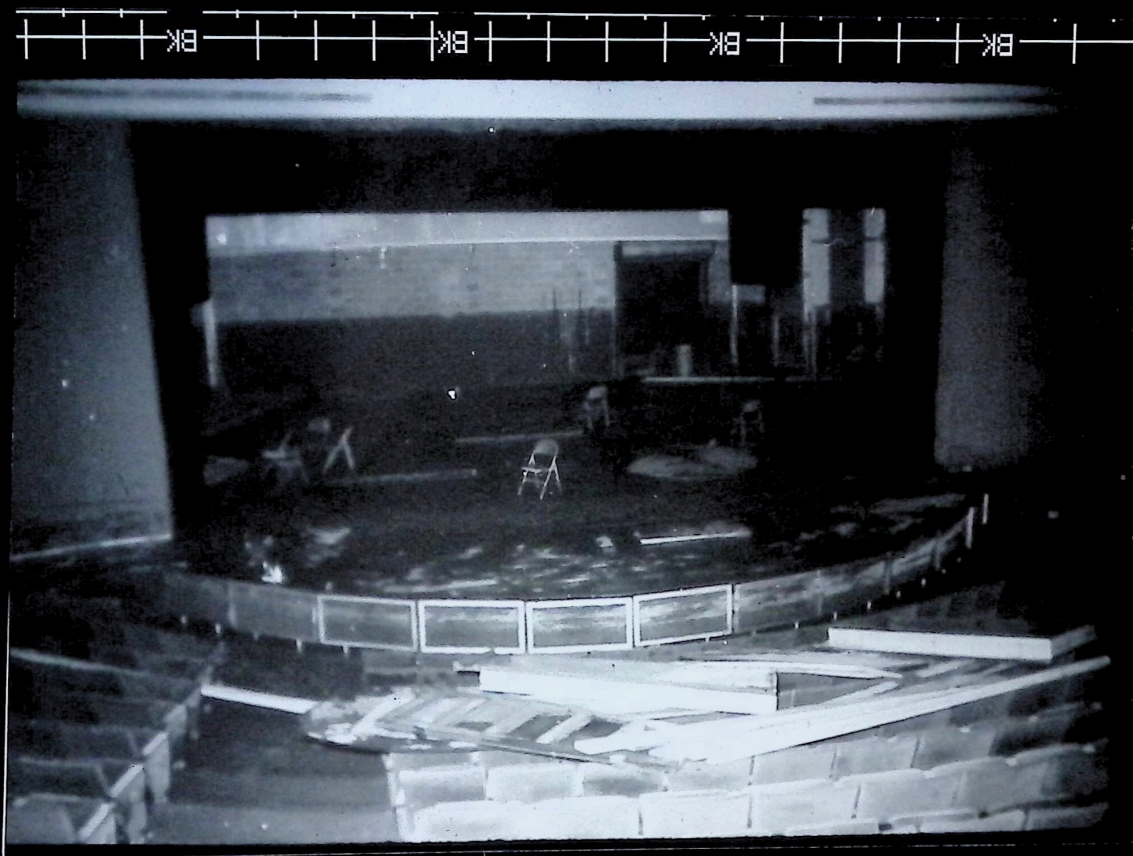
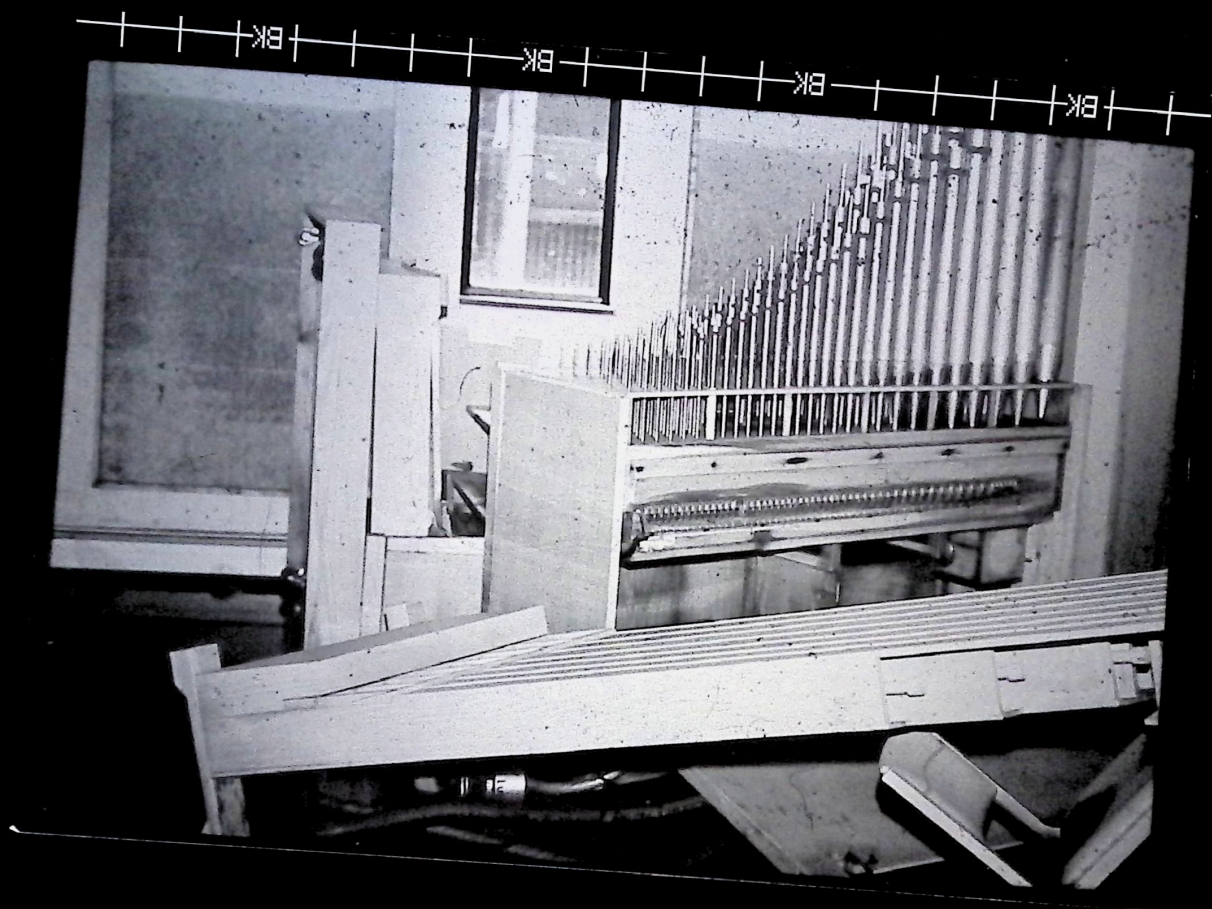












\$1.5 Million Flood Damage to Performing Arts Center Dedication to Theater Still Need As Wilkes Actors Clean Up Mess

WILKES-BARRE — Motorists passing the Wilkes College Center for the Performing Arts on West River St. can't help but focus some of their attention on a blackboard which reads: "Next Wilkes College Production: 'The Little Foxes', Now Playing 'Muddy Waters'."

During the regular school term observant individuals noticed an intimacy among members of the Wilkes Theater and the Cue'n Curtain Club, an intimacy that seemed to say, "Once a member of the theater, always a member of the theater."

Wilkes still has its share of theatergoers this summer, although their attire would appal the Broadway set. In fact they are a somewhat

large band of former and current actors, crew members and just plain volunteers who have been devoting a majority of their time to the theater.

Dressed in muddy jeans, old T-shirts and boots, the group still hasn't lost its enthusiasm after two weeks of cleanup detail following the record flooding of the Susquehanna, which left \$1.5 million in damage at the Center alone.

Behind the entire operation is one man, Alfred S. Groh, who has been with the Wilkes Theater for 26 years.

Slightly more than a quarter of a century ago Groh had only a small one-room theater, that had once been an old carriage house, in which to work, along with some enthusiasm and a determination to make campus theater into something bigger and better.

And he did, enabling Wilkes College to look forward to its second quarter century of campus theater with pride and a million-dollar Center for the Performing Arts — a place where Walter Mitty could be perfectly at home and a place where the talents of so many Wilkes students could be realized.

Then it hit — just like a segment out of the ancient melodramas. Nature intervened to vent her wrath, causing \$10 million in damage to Wilkes alone and countless millions to private homes in the area.

Then, like members of a pioneer family, the Wilkes family pulled together to dig the college out from beneath the tons of debris left behind the water's path.

Their efforts have shown remarkable progress in the restoration of many of the campus buildings. With a little more elbow grease and a lot of luck the college theater should be able to put on some of its finest productions this fall.

Over the years Groh has watched a good many of his students come and go, many of them eventually going on to instruct others in the fine art of stagecraft. And it is a craft — something that has to be shaped and molded, torn down and remolded.

Right now Groh is doing a different kind of directing — a kind he has never had cause to attempt before — the directing of cleanup procedures at the theater.

When one considers the amount of time and effort that goes into the staging of just one production, the amount of effort that has to be applied in the reconstructing of the theater becomes huge.

Preparations for each play begin about seven weeks before Opening Night, when the director hold tryouts. He chooses the cast with regard to their compatibility to each other, as well as to the parts in which they're cast. Rehearsals then begin, the director explains how he wants the players to portray the characters, and then "blocks," or sets up each movement on stage.

During the past three weeks Groh has set up two basic cast requirements for his crew involved in "Operation Sneoback" at the theater — enthusiasm and a determination that the school is not only going to survive the destruction caused by the flood but rise again and continue to gain in the world of higher education.

Carl sent me the clipping
+ I shared it with Carolyn
who typed it for me, + wrote
"Al Groh could use this piece
life's experience to write
another JOB (à la Anselbold
MacTeish)
Q - sure you could, Al.

Al