



No longer standing (1975)

History of Old Buildings
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

11

Address: Lincoln Theatre
141 North Main
Legal description:
A. Wait's Resvy of lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16
Original Town of Decatur Lot 11

Date of original construction: Opening day of the theatre,
October 28, 1916
(Begun - 1915)

Name of original owner: C. A. Wait

History:

1. Data from the Macon County (Decatur Township) Assessor's office:
Sketch (See next page).

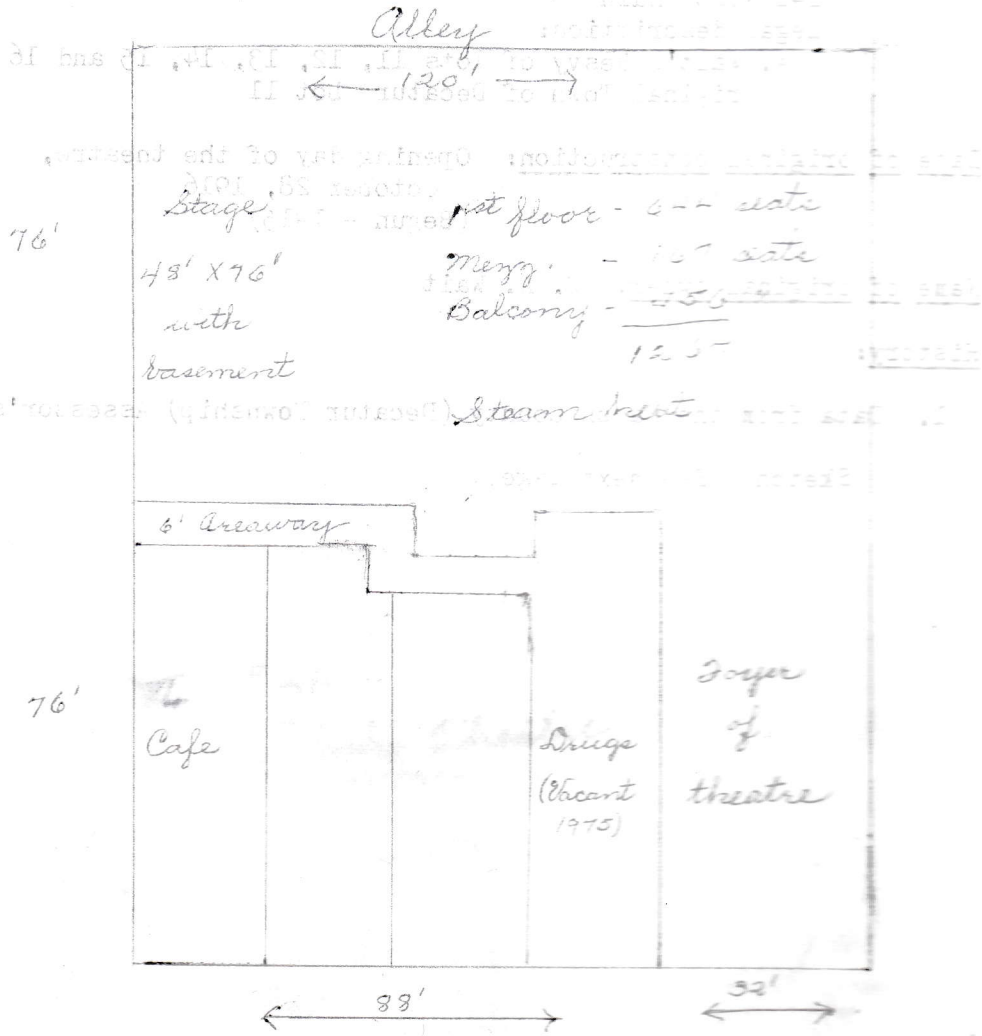


Present owners: The Arthur Wait and Fao Wait Families,
117-41 N. Main

(a) See A. T. Tolson's Decatur Review columns, Story of Decatur, History of theater in Decatur, (The Lincoln Theatre)
April 24, 1914 - Chapter 144
April 13, 1914 - Chapter 137
April 12, 1914 - Chapter 136

History Cont'd.

1. Sketch:



4 stories built in 1961
 Central air conditioning

Not drawn to scale

2. History of theater in Decatur (pre-Lincoln Theatre).

- (a) See E. T. Coleman's Decatur Review columns, Story of Decatur.
 April 12, 1924 - Chapter 132.
 April 13, 1924 - Chapter 133.
 April 24, 1924 - Chapter 144.

History Cont'd.:

2. History of theatre in Decatur (pre-Lincoln Theatre) Continued:

(b) See microfilm print-out from Decatur Review:

October 30, 1935 - Decatur's First Motion Picture

Theatre (Nickelodeon), northeast corner, Water and William.

(c) See microfilm print-out of Decatur Diary column:

Dec. 12, 1925 - Rex Spires City Became Top Show Town.

Feb. 22, 1970 - Otto B. Kyle's brief history of Decatur theatres.

3. Story of the Lincoln Theatre:

(a) Feb. 24, 1865 - Decatur Diary column by Rex Spires, Hotel

Fire Spectacular Event.

- story of the April 30, 1915 burning of the Decatur and Arcade hotels and Arcade store on the site where the Lincoln Theatre would be built.

(b) Oct. 28, 1916 - See microfilm print-outs of the opening of the Lincoln Theatre.

(c) Oct. 24, 1936 - Obituary, Clarence A. Wait, builder-owner of the Lincoln Theatre.

4. See microfilm print-outs of a few of Lincoln Theatre's attractions:

(a) June 12, 1966 - Decatur Diary column by Richard S. Klinger,

Stagehands Now Projectionists which includes a listing of a few stage attractions.

(b) March 7, 1971 - Decatur Diary column by Cheryl D. Peck, De-

caturs's Helen Ferguson rose to Hollywood Eminece which is the story of her acting career (not in Decatur), and later, her public relations work representing such famous Hollywood stars as Jeanette MacDonald, Gene Raymond, Barbara Stanwyck, Fay Wray, etc.

(c) Jan. 8, 1928 - Decatur Herald news story of the Lincoln's only

performance by the Metropolitan Opera Company - a financial loss.

(d) Vaudeville headliners that supplemented movie attractions:

- October 27, 1928 - 11 - Beautiful Diving Girls - 10 including the Jansen girl (portable tank on stage).

- April 14, 1929 - through April, 1929 and some of May: Bob Hope on stage as master of ceremonies of an "Hour of Hilarity" with a stage band and five acts of vaudeville, the acts changing twice a week, cost, matinee, 25c and 50c and night, 35c and 50c.

(e) Stage shows with well-known actors, stopping in Decatur usually for a one-night stand enroute between engagements in Chicago and St. Louis.

- April 25, 1925 - Pauline Frederick in "Scarlet Woman".

- Oct. 31, 1950 - Tallulah Bankhead in "The Little Foxes" (L. R. (Layah Riggs) reviewed it as being "vicious, horrible, magnificent".

- Jan. 24, 1950 - Monty Woolley in "The Man Who Came to Dinner" played to a full house, price \$1.50 to \$3.60.

- Feb. 9, 1950 - Ralph Meeker and Joria Cutright in "Streetcar Named Desire".

History Cont'd.:

5. Lincoln Theatre's use for local benefits:

- April 29-30, 1964 - Junior Welfare benefit of Bill Madden's show, S.W.O.B. (Someone's Widening our Baord-way).
- November 23, 1972 - a benefit for Decatur's new community college's scholarship program, Vaudeville '72, including Marko the Magician, Bearsdale Municipal Band, etc. etc.

6. Lincoln Theatre's use for high school commencements:

From June 16, 1917 through 1940, when Kintner Gym was completed, Decatur High School commencement exercises were held at the Lincoln Theatre.

7. Lincoln's managements:

- 1916- Harry E. Snookley, first manager.
- Jan., 1929- Jan., 1940 - Paul Winte, city manager for Great States Theatres- Bijou, Express, Lincoln.
- 1960- Thomas Flinn, Jr. - house manager of Lincoln for Great States.
- John Wendell, manager of Lincoln.
- May 13, 1974- Flinn Theatres purchased Lincoln Theatre (Henry G. Flinn purchased the entire ABC Great States chain for twenty-five million dollars).
- Dec. 11, 1974- Lakesides Theatres of Springfield purchased Decatur's Lincoln, Avon, Rogers, Drive-In, Outdoor Theatres.

8. See copy of Frank Wait's reminiscences of the Lincoln Theatre. Living in New York City as a free lance writer, Mr. Wait is a nephew of Clarence Wait, the original owner of the Lincoln. Frank Wait is one of the Wait family members now owning the theatre. His reminiscences draw upon a collection of old theatre programs.

The Story Of Decatur

By E. T. Coleman

CHAPTER 132.

PUBLIC HALLS AND THEATERS

A History of Decatur Auditoriums and Amusement Houses.

Previous to 1856 Decatur had no theater, no public hall, no auditorium in which large meetings could be held. Meetings were held in the churches if they were of a religious or semi-religious nature. Other meetings were held in the circuit court room in the old brick court house in Lincoln square. Large gatherings of people were usually out of doors. Indeed, up to that time there had been but little use for a theater or a large public hall. Theatrical companies could not get to Decatur unless they walked or came by wagon. Decatur was a pretty poor town built by some very fine people.

In 1856 the town had two railroads which had stimulated it into active growth. People were beginning to say it was a shame that Decatur had no public hall and that some body really ought to build one.

Powers Hall was Decatur's first theater. It was built by William Powers in 1856. It was located on the south side of East Main street between Lincoln square and Water street. It occupied the third floor over what is now the Farmers State Bank & Trust Co. The building is said to have been the first really substantial building erected in Decatur. It was a characteristic of William Powers to build well whatever he built.

UP TWO LONG FLIGHTS.

Powers Hall was just what its name implies, a public hall. It had a level floor and a stage, our first stage. But in that hall Decatur people heard the very best theatrical talent of the time. One of the noted actors that played there was Edwin

Forrest. There were numerous others of the big theatrical people who came here regularly year after year.

Decatur was a good theatrical town. It was said by actors to have been the best in the state. Moreover it was on the direct route from Chicago to St. Louis, which made it easy to stop here.

A GOOD THEATRICAL TOWN.

There were local entertainments given there of high order. The Decatur Musical Union gave their oratorios, cantatas and concerts there. Captain Ira Harris of Decatur Halling Mill fame and prominent socially gave there with an able company of local amateurs "The Cricket on the Hearth."

Abraham Lincoln spoke there several times. According to the story of John McGinnis Lincoln once spoke and defended in that room a man charged

with murder, the trial having been adjourned from the brick court house because of lack of room. Oglesby and Sheridan Wait prosecuted the case. A seceding faction of the Presbyterian church held services there for some time.

MACON HALL.

It cannot be stated just when the hall ceased to be used for a place for public entertainments. The new Macon Hall came as a rival and in some respects it was superior. Powers Hall was taken over and used for years as a lodge room by Decatur Odd Fellows.

Macon Hall was the second public hall in Decatur built and used for theatrical and other public purposes. It was located on Merchant street and occupied the third floor over two buildings erected by Franklin Priest and Ben Dodson. The room was forty-two feet wide and occupied the entire length of the block. The stage was at the east end of the hall and the floor sloped gradually down to the stage. There was a well designed stage and it is said that the hall was preferred by theatrical companies because of the better stage.

GREAT ACTRESS CASE.

It can not be stated exactly when this hall was built but it is believed to have been very early in the 50's. We have an account of its builder by Messrs. Priest and Dodson who died. All during the Civil War and war with Spain and during the latter part of the hall. About that time Mike Bingham and other theatrical people used to come here and stage work at a time and very much played in a regular hall. With him as member of the company were the manager, Frank Williams and his wife, Gertrude Williams. (To Be Continued)

Absolute conviction breathed in her hoarse whisper. "Madame Copeland, M'sieu Sloat and I, we have queek adopt another young girl with golden hair from the wreck and bring her to this house. She is unconscious, she knows nothing and Madame have reason to believe she is shogirl, but today it is discover that she is the chief, Diamond Bess, Doctor Qualters--"

"Symington Qualters, the alienist?" interrupted the captain, and the woman's eyes turned to his.

"But yes, M'sieu. He is to take her tonight to his sanitarium in the country and kill her, but an hour ago word came from M'sieu Horace Bellows, who has what you call 'spool-

peegon' at your Police Headquarters, that all is known and we must escape. M'sieu Sloat and I, we have had our conference and so Doctor Qualters took us with some small instrument from his case, but I do not think he is so good a surgeon as you seem. So I live to talk still a while, eh?" She gasped, struggling for breath, and Thomas drew out his handkerchief and wiped the fresh tears from her eyes.

"Spool-peegon at Headquarters!" the captain muttered, and turned to the man beside him. "Dan, find the nearest telephone in this house and call them up, downtown. The sooner they get the news the better."

There was an interval while the

police captain examined the woman, whom he had a suspicion to her and saw that she was made under such conditions from the killing crew. The girl's name being the same with a slight but striking shade of her hair.

One of the detectives who had been upstairs drew the curtain aside and Mike joined them.

"There's a dead man on there, all right, with the skull cracked like one of the household, he must be, for his picture in a big frame stands on a dresser in the front bedroom, but the skirt ain't told all the truth, for as he'd on the floor above there's an old lady who's very much alive."

(Continued in Our Next Issue)

The Story Of Decatur

By E. T. Coleman

CHAPTER 133.

DECATUR'S FIRST REAL THEATER

Smith's Opera House On Water Street, Where the Stewart Dry Goods Store Is Now.

Smith's Opera House was the first real theater in the city. It was especially designed and built for that purpose by the Hon. Edward O. Smith. There is nothing to fix definitely the date of its erection but it must have been very soon after the Civil war.

This theater was located on the west side of North Water street in the 200 block. Its entrance was about where Saltz Bros. shirt shop is now.

BEAUTIFUL THEATER.

The block included four large store rooms. The Smith opera house had a modern stage, private boxes and a balcony. Best of all the main floor of the auditorium was on the ground.

Its worst fault was a long and somewhat narrow passage leading from the entrance to the auditorium which would have been deadly in case of fire.

On the whole it was a beautiful theater when it was opened to the public and the people of Decatur were inordinately proud of it.

To this theater came John McCullough in "Spartacus," "Richelleu," "Pizarro" and "Jake Cade"; Janauschek in "Mary Stuart"; Modjeska when she was a very young girl. A Decatur woman recalls that one night she waited till 9 o'clock for the arrival of the train from Bloomington on which Modjeska and her company were to come. When they finally did get here they did not take time to set the stage but gave the first act of Twelfth Night in a kitchen scene.

There were also Thomas Keene in different Shakespearean plays; William J. and Mrs. Florence in the "Almighty Dollar"; Joseph Jefferson in the "Rivals," "The School for Scandal" and "Rip Van Winkle"; Minnie Maddern Flisk when she was still Minnie Maddern in "Fog's Ferry"; Edwin Booth, Sothorn, Sol Smith Russell, Emma Abbott who was originally a Decatur girl appeared here in opera. Various light operas were given by different capable companies but Decatur took much more kindly to drama than to opera.

PALMY DAYS.

Those were the palmy days of the theater in Decatur. Frank H. Haines was the manager of this theater during practically its entire history. He was the city bill poster and natu-

ally took over the management of the city's theater.

The theater continued in active use until the opening of the Powers Opera House in 1889, when it closed forever as a play house. The old theater was turned then to business uses and was partially destroyed by fire in 1892 with a loss of \$15,000.

The giving up of the theater by E. O. Smith, the owner, is an interesting sidelight on the character of two men. He heard that Orlando Powers had said he would like to build a new theater, but he would not start competition for Mr. Smith. That gentleman sent word to Mr. Powers to go ahead and build and Mr. Smith would gladly change his building.

POWERS GRAND.

The Powers Grand Opera House which many persons still regard as Decatur's most imposing theater is so recent that the chief reason for mentioning it here is to insert it in the record. At it will be recalled recalled the theater occupied the present site of the Grand Opera House block occupied a space of 165 by 125 feet and the theater itself was 72 by 125 feet. The normal seating capacity was 1,200.

BUILT BY ORLANDO POWERS.

The building was erected by Orlando Powers. It was commenced July 21, 1888 and was opened July 2, 1889. It was at that time, perhaps without equal as beautiful and modern a theater as could have been found in the west. It was placed under the management of Frank H. Haines, who had been De-

catatur's amusement purveyor during the regime of Smith's Opera House. It was opened by W. H. Crane and a brilliant company. It continued to be Decatur's chief, and indeed only play house. It was twice burned, the first time in 1895, when it was rebuilt substantially as before. The second time it was totally destroyed by fire in 1914.

WHO'S WHO ON AMERICAN STAGE.

A list of the great actors who have appeared on that stage during the twenty-five years of its existence would comprise a nearly complete "Who's Who of the American Stage."

Booth, Barrett, Henry Irving, Mansfield, the Drews, the Florences, Modjeska, Marlowe, Mrs. Flisk and literally scores of others. Decatur did not have to go to Broadway to see the best dramatic talent. Then there was the lighter drama, comedy and opera—Hoyt's farces, English's Follies, a long line of comic operas. The Theodore Thomas orchestra played there and Sousa' band was number of times. Padonovick, Kibelik and other great virtuosi were there.

RENDERED GREAT CURE SERVICE.

The service which the Powers theater rendered to Decatur in purely a local way is scarcely second to its use as a play house. It was the only large auditorium in the city. It was used for lectures, concerts, political meetings, high school commencement, religious services and many other purposes. It was indeed a sort of social center for Decatur.

FRANK HAINES MANAGER.

Frank H. Haines continued as manager of the first opera house here in 1889. The theater was restored and Frank H. Haines was its manager. He was succeeded by Thomas Keene. The building was totally destroyed by fire in 1914 and was never rebuilt.

ORLANDO POWERS BUILT.

The amusement field was largely unexplored before the Powers theater was erected. There was a vague idea of a theater and moving pictures were known to some extent. The theater was built. The Powers Grand Opera House, the first, the only one of its kind in the west.

DR. FLANNERY DENTIST

DR. FLANNERY
DENTIST
 125 N. Water St.
 CHURCH BUILDING
 EXTRACTS

OF YOU'LL MEDAY



EUROPE



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that a third party only to the ad-mocrate does not ment at all with up, for they have e Democrats al-ate and house at ent to show their line principles in

FINANCE.

significance at-tempted concealing Thursday of a native from New session had been session regulars ment to throw enough of the and with the place

CHAPTER 144.

A FAMOUS THEATER MANAGER.

Frank W. Haines, for Twenty-Seven Years Purveyor of Amusements to Decatur, Did Useful Work, Will Be Remembered.

At the time of his retirement as manager of the Powers Grand Opera House, Frank W. Haines was the oldest and best known theater manager in the west. He was chief amusement purveyor for the people of Decatur for twenty-seven years in which capacity he performed a public service of real value.

Perhaps we do not often think of the theater manager as a public servant but who shall say that it is not more important to the people of any given city what amusements are served to them than who is governor of their state?

Within certain limits the manager of a theater is absolute dictator of the kind and quality of entertainments that are given

on his stage. Frank Haines sought persistently to bring the best to Decatur.

This city was regarded for years by theatrical people as the best show town in the state. They liked to come here because if they had a few weeks while they were out of a large and appreciative audience.

For people in theatrical land there had at all times been a reputation with theatrical people. Mr. Haines began by making his name as the show that and because people think he was working on the all fronts. Then they gradually took knowledge it grew into a reputation and reputation with all of the leading theatrical people of the country. In many cases the reputation spread into highway and main thoroughfare. He was a man of great and played to a large extent was his capital.

Not only should a theater manager know theatrical people and how to be used know his own audience. Mr. Haines knew his people. In short he knew the theater and the people knew their trade or profession or capital.

DECAY IN THEATER

Mr. Haines began his theatrical career in the old Opera House in Decatur, Ga. It was a fine old building which was the only hall in the city equipped with stage and orchestra.

But Haines was not content with manager of the old Opera House. He was employed in the city of Decatur.

Some of the best shows of the day found the boards of the old Opera House. It was a fine old building which was the only hall in the city equipped with stage and orchestra. Mr. Haines was not content with manager of the old Opera House. He was employed in the city of Decatur.

FIRST REAL THEATER

Frank W. Haines was Decatur's first real theater. It was in 1887 with Haines Haines. It was a fine old building which was the only hall in the city equipped with stage and orchestra.

The house was opened by Kate Farnum with a week's engagement. The profits of that engagement were \$1,000. Mr. Haines soon retired as manager and was succeeded by Dan

W. Broome, who continued in charge for about a year. He was succeeded by J. Q. A. Olor. Mr. Haines resumed the management in 1873. He continued during the life of this house as a theater.

At the opening of the new Powers Grand Opera House Mr. Haines took charge as manager and continued until the first fire. He was just finishing up his affairs to retire when the accident occurred.

BRELLIANT ARRAY

Ellie Russell made her only appearance in Decatur in "Legitimate" at Smith's opera house in "Ellie Russell" when she played there were John McCallough, Lawrence Brown, Leta, Emma Abbott, and the company. Henry Ward Beecher, George T. Hays and many other well known names were in the cast.

On Aug. 2, 1888, Eliza Beach and John McCallough played Hamlet in the theater. Mr. Haines felt that this was the greatest triumph of his life. People looked from everywhere to see what would be the result of the performance. The best theater manager in the city was in the house and the audience was the largest of the city.

The performance was a great success. Mr. Haines was the manager of the house and the audience was the largest of the city.

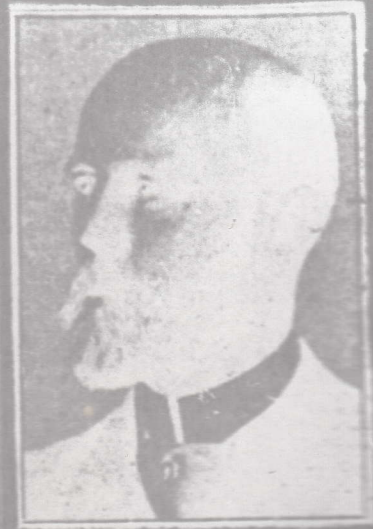
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FRANK W. HAINES, Theater Manager Leader of Grand Opera House.

range of theatrical taste to satisfy. Nothing exhibited Mr. Haines' ability as a manager better than his handling of and the quality of plays that he booked. He could not publicly advertise a show as first or mediocre but he never showed money under false pretenses. He had a tremendous will and ambition and he never gave the wrong impression.

SKILLFUL ADVERTISING

"Frank, I am thinking of taking my wife and daughter to the city tomorrow night. Will you advise me?"

"What will you do? I have something and want to know what you will do."

"The best of course is to go to the city tomorrow night. I have something and want to know what you will do."

"I have something and want to know what you will do."

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"I have something and want to know what you will do."

LAY

Just Folks

By Edgar A. Guest.

RIGHT 1924 Edgar A. Guest.

"GLAD TO MEET YOU. Glad to meet you!" Thus we say this from "strangers' lips we hear

introduced along the way— one that's very old and dear, with the name our friends repeat.

And in newborn friendly greeting, the other each will greet, glad to meet you!"

"Glad to meet you!" Day by day, strangers we shall pass us by, and the beginning who can say what the future has in store?— our paths may seem to differ, but we utter, side by side, glad to meet you!"

"Glad to meet you!" Let's not be but an empty phrase, words, formal and polite, and Victorian days, and "strangers' lips we hear, glad to meet you!"

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DECATUR'S FIRST MOTION PICTURE THEATER



Decatur's first motion picture theater, a "Nickelodeon," was in the northeast corner of Water and William streets. It was opened in 1906 and run by W. H. Ellis. It was later known as the Colonial. At the time this pic-

ture was taken "The Fall Round Up" was being shown, a picture taken on the Miller Bros. 101 ranch in Oklahoma. Later another movie theater was opened in the room next to the north.

Lake Tana, One of Great Britain's Chief Interests in Ethiopian War

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Among the chief interests of Great Britain in Ethiopia, is Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile river which, with the White Nile, furnishes the needed water for the irrigation system of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

"The Blue Nile, which joins the White Nile at Khartoum in the Sudan, is deeper and swifter than the White Nile and brings more and richer silt to the Sudan and the Delta," says a bulletin from the Washington, D. C. headquarters of the National Geographic society.

"Near Sennar, the Blue Nile has been dammed, and water from the reservoir flows out in a network of large and small canals across the Gezira. This triangular-shaped plain wedged between the White and Blue Niles is one of the most fertile areas in Africa, abundantly producing grain and long staple cotton.

"The Sennar dam impounds about 140,000 million gallons of water. Plans are under way to construct another dam at the Blue Nile's outlet from Lake Tana. While this would impound for low years a large reserve supply of water by causing the lake's level to rise, it would not diminish the amount of sediment carried into the Gezira, for the water leaves the lake clear, and

Nile flows out through marshes, and thence through narrow channels among reefs, whose proximity to each other would facilitate the building of the proposed new dam. About 21 miles below the lake's outlet, the river suddenly drops 80 feet in the beautiful Tisesat Falls. Spray rising like smoke from them in the cold morning hours probably has given the falls their name, one interpretation of which is "Smoke of the Fire."

"Near the falls, mule caravans cross the river on an old stone bridge built by early Portuguese explorers. Farther down the river they built another bridge. Below that one there is no bridge across the Blue Nile until hundreds of miles farther down, where the Sennar dam takes the railroad across. Natives sometimes cross the river on stuffed ox-skins, and in the dry season, mules wade the fords.

"After the Blue Nile plunges down the Tisesat Falls, it enters mountains, through which it has cut a deep gorge, longer than the Grand Canyon. The river winds its way among these mountains almost to the edge of the Sudan plain."

500 Letters a Day

State Schools Show Increase

West Coast Leads National Increase of 8.3 Per Cent in Enrolment

OXFORD, Ohio—Improvement in economic conditions in every section of the country is indicated by reports received from 44 state universities and land grant colleges showing an increase of 8.3 per cent in the total student enrollment this fall over 1934, according to Dr. A. H. Upham, president of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and secretary of the National Association of State Universities.

The reporting institutions, representing all but four of the states having state universities or land grant colleges, showed a total enrollment of 175,895 in October of this year, as compared with 162,428 a year ago.

The largest percentage of gain in enrollment was in institutions in the Pacific Coast states, which reported an increase of 19 per cent. The second largest gain, 8.8 per cent, was in the West North-Central states, comprising Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Social Work Conference 40th

Decatur Will Part in Eastern Meeting; Talk Tonight

By ROBERT OF THE HERALD

EAST ST. LOUIS, Illinois conference here held session tonight here West at health and in economic problems. 200 persons in attendance meeting has begun Tuesday continue until Thursday. Principal speaker tonight morning is Frances Robert children's bureau C. whose subject and Child Social Service. In. secretary of States public in Washington, special department of State reports to Mod Post M. H. Hunt ment of economy of Illinois. Tax Situation in Welfare.

Speaks

"An Analysis of WPA" was presentation of Robert of finance of at the Wednesday. Opening the college were "spe Harry L. Eastman court at Cleveland Harris, executive S. Louis Y. M. C. The sessions Wednesday after four sections: The bibliography and Freda Klepfisz to profits at the by problems.

Hornet

Past president of the organization at a dinner Wednesday at Hornet is scheduled speaker "State Address" the left. At the day night Paul Kellogg, whose address "ing America," 2nd president who will discuss the Social Conference Meet Five

Where here

at political senti- the country was Charles Shaffer, they were on a re- of the South. the couple agreed neutral in their trip but that in such a way the real senti- during the journey. station men, hotel workers and oth- expected but they closer down to the they took to stop- the way. They ng a closer view- t. Many of the opping places are well fixed and are es to help out re-iduals are usual- well educated and

informing to let theories as they The Decatur tour- these homes and them, reflecting e silent sentiment more active busi-

ces in the West is de of some of the only occasionally was never better his week when a ho was in Chicago with a man in De-

er man, said that hotel for a couple New York, and Decatur man run

C. A. W.

New York

meditations. That hall lawn where a man and a wom- ing for business at . . . With a . . . part of the pic- tureman demon- . . . A parade of . . . building . . . showing a brief-

Decatur Was Small Village When 'Hello Dolly' Ancestor Appeared

By Otto R. Kyle

Of the Herald and Review

Decatur in 1835 was just a struggling, 6-year-old village with a small log courthouse providing the only public assembly room when the first ancestor of the present day stage and movie "Hello Dolly" appeared in England.

The log courthouse was 18 by 24 feet in size and probably was ready for use sometime in 1831. It had been ordered in June, 1830 but it was not finished until 1832. The courtroom, roughly furnished, was used for meetings of the court, church, school and other public gatherings. Decatur would have to wait 25 more years for the first show stage to be provided and it would be in a bare third floor room.

The "Hello Dolly" ancestor was a one-act play, "A Day Well Spent," by John Oxenford. It was presented in Theater Royal, an English opera house in London. The play was about two young store clerks, left to take care of a shop, who decided to lock the shop door and go to London for a good time.

Decatur got a larger and better room for public meetings than the log courthouse provided when it was decided in 1836 that Macon County needed a better courthouse. A contract was let Jan. 16, 1837 for a two-story brick building in the southeast corner of the public square which later was named Lincoln Square. The building was to cost \$10,625 and be finished in 18 months.

The new courthouse was completed and ready for occupancy on June 30, 1838. The courtroom on the second floor became a new assembly hall for public gatherings. The building was 40 feet square, which made the courtroom large.

There was no need for a theater or stage for professional performers, as theatrical troupes traveling overland were few and far between. There is no record of any such group stopping in Decatur. However, there were some lecturers and preachers who traveled from city to city over the country roads.

That courthouse room would be for public use for many years until the "courthouse in the square" was abandoned after the county moved the courthouse business to rooms in the Powers Building on the east side of the 100 Block South Water Street in 1878.

In the meantime, in 1842, a second "Hello Dolly" ancestor showed up in Vienna, Austria, when Johann Nestroy's comedy, "Einen Jux Will Sich Es Machen" was presented with full credit to the earlier ancestor. However, Nestroy expanded the story into a full stage play. It would be 96 years before another "Hello Dolly" ancestor appeared.

Decatur would not have to wait 96 years for a theater. In 1854 the first railroad train entered Decatur. Two years later, William Powers built a row of three-story buildings on the south side of East Main Street from Water Street west to the alley.

On the third floor of one the buildings he provided Powers Hall. In that hall was the first theatrical stage ever built for Decatur. The floor of the big room was flat, but provided a theater. The building is still there.

Traveling theater groups came to Decatur and used Powers Hall. The city soon had the reputation of being a good theater town and many of the most prominent actors of the day appeared in Decatur. In addition, the Decatur Musical Union gave oratorios and concerts in the hall. Other groups gave entertainments. A trial is reported to have been held there to accommodate the crowd.

When the Macon Hall was opened on Merchant Street, it had a sloping floor and a well-designed theater stage. It was on the third floor and was 42 feet wide, occupying two buildings that had been erected by Franklin Priest and Ben Dodson.

Theater groups went to Macon Hall and the Powers Hall was used by the Decatur Odd Fellows and various entertainments. The best traveling

theater groups used Macon Hall until Decatur's first real theater — Smith Opera House — was opened in 1878.

The Smith Opera House on the west side of the 200 Block North Water Street had a modern stage, boxes and balcony. The main floor was on the ground and the theater's only bad feature was a long narrow hallway from the street to the main floor entrance.

This theater had such stars as Joseph Jefferson, Thomas Keene, Minnie Madern Fisk, Edwin Booth and Sol Smith Russell.

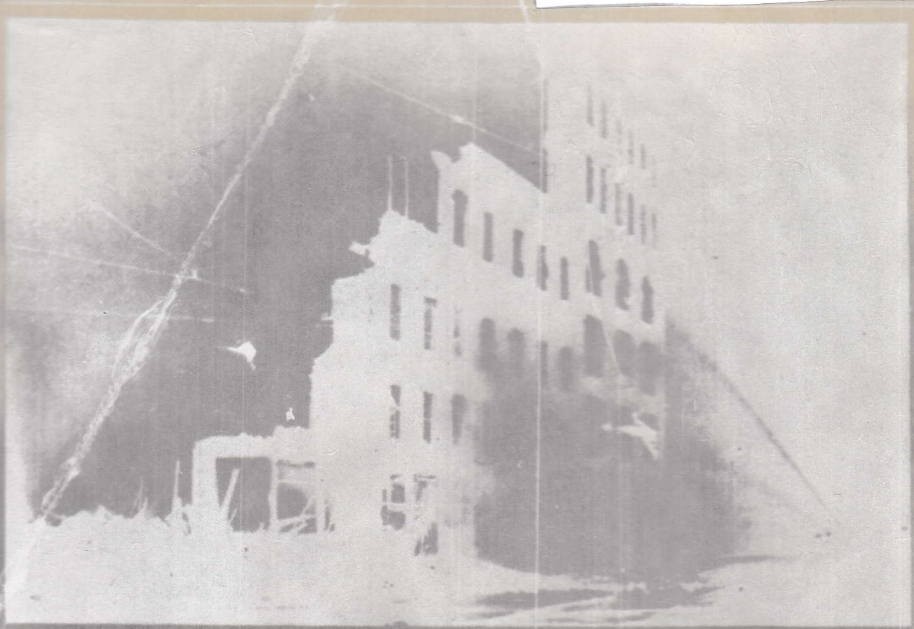
Then came the Powers Grand Opera House on South Water Street, and the Smith Opera House closed its doors in 1889. The room was turned to business uses, and when partially destroyed by fire in 1902, was never rebuilt. The Powers Opera House went into a heavy listing of theatrical attractions. It seated 1,500, having a first floor, balcony and gallery.

The Powers opened in July, 1889 and housed all the notable actors and actresses playing. The theater burned twice. After the first fire in 1895 it was rebuilt, but after the second fire in 1914 the ground space was occupied by the Hotel Orlando.

Then came the Lincoln Theater, erected by Clarence Walk in 1915-1916. It showed many stage productions and then turned to movies.

All this time the "Hello Dolly" theme was sleeping. In 1938 Thornton Wilder researched the 1835 and 1842 plays as the basis for his "The Merchant of Yonkers." In 1954 the play was slightly revised and opened in Newcastle, England, under the title of "The Matchmaker." It reached New York and Broadway the same year and started a long run.

Ten years later, a musical version based on the play that had a start in London in 1835 came to life as "Hello Dolly." Some day Decatur may get a showing of the movie version, but the movie version does not get a Chicago opening until August or September of this year.



The front wall of the Arcade building remained amid ruins of the fire.

Decatur Diary

Hotel Fire Spectacular Event

By Rex Spires
Of the Herald and Review Staff

"A still alarm, smoke in slowly increasing volume, then a sudden reaching out of hungry flames, and Decatur's \$200,000 hotel fire had crept out of control."

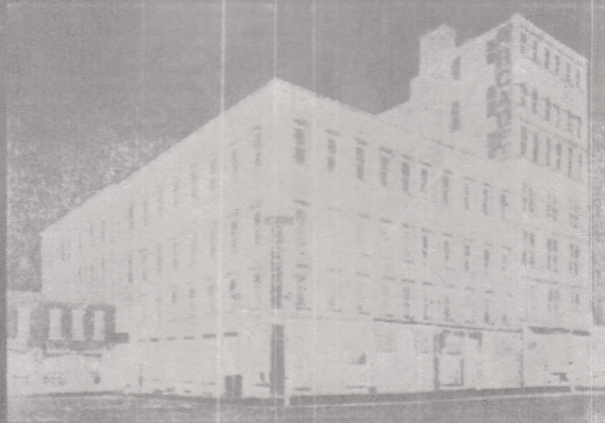
That was how the April 21, 1915 Herald described the beginning of the spectacular fire which destroyed the Decatur and Arcade Hotels in the 100 Block N. Main St., claiming two lives and damaging several surrounding buildings.

Killed in the blaze were William E. Graham, an engineer for the Decatur Bridge Co., and C. S. Guild, a traveling salesman from Lockport, N.Y. Both bodies were found in the ruins of the Decatur Hotel.

The blaze was believed to have started from oily refuse behind the boiler of the Decatur Hotel. A night watchman discovered the smoldering refuse, tried to put it out, but was driven from the basement by the dense, suffocating smoke.

All fire-fighting equipment in the city was out within minutes of the 2 a.m. alarm. Smoke was issuing from basement windows of both hotels. Firemen played streams of water into these windows, but it was nearly 30 minutes before a flame could even be seen.

Because of the thick smoke, firemen were unable to enter the basement and had no idea of the exact location of the fire. A roar from the crowd assembled in Lincoln Square announced the first visible blaze.



This is how the hotels looked prior to the fire.

It came from the rear of the Decatur Hotel and illuminated the lobby immediately. Hose was dragged into the front door and firemen made a desperate attempt to stop the rush of the flames.

In 10 minutes time, a tongue of flame was leaping from the roof of the hotel after eating its way through the walls. No haze was evident on the second and third floors of the four-story structure.

It was soon evident there was no hope of saving the hotels and Fire Chief C. W. DeVore wisely directed a good portion of his men to protecting surrounding buildings.

Bachman Store Threatened

The huge Bachman Bros. & Martin Co. furniture store, now the site of Linn & Scruggs, was threatened by a fire on the roof. A wind fanned showers of burning material across the YMCA roof toward the First Presbyterian Church.

Fires on the roof of the YMCA and in the tower of the church were quickly extinguished. Firemen maintained a vantage point on top of the YMCA and kept the flames down on the small building between the Arcade and Bachman Bros., occupied by the Odd Fellows organization.

The falling of the north wall of the seven-story Arcade building was one of the most spectacular sights of the dark morning, which was made light as day by the brilliant illumination of the blazing hotels.

It descended and struck the Bachman Bros. Store with terrific force, causing a loud explosion and a huge rush of air. The furniture store was saved from heavier loss only by its sturdy fire wall, which refused to give, and a sprinkler system.

Had it not been for a drizzling rain prior to the fire, it was conceivable the entire west part of the downtown area, including numerous residences would have burned. As it was, several residences were damaged from the chunks of burning debris showered upon them.

Unusual Escapes

There were many unusual escapes, not the least made by guests of the Arcade who were

helped through the dense smoke by Herald reporters, policemen and firemen, even after flames had erupted from the basement.

One of the last and most thrilling escapes was made by an unidentified one-armed man from the fifth floor of the Arcade. With licking flames in the background, the crowd saw the man climb to a window ledge and leap to the roof of the Decatur Hotel.

He was lost from sight and it was feared he was injured and couldn't go any farther, but he reappeared at the edge of the roof and laboriously made his way down a fire escape ladder to a fireman's ladder, practically engulfed by smoke. He finally touched the street to the cheers and clapping of the crowd.

The combined loss of the two hotels and establishments within them amounted to approximately \$150,000. Bachman Bros. was fortunate enough to escape with \$12,500 damages. At least a dozen other buildings and establishments received lesser

damage along with several residences.

Decatur had major fires before this one and has had several since, but the burning of the Decatur and Arcade Hotels still ranks as one of the most spectacular for its exciting scenes and narrow escapes.

Lincoln Square Theater and I.O.O.F. Block

A COMPLETELY new theater is to be built in the way the foundation of the new Lincoln Square building which took form of the new building that C. J. Walker is planning at the corner of Lincoln square and North Main street.

The whole structure has a floor area of 172 and 224 feet.

THE DARK WALL

So far there is no talk of any thorough work has been going on for weeks but a big dark wall was stretching from the northwest corner of Lincoln square 201 1/2 feet in front of that is the foundation and some wooden floor joists for the stage that will be in Main street. West of that wall out of sight of the public is the theater. That is the I.O.O.F. structure. That wall is twenty-two inches thick. It will not have anything in it when the theater is done. The joists are essential for the whole building will be in the Odd Fellows end of the block with another wall is one inch apart between them and the theater.

THEATER WOULD STAND

This block might have been built as a hotel, architect of the Lincoln square theater and Odd Fellows building. The theater would stand that is a fact. It cannot burn. There are no wooden walls, no floors, no railings, no fixtures, there is no wood. Many are these facts in the new building and things that are in the theater building but they are not. The theater is a structure of steel and iron.

CAPACITY

The new theater will have seats for 1,200 or more. There will be in the main balcony in the orchestra house and in the single balcony. The main balcony will be a very feature, there being a balcony all around the audience side of the house, just under the balcony. With the big seats, seats will be set in the house or back of 2,000 seats to carry the building is used for exhibitions and other such meetings. There will be no seats in the audience. The lighting will be introduced and there will be no fixtures in a chair. The air will be washed, winter and summer, heated in winter and cooled in summer so that the temperature will be of the best.

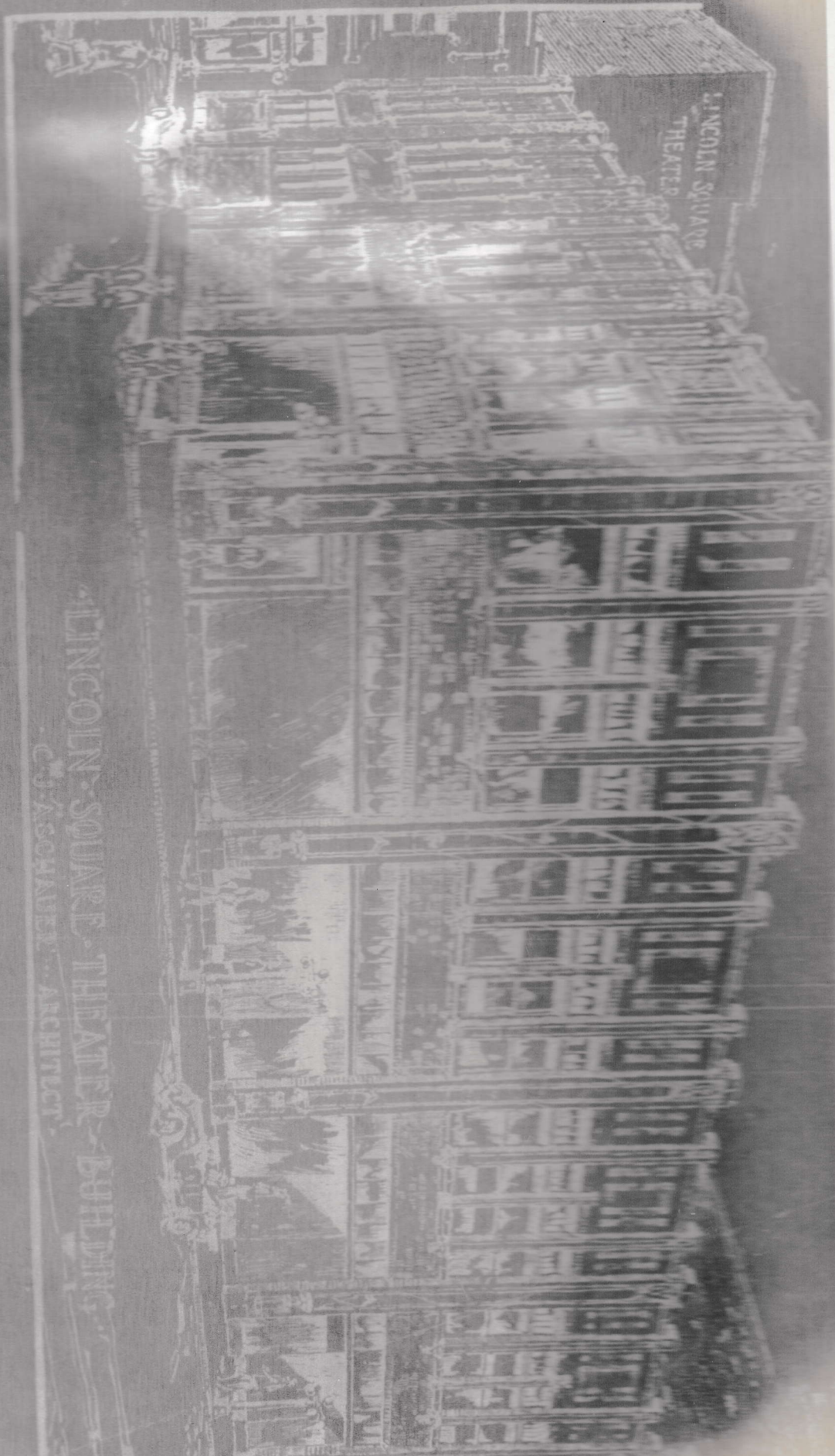
The theater will be of white terra cotta and will not burn.

NAMES

The north forty feet of the block on the ground leased from Decatur lodge No. 32, I. O. O. F. will be known as the Odd Fellows building and will be 36 stories. The theater will occupy the second floor. The rest of the block will be the home of the theater.

There will be no stores on Main street office rooms on the second floor. There will probably be seven stories on Main street. On Lincoln square there will be show windows for the store room in the corner.

The main entrance to the theater will be on Main street, about the middle of the block.



Decatur Diary

City Became Top Show Town

By Rex Spres

Of the Herald and Review

One hundred years ago, Decatur had a reputation of being the best show town in Illinois, outside of Chicago.

The late Charles P. Housum, who worked as a stage hand in the Powers Grand Opera House as a youth, told the Herald and Review 25 years ago, "You may not believe it, but in the old days Decatur got all the current New York stage successes and the best actors."

"The town expected the best and, as a general rule, got it," he said.

He added, "There was nothing hit or miss about the show season here. Frank Haines (first manager of the Powers Opera House) each year would go to New York to book the best entertainment for Decatur."

Although the Powers Grand was opened in 1899, Decatur had been introduced to theatrical productions long before that.

First Stage

In 1856, William L. Powers built a row of buildings on the south side of the 100 Block E. Main St. and on the third floor of one of these buildings, Decatur's first stage was erected.

This was Powers Hall which served as the city's first theater. Prior to that, entertainers and traveling troupes had to use whatever building or room was available or large enough.

At Powers Hall the Decatur Musical Union, an important organization here for many years, presented numerous concerts. It was also used for public gatherings and other events requiring a large room.

Macon Hall was the city's next large public hall. It occupied the third floor of two large buildings erected by Franklin Priest and Ben Dodson on Merchant Street, just off Lincoln Square.

This hall featured a sloping floor and an unusually fine stage for those days.

Smith's Opera House

The first-opera house in Decatur was built by E. O. Smith in 1870. It was located on the west side of the 200 Block N. Water St. and boasted a modern stage, private boxes and a balcony.

It was the first structure actually erected for theatrical productions and operated until 1888 when the Powers Grand



Powers Opera House show top stage paraffin.

Opera House was built.

This was the golden era of opera. It was played by the theater in Decatur when Frank Haines was booking talent from New York for Smith's Opera House and later the Powers Grand.

Such nationally famous performers as Edwin Booth, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Oscar Wilde, Thomas Keene, Helen Majeska, Lillian Russell, DeWolf Hopper, Eddie Foy, Joseph Jefferson and many others appeared here during this period.

Most of them performed in the Powers Opera House. In between top stage productions at Smith's Opera House, it had relied on burlesque, comic opera, minstrels and melodramas.

Richard J. Oglesby of Decatur, three times the governor of Illinois, made the dedicatory address when the Powers Opera House opened on July 9, 1889. It was located on the present site of the Orlando Hotel.

Although the Powers Grand

managed theaters here for the Great States Theaters Co. for 35 years.

Long before it came into being, he predicted that movies would be in color and three-dimensional.

With an apparent growing interest in cultural activities and talk of a civic-cultural center, Decatur may again attain the prominence it once had as a top show town.

operated with considerable success. It was played by fire. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1885, but when it was burned a second time in 1888, the theater was replaced by the hotel.

By this time, the entertainment scene was changing. Motion pictures had entered the field and were becoming increasingly popular and legitimate stage plays were giving way to vaudeville.

Decatur's first movie house was the Nickelodeon, started in 1896 by H. W. Ellis at the southeast corner of William St. and Water St. It was later called the Colonial.

First Talkie

The old Empress Theater had the distinction of showing the first talking picture in Decatur, "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, on April 22, 1928.

"Mr. Theater" in Decatur during the rise of the talkie was the late Paul Witte, who



Sunday Morning, December 28, 1919.

GOOD ATTRACTIONS AT LINCOLN SQUARE

**"Going Up" Will Show
Here on Jan. 5.**

"Going Up," the musical comedy founded on the book, "The Aviator" wherein the author writes all about aviation without really knowing anything about it, will be the next legitimate attraction at the Lincoln Square theater, Monday, Jan. 5. The company which has been in Chicago for nearly six months will come direct to Decatur with a company of sixty people. As the company carries five of its own musicians the local presentation will have an orchestra of twenty pieces.

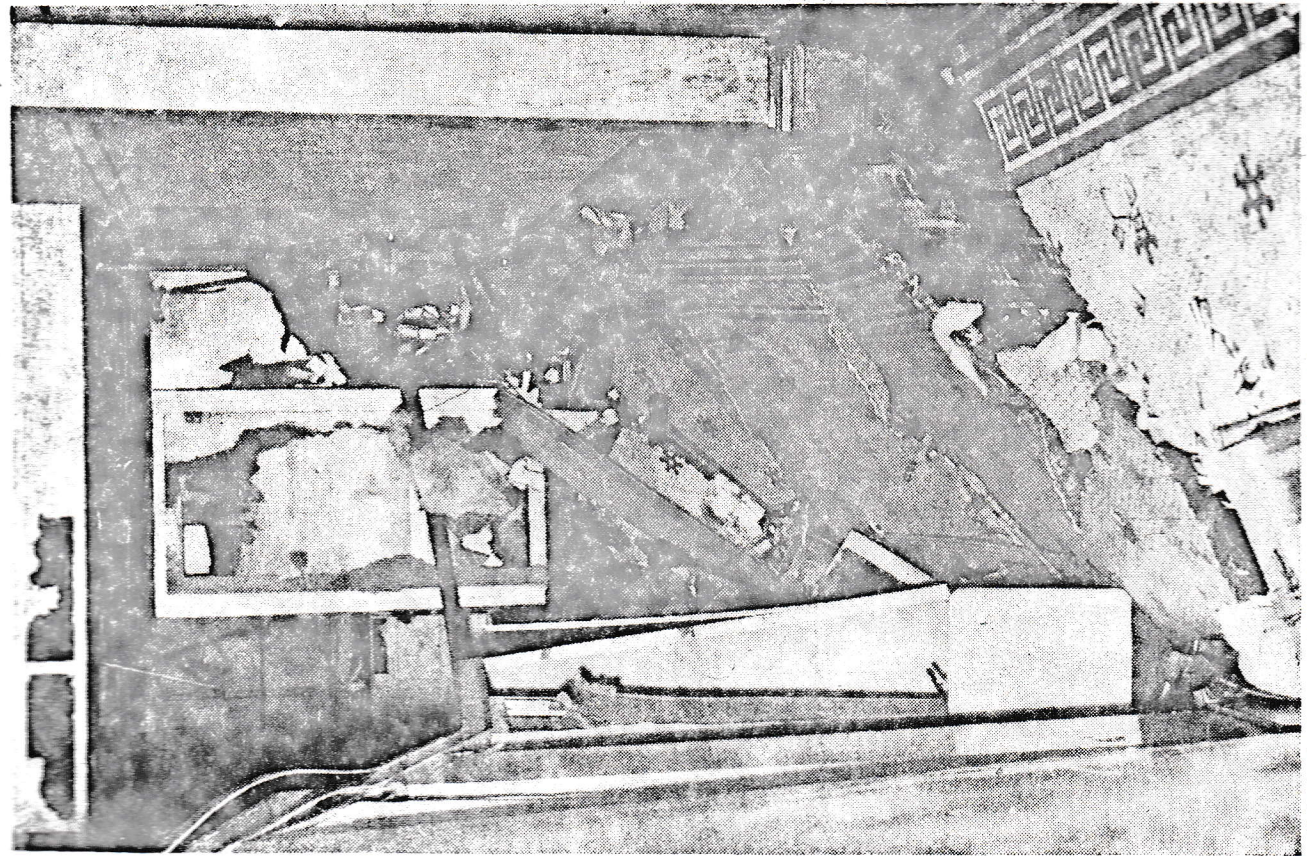
"TAKE IT FROM ME"

On Jan. 14 and 15 "Take It From Me" another very popular musical play which has been at the Studebaker theater in Chicago for twenty weeks will appear at the local play house.

A week later, Jan. 21, Eddie Leonard in the musical play named after one of its popular songs, "Roly Poly Eyes" will come to Decatur.

"The Wanderer," a large spectacle type of show carrying a hundred people and an immense amount of stage property will be in Decatur for two nights Jan. 7 and 8. This show is so large that no one night stops are scheduled. Like "Don Hur" of other days, the work of staging it is the great for one night stands.

FIRE CUTS PHARMACY, STORE FLOORS SINK AS FIREMEN FEED WATER THROUGH 12 LINES



The floor of the flower shop, at left, is shown as it looked today—cracked and fallen. Flower refrigerators and display cases are a mass of wreckage. Smoke flower shop and beauty parlor.

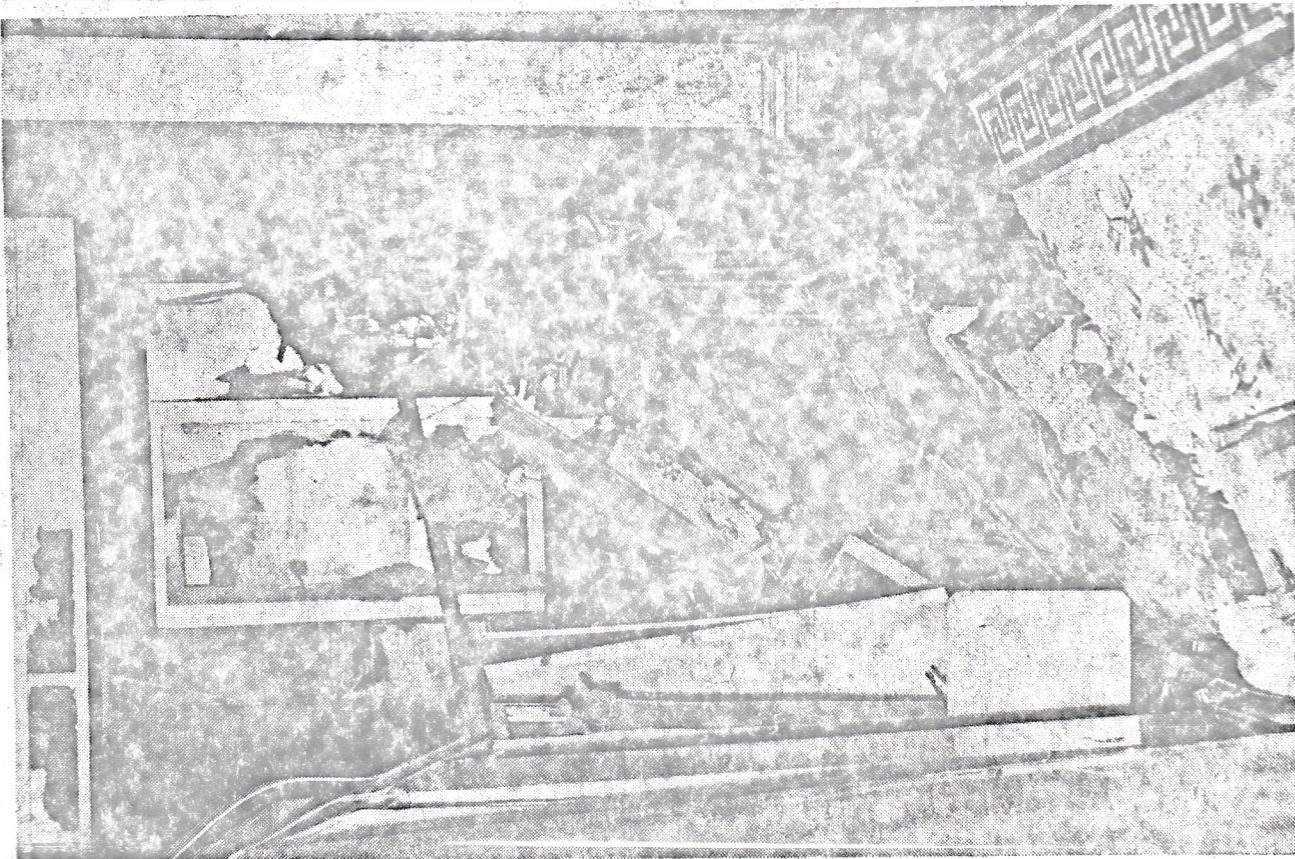
Principal damage in yesterday afternoon's four-hour fire was centered in Rambo's drug store, under which the fire started, and in the adjoining flower shop and beauty parlor.

and heat damaged walls and ceilings. The Rambo pharmacy and the Cook jewelry store, occupying the same room (shown at right), suffered most from

the fire. The entire place was gutted by fire and the floor of the store dropped nearly to the bottom of the basement. Little will be reclaimed. (Herald-Review photos)

Decatur Public Library

Fire damage is estimated at \$40,000 --- Card 2
FIRE GUTS PHARMACY, STORE FLOORS SINK AS FIREMEN FEED WATER THROUGH 12 LINES



Principal damage in yesterday afternoon's four-hour fire was centered in Rambo's drug store, under which the fire started, and in the adjoining flower shop and hardware store.

The floor of the flower shop, at left, is shown as it looked today—cracked and fallen. Flower refrigerators and display cases are a mass of wreckage. Smoke

and heat damaged walls and ceilings. The Rambo pharmacy and the Cook jewelry store, occupying the same room (shown at right), suffered most fire

damage. The entire place was gutted by fire and the floor of the store dropped nearly to the bottom of the basement. Little will be reclaimed. (Herald-Review photos)

OF "ANTIC AGE" Given at D. H. S. ...

McKinley Has 1 Vote Lead

Smith Gains in County by Canvass.

ADKINS IN EASY WIN

Macon County Official Count Complete.

The fight for United States senatorial nomination between McKinley and Smith in Macon county resulted in a victory for McKinley by only one vote, according to the official canvass.

ADKINS HAS WALKAWAY.

Charles Adkins had a walkaway in Macon county in the race for the congressional nomination by the Republicans. His total vote in the county was 2,209 as compared with 2,214 for Dyers.

MOBY VOTE HIGH.

The total vote for Judge McCoy in his race for re-nomination was 3,497 in the whole county. J. G. Allen, his opponent, polled a total of 4,331 votes.

THE COMPLETE MACON COUNTY OFFICIAL VOTE FOLLOWS.

Table with columns for Name, Position, and Vote. Includes names like Smith, McKinley, Stratton, Brown, Kibbett, Kinsey, etc.

ADKINS IN EASY WIN

Adkins ...

McKinley Has 1 Vote Lead

McKinley ...

J. M. U. NET TEAM DEFEATS LINCOLN

Take Singles and Doubles in First Contest of Season.

Millikin university's tennis team made a clean sweep of the matches with Lincoln College Thursday afternoon on the Millikin courts.

In the singles Marian Walley won from Jerald 6-2; 5-2. Roy Dodd trimmed Prince 6-4; 6-4. Charlie Fields, the Millikin captain won from Layman 6-2; 6-2. Bill Kinsey, brother of Olympic Champ Dan won from Crawford 6-2; 6-2.

Doubles also proved easy going for Millikin with Marian Walley and Bill Kinsey taking a 7-5; 6-1 victory from Layman-Jerald. Three of the members of the tennis team from Lincoln were on the baseball team which Millikin batsmen defeated this week.

Monk Watson To Close Engagement

Ends Long Run Run at Lincoln Square April 24.

After a twelve weeks record-breaking run in Decatur, "Monk Watson" and his Keystone Sarcophagi will close their engagement at the Lincoln Square theater a week from Saturday night, April 24.

The entertainers plan to accept an engagement at the new Tower theater in Chicago immediately after leaving Decatur.

Community Chest Out of Funds

Urge Immediate Payment of Pledges.

The Community Chest treasury is at low tide because pledges have not been paid.

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Portable Houses Sent To Russia

R. L. Crisp and Paul Stephens Sail May 2.

The Swisher Lumber company loaded out the last of the eight portable houses Friday for the Georgian Manganese company in Russia for immediate shipment to that country.

Robert L. Crisp, who now is in employ of the Georgian Manganese company, personally superintended the loading of the order. He also purchased from the Farley company the brass drawing table lights and other electrical fixtures for use in the houses after they are erected.

RUSH JOB.

"The Swisher company made a record in executing this order," said Mr. Crisp. "The houses were to have been shipped May 15, but we found that a boat, the 'Maresh,' is loading at New York now and will clear soon for a Russian port so the houses were hurried, and will go on that boat. Otherwise they could not have been shipped before the last of May."

MODERN CAMP.

Mr. Crisp said the building camp will be modern in every way. Although the site is in the mountains of southeast Russia, the first construction colony will have American cottages, electric lights and power and hot and cold water. Power will be supplied by a Fairbanks-Morse outfit.

The houses will be erected at Karia, on the narrow gauge railroad which is to be made into a standard gauge track by the Russian government.

Eight rooms in the largest of the Swisher portable houses, there will be two six-room cottages, a recreation ground, an office building with six rooms, a dining hall and kitchen of three rooms and a bathroom building for the whole camp.

PORTABLE HOUSES

Each of the houses there will be the typical portable houses, the Decatur products which will be used in the camp will be the same as those used in the other camps.

The camp will be completed in about two months and will be ready to receive the first contingent of men on May 1, which will be well before the United States and experts in the United States.

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SCRAPS OF

GARDEN CLUB Members of the Garden Club ...

JITNEY SUPPER Starlight Casino ...

NEW FUNERAL MORAN & SONS ...

TO SELL QUITS Mrs. A. P. ...

GRAVEL ...

WHITE WALKER ...

MODERN CAMP ...

PATENT ...

EXECUTIVE ...

LETTERS ...

LETTERS ...

LETTERS ...

LETTERS ...

LETTERS ...

LETTERS ...

Unlucky

Tibbets Loses Denver.

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Two In Jail Bars

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RIVERSIDE MOTHERS ELECT OFFICERS

Overhauling Big

Sunday Morning, February 14, 1926.

THE I

Big Orchestra at Lincoln Square

To Be Permanent Feature with Specialties.

In the new musical enterprise which is initiated by the Lincoln Square theater management Sunday, Decatur residents and visitors are to find an entirely novel and modern form of musical entertainment. Louis St. Pierre, general manager of the company advises.

It is the introduction of symphonic jazz to Decatur audiences by an orchestra of twelve musicians, directed by Monk Watson, who was in acts with Miss Elsie Janis in America, and an army entertainer with her on the battle fields in France.

OPEN TODAY.

Mr. Watson has had his ensemble of instrumentators in rehearsal the last week, making ready for the "Merchant Prince," which will be the opening bill Sunday.

Manager St. Pierre says the new symphonic jazz orchestra will be a permanent feature in Decatur if it is adequately patronized. Mr. Watson having been retained as director. Accompanying will be specialty features each week which will be built up as a connected act with the stage offerings instead of each act being separate. The entire entertainment form is new and has found great favor in the large cities, but Decatur is said to be the first small city to have this introduction.

COME FROM OMAHA.

Watson arrived in Decatur last week after a fourteen weeks engagement in Omaha. During the entire four years touring recently concluded he had his own company of entertainers and traveled the Orpheum and Keith circuits.

Mr. St. Pierre said that Decatur has shown, of late, a strong inclination to demand more big city theatrical and musical entertainment, and taking advantage of this his company is entering the larger field with symphonic jazz orchestra and a built-up specialty and vaudeville.

He thinks Decatur and visiting theater goes patrons will be pleased with the new enterprise, and promises that if these expecta-

tions are fulfilled it will not be long before theater patrons will be rewarded with theatrical offerings such as they have been going to the metropolitan cities to enjoy.



Richard Barthelmess is to make his next production for First National release, on the West Coast. He will immediately begin work on "Hansom's Folly," the noted Richard Harding Davis story.

Theodore Roberts has just completed his first appearance before the camera in two years and is preparing to make a short vaudeville tour. Roberts' return to the screen was in company with Betty Bronson, Ricardo Cortez and Arlette Marchal, the French beauty recently signed by Paramount. He plays the role of Betty's father in "The Cat's Pajamas."

With "Irene" completed and almost ready for release, Colleen Moore is busily engaged in the preparation of her next story, "Ella Cinders." "Irene" is to be released next month. It is regarded as Colleen's finest screen achievement.

Constance Binney, well known screen celebrity, has announced her engagement to Charles E. Cotting, Boston banker. Miss Binney states that she will desert the screen.

Milton Sills' next starring vehicle for First National will be "Poppets," the stage play by Frances Lightner, which ran in New York last winter. John Fleh Goodrich is doing the continuity of this story which will be filmed under a new title. A. E. Rockett will make his bow as a First National supervisor on this picture which will be directed by George Archambault.

J. D. Williams, Managing Director of British National Pictures, Ltd., London, made the announcement immediately after the "Hell Geyser" preview at the Elks-Carillon Hotel, New York, that he and his English associates were so strongly impressed as to the future of Dorothy Gray, following her brilliant triumph in the same part of Herbert Wilcox's production "Hell Geyser," that the com-

Now A Dancing Star



With some of the finest dancing in the country...



Miss Binney, Dorothy Gray's new dancing partner. Inset she as she looked six years ago, in high school.

pany had made a deal with English which arrangement she is to the picture, Inc. who has the star in England immediately to be under contract for five years, under in three productions.

5

STANDARD ACTS OF BIG TIME

THE BROADWAY

STANDARD ACTS OF BIG TIME

VAUDEVILLE

CONTINUOUS SHOW TODAY OPEN THRU THE SUPPER HOUR.

VAUDEVILLE

THE BIGGEST SHOW IN TOWN!

Good Bye Week

See Herald

Sun., April 18, 1926

CONTINUOUS SHOW TODAY 1 TO 11 P. M.

LADEEZ AN' GENTLEMEN!
 We take pleasure in presenting for Farewell Week, the wildest aggregation of syncopatin' sirens, dancing demmons and blowin' be-hemoths in captivity—

GOOD BYE BOYS UNTIL AUGUST 15th

The Genius of Jazz
"Monk" WATSON
 and Bill Foley's
"Keystone Serenaders"

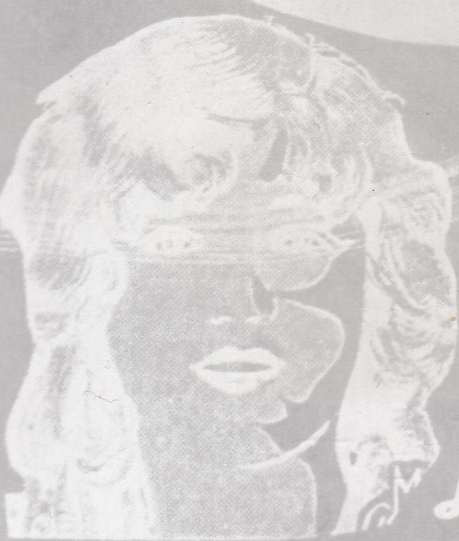


The mightiest, grandest, most magnificent show of all.

"LOU FINK" "LEONARD & BARNETT"
 "THE FOOT LOOSE FOLK" AND OTHERS THE WHITE TOP"

In Conjunction with

MARION DAVIES



THOSE WERE THE DAYS! Flapperish, glit-
 tery, jangleless — but a stir-
 ring time of real romance
 flowering amidst the con-
 flicts and passions of a
 great metropolis in the
 making.

Marion Davies, in her greatest triumph,
 shows herself a superb comedienne—She'll
 make you roar with glee, then move you to
 tears.

Lights of Old Broadway

From the Play, "Merry Wives of Gotham"—With CONRAD NAGEL

THURSDAY — FRIDAY — SATURDAY
 BEAUTIFUL
"Charleston" LOVING CUP

LINCOLN
 SQUARE THEATRE

Tri, Oct. 20, 1916

THE DECATUR REVIEW

NEW THEATER IS A BEAUTY

Speakers on Stage Heard
Perfectly.

PERMIT IS ISSUED

Decorations, Lighting and
Arrangement.

A good many comments were made Thursday night on the appearance of the new Lincoln Square theater when the public got its first sight of the house at the lecture on Christian Science by John W. Doorly. The public was most interested naturally in the appearance of the interior, but the owner and manager of the house were most anxious about the acoustics. These turned out to be all that could be desired. After sitting in various parts of the building, C. A. Walt, owner, remarked to Harry K. Shockley, manager: "It was a gamble getting a house in which a speaker could be heard, but we won. It is all right."

SPEAKER DELIGHTED.

The speaker of the evening, Mr. Doorly, said after it was over, that he had never been in a house in which it was as little trouble to speak as in this one.

Various persons who have tried speaking from the stage have been surprised to see what little effort is required to make one on the farthest seat hear with ease.

Decoration, lighting, and interior arrangement, simplicity of treatment being one of the most effective features in adding to the charm of the whole.

FORMAL APPROVAL.

Before the house was opened Thursday night Building Inspector Cope put his formal approval on it by granting a permit. The management has paid \$150 for a city license to operate a theater. Besides that it has paid a government tax of \$100.

The formal opening of the house for the theatrical season will be on Friday night, Oct. 27, when "Hit the Trail Holiday" will be given.



Decatur Review Oct. 28, 1916

PACKED HOUSE AT THEATER OPENING

**\$1,600 Audience Attends
First Performance.**

FOR "SAFETY FIRST"

**Brief Talks by Dinneen,
Wait and Shockley.**

Before a \$1,600 audience, which filled every seat, the new Lincoln Square theater was formally opened Friday night. The attraction was George M. Cohan's comedy success, "Hit the Trail Holliday," and it kept the first night crowd in laughter most of the evening.

C. A. Wait struck the keynote when, in a brief speech before the curtain, he stated that the new playhouse is Decatur's "Safety First" theater. It is absolutely fireproof. Flames have destroyed three or more theaters in this city in the past quarter of a century and Mr. Wait gave assurance that

there will probably be no more such conflagrations.

KNOW THEM ALL.

Decatur's best families were represented in the audience. Nearly "everybody" was there; and, as Mr. Wait remarked after his introductory remarks could name every man seated along the aisle and could tell something of each one's history. There were dress suits and pretty evening gowns. On the whole, it was a brilliant and delightful occasion.

Mayor Dan Dinneen, Manager Harry K. Shockley and Mr. Wait were the speakers of the evening. They were introduced to the audience by Frank Otto, who made a decided hit in the title role of "Bully" Holliday.

DISTINCT STEP, SAYS MAYOR.

"The dedication of this new theater marks a distinct step in the advancement of Decatur," said Mayor Dinneen. In the past few years we have made many improvements in the way of new pavements, better parks, a handsome lighting system and other things, but we have lacked a playhouse. We now have one which is as good as any to be found in the central west.

"A man who puts his money into an enterprise of this sort does so for something else than financial return. He does it in a spirit of progressiveness and loyalty to his city. Mr. Wait, with characteristic modesty, asked me to leave him out of this talk. This I consented to do, and I will not tell you that Mr. Wait is one of Decatur's foremost, finest and most loyal citizens."

PRaises SHOCKLEY.

"I think the theater is fortunate in securing as a manager H. K. Shockley. He knows the theater business from beginning to end and I believe he will offer Decatur nothing but the best."

Mr. Dinneen's address was roundly applauded. It was brief and to the point, as all his addresses are. It was fitting that he should be the man to make the dedicatory speech.

Manager Shockley spoke a few words of appreciation of the fine audience and the appreciation shown by Decatur people. "I want you folks to know that this is your theater," he said. "This is a civic enterprise. Come and use it."

"Everything that has been said about the Lincoln Square theater is true," said one Decatur man between acts Friday night. "It is certainly a beauty. I've been in the best playhouses of Chicago, Boston and New York and I've seen nothing to beat this theater, although I have seen many larger ones."

LIGHTING A FEATURE.

Great bowls of light on top of massive ivory columns on each side of the stage lend stately beauty to interior of the theater. The lighting is a feature.

Every Seat Filled.

SEATING CAPACITY OF NEW THEATER

C. A. Wait, proprietor of the Lincoln Square theater, has been asked so often as to the relative seating capacities of the Powers and the Lincoln Square theaters that he has prepared the following figures:

	Powers Square	Lincoln
Main floor	524	727
Railway	225	469
Boxes	50	158
Gallery	800	None
Totals	1,491	1,344

All the seats in the Lincoln Square theater are individual chairs and there is room for 100 more if necessary. The gallery seats in the Powers were benches.

The acoustics appeared to be perfect. The actors on the stage, even when talking almost in a whisper, could be heard everywhere in the house.

It became extremely hot in the house between acts while the curtain was down, but soon as the curtain was lifted a flood of cool air came from the stage. It is expected that the ventilation will be improved upon before the next performance. An ambulance of nurses, headed by J. L. Jencks, handled the seating in nice shape.

PLAY A WINNER.

The play was a winner. It told of the adventures of "Bully" Holliday, a New York bartender, who made a trip to a small New England town to take a new job. When he got there, he found the name of the son of the town's proprietor and was promptly "fixed." That night he addressed a prohibition meeting and raised so much enthusiasm that all the bartenders in the town went on a strike.

Holliday then decided to turn evangelist and he succeeded in making a fortune for one of his friends who had invented a temperance beverage, "Nearly Beer." Of course, he married the girl of his choice. The leading part was played excellently by Frank Otto, who is a brother-in-law of George M. Cohan.

THEATER PARTIES.

There were many theater parties in the morning boxes.

Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Wait, Mr. and

Mrs. H. K. Shockley and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Shockley and Miss Marian Wait occupied the east box, next to the stage. In the west box were Dr. and Mrs. Will Barnes, Dr. and Mrs. M. W. Fitzpatrick, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Cook and two daughters.

Mr. and Mrs. C. C. LeForgee had as their guests Mr. and Mrs. G. D. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Allen and Dr. and Mrs. Will Chenoweth. After the theater, a supper was served at the LeForgee home.

Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Evans entertained in honor of their guests, Mary and Lucyanna Jones of Indianapolis. In the C. G. Powers party were Miss Charlotte Kerney, Miss Helen Kenney, Thatcher Shellbarger and Jack Powers, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Prentice had Mr. and Mrs. Harry Haines, Mrs. M. A. DeForrest and Dr. C. Tearman as guests. W. Curtis Busher entertained a party of eight young people. The Double Four Bridge club and its husbands also made up a party.

January 10, 1928

Decatur Sees, Relishes, Opera At Sacrifice; Theater Loses More Than \$1,000 On Production Monday

For one night, New York's famed Metropolitan Opera House was removed to Decatur. Manager Jim Wallace of the Lincoln Square theater says it will never happen again. Of a guarantee of \$1,000 posted to bring "The King's Henchman" to this city with a Metropolitan cast, only \$2,712 gross was recovered at the box office. The audience, happily, knew nothing of the gloom surrounding the theater headquarters. It heard grand opera sung in Decatur, for the first time in a generation, as it may ordinarily be heard only in the world's musical capitals.

Marie Sundelius, in the role of the quick but shallow Aelfrida of Edna St. Vincent Millay's beautiful drama, sang for her audience here as she sings before the diamond horseshoe. She was finely supported by Henri Scott, a powerful basso and a great actor in the role of King Eadgar; by Rafaelo Diaz, a young and romantic Aethelwold, and by Alfredo Valenti in the part of Maccus, the sympathetic troubadour. Decatur heard the opera directed by Jacques Sammeson, under whose baton it was first sung in the Metropolitan.

Many In The Dark

Because it had been so widely heralded as a first successful American opera, many in the audience were unprepared to appreciate it fully. Because it was to be sung in English, many apparently assumed that they had no need of a libretto, forgetting that even in the average choral work, words are usually unintelligible to those without a book. Nevertheless, the simple theme and the great, simple emotional appeal of the work carried over the footlights, and the curtain was called up again and again at the end of each of the three acts.

Staging and acting of the piece was in harmony with its artistic excellence. The setting for the third act in particular, built around the color accent of an intensely green drapery hung against brown stone walls, was tremendously effective. The company carried an orchestra of 47 pieces, for the accommodation of which it was necessary to use the first three rows of seats and the two lower boxes, as well as the usual pit. This improvisation of orchestra space was a handicap, bringing the volume of the orchestra so near the audience as to diminish the effects of the comparatively small chorus, but it did serve to accent Deems Taylor's musical settings for the play. These seemed, in comparison with the works of the

masters, lacking a little in flashing highlights of climax, but finely wrought and consistent.

Second Act Triumph

Mr. Taylor reached his heights in the second act, usurped by Aelfrida's maidenly incantation—"White thorn and black thorn—" exquisitely delicate, and sung by Miss Sundelius with rich feeling. The duet with Aethelwold, which followed was magnificent, particularly for its first introduction of the musical clue to the approaching tragedy. Beginning as an idealized love scene, something childish and natural, it led rapidly to the pronunciation of the fatal name, to the accompaniment of a shrill warning from the string choir.

The book of the opera is simple, a re-motting of the age-old John Alden theme. The first act in the castle of King Eadgar disclosed the retainers of the tenth century sovereign gathered at a banquet to speed the departure of the King's henchman, Aethelwold, upon his unsought mission to woo Aelfrida for the widowed King. The high point in the act was song of Eadgar's warriors, "Daggar, great warf thou," which was thrown back and forth between the male members of the cast with splendid effect. For the purpose of dramatic contrast, the forebodings of the fatherly bishop, and the pledge of deathless loyalty between the friends Eadgar and Aethelwold, were accepted.

Shrew-Mouse Revealed

The second act accomplished the meeting of Aethelwold and Aelfrida, their identity unknown to each other. In the third, Aelfrida is disclosed in the changing character of a young matron. The all-absorbing first love is dulled by household cares; in place of the poetically delicate maiden the audience sees "that shrew-mouse of the world—a wedded woman that will not settle down." Realization that destiny had marked her for a Queen of England rather than the wife of a retainer fans ambition above the heights of old love. When King Eadgar and his retainers arrive to pay a visit of congratulation to their old comrade, she disregards the instructions of her husband to dull her beauty, and instead adorns herself with greatest splendor. The reaction of the noble Eadgar is one of sorrow. Life is empty, since it has shown that the one who could be trusted above all others is untrustworthy. Aethelwold in the face of that reproach takes his life. Maccus and the King, warn back the half-repentant Aelfrida.—"I would not have thee foul this blood."

January 8, 1928

The Biggest and Best Road Show That Ever Played Decatur.

Lincoln Square

MONDAY, JANUARY 9th
ONE NIGHT ONLY

Good Seats Now on Sale at Box Office

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE SENSATION
Deems Taylor Great American Opera

"THE KING'S HENCHMAN"

Orchestra of 50—All American Cast—Chorus of 50

Frances Peralta
Giovanni Martino
Arthur Hackett
Ora Hyde
Alfredo Valenti
Katherine Hamill

Marie Sundelius
Henri Scott
Richard Hale
Barton Leslie
Linet Zinger
Marie Marshall

Rafaelo Diaz
Thomas George
Constance Hajela
Dudley Marwick
John Roberts
Albert Criss

PRICES

Lower Floor	\$4.40
Mesanine	\$3.85
Balcony, first five rows	\$3.30
Next seven rows	\$2.75
Balance	\$1.65

INCLUDES TAX

Herald 10/27/28

LINCOLN

ENTIRE NEW SHOW TODAY

Continuous 2:00 to 11:00—Adults 50c—Children 15c

**A SENSATIONAL BILL OF KEITH-ALBEE-ORPHEUM
BOOKED HEADLINE VAUDEVILLE ACTS**

3 DAYS ONLY

*An Extraordinary
Big Headline
Feature Act*



**LOTTIE
MAYER**

PRESENTS

**AMERICA'S GREATEST AQUATIC
SPECTACLE**

**The Famous Hippodrome
Disappearing Water Ballet**

WHERE DO THEY GO?

INCLUDING THE
JANTZEN GIRL

The Original Diving Girl Poster Model



Direct from an Extended Engagement at This New
York Hippodrome.

**NOTE THIS IS THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE
DISAPPEARING WATER BALLET EVER
OFFERED IN A PORTABLE TANK ERECTED UPON THE
STAGE.**

Nothing Like It Ever Offered In Decatur!

—ALSO—

FRED HUGHES
"WELSH TENOR"

AL STEDMAN FANNIE
"PIANOCAPERS"

ON THE SCREEN

What Is the Secret of Fascination?



ADULATION, supplication! You, too, will bow
to the charms of this unapproachable act-
ress. The world at her feet. Men sell their birth-
rights to buy flowers and jewels to adorn her
perfection, but it takes love to uncover her heart
—the heart of a great actress—greatest in love.
Behind the mask of make-believe. The pulse of
humanity laid bare.

**POLA
NEGRI**

IN

**"LOVES
OF AN
ACTRESS"**

WITH
NILS ASTHER

DAILY FEATURE LINCOLN ORCHESTRA; 10 MEN; BILLY CALL, Director

RALPH HENDERSHOT MEETS TROUPER FRIENDS FROM LINCOLN ORCHESTRA PIT

Drummer Has Been in Show Business Since 1900; Made Decatur With Many Shows Before He Settled Here; Knew Lon Chaney

"Way back when the Powers opera house was in existence and Tom Ronan was its manager, Ralph Hendershot visited Decatur with many of the musical comedies that played here. He is now drummer in the Lincoln theater orchestra and can look back on a varied and interesting trouping career.

He came here as drummer with "Piff, Paff, Poff," "The Time Place and the Girl," "The Umpire," "Shuborn Cinderella," "A Knight for a Day," "The Broken Idol," and "Miss Nobody from Starland." He made friends and acquaintances that are now renewed with practically every change of bill—the old stars having forsaken the productions for the vaudeville stage.

Chaney Got Break

Eddie Foy, Fred Mac, Laura Guerite, Otis Harlan, Joseph Santley, Olive Vail and Lon Chaney are a few of the actors and actresses whom Hendershot came to know intimately.

Lon Chaney got a peculiar break in the show business. He was the electrician for "The Royal Chef," a show with which Hendershot was connected, and at one of the performances the actor who had the role of the bandit could not appear. Chaney was put in the vacancy and made a big success of the part—so big, in fact, that he was given the role. Since that time, he has gone from one show to another, playing big and small time houses, and is now world known for his character acting on the screen. Hendershot and the Chaney's became good friends.

With Tanguay

Since 1900, the year he started in the show business with Eva Tanguay in "The Chaperone," Mr. Hendershot has been drumming around in various and sundry jobs. He has been with the Ringling shows and has played in Edison photograph recording bands. He was connected for some time with the Redpack chautauqua and it was during that engagement that he pulled a neat little trick on one of the tent boys.

The boys were usually university kids and got a big kick out of the

chautauqua life," Hendershot said. "One day one of the fellows couldn't find his trousers and he had a heavy date scheduled for that evening. Well, it had rained that day and I had picked up his trousers after they had been out in the rain and mud for some time and took 'em to be cleaned and pressed.

Came Here in 1919

"That night the kid was still fussing about not finding his pants. I told him I had a pair I'd sell him. He took me up on the offer. I went to my tent, picked up his pants which were cleaned and pressed, and sold 'em to him for three bucks. Everybody was laughing at him but he didn't recognize the pants as being his own."

Mr. Hendershot first came to Decatur as a tent stand in 1914. He owned the Lincoln Square amusement park and operated the same for three years. The owner at that time finally picked up the tent stand and took it to the city of Decatur, Ga., and operated it there for some time. He went to the Lincoln this fall.

Wishes Indian

His home is in Ottumwa, Ia., and the boys in the orchestra say that Hendershot must go home for his vacation each summer. It seems that there is a large copper Indian statue on the top of the courthouse. It is a statue of old Chief Wappela, one of the bad Indians of that section of the country. Anyway, Hendershot feels obliged to go back to his home town and help wash the Indian. Just why he feels this obligation no one offers to say.

TALKIES FORCE MOVIE STARS TO OTHER DEVICES

Retrenchment Leads Hollywood Leaders to Varied Vocations

SELL FOOD AND LAND

What with talkies, the income tax and a hard winter coming on, the stars of the Hollywood colony are showing up retrenchments. Avocations are the vogue. The film celebrities must have their work.

Clara Bow is the unseen hostess at one of Hollywood's brightest new cafes. Her father, as manager, greets guests at the door and does the honors for the Bow family. Clara's name supplies the trade.

Real Estate

Bebe Daniels, having sold and re-sold most of the southern Pacific sea-coast and realized handsomely thereby, now is drawing plans for a secondary-apartment to be built near the University of California. The building will house 200 young women and if the atmosphere of the place itself doesn't draw the customers, then Bebe's name will cause a "no vacancy" sign to be hung over the door-knob.

Esther Ralston is going in for beauty shops, supplies, and a fashion salon.

Sells Cars

Charles "Buddy" Rogers, one of the most popular young stars on the screen, has been wise enough to have his name connected with a firm which makes a business of selling cars to the picture-folk and others.

Chester Conklin says he is about to take over a delicatessen business but declares he won't make personal appearances.

Pauline Frederick

Coming On Apr. 24

Sun. April 14, 1929

Appears in Only Road Show of Lincoln Season.

The only road show of the season at the Lincoln theater will come Wednesday, Apr. 24, with Pauline Frederick as the star. The show, "The Scarlet Woman," which is a comedy, will be given matinee and night. The production was six months on the Pacific coast and for the last fifteen weeks has been in Chicago.

The name of the show would not indicate that it is comedy. It was written by Zaida Sears and presents a rather dramatic plot. It concerns a small-town girl, daughter of a famous father, who, during her parents' life was content to be his shadow. After his death she went to New York in quest of adventure and romance. The big city proved indifferent, and in a year she was ready to go home. Rather than face an empty future alone, she adopted a baby and took it with her. The infant's advent in the girl's home town had unexpected results. Developments followed thick and fast, with the shy heroine thrust into the spotlight. Branded as a "Scarlet woman," she found romance aplenty.

When a college president falls in

GREAT STATES THEATRES

BLUE RIBBON MONTH

★
APRIL 15
to
MAY 15

Sun., April 14, 1929

LINCOLN

A "GREAT STATES" THEATRE

Continues Today Four Stage Shows—2:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Pictures at 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00

Matinee—15c and 50c

Night—25c and 50c

— THREE DAYS, STARTING TODAY —

STAGE BAND SHOW—ONE HOUR OF HILARITY

BOB HOPE

OUR NEW MASTER OF CEREMONIES

LET'S GIVE HIM A ROUSING WELCOME!
"KEEP SMILING"

HARRY HOLMES

"THE PESSIMIST"

SELVIN, DRURY & CO.

"COLLEGE HUMOR"

Bob Hope "KEEP SMILING"

HARVEY
"THE CLASS OF FASHION AND MOULD OF FUNK"

DOOLEY COMEDY
"CRAZY DOINGS"

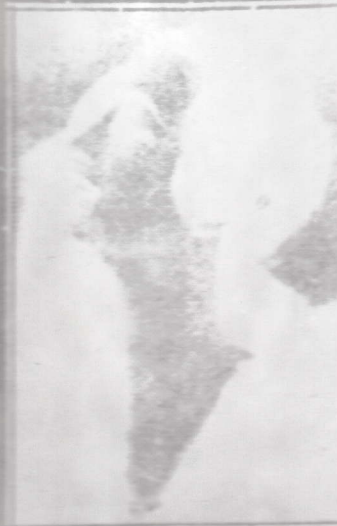
PARAMOUNT NEWS EVENTS



Sun., April 21, 1929

The Scarlet Woman Is A Comedy Drama

Pauline Frederick, Noted
Star, Will Appear.



PAULINE FREDERICK.

Pauline Frederick will appear in person with her company in "The Scarlet Woman" at the Lincoln Square Theater Wednesday matinee and night, Apr. 24.

This comedy, which broke records last season on the Pacific coast coast in Decatur after a fifteen week's run in Chicago. There has been much interest in Miss Frederick, an equal favorite of stage and screen, returning to the stage in a stage role that displays her gifts as a comedienne. Audiences have also witnessed the popular playwright, Edith Sears, in her double capacity of author and actress. Miss Sears is co-author of "The Scarlet Woman," and she stars in a principal comedy role.

INTRIGUOUS SITUATION.

"The Scarlet Woman" is the intriguing but still very human story of a girl whose father was so famous he has never noticed her. She was particularly neglected by eligible men until after her father's death she went to New York for a year's visit and returned with an adopted baby. Overnight the greedy newspaper decided the baby was her own, and she became more talked of than ever her famous father had been. The more "scandal" her reputation became, as gossip grew, the more popular she became with the men. And she stumbled upon a beautiful romance, as well as adventure, during her career as "a scarlet woman."

Miss Sears' play is wholesome and it is played by a talented cast of actor-folk, including Jack Roseleigh, Norman Peck, Paul Stanton, Betty Dunmore, Tina Marshall, Gertrude Fowler, J. Morry Foster, Frankie Raymond, Henry Hall and Burdell Jacobs.

Theater Calendar

LINCOLN

Sun. to Tues.—Stage: Four acts vaudeville with Bob Hope master of ceremonies. Screen: Milton Sunk in "Love and the Devil."

Wed.—Matinee and Night. Road attraction: Pauline Frederick in "The Scarlet Woman."

Thurs. to Sat.—Stage: All Girl Revue with Bob Hope, master of ceremonies. Screen: Bert Lytell in "Lone Wold's Daughter."

Talkies A Stepping Stone To Return Of Stage Plays

Miss Pauline Frederick, Noted Actress, Says Movies Spur Desire to See Real Shows.

By BEATRICE ATLASS.

"Talking pictures are but a stepping stone," said Pauline Frederick Wednesday afternoon.

A stepping stone to what? Why, to the return of legitimate drama.

Miss Frederick, beautiful, slender, charming, gracious, received me in the living room of her suite at the Hotel Orlando and discussed talkies, California, and Flora May, the tiny baby who was a member of her company for four months and never missed a performance.

In Miss Frederick's opinion, talking pictures bring the audience much closer to the actor than does the shadow screen. Because we hear the characters speak, they seem far more real to us. This, in turn, arouses a great curiosity to hear and see the actor in person. Eventually the audience will tire of the mechanical voice as reproduced in the talkies, just as people have tired more or less of the phonograph. And as the final outcome, there will be an enormous demand for the legitimate drama.

A LOGICAL CONCLUSION.

Thousands of people in small towns have had no conception of what a stage play, a really fine one, is like. But they are learning rapidly from the talkies. On the other hand thousands of actors in New York City are out of work. What is more certain than that the producers will feel the growing demand for legitimate drama and meet it?

No one can predict the future, but this is Miss Frederick's picture of what the future will bring.

Miss Frederick frankly confesses that for the present, some of the most famous stars are going into talkies because of existing contracts, and that she herself is an exception. What star of the stage really wishes to exchange the theatre and a sympathetic audience for a disaster relief at home through a magazine, Klor Kicks, the music of an organ out of tune, and a microphone?

MUST HAVE AUDIENCE.

"Why it is like a rehearsal on an empty stage," said Miss Frederick. "It is almost impossible to get the real spirit of a piece, the deepest feeling without an audience."

The run of "The Scarlet Woman" is to close this week and Miss Frederick is taking the first train to California. She has a beautiful home in Beverly Hills, where her mother lives with her, and she especially enjoys swimming, horse back riding, and all sorts of out door sports. Incidentally, she admitted that she is to make another talkie. That, however, will not take long, and when she has finished the picture, Mr. Wiswell, her present manager has another play waiting for her.

PAST FILMING.

Time was when the making of a moving picture required at least six months to a year. With the advent of the talkies, we learned, the time required has been reduced to a few weeks. "The Scarlet Woman" has run for 12 weeks. During that time Miss Frederick took a month's vacation, went to California, and made the picture "Oh, Dad! Here I Come." I believe that "Oh, Dad!" was one of the best talkies I have seen, yet it was only three weeks in the making.

Very few sets are needed for the talking pictures. Miss Frederick explained, and so time is not "going out on a limb" for many weeks at a time, nor is it necessary to wait for after hours to make a picture. The work on the talkies continues day and night, and after hours allowed a certain amount of rest with the scenes are filmed which involve the others.

A BROAD OUTLOOK.

But to return to "The Scarlet Woman." This picture has been well received in the smaller cities, and it has been suggested by Miss Frederick that it should be shown in any town of 10,000 people or more. It is a picture of the year, or at least a very good one, and it is a picture that will be seen in many places.

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Miss Frederick is hoping for a change of things in the real world, by her character in the picture. It is a picture of the year, or at least a very good one, and it is a picture that will be seen in many places.

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MAY RETURN.

Mr. Wiswell, company manager for "The Scarlet Woman," believes in taking his plays to the smaller cities, and he has another play waiting for Miss Frederick in which it is quite likely she will return to Decatur. The new play, "Under the Sun," was also written by his wife, Edith Sears. Mr. Wiswell, Mrs. Sears and Miss Frederick have been successful in the theatrical "game" for three years, and Mr. Wiswell looks upon Miss Frederick almost as a daughter.

"Call her Polly, when you meet her," he said to me. "That's what we all call her."

Needless to say, I haven't as yet said upon his suggestion.

A Show-Hungry Decatur Enjoys "Scarlet Woman"

There, April 25, 1929

Miss Frederick Supported By Splendid Cast.

Decatur, show hungry, went to the cinema theater Wednesday matinee and night, and was served an appetizing meal with Pauline Frederick in "The Scarlet Woman." A less capable cast would have harmed the comedy but a rather bad affair. As it was the audience had a thoroughly enjoyable evening, in spite of the fact that the cast was a group about a woman and a baby in a picture broadcast before so many people as make up a show house.

Miss Frederick has been seen in Decatur in recent years only in motion pictures and the change from her own stage role to that of cinema was especially pleasing. Her Decatur audience is convinced that she deserves her high place among modern actresses.

BABY AN ACTRESS.

To say that her supporting cast was good is not enough. It was excellent and this includes Baby Josephine, four months old, a real live actress, who smiled at the right time and never whimpered once. Zelda Stern, one of the authors of the play, is as good an actress as she is writer. Paul Stanton as a New Yorker, three married and not yet an adult, did an outstanding bit of work; in fact the production required capable handling throughout and got it.

The story had to do with a young woman who adopted a baby in New York, comes back to a small town, and when the gossips brand her as a scarlet woman she does not deny it and uses it as a love test on a university president.

'Oklahoma' at Lincoln Monday and Tuesday



These girls sing and dance in the stage production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, "Oklahoma" which will be given at the Lincoln theater Monday and Tuesday evenings. Ridge Bond and Patricia Johnson are stars of the production.

'Oklahoma' Here 2 Days

The stage show, "Oklahoma" will be given Monday and Tuesday evenings at the Lincoln theater.

The Monday evening performance is 8:45 p. m. and the Tuesday performance is at 8:30 p. m.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical stars Ridge Bond and Patricia Johnson and there are 67 ac-

tors, dancers and sin-
orchestra of
scenery will
the performers.

Good seats still are
tickets may be purchas
office and telephone re
being taken at the theat

'The Well' Shows At Lincoln This Week

"The Well," based
the tragic death of
who fell into a well
will show at the Lin

plate
SECOND 'OKLAHOMA'
PERFORMANCE SELLOUT
All 1,400 seats in the Lincoln
theater were sold last night for the
second and final performance of
"Oklahoma," John Wendell, theater
manager, said. About 2,700 persons
saw the nine-year-old musical show
last. Members of the cast said the
tour is expected to end this month
for engagements in Springfield,
Paris, Dayton, Ohio, and Rochester,
N.Y.
Decatur Herald
Sund. March 3, 1952

Girl Campers Take To Riding



Review Photo

Best House

Shown in

President enthusiastic the news-

own talk- the White own sound the news- may come being the over the site House

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ORA. don ma- in Fox have been a man in in which out of

open to 15 to 25 Monday The spec- of a bill

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mystery de- was re- House

the sea- er

Lincoln To Start Sound Films Today

"Desert Song" One of First Week's Attractions.

The week-end season closed at the Lincoln today with the first of the new sound picture program. The feature is "Desert Song" which will run for two pictures a week, the first running from Sunday to Tuesday and the second from Wednesday to Saturday.

For the opening week, the Lincoln has Richard Dix in "Nothing but the Truth" for the first half and the all-singing Broadway production of "The Desert Song" for the last half.

The week's picture program in Decatur is as follows:

LINCOLN.

Sun. to Tues.—Sound: Richard Dix in "Nothing but the Truth"; all talking comedy "Dear Teacher."

Wed. to Sat.—Sound: "The Desert Song"; synopated cartoon, "Sick Cylinder," sound news.

EMPRESS.

Sun. to Tues.—Sound: Mary Brian and Richard Arlen in "The Man I Love"; All talking comedy "Meet the Misses"; Color classic "Sports of All Nations."

Wed. to Sat.—Ramon Navarro in "The Pagan"; George Lewis in college humor play.

AVON.

Sun. Mon.—Cecil B. DeMilles' "The Goddess Girl"

Tue. Wed.—Karl Dane and

What's Doing In The Movies

Thomas Hight, executive producer of the White, trading her stock with Paul Jennings in "The Girl of the Year." ... Although Mr. Zugrue has in the past sold rights of his musical comedy productions for the use of others on the screen, this will be the first time he will be personally associated with production of a film. He will forego his annual Palm Beach vacation and remain for several months in Hollywood, giving his personal attention to production activities incident to the filming of the first picture of the new company.

Ronald Colman will follow "Bulldog Drummond," his first all-talking picture, with "Condemned," a 100% dialog picturization of Blair Niles's book, "Condemned to Devil's Island."

Irving Berlin will compose the music as well as write the entire book for Al Jolson's production, "Mammy."

Harry Richman, star of "George White's Scandals" for the last three years, has arrived in Hollywood, there to make his film debut in "Song of Broadway," an all-singing, all-talking United Artists Picture for which Irving Berlin wrote the story and eight new songs. Mr. Richman will appear as a small town song-plugger who becomes famous after innumerable setbacks; thus does his first picture parallel the narrative of his own life.

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Al Jolson is announced to star in "Say It With Songs" and "Mammy." Young Davy Lee will be featured in the first. Second is by Irving Berlin, who authors the book and composes its music.

Starved Chinese Turn To Cannibals

Boston, July 6—(A.P.)—Reports of appalling conditions caused by famine in the Shensi, Suiguan, Kansu, Honan, Tehsien and Tientsin districts of China have been received by the American board of commissioners for foreign missions. Conditions are so terrible, missionaries reported, that several cases of cannibalism have been authenticated.

Celebrate Decatur's Centennial

DANCE

If you are planning on giving a dinner—that could be more interesting and after an evening dance by the orchestra celebrating Decatur's 100th Birthday with a dinner—better still, have your guests dress as they did 100 years ago.

LEW HOGAN AND HIS Orchestra

Can you furnish the music with all the stars and pep that it takes to make it the most exciting your guests ever enjoyed—

For Old Times, Sake—Get Gone.

For Engagements Call or Write

LEWIS V. HOGAN 147 West Erieview Avenue Decatur, Phone 2-6192

AT HAND

GREAT STATES THEATRES THEY START TODAY PICTURES THAT TALK!

— LATEST IMPROVED —
VITAPHONE AND MOVIE TONE
— AT THE —

Lincoln Theatre

Continuous Daily, 1:30 to 11:00 Matinee and Night, 15c and 50c

Could you tell the truth
— the whole truth
and —

**"NOTHING BUT
THE TRUTH"**

for twenty-four hours if the love of
"the only girl" and a little side bet
of \$10,000 depended upon it?

Does it hand you a laugh to see some-
one ridiculously embarrassed — pro-
vided it isn't yourself.

Are you interested in the sweet
course of true love?

Then you'll thoroughly enjoy this
first Paramount all-talking picture.

100%
ALL TALKING

• STARRING •

**RICHARD
DIX**

HEAR HELEN KANE, in
a great comedy role. sing the
novelty number, "Do Some-
thing".

He speaks from
the screen for the
first time!

HEAR! SEE!



A Paramount
ALL-TALKING



and two in the afternoon
to be at camp next week
— Review Photo.

celebrate Decatur's
Centennial

ANCE

**LEW
OGAN**

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HANNA

Promotions for Theater Men

ASSISTANT STATES DISTRICT

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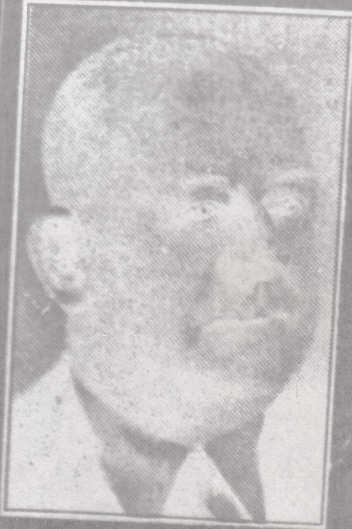
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—Photo by Selts
TOM RONAN

Tom Ronan, manager of the Lincoln and Empress theaters during the last year, leaves today for a two-weeks vacation, after which he will go to Danville to assume his duties as resident manager of the Great States theaters there, as well as assistant district manager for that chain.



—Photo by Selts
PAUL WITTE

Paul Witte, long associated with the Bijou theater, was made advertising and exploitation man for the Great States interests in Decatur when that chain bought the Bijou theater and closed it. Mr. Witte from now on will be manager of the Lincoln and Empress theaters. Edward Crabtree, will go to Danville to institute the Great



—Photo by Selts
EDWARD CRABTREE

States-Publix system of ushering in the theaters there, and will also be Mr. Ronan's assistant. Ed has been chief of service and assistant house manager in the Lincoln theater for the last five months. Tom Finin will take the position of chief of service, and Joe Briley will be promoted to fill Mr. Finin's place as door-man.

MOVIE CALENDAR

LINCOLN

Sunday, Tuesday—Waring's Pennsylvanians in "Syncope."

Wednesday, Saturday—Mary Pickford in her first talkie, "Coquette."

EMPRESS

Sunday, Tuesday—"The Bellamy Trust" part-talkie mystery.

Wednesday, Saturday—Lee Chas. King, Vera, Lord Hughes, Eddie Taylor in "Where East Is East."

MARKET

Sunday, Monday—Bob O'Brien in "Law of the Mounted."

Tuesday, Wednesday—Lee Chas. King in "The Heart of Moses" and Kenneth McDonald in "The Danger Zone."

Thursday, Friday—Bogart in "Temptation of the Night."

Saturday—The Bellamy in "Morgan's Last Raid."

AVON

Sunday, Monday—Bob O'Brien in "Smilin' Guns."

Tuesday, Wednesday—All-star cast in "The Spider."

Thursday, Friday—Junior Coghlan and Louis Wolheim in "Square Shoulders."

Saturday—Tom Tyler and Frankie Darro in "Gun Law."

ALHAMBRA

Sunday—John Gilbert in "Truxton King." Also Gertrude Olmstead in "Hey, Rube."

Monday, Tuesday—Charles Farrell and Greta Nason in "Fazio."

Wednesday—Jean Hersholt and Faythe Haven in "The Battle of the Sexes."

Thursday—Jacqueline Logan in "Ships of the Night." Also all-star cast in "Spirit of Youth."

Friday—Ramon Novarro in "Kisses to Singapore."

Saturday—Sally O'Neill in "Hard Billed." Also all-star cast in "The Gun Runner."

CRESCENT

Sunday—Ken Maynard in "The California Mail." Also Rex, king of wild horses, in "The Harvest of Hate."

Monday—Norma Shearer in "The Actress."

Tuesday—Jean Hersholt in "The Battle of the Sexes."

Wednesday, Thursday—Charles Farrell and Greta Nason in "Fazio."

Friday—All-star cast in "Spirit of Youth." Also Jacqueline Logan in "Ships of the Night."

Saturday—Jack Holt in "Court Martial."

SPECIAL

All This Week

Men's Suits

Dry Cleaned and Pressed
(3 The Cleanest Deal)

\$1

Ladies' Plain Dresses

Dry Cleaned and Pressed
(1 Pair Gloves Cleaned Free)

\$1

Ladies' Silk Dresses

25



327
N. Water
Street

SPECIAL

Mary Forbes, English mother of Ralph Forbes, put under contract by Wyn-Mayer.

Phone

2-058

For a Better Clean

Clothes cleaned by hand process take on of life and double your life in wearing them. Instead of a new outfit, why not that suit, dress or coat the season at a saving?

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O.B. CHUMBER

CLEANERS, E

1160 N. Water

We Own and Operate Own Plant

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Sept. 1, 1929

THE DECATUR REVIEW

"The Community Paper"

September.

For 1929.
Make Decatur's Hundredth Year
the Best.

Music in the Theaters.

Eight hundred Chicago musicians employed in theaters are again in controversy with the theater managers. The trouble is directly responsible to sound movies which include musical accompaniment. Heretofore the musicians have had the support of the motion picture operators but now the operators are said to be taking advantage of the situation and requiring that another operator be employed to operate the sound films that supply the spoken music.

In St. Louis 200 musicians are in trouble because of sound movies. The musicians do not want big orchestras in the neighborhood theaters but are willing to buy them in the bigger theaters.

The so-called "sound music" has had its effect throughout the country in displacing musicians from theaters. Not only has it hit the musicians but during the week it was published a company of New York cannot back up a claim that the score of music reproduction—photograph, radio and the news—has stimulated the demand for their art.

The leaf of an Chicago musician union declares that its people will not be satisfied unless they are made free to conduct or will not be satisfied. The development that have taken place in the last twenty years and those that seem to be immediately ahead have made it hard for the people to say just what they do want.

The photograph was accepted and a home was not complete without one. The life radio came along in the theaters operating pictures. Then pictures with sound. Now we face the combination of radio and pictures with television and sound in the home. In a year or so we may be paying a definite monthly lease for a machine that will compete with the motion picture theater. When we reach that stage then social intercourse may have some bearing on the situation.

The public isn't deciding what it wants now because of constant change and developments, but we may reach so mechanical an age in a few years that we will want some relief.

Peoria and Decatur.

Peoria on the Illinois river is vitally interested in the development of the deep waterway between Chicago and the gulf. To benefit from the waterway and become an important shipping point it is necessary that Peoria have docking facilities. To provide these docks it is proposed that Peoria issue \$400,000 worth of bonds.

never started on a permanent road building program. In the meantime Decatur township has stepped out and put in township roads.

Getting started on a program has been a long seige and the fact that the building of some permanent county roads is to start is an event of importance.

West Wood Street.

West Wood street and Oakland avenue is a traffic center that has entered into the discussion of traffic many times. The narrowness of both streets and the business houses and filling stations near there have added to the congestion. Oakland avenue has done its part in getting a street that will carry the traffic. West Wood street is still narrow.

West of Oakland avenue the street is too narrow to safely handle Route 10 and city traffic. It has been handling it but much of the time it is one lane traffic. When cars are parked in front of houses across in West Wood street it is not as safe as it should be. It is to be hoped that the widening of Oakland avenue will have some effect in stimulating West Wood street action.

Women's Golf Champion.

Decatur now has a city woman golf champion. We have been reading about the woman who won a great prize at her last game of Decatur's new golf club. It is to be hoped that the woman in the city with tournament title that won over the South Side Country Club course. Those who do not believe that women can get around a course in less than 200 have another game coming.

The enthusiasm displayed in this tournament inaugurated by Tax Review is evidence that Decatur has a sport in which men, women and children are keenly interested.

We congratulate and welcome Decatur's woman golf champion.

From Other Editors

Work for a Revenue Commission.

Chicago Daily News: Every section of Illinois would be vastly benefited, not only economically but morally, by the state's adoption of a just revenue system under an appropriate amendment of the state constitution. This self-evident truth should be borne steadily in mind by all the citizens.

Many downstate legislators and politicians charge—and perhaps some of them believe—that the people of Cook county do not contribute to the cost of state government in fair proportion to their wealth, particularly that part of it represented by what is called intangible personality. Some downstate politicians regard Chicago as a persistent seeker of special privileges in revenue matter or as a shameless tax dodger determined

THE arrival of September today sounds like the August always sounds like summer and usually is. As a matter of scientific record summer is with us and will stay until 6:53 a. m. Decatur time, Monday, Sept. 23. At that time we have autumnal equinox and autumn is ushered in, remain until the winter solstice early in the morning of Dec. 22.

With September we have the opening of school which means for most of us the end of vacation. We begin preparing for the winter by seeing to the supply of fuel in the basement. We begin to rake the leaves daily from the front and the parking. Every shower of rain or heavy gust sends the leaves whirling down.

Temperatures jump from cool to hot, but for the most part we look upon September as an enjoyable month, neither too hot nor too cold. The fact is that September is on the declining temperature side. In June the heat received by day is about that hot at night and in July and August they are about equal, therefore the high temperatures. In September the sun has traveled a far south that the heat received in the daytime is hardly more than that lost at night.

By December the sun's heat by day will fall to 10 degrees and the loss of heat by night in Decatur is what a difference it makes for Commander Byrd and his party down in the antarctic. The coming of September here means that winter is about gone. On Sept. 23, when our autumn starts it will be going down for Commander Byrd. He will not have the spring that the south temperate zone will have or like we have the light of March, but it will be spring.

The sun is just peeping over the horizon. Byrd will be camp in September. September is a fine month for them as it is a fine month for Decatur folk.

Selling Labrador.

A NEWS item this last week told of negotiations for the sale of Labrador to Canada. It is not likely that more than half a dozen persons gave any further thought about it other than to reflect that it was a kind of ice, snow and Eskimos. It was a big business who owns it or why the sale is proposed.

Labrador is about the same latitude as the British Isles, has summer temperatures ranging up to 50 degrees and has low temperatures in winter. There are large settlements along the coast promoting fishing, but Eskimos inhabit the land. There is 200 miles of coast line and the interior is a vast forest.

It was a dependency of Great Britain, but never had a government of its own. Part of it was under Canadian control and part under Newfoundland until two years ago, when the privy council of Great Britain made Labrador part of Newfoundland. Newfoundland has steadfastly refused to join the Dominion of Canada. It has an appointed governor and a premier and governs itself like Canada.

The name Labrador is just as inappropriate as Greenland for that far north land of ice. Labrador is from "terra leboradori" meaning cultivable land. It is far from that. The settlements in Labrador have grown in recent years, the fishing industry being a big one. Minerals have been discovered. Timber is a growing industry.

NEWFOUNDLAND is interested in developing its natural resources and is seeking finances from Canada or the United States. The sale of Labrador may be a way for Newfoundland to get funds to develop its own territory. The interesting point is that here are separate British possessions or individual countries and most of them

Leading Lady Likes Show

'Oklahoma' Singer
Has Husband in Cast

By Mary Merris
Of The Review Staff

Spending most of her time between stage doors and the asbestos curtain doesn't seem to bother Pat Johnson, leading lady of the "Oklahoma" road show.

Pat, who is married to cast member Warren Schmoll, looks like a dressed up version of the young housewife. She stands five feet, five inches and has big blue eyes.

During an interview before her performance last night as ingenue Laurey, the 121 pound ("That's what I weighed this morning") singer admitted she'd enjoy settling down, having children and raising poodles.

She and her husband met in the "Oklahoma" show. No bolt from the blue hit them at first, they were just friends. Things got serious, however, when they went half and half and bought a toy poodle, Drifty. Pat laughed and said the whole cast was relieved for the dog's sake when they decided it was love after all and married a year and a half ago.

Pat finds road life more interesting when the company spends a week in one place. They can practice in the afternoons that way. Otherwise, she commented, most of their off-hours time is spent getting into hotel rooms and unpacking.

The former star originally started out at Lawrence college as a medical technician. She discovered she had a voice, went to New York City to improve her singing and for a lack of interest in "Oklahoma."

The girls at the Studio Club where she was living said auditioning was fun. "They said you never get a part anyway," Pat relates, "and that it would be good experience." Pat did get something.

After a short session in which she started out saying "No" to offers of a role, she ended up as understudy for the lead and played the role of Giggling Genie in the road company for two seasons.

The only thing she remembers about stepping into the lead for the first time is the fudge sundae she



Pat Johnson

had had. "They've had for your voice, you know," she said confidentially.

Talking loudly because of the noise of drums in one corner of the stage and shifting scenery in the other, Pat said she auditioned again before the Theatre Guild for the lead role. She got it and has been with it since.

The singing actress, whose pet hair is attention, likes "Oklahoma" because it is well written and her part because it is "clean."

She is a native of Duluth, Minn. The two months she and her husband aren't touring are spent in New York City.

"Red is my favorite color. I guess because I look best in it," the smiling star said. She also prefers casual clothes, wears slacks when relaxing and likes to swim.

With a husband, a dog and a

lead role all wrapped up in one package. Pat has reason to say: "It's stimulating to be part of a good show."

'Oklahoma' Repeats At 8:30 Tonight

The stage show, "Oklahoma," will be repeated at 8:30 p. m. today at the Lincoln theatre.

Approximately 1,300 persons saw the first performance, starring Ridge Bend and Patricia Johnson, last night.

Besides offering such ever-popular tunes as "People Will Say We're in Love," "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top" and "Oklahoma," the show also has a love story, a lot of humor and a touch of tragedy.

Seats are available for tonight's performance.

Variety Bills On Lincoln Program

Broadway Revue on First Half of Week.

The Lincoln Square stage program for the first part of the week offers Grace Doro, billed as "Ten fingers and a baby grand" in which she sings and plays; Alexander and Peggy in comedy sketch "Piling it on" and the Broadway Revue, all of which will be in charge of Bob Hope, master of ceremonies.

For the last half there is Sandy McPherson, a protege of Gus Edwards, who is billed as "The Versatile Scot." Les'Ghezzi are known as "Europe's premier equilibrists" are two French brothers with a whole bag full of feats. Anne Shadkova and Billy Wilson come with eight steps in "A Dance excursion" to top off the bill that the theater management guarantees.

the Hotel Orlando by the Intermediate class. Supervisors of the hospital also have been invited to attend.

Havana (A.P.)—The Cuban government has tripled the number of workmen on the new national capitol in an effort to have the building ready for the scheduled dedication on May 20.

BOY WITH SPLINTER WOUND RECOVERING

Larry Boyer Ran Long Silver Into Abdomen on Side.

The condition of Larry Boyer, four-year-old son of Mrs. Opal Boyer, 1947 West Main street, who late Friday

afternoon had a six and one-half inch splinter removed from his abdomen at the Decatur and Macon County hospital was reported as good. At the hospital it was stated that his condition was not serious provided complication did not set in.

The youngster was playing on a slide at the Day Nursery when the accident occurred.



Our city is being nationally advertised by Great States, because all Great States Theatres are celebrating Blue Ribbon Month. Get in the parade. See all these big attractions at your Great States Theatre: William Haines in "Alias Jimmy Valentine," Texas Guinan in "Queen of the Night Club," Lupe Valez in "Lady of the Pavements," George Jessel in "Lucky Boy," Milton Sills in "The Barker," Buddy Rogers and Nancy Carroll in "Class Harmony," Dolores Del Rio in "The Red Dance," Colleen Moore in "Why Be Good?"

FOUR STAGE SHOWS TODAY
3, 5, 7, 9

LINCOLN

A "GREAT STATES" THEATRE

PICTURES:
2, 4, 6, 8, 10
Mat. 15c-50c
Night, 25c-50c

CONTINUOUS TODAY—FOUR STAGE SHOWS

BOB HOPE AND HIS GANG

—PRESENTING—

BLUE RIBBON REVUE

FEATURING ONE HOUR OF MERRIMENT

THE BROADWAY REVUE

in "STARS OF TOMORROW"

ALEXANDER AND PEGGY in "PILING IT ON"

GRACE DORO
Anchored by "TEN FINGERS AND A BABY GRAND"



ON THE SCREEN:

"A COME-ON GAG FOR SUCKERS"

Was broad and better to the Shakedown Kid—until love crept into his faker's heart.

WITH JAMES MURRAY and BARBARA KENT



THE SHAKEDOWN

STARTING WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, BOB HOPE AND HIS "PEACOCK REVUE" CRIS-CRIS-CRIS

FREE THURSDAY MATINEE—A BEAUTIFUL EVENING, SUITABLE FOR FRAMING. LADY ATTENDING OUR MATINEE ON THURSDAY, MAY 2, PICTURES ON DISPLAY IN MAC'S NEWS-STAND WINDOW.

FRIDAY NIGHT AT 9:00 P. M.—ON THE SCREEN STAGE—FINAL AWARDS AND IN THE DECATUR BRY GOODS COMPANY BABY CONTEST.

SEE THE ATWATER KENT RABBIT DISPLAYED IN THE LINCOLN AND EMPRESS LOBBIES. TO BE GIVEN AWAY, ABSOLUTELY FREE, MAY 16TH, IN CELEBRATION OF GREAT STATES' BLUE RIBBON MONTH. WATCH ADVERTISEMENTS FOR OTHER BLUE RIBBON PRODUCTS TO BE GIVEN SOON.

Vicious, Horrible, Magnificent

Those and Other Big Words Describe "Little Foxes"

The Review Oct. 31, 1940

"What a magnificent play!" "What poisonous people!" were the comments almost gasped by the big and delighted, if horrified audience that saw "The Little Foxes" in Lincoln theater Wednesday night. These ejaculations were followed usually by, "Do you suppose the house was big enough that we'll get some more plays?"

The theater had promised, if this play was supported, to bring others later in the year.

There were only a handful of empty seats in the balcony, a few empty boxes in the mezzanine floor, and perhaps 150 empty places in the rear corners of the main floor. It looked like a party house.

Superb Writing

Lillian Hellman wrote the play and it was tightly done, every point brought out clearly but without being unduly over-emphasized, and every line a telling one.

Tallulah Bankhead was the star, and because she played the part of Regina Giddens, that was the leading character.

If the star had been in any one of the other 10 parts, that one would have been the lead, so rich was each part and so important. That goes even for the parts of Addie and Cal, Negro servants in the New Orleans household.

Old Sad Story

The story was the old familiar one of an ambitious woman who gives up everything, love, admiration, self respect, even the lives of those in her family, for more and more money. It is the same theme that was developed in "Gone With the Wind." And in "The Little Foxes" it was a southern family too, this time in New Orleans, a family of planters embittered by long poverty and thereby over-emphasizing the importance of money.

Fine Acting

Miss Bankhead, of course, was magnificent. She has such vivid

once sat up, electrified. Every word she uttered in her hoarse voice, every biting laugh she emitted from her bitter, square mouth, at once became an incident that clung to the memory like a spider to the arm. And it left poison behind, too.

Others in the cast included Frank Conroy as the husband, an actor once familiar to movie-goers and welcomed with a burst of applause when he first came on the stage; and such familiar names as Marie Carroll in the heart-touching part of Birdie, the gentle little thoroughbred married to one of the brute brothers and who "didn't" had a completely happy day in 22 years; Abbie Mitchell and John Marriott as the Negro servants; Earl Benton Brad and Charles Dingle as the brothers; Dan Duryea as the son of one of them, forced to take a private bank depository for them; Lee Baker, as the daughter; Eugenia Rask as the gentle little daughter who had spirit after all. L.R.

Tallulah Bankhead Holds Lincoln Audience Spellbound

Tallulah Bankhead brought the Hubbard family to Decatur last night in Lillian Hellman's gripping play, "The Little Foxes", and held an audience spellbound in the Lincoln theater. It was the first stage play the city has enjoyed in a long time, and while the theater was not filled to capacity the hundreds who enjoyed the performance demonstrated their enthusiasm for such entertainment—and expressed an inward hope that there may be more plays before this new season is ended.

The play itself is not a pleasant affair, but it portrays effectively the character and motivations of various members of the Hubbard family in a small town in the South. The time of the play is about 1900.

Exacting Requirements

Miss Bankhead gave a brilliant portrayal of her role—one which she says is easy but which is exacting in its requirements. As a Southern woman, lacking in the conventional "charm" of the South, she either slyly directed or was the focal point of the plot which had to do with the efforts of her brothers and a partner to bring a cotton mill to their land. There was downright thievery in the efforts to finance the venture—using resources of Horace Giddens, the ailing husband of Regina Giddens, sister of the Hubbard and played by Miss Bankhead.

In some of her swearing hand gestures and use of the lower register in her voice the star reminded us occasionally of Ethel Barrymore. Miss Bankhead's voice

was a most effective instrument, and her laugh and shrug of the shoulders powerful devices.

Supporting Cast Good

Frank Conroy, in the role of Horace Giddens, had but brief appearances on the stage, but he made the most of them. Marry Carroll as Birdie Hubbard, who typified much of what we think of as the Southern charm, had a far more likable role than that of the leading lady and she did it with grace and effectiveness.

The entire supporting cast turned in commendable performances. The two Negro servants, Addie and Cal, played by Abner Mitchell and John Marriott, were splendidly done. The role of Cal afforded most of the unusually small amount of comedy relief to be found in the drama.

Effectively Staged

The play was effectively staged, all the action taking place in the Giddens house in the spring of 1900, though in various times of day. Much of the finest acting, particularly by Miss Bankhead and Mr. Conroy, took place on the stairway at the rear of the left stage. The lighting was effective, and costuming as well. Miss Bankhead was striking in the black evening gown she wore in the first act—and likewise stunning in the red gown she wore later.

The audience was warm in its applause throughout the play, and members of the cast took curtain calls at the close.

From Decatur the play goes to Danville for a performance today.

B. F. F.

Surv., Jan. 22, 1950 Herald and Review

LINCOLN THEATER One Evening Perf. Only!
Decatur, Ill. **TOMORROW NIGHT!**
PHONE 2-6000

Tomorrow Night --- ON STAGE!

FIRST NATIONAL TOUR of the ORIGINAL BROADWAY
STAR IN HIS COMEDY TRIUMPH... 788 TIMES IN N.Y.

MAX GORDON *presented in person*

MONTY WOOLLEY



"THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER"
HILARIOUS COMEDY BY MOSS HART & GEORGE S. KAUFMAN...

**HURRY! HURRY! SOME GOOD SEATS
ARE STILL AVAILABLE AT BOX-OFFICE!**

BOX OFFICE OPEN FROM 11 A. M. TO 9 P. M. DAILY

RESERVED SEAT TICKETS ONLY!

ENTIRE MAIN FLOOR — \$1.50
MEZZANINE — \$1.50 and \$1.00 BALCONY — \$1.00 — \$1.50 and \$1.00
\$3.60 and \$3.00 \$3.00 \$2.70 \$1.80

The Decatur Review
Full House
Tues., Jan. 24, 1950
At Lincoln

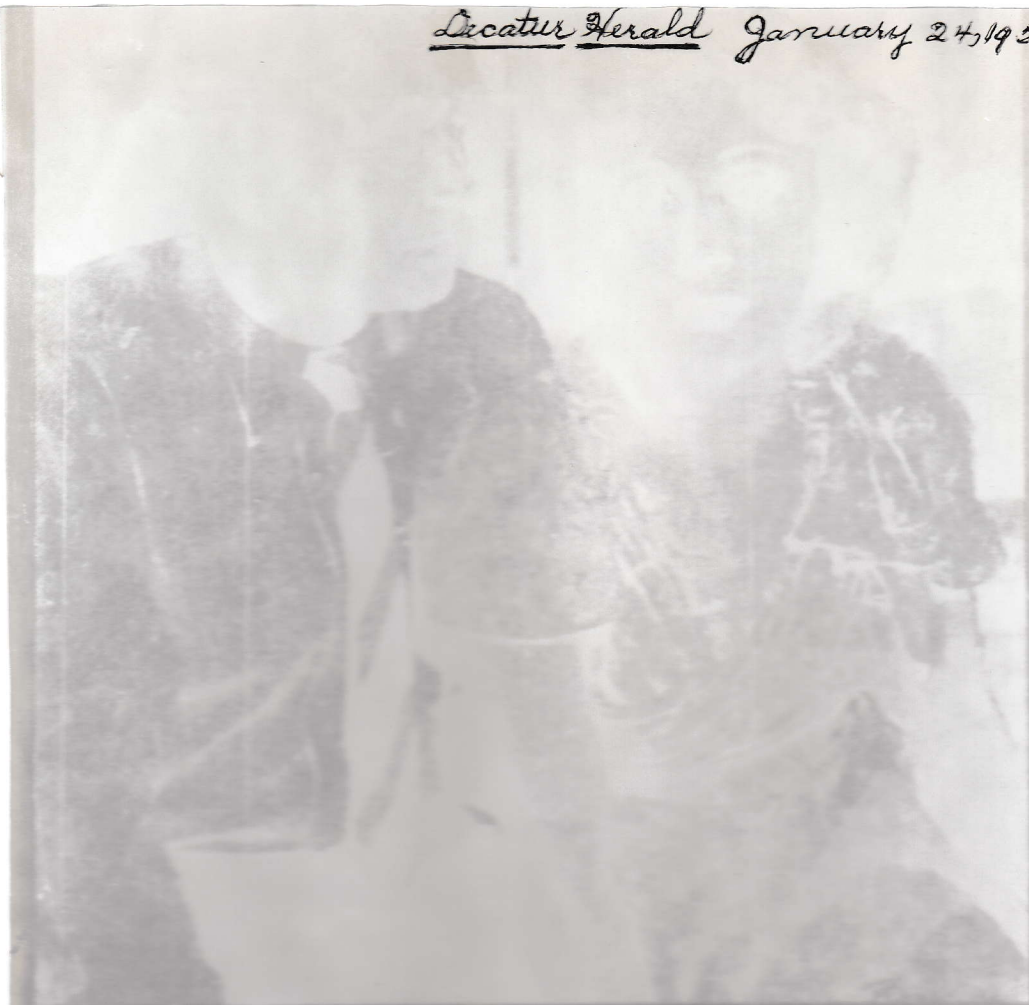
Lincoln theater had a near-sellout Monday night for "The Man Who Came to Dinner," with Monty Woolley in the lead. Inasmuch as Clifton Webb had been here in the role only a few years ago, the audience found it interesting to compare interpretations and presentation on the part of the cast.

Mr. Woolley, owner of probably the most famous beard of today now that Chief Justice Hughes has died, played the irascible, psychopathic, self-smitten Sheridan Whiteside with conviction, and Gloria McGhee did some good acting in her hysterical scene when she discovers she has been tricked into believing she had been proposed to by trans-Atlantic telephone. Except for that scene, acting laurels for the women of the cast go to Jay Presson who played Woolley's suffering, laconic secretary, knows all his tricks but falls for them anyhow.

The story is completely familiar to Decatur after one stage presentation and several showings of the screen version. It is said to have been inspired by the late Alexander Woolcott, who played in it at one time. The story goes that he was visiting at Moss Hart's country place in Pennsylvania and so insulted other guests, the servants, and his host that Hart was furious. Seeking a theme for a play, and telling George S. Kaufman about it, Kaufman consoled him with the statement that he was just lucky that Woolcott hadn't broken a leg so he had to stay longer; and then said, "There's your play!"

It was, and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" has been a hilarious favorite since it was first presented. The cast last night did not give it the polished, suave performance that Webb had given, but the burlesqued roles which were almost burlesque in themselves. The audience had a good time anyhow.

L. R.



Lincoln theater announces this morning that "A Streetcar Named Desire," Tennessee Williams' famous drama, is

booked for one night only, Feb. 9. The mail order sale opens at once. This scene shows Jorja Curtright and Ralph Meeker.

"Streetcar Named Desire" Booked to Lincoln Feb. 9

Lincoln theater is bringing another stage play, "A Streetcar Called Desire," right on the heels of "The Man Who Came to Dinner," which was seen last night.

"Streetcar" is booked for Thursday, Feb. 9, and mail orders for tickets are receivable now at \$4.50 for the entire main floor, \$4.50 and \$3.50 for the mezzanine, \$2.50, \$2.00 and \$1.50 for the balcony, all including tax. Mail orders must include check or money order, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope so the tickets can be mailed. They will be filled in the order they are received.

"A Streetcar Called Desire," a play by Tennessee Williams, has been one of the outstanding Broadway hits of the last couple of years. The company now on tour is a good one, with Judith Evelyn, Ralph

Meeker, Jim Nolan, Jorja Curtright, and other well known young actors. Irene Mayer Selznick, daughter of one Hollywood producer and former wife of another, is the producer.

Although the cast is small, the play takes one of the largest crews of stagehands needed here in a long time. This is because the settings are elaborate and, in the case of the famous circular staircase, very heavy to move.

The story takes place in the French Quarter of present-day New Orleans, where the streetcars have fancy names. One of them is actually named Desire, and in the play a leading character is brought into the scene on that streetcar which, for her, comes to have a symbolic bearing on the kind of life lived in the quarter.

Author Madden Amazed *Sun., April 5, 1964*

'Broadway' Uses Hidden Talent

By Michael K. Burns
Of the Herald and Review Staff

"What can you do with it?"

This fundamental question prompted Bill Madden to write the musical which evolved into "Someone's Widening Our Broadway," a satirical review of news events in Decatur to be presented April 29 and 30 in the Lincoln Theater.

"It was an amazing revelation to me to see how many people had formerly sung or danced or played a musical instrument," he said. Talents which had not been used for years were "just sort of withering away."

To provide a vehicle for this local, unutilized talent (and because it was fun) Madden began to play around writing songs about four or five years ago.

"It turned out to be a much more fantastic job than I considered it would be," he admitted.

His idea started as a musical comedy with 25 to 30 songs, which was shelved in favor of a musical review last January when the Junior Walker musical

ation asked him to write a show for them. The organization last presented its follies in 1959 and was seeking to renew the series with an original show.

Madden's first script was 108 pages long, with 103 pages of music. Besides distilling the script into 64 pages, he had to rewrite about two-thirds of the music.

"A male lead couldn't sing the song in this scale. So we rewrite it, and then the girl accompanying him can't hit that note. So you compromise."

After picking out some 30 tunes on the piano, Madden had to transfer them to paper. "For months all I had were the words to the songs written down," he said. All but a few bars in few tunes are original.

But the hard part was writing the lyrics, which is the far more important part. "Lyrics have to tell the story, to convey the message," he said, and they had to rhyme, have the proper number of syllables and be "singable."

The name of the production was chosen because of its refer-

ence to a current topic and to the theater, Madden explained.

This one was chosen after two others referring to personalities were considered.

Review Pokes Fun

"Nobody is attempting to deride anyone in government. This review is more in the nature of poking fun," he said. "Some of these people take themselves too seriously."

Numbers and skits are based on local events popularized by the newspapers. "Some are satirical and some are pure entertainment," Madden said.

To refresh the audience's memory, slides or photographic blowups of actual headlines will be projected onto the background.

Despite the numerous difficulties involved in staging a live production in the Lincoln Theater, Madden thinks it will be more fun on a community stage.

"People would rather perform on the Lincoln stage because it is more of an accomplishment," he said.

"It should be a rewarding experience for so many talented people, just to get the chance to do something with their talent."

Share With Actors

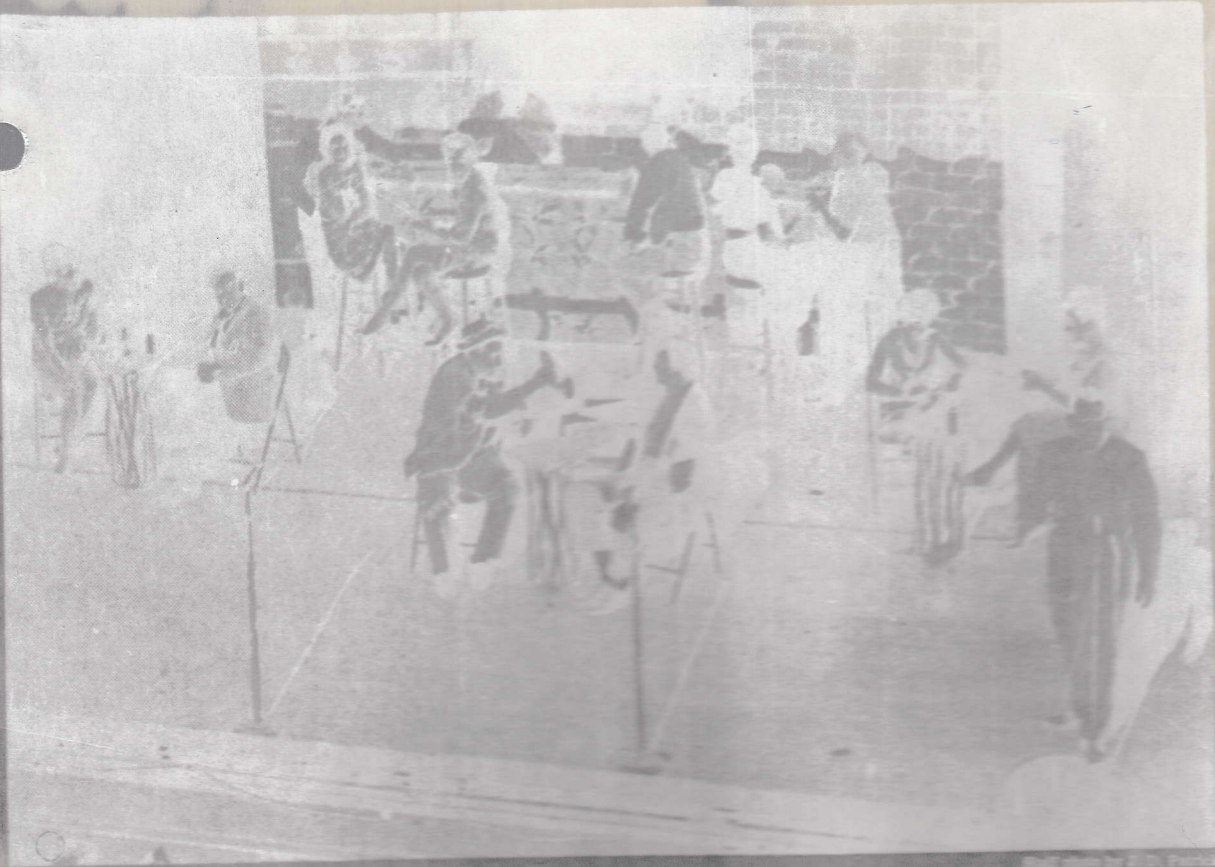
About 60 per cent of the honor of the script lies with the performers, he said.

Although Madden does not have another script in the works, he thinks Decatur could mount an original musical production every two years. One big problem with musicals is the expense: it will cost from \$1,000 to \$1,500 to present "Someone's Widening Our Broadway."

Madden has no formal training in musical composition, although he wrote similar musicals on a smaller scale for community shows at the University of Illinois.

When not writing musicals, Madden is a vice president of A. W. Cash Valve Mfg. Corp. He is a former member of the School Board and former president of the Macon County Chapter of the National Foundation.

Madden is married and has five children. The family lives on a Spring Place.



Staff photo by J. D. Patrick

'Bring Back Those Old City Fathers'

Chris Carver, right, sings in the scene "Bring Back Those Old City Fathers" last night

as Bill Madden's "Summer's Widening Our Broadway" premiered at the Lincoln Theatre. A capacity crowd enjoyed the musical satire which was sponsored by the Junior Welfare Association.

Tonight's performances are at 5:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m.

1,300 Attend Opening of 'S.W.O.B.'

Madden's Play Gives City Chance to Laugh

By Michael K. Burns
Of the Herald Staff

Decatur got a real chance to laugh at itself last night as Bill Madden's "Summer's Widening Our Broadway" opened before a capacity audience in the Lincoln Theatre.

Numerous civic leaders and city officials were among the 1,300 who turned out to see the musical satire sponsored by the Junior Welfare Association.

Taking its topics from recent stories in city (almost) appeared in the Herald and Review, the show speaks every language and cause culture with tongue-in-cheek impudence.

Urban renewal, South Cardozo's oriental motif, school district finances, executive promotion, city commission government, the Sanitary District—all proved easy targets for Madden's wit.

The show's satire does not sting like a sharp barbed wire or buffet like a feather pillow, but it stings even the proudest...



Mayor Arnold Applauds

...to make sure there are no misunderstandings. Madden explains in song at the beginning "Summer can be funny, if you don't take them too close, summer" and the finale, "The City Fathers."

The tale of a struggling 'egg on the cover system through the use of blackouts provided somewhat of a continuity for the disconnected acts and helped to direct the pace and audience's response. That, and producer Lee Dagle, kept the production moving at a lively pace.

With a cast of 125, it is unfortunately impossible to single out individuals for their performance. Vocal solos were noticeably outstanding and effectively conveyed much of the humor of the show.



Tills
Nov 23, 1972

An old-time hearse, drawn by a team of white horses, carries the Luxor mummy to the Lincoln Theater Monday.

Mysterious Mummy Performs at Theater

By David W. Petrina

Coughing and rasping to shake out the dust of "more than 3,000 years," the mysterious Luxor mummy came out of retirement Monday with a performance in the Lincoln Theater.

A string of curious onlookers were drawn to the "premiere," event by the preview ride of the mummy in a glass enclosed hearse drawn by six white horses.

The hearse toured the downtown area and arrived in front of the theater escorted by Macon County sheriff's deputies who acted as pallbearers.

They rushed the "remains" up to a bier in the lobby of the theater where the lid of the coffin was pried off.

One of the workers stooped low to whisper into the "face", painted into a mask.

He quickly placed his ear near the immobile lips. The lips did not move nor was a response heard but the man rose and disappeared, apparently satisfied the Luxor mummy called Ra-Ra-Ra was sufficiently "revived" to begin fielding questions.

Marko the Magician—Richard L. Berry of Decatur, introduced Ra-Ra-Ra.

The crowd pressed to the restraining ropes. Sheriff Ray Rex was first to pose a question, speaking into a vacuum cleaner type hose which was held over the mummy's face by Berry.

He asked how many deputies were in his department, then held the hose to his ear.

"It's kinda raspy, I can't make it out," the sheriff said.

A small child in her mother's arms was overheard to say, "You mean that's a mummy (mommy), too."

Grossman spoke into the hose and waited smiling wide as the mummy explained it may be possible Decatur's population could equal that of Chicago's by the end of the century.

Another councilman, Clarence R. Flint, received an opinion on the city's sewer problem, 30 feet underground on East Main Street.

Yes, the mummy said, it is possible the problem will be solved, "Maybe in the next 20 years!"

No, the Dolphins would not have any trouble in the Monday night football game.

"Yowee, I'm gonna pocket \$200," an enthused sports and mummy fan yelled.

A pregnant woman whispered the question everyone knew.

"What is it gonna be? What did he say?" the crowd pressed.

"Oh, he just said, 'I would realize my expectations,'" she replied.

Another man, apparently from the Community College of Decatur, asked, "What will our spring quarter enrollment total be?"

He, too, laughed and appeared to be pleased with the answer "More than you would imagine."

"What radio station is the best in Decatur? WJZ announcer Lois Howlett asked.

The mummy gave her station's call letters, indicating he could see through closed eyes as well as he could talk through unmoving lips.

The questioning pace slowed until a teen-age girl was coaxed to the speaking tube. Her question was not heard and she broke into a shriek of laughter at the mummy's answer. Only a friend nearby was told the answer.

Thurs., Nov. 23, 1972 Herald and Review

Marko the Magician, Phyllis to Perform

Marko the Magician and Phyllis (Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Berry of Decatur) will take part in Vaudeville '72, which will be presented at 8 p.m. Nov. 30 in the Lincoln Theatre.

Marko and Phyllis will present excerpts from their 1971 "Theatre of Illusion" stage show as part of "Vaudeville '72," according to Terri Alexander, director of the vaudevilian revival.

"Vaudeville '72" is a professionally produced benefit show, profits from which will be used to underwrite student scholarships and student activity programs at the Community College of Decatur.

Mr. and Mrs. Berry are both magicians who have performed professional stage magic for many years. They now tour the U.S. and Canada annually with their "Theatre of Illusion," the largest traveling magic show in this country.

Many of the stage props now used by Marko in his show and to be used during "Vaudeville '72" were originally constructed

by magicians such as Blackstone and Houdini for use in their vaudeville performances during the first third of the century.

Marko met Blackstone back in the 1930's when Blackstone performed a stage magic show at the Lincoln Theatre. Marko later joined Blackstone as an apprentice and traveled with him for many years as his understudy.

Other acts and performers to appear in "Vaudeville '72" include the Beaufort Municipal Band, Dave Nelson, Louis the Great, the Alexander Sisters and the Star Singers.

Also performing will be Bob Ingram, Marjorie Sangster, Rolling Rager, Marcella Cline, Ann and Amy Cannon, Steve Walters, Terry Highland, Bill Woodcock, Mayor James H. Rupp and several dance groups.

Magician To Attempt Great Escape

An exhibition displayed by escape artist Harry Houdini before he died in 1906, will be attempted at 11 a.m. Saturday in Downtown Decatur.

Louis the Great (Louis Blackstone) will attempt to free himself while locked in a straight jacket and suspended upside down high over Main Street in front of the Lincoln Theatre.

July 14, 1968

Hats a Problem

From Opera to Vaudeville, Crowds Packed the Theatres

By Gary W. Blumharts
Of the Herald and Review
Powers Hall, Decatur's first theater, was nothing more than a stage and some seats on the third floor of some of the buildings on the south side of the 1st Block E. Main St.

Constructed in 1858, William L. Powers, a general contractor, built a large meeting place for theater productions and other public gatherings.

Abraham Lincoln was defeated as a senator because there were no theaters in the big for the country.

People gathered in the Powers Hall for the first time in 1858. The theater was built on the site of the old Powers Hall. It was a large building with a stage and seats on the third floor. It was used for theater productions and other public gatherings.

Frank W. Bates was the first manager of the theater. He was a general contractor and a theater producer. He was the first to bring theater to Decatur. He was the first to bring theater to Decatur. He was the first to bring theater to Decatur.

The Powers Opera House was built in 1858. It was a large building with a stage and seats on the third floor. It was used for theater productions and other public gatherings. It was the first theater in Decatur.

The Powers Opera House was built in 1858. It was a large building with a stage and seats on the third floor. It was used for theater productions and other public gatherings. It was the first theater in Decatur.



strate the Charleston on the Lincoln Stage?? It was the latest thing out in 1906."

On April 22, 1906 the first vaudeville act came to Decatur at the Empress Theater.

"Crowds stood before the theater all day long, and many were not able to gain admittance," according to a Herald story of the time.

When the Lincoln Theater in Decatur opened in 1906, the vaudeville act was first. The vaudeville act was first. The vaudeville act was first.

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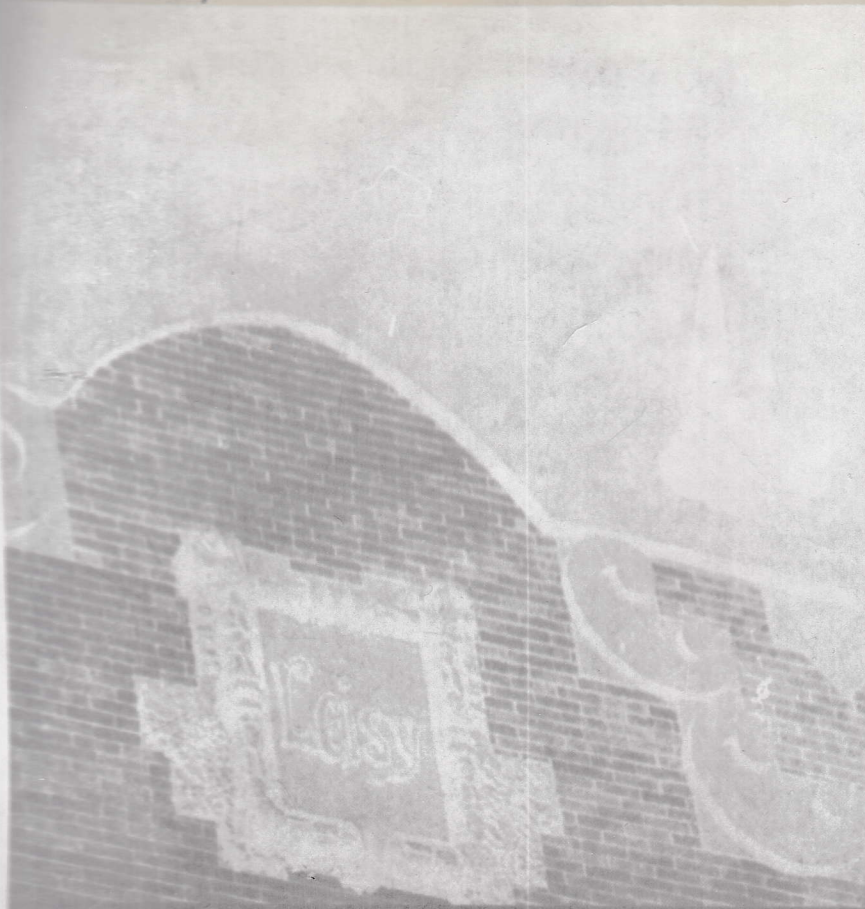


The Powers Grand Opera House burst down two

MONTGOMERY WARD

201 E. Macon - Open 11-5





Leisy is on a building at 118 N. Merchant St., over the Transfer Tap. The building was put up as a saloon by the Leisy Brewing Co., St. Louis.

Buildings Bring Memories

This magnificent building is one of the most artistic works and one of the most famous in the downtown buildings. Leisy Brewing Building. This building was opened in 1916.



Leiton is on a building at 118 N. Merchant St., over the Transfer Tap. The building was put up as a saloon by the Leiton Brewing Co., St. Louis.

Denz is a name which appears on a building which runs through from Merchant Street to North Main Street. Edward A. Dens, who died in 1934 at the age of 50, had this building built in 1916.

DECATUR DIARY

Cliff-Hanger Serials Gave Early Delight

By Jim Dedman
Of the Herald and Review

In the early days of Decatur's silent movies, the serial, forerunner of today's soap opera, was the main attraction.

"To be continued" always left you on the edge of your seat and wild horses couldn't keep you away from the next episode. Perhaps that is why better than 20,000 persons a week attended movie theaters in Decatur by 1909. While there were main features, the serial was the thing.

By 1913, Decatur had nine movie houses, six of them on Water Street. The Oakland Theatre, 127 S. Oakland Ave., was one place where they were lucky that the movies were silent, because when a Wabash freight train went by on a hot summer evening and they had the front and back doors open, the printed word came through clearly.

The Oakland opened with a Mexican border serial, "Liberty," in 1913. But the blonde that packed them in was Pearl White. While "The Perils of Pauline" is always mentioned first, Pearl made a lot of serials, most of them better.

One of her best, "The Purple Mask," had Pearl in a heroine-type part, playing a quiet, average girl in the daytime, but at night, as worn the purple mask, a dark cloak and her famous long hair, and she was all a luscious Warner Oland as evil Chinese.

In fact, the Chinese had more trouble with Pearl than with the Russians today.

Oland, who years later played "Fu Manchu" and "Charlie Chan," would throw Pearl into a underground pool with an alligator, and "to be continued" would bring you back next week.

Some other Pearl White serials were "The Pearl Ring" and "The Ebony Book."

Most all theaters had a pianist who played whatever music was appropriate to whatever was taking place on the screen. She had to be both versatile and blessed with imagination to follow the action. The larger theaters had an orchestra.

Slides would come on before the show began, reading "no smoking, please," "Ladies, please remove your hats," and "Please do not eat peanuts and throw the shucks on the floor." Later, there would be advertising slides by area merchants.

One thing unusual about Pearl White was that she did 90 per cent of her own stunts. In very few shots did a man with a blonde wig double for her, but one stunt man did fall 25 feet and died of a fractured skull.

Another queen of the serials was Ruth Roland. "Ruth of the Rockies" was one of her early serials.

Ruth, in contrast to Pearl, was usually in trouble with a lion, a tiger or a huge snake. "Trail of the Tiger" was one of her best, where a fanatic bunch of natives was always trying to sacrifice Ruth to a sacred tiger.

There were a lot of other serials—"The Ties of Hearts"—where two sisters, one good and the evil, were after the same hero.

"The Iron Claw" and "The Twisted Thread" were fillers. "The Phantom Rider," for a change, had a male lead. But it was the heroine who was most easily put in jeopardy, and the Decatur fans loved her.

In the late '20s, the serial declined, because it didn't quite have its earlier appeal—probably because the main features, either comedy or drama, were constantly getting better.

Then, too, the better movie, condensed into a full-length feature, took the place of the weekly cliff-hanger. And so the serial, which gave pleasure to millions, passed into history—gone but not forgotten.

Bernhardt To Valentino: Silent Drama

By James M. Dedman
Of the Herald and Review

While the serials provided the "big draw" for early Decatur movie fans, the silent drama was beginning to catch up.

Sarah Bernhardt — "Divine Sarah" of the stage — realized she could be enshrined forever on celluloid, and she made "Queen Elizabeth" in 1912.

But D. W. Griffith was the man who first treated the motion picture as an art when he produced "The Birth of a Nation" in 1915. This also launched Lillian Gish on a series of big pictures.

Based on the novel "The Clansman," "The Birth of a Nation" for years held the title for the top box office attraction.

It came to the Empress Theatre in Decatur, which was across the street from the present Avon, on Jan. 14, 1916, for one week. There were both matinee and evening performances. All seats were reserved, running in price from 50 cents to \$2 — high in those days.

A 30-piece orchestra traveled with the picture, which enhanced its performance. It was a three-hour show.

Ahead of Times

Griffith was for years the leading producer of "spectaculars." He followed his first success with another big picture, "Intolerance." While it was a fine film, it was a financial failure, probably because the audience of that day wasn't quite ready for it.

Depicting the spirit of intolerance through the ages, it was four separate stories: The fall of Babylon, the story of Christ, the massacre of the Huguenots in France, and a modern story. Since the action kept jumping from one period to another, many in the audience were more confused than entertained.

"Intolerance" came to the Lincoln Theatre on March 1, 1917 for one matinee and two evening performances only, with prices from 25 cents to \$1.50.

It was advertised as having a symphony orchestra of 30 and chorus accompanying the film, with "125,000 people, 7,500 horses, 1,200 chariots and 3,000 scenes."

The Gish sisters, Dorothy and Lillian, were appearing in the same pictures, such as "Hearts of the World," a 1917 war picture depicting German cruelty to the Belgians and French.

And who can ever forget "Orphans of the Storm," when Lillian was lowered on the guillotine, the executioner was reaching for the cord, and Monte Blue, as Danton, rushed up to rescue her at the head of a troop of cavalry while her blind sister was weeping at the foot of the scaffold.

Big Three

Meanwhile, "America's Sweetheart," Mary Pickford, after a lot of "slapstick" comedies, was coming on strong along with the other members of the "Big Three," Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks Sr.

Fairbanks was probably the best swashbuckler, and definitely the most athletic, of all the stars. Give him a sword

and he made "The Three Musketeers," "The Mark of Zorro" (1920), "Robin Hood" (1922) and countless others.

Chaplin made "The Kid" with Jackie Coogan in 1920, and the "Gold Rush" (1925), along with many lesser comedies.

Lon Chaney scored his first success in "The Miracle Man" (1919) and followed with "The Penalty." But his first big one was as the deformed, deaf Quasimodo in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame".

Chaney followed this success in 1925 with "The Phantom of the Opera".

Phantom Unveiled

If you saw it, can you ever forget the audience reaction when Mary Philbin, coming up on the phantom playing at the organ, tore off his mask to reveal his hideous face for the first time?

Rudolf Valentino was every woman's heart-throb, starting with "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," and reducing them to jelly as "The Sheik." When he died suddenly six years later, women rioted at his funeral and almost wrecked the funeral parlor.

"The Ten Commandments" and "The Covered Wagon" were his pictures in 1923.

These were followed by "The Iron Horse," "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," "The Freshman" with Harold Lloyd, and "The Big Parade" with John Gilbert. The latter was the first of the war pictures to show the reaction to the glory of war and show the hopeless horror of it all.

"All Quiet On the Western Front" with Lew Ayers was the first picture sympathetic to the Germans (1930).

"Beau Geste," with an all-star cast of Noah Berry, Neil Hamilton, Ronald Coleman, Ralph Forbes and William Powell, made in 1926, is another picture that has been remade but never equalled.

"Ben Hur," which had been a huge stage success, came to the screen with Ramon Novarro in the lead. The famous chariot race was far more thrilling than it could ever be on a stage.

"The King of Kings" in 1927, and Clara Bow in "It," were not dimmed by the arrival of a new medium — the talkies — when Al Jolson made the first one, "The Jazz Singer."

While a few more silent movies were made, sound was definitely in, and within a few years, the silents were silent forever.



Nickel admissions were the custom in the old Bijou theater in Paul Witte's early days in Decatur as shown in the above picture taken approximately 33 years ago. At the side of the big Bijou was the "little Bijou" offering "60 laughs a minute" with the picture "My

Friend, the Indian." The big Bijou offered an amateur vaudeville contest and 3,000 feet of features.

Shown in the picture, as identified by Mr. Witte, are, left to right, "Skinny" Allen, Decatur painter; Jake Moore, now of Springfield; the late Virg

Sanders, proprietor of the Virg d' Or billiard and poolroom; a young woman employed in a postcard counter by Mr. Sanders. Mr. Witte could not identify the person standing next to the young woman, but sixth from the left is Ray Colvin, now of St. Louis. Standing at the extreme right is Mr. Witte.

Paul Witte to Retire Jan. 1 After Long Theater Career

After 35 years in the Decatur theater business, Paul Witte will retire Jan. 1 as city manager of the Lincoln and Empress theaters in Decatur.

Under a new policy, the Great States Theaters will discontinue the city manager position, placing full responsibility upon the two house managers, Thomas Finin, Jr., at the Lincoln, and John Wendell at the Empress.

Since he first set foot in Decatur as a stranger on Oct. 6, 1906, Mr. Witte has seen and been a part of the development of Decatur motion picture theaters from flicker nickelodeons to the modern establishments now showing masterpieces of sound and film. Few men have been a part of the business throughout this entire era of development.

Ex-Vaudeville Performer

Mr. Witte's long career in the Decatur show business illustrates the manner in which a quick decision, after little consideration, may change one's life.

In his early life, Mr. Witte was a vaudeville performer. His home was in LaCrosse, Wis. One day he received a telegram from the late A. Sigfried, offering a position with the old Bijou theater. A piano player in the Bijou had recommended Mr. Witte for the job. He came to Decatur at once, and remained with Mr. Sigfried until he sold his theater to the Great States chain in January, 1929. During their association in the show business a great bond of friendship developed between the two men which continued until Mr. Sigfried's death.

After the sale of the Bijou Mr.



PAUL WITTE

Witte became city manager of the Bijou, Lincoln and Empress. The Bijou was discontinued several years ago.

Was Contortionist

For a few years in his early vaudeville days, Mr. Witte performed as a contortionist. In closing his act, he contorted his body to spell the letters of his last name.

As he explains this feat, it sounds anything but simple, except for the letter "I."

For the first letter, the performer contrived to get his legs pointed up over his head, his head making the center of the letter. For the second letter, all he had to do was stand erect. Then came the double "T." For this, he stood on

his head with his legs in a split. For the final letter, he used a small barrel as a "prop." Placing himself inside the barrel, his head protruded through a hole in the center, while a leg dangled from either end to make the three arms of the letter. Still inside the barrel, he walked from the stage. Mr. Witte also appeared in stock and in tumbling acts.

Mr. Witte said he has no plans for the immediate future, except that he and Mrs. Witte will remain in Decatur.

Lincoln Manager Came in 1940

Mr. Finin came to the Lincoln as house manager in May, 1940, after serving as assistant manager of the Orpheum theater in Springfield. Before leaving Decatur in 1933, he was house manager of the Empress theater. He was with the Palace theater in Peoria for a short time before going to the Orpheum in Springfield. After graduation from high school here, he attended Millikin university, where he was a member of Kappa Delta Chi.

Manager Wendell of the Empress has been associated with Decatur theaters for 15 years. For several years he has been the Empress manager, with the exception of a brief period in which he managed the Great States houses in Danville, in 1936.

Jan. 1929

May 13, 1974
Theater
Now Under
New Banner

The Lincoln Theater, 141 N. Main St., is now officially under management of Plitt Theaters Inc.

Sale of the ABC Great States Theaters chain to Henry G. Plitt was recently completed for \$25 million. Agreement in principle for the sale was made last October.

The chain consists of 123 theaters in 12 Midwestern and Western states. ABC Inc. still owns 266 theaters in 11 other states.

Plitt was president of ABC Great States. Management of the Lincoln and most other theaters in the chain will remain the same.

Decatur Review
Dec. 11, 1974 ↓

Lincoln Theatre Sold

The Lincoln Theatre, 141 N. Main St., has been sold to Kerasotes Theatres of Springfield, which owns four other Decatur movie establishments.

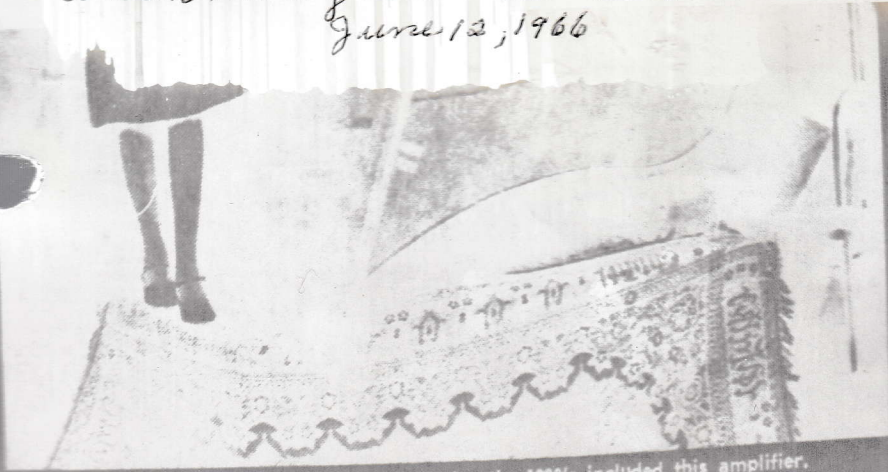
Harold Williams, manager of the Lincoln, said he was officially notified of the sale Monday. Kerasotes will take over management of the theater next Monday, he said.

The Lincoln is now owned by Plitt Theatres of Chicago, formerly ABC Great States Theatres. The theater was built in 1915 as a stage playhouse and hosted many nationally known performers.

Williams said he understood the theater was to be remodeled, though he did not know when work would begin or how extensive the changes would be.

Conversion of the 1,200-seat theater into a twin movie house is reported to be one design under study by Kerasotes.

The firm now owns the Avon, 426 N. Water St.; the Rogers, 1120 E. Wood St.; the Drive-In, 2500 N. Jasper St.; and the Outdoor, 2475 N. 22nd St.



Equipment in the Lincoln Theater during the 1920's included this amplifier.

Decatur Diary

Stagehands Now Projectionists

By Richard S. Edinger
Of the Herald and Review

What has become of all the stage and property men who played an important role in Decatur theatrical production in the days when the city was a hub of stage activity?

Many of them are still around.

But when vaudeville began to fade and the principal entertainment medium was replaced by the "talking" motion picture, many of the state assistants became movie projector operators.

Fifty years ago this year, Local 428 of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees and Motion Picture Machine Operators was formed in Decatur.

Today there are 12 members in the union—10 active and two retired. Many of the 12 members were active back in the days before moving pictures "took over" the vaudeville stage.

But, even though the members are geographers, their skills still maintain departments for films and stage production work.

The Lincoln Theater is now 50 years old, and Curtis has been a projectionist there for the past 41 years.

Three-act plays, both drama and musicals, used to be standard fare at the Lincoln, along with the films. The local movie operators have seen many stage personalities come and go over the years.

Ethel Barrymore, Tallulah Bankhead, Charles Coburn and Monty Wolley were among the thespians who appeared on the stage.

Jeanette MacDonald and Gene Raymond appeared in a musical comedy at the Lincoln in 1951.

—W. N. Hambrecht and J. J. Steele, both projectionists at the Lincoln Theater.

—O. O. Moran Jr., W. W. Hambrecht and R. O. Dilley Jr., projectionists at the Drive In and Outdoor theaters.

—Joseph Keller, projectionist at the Rogers Theater.

Sons Recruited

Asked about the similarity of names in the above list, Curtis said that during the early 30's when the Depression was at its height, motion picture operators recruited their eldest sons into the business.

Curtis said he has a grandson who is about to become a projectionist.

The names Bijou, Nickelodean, Crescent, Empress, Nickel Bijou and Powers are all familiar to the movie operators. All of these, with one exception, were old movie houses in Decatur.

The one exception is the Powers Theater, which was an opera house. Moving pictures were never shown at the Powers.

The Lincoln Theater is now 50 years old, and Curtis has been a projectionist there for the past 41 years.

Three-act plays, both drama and musicals, used to be standard

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9. TAI-PAN Clavell
 10. THE COMEDIANS. Greene
- General
1. THE LAST BATTLE. Ryan
 2. IN COLD BLOOD. Capote
 3. PAPA HEMINGWAY. Hotchner
 4. HOW TO AVOID PROBATE. Dacey
 5. HUMAN SEXUAL RESPONSE. Masters and Johnson
 6. GAMES PEOPLE PLAY. Berne
 7. UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED. Nader
 8. THE LAST HUNDRED DAYS. Toland
 9. THE PROUD TOWER. Tuchman
 10. THE BIG SPENDERS. Beebe

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Alumni, parents, students and friends of Culver Stockton College will attend a picnic at 2:30 p.m. today in No. 3 Pavilion in Nelson Park.

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Only a few maintain a high level of excellence through their 50's and 60's. Fewer still write their finest books in their old age. Andre Maurois, one of the most distinguished French writers of this century, an amazingly versatile and industrious man of letters, is one of those few. His fiction, satires, essays and criticism are all superior. His early biographies were good. But it is his four massive biographies of 19th century French novelists, a writer during the last 15 years that are his master works.

The first three were biographies of George Sand, Hugo and the two Dumas. The fourth, which is now published a few months before Maurois' 81 birthday, is a biography of Balzac, "the greatest novelist of his century."

Estere de Balzac, the grandson of a peasant, the son of a shady army contractor, was a writer of prodigious genius. Like so many greatly gifted artists he had no talent for bringing peace, order or good sense to his private life. The best which Balzac was capable,

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March 7, 1971

Decatur's Helen Ferguson Rose to Hollywood Eminence

By Art Buchwald

By Cheryl D. Peck

A former Decatur girl, Helen Ferguson, rose to fame on the silent motion picture screen and later was called one of Hollywood's most esteemed public relations and career counselors.

Miss Ferguson was born in Decatur in 1901, a daughter of Emelie de Blanc Ferguson and Fred W. Ferguson. They lived in a small house at 517 N. Water St.

She lived here until she was 10 years old. Miss Ferguson attended E. A. Gastman School and did some of her first acting in playlets there.

Her mother and younger sister, Catherine, then moved to Chicago, where the girls attended high school.

When Helen was 13, she entered motion pictures as an extra in the old Essanay Studios in Chicago. At 14, she went to New York where she was engaged to make a propaganda picture for the government.

Her performance in that picture resulted in a contract with Famous Players in California, where she stayed for six years and made 10 silent films.

Miss Ferguson went to Los Angeles in 1919 and worked for the Famous Players. She was just finished what she considered the last part of her contract. She was cast as Helen in the picture "The Sign of the Cross" which Famous Players produced.

She said she hoped all her Decatur friends would see it when it was released.

In 1920 she was featured prominently in "The Sign of the Cross" which was a big success.

In 1921 she married an actor and moved with him to New York. He was a big success and she was a big success.

She was a big success and she was a big success. She was a big success and she was a big success.

She was a big success and she was a big success. She was a big success and she was a big success.



Helen Ferguson
Decatur
Diary

In 1920 she married Richard L. Hargreaves, president of the Beverly Hills First National Bank of Beverly Hills, Calif.

In 1920 Hargreaves had divorced his previous wife, who was Grace Bryan Hargreaves, daughter of William Jennings Bryan.

In 1921 Helen entered the public relations. She printed her name, using lipstick, on the door of a woman Hollywood actress.

The first office contained a locked cage, three chairs, two desks and a table. It was a five-office building in a building, a secretary, two waiters, and a receptionist.

In the year that followed, she also appeared, modeled, or photographed many of Hollywood's top stars such as Josephine McKim, Walter Pate, and others.

Dolores Del Rio, Constance Bennett, Barbara Stanwyck, Ida Lupino and Fay Wray.

In 1941 Hargreaves died of a heart attack in Hollywood.

Helen's father died in 1936 in St. Mary's hospital. He had lived at 124 1/2 N. Merchant St.

A life-long resident of Decatur, Ferguson was a retired tinsmith and the former owner of Ferguson's Hardware Store which stood at 658 E. Eldorado St. The store was established by his father, William L. Ferguson.

In May, 1961, Helen doubled as repairer for the dress of Barbara Stanwyck at the Emmy Award festivities.

News photographs showed her fixing Miss Stanwyck's dress torn as the actress went on the stage to receive the best actress award at the Hollywood ceremonies.

Miss Ferguson, at that time, had been publicity agent for Miss Stanwyck many years.

A condensation of Loretta Young's book that appeared in an April 1961, issue of The Ladies Home Journal was written by Miss Ferguson.

In writing the condensation of the book, "The Things I had to Learn" as told to her by Miss Young, Miss Ferguson pointed to Miss Young's essentials of charm.

Loretta Young once said of her: "I've heard her on the telephone. I've heard her practically under the wires — and I've heard her soft as with the soft voice."

In answer to questions about her success, Helen has said, "I've been poor enough to be used that I've earned enough to see my income tax. Besides, as far as I'm concerned and as an actress, the only real bargain in the world is what you get for your money. When I'm paying income tax in the States, I'm paying income tax in the States."

Decatur Yesterdays

10 Years Ago - 1961

The Macon County Democratic Co. has begun wrecking three buildings in the 124 Block E. Wood St. to make way for a parking lot. The Empire Pool Room and the La Petite Cafe formerly occupied the

buildings. The buildings were built in the 1920s. The subject was "What do you suggest for the goal of the 1960s?"

J. J. Wilkey was elected president of the Macon County Council of the American

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Big Fires in Decatur

23 114 2-8

Wabash freight house, Nov. 21, 1890	\$ 44,000
Union Elevator, Nov. 21, 1890	100,000
Furniture factory, Nov. 19, 1891	50,000
Decatur Lumber & Mfg. Co., Nov. 19, 1891	12,000
Old Library block, Feb. 21, 1892	100,000
Old Smith opera house, Sept. 11, 1894	15,000
B. O. McReynolds, Feb. 9, 1895	10,000
P. Loeb building, March 15, 1895	75,000
Union Iron Works, Aug. 6, 1895	30,000
Powers opera house and Linn & Scruggs, Nov. 5, 1895	250,000
Gebhart block, Feb. 29, 1896	60,000
N. A. Cruzan and Wabash avenue property, April 12, 1896	60,000
C. B. & Q. factory, Jan. 17, 1899	35,000
Faries factory, Oct. 9, 1900	35,000
Shellabarger mill, Dec. 26, 1901	35,000
Mueller, Platt & Wheeland Co., Feb. 11, 1901	116,000
Decatur Gun Co., July 4, 1901	20,000
Charles T. Johnson store, July 6, 1901	21,000
Central Malleable Iron Works, Nov. 14, 1904	35,000
Decatur and Arcade hotels, Nov. 17, 1904	37,000
Decatur Cereal mill, June 8, 1909	265,000
Morehouse & Wells and other buildings, Aug. 22, 1909	508,049
Mantel factory, Jan. 8, 1911	200,000
Suffern-Hunt mill, Nov. 30, 1913	30,580
Linn & Scruggs and Powers theater, second fire April 7, 1914	565,117
Decatur and Arcade hotels, second fire, April 21, 1915	180,000
Scovill Furniture store, Oct. 1, 1917	140,000
Leader Iron Works, Nov. 6, 1920	125,000
Bowman Barn fire, Feb. 13, 1922	15,000
Shellabarger Elevator Co., Feb. 3, 1923	125,000
Wabash Shops, Feb. 26, 1924	250,000
Irwin Neister, Dec. 25, 1925	100,000
W. C. Starr garage	200,000

Lincoln Theatre

Fire Damage Is Estimated 350 At \$40,000

Charred wreckage remained on the sunken, water-soaked, fire-saten floors of two stores in the 100 block North Main street today after yesterday's \$40,000, four-hour fire.

Insurance adjusters were on hand this morning to figure damages; and the work of reconstruction is expected to be started at once. A fire department pumper unit was kept running most of the night to remove thousands of gallons of water from the basement of the stores.

All available fire equipment was put into service yesterday and all firemen were called in as the blaze threatened to get out of control shortly after 2:30 p. m.

New Outbreak of Smoke

The fire actually did not appear to be under control until after 3 p. m. As late as 3:25 p. m. excitement flared again when smoke broke through the south wall of the Lincoln theater lobby; but firemen ripped off panels and shot water into the opening and the smoke stopped.

Fire Chief Claude Osborne estimated damage to buildings at \$20,000 and damage to contents also at \$20,000.

Elmer Rambo, owner of the Rambo pharmacy, suffered the greatest loss of stock in the fire. He estimated his loss to contents at \$10,000, since the entire first floor and basement had to be flooded in order to stop the fire.

George Cook, operator of the jewelry store in the front part of the drug store, said it was difficult for him to estimate his damage. Three hundred watches were in the jeweler's quarters for repair.

Unable to recover them when the fire first got underway, Mr. Cook last night secured \$3,000 worth of loose diamonds undamaged by the blaze.

Several trays of rings, valued at \$4,500, were carried by Mr. Cook to the adjoining flower shop during the fire. The spread of the fire, however, caused the flower shop floor to sink and the jewelry fell into the water-filled basement. Mr. Cook, at 10 o'clock today, still had not recovered jewelry.

Lincoln Square Tavern, estimated his loss at \$1,800. He said that he suffered some loss to the interior of his place from water and smoke. Water in the basement did not injure the liquor stock but cigars and other supplies were ruined.

Mary Alice Cramer, clerk in the Lincoln flower shop, said she did not know of the fire until the arrival of the fire trucks in front of the store. Before she could reach the cash register the smoke suddenly started pouring into the store and she left quickly.

Mrs. C. B. Allen, owner of the flower shop, was home ill at the time of the fire, but she came downtown to attempt to secure her clothing which she had left in the shop while her home is being repaired. The clothing was destroyed. She said all she had left was the dress she was wearing.

Crash Through Floor

Mrs. Allen estimated the loss at her flower shop would amount to at least \$2,000. A large refrigerator which cannot be replaced was badly damaged. A stock of Christmas wreaths and baskets and pottery also was a total loss.

J. F. Darby, operator of the Darby Beauty salon, also in the flower shop location, estimated his loss to equipment and stock at \$750. A permanent wave machine was ruined, he said, and was covered by only \$500 insurance.

At the Lincoln cafe, Tom Greanias, proprietor, said his only damage was to walls which might require some redecoration.

Most of the floors in both the drug store and the flower shop collapsed. The soda fountain in the drug store crashed through the floor and in the flower shop a large refrigerator fell through.

Military Police Help

Arthur and Fao Wait, who own the buildings from the Lincoln cafe to the Linn & Scruggs building, said they carried \$150,000 insurance on the buildings, and that the damaged stores would be repaired as soon as possible.

A detail of military police from the military police camp here volunteered for duty at the fire and assisted in keeping the crowd back. Staff Sgt. Otis Jettors was in charge of the detail which continued on guard throughout last night.

Heated for fire yesterday afternoon, was back again today for the noon show, to which they were to be admitted. They began lining up at about 11:30 and shortly afterward the doors were opened. A large number bought tickets, but most of the first audience was made up of yesterday's disappointed crowds.

Blackstone put on his show at about 1 o'clock, despite yesterday's excitement and the sadness of the morning when his stage manager, Teddy Banks, dropped dead.

Early this morning the theater reeked heavily of smoke, but by the time the first crowds were admitted the air was clean and fresh. The ventilating system was used all morning, a special deodorizing machine was attached, and all the doors had been open, with a good breeze blowing through.

The Howe School of Music was not damaged by the fire and is open for classes today, according to Miss Myra Howe, who operates the school located on the second floor above the damaged stores.

The work of removing the equipment of Blackstone from the theater was in charge of his brother, who looks enough like the magician to be his twin. Throughout the day he was constantly being mistaken for the magician.

A woman telephoned the newspaper office just before noon today to report that Boske Carter, in his news broadcast this morning, had used for his first item the story of Blackstone the magician, who did his best and fastest trick in Decatur yesterday when he made 1,000 children disappear in clearing the Lincoln theater.

Radios in Basement Receive Soaking

The Emerson Piano House, which has been having trouble this summer with restrictions on the manufacture and sale of pianos and other musical instruments, radios, phonographs, electric refrigerators and nearly everything else sold there, had a little more trouble added on Wednesday.

The fire in Rambo's drug store a couple of doors south sent smoke billowing all through the store, put nine inches of water in the basement, and completely soaked a few precious radios stored down there. John McDermott thought this morning, however, that the instruments could be dried out without loss. He is so anyhow.

Blackstone the magician gave the shortest and best performance of his career Wednesday in Decatur's Lincoln theater. He made about 1,000 children disappear in five minutes.

It was just time for his first performance of a two-day stand when fire broke out in Rambo's drug store next door. The fire wall between is 24 inches thick, says Architect Charles Aschauer, and the whole south corner of the block could burn and the theater not be affected by fire, but smoke was pouring that way. So it was thought best to clear the theater.

Lewis Tells Story

With Ed Lewis, new man on the theater staff, at his heels, Blackstone strolled out on the stage. The movie had been cut short and the lights turned up. Mr. Lewis tells the story.

"Children," said Blackstone, "I'm going to perform a few tricks for you, but first will be one you've never seen before and never will see again. You have to go outside for it. Slowly. First this section. When you are out, there's a surprise for you. Look up in the sky and you'll see it."

"All exit doors were open," continues Mr. Lewis, "and the entire staff was alert. Blackstone kept up his chatter and stories, and did a few hand tricks. The children went out as orderly as you please, all full of curiosity.

"After the first section was out, the second and then the third went, the downstairs audience through the alley door, the upstairs crowd

HIS BEST PERFORMANCE

Blackstone Uses Magic in Clearing Theater

down the fire escape. There wasn't a flutter.

Wept From Strain

"When they were all out, Blackstone went down in his dressing room and burst into tears from the nervous strain. It was terrific, all that responsibility on him."

Word of the fire spread rapidly over town and mothers from every corner of the city, who knew their children were in the theater, began gathering at the front door. The theater management was ready for that emergency too. Staff men were posted there to tell them where to find their children, other officials pointed the best way to get around behind the buildings where most of the children were still standing in orderly fashion, awaiting orders.

Objected to Leaving

"It's just a trick of Blackstone's," one indignant woman protested to a policeman in the alley back of the Lincoln, after the theater had been cleared of its afternoon audience by the magician, because of the fire next door. "There's no fire. I want back in there. Blackstone said it was a trick and it is. I want to see the rest of the show."

Patently the officer explained that the trick was to get the audience out of the theater safely, that the fire was real, that the theater was closed, that she could come some other day. Finally she left, grumpily, still not believing the fire was real. When last seen, she was headed around into Main street to see for herself.

The theater's loss in admission fees Wednesday, because the house was closed all afternoon and evening, was estimated at about \$2,000, but the managers consider it small when they think what the loss in life might have been had there been a panic.

See Card

Lincoln Theater

THE LINCOLN (SQUARE) THEATRE

Some Of Its History

by Frankelm Wait
of New York City,
for the
Zonta Club
project
Written

This is a quick-trigger piece - disorganized and consistently disjointed. The "information" has been culled from programs, not always dated, and from memory that may be faulty at times.

Nov. 16, 1971

Until sometime in the 1930's, when its name was changed to LINCOLN THEATRE, it was called THE LINCOLN SQUARE THEATRE. It was built after the fire in 1915 that destroyed the Decatur Hotel and Arcade Hotel. Clarence A. Wait had inherited the heavily mortgaged corner from his father's estate. He decided to build a theatre which could house and present the best stage plays and shows that were plentifully available in those days when "the road" ^{was} an extensive theatrical system.

Frankelm Wait
is a nephew
of C.A. Wait,
original owner

The architects who designed the Lincoln Square Theatre were Aschauer & Waggoner of Decatur. The theatre was furnished sumptuously, its curtains and fire-proof curtain were the best of the times.

The theatre was opened probably in October 27 of 1916. The program for the first production, "HIT-THE-TRAIL-HOLLIDAY" gives only the date "Friday Evening, October 27."

The theatre seated some 1600 in its "orchestra" mezzanine and balcony and boxes. There was an orchestra pit, flanked by a box on each side ~~on~~ on the main floor and a box above each on the mezzanine level.

(more)

For that opening night, the orchestra was under the direction of Robert Walter. The play, "Hit-The-Trail-Holliday" was by George M. Cohan (suggested by George Middleton & Guy Bolton) and produced by Cohan & Harris. Frank Otto - George M. Cohan's cousin - played the title role of Billy Holliday. Between two of the acts, he introduced Clarence A. Wait who spoke briefly about what he hoped the theatre would mean for Decatur.

H.K. Shockley was manager of the theatre and C.H. Weidner was asst. Mgr. and Treasurer.

At that time the movie spectacles of D.W. Griffith, and the ~~many~~ "colossal" productions of other filmmakers were being distributed to what were known as "legitimate" theatres; those which ~~presented~~ presented stage productions exclusively. So between stage plays such as "Experience" Mrs. Fiske in "ERSTWHILE SUSAN" in April of 1917, such movie features as Griffith's "Intolerance", "The Birth of the Race" and "Hearts of The World" were shown.

During the early days of the Lincoln Square Theatre the emphasis was on stage shows. Mrs. Fiske appeared again in 1923 in "The Last Card;" Otis Skinner began his numerous appearances at the Lincoln in May of 1919, appearing then in "The Honor of The Family;" in 1921 he returned in "Mister Antonio;" in 1924 ~~him~~ December,

(more)

of that year, he acted and sang! in a musical "Sancho Panza" based on Don Quixote.

Among the many stars who have appeared on the stage of the ~~Lincoln~~ Lincoln have been Ethel Barrymore in "The Off Chance in 1920's, in "The Corn Is Green," Dec. 9, 1943; The Dolly Sisters in "Oh Look" during the 1919-1920 season; Laurette Taylor in "PegeO' My Heart" Feb. 1920; Anna Pavlowa "The Incomparable And Her Ballet Russe" as the program states, December 22, - 1921? Geraldine Farrar appeared in a concert, November 14, 1922; Harry Lauder sang for a matinee and night performance Feb. 8, 1921; Walter Hampden played "The Taming Of The Shrew" at a matinee, Wednesday, February 22, 1922, and played "Hamlet" that same night!

Lionel Barrymore appeared only once at the Lincoln Square as far as these records ~~announcements~~ of programs indicate. He acted the role of Achille Cortelon in "The Claw". The leading lady was Irene Fenwick who played opposite Lionel in many ~~of his~~ ^{later} stage productions.

Al Jolson in 1921- or 1922 appeared in a production "Sinbad" billed as "The Most Popular Singer in The World With a Budget of Corking New Songs." It was in March of either one of those years. He drove from Springfield where he had appeared the night before - the roads were not all paved between there and Decatur. He was almost stuck in the mud several times. During the musical he frequently made a quip about the "road to Decatur."

George Arliss, in "Jacques Duval" Dec. 15, 1919

4)

Ed Wynn cavorted about the Lincoln stage in "Carnival" - rather it was "Ed Wynn Carnival" in May of 1920; several years later, he returned in "The Perfect Fool." In October 1923, Jane Cowl played Juliet in Shakespeare's Romeo And Juliet. Jack Donahue danced in the musical comedy "Molly Darling" in November of 1923. Olga Petrova was in the romance "The White Peacock" sometime during the 1923-1924 season. Richard Bennett, father of Constance, Joan and Barbara, appeared in "The Barker" in 1928.

There were many movies during the early days - the serials - Ruth Roland in "Hands Up;" Pearl White in "The Black Secret." There were movie comedies of Buster Keaton, Charlin Chaplin, Charlie Chase, and the many editions of Pathe News to furnish a "prologue" to the feature film. The orchestra, in those silent days played for the highlights of the program - first an overture, then for the News footage. Then, for the comedy, a pianist or later an organist took over while the members of the orchestra retired. ^{They} reappeared when the feature film was developing dramatically, romantically or comically. Then would ^{they} give forth with the appropriate classical or popular music.

Such productions as "Irene", "Tea For Three"; The Sonora Grand Opera Company for several days presented "Rigoletto," "Il Trovatore" and "Lucia Di Lammermoor;" Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen," the Lassie's White All Star Minstrels;" "The Greenwich Village Follies;" numerous companys presented bloodhounds and ~~mm~~ floating ice

(more)

and Littel Eva heavens in their interpretations of "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" "Blossom Time" "Rio Rita;" (all of these were stage productions) "Rose Marie"; "You Can't Take It With You;" "Life With Father;" and "Arsenic And Old Lace," all graced the stage of the Lincoln - and many many more.

But, not least important, the Lincoln Square Theatre was a place for the presentation of many other things. There were a number of High School Graduation exercises held there. Jack Dempsey put on a sparring exhibition after his famed fight with Georges Carpentier. Blackstone the magician appeared there a number of times, the last time in August 1942 when he had to calmly persuade and pacify the audience, mostly children, out the doors and fire escapes when a fire broke out in the Rambo Drugstore next door. Senator Hiram Johnson a presidential candidate from California, made a primary campaign speech there in spring of 1924

There were many local shows and performances presented. One of the first was "Jollies of 1919" presented by Ansar Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S. a "Big Minstrel Comedy Revue - Put on as Shriners do everything" on the night of Saturday January 13, 1919. "Heaven, Hell or Hoboken," was produced in 1920 by a group of enterprising war veterans under the direction of a jeweler R.H. Heil Later "The First American Legion Minstrels" was produced by Castle Williams Post Number 105. In October of, probably 1921, the Decatur Musical College presented a "Dance Divertissements 'Ballet de Masquerade' under the

(more)

the direction of Annette Van Dyke." The "symphony" orchestra was under the direction of G. Tommasi who directed the Lincoln orchestra for years (from probably) 1918 - 1924. A year later, the same dance group ~~presented~~ presented "A Living Doll Revue" and in December 1922 during the Christmas holidays the Decatur Musical College put on "Junior Follies of 1922," billed as "A miniature edition of the Fokine Ballet introduced in the Ziegfeld 1922 Follies."

"Whose Little Bride Are You?" was produced in April 1923 by the Decatur Fans Association to raise money for the Decatur Three-Eye baseball team. The talent was local, R.H. Heil playing a prominent part with Norma Connor, Everett Penhallegon, Robert Barracks, Victor C. Dewin - local/
 A/group calledg themselves "The Mokanna Players," presented during the 1919-1920 season - presumably on March 31st and April 1st of 1920 - "Seven Chances" It was a play by Roi Cooper Megrue who wrote "Tea For Three" Mrs. Charles Albert Gille directed it. In the cast were Art Metzler, Virginia Baldwin, Otto R. Kyle, Marion Wait (whose father Clarence had had the theatre built) Lucille Grieder, Katherine Helen McGorry, Mildred Pierce, Norma Flesher, Mrs. Carleton Mattes -

There were of course many later productions after the 20's and about which I have no records.

All of this is very factual and mere skin and bones. Someday I hope to give a more detailed account adding the flesh of the excitement, fascination and warmth of going

to see the plays and shows at the Lincoln.

You will note that most of the information here is about the period from 1916 to 1924, and mainly about the stage productions and little about the movies. I have no records of significance of the great number of movies and stage presentations from 1924 on. ~~also~~ The period of the late 20's when there were two "mighty" organs in the Lincoln - a fashion of the movie "palaces" in those days - ~~none of them stage, none of them~~ and the Emcees such as George Givet - ^{Mark} Watson and his band - who were "live" and appeared, for months, before every movie - of this period I have no programs nor records available here.

And as I indicated above, this reflects nothing of the sources of the thrill when you were seated in the theatre, saw the footlights throw a glow on the rose-colored velour curtain, when the orchestra lights would flicker as a signal for its members to wind up the music they were playing, when the "house" lights would dim and the audience noises, shufflings and program rattlings would gradually subside and the "house" would pause in the darkness, and then with a quiet swish the curtain would go up on a brightly lighted new world.... phony as it was many times ... but, nonetheless titilating and fun.

Frank Wait

November 16, 1975

Bob Hyle ←