

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUL 14 1976

DATE ENTERED

SEP 7 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Chase's Theater and Riggs Building

AND/OR COMMON

Keith's Theater and Albee Building

2 LOCATION

Southeast Corner of 15th and G Streets, N.W.

STREET & NUMBER

(1426 G Street and 615-27 15th Streets, N.W.)

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Washington

__ VICINITY OF

Walter E. Fauntroy

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

District of Columbia

11

District of Columbia

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED (Theater)	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED (Office)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

World Corner Building Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Cafritz Construction Company

1825 K Street, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

__ VICINITY OF

District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th & D Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

November 2, 1977

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSJoint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission
Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The following architectural description of the Keith's Theater and Albee Building was prepared by Floy Brown, historian, and Nancy Schwartz, architectural historian, of Don't Tear It Down.

The combination theater/office building at the corner of 15th and G Streets was erected between 1911 and 1912 according to the designs of J.H. DeSibour. De Sibour was trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and practiced in Washington for thirty years. He was responsible for many of the best houses along Massachusetts Avenue's "Embassy Row," and in addition to the Riggs Building, he designed the Wilkins, Hibbs, F.H. Smith, Folger, and Investment office buildings.

The building has a 115.71-foot, seven-bay 15th street facade and a 177.25-foot, eleven-bay G Street facade. It fills its entire lot, abutting an alley on the rear and the complementary Beaux Arts Metropolitan Bank Building on the south. The building has a granite watertable and is faced with marble and terra cotta on the two street facades and part way down the alley. The first two floors are of rusticated, unpolished white marble and form a base for the giant (order) Corinthian pilasters which run between third and sixth floors and divide the bays above.

The 15th Street facade originally had five shops and the theater entrance on the first floor. Each shop window had a flat lintel of splayed voussoirs with a central scrolled keystone. Two of these window heads are still visible on the store fronts south of the theater. The others have been obscured by "modernizing." A black metal marquee now extends across the sidewalk over the theater entrance. The original entrance had three large round arches with decorative keystones, framed by pilasters supporting a cornice. Early photographs show a protective awning extending from the central arch. Windows at the second floor have simple surrounds with decorative panels between them of swag or swag-and-torch motif.

The next four floors are articulated by giant order Corinthian pilasters. These floors and those above are faced with terra cotta. The four central pilasters are fluted while the remaining four are plain. Between the pedestals run balustrades and the spandrels between third and fifth floors are decorated with a rich swag and wreath design. Above the sixth floor is the building's most prominent cornice. It has large modillion blocks and a crowning heavily foliated cyma recta punctuated with high relief lion masks. The seventh floor is more subdued and appears as a kind of attic. The crowning cornice is simpler with alternating bands of plain and enriched molding topped by a low recessed parapet. The roof is a copper mansard with pedimented dormers. The end bays have single windows from the second floor through the dormer. All other bays have double windows. The first four bays of the north facade are identical in configuration to the west front, and the treatment above the fifth floor is the same all around the building.

The entrance to the office portion of the building is in the third bay on the north face. It originally consisted of a round-arch opening framed by pilasters supporting a cornice. In the 1950s, this classical entrance was replaced by a simple red marble surround in a mitred black marble border. The name "Albee Building" is spelled out in metal letters. The exterior stairs to the basement are to the west of this entrance and are now covered.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1911-12 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jules Henri De Sibour

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Keith's Theater and Albee Building a Category II Landmark of Importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Together with the adjacent National Metropolitan Bank building it has a major design impact at one of the most strategic points along the ceremonial route between the Capitol and the White House, reinforcing the stately and powerful rhythm of the colonnaded east side of the Treasury Department, a Category I Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and creating a sense of ceremonial closure before the climactic turn of the route into Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House. It is a visually integral part of the 15th Street financial district. It is a significant work in a prominent location by Jules Henri de Sibour, a Beaux Arts architect of national reputation whose work also includes the Canadian Embassy, the 1785 Massachusetts Avenue Office Building and other individually designated landmarks of the National Capital. Architecturally its exterior is substantially unaltered. Many entertainers of national reputation played the theater--often to audiences of equal distinction.

The distinctive Beaux Arts facade of the Keith's Theater and Albee Building forms a strong architectural unit with the adjacent National Metropolitan Bank Building, balancing Robert Mills' superb east side of the Treasury Department and complementing it in scale, vocabulary and presence. Carefully proportioned and detailed in the lyrical manner characteristic of de Sibour's work, the Keith's Theater and Albee Building is an excellent example of Beaux Arts commercial design, relating positively to nearby individually designated Landmarks and to other buildings in the 15th Street financial district. It represents an interesting design solution to a complex program requiring construction of a large vaudeville theater with proscenium arch stage within a conventional office building. The theater has been a notable vaudeville and motion picture house, prominent in the history of those entertainment forms in Washington.

The following history of the Keith's Theater and Albee Building was prepared by Floy Brown, historian, and Nancy Schwartz, architectural historian, of Don't Tear It Down.

The theater and office building were erected on the site formerly occupied by the Riggs House, a large hotel noted as the "home of statesmen and rendezvous of bon vivants". The site was purchased by the Riggs Realty Company, George Howard, president, in 1909, and the Riggs House was pulled down in 1911. The building was originally known as the Riggs Building and the theater as Chase's. After the building was sold to the Claremont Theater Corporation, the name of the office building was changed to the Albee Building. The theater has been known as Keith's since its second year of operation. During its first year, the

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The fifth through eleventh bays on the north side abut the theater auditorium and are given a special unified architectural treatment. On the first floor are exit doors with scrolled keystones like the original shop windows and elaborate metal transom grilles. In the sixth and tenth bays are metal display windows with arched shell pediments. At second floor level are five raised rectangular foliate panels, the central three incorporating alternating tragic and comic masks.

The rhythm of giant ^{of 1st order} pilasters continues along the north side. The pilasters flanking the 5th and 11th bays are unfluted and those bays lack fenestration. In the remaining bays are single panels outlined by raised molding and containing a window. Above the panels are centered human masks with radiating swags which drape the panels.

The facing of marble and terra cotta continues along the east (alley) side of the building as far as the light court, but there is little fenestration below the sixth floor.

The theater retains several early signs--a theater sign and announcement board above the marquee and a three-story vertical sign at the northwest corner.

The theater, its lobby, and lounges fill a large part of the interior of the building. The theater was hailed by local newspapers at its opening as "the finest playhouse south of New York" (Washington Herald, 8/18/12). Both its lavish decoration and its backstage facilities received rave reviews from critics and performers. The original lobby was altered during a renovation in 1955. A Washington Post article of August 4, 1912, describes the original lobby as follows: "The white marble entrance arches are flanked outside and inside by attractive metal transparency casings. The walls are of multi-hued Sienna marble surmounted by a frieze of Rockwood pottery plaques; the ceiling is bronzed, with stained glass windows, letting a subdued light play upon metal surfaces within its range; Italian marble benches invite the waiting throng." The original decor has been replaced with striated green marble, veneered panels, and recessed lighting. The original free-standing ticket booth in the center of the outer lobby was replaced by a metal booth on the south side. Swinging glass doors replaced the original red leather upholstered ones. On the south wall of the lobby is a door and steep winding stairway leading to the theater offices on the second floor.

In the inner lobby only the elaborate plaster ceiling is original. On the east wall are stairs leading to the balconies. The entrance to the orchestra level is immediately to the north. Originally another set of stairs led down to the Mezzanine Lounge with English oak paneling and Tudor fireplace. This area is now inaccessible. From the Mezzanine Lounge, the patron descended a marble staircase into the Promenade Lounge--a large paneled room beneath the north end of the auditorium. Although all the major entrances have been blocked up, this room still exists in deteriorating condition. It has a high oak paneled wainscoting and groined plaster ceiling. High-backed settles are built into the walls. The Promenade Lounge originally featured an electric pipe organ which played before performances.

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The remainder of the basement level is taken up by a maze of rooms which served as prop storage, maintenance and mechanical rooms, and quarters for performing animals. The area directly beneath the stage consists of a grid of metal columns, standing in sleeves and bolted to the wooden framing members above. These columns can be unbolted and the framing members, which rest in metal brackets, can be disassembled so that any portion of the stage floor can be removed.

The stage and loft occupy the southeast corner of the building. Much of the original equipment, including the magnetic lighting panel, is still in place, although the proscenium opening is now blocked by a permanently installed (1955) motion picture screen. Dressing rooms are located at either side of the stage at several levels. Those on the west still retain some of the costume closets, large clocks, call bells, electric heating irons, and foot-operated sinks used by performers.

The auditorium is fan-shaped and seats 1,838, with seating for 845 on the ground floor, 510 in the mezzanine, and 483 in the balcony. Picturesque curving aisles divide the orchestra seating into three sections. The original mahogany chairs upholstered in red leather have been replaced by standard plush, fold-down theater seats. The cantilevered mezzanine overhangs row 12 of the orchestra. A plaster frieze of alternating comic and tragic masks ornaments the mezzanine overhang. The original ten mezzanine boxes have been replaced by standard seats. The cantilevered balcony exactly overhangs the mezzanine. Seating rises steeply to the roofline. The fireproof steel motion picture cabinet and booth for all spotlights is at the rear of the upper balcony.

Although no longer accented in "old gold and maroon," much of the interior ornamentation remains. The arched lofts on either side of the proscenium are enclosed in an elaborate plasterwork surround, now filled with draperies. The eight staggered boxes have been removed and the stairways to them sealed off from the auditorium. The 44-foot wide proscenium arch has a wide border of decorative plasterwork. The large central ceiling mural has been plastered over because of leaks. A description of the theater when it opened has been appended to this nomination.

The office building is completely separate from the theater and shops. The G Street entrance opens into an elevator lobby which has been refaced with pink and dark green marble. Above and below the main floor the metal stairways and elevator door retain their original appearance. Offices occupy the west end of the building on the second through fifth floors and cover all the floor space except that occupied by the stage loft on the floors above. There is a central light court. Many of the original partitions have been rearranged, but an early advertisement for the building (Washington Post 9/1/12) describes some of the features of the offices. Each office had a closet and a lavatory which also had "a drinking faucet for distilled ice water connected with the refrigerating plant of the building." Offices were equipped with a "fireproof vault with sheet steel door", some of which still survive. "The floors in each office are made of maple, and the trim is of the best birch and mahogany."

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In the basement of the office building were the barber shop and men's and women's Turkish baths. These facilities all remain, although in decayed condition. There are white tiled heat and steam rooms and a swimming pool in the men's section. A changing room with rows of wooden cubicles also remains. The women's facilities are much smaller. Access to the basement was by an exterior stairway along the G Street facade.

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building numbered among its tenants the Chamber of Commerce of the U.S.A. and the Democratic National Committee. The 1914 city directory lists in addition the National Republican Congressional Committee, the American Automobile Association, and the National Press Club. Although the Press Club later moved to its own building at 14th and F, its presence undoubtedly attracted the large number of newspapers, news services, and correspondents who maintained offices in the Riggs (Albee) Building until the building was vacated in the 1960s. The 1934 city directory has 37 listing for journalists and news offices in the Albee Building. Long time tenants included the Washington bureaus of the New York Times, Boston Globe, Cleveland Plain Dealer, and the Chicago Tribune. Other tenants included lawyers (34 listed in the 1922 directory), engineers, chemists, trade associations, insurance companies, and public interest groups. One of the most interesting tenants was the Turkish Baths which occupied the basement from 1920 through the 1940s. In the 1930s they advertised facilities for both men and women. The building obviously fell on hard times in the Depression with 27 offices listed as vacant in 1934. After that much of the space was occupied by Federal recovery programs. In its last years the building catered mostly to manufacturing representatives. It has been vacant for over ten years.

The theater debuted on August 19, 1912, as Chase's Polite Vaudeville Theatre, "Washington's Largest, America's Finest, and the World's Model, Modern Theatre." Plimpston B. Chase, credited with coining the term "polite vaudeville," converted the Grand Opera House at 1424 Pennsylvania Avenue into Chase's Theatre in 1904, managing the theater until 1913. His new playhouse was praised for being more commodious and structurally sound, but the theatrical fare was to be the same "clean, wholesome entertainment at prices that enable even poor people to find diversion from the monotony of life." In addition to gala vaudeville productions, motion picture films were shown, some of the earliest such presentations in the city.

Mr. Chase retired in August of 1913, selling the theater to B.F. Keith. An article published in The Washington Post on August 28 proclaimed "The name of Keith stands for everything that is the best in vaudeville. Benjamin Franklin Keith literally created vaudeville. On July 6, 1885, he initiated continuous performances at the Gaiety Museum in Boston, the first vaudeville house in America. His fortune is estimated at \$50 million. He operates thirty first-class vaudeville theatres in cities east of Chicago, and is affiliated with the Orpheum circuit, which operates thirty west of Chicago. His Boston and Philadelphia houses are well known all over the world for their beauty, elaborate furnishings, and wonderful detail of management."

A second article, published on September 7, 1913, announced Keith's New Policy for the Old Chase's: "E.F. Albee, general manager of all the Keith Theatres, and of the United Booking agency of New York, will have personal charge of the new house....Mr. Keith can obtain internationally famous acts at half price the sum paid by Chase. When a man controls the bookings of almost every big vaudeville theatre in the U.S., he is in a position to dictate terms for engagements in any particular city."

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During the years of vaudeville, Keith's Theatre enjoyed great popularity. Many nationally famous vaudeville teams and personalities appeared there, including Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Bud Flaher (creator of "Mutt and Jeff"), Eddie Foy and the Little Foys, Rudy Vallee, Laurel and Hardy, Zasu Pitts, and others.

The theater quickly became a popular rendezvous for public men in Washington. Its most noted regular patron was President Wilson, who rarely missed a Saturday night performance during his eight years in the White House. Even after the illness which eventually led to his death, Wilson had a special arrangement whereby he occupied an aisle seat on the rear row of the orchestra on the Saturday nights he was physically able to attend. He entered and left the theater by a side entrance. A plaque commemorating his frequent attendance was placed in the theater's presidential box in 1931.

During World War I, Keith's Theatre served in the interest of civic concerns as well as providing entertainment. From its stage during the days of the great Liberty Loan drives many of the most important men in public life sold bonds and made speeches. Among them were former President Taft, Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, Speaker Cannon, and many others.

In 1928, after fifteen years of strictly vaudeville entertainment, Keith's added to its bill the showing of feature films, a change in policy to keep the theater in competition with the newer motion picture houses. By 1932, due to the overwhelming success of the "talkies," the theater endorsed a straight motion picture policy and became the last city theater to abandon 2-a-day vaudeville. Advertised as Washington's "family theatre", Keith's boasted wholesome entertainment and civic-mindedness. Manager Hardie Meakin, in cooperation with local civic groups, regularly scheduled benefit shows and special events. To cite one example of many: on November 27, 1938, The Washington Post reported that hundreds of city children had brought toys for less fortunate children in lieu of admission. The event was cosponsored by the Women's Council of D.C. and the Federation of Churches.

Moving into the 40's, the theater continued to figure prominently in the Washington entertainment scene. A gala premier of "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," starring Raymond Massey, drew Eleanor Roosevelt along with "Cabinet magnificoes, high-test bureaucrats, diplomats and other famous and well-born.

In the early 1950s a closed-circuit television was installed to permit limited viewing of prize fights and other featured events. The current management still utilizes the Peerless Magnarc lamps and Simplex projectors installed over thirty years ago. Like most large downtown theaters, Keith's has fared badly in the last ten years. Its feature films no longer conform to its longstanding reputation for polite, family entertainment.

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The following is a contemporary description of the interior of the theater, "New Chase's a Revelation in Beauty and Convenience," Washington Post, August 18, 1912, Magazine Section, page 2.

"A magnificent lobby, finished in Sienna marble, with an allegorical frieze of rockwood pottery, is the entrance to an auditorium with a seating capacity slightly less than the old Chase's. On the orchestra floor which is below the level of G Street, there are two main cloak rooms, and two handsomely furnished restrooms for patrons. Check rooms for both men and women are to be found on both balcony floors, also.

"Below the level of the auditorium is the distinctly revolutionary feature of the new Chase's--a wonderful promenade which fully realizes all the advance promises of amplitude and beauty. The woodwork is old English oak with broad low settles, wonderfully shaded lights, severely simple titled floors, and white stone ceiling. At the right, some ten steps above the door of the promenade, is an antechamber with an enormous open fireplace, and a massive mantel of marble and weathered oak, copied after a mantel in an English Baronial home. Adjoining the main promenade are two libraries and two retiring rooms. The men's library is furnished in leather, with old English divans, arm chairs, and library table. The ladies' library is finished in plush. Concealed in the south wall of the promenade is a great electric pipe organ, on which concerts will be given daily at 1:30 and 7:30. Above the paneled oak wainscoting of this magnificent lounge are the shields, in colors, of all the leading colleges and universities of America. Smoking is permitted here.

The Lighting Arrangements

"The auditorium is furnished throughout with handsome mahogany orchestra chairs, upholstered in Spanish leather. They are equally as broad as those in the old Chase's. The chairs are identical for orchestra, mezzanine and balcony, another innovation of the theater.

"The walls of the auditorium are covered with red silk tapestry and all the floors are covered with a sanitary sound-absorbent material, which has the additional advantage of being pleasing to the eye.

"The lighting arrangements of the theater are especially attractive, most of the electric bulbs are concealed behind opalescent globes. Instead of a central chandelier, there is an oval of alabaster globes surrounding an immense mural painting on canvas, "Fete de Nuit."

"There are eight boxes to the right and left of the stage, and a number of attractive mezzanine boxes, all furnished with mahogany chairs of distinctive design.

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"The theater curtain is of ruby-red plush, with fringes of gold. The box draperies and curtain surrounding the orchestra pit, which will accommodate twelve musicians regularly, are of the same material. The stage is exceptionally low, to the great advantage of patrons occupying the front rows. The width of the proscenium arch is 44 feet and the height is 36 feet. The fireproof steel motion picture cabinet and booth for all spotlights is located at the rear of the upper balcony.

"One of the most interesting features of the mezzanine and balcony floors is the arrangement of the stairways, enabling the playgoer to enter either balcony at the bottom or the top. If his seat is near the rear, he can enter at the top and descend; if toward the front, he can enter on a level with the front row and ascend. The exits are so numerous that it is estimated the theater can be emptied in 60 seconds.

Behind the Scenes

"These are among the features of the new Chase's which will be patent to every eye tomorrow. But behind and below these portions visible to the playgoer, is a labyrinthine maze of dressing rooms, locker rooms, green rooms, animal quarters, and stage equipment departments. To the rear of the promenade lounge is a series of passages and rooms which resemble the catacombs, with the primary difference that every section is admirably lighted and splendidly ventilated. Twenty-five dressing rooms, most of which can accommodate four players, are equiped with modern make-up tables, adjustable lights, electric heating irons, and running water. The dressing rooms are located on both sides of the stage at four levels, and there are two electric elevators which will be used by the actors in reaching the floor of the stage.

"The stage itself is the most modern design, being in sections a yard square, so that any portion of the floor may be removed almost instantaneously without the cutting of traps. Below the stage floor is an open space 14 feet deep, so that a hippodrome lake might almost be staged here.

"The big steel curtain, which weighs more than nine tons, is raised and lowered by an automatic hydraulic pump, and a separate pump is used to raise and lower the heavy stage carpets. By means of the latter a carpet can be placed in position or changed as easily as a 'drop' is lowered from the 'files.'

The Green Room

"Great attention has been given to the comfort and convenience of the players. Before work on the theater began, Mr. Chase solicited suggestions from all classes of vaudeville entertainers, with the result that provisions have been made for the comfort and health of those behind the scenes which are not to be found in any other playhouse in the world. For example, the proprietor of an animal act will find electric stoves in his animal quarters, so that food can be cooked for monkeys and other delicate creatures. Special

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bathtubs have been provided for dogs, cats, and other dumb performers. A special lavatory has been provided for 'black face' performers.

"The green room of the theater is an ample apartment, attractively furnished and supplied with magazines and newspapers, thus affording the players a place to rest, write, or receive friends before their 'turn' upon the stage.

"One room below the stage has been equipped with a steam drying apparatus where all damp clothing may be placed and dried almost instantaneously. This is an exclusive Chase feature.

"The switchboard in the stage is unique in that it is operated magnetically instead of by electricity. The true electric switchboard is in a fireproof vault far below the level of the street, and the stage board acts as a shock and spark proof delay station.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original and Unpublished sources:

Building Permits on file in the National Archives (Permit #5673, issued June 1, 1911, pertains to the erection of this building)

Deed Records, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, 6th and D Street, N.W., Washington,

D.C. Tax Assessment Records, National Archives

Floor Plans of the Albee Building (office section only). Copies on file in the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office

Interview with Mr. Gurdial Kundhi, Assistant Manager, Keith's Theater, Feb. 17, 1977.

Interview with Mr. R. Tooter, Assistant Manager, Keith's Theater, 1976.

Secondary and Published Sources:

Selections from the Work of J.H. de Sibour, Architect, Washington, D.C., Edward F. Gruver Co., Washington, D.C.: Bookbinder. Privately printed. Original the property of Jay L. de Sibour, grandson of J. H. de Sibour. Photographic copies in the office of the Commission of Fine Arts.

"Theaters--K", Vertical Clipping Files, Washingtoniana Room, Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.

Washington City Directories, 1912-1967.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Advertisement for the Riggs Building, Washington Post, September 1, 1912.

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Square 224, Lot 18
20,355 Square Feet

Riggs Building

North ↑

