



To House Offices of City - But Day of Reckoning Probable

(Editor's note: Lt. Col. Mark Hillary, executive director of the Salem Memorial Auditorium association, has just returned from a trip inspecting auditorium facilities. Following is one of his last stories.)

AMARILLO, Tex. (Special)—Amarillo, Texas is a city of some 52,000 located in the famed Texas panhandle. It is a thriving business community with some rather modern ideas in the matters of city government. It has an auditorium which was built about 1930 and for several years operated on a self-supporting basis, according to our informant.

Then came the day when the city offices proved inadequate and the city fathers decided that it was a very logical move to utilize the city auditorium to house the city functions. Doing this would save rental for municipal office space, maintenance costs, etc., but in some way they overlooked the fact that each year there was a certain amount of depreciation of the facilities or that a sinking fund was essential to keep the building in repair and general utility.

Of course our informant may have been very poorly informed, but no city official was available even though they had been notified of our prospective visit.

An Inclined Floor
The main auditorium has an inclined floor with seating capacity on main floor and balcony of around 2,500 in fixed seating. The stage measures about 80 feet wide by 50 feet deep and has a stage opening approximately 56 feet wide by 32 feet high which is adequate for an auditorium of this size.

A circular corridor connects the wing on the north with the wing on the south but the rooms in these wings are so fully occupied with city offices and activities that during our visit it was observed that no space was available for meetings of young people and they were gathered in groups with portable chairs in the corridor space.

There is no full time manager for the building but the renting is handled by the city secretary on a basis of fixed rentals, the highest of which is \$100 for the auditorium for a night performance. There is a building superintendent who is charged with maintenance. The operational costs for the building were \$22,400 for the past year. This covered not only the maintenance of the auditorium but also for the wings housing the city offices, the library, and other functions such as council rooms, etc.

Building in Shady Park
The location of the building is in a shady park area close to the heart of the city's business section, perhaps three blocks removed and is a natural for conventions and organizational meetings but no undue effort is expended securing any of these activities.

Several citizens expressed their opinion that before the building could have much appeal to draw outside activities it would be necessary to expend several thousands of dollars in renovation and modernization. It is questionable this was true but whether such an expenditure was being contemplated could not be learned.

However, the potentialities of such an auditorium could be unlimited to a city the size of Amarillo, particularly in the cultural life of its youth and adult population.

Needs Full-Time Manager
It would require a full time auditorium manager who would go out and interest outside convention-minded organizations and who would have something to offer beside a theater only; they need meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, committee rooms, and space to arouse local organizational interest. This they do not have as all space is now taken by municipal offices, except, of course, the corridors.

This is unquestionably a nice thing for the city but someday the taxpayers are going to be asked for the necessary funds to put the building in shape and no taxpayer likes to pay for a "dead horse."

GUilty PLEA EXPECTED
PHILADELPHIA, July 13 (AP)—Harry Gold will be arraigned in U. S. district court here next Thursday to plead to charges of passing atomic bomb secrets to a Russian spy ring. John D. M. Hamilton, Gold's court-appointed attorney, said he expects Gold to plead guilty.

TOKYO—Lt. D. C. Gates (above), Joinville, Tex., was first to report finding bodies of U. S. soldiers with hands tied behind backs and shot in head in territory recaptured from North Koreans. Gates, officer in Pacific in World War Two, reenlisted as sergeant and was recommissioned after going to Japan three years ago. (AP Wirephoto)

Boxcars to Get Even Scarcer, Rail Man Says

PORTLAND, July 13 (AP)—A shortage of boxcars for shipping Pacific northwest grain probably will get worse, spokesmen for the area's major railroads said today.

A Union Pacific official said the situation has been aggravated by diversion of cars for movement of military supplies.

A Northern Pacific official added that eastbound shipments exceeded those westbound. This makes it necessary to move empty cars into the area, and recently these have been difficult to obtain, he said.

The shortage will complicate the grain storage problem, grain spokesmen said.

Overtaxed heating equipment is blamed for many home fires.

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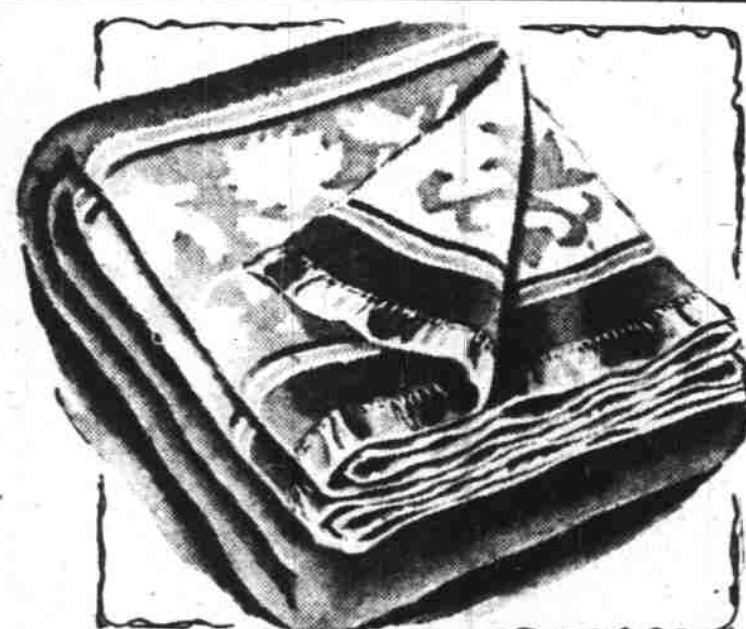
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