

PH0672653

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAY 17 1978  
DATE ENTERED AUG 2 1978

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC *\* \**  
Colonial Theatre  
AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: 12-14 South Potomac Street  
CITY, TOWN: Hagerstown  
STATE: Maryland  
VICINITY OF: Sixth  
COUNTY: Washington  
CODE: 24  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Sixth  
CODE: 043

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME: Faith Chapel, c/o Rev. Terry King ✓  
STREET & NUMBER: 38 South Locust Street  
CITY, TOWN: Hagerstown  
STATE: Maryland  
VICINITY OF: 21740

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Washington County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER: 95 West Washington Street  
CITY, TOWN: Hagerstown  
STATE: Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE:  
DATE:  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
CITY, TOWN:  
STATE:

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR  
 DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Colonial Theatre stands at 12-14 South Potomac Street in Hagerstown, Washington County, and is located on the eastern side of the street in the northern third of the block formed by Public Square and Antietam Street.

The theater is a 1914 commercial structure, three stories high, with a heavily ornamented, Baroque-influenced facade which sits tight to the sidewalk. The street level of the facade has a wide, recessed entranceway flanked by quoined end walls painted to simulate black marble. A small, detached, rectangular ticket booth site is centered on the sidewalk. The three sets of double doors with large glass panes leading into the theater are flanked by two small store rooms and large display windows. A large marquee bearing the name of the theater projects over the sidewalk.

The upper levels of the facade, which appear to be original, are constructed of glazed white blocks with gold decorative detailing and are arranged in a Palladian window motif of three window divisions. The large central bay has a semicircular pediment with a sculpture panel and is separated from the two narrow divisions by Roman Ionic columns. The Palladian window shape is flanked by flat Ionic pilasters and has a heavy modillioned cornice with a decorated frieze and a closed roof balustrade.

The windows of the upper levels are of the metal casement type and have rectangular transoms. The tracery in the third floor transoms form ovals and circles. The second floor windows are separated from those above by a series of decorative bandings. These bandings consist of a guilloche motif immediately above the second floor windows and below the third story windows with strips of vertical fluting with swags and foliated panels between. The middle second story window has a broken swan's neck pediment with rosettes and a fleur-de-lis-like finial. The pediment rests on twisted columns with leafy capitals and "socks" above the bases.

The pediment sculpture panels consists of two partially nude women embodying the curvilinear characteristics of the Baroque style positioned at right angles to each other. The figure on the north side holds a lute and the one on the south side a lyre. Both figures, looking at each other, lean on the scrollwork surrounding an oval shield and appear to be holding on to a swag consisting of fruit. A small cherub holding onto a ribbon is mounted on the shield between the figures holding the musical instruments. Another small cherub hangs from a shield projecting from a bouquet of flowers at the top. The background of the panel consists of blue clouds and gold rays emanating from them.

The frieze is decorated with fretwork and has diamonds interspaced along it. The cornice has dentils and an egg-and-dart band below the modillions. The modillions are large and have leaf carving on them. The arch around the pediment is divided into square panels with rosettes in every other panel. The cornice has a shell motif ornament centered atop it.

The street level is generally the product of the same renovation project which altered the interior of the building in the 1940's. The original appearance, as indicated in a sketch published in a 1914 newspaper (Daily Mail, 15 August), consisted of two series of double doors at the sidewalk. One group of the doors opened into the theater and the other probably into a store room. The 1914 sketch also shows

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

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Colonial Theatre  
Washington County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 1

(Description continued)

balustrades along the second floor windows, although there is no evidence that they were ever installed. The original marquee, as represented in the drawing, was as large as the present one but not as high and did not carry the headlining name.

The Colonial Theatre building is divided into two sections. The west or front portion with the ornate facade originally had the lobby on the first floor and offices and meeting rooms above. The theater auditorium is located in the east or rear section which is connected to the front portion at the first story level only. The west or front section with the facade is currently undergoing extensive renovations -- new ceilings, plaster, panelling and lighting.

The auditorium, now (June, 1976) being refurbished by Faith Chapel, was rebuilt in the 1940's following a fire. The man who managed the theater at the time states that although the fire was small the water damage was great and covered almost all of the auditorium. In the rebuilding process, apparently everything from the basement to the roof of the auditorium was rebuilt. Some evidence of the original interior is still visible, but this is primarily limited to capitals on the pilasters.

In the rebuilding of the auditorium, a new concrete floor was installed and the theater was converted for movies only. According to the former manager, access to the stage was limited in the rebuilding, and areas and devices used backstage for scenery and entrance to the stage were removed. The decorative treatment of the rebuilt auditorium and the renovated lobby (also done in the 1940's) was and still remains plain and functional and is limited pretty much to fluting on the frames around the poster displays.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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     1914

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The facade of the Colonial Theatre in Hagerstown, Maryland, is representative of the Baroque style of theater architecture popular in the early twentieth century when the motion picture industry was beginning to develop into a major force affecting American society. It is particularly interesting for the decorative detailing of the upper levels, especially the sculptured panel in the pediment.

The Colonial Theatre was built in 1914 for the Colonial Real Estate Company. It opened on Saturday, 15 August 1914, with a showing of the movie "Eagles Mate," starring Mary Pickford. The facade was not completed at the time but was an integral part of the original design as indicated in a sketch published in the newspaper on the opening day.

The theater was designed by Harry E. Yessler (18-- 1964), a Hagerstown architect. Yessler opened an office in Hagerstown about 1905 and practiced in the city until the late 1930's. The Membership Files of the American Institute of Architects show that he transferred his membership to the York, Pennsylvania area in 1939. Yessler collaborated with Thomas W. Lamb, a noted New York theatrical architect, on designing the Maryland Theatre in Hagerstown, located diagonally across the street from the Colonial and opened in 1915.

As a movie theater, the Colonial Theatre closed about 1973 due to a lack of business. The theater is now (1977) owned by Faith Chapel and the interior has been remodeled to serve a religious function. The present owners have painted the first floor level but have otherwise left the facade as described in #7 (see photograph).

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Institute of Architects, Membership Files, Washington, D. C.  
 The Daily Mail, Hagerstown, Maryland. (August 14 and 15, 1914).  
 Morgan, William. Notes. On file at Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.  
 Washington County Land Records, Courthouse, Hagerstown, Maryland.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre (41' wide fronting on South Potomac St.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	2 6 6 5 6 0	4 3 9 1 2 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Ronald L. Andrews, Historic Preservation Consultant

ORGANIZATION

City of Hagerstown

DATE

10 September, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Hagerstown, Maryland

STATE

21740

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE XX

LOCAL     

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

*John N. Pearce* 4/20/78

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*W. M. ...*

DATE

8-2-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGIST AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles ...*

DATE

8-10-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER