Mälzel in America

**The appearances of the Turk were profitable for Mälzel, and he continued by taking it and his other machines to the United States. In 1826, he opened an exhibition in New York City that slowly grew in popularity, giving rise to many newspaper stories and anonymous threats of exposure of the secret. Mälzel's problem was finding a proper operator for the machine, having trained an unknown woman in France before coming to the United States. He ended up recalling a former operator, William Schlumberger, from Alsace in Europe to come to America and work for him again once Mälzel was able to provide the money for Schlumberger's transport.**

Upon Schlumberger's arrival, the Turk debuted in Boston, Mälzel spinning a story that the New York chess players could not handle full games and that the Boston players were much better opponents. This was a success for many weeks, and the tour moved to Philadelphia for three months. Following Philadelphia, the Turk moved to Baltimore, where it played for a number of months, including losing a match against Charles Carroll, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The exhibition in Baltimore brought news that two brothers had constructed their own machine, the Walker Chess-player. Mälzel viewed the competing machine and attempted to buy it, but the offer was declined and the duplicate machine toured for a number of years, never receiving the fame that Mälzel's machine did and eventually falling into obscurity.

Mälzel continued with exhibitions around the United States until 1828, when he took some time off and visited Europe, returning in 1829. Throughout the 1830s, he continued to tour the United States, exhibiting the machine as far west as the Mississippi River and visiting Canada. In Richmond, Virginia, the Turk was observed by Edgar Allan Poe, who was writing for the Southern Literary Messenger. Poe's essay *Maelzel's Chess Player* was published in April 1836 and is the most famous essay on the Turk, even though many of Poe's hypotheses were incorrect (such as that a chess-playing machine must always win).

Mälzel eventually took the Turk on his second tour to Havana, Cuba. In Cuba, Schlumberger died of yellow fever, leaving Mälzel without an operator for his machine. Dejected, Mälzel died at sea in 1838 at the age of 66 during his return trip, leaving his machinery with the ship captain.

**Source:** [**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Turk**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Turk)