

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Finke Opera House

other names/site number Ritz Theatre

2. Location

street & number 312 North High Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town California [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Moniteau code 135 zip code 65018

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National
Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the
property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally []
statewide [x] locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].

Signature of certifying official / Title *Mark A Miles* Mark A. Miles / Deputy SHPO

2/10/04
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official /

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- [] removed from the
National Register
- [] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Current Functions

WORK IN PROGRESS/theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials

foundation LIMESTONE
walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Finke Opera House
 Moniteau County, MO

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Periods of Significance

1885-1953

Significant Dates

1885

1937

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Legg, Jerome Bibb/original architect

Steigmeyer, O.W / remodeling architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	537840	4276180			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rhonda Chalfant
 organization Chalfant Consulting date September 2, 2003
 street & number 619 West 32nd Street telephone 660-826-5592
 city or town Sedalia state MO zip code 65301

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name California Progress, Inc.
 street & number P.O. Box 42, 501 South Oak Street telephone 573-796-3040
 city or town California state MO zip code 65018

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Section 7 Page 1

Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Summary:

The Finke Opera House, also known as the Ritz Theater, is located at 312 North High Street on the southwest corner of North High Street and West Third Street in California, Moniteau County, Missouri. The two-story, rectangular, brick building, constructed in 1885, was built as a multi-use facility; its basement housed a billiard hall, its main floor and balcony housed the opera house, and its second floor housed meeting rooms for fraternal orders. The building, designed by Jerome B. Legg in the Late Victorian/Eclectic style, features decorative brickwork banding and segmental window arches with stone accents. The east and north facades are characterized by pilasters that separate the bays, with four bays on the east façade and six bays on the north façade. The east façade features a gable with a decorative sunburst detail. A canopy was added to the east façade sometime before 1925. The building was remodeled in 1937 and given an Art Deco façade and a street level entrance on the east, and a ten-foot addition to the first story and basement of the west facade. The Art Deco façade has been partially removed, revealing part of the original facade. The building retains significant integrity, and the owner, California Progress, Inc., is in the process of restoring the building for use as a community theater/meeting hall.

Elaboration:

The Finke Opera House is located on the southwest corner of North High Street and West Third Street in downtown California, Missouri, a block from the Moniteau County Courthouse Square, listed on the National Register on 15 October 1970. It is also near several other buildings listed on the National Register--the Old California City Hall and Fire Station at 101 North High, listed on 12 April 1982; the Old Barnhill Building at 301 North High, listed 12 April 1982; and the Gray-Wood Buildings at 401- 407 North High, listed on 19 January 1984.

While *The Heritage of Missouri* suggests that "the small town 'opera house' was usually little more than a barn-like structure with a stage," the Finke Opera House was a well-appointed two-story brick building in designed in 1885 by Jerome Bibb Legg of St. Louis in the Late Victorian-Eclectic style (illustration 1).¹

The Finke Opera House originally measured approximately 81 feet by 44 feet. A ten foot addition was made to the west façade in 1937, making the current dimensions of the building 91 feet by 44 feet. At the same time, the five stone steps leading to the east entrance were removed and the entrance brought down to street level. The building, which sits on a sloped lot 112 feet by 55 feet, faces North High Street on the east (photo

¹Duane Meyer. *The Heritage of Missouri* (Springfield, Southwest Missouri State: 1965): 518.

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

1). Its secondary façade faces Third Street on the north (photo 2). On the south the building joins the Finke Building, a shorter two-story building which originally provided storefront space on its main floor and a second floor apartment for the owner of the theater and his family (photo 3). The westernmost portion of the south façade faces a parking area behind the Finke Building. The south façade retains four of its second story, segmental arched, two over two windows. The west of the Finke Opera House faces an alley (photo 4). The second story of the west façade retains its four segmental arched, two over two windows. The basement is at ground level on the west (illustration 2).

The exterior, which was remodeled with the addition of an Art Deco façade in 1937, has been stripped of the Art Deco façade and prepared for restoration. This description will focus first on the original appearance of the building, both exterior and interior, showing original photographs, architect's drawings, and floor plans, followed by a description of the building after its 1937 remodeling, showing photographs and current interior floor plans.

The east façade features pilasters which accent the corners of the façade and set apart the entranceway. The entrance doorway originally had a segmental arch with a brick soldier course outlined with dark banding and accented with five-sided stone shoulders at the corners. Two decorative bands of dark brick enclosed bands of brick set on an angle in a diamond pattern. These bands connected the pilasters to the doorway. The original five panel double doors were topped with a transom of stained glass in amber and cobalt glass. Marquee panels originally flanked the doorway. A wooden balcony supported by wooden corbels originally fit above the doorway. The balcony was mounted between the pilasters and accented the two center second-story windows on the east façade. To allow access to the balcony, the center second story windows were longer than the second story windows on either side of the balcony. A triangular pediment with a sunburst detail rises above the pilasters on the east façade. The pilasters, balcony with tall windows, and gable create a strong vertical line.

The first and second story windows on the east façade were originally segmental arched, two over two, with soldier courses accented with five-sided stone shoulders at each corner. The first floor windows were accented with transoms of cobalt and amber stained glass. The arches were filled with a wooden plaque with a carved, swirling leaf pattern.

Seven pilasters separate the north façade into six bays, each containing segmental arched windows with a soldier course and five-sided stone shoulders. The arches of the windows on the north façade were also filled with a wooden plaque with the carved, swirling leaf pattern. The first and second story windows on the north facade were originally two over two, segmental arched windows, with stained glass transoms. The windows had soldier courses marking the arch and five-sided stone shoulders at each corner of the arch.

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

The building originally used stone accents and brick laid in a variety of decorative patterns. Linking the shoulders and running around the east and north facades of the building are two bands of dark brick enclosing a band of brick set vertically and angled in a decorative pattern. A band of dark brick links the second story stone windowsills around the east and north facades. The first story windows, like those on the second story, are linked by two bands of dark brick enclosing a wider band of brick set vertically and angled in a diamond pattern (illustration 3).

Decorative brick banding below the gutter forms a cornice at the roofline. The original roof was hipped, made of standing seam metal. The roof has been covered with asphalt shingles; restoration plans call for replacement of the metal roof. The building originally had ten highly decorative corbelled chimneys, spaced evenly five on the north side of the building and five on the south. Sometime prior to 1925, according to a drawing of North High Street published in 1925, a flat-roofed canopy was added over the main entrance on the east façade (illustration 4).²

The basement walls are of limestone blocks on the east façade and brick on a limestone foundation on the north façade. Stone lintels accent the tops of the basement windows with the basement originally opening onto West Third Street near the rear of the building and onto the south near the east wall.

The brick banding, the cornice, and the stone water table form the horizontal lines of the building, somewhat offsetting the vertical lines suggested by the gable, balcony, and pilasters.

The interior of the basement became a billiard hall in 1894 (photo 5). Patrons entered through a ground level door on the north façade (illustration 5).

The main floor housed the lobby and performance space, with stage at the west end of the building. Behind the stage were dressing rooms; above the stage were scenery hoists and other stage equipment. In 1888, the dressing rooms were moved to the basement and the stage was made eight feet larger. The east end of the first floor housed a lobby with a ticket office in the center and stair halls with stairs opening onto the second floor on either side (illustration 6). Box seats flanked the stage; a horseshoe balcony wrapped around the south, east, and north sides of the hall (illustration 7). The Opera House seated 600. Gaslights and chandeliers provided illumination.³ Parts of a pump organ were found in the basement, leading the owners to believe that the building once housed an organ to provide music for performances.⁴

² *St. Louis Globe*, 27 July 1925: 10.

³ *California Democrat* article on file at the Moniteau County Historical Society.

⁴ Jim Martin, Personal interview.

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

The second floor housed meeting rooms for Lodge No. 183, A.F. & A.M. and the I.O.O.F. and their female auxiliary, the Loyal Rebekah Lodge (illustration 8). The interior of the second floor was divided into two distinct areas that are mirror images of one another. The Masonic Lodge used the rooms on the north side of the building and the Oddfellows and Rebekahs used the rooms on the south side. At the top of the stairs from the lobby, the stair halls opened onto anterooms, each of which opened into the lodge meeting rooms. The second floor retains the original woodwork, door casings, and baseboards.

In 1937, the building underwent a \$10,000 remodeling, done in the popular Art Deco style by St. Louis architect O. W. Stiegmeyer, a popular theater designer. Seven chimneys were removed and the other three were simplified, removing the corbelled detail. The exterior balcony was removed, and an Art Deco front was applied over the east façade. The first floor windows on the east façade were lengthened to create doorways allowing access to the second story lodge halls from the street (photos 5). Four marquee spaces for advertising current and upcoming attractions flanked these doors.

The applied Art Deco façade, which appeared in photographs to be made of Carrara glass and aluminum, was actually made of painted masonite (illustration 9). Above the newly created doors to the lodge rooms was a vertical band of fluted trim outlined on either side with a scalloped edge; this band of trim rose to the apex of a stepped pyramid shape. At the base of the pyramid, a band of decorative trim with a repeated geometric motif ran across the east façade of the building. Both the pyramid and geometric designs are characteristic of the Art Deco style. The doorway opening from the street into the lobby was enlarged to include a pair of double doors. In addition, the steps to the entranceway were eliminated and the interior floor was brought down to street level. The interior floor was sloped toward the stage, making the basement unusable. A large electric sign naming the RITZ THEATER was added to the canopy on the east façade.⁵

During the 1937 remodeling, the first story windows on the north facade were bricked over in order to ensure the darkness necessary for showing motion pictures. Part of the west wall was removed and an addition extending the building ten feet to the west was built. The addition housed the screen, curtain, and the return air vent for the heating and ventilation system. The HVAC system, which provided cooling "by washed air," had a large squirrel cage fan and furnace in the basement. Vents covered with grills were placed along the apron of the stage. The original stage was removed to provide more seating (illustration 10). New sound equipment was installed. The walls were covered with Temlock acoustical tiles. Eight decorative lights, four on each wall, accented the north and south walls (photos 7, 8). New seats upholstered in red velvet and carpet with a pattern of red, gold, and brown swirls were added (photo 9). The interior remodeling included adding stairs to the balcony on either side of the east end of the theater and changing the balcony

⁵ *California Democrat*, 19 Jan. 1937.

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

from a horseshoe to a straight balcony along the east end of the building (photo 10). A projection booth sits in the center of the balcony (illustration 11). The second story remained relatively unchanged (illustration 12).

A 1945, a fire destroyed part of the building, blistering paint and damaging the lodge rooms upstairs. The interior walls were refinished; brown masonite wallboard accented with a narrow band of red-painted beaded trim were added. The Temlock tiles were surrounded by a frame of cream-colored painted masonite accented by red-painted beaded trim. A new screen and overhauled projection equipment completed the remodeling.

California Progress, Inc. is in the process of restoring the building. The roof of this canopy has been removed in order to allow restoration of the building; the remainder of the canopy will probably be removed as structural restoration continues. The east façade must be reinforced structurally, so the original entrance cannot be exactly duplicated, according to Chinn and Associates, who have done a feasibility study for the restoration of the building.⁶ However, the plans call for an entrance very similar to the original, with a segmental arched entranceway and restoration of the decorative brickwork. Plans also include restoring the balcony (illustration 12).

⁶ Chinn and Associates, *Finke Opera House Assessment and Feasibility Study*, 11 March 2003.

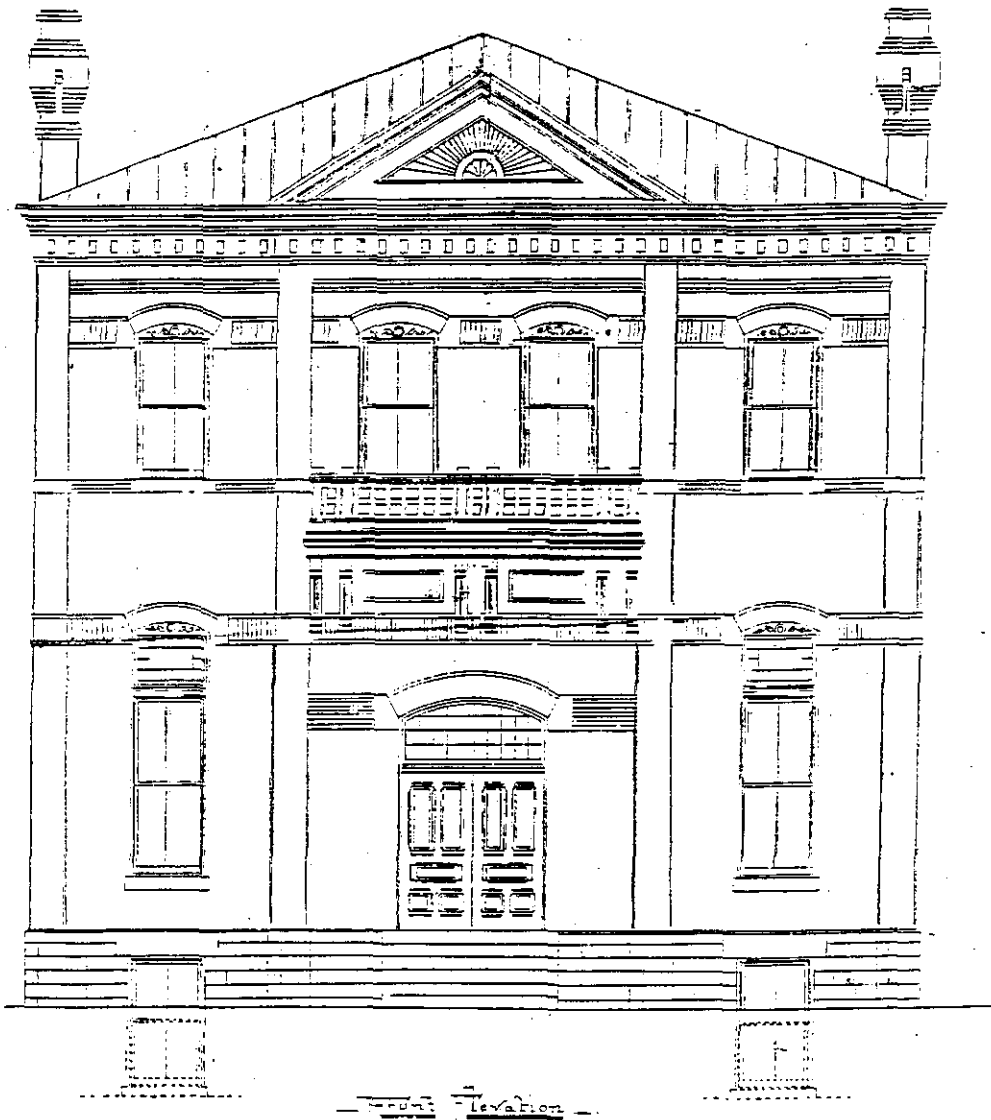
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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 1. Original architectural drawing by Jerome B. Legg, 1885



Front Elevation

Opera House
California Mo.

J. B. Legg Arch^t St. Louis

→ N

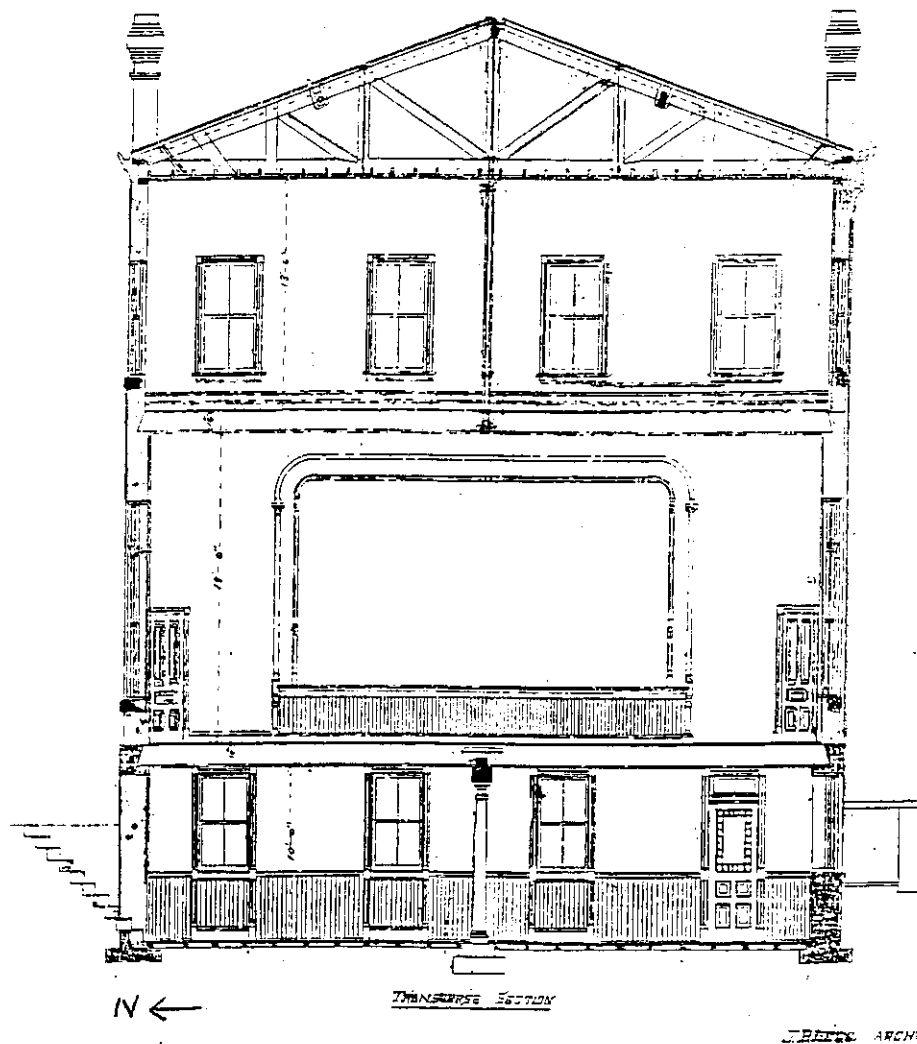
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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 2. Original architectural drawing of transverse section of Finke Opera House by Jerome B. Legg.



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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 3. Early photograph of the Finke Opera House, courtesy Moniteau County Historical Society



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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 4. Advertisement from *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* showing street scene in California, Missouri, 1925. The Finke Opera House's canopy is visible through the trees on the left.

ANOTHER HIGH LIGHT IN THE 49th STATE





**The
49th State**

—Add this new commonwealth to your map. It's a circle—radius 130 miles.

Call it "Globe-Democrat Influence." The capital is St. Louis.

The population exceeds 4 1/2 millions. The wealth is based on a wider variety of natural resources and industry than any other state can show.

The Globe-Democrat serves the entire 49th State. No other single newspaper even claims such coverage.

CALIFORNIA, Mo.

Richly Endowed by Nature

We have all heard the praises of the State of California, blessed with natural resources and advantages.

Here in the 49th State is a town which bears the name of California, and which, too, rejoices in many gifts of Nature.

Right in the midst of a rich agricultural section, this town of 3000 inhabitants seems to possess more than the usual share of good things.

Besides her agricultural interests, California has flourishing industries; two flour mills, a woolen mill and an overall factory.

Bank deposits total \$1,000,000.

The following local stores do an aggregate annual business of several million dollars:

7 Grocery Stores	5 Auto Dealers and Garages	4 Drug Stores
4 Hardware Stores		2 Building Material Dealers
2 Jewelers		4 Shoe Stores
6 Dry Goods Stores		2 Furniture Stores
2 Men's Furnishing Stores		1 Stationer
2 Confectioneries		1 Coal Merchant

The Globe-Democrat, The Newspaper of The 49th State, reaches the representative people of California to guide their purchases both at the local stores and during their frequent trips to St. Louis!

Globe-Democrat

St. Louis Largest Daily

The Globe-Democrat is the leading newspaper in the Big Influence

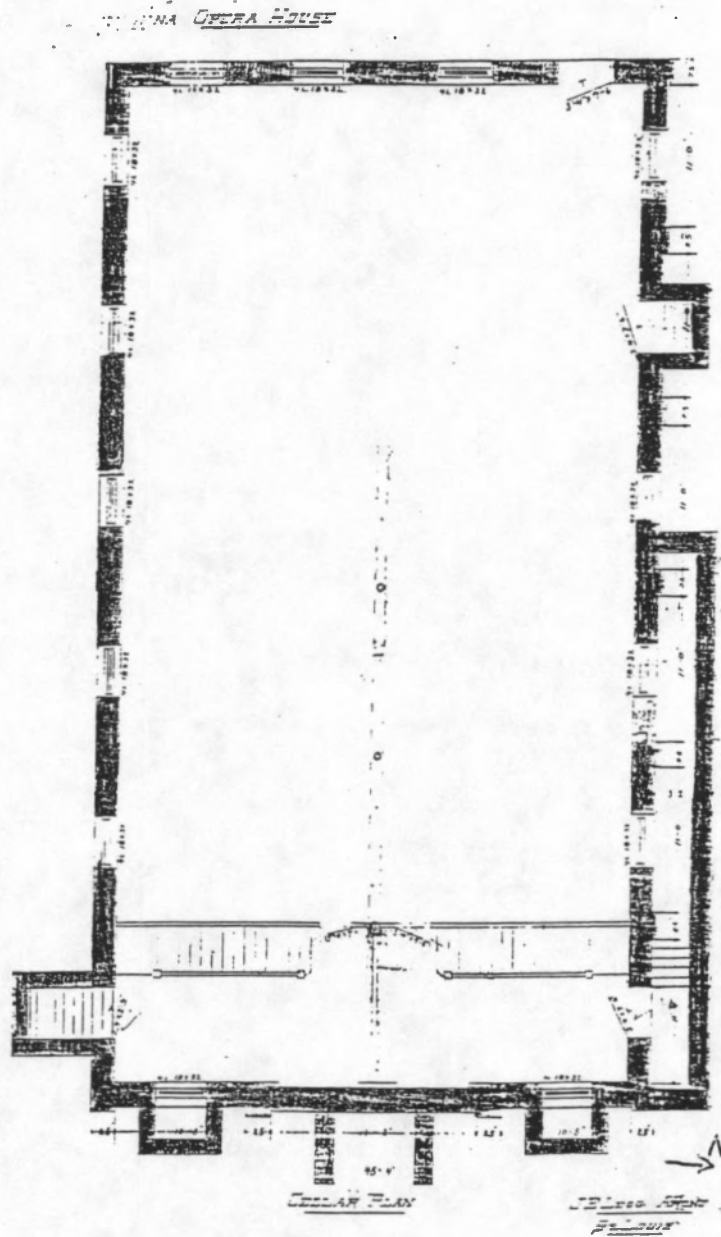
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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 5. Original architectural drawing by Jerome B. Legg, basement level.



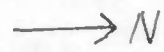
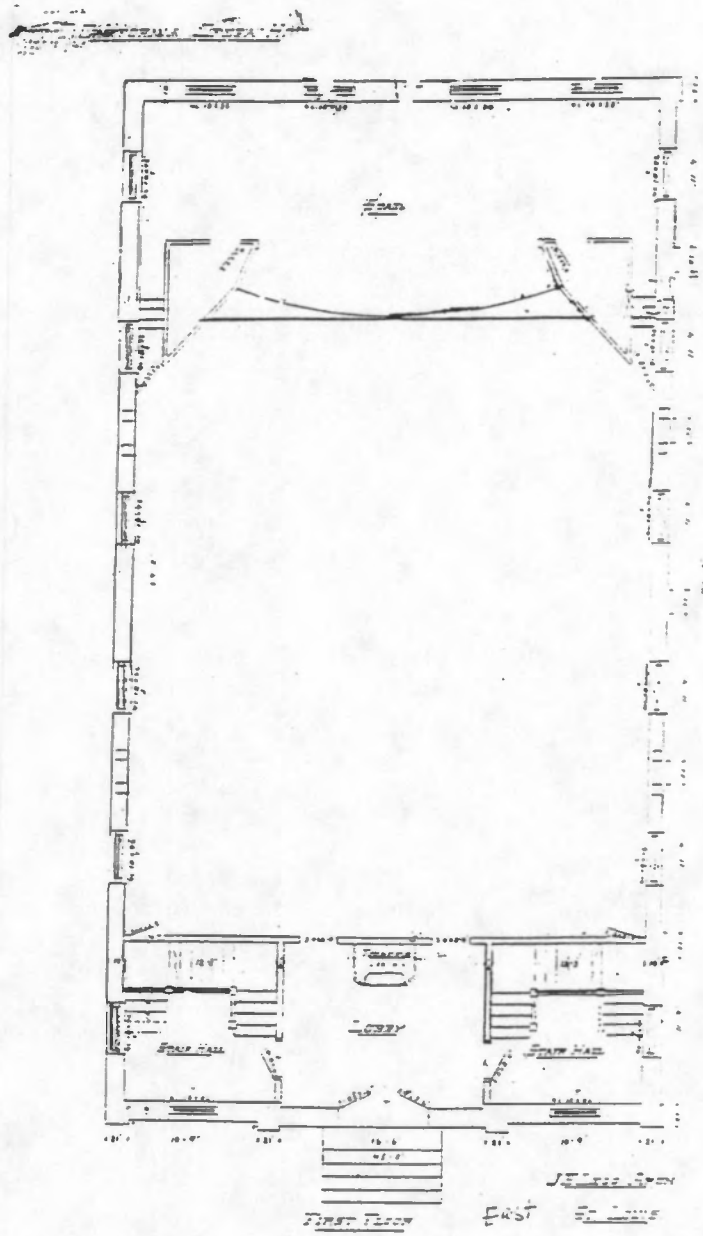
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 6. Original architectural drawing by Jerome B. Legg, first floor



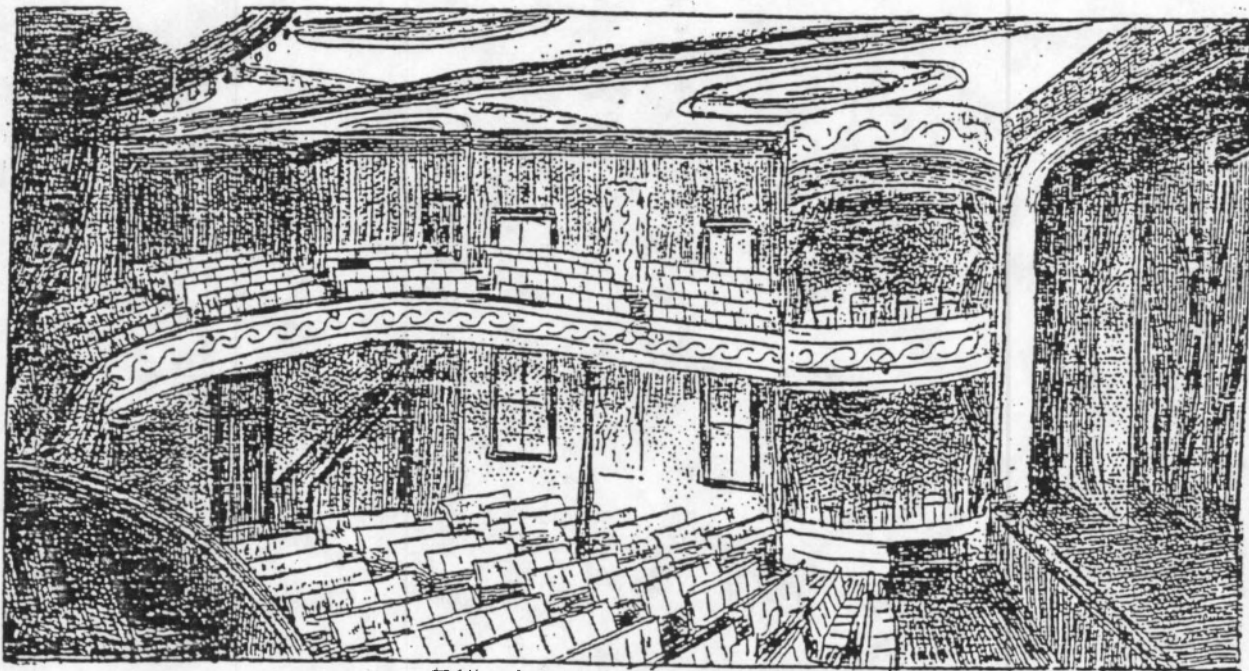
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 7. Interior of Finke Opera House. *California Democrat*, 13 January 1900



Interior of Finke Opera house.

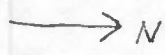
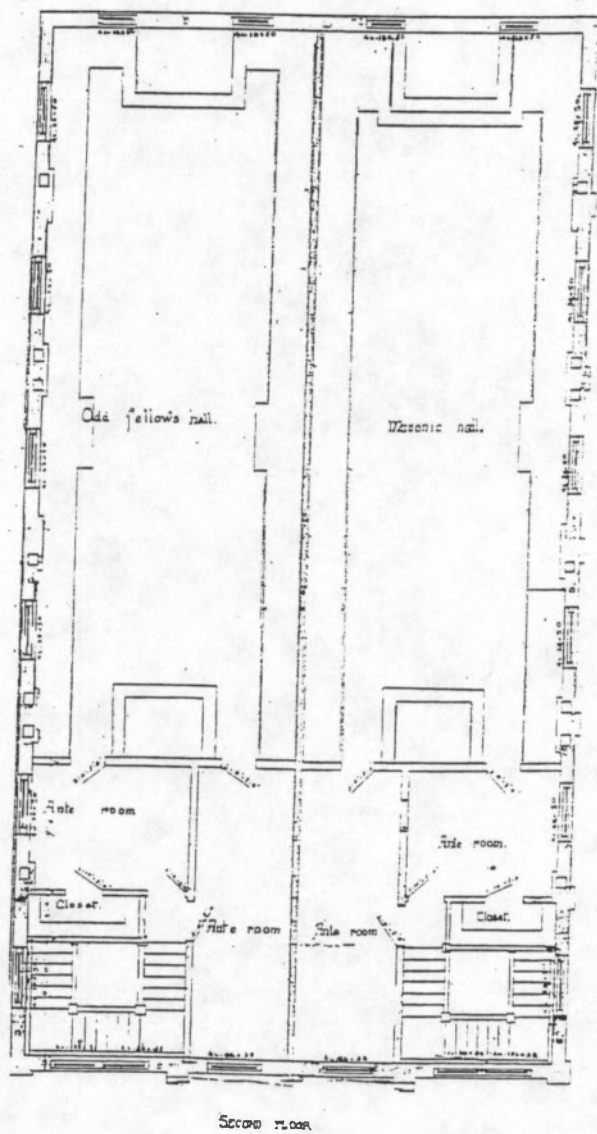
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 8. Original architectural drawing by Jerome B. Legg, second floor



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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 9. Ritz Theater, 1937, showing Art Deco facade. Photo courtesy Moniteau County Historical Society



RITZ 1937

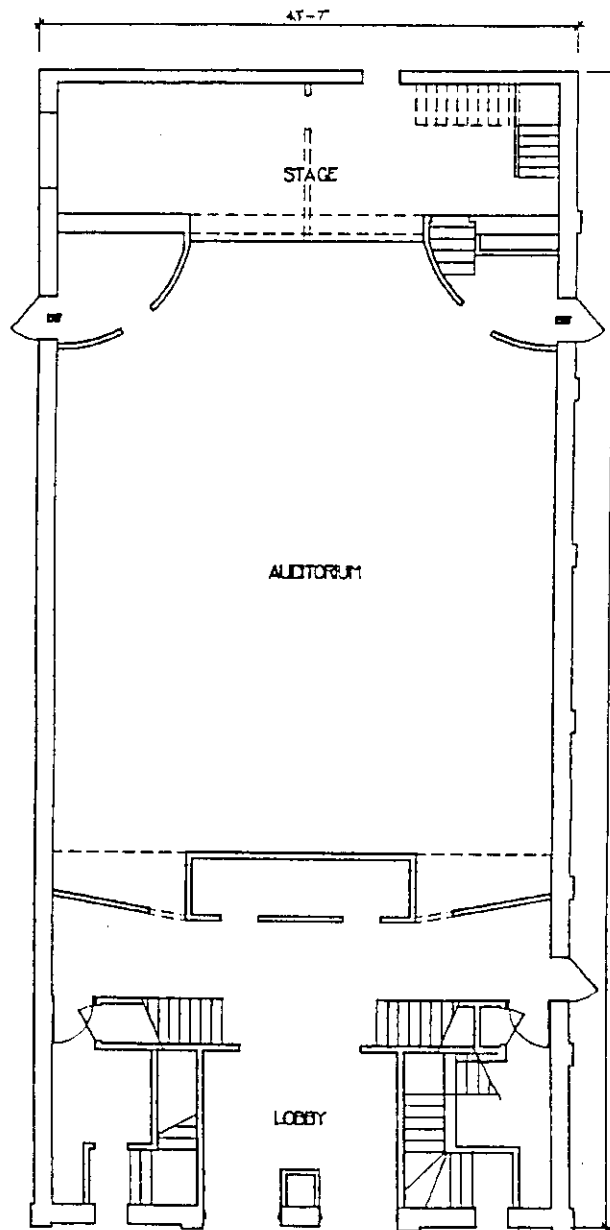
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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 10. Finke Opera House, existing first floor interior. Drawing by Chinn & Associates, Architects, Columbia, MO.



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



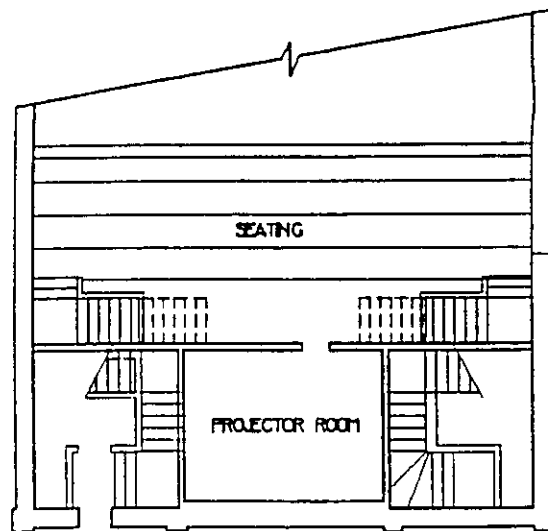
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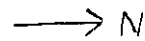
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 11. Finke Opera House, existing balcony, interior. Drawing by Chinn & Associates, Architects, Columbia, MO



EXISTING BALCONY PLAN



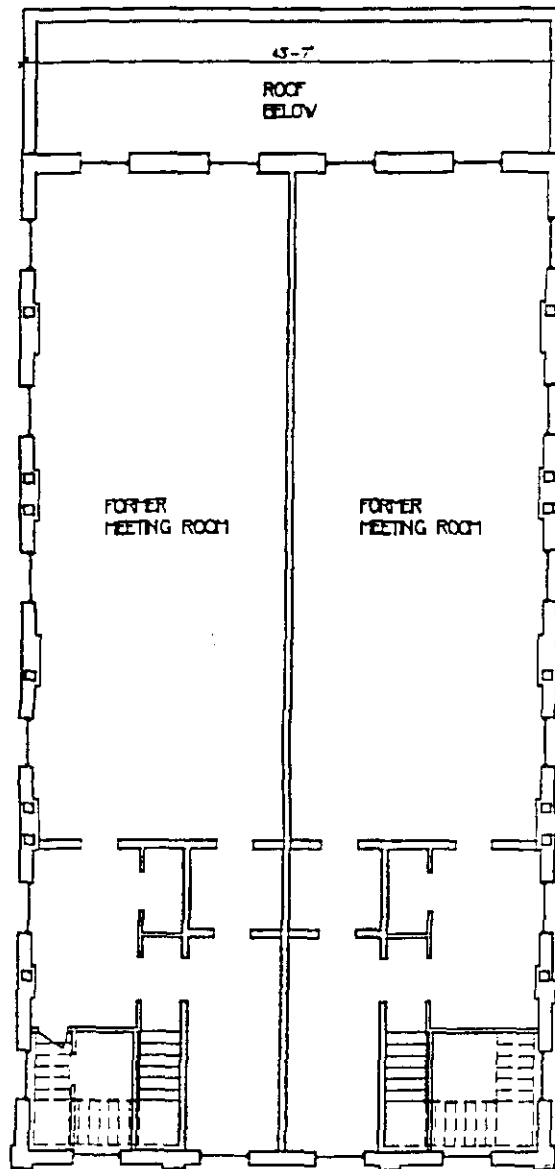
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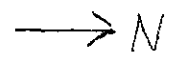
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 12. Finke Opera House, existing second floor, interior. Drawing by Chinn and Associates, Architects, Columbia, MO



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN



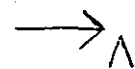
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Finke Opera House
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Illustration 13. Proposed east façade restoration, Finke Opera House, 2003. Drawn by
Patty Kay.



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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Summary:

The Finke Opera House in California, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for significance in the area of ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION. Designed in 1885 by Jerome Bibb Legg, well-known St. Louis architect, the building was California's only opera house and later, as the Ritz Theater, its only movie theater. As an entertainment center, the multi-use building provided a variety of recreation opportunities for residents of California and the surrounding area for more than ninety years. The main floor theater originally offered stage shows, plays and musical performances, later vaudeville, and finally motion pictures. The second story rooms were used as meeting places for the Masonic and Oddfellows fraternal orders. For many years, the basement housed a billiard parlor. Movies were shown until 1978. The period of significance extends from 1885 when the building was constructed and opened as an opera house through 1953, the arbitrary cut-off date for National Register nominations.

Elaboration:

The building's significance in the area of ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION can be seen in its function as a theater. Bishop and Coblenz link the interest in theater during the late nineteenth century to both social class and education: "nearly every American Victorian of the middle and upper class was expected to possess an education of at least 'respectable duration' and to support, even if not understand, the arts."⁷ David Dary confirms the relationship of social class to theater, noting "the elite and genteel found pleasure in patronizing the local opera house or theater, where they enjoyed musicals, lectures, comedies, or dramas."⁸ Those desiring to be thought respectable imitated the behavior of the elite, and also attended the morally uplifting and suitable programming appreciated by the upper and middle class, while avoiding performances that might be considered "low." Those desiring entertainment but not interested in impressing others with their status or gentility attended variety performances, opera bouffe, and burlesque shows staged at the same opera houses.

The opera house provided a focal point for the community's public persona, becoming, according to David Naylor and Joan Dillon, "the chief repositories of the communities' hopes and dreams...the most prominent element of local pride."⁹ During the late nineteenth century, elaborate public buildings were thought to represent a town's wealth, culture, and respectability. Courthouses, city halls, churches, schools, along with theater or opera house buildings, stated by their size and elegance that the community had

⁷Robert Bishop and Patricia Coblenz, *The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America* (New York: Dutton, 1979): 371

⁸David Dary, *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West* (New York: Knopf, 1995): 209.

⁹Naylor and Dillon: 14

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Finke Opera House
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arrived, that it had moved from frontier outpost to settled, civilized community. Even small towns demonstrated their cultured status by building an opera house: "the patrons of each newly built entertainment venue along the fringes of nineteenth-century America were determined to be as prosperous and, eventually, as culturally sophisticated as anyone else, in this country or in Europe or Asia."¹⁰

Changes in economics and education during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century enhanced interest in theater. Increasing leisure time that developed as the workweek shortened from 60 hours in 1890, to 51 hours in 1910, to 47 hours in 1920 enabled more people to attend performances. Increasing income during the same period also increased the number of people with discretionary income that could be spent on theater tickets. Wages for clerical workers increased from an annual income of \$848 in 1890 to \$1,156 in 1910, those of factory workers from \$486 to \$630, of teachers from \$256 to \$492, and of farm laborers from \$233 to \$336. Increasing literacy allowed for a greater appreciation of plays, of the works of great playwrights, and of books turned into plays.¹¹ In addition, the disapproval of theaters included in many religious denominations' teachings lessened, especially if the plays were morally instructive.

The late nineteenth century is considered by some historians to have been "the golden age of the professional stage" in Missouri, with well-known actors, lecturers, and musicians touring the state.¹² Nineteenth-century theater performances generally, according to C. Robert Heywood, "emphasized uplift, education, culture, and family-type programs that appealed to respectable adult men and women." Most Americans preferred "simple melodrama and sweetly sentimental effusions—the same formulae that set limits on popular songs and fiction."¹³ Wild West and Old South settings were popular for the melodrama, adventure, and comedy of the time, as distant settings and past times allowed patrons to escape the realities of everyday life. The triumph of virtue and justice "reinforced the popular belief that even in an uncertain and disillusioning world, goodness would prevail."¹⁴

Small and developing towns took the initiative to build theaters. California, Missouri, was first settled in the 1830s and a post office opened in 1841. Designated the county seat of Moniteau County, a courthouse was built in 1847. The city was incorporated in 1848. California was on the proposed route of the Pacific Railroad running west from St. Louis, and in 1857 the railroad reached California. Within a year, the train had pushed west toward Tipton, and by January 1861, Sedalia, and by 1865, Kansas City. The railroad

¹⁰ Naylor and Dillon: 14.

¹¹ Mary Beth Norton, et al. *A People and a Nation* (New York: Houghton, 1991): 338.

¹² Meyer: 519.

¹³ C. Robert Heywood, *Victorian West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991): 163.

¹⁴ Norton: 339.

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enhanced the position of California as a retail and manufacturing center. In 1859, California had a population of 714 residents, 33 of them slaves. An 1889 county history suggests that California was spared the "anarchy" experienced by many communities during the Civil War. At war's end, California had a population of 1000 people and a business district that included ten dry goods stores, two drug stores, a tobacco factory, a printing office, a steam flourmill, a carding mill, and a high school.¹⁵

California, located 150 miles from Kansas City and 133 miles from St. Louis, was an "ambitious town which was then seeking to be the capital of Missouri." By the mid-1870s, industries had increased to include a woolen mill, a cheese factory, the Moreau Paper Mill, and several potteries. Two banks and a building and loan company had been established. California continued to grow slowly; by 1880, the town's population had increased to 1427, and the city boasted amenities such as a fire department and an artesian well.¹⁶

One of California's leading citizens, Henry Finke, was responsible for much of the town's business growth. Described as "one of the most energetic of California's early businessmen, being actively engaged in business, government and building," he arrived in California in 1850 from Cincinnati. Trained as a tailor, he worked at that craft until he opened the Finke Mercantile Company. He built the town's first brick business building. He held several city and county offices, including county treasurer, city treasurer, and city councilman. He opened the Moreau Paper Mill, the first paper mill in Missouri. In addition, he managed a large farm, held real estate in Moniteau and adjacent counties, and sold timber to the railroad.¹⁷

In 1884, an Opera House Company organized in order to build an opera house. Henry Finke was treasurer of the company. The group was successful at raising money, selling close to \$4,000 of stock. The *California Democrat*, which reported that the planned house would be "a good one," suggested that the building committee visit Woods' Opera House in Sedalia, Moore's Opera House in Nevada, and the "first-class one at Butler" to get ideas.¹⁸ Naylor and Dillon note that by the end of the nineteenth century, prospective theater owners began to see the need to "call upon the newly emerging class of architects whose practices typically involved some theater design."¹⁹ The opera house company chose architect Jerome B. Legg, one of the nineteenth-century's "outstanding architects of St. Louis" to design the building.²⁰

¹⁵ *History of Cole, Moniteau, Morgan, Benton, Miller, Maries, and Osage Counties* (Chicago: Goodspeed, 1889): 366-377.

¹⁶ Goodspeed's *History*; U. S. Census Surveys, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900.

¹⁷ Grant Chapman, "Finke Influence was Felt Throughout California" *California Democrat*, 18 March 1887: 23.

¹⁸ *California Democrat*, 17 April 1884.

¹⁹ David Naylor and Joan Dillon. *American Theaters* (New York: Wiley, Preservation Press, 1997): 17-18.

²⁰ John A. Bryan, "Outstanding Architects in St. Louis Between 1804 and 1904." *Missouri Historical Review* 28 (1934): 86.

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Legg was responsible for several Missouri courthouses, opera houses and theaters, churches, schools, and other public buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born in Schyler County, Illinois, in 1838 or 1839, Legg was educated in the rural schools of the area. In 1864, he moved to St. Louis to attend Jones Commercial College. Following several years of work as a teacher and in several administrative positions, he took a job as bookkeeper to George Barnett, St. Louis' leading architect. Barnett encouraged Legg to pursue a career in architecture. After he worked a year with Barnett, and a year as a builder, he was chosen to superintend the building of the Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Louis. He then opened his practice as an architect, designing buildings in St. Louis and Jefferson City, Missouri; Wichita, Kansas; Paducah, Kentucky; and Dallas and Waco, Texas. Legg promoted his services with the publication and mailing of a brochure called *Home for Everybody*, and added to the general knowledge of architecture by editing the *Building Trades Journal*. By 1899, he had expanded his business to include buildings in twelve states.²¹

Legg's work in Missouri included remodeling the state capital in 1887, and designing courthouses in six Missouri counties--St. Francois, 1885; Ste. Genevieve, 1885; Shelby, 1891; Gasconade, 1898; Mississippi, 1899; and St. Charles, 1901.²² His work in St. Louis included the Manual Training School at Washington University, St. Paul's Church, Mount Cavalry Church, the Anzeiger Building, the Crawford and Company Building, the Exposition and Music Hall, the Police Stables in Forest Park, the Bofinger Memorial Chapel of Christ Church Cathedral, the Cupples Factory, the Oriel Building, and many houses.²³

Many of Legg's buildings are characterized by the use of brick cornices, elaborately corbelled chimneys, and segmental arch windows with soldier courses accented at the corners with oversized stone shoulders. In 1885, Legg designed three buildings using these design elements--the Ste. Genevieve County Courthouse, the St. Francois County Courthouse, and the Finke Opera House. These buildings can best be described as Victorian Eclectic, drawing elements from a variety of styles to create a unique building. While Marian Ohman identifies a French influence on Legg's work in her description of

²¹ William Hyde and Howard Conrad, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* (New York: Southern History Co., 1899); Carolyn Hewes Toft, "Jerome Bibb Legg," in "St. Louis Architects: Famous and Not So Famous," *Landmarks Letter* 23 (July/August 1989).

²² Marian Ohman, *Encyclopedia of Missouri Courthouses* (Columbia: University of Missouri Extension Division, 1981): passim; Marian Ohman, *History of Missouri Capitols* (Columbia: University of Missouri Extension Division, 1982): 44, 45, 55.

²³ Toft.

²⁴ Marian Ohman, *Missouri's Counties, County Seats, and Courthouse Squares* (Columbia: University of Missouri Extension Division, 1983): 72-77, 96. Esley Hamilton, "Jerome B. Legg," e-mail to the author, Sept. 2003.

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Missouri courthouses, his work more typically reflects elements of Italianate and Greek Revival styles. The segmental arch windows are an element of Italianate design, and the pilasters and pediment reflect a Greek Revival influence.²⁴

The firm of Petty and Stevenson were the "home architects" and W. R. Bishop oversaw the carpentry work.²⁵ The "beautiful" opera house, complete with "handsome chandeliers with brilliant gas light and imposing stage scenery" was completed in August 1885. A "large and appreciative audience" gathered to hear a program of classical music performed by Professor Lenzen's music class, whose renditions "would certainly have been a credit to the stage of our metropolitan cities."²⁶

The original Opera House company must not have been entirely successful, for in 1888, the building, with its scenery, gas fixtures, and seats, was sold at the courthouse under a deed of trust. Dr. J. H.P. Gray bought the building for \$4,600. A second stock company was organized to manage the Opera House, and Henry Finke was again elected treasurer. The company must have been more successful, for in 1890, it paid a 4% dividend to its stockholders. In 1895, Finke's son William bought out the other investors to become sole owner of the Finke Opera House (illustrations 14, 15).²⁷

Towns along the major railroad routes had an advantage in securing high quality theatrical performances, as traveling troupes could easily reach them. Heywood calls the late nineteenth century the "Golden Age of the Road," noting that towns on the railroad were "generously served by traveling shows."²⁸ Traveling troupes often used their status as road shows to enhance their cachet. For example, on Tuesday, December 7, 1909, the *California Democrat* advertised that a traveling troupe with a band and orchestra traveling in two Pullman cars would present *King of the Cattle Ring*, a western melodrama that "thrills the audience and plays upon the heartstrings with a master touch."²⁹ Another traveling troupe, the Belcher Company, which produced *Circumstantial Evidence* in April 1907, advertised "a complete equipment of special scenery, mechanical and electrical effects."³⁰

The traveling troupes had to present quality performances to audiences that were "at least as critical of truly bad acting as the eastern audiences and were just as prudishly Victorian about improprieties."³¹ The *California Democrat* was generally not effusive in its praise for

²⁵ *California Democrat*, article on file at Moniteau County Historical Society.

²⁶ *California Democrat*, 20 Aug. 1885.

²⁷ *California Democrat*, article on file at the Moniteau County Historical Society

²⁸ Heywood: 163.

²⁹ *California Democrat*, 7 Dec. 1909

³⁰ *California Democrat*, 11 April 1907.

³¹ Heywood. 164.

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theatrical performances, but it did praise what it considered especially entertaining comedies presented at the Finke Opera House. The comedy *A Hot Time*, presented in August 1885, was billed as a "musical farce comedy, . . . a play without a plot, constructed for fun and music." Louise Sylvester played the lead, showing "great versatility as an actress in personating several different characters, excelling in each. . . The supporting company is first-class in every respect."³² French actor Herbert DeGuerre starred in "the funniest play seen in years," *A Bachelor's Honeymoon*.³³ The Rudy Lafayette Dramatic Company presented a line of "standard dramas" in November 1886, but they did not receive the praise given to the 5 February 1907 performance of *Wizard of Wall Street*, which was "for laughing purposes only" and perfect for those who "are at sorts with the world."³⁴

Traveling troupes, if they were to be successful, also had to meet what Heywood calls the "small-town, middle-class standards of goodness." Meeting these standards meant "restricting language, behavior, and choice of subject; no swearing, no obscenity, no blasphemy, but reinforcement of religious piety, the work ethic, sexual chastity, family solidarity, patriotism, and ethnocentricity." Having patrons return for other performances, important to the survival of a theater, required that those who paid fifty or seventy-five cents to see a performance received "moral instruction" along with entertainment.³⁵ *King of the Cattle Ring* met these criteria; billed as "clean, wholesome in every line," the five-act production could be seen for "popular prices" (illustration 16). *Circumstantial Evidence* also met standard of propriety; the comedy drama "pleases and appeals to every class of society," presenting a "realistic prison scene" designed to impress upon the audience the importance of following the law.³⁶

Music formed an important part of Victorian culture. Studying music was thought to provide "good moral influence," so music schools were typical in even small towns. Heywood notes that "teachers found little difficulty in attracting a sympathetic audience to listen to their students' progress."³⁷ Recitals formed a part of the Finke Opera Houses' programming; the grand opening performance on August 18, 1885 consisted of a "grand musical concert" directed by Professor Lenzen. The "imposing stage scenery" and "array of musical talent" enhanced the performance of "a line of classical music that was excellently rendered, many parts of which would certainly have been a credit to the stage

³² *California Democrat*, 27 August 1885.

³³ *California Democrat*, 24 October 1907.

³⁴ *California Democrat*, 4 November 1886, 31 Jan. 1907.

³⁵ Heywood: 166.

³⁶ *California Democrat*, 18 April 1907.

³⁷ Heywood, 200, 202.

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of our metropolitan cities."³⁸

A variety of types of music were presented at the Finke Opera House. In 1893, Blind Boone, the African-American pianist from Columbia, Missouri, presented "camp meeting songs" and his own composition "The Marshfield Cyclone" for a "large audience."³⁹ Classical music, especially art songs and opera were popular with audiences. In 1907, Miss Jessie Wooldridge of Boonville gave a recital of art songs accompanied by Mrs. Harris Johnston.⁴⁰ In 1913, Naidene Parker, soprano, presented a concert featuring arias from *La Boheme*, in company with Mr. Phillips playing Chopin Nocturnes, and bass Mr. Pfeffelburger singing "The Storm King."⁴¹

Lectures designed to entertain or to uplift were an especially popular form of entertainment. For example, Miss Parker's musicale shared the bill with a lecture about the Philippines by Miss Parker's father and California native, Colonel John "Gatling Gun" Parker.⁴² Other lectures included a series of presentations about Chinese culture by Tank Kee, who also displayed pieces of Chinese art in the lobby.⁴³ In 1909, Cole Younger, former outlaw and companion of the James Gang, lectured, relating the "pathetic incidents of life," explaining why he was forced to live the life of an outlaw, and detailing experiences during his twenty-five years in prison.⁴⁴

Churches, many of which discouraged theater attendance because of the questionable nature of some plays and the skimpy costumes worn by some vaudeville performers, developed creative ways of combining theater, music, and lecture as part of both their ministry and fundraising efforts. While most church performances took place in the church buildings, in 1910, the Ladies Aid Society of the First Christian Church was able to secure a triple bill inspirational program of music, two hundred still pictures—slides shown on a screen twenty feet square, and lecture. The slides illustrated the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son and the popular novel *Ben-Hur* written by General Lew Wallace, as well as the Ram's Horn cartoons.⁴⁵

Other forms of stage entertainment were also popular, though were often denounced as

³⁸ *California Democrat*, 20 Aug. 1885.

³⁹ *California Democrat*, April 1893, clipping in collection of Moniteau County Historical Society.

⁴⁰ *California Democrat*, 19 Sept. 1907.

⁴¹ *California Democrat*, 27 March 1913.

⁴² *California Democrat*, 27 March 1913.

⁴³ *California Democrat*, 18 November 1886.

⁴⁴ *California Democrat*, 27 September 1909.

⁴⁵ *California Democrat*, 16 December 1909.

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being less than uplifting. Although burlesque by definition is a type of low comedy, burlesque performances were often highlighted by the skimpy costumes worn by the female singers and dancers. The Black Crook Jr. Company tried to capitalize on the notoriety of the original Black Crook opera with its "inane plot and forgettable score. . . and a hundred fleshy ballerinas in skin-colored tights."⁴⁶ When the Black Crook Jr. Company performed in Illinois, viewers in Joliet and Aurora had labeled it, as "indecent, immoral and obscene, and not fit to be presented on any stage."⁴⁷ Despite the criticism, The Black Crook, Jr. Burlesque Co. with "Gay Girls Galore and a Host of Famous Funny Fellows" appeared at the Finke Opera House on February 8, 1907 (illustration 17).⁴⁸ A survey of the *California Democrat* did not reveal any reviews of its performance.

By the early twentieth century, vaudeville had become perhaps the most popular type of entertainment at small Midwestern opera houses. Vaudeville emphasized variety acts, acrobatics, ethnic humor, music and dancing, and juggling. Like burlesque, vaudeville had a somewhat questionable reputation which theaters sought to overcome by emphasizing the moral nature of their performances. For instance, B.B.B. Advertising Co. presented a "high-class moral, refined, up-to-date vaudeville entertainment, composed of ladies and gentlemen" in April 1907.⁴⁹ Ikey and Abey's Original Jass (sic) Band, which performed at the Finke Opera House, represented the typical vaudeville show. The advertisement in the *California Democrat* shows caricatured Jewish musicians and praises the "farce comedy" that was "absolutely clean in every respect" (illustration 18).⁵⁰ That the theater emphasized the "clean" nature of the performance may suggest that some patrons found vaudeville suspect.

The Finke Opera House became a showplace for local talent as well as for traveling troupes. The Aurora High School, California's high school, did not have its own auditorium until 1929, so the opera house served as the site of school graduations. In October 1885, Professor Lenzen's younger students presented a "juvenile entertainment" for an "appreciative audience."⁵¹ The *California Democrat* predicted that the "Opera House will again be crowded" for the "Temple Quartette" of four high school boys.⁵² In 1913, the Aurora Athletic Association, a group of students from the local high school, staged a benefit for a "fair sized audience." The program included a song by the Girls' Quartette, acrobatic stunts by William Houchin, a comedy routine by Elston Melton, songs and a comedy skit by the Boys' Glee Club.⁵³ Another local performance, *The Elopement*

⁴⁶ John Kenrick, "History of the Musical Stage 1796-1866: Broadway Pioneers."

⁴⁷ E.C. Alft, "Landmarks Gone," in "Elgin: Days Gone By," *Elgin History.com Home Page*.

⁴⁸ *California Democrat*, 8 Feb 1907.

⁴⁹ *California Democrat*, 18 April 1907.

⁵⁰ *California Democrat*, 31 Jan. 1918.

⁵¹ *California Democrat*, 29 Oct 1885.

⁵² *California Democrat*, 29 Jan. 1907.

⁵³ *California Democrat*, 27 Feb. 1913.

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of *Ellen*, staged in 1920 using local talent, was sponsored by the American Legion.⁵⁴

Prior to 1907, the *California Democrat* points out, the Finke Theater was the site of "the occasional appearance of stock companies, vaudeville and other road shows, and various home shows and events. The nature of performances was soon to change, however. In 1894, Thomas Edison demonstrated the technology of moving pictures, and by 1900, theaters were showing moving pictures to audiences. The first theater devoted solely to the showing of films was built in 1902. Silent films were sometimes shows along with vaudeville acts, but eventually came to replace vaudeville and the legitimate theater as the dominant form of entertainment. Articles in the *California Democrat* disagree on when the first moving picture was shown; one article says 1907, another says 1910.⁵⁵ A 1922 program featured a six-reel film with "Nazimore" in *Stranger than Death* appearing along with a "veritable human dynamo" named Annie Alboth, "the Little Georgia Magnet," who demonstrated her ability to lift ten men.⁵⁶

By 1925, when William Finke died and his wife and daughter assumed management of the theater, it was exclusively a motion picture house. The technology of talking pictures dramatically increased the popularity of films. In 1927, Al Jolson starred in the first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer*, and in 1928, the first sound movie played in Missouri.⁵⁷ By 1930, an estimated ninety million people attended the movies in an average week in the United States, and movie houses that reflected the grandeur of the old opera houses were being built.⁵⁸ In addition, many opera houses were being remodeled to meet the demands of the new audiences and of the new technology.

During the 1930s, the Finke Theater installed "at considerable expense" the equipment necessary to show "Sound--All Talking Pictures with RCA Sound Equipment" (illustration 17).⁵⁹ Major films with major stars—Myrna Loy, William Powell, Randolph Scott, Shirley Temple, Rudy Vallee, W. C. Fields, Jimmy Cagney, Pat O'Brien—played in California, as did newsreels of the trial of Bruno Richard Hauptmann, accused kidnapper of Charles Lindbergh's infant son, and cartoons (illustration 19).

In 1937, following the sale of the Finke Opera House to M. J. Nash and Henry Holloway of St. Louis, the name was changed to the Ritz Theater and the owners embarked on a \$10,000 remodeling. O. W. Steigmeyer, a St. Louis architect known for designing motion picture houses, designed the remodeled theater, removing the boxes, replacing the horseshoe balcony with a straight balcony more appropriate for the viewing of motion

⁵⁴ *California Democrat*, 15 Jan 1920.

⁵⁵ *California Democrat*, 19 Jan 1937; 26 April 1945.

⁵⁶ *California Democrat*, 12 Oct. 1922.

⁵⁷ Meyer: 603.

⁵⁸ "Some Enchanted Evenings: American Picture Palaces," *American Studies at the University of Virginia*.

⁵⁹ *California Democrat*. 1930. clipping in collection of Moniteau County Historical Society.

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pictures, and building an addition to the west of the theater in order to move the stage back ten feet. The major change involved lowering the floor so that the entrance was on the level of the sidewalk. New cushioned seats were to be installed, the floors carpeted. Acoustical wall panels and wall lights were installed. The interior reflected the plush décor associated with movie theaters and complemented the Art Deco façade that was added to the building during the remodeling.

The Art Deco style became popular for theaters in the 1930s because of the association of film with modernity.⁶⁰ Maggie Valentine suggests that Art Deco theaters "reflected the hard times in which they were built" as they "rejected the pre-depression boom that had culminated in a bust." Other architectural historians connect Art Deco more to the "industrial style" displayed at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs and Industriels in Paris in 1925. Russell Wright sees a connection between engineering and architecture; he describes Art Deco as a confirmation of "popular American taste" as "designed goods became part of a larger set of things."⁶¹

Ward Bucher defines Art Deco as a "style intended to renounce all of the various revival styles practiced in the early twentieth century."⁶² However, Art Deco borrows elements from Aztec, Mayan, Native American, and Egyptian motifs, using pyramids, "zig-zags, chevrons, lozenges, and volutes as decorative elements."⁶³

The Art Deco façade applied to the Finke Opera House revealed an attempt to make a Victorian building more modern. While the interior remodeling made the building more comfortable and more acoustically appropriate for showing motion pictures, the exterior made a statement about the modernity of the owners and patrons of the newly named Ritz Theater. The design of stepped pyramids and repeated geometric motifs, done in a variety of colors with aluminum trim, emphasized the horizontal elements of the design, becoming so dominant as to cause the nineteenth century elements of the second story to fade into the background.

In 1945, a fire damaged the Ritz Theater, causing it to close for three months while it was repaired. New projection equipment and a new screen were installed, some seats were reupholstered, and the interior walls were updated with brown masonite, brown Temlock tile, cream-colored painted masonite, and red-painted beaded trim. The Art Deco light fixtures and seats were kept and remain in the building (photo 12).

During the 1950s, television came into American homes, creating a new form of

⁶⁰ David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1981): 141; Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture* (New York: Harper, 1992): 252.

⁶¹ "Some Enchanted Evenings."

⁶² Ward Bucher, *Dictionary of Building Preservation* (New York: Wiley Preservation Press, 1996): 25.

⁶³ Steven Phillips, *Old House Dictionary* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994): 12.

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entertainment. In the 1960s, television became even more popular. In addition, society became more mobile and people seeking entertainment more willing to drive the thirty miles to Jefferson City to see newer films, to eat at restaurants, and to shop. During the 1970s, the Ritz managed to stay open, showing matinees on the weekends and late night adult rated movies. In addition, local promoters Clarence Hawk and William Kirchoff staged showings of new movies on a limited scale. A "Balcony Club" allowed patrons willing to pay the \$31 dues to sit in the balcony in rocking chairs to watch the shows. Ultimately, even these ventures were financially unfeasible, and the Ritz closed its doors in 1978.

The use of the second story rooms in the Finke Opera House as meeting places for the Masonic Lodge and the I.O.O.F. and Loyal Rebekah Lodges further reflects the importance of the building to the community. Fraternal orders became particularly popular during the nineteenth century, according to historian Mary Beth Norton, as they provided "comfort and leisure activity to middle and upper class members."⁶⁴ In addition, membership in fraternal orders provided a sense of belonging and identity, reinforced by their regalia and ritual. Lodges also worked to benefit society through various charities and through their emphasis on traditional values of patriotism, devotion to God, and appropriate behavior. Further research on the role of the Masonic order and the *Oddfellows and Rebekah Lodges in California, Missouri*, could reveal the significance of the building in the area of SOCIAL HISTORY.

California Progress, Inc. is in the process of restoring the exterior of the building. The restored building won't exactly duplicate the nineteenth century appearance; the street level entrance will be retained, the segmental arch over the entryway will be widened to accommodate four doors. The first floor windows will be shortened, their windowsills replaced, and one entrance to the second floor will be created. A showcase will replace the southernmost exterior door to the second floor. Structural support must be added and decorative brickwork replaced on the east façade of the building in order to complete the restoration, but the owners are confident that restoration can be finished. Chinn and Associates has completed a feasibility study outlining what must be done to make the building usable.⁶⁵ The interior seats and light fixtures from the 1937 remodeling remain and will be reupholstered and rewired so they can be used. Within a few years, the Finke Opera House will again be a gathering place where residents of California, Missouri, can meet to see plays, musicals, and school programs.

The Finke Opera House merits a place on the National Register as an example of a small town's desire to have an impressive opera house designed by a skilled architect, Jerome B. Legg, and as a reminder of the role of the legitimate stage and film in entertainment in small Midwestern towns.

⁶⁴ Norton: 202.

⁶⁵ Chinn & Associates.

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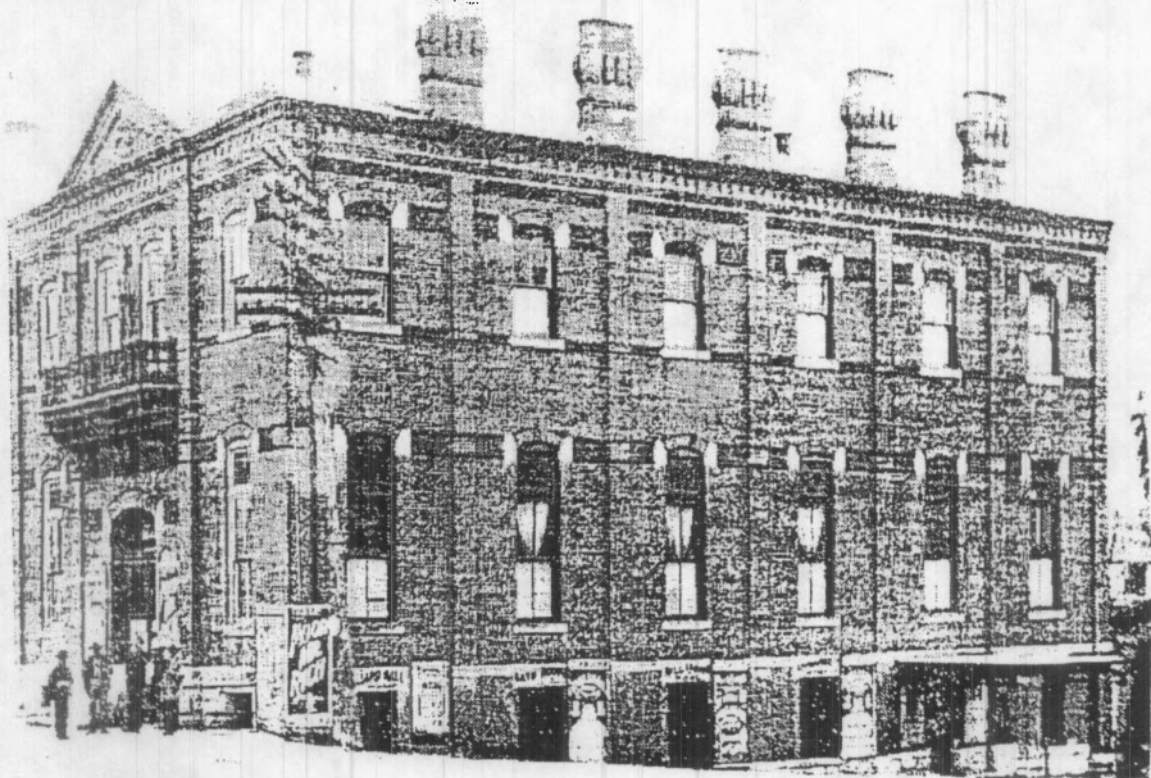
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Illustration 14—William Finke, photo *California Democrat*, 18 March 1887



Illustration 15—Finke Opera House c. 1900, photo *California Democrat*, 18 March 1897



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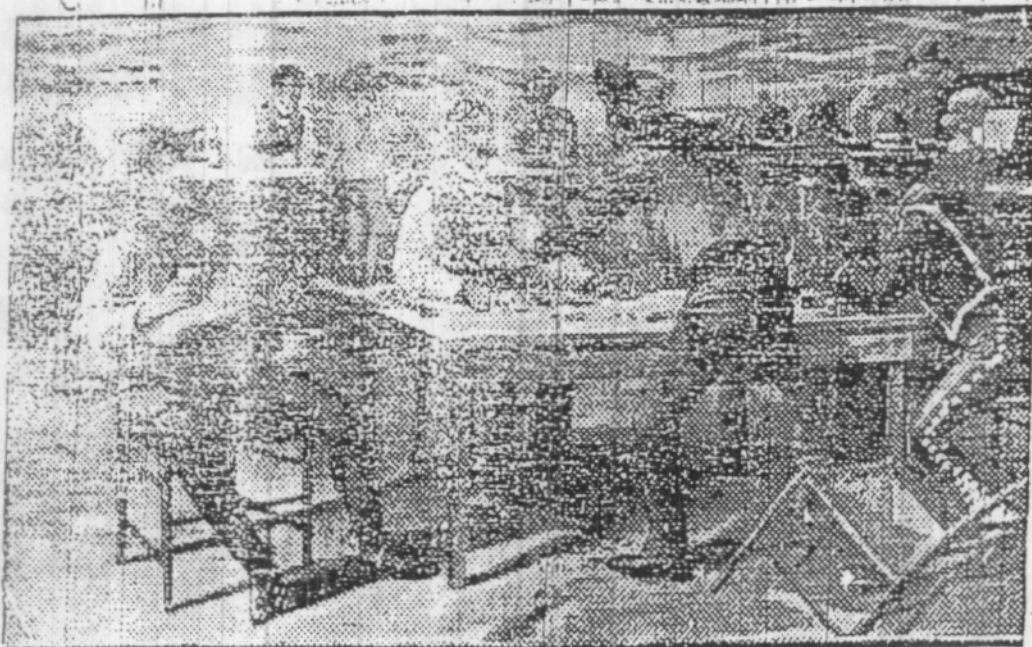
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Illustration 16. *King of the Cattle Ring* newspaper advertisement, *California Democrat*,
2 Dec. 1909

King of The Cattle Ring

The play that Thrills the audience and plays upon the
heart's string with a master touch



"I TAKE THAT POT"

Clean, Wholesome in Every Line—Big Scenic Produc-
tion. A WESTERN MELODRAMA
FIVE BIG ACTS

Finke Opera House
Tuesday, December 7th, 1909

The company travels in two Pullman cars and have

Band and Orchestra

POPULAR PRICES

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Illustration 17. Black Crook, Jr. playbill, *California Democrat*, 8 Feb. 1907.

FINKE OPERA HOUSE

One Night

Wednesday, February 13

Harry Hastings'

Black Crook Jr.

Burlesque Company.

GAY GIRLS GALORE

AND A HOST OF

Famous Funny Fellows.

Prices 75, 50, 35 and 25 cents.

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Illustration 18. Ikey and Abey Jass Band playbill, *California Democrat*, 31 January 1918.



COMING FRIDAY-THIS WEEK
FEBRUARY 1ST

At the Opera House

IKEY AND ABEY

12 - PEOPLE - 12

Farcè Comedy the Funniest Show on Earth

Absolutely clean in every respect

Show starts promptly at 8 o'clock. Doors open 7:30

PRICES—Main Floor 50c. War Tax 5c. Balcony 35c. War Tax 4c. Children 25c. War Tax 4c.
Nothing reserved but the box seats.

W. C. FINKE

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Illustration 19. Announcement of talking pictures, *California Democrat*, 1930.

Finke Theatre
Opens Wednesday with
Sound
All-Talking
Pictures
R. C. A. Sound Equipment
Wednesday and Thursday, April 23-24
WILL ROGERS In The Big All Talking
Picture
"They Had To See Paris"
Also Movietone Revue
Admission Prices—Adults 35c, Children 15
COMING ATTRACTIONS
"Rio Rita", "Sally", "Halfway to Heaven"
"Flight", "Sunny Side Up"

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Illustration 20. Movie advertisements, *California Democrat*, 1935.

FINKE THEATRE

FRI. & SAT. FEBRUARY 22-23



TODAY, "Mr. and Mrs. Thin Man" Together Again!

WILLIAM POWELL
MYRNA LOY

"Evelyn Prentice"
with **UNA MERKEL**
M-G-M Melodrama

Charley Chase Comedy

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24
ZANE GREYS

"Home on the Range"

with Randolph Scott, Evelyn Brent,
Doris Cugat

—EXTRA!—

Hauptmann Special

Resume of the Hauptmann Trial; Attorney General Wilentz addressing the jury; return of the jury; and other interesting scenes.

Matinee Sunday, 2:30

MON. & TUES., FEBRUARY 25-26
Bargain Nights
Children 10c Adults 15c

"Marie Galante"

with Spencer Tracy, Ketti Gallian,
Ned Sparks, John Gorman, Stepin
Fetchit

Cartoon "Mice in Council"
Novelty "Baby Blues"

WED. & THURS., FEBRUARY 27-28
Warner Baxter and Myrna Loy in

"Broadway Bill"

Cartoon "Hot Sands"
Comedy "Superstition of Three on a
Match"

COMING SOON:

Shirley Temple in
"Bright Eyes"

"David Copperfield"

with W. C. Fields, Lionel Barrymore,
Edna May Oliver

Will Rogers in

"The County Chairman"

Rudy Vallee in

"Sweet Music"

With Ann Dvorak

"Devil Dogs of the Air"

with James Cagney, Pat O'Brien

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Finke Opera House
Moniteau County, MO

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Finke Opera House is designated as Block 18, Lot 91, Boonsborough Subdivision of California, Moniteau County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Finke Opera House.

Photographs

Finke Opera House

Moniteau County, Missouri

Photographer: Jim Martin (all except Photo 6, by Bob Hert)

Date: August 2003

Location of negatives: Jim Martin, California Progress, Inc., 501 S. Oak St., California, MO 6501

1. East façade, facing west
2. North façade, facing southwest
3. South façade, rear, facing northeast
4. West façade, facing southeast
5. Basement window lintel, north façade, advertising Billiard Hall, facing south
6. East façade, windows, detail, facing west
7. Interior light fixture, detail
8. Interior light fixture, detail
9. Seat row end, detail
10. Stairway to balcony, looking north
11. Stairwell from exterior to second floor, looking from second floor to main floor
12. Interior, main floor, looking down from balcony, facing west



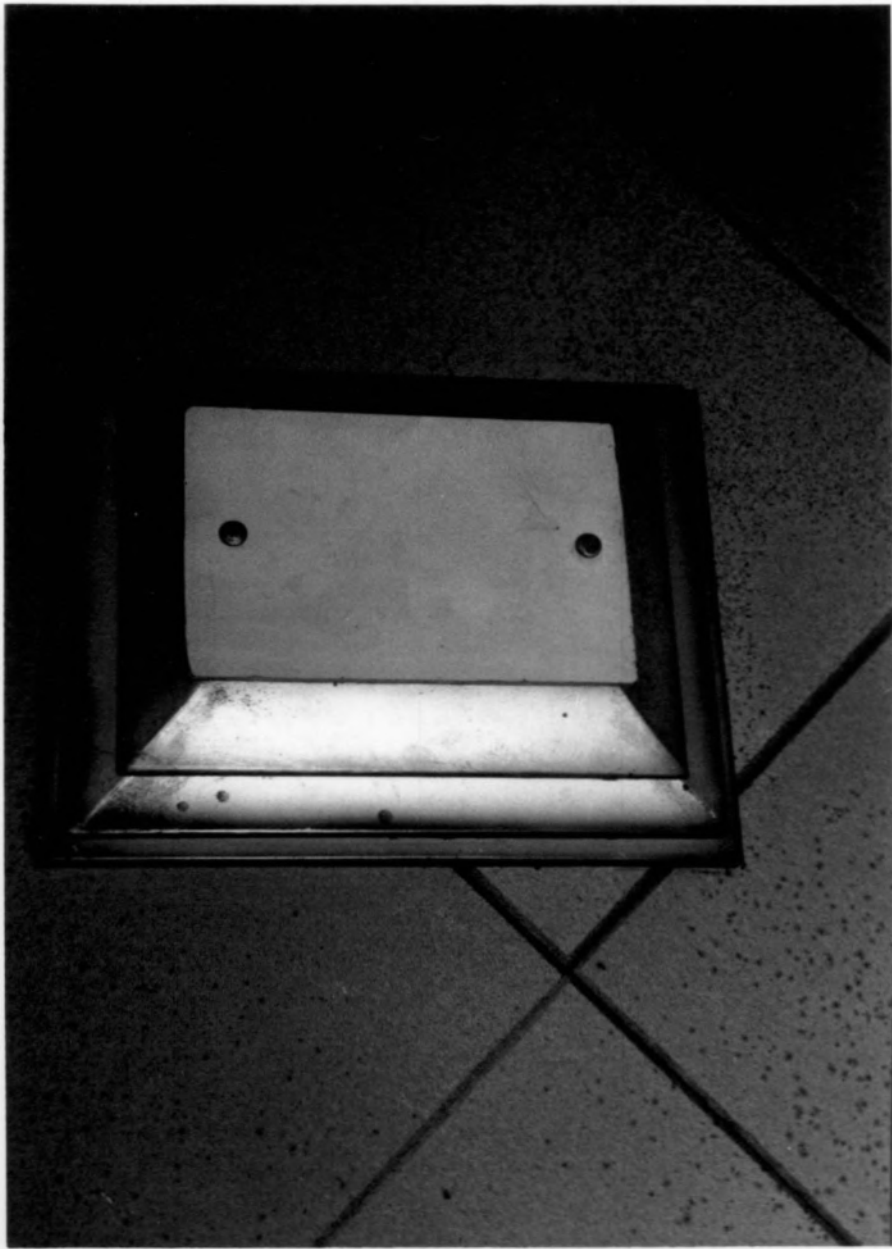


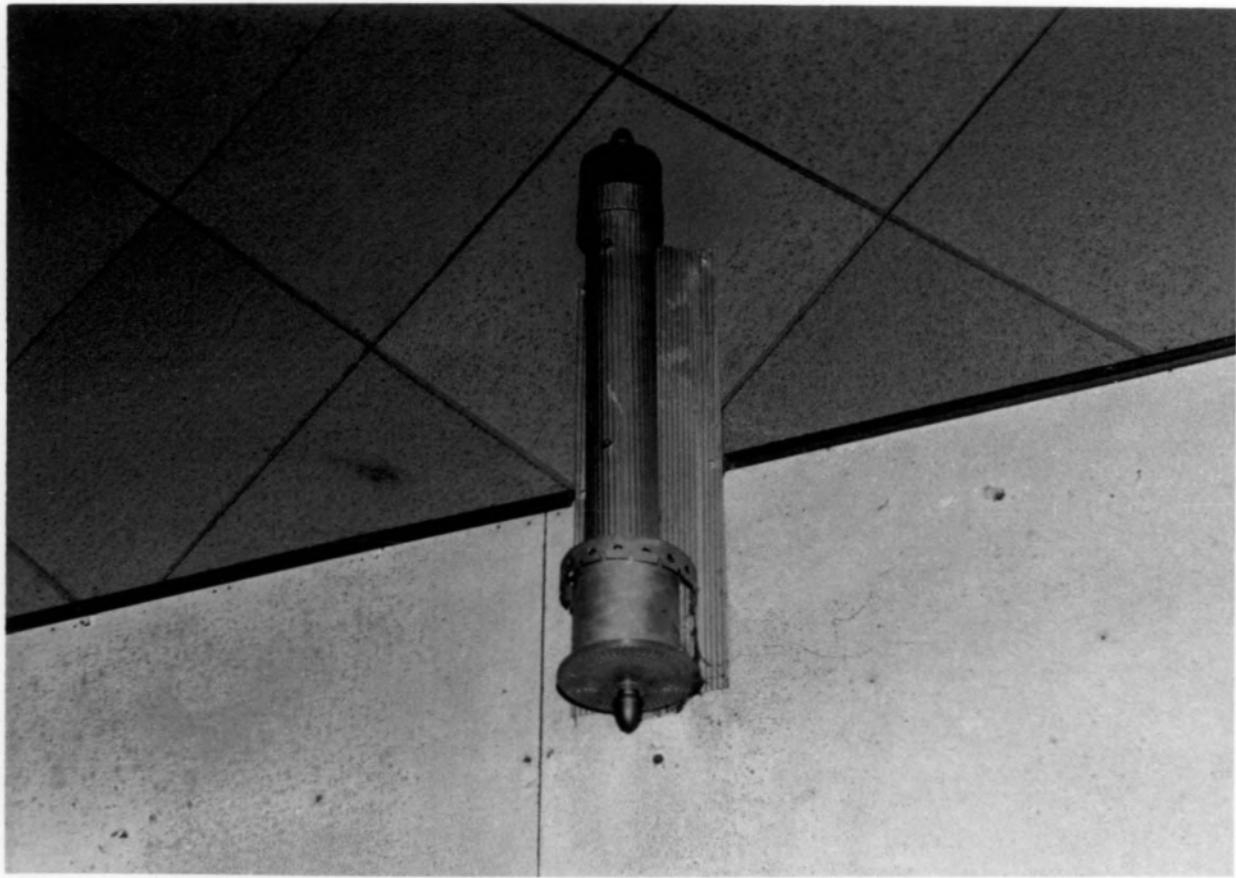














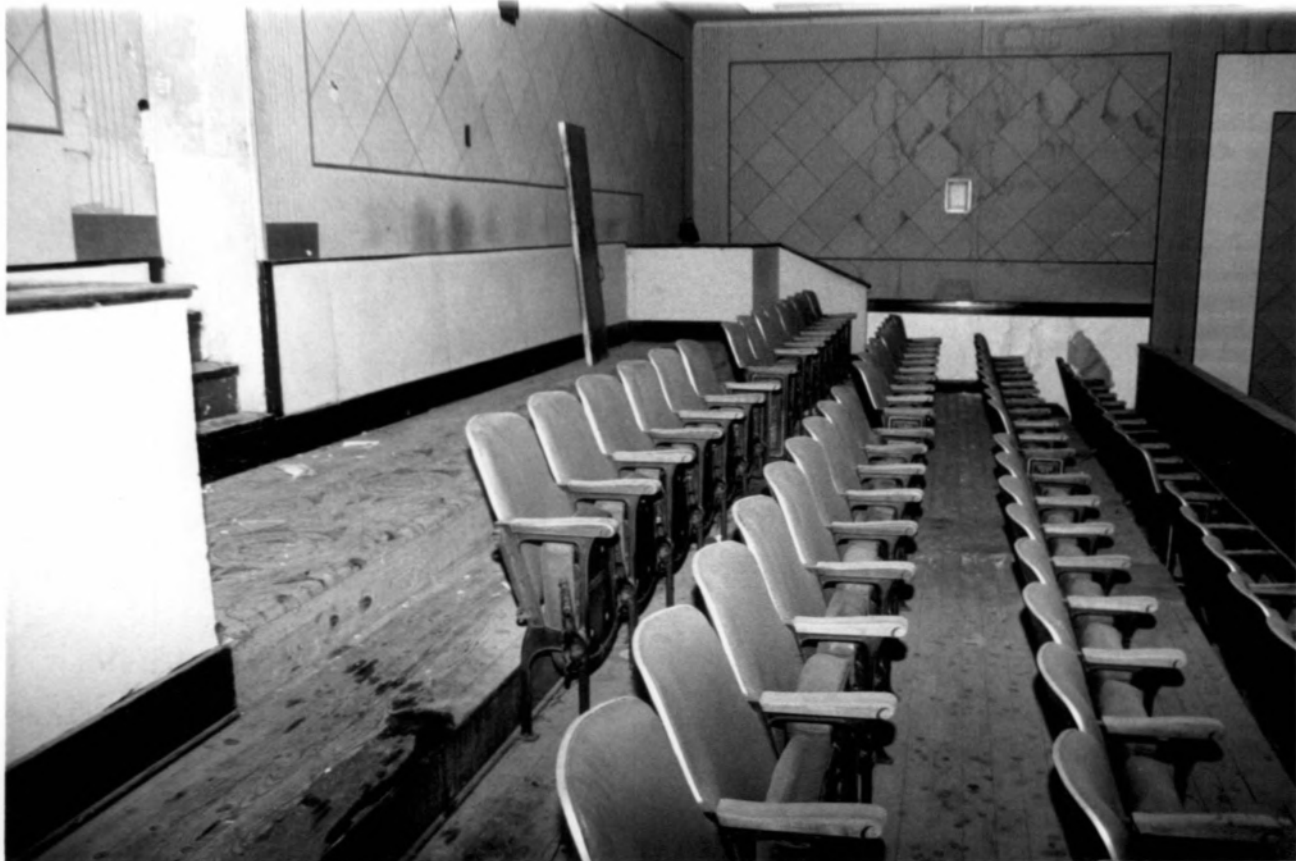


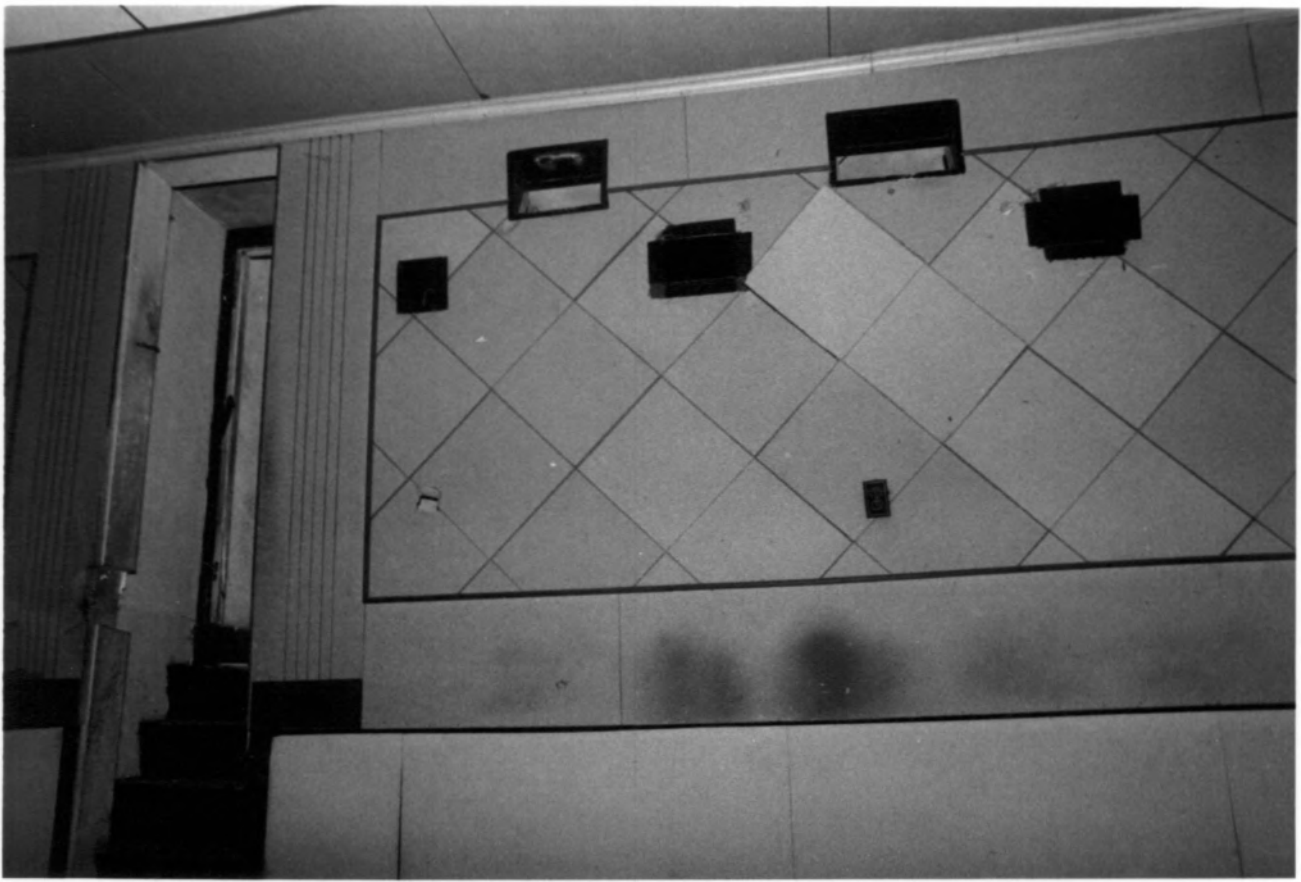




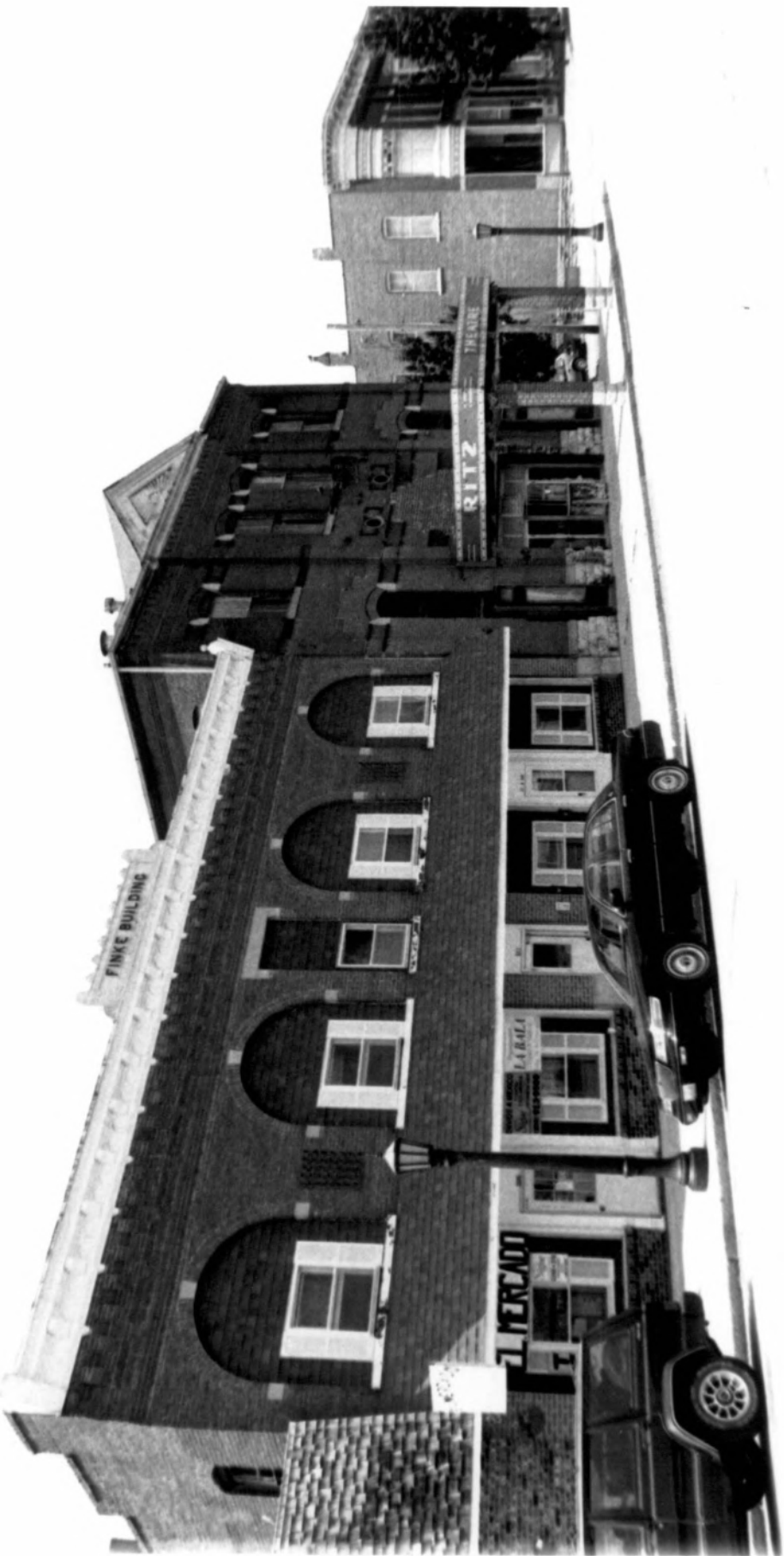
EXTRA
PHOTOS



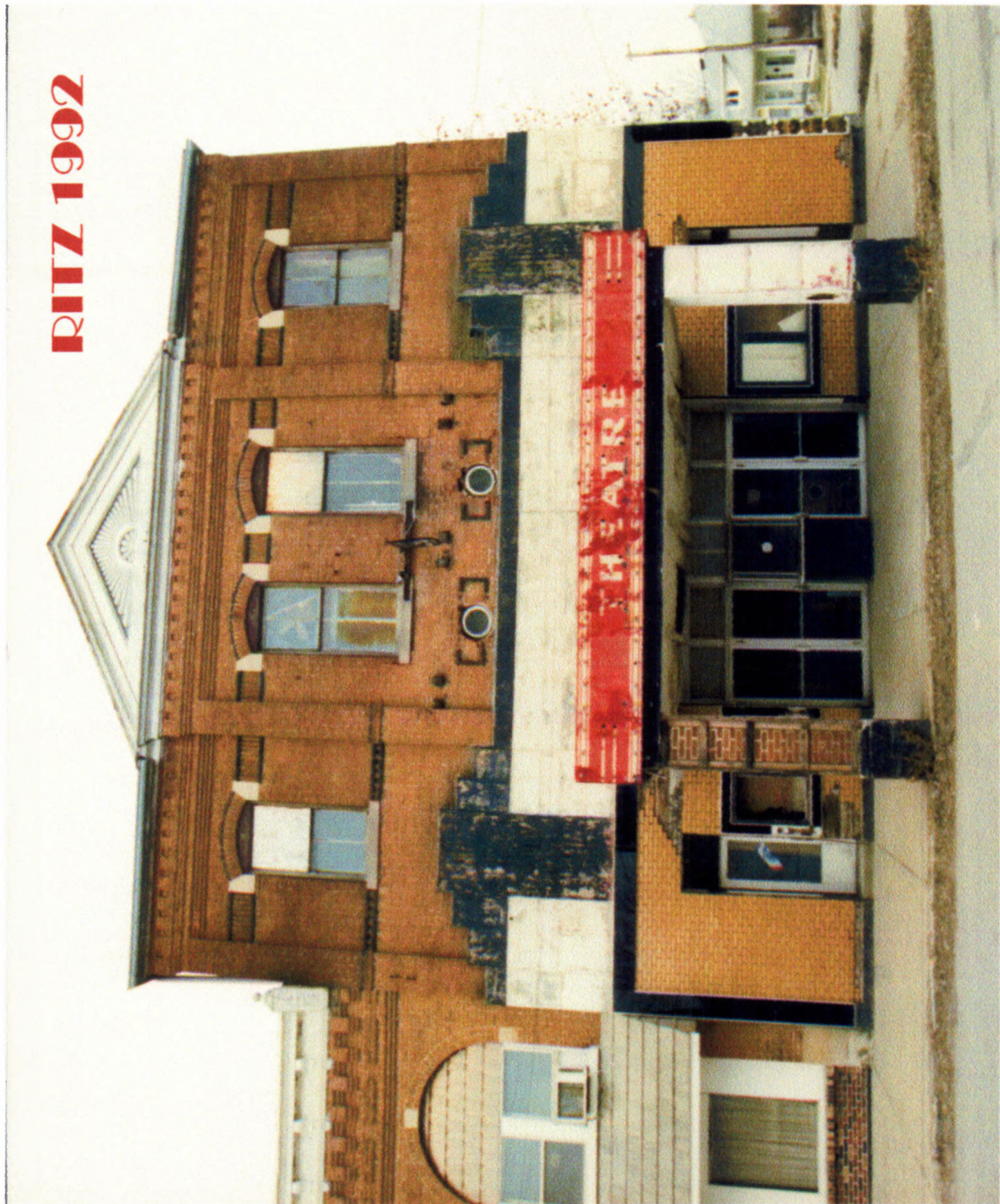








RITZ 1992





Finke Opera House 1885