

CECIL B. DeMILLE, PIONEER MOVIE MAKER, SUCCUMBS

DIES OF HEART ATTACK



CECIL B. DeMILLE

Spent Boyhood In Washington

Death Attributed To
A Heart Attack;
Had Been Ill For Week

By JAMES BACON

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Cecil B. DeMille, whose spectacular productions made him the movies' most famous and successful director, died today. He was 77.

A heart attack claimed the man who was one of the founders of Hollywood, and became legend in his own time.

He died at his home at 5:30 a.m. after an illness of a week. With him was a daughter, Cecilia, and her husband, Joseph Harper. His wife, Constance, was in the house but not at the bedside. She also has been ill.

DeMille made more than 70 films, both directing and producing many. He spent money like water, in amounts that awed even Hollywood's free-spending studio heads.

But it paid off. Picture after picture set boxoffice records. Several of his films became screen classics.

He was amazingly active right up until he was taken ill. The last film he actively produced was "The Ten Commandments." But he supervised production of "The Buccaneer" and was making plans for a new film about Lord Robert Baden-Powell, who founded the Boy Scouts.

DeMille entered show business as an actor. In 1912, at a luncheon with a glove salesman named Samuel Goldwyn and a vaudeville cornet player named Jesse Lasky, the three decided to take a fling at the new medium of motion pictures.

They formed a company, acquired rights to "The Squaw Man," and sent DeMille west to make it into a movie.

He rented half a barn in a pastoral suburb, known as Hollywood—and the rest is history. DeMille, the late Lasky and Goldwyn became the moguls of Hollywood.

DeMille has estimated that his films have been seen by more than five billion people—roughly twice the earth's population. Box office returns are nearing a billion dollars.

He was reared in a religious atmosphere, and many of his films had religious themes. But they were judiciously larded with sex and excitement.

Among his best known productions:

"King of Kings," a silent movie about the life of Christ that still is being shown; "The Ten Commandments," in both silent and wide-screen versions; "Male and Female;" "The Sign of the Cross;" "The Crusades;" "The Plainsman;" "Union Pacific;" "The Story of Dr. Wassell;" "Samson and Delilah;" "The Greatest Show on Earth."

DeMille was born Aug. 12, 1881, in Ashfield, Mass. His father was a teacher who studied for the ministry at one time. It was from his father's habit of reading the Bible aloud each night that DeMille absorbed his feeling for the epic qualities of religion that marked his movie-making career.

DeMille's parents lived in Washington, N.C., but Cecil was born in Ashfield, Mass., while they were on tour in one of their plays.

DeMille spent part of his boyhood in Washington before moving away. He still has several relatives living there.