

(There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:)

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 21, 1960]

FINAL CURTAIN

A fine old theatrical relic and the graceful home where Dolly Madison once lived now appear doomed by the General Services Administration's latest plans to "improve" Lafayette Square. Only those with hearts of ice could be wholly unmoved by the impending change. The Belasco Theater, second only to the National in local eminence, once carried such lustrous names on its playbills as Sarah Bernhardt, Mrs. Fiske, and DeWolf Hopper. During its years as a USO center, it basked in a brief Indian summer before the Treasury Department turned its velvet-and-gold interior into a vault for Disbursement Office records. And now the shade of L. Stoddard Taylor, the Belasco's last manager, will surely sigh at the news that his 65-year-old stage will soon make way for a Court of Claims given to more prosaic drama.

No less poignant is the fate of the Dolly Madison House a few doors up on H Street. The second oldest private dwelling on the square (Decatur House is older), and once the home of the Cosmos Club, the house is celebrated as the place where Dolly Madison spent the years of her widowhood. It is a house rich in associations on a square limned in history. A catalog of those who have lived around the park evokes the Republic's heroic days: Daniel Webster, William H. Seward, John Hay, Henry Adams, James G. Blaine, Henry Clay, Charles Sumner, Roger B. Taney, Gideon Welles, Stephen Decatur, and John Randolph, of Roanoke.

Long ago, the decision should have been made to preserve the residential character which predominated around the square until World War I. The opportunity has been thoughtlessly thrown away. The GSA is preparing to raze most of Jackson Place to make way for a monolithic office building; the AFL-CIO was permitted to build a headquarters mosque that towers grotesquely over St. John's Church; and now one of the city's choicest locations will be awarded to the Court of Claims. Even at this late date some hard questions ought to be raised about whether a courthouse would make the most appropriate use of such a desirable site.

With a little more foresight, the square could have remained as a pleasant patch of the past—with a refurbished Belasco serving, perhaps, as a repertory theater. The chance has long since gone, and our grandchildren may well reproach us for failing as guardians of a heritage worth saving.

Mr. MORSE. Mr. President, no one can quarrel with the need for these new courthouses. But I cannot understand why they must be crowded into the downtown area of Washington, and into the lovely square across from the White House. Destruction of these buildings to make room for new office buildings will deprive Washington of much of the grace and charm which now envelops the White House. I hope this matter can be resolved in favor of their preservation. The Congress is already studying proposals for monuments to such notable figures of our past as James Madison, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. I am all for appropriate memorials to these great men. I am all for the very large sums which were spent to restore and preserve Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and other sites of significance in American history.

But I do not understand why we cannot preserve what we already have by way of historic sites in the city of Washington, D.C. In addition to their historic import, they also contribute to the beauty of the White House, and I hope that by introducing this measure today, I can assist in their preservation.

I ask unanimous consent to have my bill lie on the table for 3 days so that any Senator who may wish to do so can cosponsor it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORSE. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent that the bill may be printed at this point in the Record in my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be received and appropriately referred; and, without objection, the bill will be printed in the Record.

The bill (S. 3279) to amend the Public Buildings Act of 1959 to provide a study by the National Capital Planning Commission, the General Services Administration, and the Commission of Fine Arts as to the best location for a new U.S. Court of Claims Building, and for other purposes, introduced by Mr. Morse, was received, read twice by its title, referred to the Committee on Public Works, and ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows: