## **Barter Theatre Typical** American Success Story of the Army.

periment. Abingdon was the first of service in the Army, Bob Portertown settled and founded west of the field found that his Barter Theatre Alleghanies, and is located in the was practically non-existent. A torsouthwest corner of Virginia among nado had demolished its workshop, the beautiful Appalachian Moun- partially wrecked the actors' dormitains. Following the old Wilderness tory and splattered his painted scen-Road like a modern Daniel Boone, ery all over Virginia's beautiful na-Porterfield and his bold band brought tural scenery. But with characteristic to the people. Their only other piece dozen difficult years. of equipment was a beaten-up, dis-

over the Opera House, constructed in 000 grant because it helped to solve 1830, to the Barter Theatre and all their productions have been staged in it ever since. The building which houses it also houses the Town Hall and is the seat of government of Abingdon. Underneath the Barter Theatre's auditorium is located the town jail. Occasionally, on a Saturday night, Barter actors have been known to compete with the happy carolings and shouts of incarcerated town

The Barter Theatre was officially born on the night of June 10, 1933. Its first play, directed by and acted in by Bob Porterfield, was John Golden's "After Tomorrow." They did not know it then, but those still-hungry actors-it had been a long, long time between Broadway engagements -were destined to make theatre history. During the course of the next 17 years they and Porterfield were to prove that the American people craved and demanded good theatre and would flock to see it, if it were provided them in an artistic, capable and entertaining fashion. The ancient mouse-trap theory was once more vindicated.

Since that historic night there have been more than 200 different productions of classics, new plays and famous Broadway hits. The word "barter" has taken a new meaning in our language and now stands for an institution that is not only known throughout the United States Europe as well. It is the only American theatrical company to have been invited to perform Shakespeare's "Hamlet" at Elsinore Castle, which was the scene of the Melancholy Dane's original tragedy. The Barter Theatre company played there during the summer of 1949 and its production was acclaimed by the Danish press and public. Following its appearance in Denmark, it toured various army camps and posts in occu-

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pied Germany at the invitation of the State Department and the Department

nothing with them but their talents, grit and determination, he set out to zeal, enthusiasm and a great deter- rebuild and renew the institution he mination to bring the living theatre had founded and developed through a

He turned for help to his legion of carded stage setting which they used friends, among them the Virginia in all their early productions. Each State Conservation Commission, which week they would scrape the paint off gave him and the Barter Theatre a it and repaint it on Sunday, using grant of \$10,000. That was an impaint that had been bartered in ex- portant piece of help not only financhange for tickets to the previous cially, but also in that it led to the realization of one of his most cher-Th city fathers and townspeople of ished ideas—to make the Barter Thea-Abingdon came to their assistance tre truly a people's theatre. For generously. The original Barter years, Ponterfield had believed in and Theatre company was housed in what worked for a theatre that would be had once been the lovely home of free of the chains of Broadway. In General Preston and was later occu- countless lectures, magazine articles pied by the Martha Washington Col-lege for girls, until the depression forced it to shut its doors. The kind The living theatre, he kept saying, citizens of Abingdon came to their aid belongs to the people. There was no by contributing china, cutlery, sheets, reason why it should all be concenblankets, pots and pans and even some trated in New York, and it was uncast-off clothing, not to mention beds healthy, stultifying and killing, as it and other essential furniture. The has, the growth of it. Thus, he was Abingdon City Council also turned delighted when he received the \$10,-

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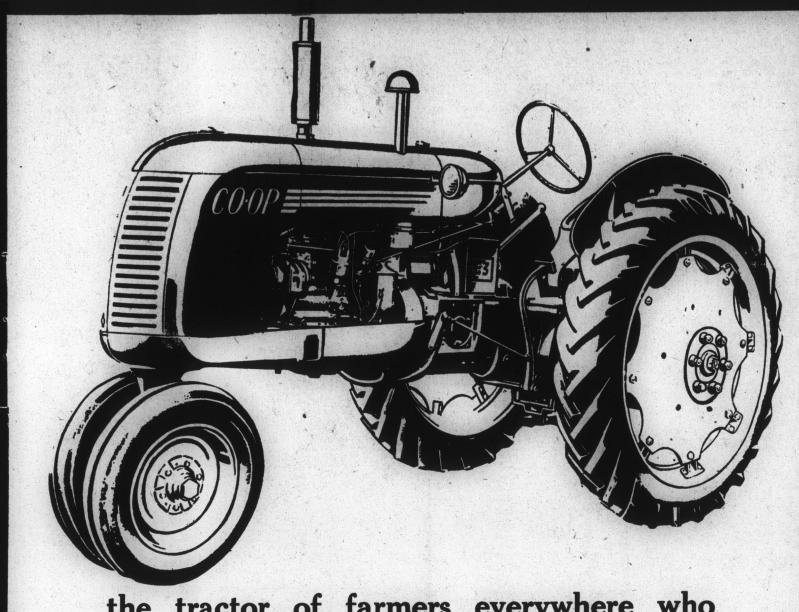
also made Barter the official State

oblem and eastern section of the nation. Like with such stars as Walter Hampden, it and nothing will take its place,

the pioneers of covered-wagon days, Sidney Blackmer, Clark Gable, Le-neither radio, movies nor television tution of its kind in the entire United the Barter Theatre's hardy crews nore Ulric, Peggy Conklin and the At the end of its first summer season (Continued From Page One)
the ancient and honorable custom of bartering services rendered for commodities? Thus was born the institution now known throughout the nation, and in Europe, as the Barter Theatre.

Leading a band of 22 hungry actors, Porterfield chose Abingdon, Virginia, as the scene of his daring experiment. Abingdon was the first town settled and founded west of the Sarter Theatre.

From its original "small but noble baild in the entire United States. Partly as the result- of this sasistance, the Barter Theatre's scope have been carrying the name and fame of Barter and the Common-modities? Thus was born the institution now known throughout the nation, and in Europe, as the Barter Theatre's not a company that now numbers well over a hundred. From the Barter Theatre's hardy crews have been carrying the name and fame of Barter and the Common-modities? Thus was born the institution now known throughout the nation, and in Europe, as the Barter Theatre's ory Peck, Jeffrey Lynn, Lisbeth from the winter months its might well be said, as some have altroughen, unabering as many as three for years has four at a time, are busy barn-storming all over the country, reaching as far as Texas and Arizona, Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as the first town settled and founded west of the Barter Theatre's name and fame of Barter and the Common-modities? Thus the Barter Theatre's united to just Abingdon wealth of Virginia far and wide more recently in several Hollywood have been carrying the name and fame of Barter and the Common-modities, and the Barter Theatre's united to just Abingdon wealth of Virginia far and wide more recently in several Hollywood have been carrying the name and fame of Barter and the Common-modities, and the Leslie Howard. He has appeared the Barter Theatre's united to just Abingdon wealth of Virginia far and wide more recently in several Hollywood barter of the Barter Theatre's and the Common-modities, and the Leslie Howard. He has appeared the Barter Theatre's and the Common wealth of Virginia



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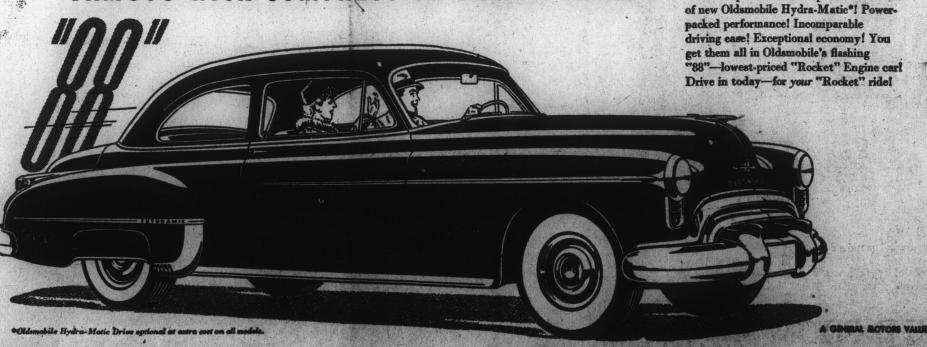
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