

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 *The Guyer Opera House*

and/or common The Guyer Opera House/Lewisville Public Hall

2. Location

street & number U.S. 40, west of Highway 103 not for publication

city, town Lewisville vicinity of congressional district 10th

state Indiana code 018 county Henry code 065

3. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Raintree County Opera House Guild, Inc.

street & number Box 215

city, town Lewisville vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Henry County Recorder's Office

street & number Henry County Courthouse

city, town New Castle state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/>	excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/>	good	<input type="checkbox"/>	altered
X	fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	original site
		<input type="checkbox"/>	moved date _____
		<input type="checkbox"/>	unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Guyer Opera House, opened in 1902, was constructed on the north side of the Old National Road, U.S. 40. Once a bustling thoroughfare, U.S. 40 has seen a decline in traffic since the construction of a new interstate highway nearby. As a result, Lewisville's business district, like those of other small towns along the National Raod, has become relatively quiet over the last few years.

The Opera House, at two and a half stories, dominates the commercial block on which it stands. A large rectangular mass with a pitched gable roof, the building has brick bearing walls on a stone foundation. A large parapet on the street facade conceals all but the peak of the gable, giving an overall rectangular appearance to the building.

The ground level retains its original cast iron facade, with two storefronts, and a side entrance with stairs leading to the second-floor theatre. Although the upper stories are symmetrical, one of the storefronts is smaller than the other, so that none of the ground floor elements lines up with those above.

Second floor windows are doublehung with rusticated stone sills and lintels. The upper half story features a group of three windows flanked by engaged brick pilasters with ionic capitals. These, in turn, are flanked by galvanized metal columns, two on each side, which rest on a metal belt course. The columns were once capped by finials, two of which are in storage. Stylized classical detailing at the cornice level and on the pediment, also galvanized metal, complete the decorative elements on the exterior of the building.

The two commercial spaces on the ground floor have housed a number of businesses over the years. The larger of the two is on the west, and is largely intact with its wood floors, plastered walls, and metal ceiling. This space will be used as a lobby for the restored theatre. The smaller room, presently occupied by the South Henry School Corporation, has been redecorated.

The theatre, itself, is located on the second floor of the building, a common practice that left rentable space on the ground level for producing additional income. The auditorium is approximately fifty feet square with a floor tiered for seating, and a vaulted ceiling sheathed in decorative pressed metal. The roof structure above the ceiling is a wood truss system, and is in sound condition.

The plain, plastered proscenium has a lovely beveled rectangular stage opening with simple painted panels. Original gas light fixtures and several of the original globes still remain. The original curtain still hangs over the opening, with its view of a castle and mountain landscape. Much of the original stage hardware -- winches, trap door, and wood pulleys -- are intact and usable. Dressing rooms are located beneath the stage, and have gas light fixtures. Old playbills remain on the walls from days past.

The integrity of the Opera House is relatively intact, marred only by a lack of maintenance over the years.

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 type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) _____				

Community Center

Specific dates 1902

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Guyer Opera House is significant for its role as a small town theatre and community center, and as one of the few of its kind remaining in the area.

The Guyer Opera House is typical of the many small opera houses or theatres that were built in the midwest communities during the late 1800's and early 1900's. By some accounts there were thirteen in Henry County, of which only four remain. The Guyer Opera House is probably the most intact of these, and the most adaptable to modern theatre productions.

The Guyer Opera House is named for Dr. O. K. Guyer, a Lewisville physician who was instrumental in funding and constructing the building in 1902. "Opera House" is probably a misnomer, since operas were rarely if ever, presented. But the term was more acceptable to a populace that did not approve of theatre or actors, even though they did support the performances. The theatre, which seated 350-400 persons at a time when the town's total population was only 400, was not only the scene of traveling shows, but also served as a community center for dances, reunions, commencements, suppers, and the like.

Like many such theatres, the Guyer Opera House was used for a time as a motion picture house. The theatre, however, was closed in 1942 because the pot-bellied stoves used for heating posed a fire hazard. It has been unused and unchanged since then. The opera house is presently undergoing rehabilitation as a much-needed small auditorium for modern theatre productions.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Weber, Wayne M. and Wells, Cecil, Inspection Report, Opera House Building, Lewisville, Indiana to Administrative Building Council, February 21, 1972.
2. Hazzard's History of Henry County, Indiana, 1922-1906, Military Edition, Vol.II. New Castle: George Hazzard, 1906, pp. 938-939.

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lewisville, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 6	6 4 0 9 6 0	4 4 0 7 4 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	_____	_____	_____
D	_____	_____	_____
E	_____	_____	_____
F	_____	_____	_____
G	_____	_____	_____
H	_____	_____	_____

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot No. 7 in Block No. 1 in the Original Plat of the Town of Lewisville

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Willis, President

The Raintree County

organization Opera House Guild, Inc.

date April 15, 1978

street & number Box 117 telephone 317/987-7896

city or town Lewisville state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Sally G. Sodha

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 18, 1979

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 12/6/79

Sally G. Sodha
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: William H. Brinkman

-Chief of Registration

date 12-8-79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 30 1979
DATE ENTERED	6 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

3. The Courier Times, New Castle, Indiana. Issues from 1902-1912
4. "Store of Lewisville" Souvenir Programme, Lewisville Fair, 1972.