

# Washington Digest

## Alas, Poor Yorick, Capital Has Seen Its Last Theater

By BAUKHAGE  
News Analyst and Commentator.

WASHINGTON—As Washington hurries through summer, forced to commute to Philadelphia for its major distraction, it is faced with a painful prospect of less diversion next fall. This city which once boasted of almost a dozen legitimate theaters (when it had a much smaller population) is about to have the last one that lingered on alone turned into a movie house.

The old National theater, which opened in 1935, was burned and rebuilt four times, collapsed once, is now about to end its legitimate days on an issue which is giving the Democratic party equal concern—civil rights. The Actor's Equity, to which most actors belong, won't play here because Negroes are not permitted in the audience.

There is talk that the old Belasco theater, erected in 1895 on Madison place, facing Lafayette square, may be reconditioned and leased to a management which will lift the racial discrimination practice (the Belasco is currently government property and is used as a storehouse). If the Belasco is not reopened, Washington will be theaterless.



Baukhage Washington's theatrical tradition began early. One of the first theaters here was the Washington theater at Eleventh and C streets. It opened in 1804 and its ads proclaiming the grand premiere added in small type: "No Segars are to be smoked during the performance."

When that edifice burned, a second Washington theater, seating 700 persons, was opened in 1821. It boasted numerous improvements and innovations, including stoves, reserved seats, improved acoustics, no liquor in the box lobbies and facilities for Negro playgoers. "Facilities" today wouldn't satisfy—accommodations would have to be on a basis of race equality.

Fourteen years after the new Washington theater had opened its doors the National theater appeared on the site of the present movie-house-to-be. It is located in the very center of what only recently has been called "downtown," on E street which meets Pennsylvania avenue just before it bumps into the treasury building, skirts its northern front and ambles past the White House.

Important clubs, hotels, and restaurants are only a few blocks from the National today but when it was built, it was, like any other point in the young capital, well-nigh inaccessible in inclement weather. When it rained or snowed, Pennsylvania avenue became a mudhole. Residential areas, except those in Georgetown, weren't far from the center of town in the early 1840s, but because of the rough going (the wealthy didn't like to risk their fancy equipages out on bad nights), it cost as much as \$10 to get from home to the show.

Now you can ride all the way from Capitol Hill to what was forest and farmland in 1835 for 23 cents.

The capital's greatest theatrical development began right after the Civil war and went on for three decades. By the time I attended my first show here in 1914, there was no dearth of dramatic entertainment and sometimes three original Broadway companies would be playing in different theaters at the same time. It was a good town for openings up until fairly recently.

There is one theater, now a museum, which is still a point of interest for tourists. Originally it was a Baptist church on Tenth street. In 1861 it was converted into what was called Christy's opera house. Later it became Ford's theater. In the upper stage box of this theater, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by the actor, John Wilkes Booth.

There was a saloon on the corner below the theater where Booth was said to have had his last drink before he crept into the theater, shot Lincoln and leaped to the stage, tripping on a piece of hunting and breaking his leg.

For many years, over the bar of that saloon, hung a crude picture of the assassination, and on the floor was a metal marker where the half-mad actor was supposed to have stood as he warmed his courage in preparation for his theatrical crime.

Washington theatergoers were well acquainted with John Booth's acting but better still with that of his elder brother, Edwin, who had the greater talent. But they never saw Edwin Booth on a local stage again. He was so heart-broken over his brother's crime that he never again played in the capital.

A theatrical performance in Washington plays one role that it plays in no other American city. It becomes, on certain occasions, few or many according to the taste of the incumbent president, a ceremony of state. No matter how private a president wants to be when he sees a show, he can't help being a public personage on such occasions.

The secret service, responsible for

his life, wouldn't think of letting him sit anywhere but in a box where he is separated from the crowd. This, on the other hand, makes him conspicuous. One guard outside the door to Lincoln's box in the Ford theater could have prevented the assassination.

The fact that there was no provision for protection by the government in the Temple of Music in Buffalo cost the nation its President William McKinley.

Since then, the chief executive has had a bodyguard whether he likes it or not, and a bodyguard can't hide its light under a bushel. Entrance and exit from a public building become a little bit of a pageant, no matter how they are effected.

Woodrow Wilson loved the theater. He liked vaudeville and was a frequent visitor at Keith's—now one of our big movie houses. Edmund Starling, head of the secret service under several presidents, often talked to me about how much Wilson loved the theater. Starling enjoyed it. I enjoyed it, and perhaps together, we exaggerated Wilson's affection for the footlights. But Starling used to say that Wilson got more recreation from that source than any other. In his book, "Starling of the White House," he says Wilson preferred musical comedy and vaudeville to serious drama. That was the general impression among the newspapermen. I know.

Both the Roosevelts, Theodore and Franklin, were great theatergoers. Neither of them was a blushing violet as far as receiving adulation of the crowds was concerned, but for a number of reasons, largely the hectic times of the late Roosevelt's regime, the former made his attendance anywhere more of a show. Although an assassin's bullet did lay low a man in Franklin Roosevelt's entourage—Mayor Anton Cermak of Chicago when both were visiting Miami—Theodore Roosevelt was himself actually shot and badly wounded on one occasion. However, this was after he left the White House and while he was making a political speech in Milwaukee.

It was the movie which drove out the later Washington legitimate theaters, but this death blow to the present-day National theater arises out of the growing demand to end segregation—a demand which made itself felt after World War I, and which increased in World War II. The frequent, well-publicized controversies over lifting of the segregation ban in Constitution hall, property of the Daughters of the American Revolution and one of the few available concert halls in the city, have spotlighted Washington's segregation habits—they aren't laws.

The manager of the National theater is not closing the theater for social reasons. He simply can't book shows if he continues race discrimination and he thinks that if he raises the ban, he can't sell tickets to enough white people to make it pay.

To southerners it probably seems absurd that such a question should arise, and northerners probably will be just as surprised for the opposite reason. Washington was once a southern city, now it is a mixture of North and South and typical of neither.

### Embrace, Pity, Then Endure

Before his third party's convention in Philadelphia, Henry Wallace repeated several times the assertion that he was not a Communist, that he didn't want Communist support, in fact, that he wished they'd get out of his party. For this, as some observers pointed out, Wallace was mildly spanked by the Daily Worker, mouthpiece of Muskovite communism in America.

It seems to me that Wallace is following one of Alexander Pope's quatrains in reverse. Remember Pope said:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien As to be hated needs but to be seen, Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Having embraced the Reds, Wallace seems to be beginning to back up, through pity, and now is finding that he has to endure them, whether he likes them or not.

# Farm Topics

## Grass Silage Offers Benefits to Dairymen

### Advantages Are Shown In Wisconsin Research

Twelve positive advantages that grass silage offers dairy farmers were compiled as a result of tests conducted by Wisconsin FFA chapters and Kraft. Some of the decided advantages were:

Grass silage preserves as much as 30 per cent more protein of alfalfa.



There need be no loss of the crop through rainy weather at haying time.

Crop may be saved in a more orderly manner and labor distributed more evenly.

A grass silage program helps in control of weeds because it destroys the viability of weed seeds.

A grass silage program makes the control of erosion and insect pests easier.

It can be used to preserve the feed value of weedy crops.

It can be used to give pastures a much-needed rest period in the fall.

Grass silage makes for more vitamins and more color in winter milk and butter than either corn silage or sun-cured hay.

## U. S. Wheat Champions Honored in Minnesota

Millions of fungi are in the two tiny dishes held by Dr. J. J. Christiansen, professor of plant pathology, University of Minnesota, as he explains disease control to W. A. Brown, left, national wheat cham-



pion, Pierce, Colo., who with his son, Norman, won the national Pillsbury title with samples from their 1,600 acre farm. Tom Ridley, national reserve champion, Langdon, N. D., center, won with durum wheat in competition with wheat farmers in 13 states.

### Metal Turning Lathe



This stand for the metal turning lathe has a plank top, one-inch pipe legs and one-inch angle iron frame for the top and bottom. Sheet metal for sides, front and back is welded to the legs and to the angle iron frame.

## Precautions for Dipping Sheep Are Suggested

Among rules to be followed when dipping sheep are: Fast the sheep several hours before dipping. Don't dip sheep immediately on arrival at the bath if they have become heated. Don't dip sheep in an arsenical bath if they have open wounds. Don't put the sheep in the bath head first. Prepare the bath strictly in accordance with instructions on the package and mix thoroughly.

## Young Cockleburbs Are Poisonous for Swine

Young cocklebur seedlings will poison pigs, according to veterinarians at Iowa State college. The danger of cocklebur poisoning is greater this year because of short pastures. With grass short, pigs will be tempted to eat young cockleburbs in search of green feed. Best remedy is to keep hogs out of fields containing cocklebur seedlings until they are eliminated.

## Weather Vane

by Carl Starr



# RED SUN

WHEN THE AIR IS HEAVY WITH DUST PARTICLES THAT ARE LADEN WITH MOISTURE FROM THE DAMP AIR BEFORE A STORM, THE SUN LOOKS LIKE A FIERY RED BALL.

PROVERB: IF RED THE SUN BEGINS HIS RACE, BE SURE THE RAIN WILL FALL APACE.

SMOKE WILL ALSO CAUSE A RED SUN BUT THIS IS NO WEATHER SIGN.

## WHY WE SAY

by STAN J. COLLINS & L. J. SLAWSON



Today good silver is referred to as sterling silver. This title was secured from the Easterlings of North Germany, the first coin makers of England, who established a reputation for the purity of their coins—thus sterling silver became good silver.

## LOOKING AT RELIGION

By DON MOORE



St. Anthony's Church, Festina, Iowa, is one of the world's smallest. It has four pews and was built in 1849 for two families.

PALESTINE OFFERS THE GRANDEST PANORAMIC VIEW OF PALESTINE—YET IT IS MENTIONED ONLY ONCE IN THE BIBLE!

"BLACK MARKET" DELEGATES FROM 17 NATIONS WHO MET IN BIRKHOVEN, NETHERLANDS, TO DISCUSS THE WORLD SHORTAGE OF BIBLES DISCLOSED A BLACK MARKET IN COPIES OF THE BIBLE IN INDIA AND IN JAPAN!

## Lawn Furniture Can Be Made at Very Low Cost



MAKE your porch, terrace or lawn an outdoor living room—turn your backyard into a picnic ground. You'll be agreeably surprised to see what fun dining out can be. Food takes on an added zest when flavored with the thrill of a picnic.

You can build wonderful pieces of lawn furniture at very low cost. The set illustrated above was built from patterns. These patterns take all the mystery out of woodworking. Each shows the full size, shape and length for cutting each part. Wherever two parts are fastened together, the exact location is indicated on the pattern. Step by step directions explain every part of construction in easy to understand language.

Making a home is traditionally American. The strength of the country rests on the people who have built a home for themselves and their families. Building lawn furniture or any other home equipment is not difficult. You can do it if you try. Each pattern is designed so that no special tools or skill are required. Build this lawn set for immediate use. You'll save money and have fun building it. Each pattern contains a complete purchase list of materials. All materials which the pattern specifies are stock size and readily obtainable at lumber yards everywhere.

Send 25 cents for Lawn Chair Pattern No. 56 to East-Bild Pattern Company, Dept. W, Pleasantville, N. Y.

## Honey Bee Important Agent In Pollinating Farm Acres

Emphasizing the importance of honey bees in pollinating agricultural crops, M. H. Haydak, associate professor of entomology at the University of Minnesota, called bees the "wings of agriculture."

Honey bees by far outweigh the value of other insects as pollinators of plants, according to Dr. Haydak. Between 75 and 80 per cent of our agricultural crops are pollinated by honey bees alone.

Dependability of the honey bee in pollinating is apparent from the tremendous amount of work it does. About 10 loads of pollen are used to rear one bee.

Investigations show that to make one load of pollen a bee has to visit 348 red clover florets or 84 pear blossoms. A strong colony during a year rears about 200,000 bees and so requires two million loads of pollen.

Locating the apiary close to the field to be pollinated plays a very important part in making services of bees more effective, as does the number of bees per surface area. The more bees per field, the larger the crop that can be expected.

# SURE DEATH TO ROACHES



# FLIT ROACH KILLER

CONTAINS CHLORDANE (C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>6</sub>Cl<sub>8</sub>)

It is easy to rid your home of roaches with the new Flit Roach Killer. Spray it around roach infested areas. It leaves an invisible film that keeps on killing roaches for a long time.

On sale now at your local grocery, drug or hardware store.



WNU-13 30-48

## Relieves Distress of MONTHLY FEMALE WEAKNESS



Also Helps Build Up Red Blood! Do female functional periodic disturbances make you suffer pain, feel nervous, irritable—at such times? Then try Lydia E. Pinkham's TABLETS to relieve such symptoms. Pinkham's Tablets are also very effective to help build up red blood in simple anemia. Lydia E. Pinkham's TABLETS