

SPECIAL COMPLETE STORY: Mike is swindled by a man called Doc Simpson—but he gets his own back by "doctoring" the rogue's sheep.

KING OF THE KEELBOATS



GOOD MORNING, CAP'IN FINK. YOU'RE ALL SET TO SHOVE OFF, I SEE. BUT PERHAPS YOU'VE GOT TIME TO LISTEN TO MY PROPOSITION FIRST.

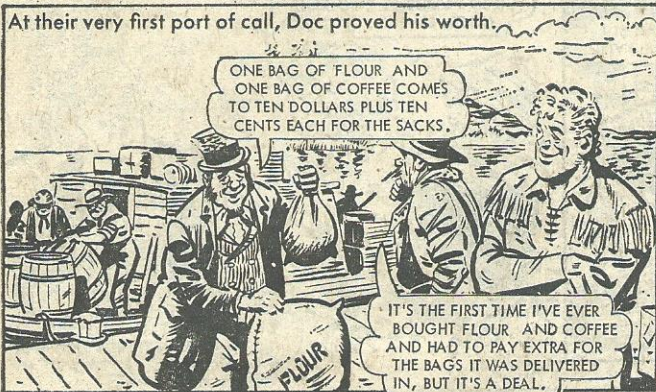
IF YOU'VE GOT A CHAMPION SHOOTER OR FIGHTER, JUST BRING HIM ALONG. THERE AIN'T NO BUSINESS PRESSING ENOUGH TO STOP ME LICKING THE HIDE OFF A CHALLENGER.

Mike Fink, a seventeen-year-old, was brought up on the Mississippi and became captain of a keelboat. At Pittsburg Mike bought a flatboat and its cargo of mixed merchandise when its owner died. He sent his keelboat downriver with half of the crew under the leading hand, who had instructions to recruit enough men to make up a full crew. Mike and the other half of the crew were aboard the much slower flatboat and they intended to meet the keelboat at Cairo, a port in the south, after it had done several trading runs from there. They were just pushing off when Doc Simpson came aboard.



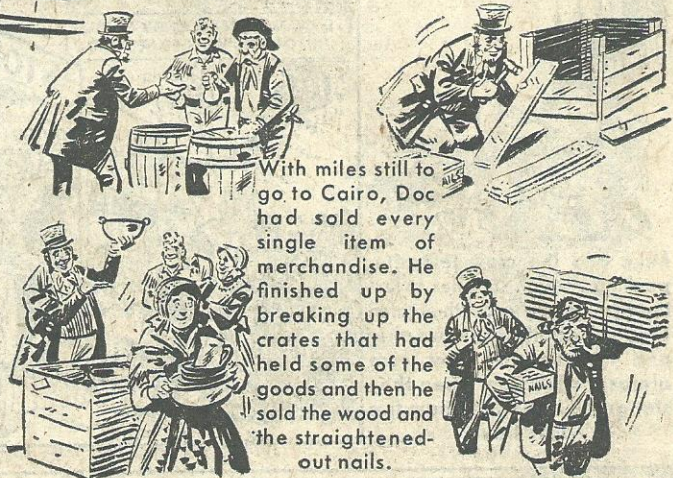
NO, NO! YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG. I'M HEADED FOR CAIRO AND I RECKON TO WORK MY PASSAGE BY HELPING YOU WITH THE TRADING. I'M WELL KNOWN AS A TOUGH BARGAINER.

WELL, NOW, YOU'RE JUST THE MAN I'M LOOKING FOR. I AIN'T MUCH GOOD AT FIGURES OR TRADING. WELCOME ABOARD.



ONE BAG OF FLOUR AND ONE BAG OF COFFEE COMES TO TEN DOLLARS PLUS TEN CENTS EACH FOR THE SACKS.

IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BOUGHT FLOUR AND COFFEE AND HAD TO PAY EXTRA FOR THE BAGS IT WAS DELIVERED IN, BUT IT'S A DEAL.



With miles still to go to Cairo, Doc had sold every single item of merchandise. He finished up by breaking up the crates that had held some of the goods and then he sold the wood and the straightened-out nails.



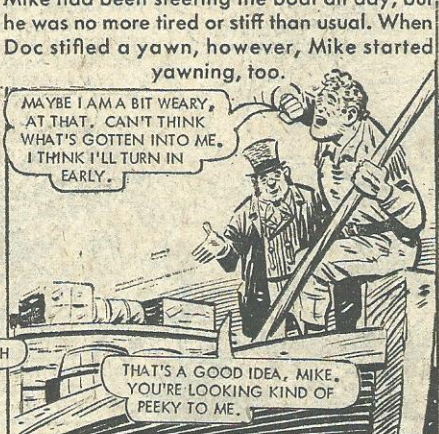
DOGGONE IT, DOC, I'M RICH! AND I'VE STILL GOT THE BOAT TO SELL. HEY, DOC, YOU AIN'T LISTENING TO A WORD I SAY.

EH? OH SURE, MIKE, SURE. ER-ARE YOU FEELING ALL RIGHT?



SURE I'M ALL RIGHT, DOC. WHY DO YOU ASK?

OH NOTHING, WELL NOTHING MUCH ANYWAY. YOU AIN'T MAYBE FEELING A MITE TIRED BY ANY CHANCE, AND MAYBE A BIT STIFF IN THE JOINTS?



Mike had been steering the boat all day, but he was no more tired or stiff than usual. When Doc stifled a yawn, however, Mike started yawning, too.

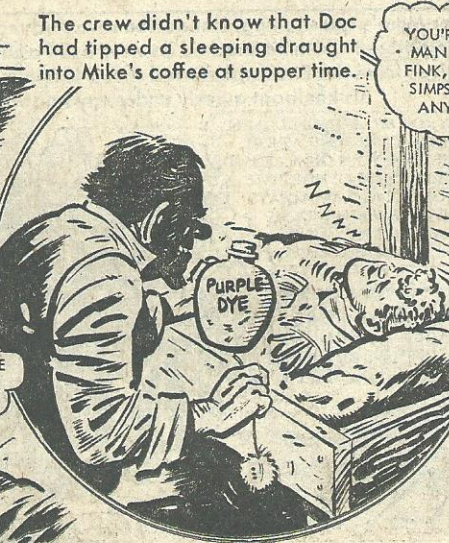
MAYBE I AM A BIT WEARY, AT THAT. CAN'T THINK WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO ME. I THINK I'LL TURN IN EARLY.

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, MIKE. YOU'RE LOOKING KIND OF PEEKY TO ME.



I DON'T KNOW HOW DOC CAN STAND IT! I'M SLEEPING ASHORE TONIGHT.

THERE AIN'T NOBODY ON THE RIVER SNORES LOUDER THAN MIKE—BUT HE SOUNDS MORE LIKE A BUZZ-SAW THAN USUAL TONIGHT.



The crew didn't know that Doc had tipped a sleeping draught into Mike's coffee at supper time.



YOU'RE GONNA LOOK THE SICKEST MAN THERE EVER WAS, MIKE FINK, AND GOOD OLD DOC SIMPSON WON'T TELL YOU ANY DIFFERENT.