

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge-1861

The Yacht *Camargo*

Camargo was the first clipper stem straight diesel ship ever built in the United States. Commissioned by Julius Fleischmann, she cruised all over the world with family and friends – many from Indian Hill.

Built in 1928, *Camargo*'s overall length was 225 feet. She was constructed completely of steel and powered by two 800 horsepower Bessemer Diesel motors, which were capable of driving her at a speed of 14 knots. There were stateroom accommodations for 14 people, a dining room, saloon (living room) with fireplace, smoking room and gymnasium. Besides refrigeration and heating equipment, the vessel had an electrical generating apparatus, galley telephones, radio, and a wireless. Designed by Henry J. Gieglow of New York, she was launched in June 1928 from the Lawley yards at Neponset, MA. Described by the *New York Times* as a "floating hotel", she had a captain (Charles Small of Boston) and a crew of 35 men.

Her initial launching was followed by a cruise along the New England coast with a group of friends, and then extensive journeys of longer duration occurred. In December 1928, she departed for summer climes, with guests who planned to remain on the yacht for the duration of the winter.

In 1930 *Camargo* went on a cruise to the Pacific carrying the Fleischmanns, Mr. & Mrs. DeWitt Balch,



H. C. Yeiser, Jr., Mary Matthews – all from Cincinnati, predominantly from Indian Hill, and a physician friend from the Mayo Clinic. The group sailed from Miami, FL through the Panama Canal en route to the Galapagos Islands. Highlights of the journey were described by DeWitt Balch in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. They stopped to fish near the Cocos Islands (part of Costa Rica). Here they landed copious quantities of sailfish, swordfish, wahoo, tuna, mackerel, grouper, shark, bonito and marlin. Then they went on to the Galapagos Islands, where they collected specimens which they brought back to the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. Animals which they donated to the zoo included iguanas, an albatross, gulls, boobies, penguins, a cormorant, and two land turtles. Most of these were collected from the wild, but the land turtles were bartered for with a pair of trousers, a carton of cigarettes, and a bottle of whiskey. These specimens

were kept in cages for the duration of the voyage, and some became so tame that they went on deck walks and ate from the hands of the guests on board.

The yachting party stopped at assorted anchorages and continued game fishing and absorbing local color. On Charles Island, which was reportedly abandoned, they found two occupants, a middle aged German doctor and his new young wife, both dressed in spotless white overalls. Later they learned that the immaculate condition of their attire was due to the fact that it was rarely worn, as the couple's customary garb was that of Adam and Eve. Conversing in German with Dr. and Mrs. Ritter, the American learned that the couple were devout vegetarians who expected to live to be 120. The voyageurs also met the Governor of the Galapagos, and Mr. Yeiser engaged him in a shooting match from the boat's deck.

Then in 1931 *Camargo* embarked on a cruise around the world, departing from New York in October. Mr. and Mrs. Fleischmann were accompanied by their two young children and eight guests. During the trip, *Camargo* aided in the rescue of three castaways, endured a monsoon and a hurricane, and was utilized to entertain European royalty. She logged 36,000 miles and touched at 123 ports. Mr. Fleischmann reviewed the voyage in his book, Footsteps in the Sea, which contains more than 100 photographs and documents the diverse cultures they encountered on the *Camargo*, an extraordinary vessel.

Plan to attend the Indian Hill Historical Society's program "A Voyage Aboard *Camargo*" on 9/21.