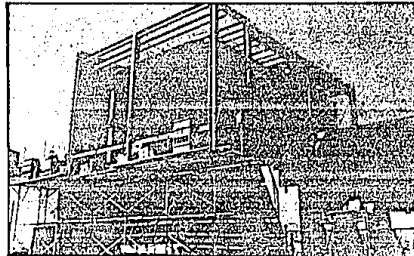


New stagehouse structure surrounds old playhouse.



Another view of scaffolding on exterior of building.

## Show goes on despite difficulties

Continued from Previous Page

"ACTORS IN 'Social Security' have no sets, just tape marks on a badly damaged floor," Haycock says. Usually actors rehearse on a stage with complete sets because being surrounded by the belongings of characters they play helps them step into their roles and "become" the characters.

Remaining plays in the season are bound to run more smoothly without

the complications of scaffolding, sawdust and time crunches. The Tony-award-winning musical "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" opens Nov. 24 for a three-weekend run. Based on Charles Dickens' unfinished stories of Edwin Drood, the play — like the Dickens story — has no ending. Each night, the audience votes to decide who committed the murder, in this light-hearted production billed as a magical, musical mystery.

The touching drama, "The Trip to Bountiful," opens Jan. 26 for a two-weekend run. The story by Horton Foote, made famous first by Lillian Gish on Broadway, then by Geraldine Page on film, gently probes memory to create heart-warming theater.

The ill-fated love between Anne Boleyn and headstrong Henry the Eighth of England takes center stage for two weekends beginning March 23 when the players present Max-

well Anderson's drama "Anne of a Thousand Days."

The players hope to get permission to use the comedy drama, "Steel Magnolias," which they have scheduled to close the season May 11-13, 18-20. Playwright Robert Harling's slice-of-life drama exposes the eccentricities of life in a small Southern town. The story, set in a beauty salon, brims with funny dialogue as it builds to its moving conclusion.

## Lots of projects help raise money

Continued from Previous Page

donors pledged to contribute money for each pin knocked down. Last year Birmingham Village Players put on a summer show, in addition to the traditional five-play season.

TO DATE, the group has raised \$135,000 to fund the first and most expensive phase of the renovation project — rebuilding a two-story stagehouse to replace the old one. Loans from Comerica Bank and from individual members added another \$125,000 to the building fund.

Phase 1 construction began last spring and was completed just in time for the opening of the 1989-90 season. Costs for Phase I were originally projected at \$280,000, but Hay-

cock says, "Bills coming in put the actual cost at about \$350,000."

Fund-raisers scheduled for this year include a square dance in October and a repeat of the popular "Lunch with Santa" during the holidays. Again this year as a fund-raiser, the players will sponsor a Sunday Matinee Brunch before one matinee performance of each production this season. Plans are in the works for a "theater evening" with dinner at a local restaurant followed by a play at the playhouse.

With Phase I nearly complete, Masters says, "We're hoping to start Phase II next year if we have the money." They will raise it with the same "any which way" inventive, nest that took Phase I from dream to reality.

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