

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Missouri Theater

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

203 South Ninth Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#8 - Hon. Richard H. Ichord

STATE

Missouri

CODE

029

COUNTY

Boone

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Shirley Stone Cox

STREET & NUMBER

216 Camino Sobrante

CITY, TOWN

Orinda

VICINITY OF

STATE

California 94563

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Boone County Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

City-County Building, 701 East Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

STATE

Missouri 65201

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Missouri Theater, located in the Missouri Theater Building, 203 South Ninth Street, in Columbia, Missouri, is a small-scale, single-balcony movie palace which represents a hybrid mixture of hard-top and atmospheric features.¹

EXTERIOR

The theater measures approximately 160' in length from the east to the west and 142.5' in width from the north to the south at its longest and widest points (see plan). It is located in the Missouri Theater Building along with seven shops, all of which are one story in height and situated at the eastern extreme of the building. The shops include Woody's Mens' Furnishings, Car Tunes, Telegift, Et Cetera Gifts, Allens' Flowers. Along the block line which separates lots 40 and 41 in the Old Town of Columbia, Missouri, an alley runs which is three-quarters the width of the building, just west of the shops and east of the theater auditorium. The theater facade on the Locust Street side is 56' in height and it rises to 72' on the south, in the area of the stage. The building sits on a foundation of reinforced concrete. Its walls are of textured yellow-brown brick on the north and half of the south sides and red brick elsewhere. They are laid in common bond over a structural system of reinforced concrete. The structural system is extremely strong and the foundations very heavy because it was originally planned that the Missouri Theater Building would rise eight stories and include an hotel and office space. The Depression hit, however, before the job could be completed.² The building is topped by a flat roof of reinforced gypsum.

The original primary facade of the theater, in the northern portion of the east side of the building, was trimmed with terra cotta tiles along its cornice and ornamented with several concrete urns situated on the parapet. Several of these urns are still visible along the parapet atop the north theater wall. In addition, the ticket booth was originally octagonal and located in the center of the entrance-way, which was faced, and still is, with glass, metal, brick and ziorite.³

In addition to the two pairs of large, double, glass doors which are located on the east at the main entrance to the theater, there are double exit doors located at the rear of the foyer, on each side of the auditorium and balcony, and at the rear of the stage. In addition, on the north side, next to the foyer exit, a small door leads to a flight of stairs which approach the rear of the balcony. At the theater's opening, this door served as the entrance for Negroes.

Currently, the theater's main facade is faced with a plain, broad concrete cornice which has been made concave over the recessed entrance to allow room for the name of the theater in plastic letters, and an outward-curving, plastic marquee which announces the films being shown within. Several glass windows on both sides of the entrance enclose posters for current and upcoming films. The ticket booth is now located in the south wall of the recessed main entrance.

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INTERIOR

A basement is located under the stage and dressing room area and continues under the shops. This is the location of the boiler, air conditioner and the coal bin, all of which are located in the southwest quarter of the building.

On the street floor, the lobby of the theater is approximately 80' in length and is adorned with black and gold marble wainscoting and a black and gold terrazzo floor. Elsewhere in the theater the floors are of concrete and are covered with carpeting. The snack bar and an office are located along the south side of the lobby in an area which was originally part of one of the shops.

The foyer is located just west of the lobby and is reached down a short flight of stairs. Here, a stairway rises in the northwest corner which leads to the mezzanine, with its rest rooms and offices, and to the balcony above. At the opening of the theater this area was adorned with antique furniture and works of art.⁴ In the recent past it has been embellished with conventional murals depicting country scenes.

Directly south of the foyer is the four-aisled auditorium which has a seating capacity today of 1,043. Its lower walls are covered with gold brocaded wall paper. Above, a series of arched, vestigial opera boxes, or coves, which are embellished with Rococo style plaster relief decoration and heavy gold drapes, pierce the walls of sand finished plaster which are painted rose beige. These coves served originally and still serve as the location for dramatic lighting effects within the auditorium. Above, the center of the ceiling is recessed and adorned with Classical and Baroque moldings and a plaster, polygonal grill of Rococo inspiration. From the center of the grill is suspended an 1800 pound chandelier which features cut glass prisms and twelve candle clusters supported by bronze acanthus leaves.⁵ The recessed ceiling surrounding this fixture was originally painted blue, dark at the edges shading to light at the center.⁶

The organ screens which are located to either side of the proscenium arch are the major design feature of the theater. They are equipped with silver drapes, overlaid with gold drapes, and flanked by woodwork of solid walnut. The undulating, convex, arched opening of each is capped with fanciful Baroque moldings, floral embellishment and a masqueron representing the Dramatic Arts. Above, a krater of flowers rests beneath a Baroque archway supported by oversized, floreated scrolls. The base of each organ screen is adorned with heavy moldings in acanthus and egg and dart patterns, and shields flanked by garlands, fruit and floating cheribim. This design is repeated along the undulating balcony and cove aprons. In addition, floreated masquerons are employed as surrounds for the decorative, brass wall sconces at balcony level.

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At the south end of the auditorium, the stage rises 55' with 48' between the stage surface and the gridiron. The proscenium arch was originally 36' wide but was enlarged to approximately 56' with the advent of Cinemascope in the 1950's. The stage is equipped with a transparent gold curtain and a red plush velvet, flounced valence. In addition, it features a trap door to the basement in its floor and a door for the deus ex machina to the west, high up at balcony level. In front of the stage the orchestra pit measures 40' x 8' and is presently covered with a false wooden floor. It is entered through two doors at basement level. In the wings, the theater is furnished with six dressing rooms to the east and west, two at each of the main and mezzanine levels on the west and two at mezzanine level on the east. Each is equipped with a lavatory and toilet.

The balcony seats 468 patrons and is provided with a separate entrance and restroom which were originally intended for the use of Negro patrons of the theater. Just east of this area is the projection booth which originally held three projectors and a Brenograph machine.⁷ Provision was also made for the installation for both Movietone and Vitaphone sound systems, but these were not installed immediately.⁸ In addition, the theater is provided with a crawl space above the ceiling of the auditorium.

The lighting of the auditorium bears mentioning. In addition to the central chandelier, the auditorium boasts full lighting in three colors: red, blue and amber. These are fully equipped with dimmers and operated from the completely outfitted switchboard to the east of the stage. These include the cove lights, recessed dome lights, 12 orchestra floods, and six dome lights over the orchestra. In the roof formed by the extension of the balcony over the orchestra seats there are six lights which have been recessed behind panels of decorative stained glass in floral designs. In addition, on the stage there are 400 footlights, and 1,200 border lights surround the stage and the edge wall of the balcony.

ALTERATIONS

In addition to the alterations already mentioned in the areas of the east facade, ticket booth and the proscenium arch, extensive remodeling was carried out after Commonwealth Theaters leased the theater in 1953. A wall with two sets of double doors which originally separated the lobby from the foyer was removed as was another short stairway at the west end of the lobby. The concession stand was placed in the foyer on the north wall and the theater was redecorated and painted.⁹ In 1967 and 1968, local architect Wynn Brady and the Knipp Construction Company extensively remodeled the Ninth Street facade of the theater and shops, but no changes were made at that time on the interior.¹⁰

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PRESENT CONDITION AND STATUS

The Missouri Theater is in excellent condition today. Its lease was recently renewed by Commonwealth Theaters, Inc. and its future seems secure for the time being. The president of the corporation which owns the building visited Columbia recently from her home in California. She spoke to local preservationists who urged her to continue the operation of the theater due to the importance of its interior decoration. Since the theater is still a money-making concern, she responded favorably to these requests.

SITE

The Missouri Theater is part of the Missouri Theater Building and is located in the downtown area of Columbia, Missouri just two blocks from the campus of the University of Missouri. It is surrounded on all sides by commercial establishments and churches. Its proximity to the University may be a factor in its survival at a time when several other theaters in town have been forced to close their doors due to declining box office receipts.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Hard-top" and "atmospheric" are terms which describe the two schools of movie theater design in the 1920's in America. "Hard-top" denotes a conventional auditorium interior with a ceiling designed to be a ceiling and nothing more. The term "atmospheric" denotes a theater ceiling which appeared to be predominantly open sky and upon which clouds, birds, moonlight effects and stars could be projected with a special machine from the projection booth. For more of an explanation of the importance of these types see Item #8.
2. "Missouri Theater Co. Incorporated", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, December 6, 1927 and "Plans for New Hotel and Theater Building to be Erected at South Ninth St.", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, June 17, 1927. Due to the extensive alterations to all of these shops and to their lack of any real architectural character, they have not been included in this nomination.
3. Ibid. and "New Theater Opens Tomorrow Night", Columbia [Missouri] Tribune, October 4, 1928. For a representation of these urns see photo #9.
4. Ibid.

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5. This chandelier is not the original one. The latter is still on the premises, back stage, packed in a box. It features yards of hanging glass beads and eight clusters of candelabrae. "New Theater in Louis XV Design", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. The Brenograph was a machine responsible for the projection of sky effects in atmospheric theaters of the 1920's. In the Missouri Theater, this projection was probably done within the blue dome in the center of the ceiling, though no one has been found who can remember just where the atmospheric effects were projected. See Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. 1961), p. 94.
8. "New Theater Opens Tomorrow Night". The term Vitaphone describes a method to produce talking films developed by Bell Telephone and Western Electric in 1925 whereby a 16" disc was played at 33 1/3 RPM and synchronized with a film to produce the illusion of music, sound and speech when properly executed. Movietone is a term referring to the German Tri-Ergon sound-on-film process whereby sound is recorded as the film is being shot and is translated into lines of varying density along one side of the film and so stays always in perfect synchronization. William Fox developed this in the United States so it is not surprising that one of his theaters, the St. Louis Fox which was placed on the National Register on October 8, 1976, was the first in the country built fully equipped for the process. Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats, pp. 244-249.
9. "Theater Firm Takes Lease for 15 Years", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 31, 1953. This article gives the first mention of a concession stand in the theater. It is not known when the present concession stand just south of the lobby was put in or when the present murals of country scenes were painted on the foyer walls. An important document for the study of the alterations and additions to the Missouri Theater is a complete inventory made at the date the theater was leased by Commonwealth Theaters, Inc. and before it was remodeled in 1953. A copy of this inventory is in possession of the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources. For this list and entire lease see Deeds, BK. 270, p. 626ff.
10. Wynn Brady, architect in charge of remodeling, personal interview with Noelle Soren, graduate student, November 22, 1974. For a view of this facade before its last remodeling see photo #9.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1928 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Boller Brothers

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Missouri Theater in Columbia, Missouri is significant as the only pre-Depression movie palace to have been erected in central Missouri. In addition, it is a fine example of the restrained yet elegant style of the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, Missouri.

Cinema architecture had its beginning in Paris, France around 1894. Here, the Lumiere brothers, who were probably the first to develop a movie camera which could record up to fifteen images per second, gave the first showing of their films in the Indian Salon of the Grand Cafe, 14 Boulevard des Capucines.¹ Among the invited guests was George Méliès, the director of the Theater Robert-Houdin, a theater of magic and illusion. Méliès immediately seized upon the idea of showing short films between his magic acts,² and soon his theater became more famous for its moving pictures than for its magic. In fact, Méliès, through his imaginary and fantastic approach to film,³ enabled this form of entertainment to survive after the initial interest in it lagged.³ He firmly established a fantastic character to the aura surrounding the motion picture from its infancy, giving rise to a world of imagination which found expression in many forms up to the time of the Great Depression.⁴

One of the most tangible of these forms of imaginative expression was the architecture built to display the developing cinema which was based on the analogous architecture of the legitimate theater of the time.⁵ This is not only obvious, but especially logical since films were seen, from the very beginning, as part of a larger theater program. With the advent of the 1920's, the beginnings of cinema architecture was shaped into the "Cathedral of the Motion Picture"⁶ which, rather than being just another, excessively gaudy form of historicism, actually created, or tried to create, a world of its own, more fantastic than any ordinary citizen of an industrial society could have ever seen - and it was available to all for just 25¢.⁷ The essential approach of Méliès was combined with the paradox of the 1920's, that is, a feeling of growth and unlimited possibilities⁸ paired with the realization of the smallness of the individual lost in a vast industrialized society. This combination produced the Movie Palace an architectural and sociological phenomenon where anyone off the streets could rub elbows with the rich and live like a king for a while.⁹

Three men were most important in the final realization of the "Cathedral of the Motion Picture" - Thomas Lamb, John Ebersson and Sam Rothapfel. Lamb and Ebersson were architects who built and decorated their theaters with all the elegance, or illusion of elegance, possible. Their exteriors were usually in a Classical mode, dependent

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upon terra cotta for embellishment. But, it was in their interiors that these architects fully developed their individuality, each founding their own "schools" of decoration. Lamb designed in the "hard-top" school which was based on standard, large theater design with two balconies and decoration in the "French" style imitating Baroque and Rococo, or in the style of Robert Adam. Later in his career, however, he gave full reign to more flamboyant styles, such as Hindu, Spanish and Persian for theaters he designed for the Loews chain.¹⁰ Eberson, who had been trained as an architect in Vienna and Dresden, fathered the "atmospheric school" of decoration which relied on manufactured stars, clouds and weather effects displayed on a ceiling through the use of a special machine, and on sumptuous decoration, usually executed in plaster.¹¹

Sam L. Rothapfel, or Roxy as he was called, was not an architect, but a showman. He was, however, probably the single most important force in the development of the concept of the Movie Palace. Under his direction in the many theaters which he eventually owned in New York City, music for the first time was chosen and arranged to be appropriate for the movie which it accompanied. Another of his innovations was the employment of a large staff of highly trained, competent people as ushers, doormen, matrons, cashiers and nurses to meet any need of the patrons of his theaters which might arise.¹² With the arrival of the Great Depression, this sort of entertainment became impractical due mainly to its ever rising expense. Theater design and architecture in general were drawn to the cleaner and simpler lines of the International and Depression Modern styles for economic reasons as much as esthetic ones, and the concept of elegance and service in theater design and staffing became only a memory.

At the height of this era the Missouri Theater was constructed from January to October, 1928 in Columbia, Missouri, as part of the Missouri Theater Building. The financing and construction of this building was in charge of the Missouri Company, Incorporated, a company formed for that purpose. Its president was Mr. J.D. Stone of Columbia.¹³

J.D. Stone was the son of Josiah and Elvira Stone of Columbia, Missouri. The elder Stone was responsible for the construction of the Columbia Theater at 1101 East Broadway, which is now an office building, and the Elvira Building which still stands at 1109 East Broadway, both in Columbia, Missouri. The younger Stone studied Law at the University of Missouri and was active in setting up facilities for crippled children at Noyes Hospital in that town.¹⁴ In addition, he was a member of the local Masonic Lodge. He died in 1948.

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The Missouri Theater opened on October 5, 1928 to a capacity crowd which included over 300 specially invited guests from around the state. Telegrams of congratulations were displayed from United Artists in Hollywood and from stars such as John Barrymore, Charles Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, Buster Keaton, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford and film makers such as Carl Laemmle and Samuel Goldwyn.¹⁵ The varied program featured Jack Keith and his Missouri Orchestra, Bob Crowley at the console organ, a newsreel, a cartoon, the feature, Buster Keaton and Ernest Torrence in "Steamboat Bill, Jr.", the Missouri Rocket Girls and an obscure comedian named Bob Hope, who was not even billed.¹⁶

The patrons that night were treated to their entertainment in a small scale example of Movie Palace architecture. It had, at its opening, most of the features associated with this sort of building, that is, a formal staff, a fully equipped stage and dressing room area, an orchestra and organ and a full lighting system. The latter included a cloud machine, indicating that the Missouri Theater could have been used as an atmospheric theater even though it had been designed in the hard-top school. Just where the clouds were projected is not clear. Perhaps they were seen on the closed curtain or in the blue-painted dome.

The decor of this theater was, and remains, typical of Movie Palace architecture. At the opening, the interior of the theater was stated to have been designed in the style of Louis XV, and it is true that many of its decorative elements derive from the Rococo.¹⁷ For example, the extensive use of the shell motif, the delicate floral rinceaux and the zones of decorative grill in plaster all have parallels in the Rococo style of Europe in general.¹⁸ In fact, the latter may well derive from screens on royal boxes in theaters of that period and earlier.¹⁹ The use of pastel colors, such as the pink and french grey, which originally covered the walls of the lobby and foyer, can also be related to this style.

Even though the Rococo was an influence on the style of this theater, it is more accurate to say that the decoration of the Missouri Theater continues in the long line of Baroque theater design tradition, the roots of which stretch back to the Renaissance, than to single out any one style as its source.²⁰ For example, the closest parallel found to the putti and shield motif at the Missouri, except for the one noted further on, is in the Markgräfliches Opernhaus in Bayreuth, Germany.²¹ A similar motif with adolescent figures occurs at the Versailles Opera.²² The use of Classical elements, such as mouldings, also has parallels at Versailles as well as at countless other theaters of later date.²³

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The one building which most seems to relate to the decoration of the Missouri Theater is the Paris Opera designed by Charles Garnier. In the decoration around the proscenium of this structure can be seen most of the elements which, when rearranged and simplified, compose the decoration of the Missouri.²⁴ The shape of the shields on the proscenium boxes of the two theaters is almost identical. Moreover, they share Classical elements, urns, large acanthus leaves and portraits of the Arts as common property. In addition, the Opera has floral-festooned youths placed heraldically with a shield on the keystone of the arches of the proscenium boxes. At the Missouri, this motif is placed on the proscenium box itself. And finally, a faint resemblance can be seen between the herms of the Opera's proscenium boxes and those of the lighting fixtures on the Missouri's balcony. In fact, this entire arrangement can be favorably compared with the lighting fixtures and shield decoration in the vestibule of the Opera.²⁵

The architects who designed this fantasy were the Boller Brothers of Kansas City, Missouri. Their restrained yet elegant designs can be found all over the Mid-West, yet very little factual information is known about them. They designed many buildings in Kansas City, though they seemed to have specialized in theater designs.²⁶ Three of their designs which have been published form interesting comparisons to that of the Missouri Theater in Columbia. The Electric Theater in St. Joseph, Missouri (now demolished) was a large two balcony theater with Classical, Spanish and Assyrian design motives featured. Its low-key decoration was highlighted by a large central chandelier hanging from a ceiling recess much like that at the Missouri. In addition, this theater was an atmospheric one; sky effects were projected on a broad curving strip of wall which surrounded the theater, located between the point where the wall seemed to end and the ceiling seemed to begin.²⁷ The Missouri Theater, also in St. Joseph, still stands today. It is a small theater, but extremely elegant surpassing its Columbia counterpart in this respect with its Moorish Art Deco front and its frankly garish, Persian and Neo-Babylonian decor.²⁸ Finally, the Lincoln Theater in Lincoln, Nebraska comes closest to the Missouri in design with its Franco-Spanish decoration which features wall coves and balcony and ceiling grills.²⁹

At the Missouri Theater the interior decoration was as important to its elegant aspect at its opening as was the architecture. This aspect of the design was in charge of a decorator from St. Louis named Carl Bonfig.³⁰ His only other claim to fame which has come to light is a W.P.A. project in which he was involved which culminated in the painting of murals with the theme of The History of Transportation on the walls of the foyer of City Hall in St. Louis, Missouri.³¹

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The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on their selection as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan". The Missouri Theater, therefore, is being nominated as an example of the themes of "Architecture" and "Fine Arts and Humanities".

FOOTNOTES

1. Georges Charansol, Le cinema (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1966), p. 5.
2. Georges Sadoul, Georges Méliès (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1970), p. 15.
3. Ibid., pp. 15-16
4. It is hard for us to realize now how terrifying motion pictures must have been to those who had never experienced such a thing. According to Dennis Sharp, The Picture Palace (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 28, when Thomas Edison first showed films in the Vitascope process, which was equivalent to the process of the Lumiere brothers, "the short view of waves breaking on the shore at Dover momentarily filled the silk-hatted audience with terror and their first reaction was to run out or duck under the seats to avoid the spray."
5. The discussion in Dennis Sharp, The Picture Palace, pp. 12-22, of other aspects in the development of the cinema show is useful. In addition, he notes on pages 28-30, that legitimate theaters were often converted to show the new "movies".
6. Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1961) uses this phrase over and over.
7. Movies were also becoming big business. By the mid 1920's moving pictures formed the fourth largest industry in the U.S. By 1927 there were 20,500 theaters in this country with a total seating capacity of 18,000,000. See A.M. Schlesinger and P.W. Slosson, The Great Crusade and After (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1937), pp. 393-394. The incredible popularity of motion pictures is illustrated here on pages 353-354 with the statement that:

"Former President Charles W. Elliot of Harvard, generally considered the leader of American education, died August 22, 1926, and Rudolf Valentino, the moving picture actor, the following day. Though many newspapers printed editorials solemnly deploring that so much more interest was taken in the death of Valentino, the same papers in their news columns devoted a page to the actor for every column they gave to the educator."

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8. A.M. Schlesinger and P.W. Slosson, The Great Crusade, pp. 185 and 350. There was, for example, a movement towards bigness in the formation of chain stores and newspaper chains at this time.
9. Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats, p. 14 argues the same. In addition, the author of "Decoration Without Limitation", Architectural Review LXXXIII (February, 1938), 91-92 states that the function of theater decoration is to relax the customer.
10. Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats, pp. 106-109. Lamb felt that the Adamesque style reflected the American mood. Later there was a demand for more flashy and gay decoration and the styles of Louis XVI and the Italian Baroque became his favorites.
11. Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats, pp. 94, 102.
12. Sam L. Rothapfel, "The Architect and the Box Office", Architectural Forum (September, 1932), explores this host-guest relationship which characterized Roxy's theaters. He said that the theater building is a show window. The lobby should be inviting with stimulating architecture and decoration. For more about this showman's philosophy of entertainment see Ben Hall, Best Remaining Seats, pp. 123-132, 168-169.
13. The theater was built on the site of the old Robert L. Todd home which was built in 1841 and which was first occupied by G.D. Foote, the builder of Academic Hall at the University. Todd was a first cousin to Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, and was one of the first two students to receive degrees from the the University of Missouri. The land was bought by J. Dozier Stone and the house was torn down on August 22, 1927. Excavation for the new theater, shop and apartment complex began on January 7, 1928 under the charge of William Fenton of the Tiger Transfer Company. The fill from the site was dumped at the corner of Bass and William Streets. The Missouri Company, Incorporated was formed to be in charge of and finance the structure. The officers of the corporation were: President, J.D. Stone, Vice President and Treasurer, H.H. Banks, Secretary, Fred B. Beaven, and Directors, Fred B. Beaven, F.W. Dearing and E. Sydney Stevens. See "Home Built in 1841 Torn Down", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, June 13, 1927, "M.U. Enrolls Grandson of Robert Levi Todd", Columbia [Missouri] Tribune, October 23, 1953, Deeds, Bk. 184, Boone County Recorder's Office, "Todd Home Being Wrecked", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, August 23, 1927, "Ground Broken for Excavation Work on New Building", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, January 10, 1928 and "Missouri Theater Co. Incorporated", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, December 6, 1927.

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MISSOURI THEATER

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14. "J.D. Stone, Obituary", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, May 3, 1948. Some others who worked on the theater were the following: the builder was the Shulz Company of Chillicothe; the wiring was done by Frank C. Sutton of Lincoln, Nebraska; the heating was provided by Thomas L. Dawson of Kansas City; the hardware was in part provided by Rollets and Greene of Columbia; Boone County Lumber provided building materials; the Missouri Electric Sign Works of St. Louis provided all signs; the furniture was imported from Italy by the Pokorney Furniture Company of Columbia. See "Debut of New Theater Set for Tomorrow", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928.
15. "Theater Filled on First Night", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 6, 1928.
16. "Missouri Theater Opened Last Night", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 6, 1928, Dana Spitzer, article on St. Louis Theaters on file in the St. Louis City Library, Art Department, and Mr. Bob Walter, former manager of the Missouri Theater, personal interview with Noelle Soren, graduate student, October 16, 1974. Could these be the same girls who appeared later in St. Louis at the Missouri Theater there with the name of the Missouri Rockettes and who later moved to New York to become the Radio City Rockettes? Bob Hope, in his monologue made during a visit to the University of Missouri in 1973, referred to his relationship to the Missouri Theater.
17. "New Theater in Louis XV Design", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928
18. Pierre Verlet, Le Style Louis XV (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1942), pl. 21 and Liselotte Anderson, Baroque and Rococo Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 207
19. See Margarete Baur-Heinhold, The Baroque Theater (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 218-219 for photos of the Royal boxes at Versailles, for example.
20. See G.R. Kernodle, From Art to Theater (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 219. Even the styles of Ebersson and Lamb can be seen in this larger context. Compare, for example, Andrea Palladio's Teatro Olimpico and the idea of the Baroque painted ceiling with Ebersson's atmospheric theaters. Ebersson merely added movement, in the spirit of the moving picture itself. Lamb's elegant style can be related to theaters such as the Palace Theater at Ludwigsburg, Sweden of 1730. See Margarete Baur-Heinhold, The Baroque Theater, p. 247.
21. Ibid., pp. 234-235.
22. Ibid., p. 217.

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23. It is noteworthy that the theater at Versailles was later the inspiration for many movie palaces throughout the United States. Two local examples are the Ambassador Theater and the St. Louis Theater (Powell Symphony Hall) in St. Louis, both designed by the theater architects, C.W. and George Rapp. Powell Hall was placed on the National Register as part of Midtown Historic District in St. Louis on July 7, 1978.
24. Monika Steinhauser, Die Architektur der Pariser Oper (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1969), Plates 45 and 211.
25. Ibid., Plates 20, 21 and 46.
26. Prof. George Ehrlich, Department of Art History, University of Missouri - Kansas City, personal correspondence with Noelle Soren, graduate student, October 28, 1974. A list of theaters they designed in and around Kansas City is given here.
27. R.W. Sexton and B.F. Betts, American Theaters of To-Day (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1927), pp. 168-169.
28. Ibid., pp. 146-149.
29. Ibid., pp. 136-138.
30. "Debut of New Theater Set for Tomorrow", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928.
31. The only information on the life of Carl Bonfig which has come to light is a very brief article about him, "Historical Murals for City Hall Walls", St. Louis [Missouri] Globe-Democrat, February 24, 1934. These murals remain on either side of the Market Street entrance to the City Hall.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Liselotte. Baroque and Rococo Art. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969.
2. Baur-Heinhold, Margarete. The Baroque Theater. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
3. Brady, Wynn. Personal interview with Noelle Soren, November 22, 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1/3 - 13,856.5 square feet

QUADRANGLE NAME "Columbia, Mo."

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 55,82,7,5 4,31,11,5,5

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of block 41 and the northern 47' of block 40 except for area of store measuring 22' x 59.25' at the extreme northeast corner of the Missouri Theater Building, all in the Old Town of Columbia.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Noelle Soren, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Department of Natural Resources
Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

January 4, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FDR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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4. Charenso, Georges. Le cinema. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1966.
5. "Debut of New Theater Set for Tomorrow", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928.
6. "Decoration Without Limitation", Architectural Review LXXXIII (February, 1938), 90-94.
7. Deeds, Bks. #184 and 270. Office of the Recorder, City-County Building, 701 Broadway, Columbia, Missouri.
8. Ehrlich, Prof. George. Personal correspondence with Noelle Soren, October 28, 1928.
9. "Ground Broken for Excavation Work on New Building", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, January 10, 1928.
10. Hall, Ben. Best Remaining Seats. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1961.
11. "Historical Murals for City Hall Walls". St. Louis [Missouri] Globe-Democrat, February 24, 1934.
12. "Home Built in 1841 Torn Down to Make Place for Theater", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, June 13, 1927.
13. "J.D. Stone, Obituary", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, May 3, 1948.
14. Kernodle, G.R. From Art to Theater. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.
15. "Missouri Theater Co. Incorporated", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, December 6, 1927.
16. "Missouri Theater Opened Last Night", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 6, 1928.
17. "M.U. Enrolls Great Grandson of Robert Levi Todd", Columbia [Missouri] Tribune, October 23, 1953.
18. "New Theater of Louis XV Design", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 4, 1928.
19. "New Theater Opens Tomorrow Night", Columbia [Missouri] Tribune, October 4, 1928.

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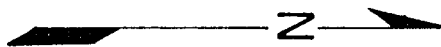
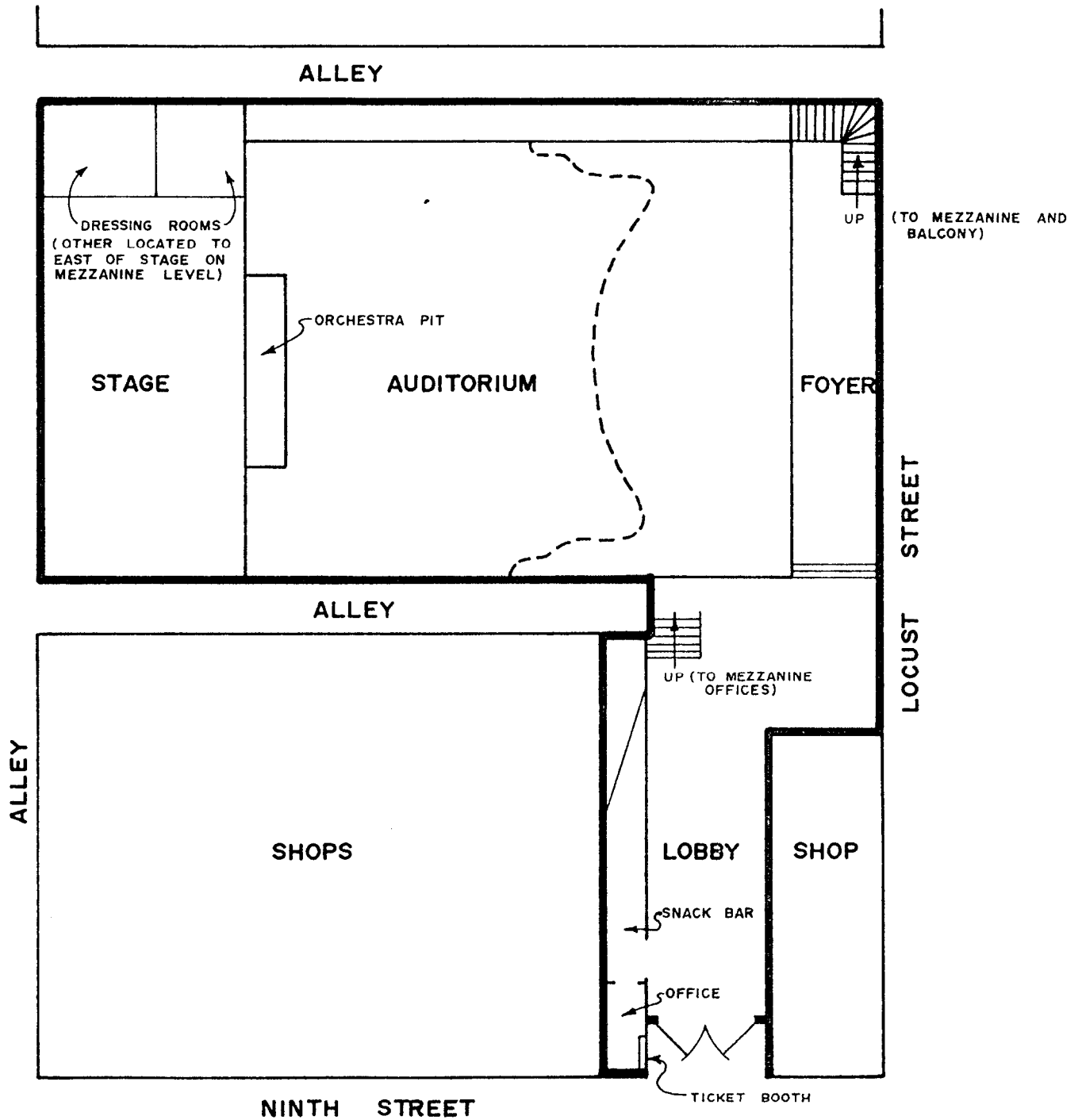
MISSOURI THEATER

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21. Rothapfel, Sam L. "The Architect and the Box Office", Architectural Forum (September, 1932).
22. Sadoul, Georges. Georges Méliès. Paris: Editions Seghers, 1970.
23. Schlesinger, A.M. and Slosson, P.W. The Great Crusade and After. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1937.
24. Sexton, R.W. and Betts, B.F. American Theaters of To-Day. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1927.
25. Sharp, Dennis. The Picture Palace. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.
26. Spitzer, Dana. Article on St. Louis Theaters on file in the St. Louis City Library, Art Department.
27. Steinhauser, Monika. Der Architektur der Pariser Oper. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1969.
28. "Theater Filled on First Night", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 6, 1928.
29. "Theater Firm Takes Lease for 15 Years", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 31, 1953.
30. "Todd Home Being Wrecked", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, August 23, 1927.
31. Verlet, Pierre. Le style Louis XV. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1942.
32. Walter, Bob. Personal interview with Noelle Soren, October 16, 1974.

MISSOURI THEATER IN THE MISSOURI THEATER BUILDING
 COLUMBIA, MISSOURI
 STREET LEVEL



NOT TO SCALE





Missouri theatre

TIGERS TAKE
"PELHAM ONE-TWO-THREE"
JAYHAWKS STRANDED
UP A MIZZOU TREE



TIGERS TAKE
"PELHAM ONE-TWO-THREE"
JAYHAWKS STRANDED
UP A MIZZOU TREE



A person walking across the sidewalk in front of the theatre entrance.



