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- the suffering
- the solutions

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## SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE WILL RISE TO GLOW AGAIN—THANKS TO 'UNCLE SAM' WANAMAKER

On his first trip to London in 1949, American actor and director Sam Wanamaker made a pilgrimage along the south bank of the River Thames. Wandering through a desolate wasteland of dilapidated factories and warehouses, he despaired of finding any trace of the Elizabethan-era theater district that once flourished there, or of its principal playwright, William Shakespeare. Finally, Wanamaker found a small bronze plaque commemorating the Globe Theatre, where in the early 17th century Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth* were first staged. The discovery left Wanamaker, who had idolized Shakespeare since his teens, both excited and aghast. "Underneath the plaque was a large pile of garbage, which seemed to sum up the situation," he recalls. "I simply could not imagine why the British had done nothing else to mark the site."

From that day on, Wanamaker, now 67, dreamed of rebuilding the Globe as a "functioning monument" to Shakespeare. Despite Prince Philip's support for Wanamaker's vision of an authentic Elizabethan playhouse, Wanamaker met frustrations that might seem comic except for the endless delays they inflicted. Until recently the quixotic Wanamaker had been feuding with a leftist-dominated local council that controlled the riverfront site of the original Globe and preferred to retain it as a storage depot for road-sweepers' carts. "Shakespeare," declared Tony Ritchie, the council's deputy leader and a radical leftist, "is a lot of tosh."

A protracted legal battle concluded last month when the recalcitrant council agreed to give Wanamaker's Shakespeare Globe Trust a 125-year lease on the one-acre site. Having already secured \$1.5 million in donations, Wanamaker feels sure he can raise an additional \$11.5 million for construction costs, particularly since his supporters include Lord (Laurence) Olivier and U.S. financier Armand Hammer.

Built in 1599, the original Globe Theatre stood only 14 years before it was destroyed by an ironic mischance. During a performance of *Henry VIII* a cannon blast set the structure's thatched roof and wood walls ablaze. A second

Globe was built within a year, only to be demolished during England's First Civil War (1642-46). Forsaking only the hazardous thatched roof, Wanamaker intends by 1990 to build a faithful replica of the Globe. He is planning an open-air summer theater accommodating an audience of 1,500, some seated on wooden benches, others standing in a pit area as "groundlings" did in Shakespeare's time.

The British public long ago ceased to find it odd that the Globe's rescuer is the Chicago-born son of Jewish immigrants to the U.S. The American actor has lived in Britain since 1951, when his promising film and stage career in the U.S. was halted by a McCarthyite witch-hunt that led to his blacklisting.

Wanamaker first became entranced with Shakespeare when he visited the Chicago World's Fair in 1934 and saw a half-scale reconstruction of the Globe Theatre. Two years later he was mesmerized by performances of *Hamlet* and *Richard II*. "Right then and there," he recalls, "I decided that I wanted to be a great classical actor."

After graduating from the DePaul/Goodman School of Drama and serving in the Army during World War II, Wanamaker had his first big success on Broadway in 1946, co-starring with Ingrid Bergman in *Joan of Lorraine*, which he also directed. Since moving to England, he has played innumerable TV and film roles. Wanamaker has turned down many other parts to press ahead with the Globe. "Sam's career has suffered terribly because of his Globe activities," says his wife, Charlotte. Wanamaker estimates that they have given at least \$100,000 to the cause. "Whenever someone was about to pull the plug on the project," he says, "I would just pay the bill myself."

The theater, when completed, will be a monument as much to Wanamaker's persistence as to Shakespeare's genius. He remembers a question raised two decades ago by a sympathetic old Cambridge professor. "Mr. Wanamaker," the academic asked, "what is your life expectancy? Because if you are going to try to do this in England, you will need a very long time indeed." —Written by David Grogan, reported by Robert Temple



"The Globe is a missing monument," Wanamaker has said. "It is the most historic theatrical site in Western culture."

**Struggle**

