

# George Raft Quits Gang Roles To Take Up Hoofing

By ROY THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD — George Raft is turning off his dancing shoes for a return to the night club.

Look—I've always been a frank dancer, he said. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm dancing. I've been breaking news trying to hit me, but I'm going back to dancing."

The long-time portrayal of colorful characters will open his set in the film "The Man in the Hat" in Las Vegas in June. Then, he said, he has a picture, "because they call following—because they call following—the stars they saw."

before the war, whereas the new actors aren't well known. A guy like Kirk Douglas is big here, but few people know him in Europe."

Raft was lunching at Romanoff, on a spartan lunch of raw hamburger and rice toast. He is training for the dance tour like a prizefighter. At present he is dieting and working out in a gym. In a couple of weeks, he'll begin dancing and choosing his partners.

"It's kinda rugged getting back in shape at my age," he said. Raft's age has always been listed in the record books as a question mark, and I asked him about it.

"I was born in 1895," he answered flatly. "and now I don't care who knows it."

He looks much younger than his 57 years. His hair has receded and is flecked with gray. The ridges to eyes, but his skin is that of a 20-year-old. That's the one thing he brags about.

What happened to his picture career?

"Lots of things," he said. "For one thing, I think I made a mistake when I stopped appearing with big names. My biggest successes were with people like Gary Cooper, Carole Lombard, Marlene Dietrich and so forth. Maybe they made me look good. Maybe I was better with them. When I started appearing with then unknowns like Ava Gardner or Janet Blair, they rose but I slipped."

He cited another reason: his failure to cultivate bigwigs.

"I suppose I should have gone around with producers, directors and writers," he said. "I could have given the big parties, as some stars did. But I was afraid to. I was afraid half of them wouldn't show up. People think I'm a tough mug, but I'm not. I bruise easily."

"Another mistake I made was to admit I couldn't act. I probably shouldn't have been so modest. Maybe I was better than I thought I was."

Raft may have been modest about his acting, but he looked back with nostalgia at his earlier dancing days.

"I was the highest-paid dancer in this country," he said. "I danced before the kings and queens of Europe. A lot of people don't remember that I was the first white performer to dance the Charleston and danced it faster than anyone in the business. I introduced the French tango to America and was the first to do the rhumba in pictures."

"So you can see I'm no new-comer to dancing."

Raft's picture work has been confined to his TV series in the past year. "But you can't tell whether it'll pay off for a couple of years," he said. "By that time, I may look like Abe Lincoln."

Hence the dance tour. But shed no tears for coin-flipping George. He's the king who saved his money.



**TWO HONOR STUDENTS** of this year's graduating class of Merrill high school are Edna Mae Reeves who will give the valedictory address and Clifford Honeycutt who will give the salutation. Edna Mae is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leland Reeves. Clifford is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Knowlton Honeycutt. Commencement will be in the high school auditorium, Thursday, May 21, 8 p. m. Baccalaureate services will be Sunday, May 17, 8 p. m. in the First Presbyterian Church with the Rev. George Milne giving the baccalaureate sermon.

# Garden Club Show Slated

PROXIMELY — The Spring Garden Club will be held Sunday, May 17, from 2 to 4 p. m. at the Community Club building, 1000 Spruce. The show will feature a display of carnations by Casson of Talent, June Johnson, of Jackson, and a display of "Oregon children," wood, stone and acorn carvings.

A silver tea will be held, also plant sale.

All garden clubs are invited to participate. Arrangements and entries should be checked in by 1 p. m. Sunday. The public is invited.

# Stallings Rites Today

PORTLAND — Funeral services will be held here Wednesday for A. B. Stallings, 85, who 14 years was president of the S. Spruce Production Corp. He died Monday after a year's illness. He was born in West Virginia and was commissioned in the judge grade general's department in 1930. He became head of the Spruce Production Corp. in 1931. The corporation was liquidated in 1946 after criticism by Congress having stayed so long in business.

# Columbia Basin Group Change Asked

PORTLAND — Reorganization of the Columbia Basin Interstate Compact Commission to include Montana and Nevada was recommended here Tuesday at a meeting of the organization's executive committee.

Member states now are Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. Montana, originally included in the compact group, has not had an interstate compact commission of its own for official representation.

The committee also recommended that new officers be named because of personnel changes in some of the states.

Scheduled for discussion at the June 9 general assembly of the commission, is whether the Columbia Basin states should regulate water power resources jointly.

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# HIGHLIGHTS AT KUHS

By HAROLD MCKAY

Tomorrow morning seven boys leave for the state track meet in Corvallis. The runners are: Calvin Gilmore, who took first in the century dash and runs one leg of the relay; Jim Dougherty, who took first in the broadjump and second in the shot and high hurdles; Barry Pitts, who led the field in the mile run in the district meet; Clinton Mills, second place winner in the 440 yard dash and anchorman of the relay team; Don Mills and Jim Bevens, who each run one leg of the relay. In addition to these boys, Harold McKay the manager and Paul Deller the coach and Len Burles will make the trip.

The Script and Microphone society elected its new officers for next year. Here are the results:

President, Betty Wells; vice president, Pat Collins; and secretary, Bill Davenport; sergeant-at-arms, Jim Craig.

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# Electric Energy Output Declines

NEW YORK — Electric energy distributed by the utility industry in the United States last week declined to 7,896,539,000 kilowatt-hours from 7,938,823,000 in the preceding week, Edison Electric Institute reported Wednesday. It was the lowest volume since the week ended Jan. 3, 1952.

Nevertheless, last week's total was 12.2 per cent above the 7,039,438,000 kilowatt-hours produced in the same week in 1952. All sections of the country produced more electrical energy last week than a year ago. Percentage increases included Pacific Northwest 9.9.

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