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Mary Shea Giffioniello

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SCRAP BOOK

200



Scrap Book

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FILLER No. 519

Consisting Of 36 Sheets

MADE IN U S A

THEATRICAL KING, DIES

NRA THE WEATHER Generally fair and somewhat warmer tonight. Tomorrow partly cloudy and warmer, possibly turning unsettled late in day.

BUFFALO

MICHAEL SHEA,

(Continued from Page 1.)

DEATH COMES IN HOME HERE AT AGE OF 75

Buffalo Showman, One of Oldest and Best Loved in Active Service, Succumbs to Illness of Several Months—Family at Bedside as Life Ebbs.

Michael Shea, veteran Buffalo theater magnate and probably the oldest active showman in the United States, died at noon today in his home in the West Park...

PARIS, May 16 (U.P.)—Leon Trotsky, the Russian revolutionary leader, was found today in the sky, to the disappointment of police. ... TORONTO, May 16 (U.P.)—The Japanese Foreign Office contended today that Great Britain violates the League of Nations pact...

time. She explained that she was seeking additional stage experience and he immediately persuaded her to come to appear at the Buffalo. At first she was hesitant. It was a different kind of work than she had done heretofore, but Mr. Shea overcame her objections with his brusque but kindly manner. The incident was characteristic of him. He was always ready to help those who were just getting a start, who were in need of encouragement.

street. He held a helper's job there for four years and then left to become an ironworker. In summer he gave up bridge building and worked on the docks unloading freight, or shipped occasionally on a lake freighter. It was a stern training, but it gave him a wiry, muscular physique and a rugged individuality that were to stand him in good stead throughout his later life.

Fire Destroys Music Hall. Although success smiled upon him with the passing of the years, his path was not always in smooth, easy places. He came to place more reliance on courage and hard work than good luck to carry him along. "There's no such thing as luck," he once said.

It's work that counts. Work keeps men young. If you don't have anything to do you get old. People ask me why don't I retire, but they don't tell me what I'd do with my time. I'm staying right on the job. His first enterprise was the establishment of a music hall in the old Arcade building, located at Main and Clinton streets, where the Brisbane building now stands.

It developed into a popular place for Buffalo entertainment-seekers. Many well-known entertainers appeared there, some of them filling long engagements. But in 1893, the building was reduced to ashes by one of Buffalo's most famous fires. One of the Shea stories has it that he gazed upon the ruins and then announced with a note of quiet determination in his voice that he would start all over again.

Mr. Shea was born in St. Catharines, Ont., April 1, 1859, but came to this city in infancy. The family lived in Alabama street in the old First ward. He attended School 34 and later St. Brigid's school. When only 12 years old, he set about the task of earning his own living. His first job was in the Union Wire Works, in old Uniontown, at the foot of Katherine

the seats were all on one floor. It had no balcony or gallery. The garden fct was supplied by potted along the side. In the early days, Mr. Shea was the owner, operator and entire staff of his theater. There were no central booking offices on which the individual theater operator could depend for his shows. He engaged his acts wherever he could find them. Having once acquired that habit, Mr. Shea never lost it, although he became associated later with various organized theatrical groups.

Right up to the present time, it has been his custom to cast an approving eye over the pictures and acts scheduled to be shown in his theaters. In Close Touch With Actors. It was a habit that kept him in close touch with actors throughout his half-century as a showman. Many an act that made an especially good record during an engagement would find an extra \$50 or \$100 in the pay envelope.

Mr. Shea is fondly remembered by actors throughout the country for that kind of encouragement. Mr. Shea always exercised supervision over the material used by the acts showing at his theaters. It was his custom to view the show from "out front" at the first performance. If the comedians used objectionable material, they were sure to feel Mr. Shea's censorious before it came the turn to go on again. I always endeavored to keep per ormances within the bounds of good taste. Sometimes he would be out of town and would miss an opening performance, but care always was taken not to permit the use of objectionable songs or jests.

The members of the Shea organization knew the fat would be in the fire if that happened during his absence. Throws Out Picture. Connected with this individual supervision over his theaters is a favorite story about Mr. Shea. It goes like this, as Harold B. Franklin, a former associate, tells it: "On one occasion Mr. Shea walked into Shea's Hippodrome. He saw a scene where a baby was thrown from a window. Mike immediately inquired whether there was any other film in the theater. Yes, there was—a comedy with a slapstick comic who twirled a cane and an old lady who had just taken a fling at the picture game. "Throw it in the alley" was his order regarding the baby picture, and on went the new picture. In four hours you couldn't get near the theater. In this way was presented the world premiere of 'Tillie's Punctured Romance,' with Charlie Chaplin and Marie Dressler as stars."

Mr. Shea was born in St. Catharines, Ont., April 1, 1859, but came to this city in infancy. The family lived in Alabama street in the old First ward. He attended School 34 and later St. Brigid's school. When only 12 years old, he set about the task of earning his own living. His first job was in the Union Wire Works, in old Uniontown, at the foot of Katherine

And I'll pay every cent I owe," he added. Presently he opened another music hall in Washington street and every creditor was duly paid off. After a time he sought new quarters and opened the theater in Pearl street near Niagara that came to be known as Shea's Garden theater. This playhouse was unique in that

Opens Park Theater.

During the Pan-American exposition in Buffalo in 1901, Mr. Shea opened the Park theater in Court street. William Farnum, then a widely admired matinee idol, was the star of a resident stock company installed there.

It was the newest and finest theater in the city at the time, and when the stock company season was over, Mr. Shea decided to devote it to vaudeville, which was increasing tremendously in popularity.

Associated with him financially for many years was the late Pliny B. McNaughton. Mr. McNaughton was a widely known real estate operator in Buffalo up to the time of his death about a decade ago. An earlier financial associate of Mr. Shea was John Kreitner who was formerly connected with the brewery industry.

This form of entertainment had started in the music halls which were forerunners of the modern cabarets.

The patrons sat at tables and sipped beer while the entertainers appeared on a small stage. Gradually this form of entertainment gained in prestige and patronage.

It began to be organized under the direction of Mr. Keith, Mr. Albee and others. The day of the so-called big-time vaudeville had arrived.

Fabulous Salaries Paid.

The Park theater became known as Shea's Court street and was the home of two-a-day vaudeville in this city. Those were the palmy days of vaudeville. It was just before the motion pictures were graduated from the "nickleodians" and "Bijou Dreams" that first housed them.

Vaudeville attracted leading players in off-seasons. Established playwrights wrote vaudeville "sketches." Salaries that were deemed fabulous in those days were paid by the vaudeville circuits.

One had to put an order in early for seats at Shea's in those piping times. Those who were so short-sighted as to wait until shortly before the performance began were likely to find there was no seats available. A person whose friendship was sought was one who could obtain a pair of good seats for Shea's on short-notice.

Joined Movie Procession.

It was the custom to show motion pictures as the last number on the vaudeville bill, when the theatergoers were reaching for their hats and wraps. No one thought that those flickering shadows would ever supersede vaudeville.

As a special novelty, Mr. Shea one week showed pictures that talked. They had a phonograph equipment back of the screen. It was difficult to understand the words, but they were sufficiently well synchronized to make people marvel for the time. But they were quickly forgotten and were not resurrected for some 20 years.

Motion pictures began to demand increased attention. It was characteristic of Mr. Shea that he joined the procession, so that when interest of the two-day vaudeville dwindled he was found well out in front in the picture business.

Opened Hippodrome in 1914.

In 1914, he opened Shea's Hippodrome in Main street near Chippewa. Many thought that Mr. Shea had made a mistake in building a theater so far north on Main street for the showing of motion pictures, but it prospered in spite of pessimistic predictions. It was in the Hippodrome that Mr. Franklin, now a leading theatrical executive, spent several years as manager.

Expansion in Mr. Shea's theatrical interests again occurred in 1920, when the first of the Shea community theaters was acquired. This was the North Park in Hertel avenue.

In 1926, Mr. Shea opened Shea's Buffalo. Later the Great Lakes and the Century were acquired and in time the community theater circuit was built up to include Shea's Kensington at Bailey and Kensington avenues; the Bailey, at Genesee and Bailey avenue; the Seneca, at Seneca and Cazenovia streets; the Elmwood, Elmwood avenue and Utica street.

A Great Occasion.

The opening of the Buffalo was one of the great occasions in the history of the Shea organization. The theater was quite the most magnificent the city had seen. It

was thronged on the opening night, Jan. 14, 1926. Among other things it introduced to Buffalo the orchestral pit that elevated the musicians to the stage level when it came time for their part of the performance, the largest Wurlitzer organ up to that time, the uniformed and military ushers. The theater was reputed to have cost more than \$1,500,000.

The Century came into the organization from the Loew interests. It had originally been known as Loew's State theater and had played vaudeville and pictures.

Gained Exclusive Rights.

One of its first great triumphs after Mr. Shea had taken it over was "Broadway Melody." The city had been somewhat skeptical up to this time about the pictures synchronized for sound and speech, but this one it took to its heart. The picture had a record-breaking run of six weeks.

The Great Lakes at Chippewa and Main streets was acquired four years after it was built. It had been opened as a picture theater, but it came eventually to show stage productions and entertainments similar in character to those given at the Buffalo. As a result of its acquisition, the Shea interests gained the exclusive rights for the showing of the films of Paramount, United Artists, Warner Brothers, First National Radio, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Universal and Fox companies.

Praised in Magazine.

Mr. Shea also operated theaters in Toronto, Niagara Falls and the Tonawandas. Regarding Mr. Shea's career, Variety, the theatrical publication, had this to say in an anniversary edition last January. "Two-thirds of his life have been spent in the show business. He has been a showman in all that term implies for every minute of those 50 years. He is the last of the vaudeville Mohicans, the lone survivor of that colorful band of men who started from scratch in the 1830's and nursed vaudeville from a museum to the most popular form of amusement of its time. He has lived through vaudeville's recent loss of prestige which he and others fought so hard and long to build up. But he didn't, and doesn't cry about it. He remained a showman and progressed with the show business."

Shea's Last Words Typified Philosophy

"Say Some Hard Ones" His Response to Daughter Who Asked for Prayers.

It was a hard, cool, brusque exterior that Michael Shea, one of America's greatest showmen, turned toward life. He met death in the same attitude. His last words were typical of the way he had lived.

At his bedside in his room in the Westbrook apartments were the members of his family. His daughter, Mrs. Emile Giffoniello, approached the bed and asked: "How do you feel, dad?" "I'm all right," replied Mr. Shea. Mrs. Giffoniello then said: "Let's say some prayers."

"All right," Mr. Shea responded. "Say some hard ones."

A few seconds later he died, his eyes on a crucifix in Mrs. Giffoniello's hand. Members of his family said Thursday that not once during his long illness did he ever say he felt badly. His answer was always "I'm feeling fine."

PROFESSOR STRAUB

HERBERT STRAUB laments the loss of a title. It was an affectionate one bestowed upon him by Mike Shea. It was "the professor."

Years ago Straub came to the Buffalo to play a week as guest conductor. He was brought from Detroit. Buffalo was the first stop in a projected nationwide tour. Straub never finished it for Mr. Shea visited him the second week and urged: "Professor, I think you should stay with us."

Buffalo became Herb's home. He always was "the professor" to Mr. Shea, who couldn't remember his name or pretended in gallery that he couldn't.

"Funny thing about it," says Straub, "was that he always remembered Mrs. Straub's and the children's names. But he used to look at me somewhat blankly as if he had only that minute discovered me and sometimes say 'Professor, that sounded like a boiler factory.' There was something jocose and charming about it. I didn't mind his barbs. No one else ever called me 'the professor.' I am sad that the appellation is forever lost."

SHEA—In this city, May 6, 1934, Michael Shea, husband of Josephine G. Carr; father of Mrs. Emile Giffoniello; brother of Thomas, Jeremiah, Mrs. Catherine Crotty, Mrs. Elizabeth Summers and Agnes W. Shea. Funeral will be held from the Westbrook apartments, 675 Delaware avenue, Saturday morning at 9:15 and from St. Joseph's cathedral, Delaware avenue, at 10 o'clock. 17-18

Michael Shea To Be Buried Saturday A. M.

Reputedly Oldest Showman in America Died Yesterday Noon; To Be Buried from St. Joseph's Cathedral.

Michael Shea, 75, pioneer theater owner and reputedly the oldest showman in America, died yesterday noon following a two months' illness during which, even up to this week, hopes were entertained that he would recover. Though he had no desire at all for publicity, and the number of times he has been interviewed by reporters throughout his more than a half century in the show business could be counted on the fingers of one hand without repeating, he was one of the best known showmen in the United States, and was loved by literally thousands of "troopers."

The solemn funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. Joseph's Cathedral Saturday morning at 10 o'clock by the rector, and long time personal friend, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles E. Duffy, D. D.

In 1889 he was married to Josephine G. Carr.

At his bedside when the end came were his wife, Mrs. Josephine Carr Shea; their daughter, Mrs. Emile Giffoniello; Mr. Giffoniello; John E. Carr, Mrs. Shea's brother, and members of the immediate family.

Famous Acquaintances

For 53 years Michael Shea was engaged in the theatrical business in Buffalo and despite gigantic changes in the profession he kept in the vanguard of the profession always. Among his numerous acquaintances were Charles Frohman, Abraham Erlanger, Oscar Hammerstein, William Hammerstein, Flo Ziegfeld, B. F. Keith and E. F. Albee, and among the great stars who have played under Shea auspices here have been David Bispham, Albert Chevalier, Annette Kellerman, Neil O'Brien, Edmund Hayes, Ethel Barrymore, and all of these present day headliners, Jackie Coogan, Betty Compson, Conrad Nagel, Bert Lytell, Tom Mix, Pola Negri, Anita Page, Norma Talmadge, Esther Ralston, Dorothy Mackaill, George Jessel, the late Lilyan Tashman, Paul Whiteman, Eddie Cantor, Guy Lombardo, the Four Marx Brothers, Ben Bernie and others.

Brief Biography

Mr. Shea was born in St. Catharines, Ont., April 1, 1859, but came to this city in infancy. The family lived in Alabama street in the old First ward. He attended School 34 and later St. Brigid's School.

When only 12 years old, he set about the task of earning his own living. His first job was in the Union Wire Works, in old Uniontown, at the foot of Katherine street. He held a helper's job there for four years and then left to become an ironworker. In summer he gave up bridge building and worked on the docks unloading freight, or shipped occasionally on a lake freighter.

His first theater venture was the establishment of a music hall in the old Arcade Building, located at Main and Clinton streets, where the Brisbane Building now stands.

The First Venture

It developed into a popular place for Buffalo entertainment-seekers. Many well-known entertainers appeared there, some of them filling long engagements.

In 1893, the building was reduced to ashes by one of Buffalo's most famous fires. One of the Shea stories is that he gazed upon the ruins and then announced with a note of quiet determination in his voice that he would start all over again.

"And I'll pay every cent I owe," he added.

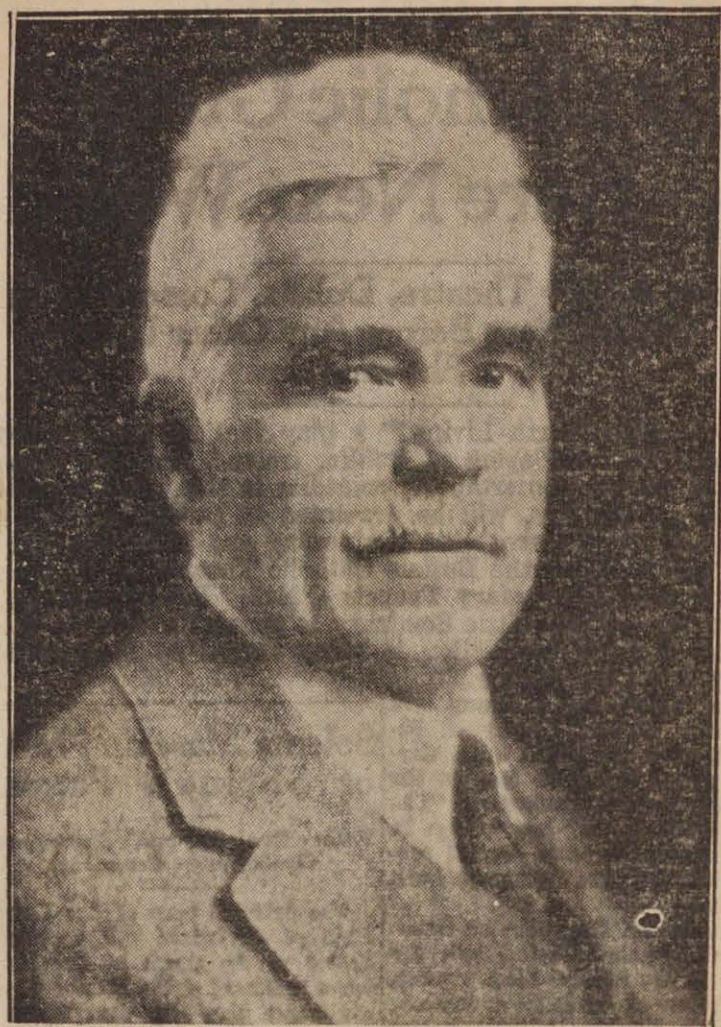
Presently he opened another music hall in Washington street and every creditor was duly paid off. After a time he sought new quarters and opened the theater in Pearl street near Niagara that came to be known as Shea's Garden Theater.

Paid Liberally

It is worth recording that Mr. Shea began his career as a showman at a time when booking agencies and agencies were yet to be organized. Consequently he had to be his own censor and his own judge of values. Stories are rife among variety actors of extra money received from "Mike" Shea because an act appeared to draw well here.

Harold B. Franklin, a former associate, has told of a time when Mr. Shea's disgust with one picture caused the world premiere of one of the biggest money making pictures that ever came out of Hollywood. As Mr. Franklin tells it, Mr. Shea walked into Shea's Hippodrome and saw a picture running with a scene showing a baby being tossed out a window. He went to the manager and said:

THE CURTAIN FALLS



MICHAEL SHEA

Photograph Courtesy of the Buffalo Evening News.

Kicked Upstairs
"Is there anything else in the theater we can run?"

The manager told him there was a picture, comic, showing an alleged comedian twirling a cane and an old woman who had just broke into the movies. Said Mr. Shea:

"Put it on, and throw out that roughhouse one out into the alley." The manager took off the offensive picture and half an hour later the crowd began to come in droves to see the substitute picture. It was "Tillie's Punctured Romance" with Charlie Chaplin and Marie Dressler.

Has Owned Many Houses

During the Pan American, in 1901, Mr. Shea opened the Park theater in Court street, and William Farnum headed the resident stock company installed to produce repertoire. It was the newest and the finest theater in the city, and actors today say it is still the finest in acoustics in the city, and today it is known as it was known for years when vaudeville was played there, as "Shea's Court Street" theater. Fabulous salaries have been paid for acts which appeared in this two-a-day house, and practically every one of the best acts that have appeared in this country anywhere have been shown at Shea's Court Street.

In 1914 Mr. Shea opened Shea's Hippodrome, and in 1920 he acquired his first community theater, the North Park. In 1926 Mr. Shea opened Shea's Buffalo, the last word in motion picture palaces, rivaling the Paramount of New York and other similar theaters. Since then he had acquired the Century and the Great Lakes theaters downtown, and the neighborhood chain of the theaters here and in Toronto, Niagara Falls, and the Tonawandas. He owns the Old Gayety, which has been remodeled and is being used by the Studio Players without cast to them as a school of the theater.

Tributes Paid Mr. Shea

Friends in All Walks of Life Join in Honoring Memory of Great Showman.

Persons prominent in the civic and business life of Buffalo; associates in the motion picture and theatrical fields; friends of long standing joined today in paying tribute to the memory of Michael Shea, Buffalo showman for half a century.

Their comments follow:

DR. PETER C. CORNELL, father of Katharine Cornell, first lady of the stage, and a former manager of the Star and Majestic theaters in Buffalo—"It is with the deepest regret that I learn of the death of Mr. Shea, whom I knew for many years, in fact since I was first connected with the show business. I have always had the greatest admiration and respect for him."

MARIAN DE FOREST, secretary-manager of the Buffalo Musical Foundation—"He was the finest and squarest man I ever knew and the best friend. As a theater man he has done more for Buffalo than Buffalo will ever know. His death is a great loss."

DAVE MILLER, manager of the Universal Film exchange at 505 Pearl street and president of the Buffalo Variety club—"I don't know of any man of my acquaintance, in the show world or any other phase of life, who was held in such great esteem as was Mr. Shea. His sense of fairness was unequalled. He was admired and respected by everyone who came in contact with him."

HARRY T. DIXON, manager of the RKO Radio exchange, 505 Pearl street—"Mr. Shea was the greatest showman I ever have known and I knew him for 25 years. His death comes as a great shock to me."

EDWARD K. O'SHEA, manager of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer exchange, 505 Pearl street—"I don't know what to say. Mr. Shea was the greatest showman in the history of the amusement business. I ran errands for him when I was a kid in school, then worked for him for four years when I was older. His passing leaves an awful void."

GEORGE H. MOESER, manager of the Hollywood Pictures exchange, 505 Pearl street—"I think his death is one of the greatest losses possible to the motion picture industry."

MSGR. JOHN J. NASH, D. D., acting head of the Catholic diocese of Buffalo and pastor of Holy Family church—"Michael Shea was a fine man. He was a typical example of the self-made man, having worked his way to the top of his profession by hard and studious work. I am shocked to learn of his death."

Cohan Unable to Come.

George M. Cohan, who had been expected for the funeral, informed Mr. McFaul by long distance telephone Friday that he would be unable to attend because he had to perform at a matinee in New York today. He said he had checked airplane schedules and learned that they would not enable him to be back in the metropolis in time.

Directions were given for the closing of all Shea theaters in the city until 3 o'clock this afternoon in honor of Mr. Shea. The Lafayette theater also joined in this tribute.

Active bearers were Vincent R. McFaul, Thomas D. Powell, Lester P. Gilbert, James Franklin, Nelson E. Hubbell, Harold B. Franklin, John D. H. Hoyt and Frederick A. Kreitner.

Honorary bearers were: Adrian J. Allard, Edward H. Butler, John J. Boland, Samuel B. Boisford, Frank B. Baird, Frank L. Bapst, Emanuel Boasberg, Arthur J. Block, John F. Burke, Dr. John Burke.

MR. SHEA SHUNNED POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Unlike many others who traced their origin back to Buffalo's old First ward, Michael Shea took little or no interest in politics.

There was one time years ago when the late William H. Fitzpatrick as Erie county Democratic leader placed him on the state committee in the old 47th Senate district, merely to avoid a clash between several aspirants who wanted the job which Mr. Shea didn't.

He served his two years on the committee, but took no part in its activities.

Shea was a distinguished contributor to Buffalo's progress, and his career is a shining example of the able grasping of the opportunities that lie within our own city for all citizens who, like Mr. Shea, have the foresight and courage to make use of them. I knew him personally for many years and I deeply regret his passing."

COMPTROLLER WILLIAM M. ECKERT—"It's too bad. I knew and admired Mr. Shea from the time he opened his first show, many years ago, at Washington and Clinton streets. He did more to boost Buffalo than almost any man I know."

COUNCILMAN THOMAS J. O'DONNELL, South district, president pro tem of the Common council—"Michael Shea, through his neighborhood theaters, contributed a great deal towards the upbuilding of Buffalo communities. He is the type of man Buffalo can ill afford to lose."

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSIONER GEORGE J. SUMMERS—"Mr. Shea's passing grieves me deeply. His charitable activities endeared him to many, and thousands will mourn his death."

MAYOR ZIMMERMANN—"Michael Shea has long been regarded as one of Buffalo's most valuable citizens, one who has contributed a great deal towards the progress of this great city. His death is a distinct loss to Buffalo and a source of personal regret to me."

Additional Bearers.

John K. Lapp, Elliott C. McDougal, John J. Malloy, Peter H. Meyer, Justice John V. Maloney, Burrows Matthews, William J. McNamara, Daniel H. McCarragher, Dr. James J. Mooney, Dean R. Nott, Walter L. Newcomb, N. L. Nathanson of Toronto, Ont.; John R. O'Neil, Frank J. Offermann, H. William Pollack, Fenton M. Park, Judge George H. Rowe, Dr. Nelson G. Russell, Charles J. Reuling, William H. Ryan, George F. Rand, Austin J. Roche, Daniel J. Riordan, Judge Robert J. Summers, George J. Summers, Frank X. Schwab, Miles D. Stettenberg, Nicholas Schenck of New York city, Mort Shea of New York city, George Schaefer of New York city, Hugh A. Sloan, Joseph T. Snyder, James Smith, Charles B. Taylor, Fredrick Ullman, Dr. Frank A. Valente, John Wood, A. J. Wright, Judge George W. Woltz, Harry W. Whitney, Harry Yates, Orson E. Yeager Jr., Mayor Zimmermann, Adolpha Zukor of New York city.

JULES H. MICHAEL, chairman of the Buffalo zone, Motion Picture Theater Owners' association—"The city of Buffalo and the country at large have lost a showman who was beloved by every branch of the profession for many years. There is no personality in the industry today who ranks as a showman with such a great reputation as Michael Shea."

THE REV. EDWARD J. FERGER, editor and publisher, Catholic Union and Times, and a personal friend—"Buffalo has lost one of its greatest figures in Mr. Shea. Known from coast to coast as an authority in the theater, he was recognized for his keen vision in the theatrical profession. Mr. Shea's ambition to keep the theater morally wholesome was known to all his friends. He always tried to exemplify in the theater the kind of life he lived personally."

CHARLES S. OTTO, manager of the Erlanger theater—"In the death of Mr. Shea we have lost one of the greatest showmen who ever was in the business. I do not believe that there is any one who can take his place. I knew him very well and had a chance to work for him several times. I admired him and I liked him and I should like to follow in his footsteps."

KENNETH G. ROBINSON, manager of the Paramount Film exchange at 464 Franklin street—"Mr. Shea's passing is deeply deplored by the entire motion picture industry, which claimed him as one of the pioneers of exhibition. Furtherance of the higher aims of the industry was always looked upon by him with deep interest. Due to his direct association and close contact with Paramount, of which his theaters were an important part, we learned to respect his judgment as a showman and his advice in future will be sadly missed."

COUNCIL PRESIDENT WILLIAM M. EBERHARDT—"Michael

Others on List.

Charles L. Bullymore, David Bernstein of New York city, Dr. Peter C. Cornell, William R. Gastimore, Oliver Cabana, Dr. Pierce J. Candee, William J. Conners Jr., Chancellor Samuel P. Capen, Frank Collins, E. E. Goatsworth, George M. Cohan of New York city, Ganson Depew, Daniel A. Driscoll, Jacob L. Davis, Charles Diebold, Samuel J. Dark, Sam Dembow Jr. of New York city, Donald Defrees of Chicago, Joseph P. Day of New York city, William W. Eberhardt, William A. Eckert, John J. Egan, Dr. Francis Fronczak, Paul Fitzpatrick, Leopold Friedman of New York city, W. F. Freeman of New York city, Joseph G. Fischer, H. Montgomery Gerrans, Elmore C. Green, Charles L. Gurney, George L. Grobe, Mathias J. Hens, Harry B. Harrison, Hon. Louis B. Hart, Judge John R. Hazel, Justice Alonzo G. Hinkley, James W. Higgins, George A. Halbin, Thomas H. Hanrahan, Dr. Joseph M. Haley, Edward L. Hengerer, William Howard of New York city, Louis G. Harriman, Edward L. Jelinek, Henry W. Killeen, William H. Kinch, Kevin Killeen, George J. Kloepfer, Judge Daniel J. Kenefick, George A. Keller, Austin C. Keough of New York city, Alfred H. Kirchhofer, Charles A. Laube, Thomas B. Lockwood, George H. Lyon.

MICHAEL SHEA PUT NO STORE BY FAME

Alert Theater Owner Rarely Seen by Movie-Goers or General Public.

Movie-goers and the general public rarely saw Michael Shea, unless to catch a fleeting glimpse of the white-haired, alert theater owner as he entered one of his Buffalo theaters on the opening day of a vaudeville bill.

Occasionally he would stand in the lobby of the Buffalo or Hippodrome to see that patrons were used well at the boxoffice and that the work of managing a theater was going smoothly. On more than one occasion he reprimanded young men for smoking too near the boxoffice "because it annoyed the ladies."

For almost everyone in the professional entertainment world, Mr. Shea had his own particular name, especially those who visited his houses every season or oftener. Often, the nickname was that of a rival artist.

He liked to talk "shop" with his intimates, but it took a clever newspaperman to get him on the subject of the theater. Mr. Shea did not care for personal publicity and the times he has been quoted directly in the papers are few indeed.

MISS KEELER MOURNS PASSING OF MR. SHEA

Studio School Director Reveals His Deep Interest in Little Theater Movement.

Tribute to Michael Shea came today from Jane M. Keeler, director of the Studio School of the Theater and long an admirer and friend of the late theater owner.

Through Mr. Shea's generosity Miss Keeler's school occupies The Playhouse, Pearl and Huron streets, where for the past two seasons it has given its productions. Use of the theater, once the Gayety, was donated the school by Mr. Shea to give it quarters which rank with those of any little theater in the country.

"I can't tell you how much I regret the passing of Mr. Shea and how deeply grateful I have always been of the interest which he showed in our organization," Miss Keeler said.

"Coming from the professional side, his interest in the little theater was amazing. His was our largest contribution. When I first talked with Mr. Shea I was astonished at his wide knowledge of the little theater movement.

"We have been singularly happy in being able to call him our very loyal friend. His contributions to the life of the city have been more extensive than anyone knows and his death leaves a place that cannot be filled."

Theater Magnates, Actors Join in Shea Tributes

Every Major Movie Company Adds Expressions of Regret to Those of Buffalonians.

Actors and executives of the theater world joined today with prominent Buffalo citizens in all professions in expressing their feelings of loss at the passing of Michael Shea.

Every major motion picture producing company was represented in the hundreds of expressions from nationally known persons who had been personal friends and admirers of the theater owner.

Buffalonians high in civic and professional life were among the first to express their tribute.

Their comment follows:

CECIL B. McMILLE, Hollywood, motion picture producer—"Mike Shea's leaving is a loss to us all, but the splendid things for which he stood will be with us always. He was a good showman, a good man and a good friend."

EMANUEL COHEN, Hollywood, Paramount Pictures executive—"Please convey to Mr. Shea's family and to all his associates my sincerest condolences. A great showman, a remarkable personality, a loyal friend. A wonderful character has passed away. Not only were his friends but the entire industry in which he worked so happily and so long cannot help but deeply feel this tremendous loss."

DAVID BERNSTEIN, Loew Theaters corporation—"I am deeply shocked to learn of Mr. Shea's death. Please convey my sincere sympathy to the family."

E. C. GRAINGER, Fox Film company—"I extend Mr. Shea's family my sincere sympathy."

WILLIAM DOWNS, Loew Theaters corporation—"To the members of Mr. Shea's family I send my profound sympathy."

WILLIAM RAYNOR, New York, former manager of Lafayette theater, Buffalo—"My sincere sympathy in the passing of Mike Shea. A great shock to me."

ABE LASTFOGEL, New York, William Morris Booking company—"Cannot tell you how badly I felt when I received the news of Mr. Shea's passing away. It was a privilege to know him and work for him. This is a great loss for all of us. Please convey my feelings to Mrs. Shea."

NICHOLAS M. SCHENCK, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—"I have just learned of the death of Mr. Shea and wish to extend my sincerest sympathy."

W. F. RODGERS, eastern division sales manager, M-G-M—"Greatly grieved to learn of the loss of your good husband and extend to you my sincerest sympathy."

MRS. WILLIAM MORRIS and family, New York—"My own feeling of deep personal loss is added to the sorrow of the entire theatrical world that loved and revered Mike Shea. Please accept our united heartfelt sympathy."

BORIS MORROS, manager of Paramount theater, New York city—"May God bless you and help you in this very trying time. I lost my best friend."

BASIL BROTHERS, Buffalo, theater operators—"Our sincere and heartfelt sympathy in your bereavement."

one of the best friends that I or anybody who came in contact with him during his many years in the theater business ever had. Heartfelt sympathies from myself and the entire organization."

SID SILVERMAN, editor and publisher Variety—"So sorry to hear of your great loss. Deepest sympathy."

VARIETY STAFF—"We mourn the loss of one of our best friends—Mike Shea."

CHARLES J. FREEMAN, Paramount-Publix executive—"Deepest sympathy."

N. L. NATHANSON, Toronto, general manager Paramount Theaters of Canada, Ltd.—"Am heartbroken at the news of passing of your husband and my good friend and associate for so many years. I will miss him and his friendship. My deepest sympathy."

HAL HALPERIN, Chicago, former Paramount-Publix Middle West district manager—"My dear Mrs. Shea: I just heard the sorrowful news. Words are inadequate to express my sympathy and thought. I can only say that the show business has lost its outstanding saint and friend."

J. E. FLYNN, Albany, MGM district manager—"Am deeply grieved and shocked to learn of passing of your dear husband and send my heartfelt sympathy."

HENRY CHESTERFIELD—National Vaudeville Artists—"Members of the N. V. A. are stunned at the passing of one of the few friends they had left—Mike Shea. The name will ever be held in veneration not only by those who knew him but by future generations of show people who will always be able to hear the legend of a just and upright manager who was ever considerate of their comfort and of their development. Convey to the family a sympathy from us that is both deep and sincere."

ARCH SELWYN, theatrical producer—"Mike Shea's death is a great loss to me and his other friends, who were legion in the industry. I knew him for many, many years and he was one of the finest men I ever knew in this business. He was of the old-fashioned school, always kept his theater in a dignified manner, and was scrupulous in his dealings. I used to be associated with him in Detroit and Buffalo and can only remember him with the greatest affection."

H. M. WARNER, president Warner Bros. Pictures—"Years of friendship, personal and business, with Mike Shea enabled me, like many others, to know the sterling characteristics and exceptional ability of the man. His death I consider a personal loss as well as a loss to the amusement business which will not easily be repaired."

JULES LEVY, vice president and general sales manager of RKO—"I am terribly shocked to hear of the death of Michael Shea. He was a fine gentleman and as honorable in his business dealings as anyone in the theater world. The show business has lost one of its greatest supporters and he will be badly missed. I had known him 25 years."

mind and a warm and generous heart were the characteristics by which he will be remembered."

MARY BOLAND, actress—"A brave and kind man known and beloved by all. The entire theater world will mourn his passing."

SIDNEY R. KENT, president of Fox Films—"I have known Mike Shea for many years, and the news of his death was a distinct shock to me. His high integrity in both personal and business relations made him one of the best loved men in the motion picture industry. During his long and successful career he worked incessantly for the good of our business and his passing will be a severe loss. There are few men of his stamp in the world today."

Other comment follows:

HENRY W. KILLEEN, prominent lawyer—"For as many years as I can remember, Michael Shea was an outstanding figure in Buffalo."

"He came to occupy a position of dominance in the business of providing entertainment through the stage and screen. He suffered vicissitudes of fortune, but there never was an abatement or loss in the public and private appraisal of the fairness, the courage, the fine sense of honor, the fidelity to duty and obligation, the innate cleanness and decency in thought and action, which marked and characterized his whole life."

"One thing about him was particularly to be observed: no man was more steadfast or more loyal in his friendships. This strength and steadfastness tied men to him with bonds of strong affection. His passing will occasion genuine sorrow to hundreds who will recall innumerable proofs of the fact that Michael Shea was indeed a friend."

HARRY C. DAVIS, president Buffalo Musicians' association—"The musicians lost one of their best friends in Mr. Shea. In the olden days, when managers used to cut down on orchestras, Mr. Shea used to build them up. He was a firm believer in large orchestras. We don't know what the future may hold for theater orchestras with Mr. Shea gone. We all are deeply grieved."

PERRY E. WURST, executive vice president, Manufacturers & Traders Trust company—"I was shocked at the news of Mr. Shea's death. I knew him very well and respected and honored him as a unique character and extraordinary individual in the public amusement field."

ELMER E. SMITH, business agent, Stage Employees' union—"In dealings with Mr. Shea over a period of 40 years, I always found him eminently fair and very good to us. We have lost an understanding friend."

ALBERT F. RYDE, business agent, Moving Picture Operators' union—"I am very much broken up over Mr. Shea's death. He was one of the greatest friends labor ever had. There never was a more fair man to deal with."

DANIEL A. DRISCOLL, acting postmaster—"Michael Shea's death is a great loss to this community and to the nation. He had been my personal friend for more than 30 years and a friend of my father before me."

A. CHARLES HAYMAN, managing director of the Lafayette theater—"I knew Mike Shea for virtually all my business life. I always admired and respected him. His fairness and sportsmanship always were in evidence, whether as competitor or customer."

SHEA POLICIES TO CONTINUE IN HIS THEATERS

Messages of sympathy, condolence arrive from men high up in entertainment field

Policies, personnel and methods of operation in the Shea theaters will continue as fixed and chosen by the late Michael Shea, it was declared yesterday in a statement issued by Vincent R. McFaul, general manager of the Shea Theaters Corporation.

Throughout the day and evening, telegrams of sympathy and condolence from men high in the field of entertainment continued to arrive at the Shea apartment in the Westbrook, Delaware Avenue at North Street, where already hundreds have paid their final respects to the dean of American vaudeville managers and showmen.

Film Greats Express Sorrow

Nicholas M. Schenck and David Bernstein, chief executives of Loew's, Inc., and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures; Cecil B. deMille, noted film-producer-director; E. C. Grainger, John J. Murdock, William Downs, William Raynor, Milton Feld, Abe Lastfogel, the William Morris family, V. P. Rodgers, Emanuel Cohen, Sam Fried, E. V. Richards, Boris Morros, the Basil Brothers, Lawrence J. Golde, Andrew Smith and George A. Roberts were among those who joined other scores in expressing grief and sympathy.

Mr. McFaul's statement was: "It always had been Mr. Shea's idea to build an organization that would continue to operate his theaters in accordance with his ideals and policies—an organization that would carry on in just such an emergency as this."

"And while Mr. Shea, of course, will not realize it, that lifelong ambition is being carried out. "While the organization has been in the process of building for the last 35 years, and actually has been operating in accordance with the Shea ideals for the last ten years, it seems a coincidence that just at the time when this organization reached a point of efficiency where it was satisfactory to him and he could

have taken a well earned rest, as he watched the theaters operated as he desired them—he should be taken by death."

Policies to Be Unchanged

"The passing of Mr. Shea is not going to cause any change in the policies and methods of Shea theater operation."

"His ideas will be carried out in everything we do in the future. Mr. Shea was one of the country's most successful showmen over a period of 50 years, and we feel that in following his teachings we cannot go astray."

"We will continue to offer the kind of entertainment in all our theaters that has made the name Shea famed throughout the country."

"There will be no changes in operating personnel. Every member of our present organization has been thoroughly schooled in Shea methods and knows how to carry on as Mr. Shea would desire."

Return of Stage Comedians Visioned by Late Showman

Day of Radio Comic About Dead, Mr. Shea Declared in Last Published Interview.

Always looking forward, Michael Shea in what probably was his last published interview predicted the end of the comedian's reign on the radio and his replacement by good musical programs. Chatting with newspapermen in the dressing room of Joe Laurie Jr. in Shea's Buffalo theater, Mr. Shea spoke as follows in a published statement in the Buffalo Evening News on Nov. 28, 1933: "A comedian is only as good as his material and the day of the radio comic is just about dead."

"You'll see a big change in radio soon. It's impossible for any of these comedians to go on week after week with all new surefire stuff."

"The comedians are coming back to the theaters. And so are the people who would rather spend money to see them at their best than to hear them free. Music—good music—that's the stuff that will predominate on the radio before long."

The week in which Mr. Shea uttered these remarks was a jubilant occasion for him. Old-time stars, like Gus Hill and Lizzie Wilson, were playing on the stage of his biggest theater in "Memory Lane Revue."

Mr. Shea jocosely refused to talk with those "kids" who were under 60—but he tramped up and down

the several flights of stairs backstage to exchange reminiscences with those who, like him, were in the 70's. It was a renewal of youth for all of them.

"I'm through listening to calamity howlers who are always talking depression," Mr. Shea told Mr. Laurie. "I've lived through worse times than these and come out on top, and I'm going to again. You can't keep a young Irishman down—at least, not a young Irishman who'll be 75 next All Fools' day."

"I know what I'm going to do? I'm going to book more and better shows and forget about what money I've lost. I'm going to get it back."

"There's just one thing I wish you'd do, Mike," Mr. Laurie urged. "I wish you'd let me write your biography. I've been working on a history of vaudeville for two years, but your life story would be a truer history of vaudeville than the facts I've been able to assemble."

"Not a chance, you young jackanapes," Mr. Shea snapped, rising hastily and making for the door. "I don't want any books written about me. And what do you know about show business? You never saw the day you were half as good as your dad was and you never will."

IN HIS younger days Mike Shea was one of the hardest and huskiest young athletes in the First Ward section, which boasted many great athletes. He was a charter member and an enthusiastic supporter of the old Mutual Rowing Club, and pulled a powerful oar. He was also much sought after as a member of the best tug-o-war team along the waterfront. He was blessed with wonderful strength and stamina, and never understood the meaning of the word quit. Buffalo loses a good and useful citizen in his passing, one known all over the world as a successful theatrical magnate, with a compelling, dominant personality, yet kindly and tolerant, respected and beloved by all who knew him.

MICHAEL SHEA

No name is better known in present day Buffalo than that of Michael Shea. No other name in Buffalo is carried in so many of the bright lights. Few personalities have made so distinct an impress upon the life of the city.

And that was not entirely because of the publicized nature of the business which brought the name of this nationally known figure of the theatrical world into every home in this area. Perhaps to most persons it was but a name. To a vast number, however, the name stood for one who was a character as well as a man, one who had fought his way up from an humble beginning of public entertaining and, by virtue of his vision and his genius, had reached the higher rounds of the ladder of achievement in his particular field.

Michael Shea was the dean of vaudeville managers in America. The flexibility of his talent was shown throughout the whole of his career. In all the many changes through which the theater has passed in the last forty years, he kept full pace with the development of that entertainment which has produced the palaces of forgetfulness that are our theaters today.

MICHAEL SHEA

Passing last week of the doyen of American showmen, Michael Shea, undoubtedly leaves a void in the field of entertainment, one which probably never can be filled.

Among impresarios and purveyors of entertainment, none did more to put variety on the high plane it enjoyed in the halcyon era of the two-a-day, when the most important personalities of all fields were lured into vaudeville, to show what they could do to amuse or amaze patrons.

In Buffalo, and to Buffalo, the name of Michael Shea was synonymous with the best and latest in entertainment. He was a pioneer in many ways. Innovations in programs, in policies, virtually always were his. In his lengthy career, he helped many an entertainer up several rungs of the ladder of fame. And he helped Buffalo, in ways few ever knew.

Final curtain for a grand old man has made thousands of eyes wet and caused a headache that will be difficult to cure.

Shea Lore

A PIECE of the spacious Shea legend I always have liked concerned a young tenor with a fancy for the liquid burblings of the saxophone, that exasperating instrument which with Whiteman, Lopez and Ted Lewis is responsible for scorching music and for its legitimate stuff which Lombardo pioneered.

The saxophonist of my tale considered himself quite a puffer. He could whinny on instruments of all lengths, sometimes played two at once.

He belonged to an aggregation known, but not very far, as The Yale Collegians. The Collegians were on their uppers in Buffalo and the helpful Fred Waring petitioned Mike Shea to give them a few days' work in his Hippodrome.

Mr. Shea agreed to hear their rehearsals. During one number in their tentative and importunate concert, the saxophonist laid aside his instrument and chirped a chorus in an indolent fashion, permitting the musicians to play around him, sometimes slightly behind, but always catching up and hitting his last somber signing note on the nose.

Demanded Song

The Yale Collegians expressed ex-tenuatingly to the Mr. Shea that the young man would only warble this one chorus and then would resume his dazzling piping, screeching and yawping on the reeds.

This didn't win Mr. Shea, though. He said that from where he was sitting it sounded to him as if the young fellow's singing had his saxophone beat all hollow.

He suggested that the young man sing all the choruses. But, the youth expostulated he was a virtuoso of the saxophone and felt that tenor singing was unworthy of his mettle.

Well, said Mr. Shea, if I hire him, he sings. If he doesn't sing—no engagement.

The young man liked railway fare and steaks. He sang. Years later, Vincent R. McFaul of Buffalo met Rudy Vallee in an elevator in the Paramount building. He was surprised and gratified to be cordially recognized by the flap idol, now in the big mazuma.

"I would hardly forget Mike Shea's manager, said Vallee. "You

know I think he started me singing. Until he insisted on my singing up in Buffalo I had my heart set upon becoming another Rudy Weidort (the illustrious saxophonist from whom Vallee borrowed his first monicker). I had hitched my hopes to the saxophone. I had no notion that my voice could please anyone. Mike Shea turned me from a musician into a vocalist."

Case of Gaxton

Stories of Shea's discoveries often sound like fables. But William Gaxton, the star of Of Thee I Sing can swear to the influence of Mike Shea's decisions.

Gaxton in his younger days was starving in the shoddy suburban variety houses. He never had been able to crack the first class circuits such as Keith's. He wailed his discouragement and his bankruptcy to Shea one afternoon in New York. Mr. Shea gave the hefty young comedian an audition, bought his act for the Court Street. He paid it \$750, more than it ever had dared think about before. He made a few suggestions, placed it prominently on the Court bill.

The next week Gaxton was booked over a major vaudeville route and thenceforth his climb to the pinnacle of the musical comedy heap was consistent with the Buffalo showman's judgment.

MICHAEL SHEA

NONE of the films exhibited in his theaters ever told a more remarkable story than the life of Michael Shea.

That story had in it every element associated with drama—thrills, aspirations, reversals, romance, triumph.

It was the story of the poor boy who makes good; of the humble stevedore who fights his way upward through adversity to wealth, power and position.

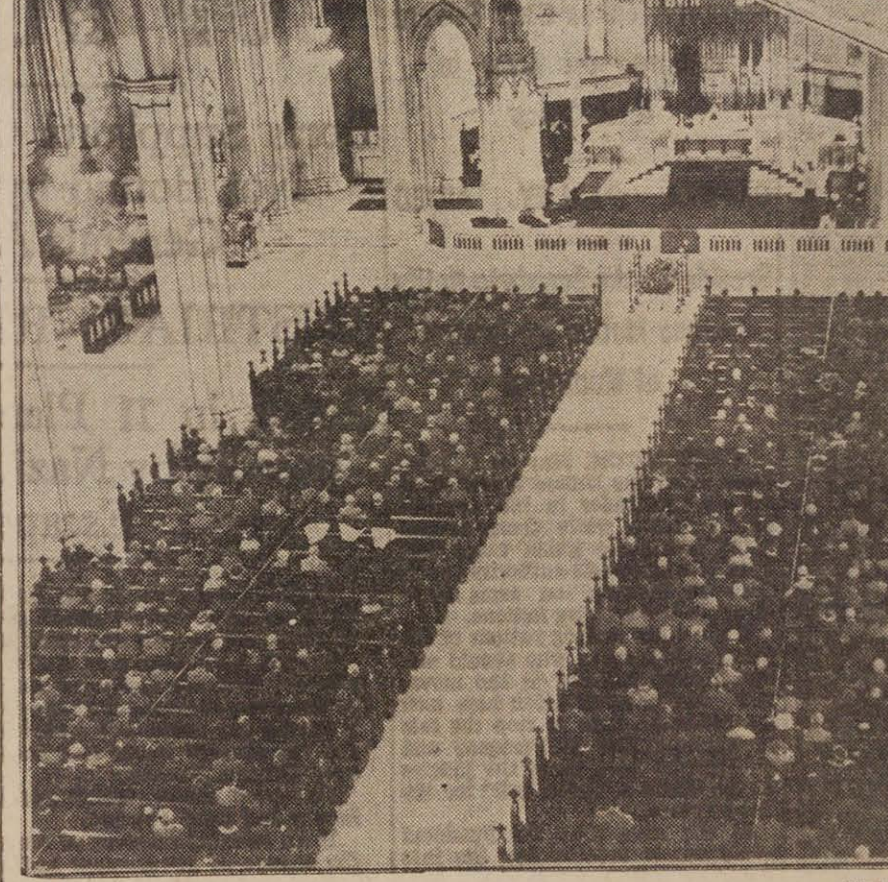
Michael Shea was the type of man who would have succeeded in any business. If he had stuck to the lakes he would most certainly have emerged one day as the owner of a fleet. Had he remained in the iron-business—he was an iron worker for a time in his youth—he would have acquired a string of foundries.

Probably an amazing versatility furnished the mainspring of his success. Starting with the old Music Hall, where the Brisbane building now stands, back in the eighties, he operated a combination beer garden and what proved to be the faint foreshadow of vaudeville. Then he shifted to vaudeville, to the movies and to the talkies as the public taste shifted, and was just a little ahead of the procession with each change. His ambition was simply to amuse and entertain the public, a pretty worthy ambition in a world that so badly needs diversion from its troubles, and he achieved it.

Until the end there was about him the bluntness and the directness of the iron worker or the stevedore he had been in his early years, but a certain external appearance of roughness did not conceal what was really a kindly, even somewhat sentimental, personality. Actor folk loved him and he loved them. They liked to come to Buffalo, to play "Mike" Shea's houses.

The Romance of Michael Shea ends, as he would have wanted it to end, with the hero of the piece at the pinnacle of his power and influence. There is no anticlimax.

When Hundreds of Friends Said F



The casket containing the late Michael Shea's body rests before the white chan cathedral as thousands pay the late theatrical magnate tribute.

Faith Brightens Sad Rites For Showman Michael Shea

(Continued From Page One) L. I. assisted. Services started at 10 a. m. before a crowded church. Those who came to mourn the passing of the famous showman who had started life with nothing but two strong hands a keen mind, and a rough and ready sympathy were as variegated as the life of

The



WEATHER: Pa

YEAR, NO. 215—IN TWO SECTIONS—S

Light of Faith Rites as Mi



At 4:15 A. M. "I'd have shot them all if they had come for me," Assistant Detective Chief Frank J. McCarthy said. According to police records, the shooting occurred at 4:15 a. m., but a celebratory General Hospital did not receive the call until 4:45 a. m. Being the wounded man into the hospital at 5:25 p. m. later, he was pronounced dead at 5:10 a. m.

Curran dropped with a bullet in his right shoulder, near the neck. The bullet ranged downward, severing large blood vessels near the heart. Curran kept coming, he and waters. Curran kept coming, he said the "gang" tried to rush him of trying to pick his pocket. He word to the men in the tavern accused About an hour later, he said one of the men in the tavern accused him of trying to pick his pocket. He said the "gang" tried to rush him and he stepped back and drew his revolver. Curran kept coming, he said, so he fired.

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MURDER CHARGE FACES MAN, 60

(Continued From Page One) was wounded and persuaded them to send for help. Thomson said he left the coal yard about 10 p. m. and entered the cafe. About an hour later, he said one of the men in the tavern accused him of trying to pick his pocket. He said the "gang" tried to rush him and he stepped back and drew his revolver. Curran kept coming, he said, so he fired.

GREATER BUFFALO ADVERTISING CLUB

9-11 HOTEL STATLER

BUFFALO, N. Y.

May 18, 1934

Cleveland 6376

Joe Shea

TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PAST PRESIDENTS AND WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Gentlemen:

Michael Shea, Honorary Member of this Club, has passed on to the Great Beyond!

Ad-Vents, issue of May 22nd, will carry the following:

" The final curtain fell last Thursday for Michael Shea, Honorary Member of this Club and Dean of American showmen. At 75, at the height of his career, he was summoned by the Great Producer after an illness that lasted approximately two months.

It was Michael Shea who threw open Shea's Buffalo Theater when the Ad Club staged mammoth mid-night shows for the benefit of the Mayor's Committee on Unemployment both in 1932 and 1933. It was in recognition of this fact that he was elected an Honorary Member of the Club in 1933. All Ad Clubbers mourn his passing."

The funeral has been announced in the press for Saturday. It is with regret that we, who are going to Toronto know and feel sorry that we will not be on hand to pay our respects.

It is President's Whitney's sincere wish, however, that the Ad Club be well represented at the services by those of the above groups who will remain at home.

We know that we can count on your cooperation. Yes, verily, is Buffalo losing one of its leading citizens.

Cordially yours,

FLOYD M. CRAWFORD
Executive Secretary

FMC:MEP

*Smile Hippocritu
51 Burbz Dr
BFC*

Variety Club of Buffalo

THE VARIETY CLUB OF BUFFALO WILL HOLD A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE LATE MICHAEL SHEA IN THE BALLROOM OF THE HOTEL STATLER ON MONDAY, MAY 28th AT 1 P. M.

THE PROGRAM, WHICH WILL BE BROADCAST, WILL INCLUDE AN ORGAN RECITAL, INVOCATION BY THE REVEREND FATHER EDWARD J. FERGER, AN ADDRESS BY THE HON. DANIEL J. KENEFICK, A EULOGY AND PRESENTATION OF A TESTIMONIAL TO THE SHEA FAMILY BY A DELEGATION OF NEW YORK STAGE FRIENDS OF MR. SHEA, RESOLUTIONS BY THE VARIETY CLUB, AND A BENEDICTION BY RABBI JOSEPH L. FINK. THE SERVICE WILL OPEN PROMPTLY AT 1 O'CLOCK AND CONCLUDE AT 1:45. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. DOORS OF THE BALLROOM WILL BE OPEN AT 12:30.

BEFORE THE SERVICE, THERE WILL BE A LUNCHEON OF THE VARIETY CLUB IN THE TERRACE ROOM OF THE HOTEL STATLER AT 12 O'CLOCK. ALL MEMBERS OF THE VARIETY CLUB AND THEIR FRIENDS ARE URGED TO ATTEND.

WILLIAM E. J. MARTIN

SIDNEY B. PFEIFER, Chairman

IN THE SHADOW OF GREATNESS

For several days, during office hours, we put our hat and coat on and started up to the Westbrook to see an old friend. Then we would take the hat and coat off—we could not make it. A friend of ours called us on the telephone and enquired: "Haven't you been up to see Mr. Shea? He is very sick." The answer went back: "No. I am going up to see him tomorrow." The tomorrow never came. We could fight a hundred causes that we thought were right. But we did not have the nerve to go up to see a man whom we loved because he was a fighter for the things he knew were right.

Mr. Shea is gone, but his name will live above the theatres in the marquees of the city's amusement places. The last time we saw him, he told us what he thought of the present day theatres. It was punctuated with the characteristic Shea brusqueness.

When we left him that day, we felt the regret that he was not forty years younger. Forty years ago, the Shea courage would have battled the immoral movie and he would have won. None of the modern movie magnates could have withstood the merciless tongue of a man who was the soul of honor in his business.

He never gave up the fight against the unclean presentation. But he was getting old and tired, and men who have fought their way for three-quarters of a century turn their thoughts from the world of the present to the world of the future.

Only recently a comedian of note came to Buffalo to appear at one of Mr. Shea's theatres. Before his first appearance, Mr. Shea sent for him and offered him two hundred and fifty dollars additional for the week if he would leave out his coarse, vulgar dialect beneath which was put over a group of dirty stories. To the audience, the vulgarity and obscenity were not known. To his own race they caused no end of merriment. He turned down Mr. Shea's offer because he knew that the "powers" in New York would stand for his filth.

The theatre owes so much to Michael Shea that it is impossible to publish all that he accomplished, in these columns. How much that was may be gauged in future years as the theatre and moving picture dies a sure and certain death, the victims of the treachery, immorality and commercialism of its un-Christian and un-American producers and owners.

The last curtain call has been made. The final strain has faded away in life's great symphony. The "star" has played his part well in the drama of human existence. The lights are dimmed as the climax is reached and passed. The audience has silently fled out and the theatre of his activities is cold and still. A man, white haired and aged, enters eternity to profit by the good deeds of time.

VARIETY CLUB MEMBERS PAY SHEA TRIBUTE

More than 300 attend affair in Statler at which showman eulogized

Tribute was paid Michael Shea at memorial services in Hotel Statler yesterday under auspices of the Variety Club of Buffalo of which Mr. Shea was honorary president.

More than 300 persons heard Judge Daniel J. Kenefick laud Mr. Shea as the foremost showman of the country, a sympathetic, generous and deeply religious man, and heard Pat Rooney 2d, speaking on behalf of vaudeville, praise him as the friend and benefactor of all the show world.

Genius Recognized

"Someone has said that 'genius is mainly an affair of energy,' and, measured by this standard, Michael Shea was a genius in his calling," said Judge Kenefick. "In the city where he lived nearly three-quarters of a century, and where for nearly 50 years he was identified with theatrical enterprises, his name was a household word. He loved the stage and none will regret his passing more than countless the-

I like Harold B. Franklin's epitaph for the late Michael Shea, noted Buffalo theatre man—"The Parade Never Passed Him By."

Caught Napping

Will Demarest who appeared at Loew's State (N. Y.) last week made his usual entrance from an aisle. One matinee as he wandered toward the stage, his eye caught the figure of a venerable fellow fast asleep. It was Mike Shea the Buffalo showman. Demarest shook Shea and inquired:

"Where do you think you are, in your own theatre?"

atrical folk with whom he contacted in his long career.

"We honor him for his achievement. We loved him for the nobility of his character and for the greatness of his soul."

Mr. Rooney presented to Mrs. Emile Giffoniello, daughter of Mr. Shea, a gold-bound testimonial scrapbook compiled shortly after the Buffalo showman's 50th anniversary in the business.

Tributes from President Roosevelt, Eddie Cantor, George M. Cohan and others of note in the show world were read from the scrapbook.

In opening the services, Sidney B. Pfeiffer, presiding officer, remarked that in honoring Mr. Shea, "we pay a fitting tribute not only to a generous, modest, unassuming, reticent, warm-hearted man whom we all knew, but we also pay homage to a calling from whose ranks could spring so great a showman and so fine and upright a citizen as Michael Shea."

Robert Demming of Shea's Hippodrome Theater played an organ solo. Meyer Balsom, bass-baritone, accompanied at the piano by his brother, Moe Balsom, song Crossing the Bar. Invocation was by the Rev. Edward J. Ferger and benediction by Rabbi Joseph L. Fink.

The following resolution, read by W. E. J. Martin of the committee in charge of the services, was adopted by the Variety Club:

"Whereas, God, in His infinite wisdom, has seen fit to summon the master showman, Michael Shea, from life's stage; and

"Whereas, by that summons, Buffalo has lost an outstanding worker for civic betterment, the world of entertainment has been deprived of an irreplaceable impresario, his family has been bereft of a loving husband and father, and the Variety Club of Buffalo of its greatly respected and admired honorary president; therefore, be it

"Resolved, That the Variety Club, in solemn session assembled, does hereby express its deep and enduring grief for the loss of an honored and esteemed member and officer, and to extend its sincere sympathy to the bereaved family."

300 PAY TRIBUTE TO SHEA'S MEMORY

Judge Kenefick Praises Late Showman at Service Held by Variety Club.

Personal and professional friends of long acquaintance joined in a public tribute to the memory of Michael Shea this afternoon.

The occasion was sponsored by the Buffalo Variety club and took place in the Hotel Statler. More than 300 persons heard Judge Daniel J. Kenefick speak in behalf of Buffalo friends of the noted showman and heard Pat Rooney II voice the sentiments of the acting fraternity toward their mentor and benefactor.

"We honor him for his achievements. We loved him for the nobility of his character and for the greatness of his soul," Judge Kenefick declared.

"He was a deeply religious man, strict in his observance of all the tenets of his church and striving to exemplify them in his daily life."

"He saw much of the seamy side of life, but it never attracted him or touched his soul."

Mr. Rooney presented to Mrs. Emile Giffoniello, daughter of Mr. Shea, a gold-bound testimonial scrapbook compiled soon after the Buffalo showman's 50th anniversary in the business.

Tributes from President Roosevelt, Eddie Cantor, George M. Cohan and others of note were included in the scrapbook, which was to have been presented at a testimonial dinner to Mr. Shea in New York this Spring.

Opening the Variety club's memorial service was an organ solo by Robert Demming of Shea's Hippodrome theater. Meyer Balsom, bass-baritone, sang "Crossing the Bar," accompanied at the piano by his brother, Moe Balsom.

Invocation was by the Rev. Edward J. Ferger and benediction by Rabbi Joseph L. Fink. Sidney B. Pfeiffer and W. E. J. Martin were the committee in charge.

Text of Judge Kenefick's Tribute

Judge Daniel J. Kenefick paid tribute to the memory of Michael Shea at a public memorial service sponsored by the Buffalo Variety club this afternoon as follows:

We come together, my friends, to give public expression to our regard and no less of our affection for Michael Shea.

He was no ordinary man and lived no colorless life. He was a very unusual man and he had a colorful career.

He was not born to fortune or to the purple. His inheritance was a sturdy frame, a simple schooling and the acquisition of the elemental virtues which are usually found in a modest home.

Launched into manual toil at an early age, stern necessity kept him there throughout his young manhood.

He was a quiet, thoughtful and unassuming young fellow in this period of his career but yet he never flinched in all the rough encounters of his life.

Kindly and Tolerant.

He looked with a kindly, tolerant and sympathetic eye on the weaknesses of his fellows. He resisted, however all temptations to deviate from the standards of personal conduct that he had set for himself and temptations passed him by untouched and unsullied.

He came, too, to a true understanding of the virile virtues which overshadow the weaknesses of the common man; his boundless sympathy and his ready helpfulness to those in distress; his quick response to any appeal to his finer sentiments, and his insistence on square dealing in all the relations of life.

I have failed in my purpose if I have not shown you that Michael Shea's earlier contacts with life furnished a background for the great success which he later achieved in his chosen calling.

He was a curious compound of the hard-headed philosopher and the dreamer of dreams.

Had Determined to Win.

He felt within him the urge to a broader field for the exercise of his talents, and so he pushed off for the great adventure.

He appreciated the handicaps he must overcome, the paucity of his schooling, his inexperience in business affairs and the lack of definite direction of his dreams.

But he had a profound faith in himself, and he had the determination to win his way.

In the early days of his great adventure he floundered about as most men would laboring under his handicaps.

When he was brought in touch with the theatrical world he sensed that he had found his career.

Someone has said that "Genius is mainly an affair of energy," and, measured by this standard, Michael Shea was a genius in his calling.

Marched in Rapid Steps.

He marched in rapid steps from the concert hall to the vaudeville theater, and thence to moving pictures.

His single theater developed into a chain of theaters dotting every section of our community and extending beyond our borders.

He strove mightily to produce the highest and cleanest type of entertainment, and he stood for all that was best in theatrical management.

He sought to maintain in the conduct of his theatrical enterprises the same high standards which he observed in his personal conduct and in his personal relations with his fellow-man.

The name "Shea" affixed to his theaters became the hall-mark of all that was finest and best in theatrical management.

In this city where he lived for nearly three-quarters of a century and where for nearly 50 years he was identified with theatrical enterprises his name was a household word.

He loved the people of the stage and I venture to say that none will regret his passing more than the countless theatrical folk with whom he contacted in his long career.

Aided Many to Succeed.

He was tolerant of their faults and their foibles. He was sympathetic, generous and helpful in their trials and difficulties and he set many of them on the way to successful careers.

He was a deeply religious man, strict in his observance of all the tenets of his church and striving to exemplify them in his daily life.

He saw much of the seamy side of life but it never attracted him or touched his soul.

We honor him for his achievements. We loved him for the nobility of his character and for the greatness of his soul.

A great philosopher in an essay on death said that when a man has attained worthy ends and expectations, the sweetest canticle is "nunc dimittis"—now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace."

Michael Shea Was Not Only Brave But Tender

Final Verdict for Great Showman Lauds His Courage and Kindness

By KATE BURR

A FINAL word on the life of the late Michael Shea, we say with feeling.

He was both brave and tender. Bayard Taylor says of these two attributes:

"The bravest are the tenderest. The loving are the daring."

One of his life-long friends said of the great showman, "Michael Shea had more courage, more cold grit than any man I know."

When his first music hall in the Arcade building burned, leaving Mr. Shea to begin over without a cent of insurance, he met the facts with a smile and at once started to make another and bigger fortune.

No one ever heard a whimper at "bad luck," out of Mike Shea. He just carried on, and while he was carrying on, he helped more people among the down-and-outers than anyone besides himself knew.

Was it Cowper who said he would not count among his friends he who needlessly stepped upon a worm?

Michael Shea would have felt the same way.

There were no alley cats wandering, thin and gaunt around his theaters.

Likely the "cat account" for milk, salmon and meat, at the Shea theaters was the only one of its kind in the country.

But it stood here, where all the Shea cats are fat and saucy.

The last few months of Mr. Shea's life when he was ailing, he never felt too ill to walk down to the market for cracked corn for his pigeons—the pigeons who used to perch on the windowsill of his Westbrook apartment.

I've heard people scoff at feeding pigeons, but Mike Shea never did.

His special pigeons at the Westbrook grew fat and saucy like the theater cats.

They would land on the sill and if their benefactor were not in sight would fly against the window to attract attention.

"The bravest are the tenderest. The loving are the daring."

Michael Shea was both tender and daring.

**Final Tributes Will Be Paid
Michael Shea on Saturday**

Family at Bedside as Death Ends Career of One of
Oldest Active Showmen in U. S.

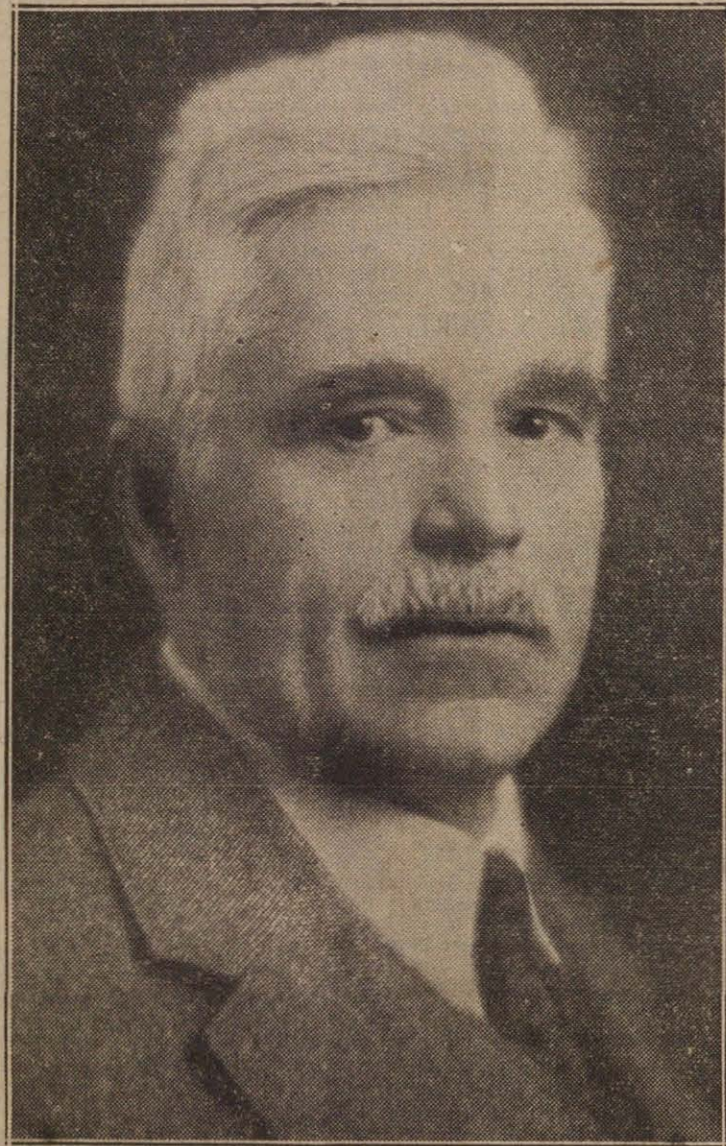
***Cathedral Is Thronged As
Shea Funeral Rites Held***

Large representative group attends services
for pioneer showman

**SHEA, THEATER
DEAN, WILL BE
BURIED TODAY**

Leaders in business, political and
theatrical fields will attend
funeral services

Curtain Falls for Theater Dean



MICHAEL SHEA

MICHAEL SHEA, LEADER IN THEATRICAL WORLD, DIES

Pioneer showman, linked with stage for five decades, ill two months

LEGION OF FRIENDS MOURN PASSING OF MICHAEL SHEA, CITY'S BELOVED SHOWMAN

Glowing Tributes Come From Celebrities and Folks Throughout Nation in All Stations

MICHAEL SHEA

The death of Michael Shea brings to a close a life that was always prominently connected with the American theatre. It has been told of him that up until recently he watched every Monday show determined that nothing offensive or ribald would be presented in his theatre. And he none too gently demanded of the actors whom he employed for his bills that they omit that which was risqué or indecent.

Nothing pained him more than the new day in which vulgarity replaced clean comedy. He knew the influence of the theatre with the millions who attended it. He knew what evil effect the immoral had upon the public mind. And through all his years of showmanship he never consented to stoop to immorality in a presentation to win for himself a personal fortune.

This writer had for Michael Shea the highest regard. He was a kindly man, kindly to the thousands who worked for him and kindly always to his intimate friends. Many a kindly act he performed for our Catholic parishes and institutions and many a kindly word and act to the actors who were always so anxious to work for "Mike Shea."

His passing is a distinct loss to the theatre. It is a loss in a day when the theatre and all that it represents tends toward the lascivious. That loss is national in scope, for everywhere that the stage was spoken of, the name of Mr. Shea was adjudged as the peer of good showmen.

May his noble and kindly soul rest in peace.

MICHAEL SHEA

Somewhat of a world figure and an era passed with Michael Shea. Wherever vaudeville was performed, his name was known and revered. The era that passes with him is that of big-time vaudeville.

Mr. Shea was the last and individually most influential of a group that nursed variety entertainment from its struggling days as the offspring of the old music hall into an international amusement form that filled hundreds of theaters weekly. Wherever the great figures of the show world gather today, there will be heard a tribute to him; for to his helpful suggestions, his personal interest in their welfare and advancement, most of the headliners owe their success.

At every turn in his career of a half century as a showman, Mr. Shea evidenced his uncanny ability to look into the future and to turn his dreams into reality. Dramatic stock was losing its hold; he introduced vaudeville to replace it. Again the fickle public tired of an amusement form; Mr. Shea stepped out ahead of the parade as a purveyor of motion picture entertainment. He was among the first to see the possibilities of the newest medium, the radio; and for the last

four years had brought to the stages of his theaters those people whom countless fans had heard and were clamoring to see.

For Michael Shea each step upward meant a struggle. He early acquired the reputation of a man who could not be swerved in his purpose, who met his obligations and carried on.

His first theatrical venture was started with little capital and boundless faith in the future; he died the operator of a dozen theaters representing an investment of millions. His was a full and significant life.

NOTED SHOWMAN SUCCUMBS AT 75 IN BUFFALO HOME

Complication of Ailments Ends Career of Pioneer Known Far, Wide in Amusement World

OWNED 12 SHOW HOUSES

Started to Work at Age of 12, Demonstrated Executive Abilities Early in Life

THE BUFFALO TIMES—TUESDAY, MAY

ETY CLUB HELD SERVICES OF MICHAEL SHEA



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Fighting
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—Photo by Times Staff Cameraman
Many notables were present when the Variety Club held its memorial service yesterday for the late Michael Shea. Left to right: Former Judge Daniel J. Kenefick, Sidney B. Pfeifer, chairman of the memorial service; Mrs. Emil Giafonelli, Mr. Shea's daughter; David Miller, president of the Variety Club, and Pat Rooney of New York, representing a group of actors.

SHOW TICKETS FOR SQUELCHER

Winners in Times Contest
See Lee Tracy in New Press Film

Free tickets to see Lee Tracy in "I'll Tell the World" at the New Lafayette theater await those who submit the best "squelchers".

And for the best squelcher submitted during the contest The Times will pay \$3 in cash, and for the second best \$2.

What is a squelcher? It is a favorite snappy comeback you can use when a wise cracker tries his wiles on you. For example—See Lee Tracy in "I'll Tell the World".

It will be no trouble to this prize winning squelcher. Your favorite one may be worth two tickets to see Lee Tracy's great paper picture which opens this week's engagement Thursday at New Lafayette.

Tracy is a past master of the art of squelching.

FOR ROBINS' SAKE

