65 YEARS BETWEEN THEM — With Vincent Smith (left) having spent 34 years on the job at the Royal Theatre and Walter "Snags" Wright having spent 31 years at the same place, that adds up to a grand total of 65 years of show business experience.

'Don't make acts like they used to'

B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N

Vincent Smith died suddenly Thursday afternoon. Jack Barton, manager of the Royal Theatre told the AFRO: "He was paid around 11 o'clock and went home looking all right." Mr. Smith had worked the midnight shift at the Royal.

BY J. D. WILLIAMS

"They don't make acts like they used to. I remember when Irvin C. Miller had his 'Brown Skin Models' in here and he had ten or 12 grand pianos with a model standing on the top of each one.

"Now this younger generation doesn't want things like that or chorus girls, dancers or comedians. All they want is quartets and rock and roll. Things have changed."

The backstage of the Royal Theatre was like a vast and deserted cavern on Tuesday afternoon as Walter "Snags" Wright, 57, 1219 Pennsylvania Ave., stood in the semi-darkness remembering some of the laughter and some of the tears he has known in 31 years at the theatre.

At his side was another veteran of show business, Vincent Smith, 55, 817 George St., who has spent 34 years at the Royal.

* * *

TOGETHER, the two men own a storehouse of memories where the names of people like Andy Kirk, Jimmy Lunceford, John Mason and Don Redmond are still as fresh as when those entertainers walked across these boards at the Royal Theatre to the sound of applause that will never ring again.

Except for a bandstand, the stage was empty and the dressing rooms were vacant, but as these old timers talked it was almost as if time had been rolled back and the stage was full of excitement and people and the magic of show business.

"I've seen all of them," Mr. Wright recalled, "Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and his sister, Blanche Calloway. I've seen George Auld, Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Carter, Savannah Churchill. There were so many of them that I can't remember all the names.

"I do remember when Lena Horne came here with Charlie Barnett's band. She was just getting her start and new look at her," he said with a hint of sadness at the thought of the days that are gone now forever.

* * *

IT WAS AROUND 1930 that Mr. Wright started in this business and his first job was at the Lincoln Theatre which in those days featured stage shows.

"I used to help wind the film," Mr. Wright recalled, "and then I wanted to be an operator. But at that time an operator had to stay in the booth all the time, and I figured that was too much so I gave it up."

During the time that he was at the Lincoln, Mr. Wright remembers seeing such artists as Tim Moore now on the Amos and Andy TV show, Dave Wiggins and the Nicholas Brothers.

"The Nicholas Brothers were just kids in those days and their mother and father were with them. The father played drums and the mother played piano in the pit," Mr. Wright said with a smile at the memory.

LATER MR. WRIGHT came to the Royal and he has been here since then as a property man. His responsibility is to see that all the necessary stage properties are in place and the job has brought him in contact with the greats and near greats of show business.

"The old timers were the best," he said without hesitation, "they had more talent.

"You don't see acts anymore like Amos and Estrelita, Moke and Poke, Slump and Slumpy and all the rest of them.

"When you did something for one of the old timers he wouldn't forget you. They used to give parties for the stagehands and they were nice people to work with."

* * *

MR. SMITH has just about the same attitude toward the old timers and with a touch of longing in his voice he too remembers the good old days when there was no TV or rock and roll and if you wanted to see a show you went to a theatre.

"I've been here since about the time when they built this theatre," Mr. Smith said, "I was doing laboring work and I just started coming here and then I got a job and I've been here ever since then."

That was 34 years ago and Mr. Smith's job as a stagehand is still the most important thing in his life.

* * *

TRUE THERE aren't as many shows as there once used to be, but when there is a show Mr. Smith is a very happy man because show business is in his blood.

"One of the best acts I ever saw was John Mason and Sandy Burns. Mason would come up the aisle with a suitcase and a bear skin coat.

"He would sit down in the audience and ask his partner for a chance to come up on the stage. May their souls rest in peace, they were wonderful," Mr. Smith said.

Both men agree that the audience of the past were a bit better behaved than those of the present but even that fact fades into unimportance when they start comparing the newcomers to those of the past.

"It's all quartets now," said Mr. Wright, "all the public wants is rock and roll. No chorus girls, no comedians, just rock and roll."

* * *

WHILE THEY remember the past, there was no bitterness in either man as he spoke of the present. They both believe that show business should give the people what they want and if they want rock and roll, well they should have rock and roll.

No bitterness and yet there was something poignant about these two men as they stood backstage at the Royal as before a multi-colored curtain and remembered the past.

High above their heads was a catwalk and the ropes and pulleys by which a man can drop a piece of scenery and turn a stage into a house, a garden, a park, a palace or a shack.

* * *

OUT FRONT, a picture dealing with the exploits of British soldiers was on the screen and the sounds of gunfire drifted backstage.

And yet even with this, even with the emptiness and the vacant dressing rooms, it seemed for a moment, as the men talked, that the stage was alive again, that music was playing and chorus girls were doing an intricate dance routine as off in the wings, perhaps it was the Mills Brothers, waited for a cue.

But that was yesterday and this is today and the dream is only an illusion. Still both men feel that the past is not completely dead and as Mr. Wright says with hope:

"One of these days rock and roll will fade away and the big shows will come back."

If this happens, there will be new smiles on the faces of these men, but even if it never happens they can remember the past and cherish each memory.

CUSTER AND SITTING BULL REVIVED AT THE ROYAL.

Probably the most humiliating defeat ever suffered by American arms was at the battle of Little Big Horn where General Custer, the dashing cavalry officer of the Indian Wars, led units of his 7th Cavalry Regiment to complete annihilation. In an action-tense drama of the tragic battle and its grim aftermath, Randolph Scott stars at the Royal in "7th Cavalry," in technicolor. Featured players include Barbara Hale, Jay C. Flippen.

As a captain in the "7th Cavalry," and General Custer's aide, Scott is branded a coward by the civilians and soldiers of Fort Lincoln, from which Custer led his troops. Scott is unable to prove the claim the 10 million pounds the late Czar left in the Bank of England for his heirs, Anastasia is led carefully through a rehabilitation and training program emerging a beautiful and thoroughly captivating person.

Ingrid Bergman plays Anastasia with a sensitive charm and her performance runs the gamut from sheer despair to unbounding hope. Hers is a triumphant return in an American film after a seven-year absence.

Yul Brynner brings not only great force to his role but a charm that the public so well knows from "The King and I."

As for Helen Hayes, her interpretation is one of dignity and strength and is deeply moving in all its aspects.

Ingrid Bergman in Anastasia at Regent

"Anastasia," a strange mixture of fact and fiction, which abounds in poignant love, mystery, intrigue and, above all, outstanding characterizations, is now showing at the Regent Theatre. Here is a motion picture that certainly will get Academy Award consideration.

The superb performances of Ingrid Bergman, Yul Brynner and Helen Hayes rate "Oscars" without equivocation and the supporting cast, down to the smallest role, is undoubtedly the finest seen here in years.

The picture, whose fascinating theme is drawn from the tenuous but persistent belief that the youngest daughter of the late Russian Czar survived the Revolution, has every dimension, from poverty to regal splendor, from rain - swept Paris streets through the famous Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, from luxurious ballrooms to colorful night clubs.

The story opens during Easter services in front of the Greek Orthodox Church in Paris. A bewildered, sick and bedraggled woman (Ingrid Bergman), is found by ex General Bounine (Yul Brynner), who believes he can pawn her off as Anastasia Grand Duchess of Russia, and

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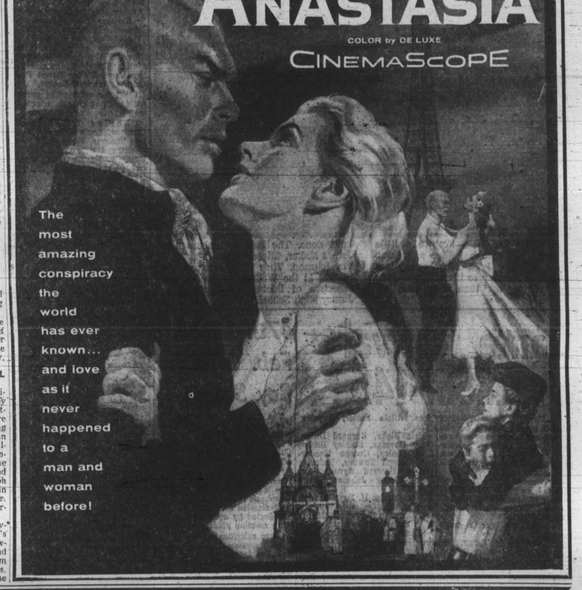

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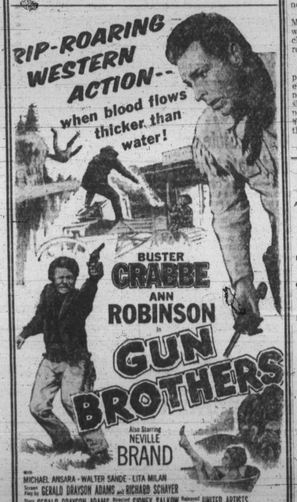

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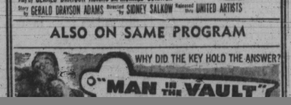

SHOW BILL

APOLLO — Fri. Sat. John Agar in "MOLE PEOPLE" also John Bromfield in "CURUCU BEAST OF THE AMAZON" Sun. Mon. Tues. Ginger Rogers in "TEENAGER REBEL" also Robert Arthur in "THE DESPERADOS ARE IN TOWN."

BRIDGE — Sun. Mon. Tues. George Sanders in "DEATH OF A SCOUNDREL" also "TEENAGE REBEL."

CARVER — Fri. Sat. Sun. Wendell Corey in "THE GREAT MISSOURI RAID." also Charlton Heston in "THE NAKED JUNGLE."

DUNBAR — Fri. Sat. John Bromfield in "CURUCU BEAST OF THE AMAZON" also John Agar in "THE MOLE PEOPLE" Sun. Mon. Tues. Ginger Rogers in "TEENAGE REBEL" also Robert Arthur in "DESPERADOS ARE IN TOWN."

HARLEM — Now playing Katharine Hepburn in "THE IRON PETTICOAT."

LENOX — Sun. Mon. Tues. Ginger Rogers in "TEENAGE REBEL" also Robert Arthur in "THE DESPERADOS ARE IN TOWN" Wed. Thurs. "DAKOTA INCIDENT" also SATELLITE IN THE SKY."

MET — Now playing Buster Crabbe in "GUN BROTHERS."

NEW ALBERT — Now playing Van Johnson in "SLANDER."

PARK — Sun. Mon. Tues. Elvis Presley in "LOVE ME TENDER" also Rod Cameron in "YAQUI DRUMS."

REGENT — Now playing Ingrid Bergman in "ANASTASIA"

ROOSEVELT — Sun. Mon. Tues. Robert Taylor in "THE POWER AND THE PRIZE" also Robert Arthur in "THE DESPERADOS ARE IN TOWN."

RITZ — Fri. Sat. John Agar in "THE MOLE PEOPLE" also John Bromfield in "CURUCU BEAST OF THE AMAZON" Sun. Mon. Tub Hunter in "THE BURNING HILLS" also Kieron Moore in "SATELLITE IN THE SKY."

WALBROOK — Fri. Sat. Spencer Tracy in "THE MOUNTAIN" also Robert Wagner in "BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL"

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Murder that leads you along a dark tangled trail to passion!

"HIGH TERRACE"

DALE ROBERTSON

'Slander' now at New Albert

The power of scandal magazines for ruining reputations, disrupting family relationships and destroying personal happiness, holds the spotlight in MGM's "Slander," starring Van Johnson, Ann Blyth and Steve Cochran, at the New Albert Theatre.

As in such previous films as "Blackboard Jungle" and "Trial," this uncompromising drama of much-ranking publications and the people they victimize pulls no punches. Jerome Weidman's unsparing screen play, solidly directed by Roy Rowland, hits straight at the truth.

Van Johnson plays the man whose life is brought close to ruin in "Slander." He is seen as Scott Martin, who, as a teenager, was sent to prison for an armed assault case but who has paid for his crime and who since has struggled to maintain his wife, Connie, and ten-year-old son, Joey, on his meager livelihood as a puppeteer.

It is when he is finally on the verge of crashing the "big time" as a highly paid television attraction that Scott's past catches up with him in the person of H. R. Manley, ruthless publisher of a scandal sheet.

When Scott refuses to destroy an actress' happiness in order to save his own, his world begins to go to pieces. His new-found success on television is shattered, his home is broken. Then occurs an appalling tragedy, when the publication of the smear article regarding Scott's past brings about the death of his son.

AT HARLEM—Accused of having turned traitor to her cause, Katharine Hepburn, bound and gagged, faces an unsympathetic judge in a scene from "The Iron Petticoat." Bob Hope teams with Miss Hepburn in the hilarious comedy-satire of a Russian flying ace who learns about democracy through romance now playing at the Harlem Theatre.

AT MET—A trio of sheriffs surround Buster Crabbe and Ann Robinson when Crabbe is suspected of having planned a stage hold-up. Scene is from the action-packed western, "Gun Brothers," United Artists release, now playing at the Met Theatre.

AT REGENT—Yul Brynner with his fellow-conspirators give Ingrid Bergman her final instructions before making her highly important appearance at an opera performance. A 10,000,000-pound inheritance hangs in the balance in this suspenseful moment from the Twentieth Century-Fox CinemaScope version of "Anastasia," now playing at the Regent Theatre.

Iron Petticoat on Harlem bill

When Katharine Hepburn, as an intrepid Russian flier, tries to lure Bob Hope from the "fleters" of capitalism and he retaliates by countering her Soviet ideology with some fast tactics in American love-making, the laughs are long and loud in "The Iron Petticoat," now on view at the Harlem Theatre.

This hilarious and witty spoof on the Cold War has Miss Hepburn playing Captain Vinka Kovalenko, one of Russia's leading lady pilots, who inadvertently lands her plane on an American airfield in Germany.

On the premise that is would be a terrific gun in their psychological warfare to have Vinka tell the truth about Communism, the Americans assign Captain Chuck Lockwood (Bob Hope) to "soften" her up.

AT FIRST VINKA tries to inculate Chuck in the pitfalls of capitalism and wargoods slavery. Then she succumbs to black lace lingerie and a cut evening gown, and an astonished Chuck succumbs to her.

It takes a game of hide-and-seek, escapes from hotel windows, the kidnapping of Vinka by the Russians and one of history's funniest mock trials, in which Vinka is sentenced to face a firing squad, to goad a now very much in love Chuck to heroic action.

He becomes a stowaway on the plane carrying Vinka back to Russia. We won't divulge the secret of the story's surprise ending for the Cold War climax except to say that it brings about a mutually happy ending to the Cold War!

Balto. musician in honor society

James A. Young, Baltimore violinist and music therapist, was elected this month to the Rho Chapter of the Phi Delta Kappa Fraternity of New York University.

The Rho Chapter is an honor society dedicated to further studies in education and research.

Mr. Young's document which was presented to the society gave new ideas and approaches on the value and functional use of music therapy in the field of education and rehabilitation.

He has served as music therapist at Kernan Hospital for polio patients and Rosewood State Mental Hospital. Mr. Young is a graduate of Morgan State College and founder and director of the National Foundation for Music Therapy and Research.

Federalsburg

Charles Magee has returned fom the Easton Hospital and is improving.

Vernon Holland is out after having been confined to his home.

Mrs. Nellie Baltimore has returned home from the Easton Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Sarah Seymour, Ms. Rebecca Cephas and Samuel Turner are still confined by illness.

The ham and chicken supper sponsored by the men's usher board and the young adults Saturday at Zion Methodist Church Saturday was a great success financially.

Mrs. Ruth Laws spoke to the youth of Zion Methodist Church Sunday.

Madison Ave.-matron arrested for arson

Mrs. Elizabeth Brim, 22, of the 1200 block Madison Ave., was charged with arson in Eastern Sl., police Court (Monday) and released in bail of $2,500 pend-

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With John Agar · Cynthia Patrick

SUN.-MON.-TUES. FEB. 3-4-5

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With Robert Arthur

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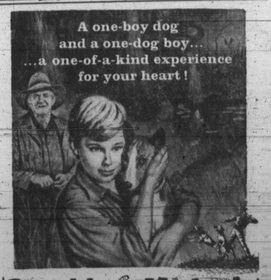

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