

# The House of Krupa: A History of the Motion Picture Industry in Lancaster, Pa.

Catharine Krupa

As told to her daughter, Beatrice Braden

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Since I was the eldest of the Krupa children and the one most closely associated with my parents, George and Elsie Krupa, in the motion picture industry, I feel that I am qualified to write this history of the industry as a tribute to them.

George Martin Krupa was born in 1873 in the little village of Klusov, Czechoslovakia, then a part of Austria-Hungary. In 1898, at the age of 25, after serving in the Austrian Army under Emperor Franz Josef, he came to this country, a penniless immigrant, unable to speak a word of English, and settled with Polish friends in the soft-coal mining country near Johnstown, Pennsylvania. There had been a political upheaval in Austria-Hungary and he was happy to be in America, eager to work hard, save his money and learn American ways.

His first job was picking slate from coal for 10 cents an hour in the coal mines near Freeland, Pennsylvania. From there, he went to work in the soft coal mines in Windber, Pennsylvania, for 15 cents an hour.

After a few years in the mines, he worked for a large electrical firm in Braddock, Pennsylvania. An alert and ambitious man, he noticed that motion pictures were becoming increasingly popular. His interest grew as he began to spend hours observing the crowds entering the theatres and he became convinced that this surely was the business for him. He bought an atlas and studied cities in Pennsylvania with a population of 10,000 or more. He became interested in Lancaster and made a visit here in 1906, and decided that this was the city in which he would search for a suitable place for the Nickelodeon he was planning. Six months later, he again visited Lancaster and found a large storeroom next to the "New Era" (which I believe was then known as the "Lancaster Examiner") Building on North Queen Street. There George Krupa opened his first theatre, called the "Dreamland", which, with a seating capacity of 160, was then Lancaster's finest theatre!

Here, in this modest beginning, my father's fabulous career in the motion picture industry began. His first actual experience in motion pictures was acquired when he purchased a projector in 1906 from a Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog. His first "office" was in the unfinished basement of the Dreamland — a desk and chair next to the furnace — but this was HIS Nickelodeon and he was filled with pride and optimism.

As the name implied, the price of admission was a nickel. For this nominal fee, the patrons saw a two-reel feature, one Pathe news reel and a special reel to please the ladies, a French film (Gaumont Production) showing closeups of beautiful models displaying the latest fashions in hats. Each reel lasted 15 minutes.

In 1907, the films he received were supplied by Pittsburgh Calcium and Light Company. This was the year the "vision picture" first appeared. For example, if a lover sat dreaming of his sweetheart, the image of the person he was dreaming of appeared on the page of a book or sheet music, on a wall or even in a fireplace, to the appropriately sentimental musical theme. It was not unusual to hear sobs from the audience!

Flashed on the screen between shows were signs like "Those who have not seen the entire performance may remain for the next" and "Ladies, kindly remove your hats."

Occasionally there was a rare extra treat for the patrons — a Magic Lantern. This machine, the improved form of which is known today as "Stereopticon", was used to project on the screen a magnified image of a photograph, drawing or even a page from a book, and was colored by placing isinglass in front of the picture. At that time, motion pictures also worked on this stereopticon principle. At Dreamland and other theatres throughout the country, it was used for illustrated songs. A performer sang the words to the accompaniment of piano as appropriate slides were used in the Magic Lantern. It was both entertaining and pleasing to the eye. Not long thereafter "song pluggers" from large established music companies came to the theatres asking to have the latest songs introduced. My father encouraged them always. Organists and pianists received

"artists' copies" of theme music before it reached the music stores.

I wonder how many remember the metal candy machines attached to the backs of the theatre seats? Many times the machines became wedged and there was much noise when they were hit to dislodge the candy. (If it was not forthcoming, my father reimbursed them always.) Seats had to be tightened daily.

This noise, coupled with the spring-up seats, created some disturbance, but at that time these annoyances were relatively unimportant to the patrons who were held in fascination and awe by the pictures. This was the best to be had at the time and everyone was happy with it. This was the largest Nickelodeon between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and provided real family entertainment. Children under 12 years of age, accompanied by a parent, were admitted free. With a 5 cent pound of fudge, their day was made!

The only competition was a very small theatre at the corner of North Queen and Orange Streets called the Gem, operated by Charles Sehner, and the popular Family Theatre on West King Street, operated by Edward Mozart. Later, Mr. Sehner was associated with the Scenic Theatre in the second block of North Queen Street, which was operated by Mr. Robinson and son, Leon, and still later, by Robert Bowman. There was also the Colonial Theatre operated by Howard Doan. As long as I can remember, all of these theatre men were good friends.

My father's hard work, perseverance, integrity, and constant efforts to please everyone — the policy which governed his entire career — won him the admiration and respect of the people of Lancaster, for whom he always felt that "nothing was too good".

George Krupa and the Lancaster New Era newspaper men had a most pleasant business relationship. He had always held them in high esteem, a feeling which they returned; and they were always, from the days of the Dreamland to the last of his theatre days in Lancaster, welcome to come into the theatres. In fact, he gave them yearly passes as a token of his friendship. The same applied to the members of the police force. (Incidentally, does anyone remember the police officer who patrolled the street at the Dreamland in those days—Mr. B. Frank Finefrock?)

Business was greatly increased when Mr. Krupa engaged as pianist a young widow, Elsie Johns Shaub, an outstanding local piano teacher and church organist. Soon after, George Krupa married Elsie and she became his inspiration and active business partner — his "greatest asset," as he himself always said. It was an ideal marriage.

In the early days of motion picture making, the fantastically high costs of today's production was undreamed of and economy was the prime consideration. New Jersey provided a perfect locale for making films. The wide open spaces made possible practically any desired location or background. Any other necessary scenery was crudely executed on cardboard or canvas. Because of the scarcity of producers' money for sets, many full-length pictures were done around, inside and atop trains in New Jersey, because they were

readily available and therefore used extensively.

In 1893, the Edison Company was making pictures in East Orange, New Jersey. In 1903, "The Great Train Robbery" was the first picture actually to tell a story. The admission for this particular feature was raised to 10 cents. One of the actors was G. M. Anderson, who later became a leading cowboy star known as Bronco Billy Anderson, one of the great favorites of the day.

Westerns were being made in the "prairies" at Bayonne, New Jersey. The Krupas often went to see films being made, booking them when released. One week, when business was falling off, Mr. Krupa booked a Jesse James picture which saved the week and made a net profit of \$129. He was quite overcome by this prosperity!

Picture titles used in those days certainly would not be considered "good box office" today — for instance, "A Ride on a Runaway Train," "The Bold Bank Robbery," and "The Ten Dollar Raise," with Helen Jerome Eddy, Pat O'Malley and Marguerite De la Motte.

I wonder how many remember the Rocky Springs theatre in the early part of the century. It was near the ballroom where DeHart and Myers Orchestra played in the summer. A stage show which drew crowds there was "Fluffy Ruffles."

After the Dreamland had expanded to its maximum 460 seats, Mr. Krupa began to look for another location and a larger building to accommodate the increasing crowds. He found what he wanted in the second block of North Queen Street, which was to become the theatre district. He opened his new theatre, the "Hippodrome," in 1912, with a seating capacity of 1200. The large lobby had an elaborate fountain in the center.

Soon he installed a large Photoplayer which had every instrument needed to match any scene of any picture. It was a most complicated and difficult instrument to master and patrons were in awe when they heard scenes perfectly matched as a full orchestra was built up to a climax. "Families" of strings, woodwinds and brasses, which had never before been heard in theatres, produced magnificent results. A beautiful violin encased in glass could be seen playing when the proper stop was employed. There were also snare drums and a bass drum, two manuals and foot pedals, as well as leather thongs with egg-shaped knobs which, when pulled, produced the sound effects of train whistles, sirens, thunder, horse trots, birds, tambourines, castinets and even Chinese blocks for Oriental pictures. This was my instrument and I was so proud of it! I mastered it and played it every day after school. I was twelve years old at the time, but I had been giving piano recitals since I was six years of age. I was also studying pipe organ with Dr. Ralph Kinder, in Philadelphia; and with Mr. Roy Shimp of Lancaster, I studied piano. Later, I also studied with Dr. S. Becker von Grabill of Lancaster.

In 1912 something unheard of came to the screen. It was an inspiring picture filmed in the Holy Land and was called "From the Manger to the Cross." Another great first-run picture to appear at



George and Lisie Krupa in 1925

the Hippodrome in that year was "Queen Elizabeth" with Sarah Bernhardt and Lou Tellegen, a full-length four-reel feature.

Some of the best shows of 1913 were "Judith of Bethulia" with Blanche Sweet and Henry B. Walthall; "Caprice" with Mary Pickford and Owen Moore; "Prisoner of Zenda" with James K. Hackett; and "The Count of Monte Cristo" with James O'Neill (father of Eugene O'Neill).

The greatest star of the era was Francis X. Bushman, who co-starred with Beverly Bayne, whom he later married. His pictures were always on a very high level and his magnificent physique made him much in demand as a model for sculptors. He posed for many of the sculptured figures seen in his native Baltimore, Maryland.

One of the leading cowboy stars, who played "The Squaw Man," was Dustin Farnum, brother of star William Farnum. Other cowboy actors of the day were Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, Jack Hoxie, James Warren Kerrigan, William S. Hart, Bronco Billy Anderson and Fred Thomson.

In 1914, a star whose pictures never failed to draw crowds was Theda Bara, "The Vamp," although there was usually the matter of censorship with her pictures. Possibly her greatest film was "A Fool There Was." She also played "Cleopatra."

In 1914 the famous "Keystone Cops" made their first appearance, produced by Mack Sennett. Their names were Roscoe ("Fat-ty") Arbuckle, Ford Sterling, Hank Mann, Al St. John, Rube Miller,

"Snub" Pollard, Ben Turpin, Mack Swain and others. The girl in their films was usually Mabel Normand.

It was always a great attraction to have the star of a picture appear on stage and in the lobby. In the Hippodrome lobby, there was a large archway leading from the Elite Candy and Ice Cream Parlor. The drop curtains of that time were composed of advertisements of local businesses.

With the advent of the new serials, people crowded in, becoming more and more excited over the thrill-packed two-reelers that were so successful that nothing could have kept patrons from returning the following weeks to see how the hero and heroine could possibly have found a way of escape from their almost certain-death predicaments. The purpose was to keep the people coming back. The "first lady of the serials" was Pearl White, whose terrifying experiences in sawmills, speeding trains and inside dynamited buildings had the patrons in a state of panic, when suddenly the words "To be continued next week" were flashed on the screen, just at the moment when the situation seemed absolutely hopeless — until the next episode of "The Perils of Pauline" showed her being rescued to safety, without so much as a hair out of place! Her leading man in some of these thrillers was Warren Williams, later to become a prominent leading man; and the villain in many of these serials (before he became "Charlie Chan") was Warner Oland, who was born in Sweden, not China as many viewers believed.

In 1914 another serial to break records was "Ruth of the Rockies" starring Ruth Roland. Another was "The Million Dollar Mystery" with Marguerite Snow and James Cruz, and the sequel to it, "Zudora." These serials were so popular that many times, if the feature was not received too favorably, they saved the show and made money.

Since all stories and emotions were expressed by the facial expressions, particularly the eyes, in silent pictures, violin music was played to put the actors in the right mood while filming the emotional scenes, especially to make them cry. Sometimes glycerine was used for tears on the cheeks. In order to make the eyes more expressive and beautiful, a bead of heavy black paste was applied to each eyelash with a match stick. Face powder was the heavy theatrical rice powder which stayed on securely even under hot stage lights. The lips were made up with a red paste-cream into a cupid's bow and a thin line was made downward through the red paint. A tinge of red was also applied in each nostril and ear lobes; elbows and knees were rouged pink. Finger nails were polished with a buffer and then the nails were whitened at the tips by rubbing them over a cake of white soap. All of this was a long drawn-out, tedious procedure, but it had to be done four times a day for vaudeville!

Ghoulish characters, travelling with horror pictures, used heavy white rice powder to give them a death-like appearance, heightened by the use of black paint around the eyes to make them appear

sunken. As the curtain rose, the "ghoul" stood in front of a black curtain, with the house lights darkened but with a green spotlight on him to make him look even more grotesque. The realism was heightened when I placed my foot on two very low, out of harmony, notes and slowly worked the expression pedal back and forth, in a sudden and sharp manner, to keep the audience in suspense.

The most controversial film of 1915 was D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" with Lillian Gish and Henry B. Walthall. It was decided to have it shown at the Columbia Opera House, operated by Mr. and Mrs. John Hardy, who asked me to play their new pipe-organ, which I was happy to do. I was 15 years old and I used my own music score and arrangements.

In addition to the Hippodrome, the Krupas acquired the Hamilton Theatre (just a few doors away) in 1916. A large sum was spent in remodeling this theatre and it was a long time before a profit was realized because of this expenditure, but the Krupas' satisfaction in their knowledge that they were offering the public not only the best pictures available, but having them shown in beautiful settings as well, more than compensated for any financial problems they may have had. Everything my parents did showed their unwavering faith in the future of Lancaster.

The Hamilton was a beautiful theatre, with a magnificent crystal chandelier. My parents were fond of beautiful fountains, wrought iron furnishings, damask and velour draperies and crystal chandeliers of great size and these charming attractions were always found in our homes as well as our theatres.

Exceptionally fine shows appeared at the Hamilton. In 1916 we showed an attraction which was one of the most spectacular ever made. It was D. W. Griffith's "Intolerance," a biblical picture. Many such successful motion pictures premiered at the Krupa theatres where, for eighteen years, the policy continued to be to please the public. Pictures were always seen by the Krupas before they accepted them for showing, as they always demanded the finest selections available, and they welcomed constructive criticism and acted upon it. Many times the Ministerial Association was invited to approve shows. There were private showings for the religious of all denominations, as well as for educators and doctors.

Concert artists who ranked high in the world of music were presented at the Hamilton. I remember when world-renowned Viennese violinist, Fritz Kreisler, asked that the clock in the center of the proscenium be stopped while he played. Standing room was sold for this engagement, as well as when the 80-piece Russian Symphony Orchestra appeared under the baton of Sascha Voneschenko.

The Hamilton also presented the finest in vaudeville attractions. One of the most popular were the Hopi Indian Tribe, who performed their ceremonial dances in public for the first time. Wrestling bears, kept in cages under the stage, were always sure to be an attraction.

Another act featured beautiful birds of many colors released

from their cages to fly over the audience until their keeper's soft whistle drew them back to their perches. Such an act was fully enjoyed in the quiet atmosphere, for there was always perfect order in the Krupa theatres, with ushers in all aisles and a head usher to keep order under strict supervision.

I remember certain Lancaster people who were regular patrons of the theatre — like Leo Hauck, who always preferred the end seat on the left side about eight rows from the front; and Alderman John F. Heinitsh, who preferred sixth row center. Often the movement of the picture and the soft music put him to sleep! Mr. Schriver (of the Coal Company) came in many days a week just to stand in the back and ask the ushers to bring me his request to play "Hawaiian Melody," which I always was pleased to do for this gentle man.

During these years, people became constantly aware of themes used by the organists and during the pictures I was always pleased when patrons sent the ushers to ask me to play the love theme or other "character music." I enjoyed doing this and even asked them which instrument on the organ they would enjoy hearing — usually a pleasant surprise for them.

Elsie Krupa, with her keen business sense and the cooperation of Kirk Johnson's Music House, soon had men stationed in the lobby to sell the musical themes. A slide was flashed on the screen during the show and intermission, informing the patrons that the music could be obtained at Kirk Johnson's and they, in turn, advertised in their window that the music displayed could be heard at the Hamilton, giving the name of the organist. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Harrison Steely and Mr. and Mrs. Brinkman sold their candy in the Hamilton lobby.

Every Wednesday night, my parents would engage Ira Bowman's Orchestra and allow my sister, Bertie, and I to invite our friends to a dance in the Hamilton lobby. These dances became so popular and so many people watched from outside that my parents, always eager to please and accommodate, advertised that all partons coming to the late show on Wednesday nights could remain to dance. Thereafter, the Wednesday night crowds were record-breaking. Many of Lancaster's most prominent people enjoyed these lobby dances. The setting was lovely — marble floors and columns with majestically high decorative mirrors at either side of the lobby and with luxuriously upholstered chairs and lounges.

This husband-wife team would have been difficult to equal. Together they planned and carried out every endeavor in perfect harmony all through the years, both in their business and in their home life. From the time of their marriage, Elsie Krupa played a very active part in the management and development of the Krupa enterprises, including the booking of pictures. In addition to this, she managed their homes and raised nine children. A typical day's activities for her included the following:

In the morning (she was a very early riser), she carried out her

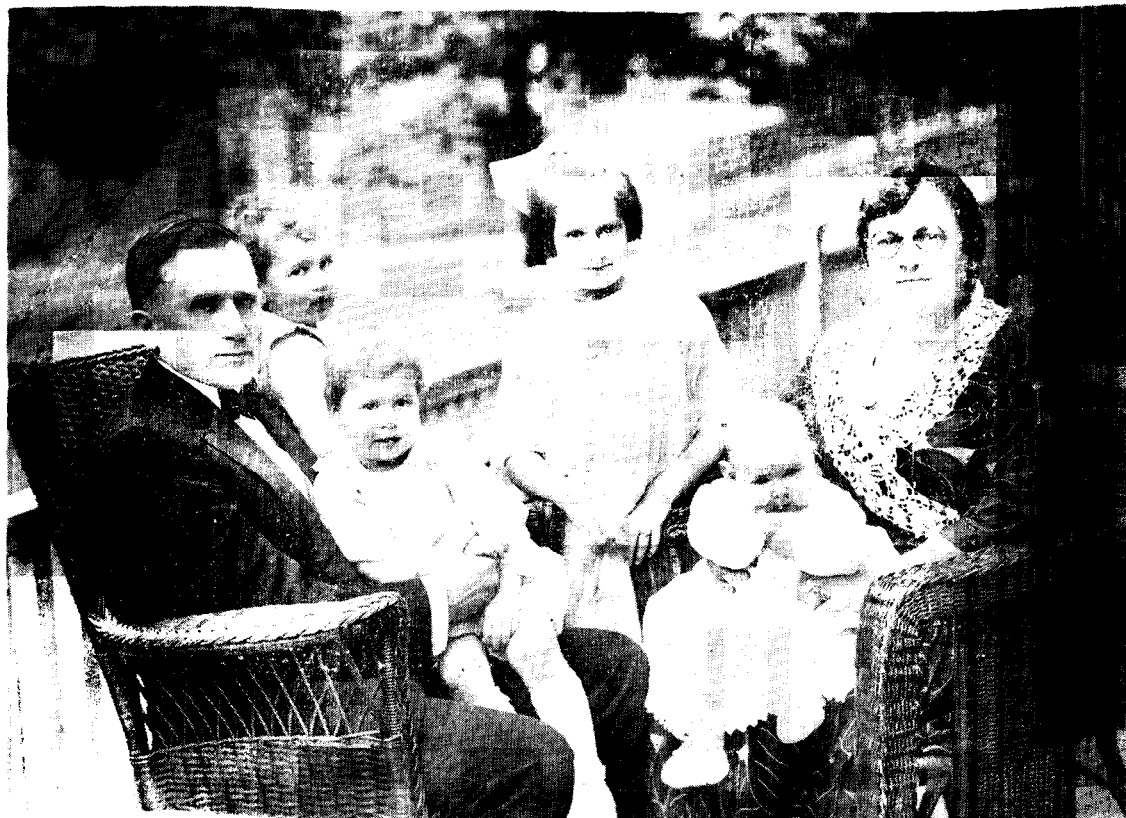


domestic duties with love, tenderness and finesse, but with a firm hand to instill in us her high ideals. Two hours in the early afternoon were devoted to business, purchasing supplies, dating of pictures and similar theatrical duties.

In the evening she returned to the theatres for business conferences, greeting people, and so forth. Aside from this, she also enjoyed the prominence she attained in civic affairs in Lancaster, presiding at various women's clubs and often speaking at important functions on "the woman's place in the theatre."

She devoted mid-afternoon to supervising the domestic help and planning the dinner menus. She and Mr. Krupa had dinner with the children, as well as with the usual number of show business friends who so often dined with us. Many of these guests were the motion picture film salesmen, who relished the strange Pennsylvania Dutch foods as much as the Lancastrians enjoyed their films! They never tired of hearing how their favorite Lancaster County cheeses were made, or of the ingredients of souse, chow-chow, ring pudding, pan pudding, mush, schmiercase, schnitz und knepp, dumplings, shoo-fly pie, calf's head soup with butter balls and lemon, ox-tail soup with hard-boiled eggs and the fascinating "red-beet eggs" which they had never before tasted. So overwhelmed were they by the unique tastes and varieties of Pennsylvania Dutch foods that the

George and Elsie Krupa, with children, George, William, Mary and Elsie, in 1921.



conversation at the dinner-table consisted mainly of this subject rather than, as one would imagine, show business. They had never heard of the Amish and Mennonite people and I remember one new film salesman who, upon leaving our theatre, saw an Amishman standing outside on the sidewalk, walked up to him and asked him what he was advertising!

This was a happy and exciting life for the Krupa children, the eldest of whom (Bertha, John and I), entertained the guests with chamber music after dinner. Often, too, a film was shown, as our home was fully equipped with a large screen. On week-ends, also, we would show the film scheduled to open the following Monday, for our friends, many of whom were from Franklin and Marshall College.

Other showmen who were guests and old friends of the family were Mr. Leon Leopold (brother of screen star Ed Wynn) of Fox Film Company, Mr. Eli M. Orowitz ("EMO" of radio fame and motion picture newsman and publisher, who, incidentally, is father of the current television star, Michael Landon), Mr. and Mrs. Al Lichtman of Paramount Pictures, film stars Crane Wilbur and Gaston Glass, whose names are seen frequently today in the credits as producers and directors of some of television's outstanding shows, June Eldridge, Anita King, Kenneth Casey (juvenile star), Tom Mix and his mother; Ken Maynard, the Singer's Midgets, the Swiss Bell Ringer troupe, the Capp family; the Mack Sennett bathing beauties, Peggy Hopkins Joyce's representative, Kenneth Hamilton; Francis Renault and Julian Eltinge, internationally known female impersonators; Hadji Ali, Keith vaudeville headliner who baffled doctors at a special matinee with his amazing ability to control his double-stomach; and numerous "Mechanical Men," who travelled with the pictures to stand outside and advertise the show. They could stand without moving for hours at a time, although children tried in every way to make them laugh or blink.

George Krupa was held in high esteem in Lancaster, both as a good citizen and a fine businessman. Besides holding the reins as official administrator of motion pictures in the enterprising community, he was prominent in civic affairs. In both capacities he had been highly successful and had won for himself the respect of the people of his beloved Lancaster. He was generous in contributing to worthy causes and to his employees to whom he gave, according to length of employment, watches, and so forth, and also helped many of them out personally when they were in financial difficulty.

In the theatre district in the early days were Buchanan and Brown's Department Store, in the second block of North Queen Street; Foster and Cochran's Department Store on East King Street; Appel's Jewelry Store, also in the theatre block, with the huge red apple in front — one of the oldest stores; and the 3 and 9 cents Store on East King Street.

In the early 1900's there were also the Moyer Lunchroom, where people could buy wedges of delicious home-made pies with various colored and flavored fillings for 5 cents, served on wide-

armed lunchroom chairs; Nissley's Lunch Room on East Chestnut Street; Holzworth's Gardens on West Orange Street; Misses Sue Ream's and Celeste Stauffer's Private Dancing School on West Orange Street; John B. Bissinger's Hotel across from the Imperial on North Queen Street.

I wonder how many remember the Lancaster "look-alike" contest, done in silhouette, run by the Lancaster newspapers? I recall that two look-alikes were George Krupa and John Malone, the prominent criminal lawyer.

Pictures of well-known Lancaster People were often flashed on the screen in the Hamilton Theatre as a surprise added attraction each week for a time. Since I had studied painting with Miss Martha Bowman, noted Lancaster artist who had her studio on East Chestnut Street, and I liked to paint, I colored these slides before they were shown.

One week my parents offered a cash prize to anyone who could view the current horror picture alone, after midnight. No one volunteered. People apparently failed to realize that they would not have actually been alone, for the projectionist had to be there, as well as at least one employee to close up afterward!

Remember the stock company which appeared in Lancaster every summer? The leading man was Edgar Van Sloane who, with the company, saw the Krupa shows regularly. My parents always recognized profession. Any great star appearing in the audience would be honored with a spotlight and I would play the musical theme to his or her show.

In vaudeville days, when an act needed a strong man from the audience, Jack Fasig of Lancaster was often called upon for this.

In 1925, a woman travelled with the horror picture, "Phantom of the Opera" (starring Lon Chaney, Sr., and Mary Philbin), and was "planted" in the audience to scream once at the most frightening and tense part of the picture.

Do you recall the society series with Mr. and Mrs. John Drew, Mr. and Mrs. Carter DeHaven; "Gloria's Romance" with Billie Burke? And the Keystone Cops; and the bouncing ball melody cartoons, called the "Ko-Ko Comedies", which I introduced at the Hamilton?

Some of the best-remembered stars of the early silent days were the comedy team of John Bunny and Flora Finch, Charlie Chaplain, Charlie Chase, Bobby Vernon, Mack Sennett and Ford Sterling (both actors and producers), Mabel Normand, Kenneth Casey and Betty Guardie; Fanny Ward (the eternal youth star) and Jack Dean, her husband; Myrtle Steadman, H. B. Walthall, Helen Holmes (the "Railroad Girl"), Alice Joyce, Edwin Porter, Paul Panzer, "Little Mary" Pickford, Mary Leonard, Hobart Bosworth, Elmo Lincoln (the first Tarzan), Jack Conway, King Baggott, Owen Moore, Florence Lawrence (the "Biograph Girl"), Francis Ford, Francis X. Bushman and wife, Beverly Bayne; and May Irwin and John C. Rice, who played the first screen love scene and kiss in 1896. Sessua

Hayakawa was the only Oriental star to play opposite an American at that time, but he always lost the girl to another. Two of his films were "Hidden Pearls," and "The Cheat" with Fanny Ward.

Possibly the biggest detriment to the theatre business, especially the night-time shows in the neighborhood houses, was the advent of daylight saving time, for the longer days sent people to the parks and other outdoor activities. Operators of theatres hoped that the novelty would wear off so that people would return to the theatres. In many places business was actually cut in half.

Carnivals and circuses also drew business away from the theatres. Large crowds gathered on North Queen Street to see the great parade of all the circus performers, elephants, caged tigers, lions and other animals, and ending with the out-of-tune steam whistles of the calliope! Even when the parade was over, people followed it out to the grounds to watch the activities.

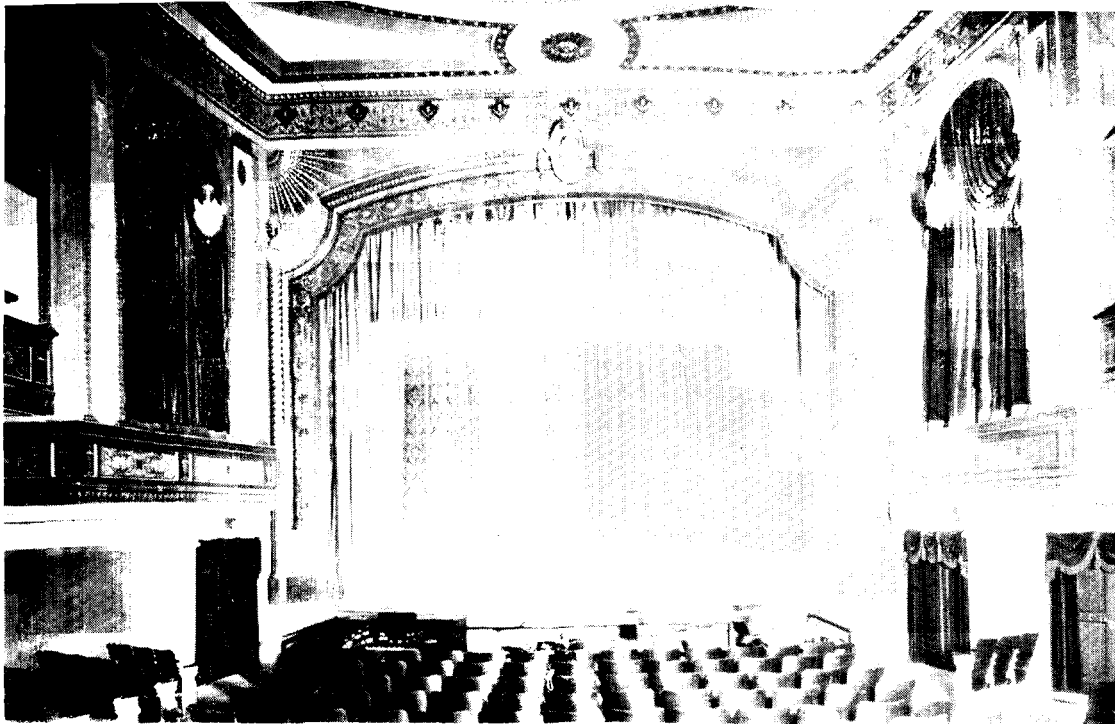
Fairs were another source of lost revenue for the theatre operators. The fairs offered so many free samples and souvenirs that people took large baskets to collect the many free items and, indeed, one basket usually could not hold it all!

With enticements such as these, even the best bookings failed to lure people back to the theatres while the circus, carnival or fair was in town, so my parents booked additional attractions for the following weeks, which drew crowds to help to compensate for the losses of the previous week.

Groups of children who could not afford the theatre were usually seen outside. They would wait for the doors to open to allow the people to leave and sometimes would slip in unnoticed through the crowds and see the shows. One child loved pictures so much that she hid in the theatre overnight so she could see the next day's show. She said she had gum from the penny gum machine when she became hungry.

Elsie Krupa endeared herself to the Lancaster people when she began to have special children's matinees. I am sure that many adults today can look back and remember with pleasure and nostalgia those wonderful times when the theatre was filled with entranced children who not only enjoyed fine motion pictures, but had the added pleasure and excitement of hearing the great four-manual pipe organ which I played for them. (The Hamilton theatre pipe organ was a large one, with pipes ranging from 2 feet in length (fife) to a 32-foot pipe of tremendous volume.) They were especially thrilled by my demonstrations of the various instruments which could be heard, as well as the thunder, bird and train whistles, horses' hoofs, windstorms, etc. It was both an educational and entertaining show. Mother always planned surprises and gifts for them, too, and called the children up on the stage with her.

When the Hamilton was sold years later, Mother gave her last children's matinee — an occasion which filled the theatre to overflowing with crowds who had waited for the theatre to open in lines that reached down to the Y.M.C.A. and around the corner to Prince Street. The farewell matinee feature was "The Wizard of Oz" with



\$1000 blue velour rhinestone-studded curtain which was dropped during organ recitals at the Capitol Theatre. The auditorium of the Capitol Theatre was considered exceptionally beautiful. The organ console can be seen at the left side of the orchestra pit.

Larry Semon. Afterward, Mother said "Good-bye" to the children and their realization that this would be their last happy afternoon with her saddened them and there were tears as they left.

Elsie Krupa was so happy in the theatres that she declined even to leave with Father when he vacationed in Czechoslovakia and Pompeii. She preferred to take over completely the operation of the Hippodrome and Hamilton, and when he returned, everything to the smallest detail, had been expertly handled by Mother. Such a fine business-woman was she, that the June 1921 issue of *The Exhibitor*, a national film journal, paid tribute to her by having her picture on its cover.

The Hippodrome, in 1924, was in the process of being remodelled and expanded to accommodate the growing crowds. I had been asked to design a new pipe-organ for the opening. Another feature was to be a magnificent chandelier, from which could be seen slowly revolving soft lights. After renovation was completed, the name of the theatre was changed to the "Aldine," which meant "excellence." It was to seat 900.

However, on December 29, 1924, just before this beautiful theatre was to open, it burned to the ground! I shall never forget the feeling of despair we had the following day as we walked through the ruins of the newly-redecorated Aldine and how I felt when I saw my new pipe organ burned, broken and standing in water.

The Krupas immediately made plans to rebuild a magnificent

new theatre with a seating capacity of 1300. Work was pushed ahead with the most skilled workmen in the area because my father hoped to open by Thanksgiving Day 1926. Much remained to be done, but the new theatre's beauty and luxury would go far beyond the dreams of the public — or of the young coal miner who had been so proud of his first Nickelodeon just nineteen years earlier! From the ruins of the Aldine, the new theatre, to be named the "Capitol," was to be a testimonial to the dedication of George and Elsie Krupa in their chosen work; and they truly surpassed themselves in their efforts to provide the people of Lancaster with the finest entertainment, comfort and convenience.

The entrance of the new theatre was to be an introduction to an interior of matchless beauty. The lobby was of marble, as was the beautiful mezzanine between the high balcony and the auditorium. The marble staircase had a costly wrought-iron railing on one side, while the wall side was covered with a magnificent \$3000 imported tapestry which was kept in a vault until the opening. Also on the mezzanine was an alcove with an ornamental fireplace with a \$200 life-sized jewelled Oriental doll reclining beside a huge hand-carved Belgian cabinet. For convenience and comfort, there were smoking rooms for men, ladies' lounges and marble drinking fountains on the mezzanine, as well as an emergency room with a woman in attendance.

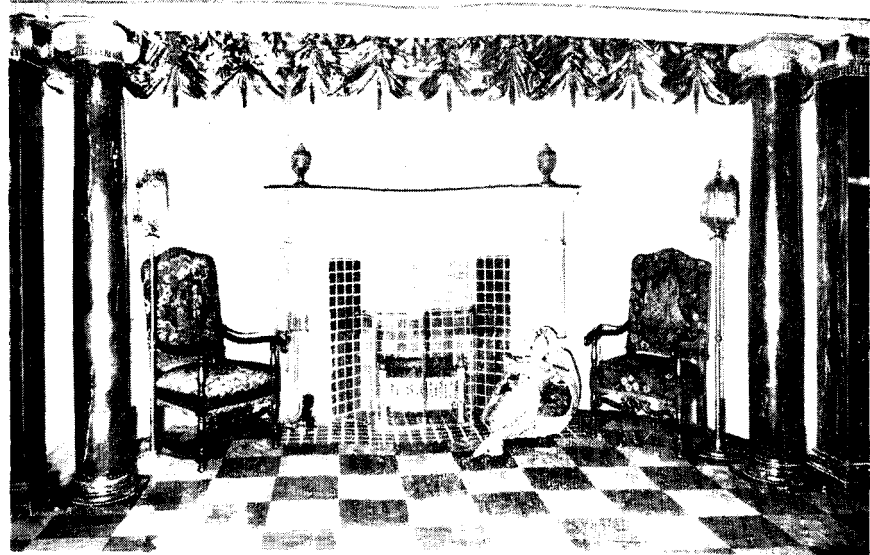
Perhaps the most compelling feature was the huge circular dome ceiling of the auditorium, elaborately decorated, from the center of which hung a huge crystal chandelier. Since this theatre was to show vaudeville also, there was a spacious stage with eight fine dressing rooms underneath, as well as an orchestra pit to accommodate the Capitol Theatre Concert Orchestra, which was directed by Elsie Krupa and conducted by my very capable cousin, Leigh E. Wittell.

Draperies of damask and velour intensified the beauty and luxury of the proscenium arch and other openings throughout the building. Ornamental bronze grilles, which actually concealed the heating and ventilating systems, added to the general decor.

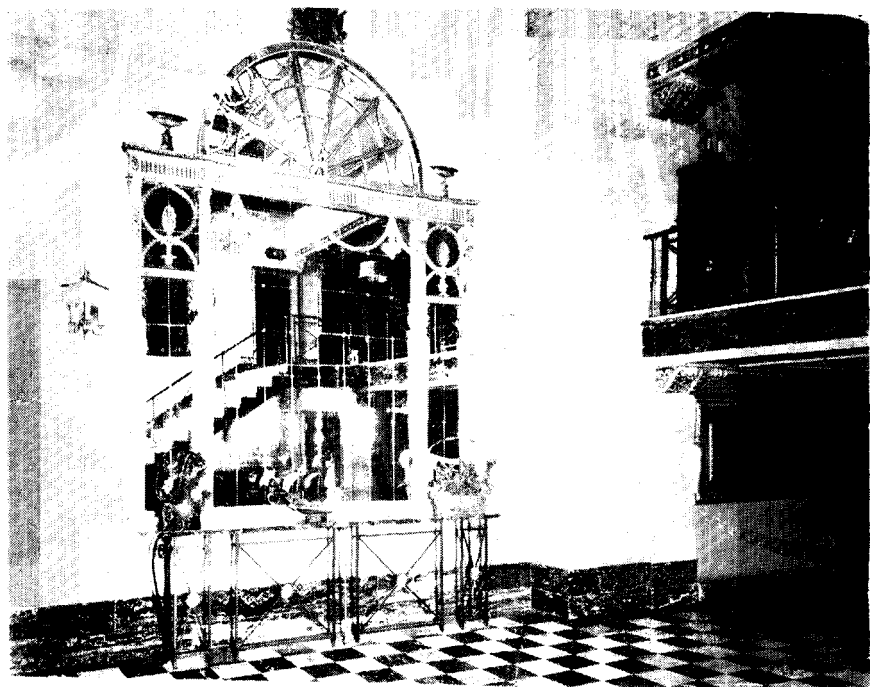
The decorator was Mr. Charles Hottinger of New York, who had also done the Hamilton Theatre. The architect was Mr. William H. Lee of Philadelphia, who, although he already enjoyed a most enviable reputation for theatres he had designed, felt that he had "outdone himself" in this impressive undertaking.

Walter C. Zook of 145 Concord Street, Lancaster, supervised the construction. For the complete comfort and health of the patrons, Mrs. Krupa instructed Everts and Overdeer, of 1 Howard Avenue, to "spare no expense" in the heating and plumbing of the Capitol.

Other contractors from Lancaster who cooperated in erecting and equipping this building of which all Lancaster was proud, were: The Coldren Roofing Company, 401 North Queen Street; Herr and Company, East King Street; Charles M. Green (brickwork), Race Avenue; S. S. Bertz and Company, Arch and Lemon Streets; Wohl-sen Planing Mill; Kate E. Smith and Sons (ornamental plastering),



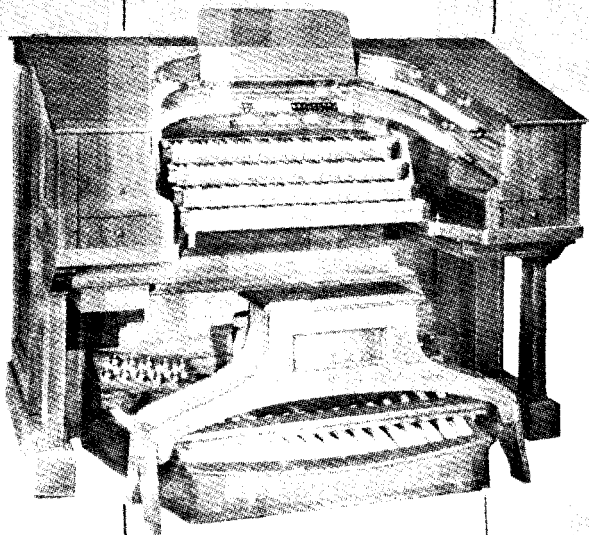
(top) Marble columns, fireplace, and jewelled Oriental doll on Capitol Theatre mezzanine.



(bottom) Entrance to main auditorium of the Capitol Theatre showing ornate Palladian-style mirror.



JOHN SMAUD KRUPA  
Organist



OUR ROBERT MORTON ORGAN CONSOLE



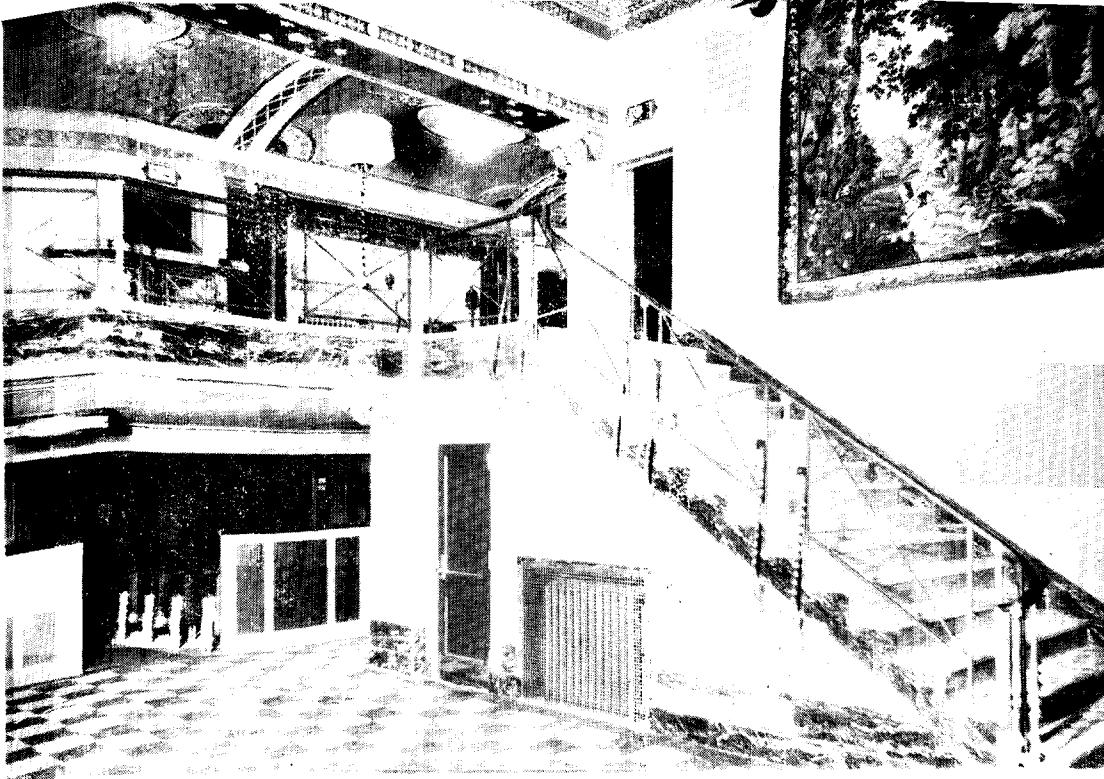
CATHARINE KRUPA  
Organist



BERTHA K. MILLER  
Organist

Page from the program for the opening of the Capitol Theatre (1925), showing the new organ and organists, John, Bertha and Catharine Krupa.





**\$3000 imported tapestry overlooking marble stairway to mezzanine of the Capitol Theatre.**

629 South Lime Street (supervised by Mr. Richard Eckman); and Piersol Company, Inc., 24 East King Street, who installed the fine Bundbar Imperial Wilton carpet with a mixture of deep, rich blues and taupe blending through brilliant flame color, in the aisles, the cross-overs of the orchestra floor and on the balcony. No place do carpets receive such hard wear as in theatres! The seats were of the latest pattern leather upholstery with five springs in each seat to endure the constant use.

During 1924, when fire took 15,000 lives and property damage exceeded \$548,000, President Calvin Coolidge appealed to the people to take every precaution against this devastating loss. This, coupled with Mr. Krupa's own personal Aldine fire loss, made him have such great concern for the safety of his patrons that he spared no expense and exerted every effort to have the finest protective equipment available. The Capitol was years ahead of its time, with its unseen "Automatic Fireman," as it was called, installed throughout the theatre by the Automatic Sprinkler Corporation of America, which was ready to go into action at a moment's notice to protect the people. In case of fire it could discharge at a rate of about 25 inches per hour, ten times more water than from the densest thunder shower! Such complete protection did it offer that the reduction of fire insurance rates equalled the cost of installation in a few years and the National Board of Underwriters acknowledged the Capitol to have the true solution to the fire problem.

In addition to the sprinkler system, Mr. Krupa had massive steel doors installed which were designed to drop at strategic points to cut off the spread of any fire, to further protect the patrons. (Years later, in 1965, when my father was no longer here to see his beloved Capitol being demolished in the name of "progress," these steel doors which had protected countless thousands of Lancasterians from possible harm, seemed loathe to stop now and defied the efforts of workers to tear them down, and this battleship-like protective bulwark was labeled an "annoyance" by them.)

While this new theatre was being erected, an announcement and pictures appeared in the Lancaster newspapers, inviting the public to see the magnificent new pipe organ destined for the Capitol, on display in the spacious marble lobby of the Hamilton Theatre. With it could be seen 54 cases of organ parts. People crowded in to see this attraction.

After long and thoughtful consideration, the Krupas had chosen a four-manual Robert Morton pipe organ which was to be the most complete instrument of its kind in the East. It was to be connected by a 60-foot electric cable and could be moved to any position. It was tuned to Philharmonic pitch, making it possible for any orchestra musician to tune his instrument to the organ, whether of American or European make.

The varied orchestral effects were divided into five divisions and the different instruments were introduced or silenced by use of finger keys placed over and surrounding the four keyboards and were equipped with sound-proof expression shutter fronts, controlled by the organist and allowing unlimited tonal coloring and expression. Each one of the five divisions was equipped with selective group controls which not only controlled stops in its own division, but could be changed to control groupings in any of the other divisions in the entire organ.

This expensive and complicated new instrument was installed by Jacob Krupa, the Krupas' 23-year-old son, who had developed an interest in this phase of the industry during his travels abroad with his father several years before. Upon their return to this country, Jacob, instead of returning to Franklin and Marshall Academy, entered the Moller Organ Company factory at Hagerstown, Maryland, starting at the bottom and learning the installation and building of pipe organs. He advanced rapidly and was employed with the Marr-Colton Company at Warsaw, New York, the Wurlitzer Company in Philadelphia and the Robert Morton Company in New York, where he made his headquarters, occasionally working at their factory in California also.

George and Elsie Krupa had always provided their children with the finest possible musical training and were proud of their children's accomplishments in the field of music. It had been somewhat of a disappointment to them when Jacob entered young manhood without showing a talent or inclination toward the musical field. However, they were more than gratified by his success in the most difficult field of organ building, since he made it possible, me-

chanically, for others to produce great music. He installed some of the finest, most expensive organs in the country.

Of all the phases in the creation of a fine pipe organ, probably the most crucial is that of "voicing the pipes," to make them "speak." An organ builder must carefully adjust parts of the pipes to bring the tone of each, first alone and then in ensemble, to its proper place of responsiveness.

Four large rooms were required for installation of the Capitol organ, including one room for the 72-horsepower motor. The organist had every known instrument at her command at the console of this King of Instruments, including a tiny 2-foot pipe (the piccolo) to a 32-foot pipe (a Bordone), for which a hole had to be cut in the roof of the organ chamber. The pipes were enclosed in many rooms and people were unaware that back of the heavy plush draperies above the loges were hidden these pipes. (I might explain here that the beautiful high pipes one sees in churches are there for beauty and inspiration alone; not a sound comes from them.)

A great attraction in motion picture theatres was the "Echo Box" arranged at the back of the theatre, in which was placed the instrument of the organist's preference. My choice was the vox humana ("human voice"), an 8-foot stop with tremendous effect upon the audience, for when it was played it sounded like a soloist or even a chorus or choir as the organist coupled stops.

One of the largest gatherings of theatrical celebrities and prominent Lancastrians attended the brilliant opening of the Capitol Theatre on December 21, 1925.

The Krupas received their guests before the show in the exquisite lobby. A handsome souvenir program had been prepared by Eli M. Orowitz as a treasured remembrance of a great occasion. The opening show was "The Midshipman" with Ramon Navarro, and five acts of the finest vaudeville.

Mr. and Mrs. Krupa were escorted to the stage by Edwin Knight, John Wohlsen and Fred Wiker. Then, as the Capitol Concert Orchestra, conducted by Professor Leigh Wittell, played the National Anthem, a large American flag was unfurled on the stage.

Mayor Frank C. Musser greeted the people and commended the Krupas on their continual interest in and contribution to the growth of the City. Mr. C. H. Goodwin, Chairman of the Board of Managers of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners, praised the high business principles of "this prominent exhibiting team, Elsie and George Krupa." John Creswell, the master of ceremonies, called to the stage the members of civic organizations to which the Krupas belonged and the Kiwanians presented them with a magnificent floral tribute. Lovely flower arrangements from their friends also filled the spacious lobby. George and Elsie Krupa had come a long way together!

On stage, my mother was radiant in her pink velvet gown (from Mary Sachs) studded with hundreds of tiny mirrors which reflected and danced with her every move. And I was proud, too, of my

handsome father, with his continental manner and his fascinating Hungarian accent. What a glorious moment of triumph for him! He always said that only in America could a penniless immigrant rise to such heights and he was eternally grateful to this country for his good fortune.

Some of the notables who attended the Capitol opening were Michael Shulman, S. Wittman, William Doyle, Dave Miller and Al Fineman (all of Universal Pictures); Bill Heenan and Frank Leonard (First National Pictures); David Barrist, C. H. Goodwin, Eli M. Orowitz, Paul Greenhalgh and Emil Luks (from "The Exhibitor" magazine); Nathan Appel and Mr. and Mrs. Louis Appel (of Nathan Appel Enterprises); Jay Emanuel, George Schwartz and Larry Jacobs (Metro-Goldwyn Pictures); Morris Fishman and Sam Hyman (Liberty Films); Joseph Shverha (Mr. Krupa's nephew, who operated the Rialto Theatre in Lewistown, Pa.); H. J. Schad and family (President of the Theatre Owners Organization); Samuel Lefko (Masterpiece Films); Mr. and Mrs. John Hardy (Columbia, Pa., Opera House); Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Newfeld, Mr. Korson, Charles Zagrans, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Leopold (Fox Films); members of the Kiwanis Club, Robert W. Troup, John P. Horn, William Everts, Richard Reynolds, Harry Longenecker and Walter C. Zook.

Others attending were Frank J. Sheppherd, Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. G. Trenchard, Lou L. Berman, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Pippin, Peter Ryan, Mr. and Mrs. Gene Marcus, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Marcus, Ben Tolmas, Jerry Safron, Jack McFadden, A. G. Buck, Dave Rosen and William Madison.

The entire front section of the theatre was reserved for invited guests. Shortly after the theatre opened, it was filled to capacity. Patrons gasped as the theatre darkened and the exquisite curtains were shown in their breath-taking combination of black velvet and rose, grey and gold changeable silk.

John Krupa demonstrated the instruments contained in the new organ, as pictures of each of them were shown on the new silver screen. This was called "A Trip through the Organ."

Following the dedication of the theatre, the Krupas entertained the visitors and local guests at a dinner dance in the Stevens House. Later, they were guests of honor at a gathering given by Mr. Charles Goodwin, Chairman of the Board of Managers of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America. Present were such notables as Carl Laemmle, President of Universal Film Company; Henry Padden, booking manager of the Amalgamated Vaudeville Company of New York; B. W. Barnett of Amalgamated; Eli M. Orowitz, broadcaster from Station WIP, Philadelphia; Charles Zagrans of Fox Film Company; Larry Jacobs of Metro-Goldwyn Company; William Quinliven of Pathe Film Company; and Al Lichtman, General Manager of Famous Players-Lasky.

A typical show at the new Capitol Theatre consisted of a full-length motion picture, five acts of fine Keith-Albee vaudeville, a two-reel serial, added attractions and Organ Recitals of my own arrangements of the musical themes of the pictures. Prices for

adults for the matinees were 35 cents on the mezzanine and 25 cents on the balcony; Saturday, holiday and evening shows were 50 cents and 35 cents respectively.

Some of the members of the Capitol Theatre Concert Orchestra were Ernest Baker (violin), Allen M. Way (flute), Ira Bowman (violin), Herman Fiedler (saxophone), Robert W. Kissinger (trombone), Philip E. Bard (cornet), Stewart Thorbahn (violin); George Hastings, George F. McDonald and Purmin Burger (drums); and many members of the Bard and Eshleman families who were musicians and familiar figures in the theatres.

Another well-known Lancaster musician was Professor Raymond Myers, violinist and Conductor of the Lancaster Symphony Orchestra. My sister, Bertie, studied violin with him in our younger days.

During each intermission I gave a 15-minute recital with four spotlights on me, so that everyone was able to watch as well as listen. All my life I have played to appreciative audiences and I always felt that if I could study their faces I could sense their musical tastes and please them. Even today I am still doing that in recitals.

Being a theatre organist was an exacting and gratifying profession, requiring great skill and concentration, as well as perpetual motion with both hands and feet, in order to utilize to the fullest, in darkness, the four keyboards, hundreds of stops for hands and feet, including 50 or more motion picture stops for sound effects (sounds of nature, animals, a baby's cry, etc.) at the same time contrasting with the different families of instruments (strings, woodwinds, brasses, percussion, etc.), each having to be in contrast to be effective and thoroughly appreciated. But it was as natural to me as breathing and I loved it. I always had faith in myself and felt confident that I was pleasing the audience. At 15 years of age I taught pipe organ and trained organists in the art of matching pictures. The organist had to watch the picture every second, for a cue dared not be missed.

Patrons were in awe when they heard scenes perfectly matched as a full symphony orchestra was built up to a climax. Actually the success of the picture depended in a great part on the ability of the organist to produce the finest possible music to match each scene, at the same time being careful not to distract from the story line. A true artist blended so beautifully the two that doing so became a highly developed technique and science. I was fortunate in not having to use music, since I had (and still have at 66 years of age) an unusual ability to memorize music. My parents were pleased, too, that I was able to apply my music to any show without first seeing it. I knew what should be played by studying the photographs outside in the lobby and applied the appropriate instruments on the organ, which were designed to suit any scene of any country in the world. Although my music library was worth many thousands of dollars (and which, incidentally, was destroyed in the Aldine fire), I always arranged and memorized my own scores for shows so that

I could concentrate completely on expression and the necessity of having to change the music in a fraction of a second to fit any change of scene.

In a love scene, for instance, strings, flute and harp would be most effective. For ballroom and social scenes, the slow build-up to an orchestra with orchestra bells were used. For a dramatic scene, instruments with a coupler (connecting two manuals or manual and foot pedals) to gradually increase the volume in keeping with the intensity of the scene, or to diminish accordingly. Most effective was the vox humana, which gave the impression of a human voice and which I used for church scenes, or death scenes, to sound like voices singing or humming from an unknown place.

The first thing to be decided upon was the theme of the picture, taking into consideration the period, settings, etc. The theme was played for all the love scenes, softly, until the final love scene, when I would play the theme in a great triumphant burst of sound. This "character" music applied also to villains and to every character on the screen. An organist had to experience mixed emotions all through the years to match perfectly the varied scenes. There were countless ways of doing this. Tremendous emotional effect was secured, for example, when the organist stopped completely for a long pause, comparable to the way an audience held its breath during times of stress or great suspense. It was a position requiring not only an intensive and thorough knowledge of music, but also an understanding of human nature, character and deep emotions.

For an Oriental scene, I simply touched the Chinese Gong with my foot, which rang out and sounded away, as the cast of characters was being shown, with no music other than that until the first scene, then an Oriental theme with the Chinese block.

When using chimes, if a theme was played with great expression using the harp, cello, flute and vox humana, one chime occasionally, rather than many, was more greatly appreciated because it made the audience anxious for the next chime.

A build-up to a storm was created by holding two low-octave foot pedals coupled with trumpets, in keeping with the intensity of the storm and with a pronounced tremolo and using the three expression pedals above the foot pedals. For the lightning effects, I sounded the cymbals loudly and then followed with an interpretation of thunder which was mine alone, using the foot pedals.

In a pastoral scene, soft music was accompanied by the singing of birds and the sound of rippling water, created by touching another pedal stop.

Circus music was easily created with the organ, as it was equipped with every instrument in the band, played on any of the four manuals and with the feet playing the bass drum and cymbal, and the snare drum with the stop for the hands.

For Western shows, the stringed instruments were useful, at fast tempo, using the pedal button for the horse trot or gallop. All of this footwork had to be perfectly memorized and played in total darkness.

For an unusual scene like a tragedy at sea, I used trumpets softly playing lower and lower as the ship sank to the rumbling of foot pedals. The vibration sometimes was frightening with such a powerful instrument!

Biblical pictures offered the greatest challenge, for all the magnificence of the organ was shown to advantage and all my skill could be utilized. Such pictures required great sacred music with heavy stops such as are used in church to inspire, with trumpets and full organ thundering out the Processional and Recessional Marches. For "The Ten Commandments," I used my own score and was greatly inspired by the comments and reaction of the audience.

In time, I found that, unconsciously, I had become a critic and could unfailingly tell the difference between a good and bad picture and scenario!

Alternating between the Capitol (before that, the Aldine and Hippodrome) and the Hamilton theatres was most enjoyable because there were many pipe organs of different construction and styles, providing unlimited ways of producing great music by putting into use all the instruments at my command. Often, too, I would play at the Grand Theatre; and when I studied in Philadelphia, I would visit and play in theatres and churches there. (Later, I also played professionally in Windber, Pennsylvania, and in Wheeling, West Virginia, where I played in a million-and-a-half dollar theatre and broadcast from there daily.)

Through the years I was a demonstrator of many famous makes of pipe organs. When anyone was interested in purchasing a pipe organ, many times my parents invited them to hear me privately and I would demonstrate the many interesting features of the organ.

When I was asked to design a new pipe organ, the specifications were approved by experts, one of whom was Lancaster's Professor George Benkert. One of the most pleasant experiences of my career came when my parents asked me to design an organ for them, specifying any instruments and effects I desired, built to order.

I had also played at the Fulton Opera House in Lancaster, which presented the greatest artists in the world of music, under the auspices of Miss Mary Warfel, Lancaster's celebrated harpist. Through the years, the Fulton has presented countless fine guests of the legitimate theatre, such as Otis Skinner (father of Cornelia Otis Skinner), in "Kismet."

Looking back to those wonderful days, I sometimes wonder if I was the youngest musician ever to play the organ for motion pictures? When I was 12 years old, I was playing the piano for shows every day after school and began playing the Photoplayer and the pipe-organs as soon as they were installed, beginning in the Hippodrome, and continuing for over 20 years in this capacity.

Some of the other well-known pianists and organists in Lancaster were Ernest Stanziola, Gertrude Willson, Richard Stockton,

Anna Martin Howell, Roy Shimp, Irene Zook, H. Clifton Thorbahn, Earl Geiter, Hazel Elliot, Charles Stork, "Kit" Shilling, Elsie Krupa and, of course, Bertha Krupa, John Krupa and myself.

There have been only four years of my sixty-six years during which I have not played piano and pipe-organ, but during the first four years of my life I lived with my Mother's beautiful music. She was my first teacher and she always had our homes filled with music.



**Portrait-sketch of George M. Krupa, at age 65, done by his granddaughter, Beatrice Braden.**

In 1926, after long and complicated negotiations, the Krupas sold the Capitol and the Hamilton Theatres to The Stanley Company for nearly half a million dollars. The transaction was made in the main offices of The Stanley Company in Philadelphia, through the vice-president of the company, William J. McGuire. With the acquisition of the Krupa Theatres and the Grand Theatre, which they had leased, The Stanley Company now practically controlled the theatre industry in Lancaster.

Elsie Krupa had always been an active business-woman and was not content to be "idle." Being a fine mother to nine children and taking care of her homes in Lancaster and in Wildwood Crest, New Jersey, did not utilize her full capabilities, so my father, who always





Front of the once elegant Hamilton Theatre just prior to demolition in 1965. Once a handsome first rate theatre, the Hamilton became a second-run and fourth rate movie house in the 1930's, and finally its lobby was turned into a cheap night club.

granted her every wish, surprised her by presenting her with the Watson's Children's Shop, a fashionable shop featuring imported clothing for children. It was located on the corner of Orange and Prince Streets in Lancaster.

However, the Krupas were still not content to be out of the theatre business. They moved to Harrisburg for a time, where they operated two theatres, the National and the Rialto. In 1911,

them to assist and was full-time organist in one theatre and part-time organist in the other. One of our most successful premieres was "Seventh Heaven" starring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell.

Soon, however, the devastating day came when rumors began to spread about the new "talking pictures" and the newly-introduced Syncrophone, which was eventually to play a part with "canned" music in replacing all of the theatre organists.

About 1929 the musicians in theatres became sure that they were to be replaced and, since they had dedicated their lives to this particular field of theatre music and knew no other way of earning a livelihood, they panicked all over the country, some of them even committing suicide when they lost their positions.

In addition, since organs were no longer in demand, many organ companies went out of business and countless theatres, which were not ready to equip for "talkies," closed their doors.

I shall never, never forget seeing pipe organs being wrecked and tossed about carelessly when men came to install the new equipment, as they represented the frustration of a life-time of music study and training and all our tender memories.

In 1929, the market crash came and my father lost everything. The family moved to Wheeling, West Virginia, for a time, but soon returned permanently to their beloved Lancaster.

Meanwhile, I continued my musical career in Lancaster, for many years playing the magnificent pipe organ in the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua, one of the largest Catholic churches in the East, where I gave recitals to raise funds for organizations like the Lancaster County Blind Association, whose members attended with their seeing-eye dogs. I also taught piano to young students at the nearby Conservatory of Music, Sacred Heart Academy, during the years 1938 through 1940, when my daughter attended this fine school. In addition, I taught pipe organ to many students and was rewarded when one of my 15-year-old students became organist at the Greek Orthodox Church, and three other students also became church organists. Four of my former students became nuns and are playing in convents.

My great love was (and still is) giving piano and pipe organ recitals and I have always been happy to comply with requests. Once, while I was in Lankenau Hospital in Philadelphia following eye surgery for glaucoma, the staff asked if I would give a recital for the doctors, nurses and patients, which I gladly did. They even moved a piano to the fourth floor for the occasion!

Now in my 67th year, I still present recitals and the ones I enjoy most are the ones I give regularly during the Art Exhibitions given by my daughter, Beatrice Braden, who is also from Lancaster and exhibited her work there for many years with the Lancaster County Art Association and the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen. She now renovates historic old homes in the South Jersey area and her homes show many evidences of her Lancaster background, with the Pennsylvania Dutch kitchens, hex signs and her hand-decorated



Site of the theatre district during demolition in the summer of 1965. Wreckers are finishing the destruction of the Boyd (formerly the Colonial) Theatre in the upper center at the corner of North Queen and West Chestnut streets. Sites for the Hamilton and Capitol theatres are marked. Concrete vault at the right side was part of the Lancaster County Farmers National Bank. Hotel Brunswick and buildings to right rear of the picture are to be torn down shortly for urban renewal.

Toleware and Amish paintings. These homes are open to the public on certain occasions, at which time we combine our arts — my daughter showing her varied art works, while I present hourly recitals in the lovely music room which she has redecorated for me and furnished with a grand piano for my exclusive use. More and more Lancaster people are attending these affairs each year. I believe the demolition of the beautiful Krupa theatres distresses my daughter more than it does George Krupa's own children, since she is devoting her life to restoring lovely old buildings and dislikes destruction of any kind.

The younger Krupa children, Mary, Elsie and Bob, grew up in Lancaster and married local people. Two of the Krupa boys became Augustinian priests. Rev. William J. Krupa, O.S.A., became associated with Villanova University, while Rev. George M. Krupa, O.S.A., went to Japan to establish the first Augustinian mission there in over 300 years. After devoting over ten years of hard work to establishing a church and school in Fukuoka, during which time he won the love and respect of his parishioners, he returned home in 1963 and died of cancer at the age of 43. The Father George Krupa Memorial Fund continues to help his mission to grow. All of the other Krupa children are still living.

When the Krupas returned to Lancaster to live, my father always longed to be back in the theatres. At the age of 65, he returned to his beloved Capitol, this time as fireman and janitor, just so he could be in the theatre he had built. So many people remem-

bered him and were happy to see him back, that many of them still called him "Boss," the affectionate term used by his old employees, which pleased him greatly.

This poignant turn of events reached the ears of the famous columnist, Walter Winchell, who devoted one of his nation-wide radio broadcasts to the story of the fantastic career of George Krupa.

My father never became bitter. He always said, "Money isn't everything. Even Americans with few worldly goods are so much more fortunate than people of other countries. I would not trade my job here (in the Capitol) for that of Premier of my native Czechoslovakia. Even though I lost my fortune, where but in the United States could a penniless young man have attained so much? I will always be proud of my American citizenship."

Elsie Krupa died in 1940, at the age of 60. George Krupa joined his beloved Elsie in 1961, at the age of 88.

The Capitol is no more. George and Elsie Krupa are no more. But I am confident they will always be remembered with love and respect for the fine part they played in the growth of their esteemed Lancaster.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catharine Krupa has dedicated 62 of her 66 years to music and the theatre. A child prodigy, she presented her first piano recital at the age of 6. At 12 years of age, she was playing for silent motion pictures after school and continued playing piano and pipe organ in theatres in Lancaster, Harrisburg and other Eastern cities until the advent of talking pictures in 1930, during which period she was continually associated with her parents, George and Elsie Krupa, in the theatre industry.

She studied piano in Lancaster with Mr. Roy Shimp and with Dr. S. Becker von Grabill, who became Court Pianist to the Emperor of Austria, the Queen of Spain and the Czar of Russia, and was knighted and given the title of Count Rufferth Dietrich von Fahnestoke. He was a friend of the great Anton Rubenstein, Peter Ilich Tchaikowsky, Xaver Scharwenka and Edvard Grieg.

Catharine Krupa also studied pipe organ and composition in Philadelphia with Dr. Ralph Kinder, a composer and a member of the Royal College of Organists of England.

From the age of 15, she taught pipe organ and the art of applying appropriate music to motion pictures, many of her students having become church organists and professional musicians. In later years, she taught music privately and at the Sacred Heart Academy Conservatory of Music in Lancaster.

For some years, she has been a piano and organ recitalist and has presented many concerts to raise funds for worthy causes, including a number of yearly pipe organ recitals in the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua, for the benefit of the Lancaster County Blind Association.

She is now pursuing her musical career in the Atlantic-Cape May County area of New Jersey, where she resides with her daughter, former Lancaster artist and sculptor, Beatrice Braden, who now restores historic old homes in that area.