

# BEHIND THE HOLLYWOOD STAGE

"In Old Chicago" Typifies the Preparatory Operations Underlying This Immense Business of Making a Modern Movie.



Behind an historical movie like "In Old Chicago" lies months of painstaking planning and investigation. Florence Richardson, head of 20th Century-Fox's research department, handled these details for the new picture. Other photos show (clockwise); filming the Chicago fire from an artificial lake built on the set; a closeup showing how Hollywood authentically reproduced the 1871 Chicago, even to wheels on the carriages; and "Daisy," the bovine Thespian who plays the role of Mrs. O'Leary's cow, being led by Tyrone Power, who is in costume for another picture.

By JOSEPH W. LaBINE

Let's make a motion picture . . . not the "piker" way like Aladdin would do it with his lamp, but the way Hollywood might do it. Let's make "In Old Chicago," the super something-or-other production soon to be exhibited in U. S. theaters. We're only using "In Old Chicago" as an example of the movie industry's uncanny skill, but what an example it is!

Two years ago "In Old Chicago" was just a notion in the mind of Darryl F. Zanuck, 20th Century-Fox's production chief. Today about 60 acres of 1871 Chicago stand in faithful reproduction on the studio's Westwood lot. The Palmer house, Field, Leiter and company, Adams Express company, the City Hall and scores of other buildings have been authentically brought back to life. An old timer walking down the streets might be tempted to hum a chorus of "Shoo, Fly, Don't Bother Me" or some other catchy tune of yesterday.

"In Old Chicago," a story climaxed by the lamp-kicking act of Mrs. O'Leary's cow, cost \$1,500,000. But it wasn't extravagance, even though Mr. Zanuck did build a 1,865,000 gallon artificial lake to simulate Lake Michigan. Nor was it extravagance to use 1,100 extras in one scene. Sure, it cost a lot of money, but Hollywood producers are skinflint as a building contractor when it comes to planning the cost of a production.

### Research—the First Step.

How is it done? Well, let's get started with "In Old Chicago."

When Darryl Zanuck decided to produce this film he immediately set the research department at work collecting data on the 1854-1871 period in Chicago which the picture was scheduled to cover. He decided that the great holocaust which laid waste 18,000 buildings at a loss of \$196,000,000 should be reproduced only as a concluding sequence. The picture would really relate an important epoch in the building of America's second city. An impoverished American family of the frontier type would be chosen, around whom the epic of growth, destruction and rebuilding could be constructed.

The O'Learys were chosen because Mrs. O'Leary's cow with the high-kicking rear legs is supposed to have started this greatest of conflagrations.

It took the research department one year to gather data covering manners, costumes and buildings of the 1854-1871 era. Then Niven Busch set to work with his original screen story, "We the O'Learys." This was turned over to Lamar Trotti and Sonya Levien, crack script team.

### Costumes, Properties, Music.

The research department furnished information for the style director, Royer, who designed costumes for the principals. Art Director William Darling supervised construction of sets and properties from old building prints and maps furnished by the researchers.

Since modern films need music, Lew Pollack and Sidney D. Mitchell wrote "I'll Never Let You Cry," "I've Taken a Fancy to You," and "Take a Dip in the Sea." Mack Gordon added "In Old Chicago" as a fourth tune. Among old-time numbers studied by these crack songsmiths were "Aunt Rhody," "Come Home Father," "The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue," "We Never Speak as We Pass By" and "The Captivating Due." Remember any of them?

Actually, two cities were built for the production. First came the Chicago of 1854, a sprawling cosmopolis of dirt streets, inhabited by set-

tlers, frontiersmen, ruffians, sharp traders and all the other sturdy and warped souls who drifted through Chicago on their way to and from the American frontier. Against this background was filmed the prologue sequences of "In Old Chicago." Through its morassed streets rumbled the covered wagons bearing Alice Brady, the newly widowed "Molly O'Leary," and her three brave youngsters.

### Sets Are Rebuilt.

When the prologue had been filmed the 1854 sets were rebuilt to match 1871 Chicago. Dirt streets were paved, tracks for the horse cars were laid, "The Patch," a tough section of old Chicago occupying an area of over five blocks on



Barbara McLean, one of the few top film editors of the industry, scans some of the several hundred thousand feet of film shot for the new spectacle. Actually, only part of this immense footage is used.

the studio's north lot, was also rebuilt to conform with the changes of 18 years in Chicago's growth.

Costumes presented a problem. Every costume company in the Los Angeles area had to help clothe the 1,100 extras used in one scene. When confronted with the necessity of housing these costumes, the studio erected a four-pole circus tent next to the women's wardrobe. Another tent, almost as large, was used to house the 500 policemen's, firemen's and soldiers' uniforms. Then came two more tents for dressing rooms.

Costumes for the principals—Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Alice Brady, Andy Devine, Brian Donlevy, Tom Brown, Phyllis Brooks and others—were created in the studio wardrobe department. Many buttons, buckles and knickknacks had to be manufactured.

Then came the lake problem and instead of moving his vast sets to

a real lake front, Zanuck snapped his fingers and ordered an artificial lake built right on the lot! This wasn't extravagance, because it was cheaper than transporting hundreds of extras, properties, crew and equipment to a location many miles away.

### Filming the Holocaust.

To film the lakeside scenes—mostly pictures of the fire—the studio built the highest parallels ever constructed for a film, towers 165 feet tall. The complete picture of desolation and horror could be seen from cameras at such an advantageous angle. A dolly, 20 by 30 feet, was built to run along tracks laid in the lakebed, holding three more cameras.

Altogether, seven outdoor sets were made for the picture. Interior settings are scattered through five sound stages at Twentieth Century-Fox. One, illustrating the interior of Chicago's old Nineteenth Regimental armory, used as the scene of a free-for-all election dance battle among 500 extras, fills an entire stage.

Fifteen fire engines of 1871 vintage were secured for use in the picture after a search that covered most of the nation. Furniture was obtained from second hand shops and antique dealers, much of it coming from an old house recently wrecked in Los Angeles. But a number of pieces had to be built to correspond with prints of the period.

Although "In Old Chicago" details the romance of Tyrone Power and Alice Faye, plus the adventures of Molly and Jack O'Leary (Alice Brady and Don Ameche) the real interest in this unusual spectacle is the great Chicago fire. Everyone wants to know "how it was done" and "how much it cost."

### It's An Expensive Job.

The studio's answer is that \$500,000 was appropriated for "special effects"—and this mostly means the fire. When you consider that the real Chicago conflagration spread over an area of three and one-quarter square miles, destroying approximately a third of the city's \$75,000,000 assessed valuation, you can understand the task confronting those who would reproduce it.

No chances were taken during the filming of the fire sequence. The studio's own fire department was constantly ready behind scenes lest the flames should get out of hand. And just to make sure that the fire adhered to schedule, a battery of equipment from the Los Angeles fire department was also on the spot.

Yes, there was also "Daisy O'Leary," the famous Jersey cow. "Daisy" was discovered on a farm near Stockton, Calif. With her three sisters as "stand-ins," the bovine Thespian was moved to Hollywood and taught the proper technique of kicking over a lamp.

But the important part of this and most other Hollywood productions is that behind-the-scenes workmen seldom get the credit they deserve. The stars glitter before the cameras, but their glittering would be in vain without the prodigious amount of research, construction and planning which lies behind every film. Costumes, scenery, sound, photography, makeup, research and casting—these are but a few of the fields in which Hollywood workers occupy themselves.

Think that over when you take in a show tonight!

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# Floyd Gibbons'

## ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



### "When Two Spies Meet"

By FLOYD GIBBONS  
Famous Headline Hunter

### HELLO EVERYBODY:

You know, boys and girls, when you stop to think of it, every one of us has had some outstanding adventure, sometime in our lives, that is of interest to other people. Leo Faconne of Jersey City, N. J., writes that he had been reading the adventure column for months before he thought of sending in his own adventure.

Leo is twenty-eight and the father of two children, but aside from the great adventure of marriage and fatherhood, Leo says, the greatest thrill in his life came when he was only nine years old.

Let's go back over the years with Leo. The World war was on and Leo was playing soldier with little John Ferrara and other Italian-American youngsters of the neighborhood. These boys' forefathers were of a race that once conquered the world, and playing soldier came natural to them. When it was suggested that Leo play the part of a German spy and hide, he agreed.

The shades of night had just fallen and it would soon be time for the boys to go home, but there was time for one last game. Leo, as the spy, slipped away to hide. He knew a swell hiding place behind the blacksmith shop, which backs on the right of way of the Pennsylvania railroad. There were lots of wagons standing in the yard, between the railroad embankment and the building, and Leo slipped in between them like a real German spy and lay, quiet as a mouse, on the ground.

### Play Spy Met Up With a Real One.

Leo could picture the other boys looking for him—everywhere but here. The spot was the sort of place that people would avoid—unless, of course, they were determined German spies like Leo. Out in the street traffic went by now and then and once a train roared by on the tracks over his head, but otherwise the spot was as quiet as the grave.

Suddenly, however, Leo became aware that he was not the only person hiding out that night. The tall figure of a man rose quietly—only about ten feet away from him—and furtively arranged some sort of



He Handled the Box Very Carefully.

box he carried in his hands. The actions of the man frightened Leo. "Perhaps he is really a German spy," Leo thought. Frightened but determined, the boy lay still and watched. He could not see the features of the man, but he could see his outline and hear him tinkering with the box.

Once—frightened apparently by someone passing in the street—the man dropped to the ground and lay still. He hid himself so well that even Leo could not see him. Leo was glad of that because it meant that the man in turn could not see him.

### There Was a Ticking in the Box.

Minutes went by during which Leo shivered with excitement. Here he was out playing that he was a spy and suddenly the tables were turned and a real spy was before him. He hoped the other boys wouldn't come hunting for him here and spoil it all. Leo wasn't very old to be a detective, but he knew from the man's actions that he was doing something he shouldn't be doing and Leo wanted a chance to get the police. What a feather in his cap if the man did turn out to be a spy!

As he was thinking these thoughts and listening to his own heart thump, the man's tall figure rose suddenly again right beside him! He was closer, if anything, and Leo was scared stiff that he would be discovered. The boy got ready to make a break for it at the slightest sign of suspicion.

But the man—whatever he was—seemed unaware of Leo's presence. He was intent on the box before him. He handled that box very carefully, Leo noticed, and once when a passing car threw a light in the yard, Leo saw a tense, cruel face under a mop of gray hair. He hugged the ground and waited.

Finally Leo, listening, heard a strange sound from the box. It sounded like a clock ticking. The man seemed satisfied with the sound and moved with the box in the direction of the railroad embankment. Leo saw him bend over and place it under a culvert beneath the tracks.

And just then the other boys nearly spoiled the whole game. They started calling for Leo to give himself up. Well sir, Leo says he'd seen enough anyway and was pretty glad of a chance to sneak away, if he could do it without being seen. He crawled along on his stomach and then made a run for it.

The other boys were scared when they saw Leo's pale face, but when he told them about the spy he had found they all ran in different directions for a policeman. A policeman was found and he brought with him two other men who didn't laugh when Leo told them his story. Instead they went back on one side of the blacksmith shop while the policeman went on the other. The boys stood on the sidewalk and watched a real spy chasing game.

### Yes, It Was a Big Time Bomb.

The policeman went along noisily flashing his light to the spot where Leo had seen the man. Some of the boys thought Leo had just been "seeing things" and started to laugh, but the next minute the laughs froze on their faces as a man, running at top speed, tore out of the darkness away from the policeman and toward them.

He didn't get far though, Leo says, before he had run right into the arms of the two men waiting for him. They caught him and held him while the policeman came up.

Leo says he didn't look like a spy at all when they had him in the light. But a good spy never does look like one.

The man never said a word, Leo says, while the policeman called the patrol wagon. Leo even began to feel sorry for him and to think he had made a mistake, but in a few minutes he knew differently. He led the policeman back to where he had seen the man place the box. They picked the box up gingerly. And what do you suppose it was?

A time bomb! With enough explosives in it to blow up the entire neighborhood! The clock was set for midnight when a train would be passing and, according to experts, the explosion would also have killed Leo and his whole family who lived a few doors away!

And that, boys and girls, is the story of how Leo caught the German spy. Luck? Perhaps. But luck and adventure are companions.

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**What Wax Is Made Of**  
Mineral wax or paraffin is made from petroleum. Some waxes, such as beeswax and spermaceti, are obtained from the bee and the sperm whale, respectively. In China there are wax insects which deposit a white wax on the ash tree. This is gathered and refined for candles. Carnauba wax is obtained from the Brazil palm. Other vegetable waxes include those obtained from the bayberry, sugar cane and a certain species of sumac.

**Description of Humming Bird**  
The earliest account of the hummingbird ever made in English, as written in William Wood's "New England's Prospect," published in 1634, said: "The Hummingbird is no bigger than a hornet, yet hath all the dimensions of a bird, as bill and wings, with quills, spiderlike legs, small claws; for colour she is as glorious as the rainbow; as she flies she makes a little humming noise like a Humble-bee, wherefore she is called the Humbird."

## Sure to Delight in Colors Bright

Add an old-fashioned bouquet of dainty roses, cornflowers, daisies, fern, and forget-me-nots to your bedspread and preserve the glory of Summertime throughout the year! A lace frill—actual lace, gathered a bit—trims your color-



Pattern 5906.

ful bouquet. Easy to do, the charming result is well worth the brief time spent on a bit of simple embroidery. Begin on it right away! In pattern 5906 you will find a transfer pattern of one motif 16 1/2 by 21 1/2 inches; one motif 5 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches; four motifs 3 by 3 inches; a color chart; material requirements; illustrations of all stitches used.

To obtain this pattern send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) to the Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 259 W. 14th Street, New York, N. Y.

## HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS



**Egg Celery Sandwich.**—Chop hard-cooked eggs up fine and season them with salt and pepper. Add half as much finely chopped celery and enough mayonnaise to make the mixture easy to spread.

**Saving Leather Chair.**—The comfortable old leather chair that was sent to the attic years ago because the leather had finally become shabby can be made usable again if the worn part is concealed by a slip-cover. If it is covered in nice, dark blue the chair may be used winter and summer.

**Save Chicken Fat.**—Chicken fat may be used as a butter substitute in cooking. Consequently, it is a good plan to save the fat from boiled, stewed or fried chicken.

**Washing Window Shades.**—Soiled window shades may be washed by spreading each shade on a flat surface and then rubbing it with a clean cloth or sponge and soapsuds.

**Polishing Furniture.**—That foggy appearance on highly polished furniture can be removed by sponging with a cloth dipped in a solution of one quart clear water and two tablespoons of vinegar, wiping dry with another cloth and rubbing.

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