (Leonia, New Jersey: Hustle Press, 1968) pp. 12-14.

5

Graham, Op. cit p. 201.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

The Development of Western Rivers Watercraft

The Western Rivers system, composed of the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, and other tributary rivers, carried most of the immigrants and freight that settled the Midwest. Starting in the late 1700s, most settlers travelled from the East Coast overland to Pittsburgh, Wheeling, or Redstone and then down the Ohio River to points west. [2] A small number also traveled north from New Orleans and southern regions using the Mississippi and other rivers flowing from the North.

To reach the new lands of the West, Europeans adapted boat types already in use by Native Americans and on the East Coast. Explorers used birch bark canoes and settlers used larger dugouts to open the west to settlement. As more people moved west, boats with greater capacity were needed, which called for new boat types. A form of enlarged dugout, called a pirogue, was developed first. Pirogues were more capacious than dugouts and were themselves adapted into more useful forms. The first adaptation changed the method of construction, by taking the well-formed hull shape of the pirogue and replacing the hewn multiple-log construction of pirogues with European plank-on-frame construction. [3]

Plank-on-frame construction was also used for another boat type called a bateau. Bateaus had been adapted for frontier use on the eastern seaboard in the early 1700s and were built for use on the Western Rivers later. When more traditional European construction practice was followed with these vessels, they resembled ship's boats but with more substantial timbers. When the best features of pirogues and bateaus were combined, they were given a hull shape that provided little resistance to the water, an external keel to help in steering, and sufficient cargo capacity to pay their way. This new vessel type was called a keelboat. [4]

Cheaper transportation was afforded by the use of barges and flatboats. Flatboats were box-shaped variants of the scow hull form used for ferries on shallow Eastern rivers. Flatboats were the cheapest form of transportation on the rivers. Intended to travel only one way and then be broken up for lumber, flatboats could be built, loaded with household goods, and sailed by the settlers themselves. [5]

Barges occupied the middle range of watercraft between keelboats and flatboats. Though similar in construction to keelboats, early barges were built wider, more robustly, and drew more water. Barges, with their deeper draft, transported heavy freight on the deeper rivers. [6]

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The Development of Barges for Alternative Uses

Barges developed in design and began to be built in standard sizes after the advent of steamboats allowed them to be towed easily. Barges of the period from 1830 to 1850 were of two general types. The more common type had a square-ended scow hull, built of planks and often used as workboats or on one-way trips down river carrying coal. This type was generally developed from the flatboat.

The other type of barge was used for voyages both up- and downstream. These were usually greatly enlarged versions of the barges of the 1820s, called "model" barges for their finely modeled pointed ends. Model barges were designed to act as companions to steamboats, providing extra capacity for as little cost as possible. [7]

Model barges and scow barges were often used as floating warehouses on riverbanks where there was great fluctuation in the water level. These floating warehouses and passenger terminals were called wharfboats. Barges modified or built to be lived on were called houseboats. Others were used to sell dry goods and groceries and called storeboats. Still others barges were built or modified to support heavy equipment, such as dredges and piledrivers.

Wharfboats allowed waterfront businesses to communicate with steamboats of all types on the rivers. Wharfboats were used by packet companies to hold cargo and passengers awaiting company boats; as ferry landings; as excursion passenger gathering places; and for many other purposes that required a mobile building on the waterfront that could move to meet seasonal water-level fluctuations.

Houseboats were constructed of all sorts of materials and ranged from fine vacation homes on the water to ramshackle hovels moving to provide shelter for itinerant workers. The Army Corps of Engineers used medium-sized barges with dormitories aboard, called quarterboats, to provide shelter for the huge crews who worked on Corps waterway improvement projects. [8]

The Development of Showboats

Perhaps the most unique American barge adaptation was the showboat, which evolved to be a theater on a large scow-form barge pushed about by a separate towboat. Between 1831 and the 1920s, more than 50 showboats carried circuses and dramatic productions to large and small towns on the rivers. Smaller medicine show and moving-picture boats

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

might add a further 50 vessels to that total. None of the smaller entertainment boat types survive. [9]

National expansion to the westward brought a demand for many of the goods and comforts of the East coast. These were provided by flatboats and keelboats. Entertainment in the new settlements along the Western Rivers was in demand as well. It, too, was brought by boats on the rivers. At first these were tiny shows designed to gather a crowd so that they might be encouraged to buy whiskey or medicine. Later more substantial productions were brought West by traveling troupes of performers. Groups of circus performers, actors and musicians traveled together by river and performed on land, under tents and in buildings. Different styles of entertainment often operated together on the rivers. Circuses put on musicals; dramatic productions included performing animals; menageries included dramatic productions; and musical performances included acrobats and dancers.

In 1815 a troupe of 11 actors, led by Noah Ludlow, traveled in a type of large keelboat called a broadhorn and performed in whatever halls could be found ashore. After a period of overland travel a larger keelboat was acquired in Nashville and renamed Noah's Ark. Apparently this boat served not only as transportation but theater as well. Noah's Ark became the first showboat. In Natchez the troupe forsook the pioneer showboat for more rapid and comfortable travel aboard the pioneer steamship on the Mississippi, New Orleans. [10]

The rivers had provided transportation for performers, and soon they served to move the theaters as well. Mobile theaters were needed to perform in the scattered settlements of the West. Showboats answered the need. Several more improvised showboats appear to have been employed on the rivers in the years following the success of Noah's Ark. In 1831, the first showboat designed as such was built at Pittsburgh. Called the Floating Theatre, the new boat held a theater on a scow-form hull, with small open decks at each end supporting a capstan. The actors lived and performed aboard as the boat travelled from landing to landing down the rivers. Like other flatboats, the Floating Theatre was sold for the wood when the boat reached New Orleans and the actors returned up the river by steamboat. The next season the process was repeated. This limited the showboat to travel downstream and short distances up tributaries. [11]

A widely expanded range of venues became available when, in 1836, the cargo deck of a steamboat was converted to serve as a theater. William Chapman also built this pioneering steam showboat and followed the practical naming pattern of his earlier showboats when he named her the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Steamboat Theatre. Steam power allowed the showboat to travel far up many tributary rivers and allowed for faster travel between shows. Chapman's Steamboat Theatre served as the model for several more steamboat conversions. [12]

Steamboats with theaters aboard were reasonably successful but suffered from some deficiencies. The principal drawback to showboats built aboard steamboats was that seating and profits on such boats were limited because of the space required for boilers, engines, and fuel. Another solution was needed to provide the mobility of a steamboat with the seating capacity of the early flatboat showboats.

The answer to the need for mobility and large capacity was found when a separate steam towboat was used to tow or push the showboat barge. Early showboats apparently hired towboats only for the voyage back upriver at the close of the season. They then descended the river by drifting again the next year. Later showboat owners bought towboats of their own to move the unpowered showboats. The showboat and towboat combination became the general model for all later showboats.

The earliest showboat to always use a towboat was also the largest showboat ever to ply the rivers. The circus boat Floating Palace was built for Spalding and Rogers in 1852 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Floating Palace supported a single standard 42-foot circus ring in the center of the main deck with seating for 400 patrons to each raked side with an additional 1000 seats in the balcony. It was towed by one or two sidewheel steamboats which also held smaller theaters used put on other styles of entertainment. One towing sidewheeler, Banjo, put on Minstrel shows and the other North River held a museum and menagerie. [13]

Later showboats were all built as theaters on barges with separate steam towboats. When towboats developed square bows for pushing barges all showboats used square ends to better join up to the towboat. Pilothouses were used aboard showboats to allow pilots to see and signal orders to the towboat behind.

Showboats, like other river craft, were built to match the conditions of width and depth on specific river systems. A few were built for use on canals. These were very narrow to pass through locks and seated about 200 patrons. Others had to be broad and lightly built to travel on very shallow rivers. The shallow river showboats ranged in size from the first tiny New Sensation which only seated 89, up to some seating 450, such as Majestic. Most of the shallow draft boats

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

operated on several tributary rivers as well as the mighty Mississippi and Ohio rivers. [14]

Showboat Entertainment

Showboats became a distinctive American entertainment institution by the time of the Civil War. The shows they presented varied in type of performance according to style and varied in material to match the region where they were playing. Several showboats were among the first theaters to present minstrel shows in the 1840s. Minstrel shows popularized the distinctive contemporary American black music styles and first allowed widespread fame for black entertainers. These minstrel showboats operated primarily in the North until well after the Civil War. [15]

Water circuses became very popular in the era between 1840 and 1860 and a number flourished on the Western Rivers. These included the Ludlow and Smith Circus, Dan Rice's Circus, John Robinson's Circus, and Spalding and Rogers Circus. Showboat entertainers had wide followings and several became famous enough to demand extraordinary salaries. Dan Rice, an incredibly popular equestrian, gymnast, animal trainer, and clown, was paid \$ 1,000 a week in the 1860s. He became a good friend of Maj. Gen. Zachary Taylor, assisted in the general's 1848 presidential campaign, and was made a special aide with the title of colonel when Taylor became President. [16]

Showboats quickly adapted the calliope, or steam piano, to their operations after its invention in 1855. A series of steam whistles were arranged to be played by a keyboard. The music produced is a lusty, rousing sort that can be heard for miles. [17]

Showboat patrons were not partial to sophisticated entertainment. They preferred melodrama and popular music rather than Shakespeare and Beethoven. Showboats presented a repertoire of plays such as "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," "Honest Hearts," and "Triss of the Rockies."

Showboats thrived in the period between the Civil War and the Great Depression. Many boats were built, taking theater entertainment to every part of the Western Rivers and some others as well. They became famous, some earning fortunes for their owners. The spread of motion picture houses, coupled with the Great Depression, and increasing regulations and taxes, spelled doom for showboats. Only two showboats, Goldenrod and Majestic, lasted beyond 1942. [18]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7**Tom Reynolds and Family**

Many showboats were owned and run by families that ran the boat and performed in the show. The largest family on any showboat was that of Thomas Jefferson Reynolds. Tom Reynolds began his career on the river selling glass- and tinware from the storeboat Illinois with his brother-in-law Tom Nichol. They added a motion picture projector and benches in 1913 and entered the entertainment industry. They continued until the store and motion picture boat burnt in 1916, killing three-year-old Norman, Tom Reynolds' son. [19]

The following year Reynolds built America, a theatrical showboat with 300 seats. Reynolds operated on the Ohio River and tributaries with his family as the cast. The family "cast" on his boat numbered up to 7 children at any one time, all performing in shows. America was a success and allowed the family to move to a larger boat. In 1923, Tom Reynolds sold the boat to his father, Marion, and brother, William Reynolds, and built a new boat for his growing family.

Construction and Career of Majestic

Tom Reynolds built the new showboat and a towboat companion at Pittsburgh in 1923. The showboat was named Majestic and the small diesel sternwheel towboat was named Attaboy. Attaboy was powered by a kerosene engine and like Majestic required only a small crew to operate. The two boats always operated together. The showboat was of medium size and designed to draw only twelve inches of water to allow her to travel far up shallow streams. That year fourteen other showboats were operating on American rivers. [20]

Majestic and Attaboy operated along the Ohio River and tributaries including the Muskingum, Monongahela, Kanawha, Green, Big Sandy, and Tennessee rivers. The boats wintered at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, and set out each year with the spring rise in river water levels. The Reynolds family, augmented by a few actors hired for the season, crewed both boats and performed at night. A single advance man distributed posters on shore and obtained necessary licenses the morning before the show. As the showboat approached the landing, one Reynolds daughter played the calliope. The usual stay at a town allowed only a single 2 1/2-hour performance in the evening before moving to the next town and repeating the previous day's activities.

The showboat season lasted nearly as long as the regular navigation season. During the season the boat played most of the tributary streams to the Ohio River. In the winter Majestic was tied-up at

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Henderson, West Virginia, with the family living aboard. During the Second World War, Majestic remained tied-up at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, with only occasional small shows. After the war ended, the family had grown up and dispersed, and the boat was left idle. [21]

In 1948, a new lease on life was given to the old trouper. The drama departments of Kent State University and Hiram College leased Majestic for the summer and presented shows along the Kanawha and Ohio rivers. Captain Reynolds guided the boat on her way during the trip. Hiram College leased the boat alone every summer after that from 1949 to 1958. [22]

In 1959, Indiana University bought Majestic and Attaboy and hired Captain Reynolds to take the boat out. While preparing the boat for the 1959 season, Captain Reynolds drowned alongside Attaboy. His son Tom, also a captain, honored his fathers' contract and took the showboat out for the season. [23]

Indiana University renamed Attaboy in 1960. Majestic and her renamed towboat, IU, continued to tour until 1964. They performed at towns from Cincinatti to Hickman, Kentucky. In 1965 and 1966, the two boats were kept moored at Jeffersonville, Indiana. Performances were discontinued entirely in 1967. The boat needed considerable work and the school could not afford it. The City of Cincinatti inspected Majestic for safety compliance before hiring the boat for a short run of performances. A finding that changes were needed kept the planned shows from happening. [24]

Indiana University sold IU and Majestic to the City of Cincinnati in the spring of 1967. Short notice of the sale caused the boat to be bought by a private citizen and member of the city's Riverfront Advisory Committee. The Committee helped to convince the City Council to take the showboat by bringing up the old city rivalry with Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville had recently bought the steamer Avalon, renamed her Belle of Louisville, and developed an excellent tourist attraction. Cincinatti would not be outdone, and so acquired the showboat Majestic and towboat Attaboy. [25]

The showboat was in poor condition and was lucky to survive the move to Cincinnati. The city performed temporary repairs immediately, and refurbished and placed the old wood boat in a new steel barge hull in 1969. [26]

The city arranged a lease with the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. The showboat became another city park and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

recreation area. The City of Cincinnati was forced to make major repairs in 1978. The city made work on Majestic a first priority, and though tight budgets stretched out the needed work, and some lower priority items were dropped completely, the showboat received badly needed structural work and a face lift. The University continued to present shows and manage Majestic until the end of the 1988 season.
[27]

Majestic was leased to Downie Productions of Cincinnati for the 1989 season. The showboat season began June 27. The City intends to keep Majestic on the waterfront as a valuable, important historic attraction.

Notes

1

Philip Graham, Showboats: The History of an American Institution (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1951) pp. 197-202.

2

Francis S. Philbrick, The Rise of the West: 1754-1860 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965) pp. 312-315.

3

Leland D. Baldwin, The Keelboat Age on Western Waters (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980) p.41.

4

Baldwin, Op. cit., pp. 42-44 and pp. 50- 51.

5

Philbrick, Op. cit. pp. 313-314.

6

Baldwin, Op. cit., pp. 44-46.

7

Alan L. Bates, The Western Rivers Steamboat Cyclopoedum (Leonia, New Jersey: Hustle Press, 1968) pp. 104-107.

8

Floyd M. Clay, A Century on the Mississippi; A History Of The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers (Memphis, Tennessee: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1976) pp. 72, 190, 223.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

- 9
Norman J. Brouwer, International Register of Historic Ships (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985) p. 250.
- 10
Graham, Op. cit. pp. 3-7.
- 11
Graham, op cit. pp. 12-18.
- 12
Graham, op cit. pp. 18-23.
- 13
John and Alice Durant, Pictorial History of the American Circus (South Brunswick, New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1957) pp. 48-49.
- 14
Graham, Op. cit. pp. 197-202.
- 15
Durant, Op. cit. pp. 48-50.
- 16
Esse Forrester O'Brien, Circus Cinders to Sawdust (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1959) pp. 25; and Richard E. Conover, Give 'Em A John Robinson: A Documentary on the Old John Robinson Circus (Xenia, Ohio: Richard E. Conover, 1965) pp. 9-16.
- 17
O'Brien, Op. cit. p. 14.
- 18
Graham, op. cit. pp. 197-202.
- 19
Robert Connors, "The Captain and His Kids" The Columbus Sunday Dispatch Magazine (Columbus, Ohio: July 25, 1954) p. 7.
- 20
Graham, Op. cit. p. 125.
- 21
Graham, Op. cit. pp. 125-129.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

22

(University of Cincinnati Showboat Majestic) "Brief Chronological History" (typescript in files of University of Cincinnati, Conservatory of Music)

23

Robert J. Siegel, "Last of the Showboats Is Up For Sale" New York Times (New York, N.Y.: July 123, 1959): and "Showboat Captain Loses Life in River He Loved" The Post (December 17, 1959, clipping on file City of Cincinnati).

24

Bob Lynn, "reminder of River's Past Due Here Soon" Enquirer (September 16, 1967); and "Full House on Majestic Called Unsafe" Post Times Star (October 14, 1967, clippings on file City Of Cincinnati).

25

Robert J. Baldwin, "A Showboat For the Waterfront" (clipping from "Majestic" file at The Mercantile Library of St. Louis)

26

Baldwin, " A Showboat..." Op. cit. p. 100.

27

City of Cincinnati Memorandum to Bret J. McGinnis, Superintendent of Recreation from Ms. Nell D. Surber, Director Department of Development, about Showboat Majestic, dated 10/2/78, (on file at City of Cincinnati Real Property Office.