



MCHS News

January, 2013

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 1, No. 1

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

Hours:
Wed-Fri 9am—4pm
Sunday 1pm—4pm
Group Tours

Free Admission

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Library Phone:
618-656-7569

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About Us:

The MCHS museum complex consisting of a modern archival library, the 1836 Weir House Museum and a collections center is owned and operated by the non-profit Madison County Historical Society with assistance from Madison County.

The museum and library offer insight and resources for exploring the history and people of Madison County.

NEW BENEFITS OF MCHS MEMBERSHIP

In early January members who have renewed for 2013 will receive membership cards for the first time in a number of years. The cards are required for members to access a new benefit of membership: Time Travelers.

The Time Travelers program, organized through the Missouri Historical Society, is a passport to a variety of membership benefits at historic sites across the United States. It currently includes over 200 organizations and institutions offering specials that may include discounted admission, free parking, gift shop discounts or other perks. For a list of participating organizations, visit their web site at <http://timetravelers.mohistory.org>.

For a list of additional membership benefits, see the enclosed membership application. It can be used to renew your membership or provide a gift membership for a friend.

NEW MCHS WEB SITE

A new website and e-mail address for MCHS will be up and running by mid-January (See sidebar at left). The web site will provide more information about the museum and archival library than previously offered and will include a special “members only” section.

MADISON COUNTY BICENTENNIAL

The Bicentennial of Madison County was the focus of a feature article in the Nov-Dec issue of the Illinois State Historical Society’s Illinois Heritage magazine. Written by SIUE Emeritus Professor Ellen Nore, the article and accompanying photographs provide an interesting overview of our region. Copies of the magazine may be purchased by contacting ISHS at 217-525-2781. The magazine is also available for reading at the MCHS Archival Library.

THEATERS OF MADISON COUNTY

Dozens of theater venues and opera houses were built in Madison County during the first half of the 20th Century before television captivated viewers. Some of these buildings are still standing, and a few still provide entertainment for today’s audiences. A series of articles on pages 4-8 provides information on the buildings still in existence. The north-western part of the county was covered by Terry Hillig and other communities by Cindy Reinhardt. If there is a former historic theater building still standing that we missed, please let us know. History “changes” as we continue to learn more about it!

MCHS NEWS

Welcome to the new MCHS newsletter! The new edition of the newsletter will arrive more often and provide more feature stories. Much of the information provided in previous newsletters will be on our new web site or on file at the archival library.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY EXHIBIT CALENDAR

Ending Mid-January

Cookies, Camping and Change: A Century of Girl Scouting

Beginning February 1

“If I Fall, My Grave Shall Be Made in Alton”
Elijah Lovejoy’s Journey from Minister to Martyr

The February MCHS exhibit will retell the story of Elijah Parish Lovejoy’s life and death with artifacts from the society’s collections. Items featured include the pianoforte that was in the Lovejoy residence at the time of his murder as well as the spade that was used for the groundbreaking of the Lovejoy monument on August 15, 1896.

MCHS BOARD CHANGES

This fall MCHS said good-bye to two board members and welcomed two new candidates to the board. Julie Hamilton, MCHS Secretary, resigned due to family commitments, but will continue to support the society as a volunteer in the Friends of the Museum. She has been on the board since 2009.

In September, MCHS board member Sharon Helms, who served from 1996-2012, passed away suddenly. Sharon was, in the words of Director Suzanne Dietrich, one of those people who is "the first to volunteer and the last to leave after everything has been cleaned up." She served as president of the society and in numerous other capacities during her 16 years at MCHS. Sharon and her family were great supporters of the society's work and she is greatly missed.

Joining the MCHS board at the Annual Meeting in November were Donna Bardon and Murray Harbke.

Bardon, a long-time resident of Edwardsville, is retired from SIUE where she was Director of Development at Lovejoy Library, responsible for fundraising. Since her retirement in 2000 she has served as a valued board member of numerous community organizations.

Harbke is a life-long resident of the Wood River/Roxana area of Madison County. He recently retired after 43 years as a high school history teacher. His family was actively involved in the growth of Roxana.

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

from Mary Westerhold

We have been busy at the Archival Library! As new collections are donated, we work to preserve and catalog them. There are also existing collections that need more detailed cataloging and additional preservation. And, of course, we get to help researchers who visit us, call us, or even email us. We even helped the police in an Oklahoma town return stolen items to their owner! Who says libraries are boring?

From a single donor, we received two large collections. One of these collections contained books, postcards, and documents relating to Cahokia Mounds and other Indian Mound Sites while the other collection focused on Abraham Lincoln. While the library has collections on both topics, these items greatly enhanced them. Two other donors increased our photo collection by about 4,000 photos, nearly doubling the current collection. Then there is the box of scrapbooks on Alton history that is just the beginning of another collection.

But it is not only large collections that are important to us. Every collection that is donated whether it contains one item or several boxes, fills a void in our collection. A receipt from a long gone business fills a gap in the history of that business. A family photo relays not only family information but clothing styles. Newsletters, anniversary booklets, and photos from churches, schools, and businesses provide snapshots in time that become research tools. City Directories, both current and older ones, provide listings of homes and businesses along with advertisements that are also used in research. Family histories are used not only by genealogists, but also by those researching their homes and businesses.

We welcome your history! It may be difficult to think of your lifetime as history, but look around and try to remember the businesses that have come and gone; the schools, churches, and houses that have been built, remodeled, or razed; or even what the main street of your community looked like ten years ago.

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT



The Lincoln era settee and side chair pictured here were originally donated to America's History Museum of Godfrey by the widow of Dr. Edwin F. Buzan. The furnishings, passed down through Dr. Buzan's family, were originally owned by Lt. Col. William Deburling Ward (1830-1898) and his wife Sarah Jane (Todd) Ward (1833-1877) of Vevay, Indiana.

When America's History Museum was unable to obtain the funds necessary to open its doors, these items were donated to the Madison County Historical Society by Brian McKinney, acting president of the organization. The donation of these upholstered neo-classical/Greek revival furnishings, now located in the front parlor of the 1836 Weir House, are greatly appreciated.

Each issue of the MCHS newsletter spotlights an item recently donated item to the museum. A complete list of recent acquisitions will be available on our web site.

TUBE SOCK PALOOZA! SEE ANYONE YOU KNOW?



In 2012, the Archival Library received a generous donation of several hundred photos taken by Edwardsville Intelligencer photographer Dick Norrish. Many of the photos are unidentified and we need your help! To start this process, the Archival Library will be displaying photos from approximately the late 1960s through the early 1980s of children at various events - wearing tube socks! Could you or your children be in these photos? Stop in and see!

RECENT EVENTS

2013 ANNUAL MEETING



The annual meeting program Nov 6 featured speakers Kenneth Hanser and Jeffrey Pauk who told a standing-room-only audience about recent progress in locating the exact site of Fort Russell.

Ken Hanser and his brother David have been researching the historical significance and location of Fort Russell for the past 5 years. He spoke about the background of Fort Russell and discoveries made by the Hanser brothers.

Jeffrey Pauk, pictured at left, is a second generation surveyor in Madison County. His surveying knowledge was an important component in the search for Fort Russell.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AND QUILT SHOW



On Dec 4 approximately 100 visitors attended the Holiday Open House and Quilt Show at the MCHS Museum and Archival Library. The quilts were all the work of former MCHS director Sharon Helms. Helms was an experienced quilter who showcased her work at the Illinois State Fair and Madison County Fair where she won many championships and blue ribbons. The society is grateful to her family for making this one day exhibit of her quilts possible.

Director Suzanne Dietrich displays one of the quilts made by Sharon Helms.

THEATERS OF ALTON – ROXANA—WOOD RIVER

More than two dozen theaters entertained residents of Alton and neighboring communities during the early decades of motion pictures but only one commercial movie house operates in the area today.

Most of the old theater buildings are gone. Several buildings that once were theaters are no longer recognizable as such.

Only three old-style theaters -- with prominent marquees out front -- remain. The Grand Theater in Alton has been closed since 1977. The old Roxana Theater (later Roxana Cine) and the Midtown Theater in Wood River have been put to new uses.

Other old cinemas still standing include the former Rio Theatre on MacArthur Boulevard in Cottage Hills and the former Norside Theatre in Alton. The Rio was located along MacArthur Boulevard and apparently operated during the 1940s and 1950s.

The Norside, at 2602 State St. in North Alton, opened in 1937 and closed in 1955. It became a Tri-City grocery store, then a nightspot called .R.'s Nites Out and, later, a medical supplies store. It is not recognizable as a theater.

The Grand Theatre

In April 1920, a small group of Alton businessmen announced plans to build a modern, fireproof moving picture theater at the corner of Third and Market streets. The new Grand Theater would be the city's largest with more than 1,000 seats. It opened on Dec. 4, 1920, to the music of Berg Plummer's orchestra.

The developers spent \$150,000 on the project -- much more than they originally intended, it was reported. By November 1923, there were problems -- disputes with the musicians' union over reduced hours. (It was the era of silent films and theaters had orchestras.) Weekday matinees had been discontinued and there were reports of negotiations for possible sale of the property.

By 1926, the Grand was owned by William M. Sauvage, a prominent figure among Alton-area theater operators in those early years, having managed the Temple, Airdome and Lyric theaters in Alton and the Wilkey Theatre in Edwardsville.

In 1912, Sauvage opened the new Hippodrome Theatre at 101 West Broadway in Alton, the site of the former Lyric. The Hippodrome operated until 1931 and was razed in 1933.

Sauvage found time to also serve as an agent for a St. Louis riverboat line and as mayor of Alton from 1917 to 1921.

Sauvage sold the Grand and the Hippodrome to Publix Great States Theatres and stayed on as their manager and a company director until retiring in 1931 after a half-century in the theater business. The Grand, under several owners, outlived many of its contemporaries and several later startups, not closing until March 3, 1977, when a sign was posted that read, "Closed Temporarily." It never reopened. Several generations of Alton-area residents have



The Grand Theatre (Courtesy of Terry Hillig)

fond memories of the Grand and would like to see it renovated and reopened.

Building owner Ed McPike said he shared that sentiment and that was his plan when he and his wife bought the property in 1990. Some repairs were made but economic realities have precluded renovation, he said.

McPike said it would take at least \$2 million worth of renovation to reopen the Grand as a theater and it would have questionable business prospects. It is oddly situated and lacks adequate parking, he said. "It's just not that practical to renovate," McPike said. "It's just tough. I can't think of anything to do with it. No one in their right mind would buy it."

In 2010, the Alton City Council overruled a decision by the city's Historical Commission to declare the Grand building a city landmark. That status would have mandated a review process before major alterations or demolition.

McPike opposed the designation. He said he had the Grand evaluated by a Chicago architect, an expert on old theaters who found little that was architecturally remarkable about the exterior or interior of the



theater. McPike said the Grand was built on a slim budget and is basically "a box of a building."

Terry Sharp is president of the Alton Area Landmarks Association, a nonprofit preservation group that supported the move to make the Grand a city landmark.

"You want to save it but the next question is how would you pay for it," Sharp said.

As some movie houses went dark in the 1920s and 1930s, others opened their doors, including the Wood River Theatre on North Wood River Avenue in Wood River, the Uptown (later Cameo) Theatre on Washington Avenue in Upper Alton, the Norside and the State Theatre on East Broadway in Alton.

Roxana Theater

In 1940, Albert Critchlow opened the Roxana Theater (later Roxana Cine) at 400 N. Central Ave. in Roxana. Critchlow and his family lived in an apartment above the lobby.

The Roxana survived a tornado that took off its roof in 1949 and operated until 1965. Bloomer Amusement Co. of Belleville bought and reopened the theater in 1968. It was later owned by Kerasotes Theatres of Springfield before it closed as a commercial theater in 2002.

The old Roxana was acquired that year by the next-door Church of the Nazarene and renamed Nazarene Community Center. Joe and Ralynne Case are the center's co-managers and live with their two sons in the apartment over the lobby.

Cleaned up and renovated, the center still shows movies one weekend each month. The offerings are selected for their suitability for children and families and admission is free. The center has also provided a venue for live plays, concerts and other programs presented by the church, other churches, schools and organizations.

The theater seats 530 and has its original stage and a renovated dressing area. Ralynne Case said the free movies are a particular boon to families who can't afford the cost of tickets, popcorn and drinks at commercial theaters. Most concession items at the center cost only about \$1.

"I'm the popcorn girl and my husband greets everyone who comes through the door," Case said. "It's always exciting."



Ralynne Case and her husband manage the former Roxana Theater. (Hillig)

The Rev. Dr. Larry Lacher, pastor of the church, said the theater was purchased by a local businessman who donated it to the church. He said the same benefactor provided a matching grant that raised \$120,000 for new heating and cooling systems two years later.

Lacher said the church has also invested lots of money and thousands of volunteer hours into the center. "We saw it as an opportunity to benefit the community," he said. Lacher said church members believe the church has a responsibility to help make its community a good place to live.

Sponsorships, rentals and concession charges help offset the center's operating costs. For information on rentals or upcoming movies, visit www.nazarenetheater.com or call 618-610-4260.



The former Midtown Theatre now houses a party center for children and teens. (Hillig)

Mid-Town Theatre

George Evanoff operated the 650-seat Midtown Theatre at 145 East Ferguson Ave. in Wood River from 1948 to 1953. After it closed, the building was used as a warehouse by a furniture store.

The Civic Action Body, a nonprofit association of individuals and businesses interested in promoting economic development and improving quality of life in Wood River, acquired the old theater in 1998.

It was re-opened in Nov 1998 as the Midtown Theater and Cultural Arts Center. Currently, it is occupied by Riverbend Bounce & Party Center, which hosts parties for children and teens.

Kil Kare Theatre

Curiously, Riverbend Bounce previously occupied another former theater in downtown Wood River, the one-time Kil Kare Theatre at 56 E. Ferguson Ave. The Kil Kare operated from 1910 to 1921 or, according to other sources, from 1915 to 1929.

Now, the building houses the Betwixt Teen Club, whose owner Buddy Manley said the building's basement has a sloped floor with holes where seats apparently were attached.

Over the years, the former Kil Kare's occupants have included a Western Auto store and a business called Scrapbook Heaven.

COLLINSVILLE THEATERS

Collinsville has two historic theater buildings still in existence. Although many are only familiar with the Miners' Institute at 204 W. Main Street, there was also the short-lived Will Rogers Theater at 101 E. Main Street.

Miners' Institute

The Miners' Institute Building, now owned by the City of Collinsville and operated under the Collinsville Area Recreation District (CARD) was designed by St. Louis architect Robert Kirsch, who was also responsible for the Madison County Court House.

In a grand celebration in December 1918, the building was dedicated. Sixteen hundred local union miners donated 1% of their pay for a year to fund the building. Over the entrance of Miners Hall were two life-sized figures of miners, clasping hands to signify fraternity in their union. Lights on the miners' helmets lit the doorway.

A description in the December 1, 1918 United Mine Worker's Journal described the three-story building in detail. "The principal feature of the building is a fine, completely equipped theater, large enough to accommodate the largest theatrical productions. This auditorium is on the first floor. It is 62 by 90 feet in size with a balcony floor 62 by 46 feet. The balcony is supported in such a manner as to eliminate columns or other obstructions to the view of the audience on the lower floor. High-grade, comfortable seats, roomy and large, have been installed, and there is a clear view of the stage from every seat.

"There are four boxes at the sides of the stage and the front seats of the balcony also are in boxes. The curtain is of asbestos. A complete motion picture outfit also will be installed.

"On the main floor there is also a store-room and buffet. The second floor contains a large reading room, luxuriously

furnished, two committee rooms, secretaries' room, toilet rooms, shower baths and lockers. On the third floor there is a meeting room... and a completely equipped kitchen. Banquets and dances may be held in this room."

The exterior of the building was primarily of semi-glazed terra cotta and a light colored brick. The lobby and vestibule had wainscoting of Tennessee pink marble with a black marble base. An important feature



The Miners' Institute at 204 W. Main St, Collinsville circa 1921
(Courtesy of Neal Strebel)

of the time was the claim that the building was entirely fireproof in its construction.

It is said that the Union Temple, as it was sometimes called, was so popular with members of all unions that other theaters couldn't survive in Collinsville due to union loyalty to the Miners' Institute. The hall became the place for nearly all large community gatherings, including graduations, lectures, meetings, and political rallies in addition to the vaudeville, plays, operas and films that echoed through its state of the art auditorium.

Will Rogers Theatre

After a fire in March 1933 gutted their building at 101 E. Main Street in Collinsville, Fredman Bros. Furniture Corporation began construction of a three story brick building, but never completed it.

In August 1936, Samuel Komm, who operated nearly 2 dozen local theaters including the Miners theatre just 2 blocks away, announced that a new theatre would be

built on the site. The theater would be named for Will Rogers, a popular American humorist and actor who was killed in a plane crash the previous year.

Plans for the theater were drawn by architect Robert Boller of Kansas City, who with his brother Carl was responsible for the design of nearly a hundred Midwest theaters between 1902 and 1950. The local contractor was Joseph Juda.

The theater opened on New Year's Eve, 1936, with five hours of "unduplicated" entertainment, that included Mickey Mouse, "Pop Eye", news reels, and three feature films including Robert Montgomery in "Picadilly Jim." The price for the special evening was just 40¢, 15¢ for children.

Despite the grand celebration, the Will Rogers Theatre was not a great success. Just 8 months after this opening, a "grand reopening" was announced for September 4,

1937. The theater operated off and on until sometime in the 1940s when it closed for good. Sam Komm died in 1947.

In 1950, the building owners offered teenagers the use of the building free of charge as a recreation center, originally called Teen Town (later the Tepee). Jere's Clothing opened in the building and was followed by Glik's in 1979, and Isle of U in 1995.

Four years ago the building was purchased by Roger Connor. His family oriented Bert's Chuck Wagon is now in the building along with his son's business, Connor Photography.

There is much of the old theater still in the building. As you enter the front door you can see the Art Deco railings that led to the balcony. In the basement the slanted floor and parts of the stage remain as well as the former theater restrooms. Outside décor and the marquee also remain.

♦♦♦

EDWARDSVILLE THEATERS

The Wildey Theatre

The Wildey Theatre, 252 N. Main Street, was built in 1909 through a partnership between a group of Edwardsville businessmen (Edwardsville Investment Company) and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF).

Designed by architect G. H. Kennerly, the theater was named for Thomas Wildey, the founder of the Odd Fellows philanthropic organization in the United States.

The IOOF Hall was placed on the third floor of the three-story brick structure. The second floor, called the Music Hall, was used for small concerts and dances. The auditorium was located on the ground floor with two small storefronts on either side of the entrance.

The theater could accommodate 1,150 patrons which included 500 seats in the auditorium, 300 seats in each of two balconies and 50 seats in opera boxes on the sides of the auditorium.

The Wildey became the center of the community. During the Great War (WW I) soldiers were given a farewell from the stage of the Wildey by a standing room only crowd, political rallies, temperance lectures, graduations, teacher conventions, cooking schools, baby shows and more were held at the Wildey in addition to vaudeville, plays, concerts, and motion pictures.

By the mid-1930s the theater was considered "old fashioned." A major renovation was completed with a grand opening of the new Wildey Theatre on January 17, 1937. The marquee seen on Main Street today was installed and the interior changed from ornate Victorian to modern Art Deco which was replicated in the recent renovation of the theater.

After 1937 the theater was used primarily for films although there were also functions like High School Proms and other community events. By 1984 the theater had fallen on hard times, and closed its doors with a showing of "The Big Chill" on March 8, 1984.

The building was sold and although various organizations and individuals tried to bring it back, it proved too large a task. In 1999 the Wildey was purchased by the City of Edwardsville with the intent to find an investor. When no one came forward, the city took on the task of renovating the building and running it through the Edwardsville Parks and



Recreation Department. On April 12, 2011, the 102nd anniversary of its original opening day, the Wildey once again opened its doors to the public. With support from the Friends of the Wildey, the project is a restoration success story.

The Wildey Theatre has a regular schedule of events including live theater, concerts and films on their web site. The auditorium and music hall, now the "Marquis Room," are available for rentals. Funds to renovate the former IOOF Hall on the third floor have just been approved to provide additional event space at the "magnificent Wildey."

The Oh-Gee Theatre and the Lux

Walking along the 100 block of North Main Street, few people look up to see the name "Giese" above the second story windows of the building at 112-116 Main Street. Fewer still notice two decorative hooks, evenly spaced, a few feet above the first floor. But both of these are clues to this building's interesting past.

In October, 1920 Olin Geise, known to his friends as "Gee," opened the Oh-Gee Theatre with a 700 seat auditorium designed for vaudeville and 'moving pictures.' Giese's theater proved very successful... too successful for his rivals at the Wildey Theatre.

United Operating Corporation, who ran the Wildey Theatre decided to eliminate the

competition. Just two years after the Oh-Gee opened, United offered Giese a long term lease on his theater, purchased nearly all the fixtures, including the spittoons, and signed Giese to a contract as manager of the Wildey. Three years later Giese died following minor surgery. His funeral was held on the Wildey stage, the only venue large enough to accommodate the crowd. His widow, Mary, inherited the Giese Building.

The Giese Building theater didn't come to life again until 1939 when investors leased the building and spent \$10,000 to install 600 new seats and a new sound system, "RCA Phonograph's new Magic Voice of the Screen." A new entrance and the "Lux" marquee became part of Edwardsville's downtown streetscape.

A few years after its opening, the Lux was sold to a group of businessmen that included Clyde Metcalf, who eventually became the sole owner with his wife.

Early on, Clyde Metcalf set up a tiny office just off the lobby where he sold insurance. In the 1950s he placed a television in the lobby. According to his son, George, "If they didn't like the feature film, they could always come out to the lobby to watch television" since many didn't have sets at home. George Metcalf joined his parents in the theater-insurance-real estate business in 1957. The two men learned to run the projectors themselves when they could no longer afford the two union projectionists.

The theater closed in 1958, with a showing of "The Ten Commandments."

The Metcalf family still owns the building today where evidence of its former life can still be found. The frame of the stage opening, now closed over, is still there. Rising above the stage floor nearly two stories high is the vast fly space for curtains and scenery. There are also remnants of a catwalk, lights, and dangling cables that provide reminders of what once occupied the space.

Further evidence can be found on the second floor where the sound and projection rooms are located. The equipment has been gone for many years, leaving the two rooms empty of all but memories.

The former theater now has store fronts on the ground floor in both the front and back of the building with leased office spaces on the second floor.

HIGHLAND'S LORY THEATER

The Lory Theater at 810 Main Street, Highland celebrated its reopening in December after being closed for 18 months as new owners, Justin and Hillary McLaughlin, worked to restore the old theater.

The theater opened in 1912 as the Columbia Opera House where "moving pictures and vaudeville" were its primary attractions. It was built for Highland businessman Adolph P. Mosimann who already owned most of the block, including the Columbia Hotel which today is an apartment building. The papers at the time made much of the fact that everything about the theater was done by local craftsmen including the building itself, frescoes, murals and scenery curtains.



Lory Theater circa 1955 (Courtesy of Voegel Photography Studio, Highland)

Multipurpose capabilities were designed into the building. The balcony had sliding partitions to close it off from the theater so the front of the building could be used for dancing entertainments. The projection equipment was in a cage outside the building so that "its beams may be

directed into the theatre or upon the curtain of the Airdome" next door.

In 1916 Henry Lory, who was sometimes a business partner with Mosimann in other ventures, bought the Columbia Hotel, Airdome and Opera House for \$20,000. Lory managed the opera house personally until his death in 1932 when his youngest son, Herbert, took over as manager.

In July 1935 the opera house closed for two months to undergo a major renovation that would bring the theater up to modern standards. The building was lengthened and most of the stage removed since they no longer intended to host live theater. The front of the building was rebuilt to the style seen today and the Art Deco influence popular in theaters at the time was introduced.

The Columbia name was dropped at the grand reopening when Herbert renamed the building "The Lory Theatre" in memory of his father.

In 1939 Kerosotes Theatres leased the building and later purchased it in 1947. Kerosote closed off the balcony and put another screen on the second floor where the balcony and entertainment hall were previously located. They operated the business until 2011 when they were bought by AMC. AMC was not interested in an older theater with only two screens.

The McLaughlins opened the 239-seat main auditorium on Dec 26 with the film "Parental Guidance" starring Billy Crystal. Renovation work is continuing on the 140-seat second floor screening room. The Lory Theater will hold a grand reopening celebration in the near future.

MADISON THEATRE



Madison Theater, circa 1920
(Courtesy Neal Strebel)

Little is known about the Madison Theatre which closed over 60 years ago. Located at 1537 Third Street, the two-story brick building was constructed in 1913 next to the village hall by the Madison Fire Company with a theater on the ground floor and the Fireman's Hall for entertainment, meetings and civic events above. Next door was a candy shop with a window that opened into the theater lobby.

From Boxoffice magazine we know the theater was expanded and renovated in 1951. The theater closed in the late 1950s. Shortly afterwards, there was a major renovation that erased most evidence of the theater's existence.



**Madison County
Historical Society**

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