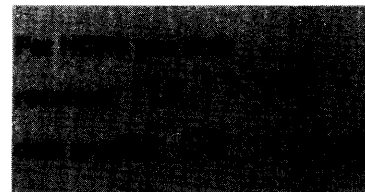


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Mitchell Opera House

and/or common Mitchell City Hall

2. Location

street & number ^{corner} 7th & Brook ^{st.} Streets ___ not for publication

city, town Mitchell ___ vicinity of congressional district 8th

state Indiana code 018 county Lawrence code 093

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name City of Mitchell

street & number City Hall, 6th and College Streets

city, town Mitchell ___ vicinity of state Indiana 47446

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lawrence County Court House

street & number Bedford Town Square

city, town Bedford ___ vicinity of state Indiana 47421

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 ___ vicinity of state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mitchell Opera House, built in 1905-06, is a symmetrical two-story brick building, measuring forty-five feet wide by eighty-five feet long. Its tin roof is essentially gabled; however, at the front end is a low hip with the gable end rising above it, and at the other end a gambrel roof shelters the stage area.

Centered on the east, or main, facade of the building is a one-story entrance and vestibule. Two modern aluminum storm doors, set in a white frame panel, have replaced the original double-door entrance. Flanking the panel are brick pilasters that are repeated at the corners of this vestibule. A stone water table ties the pilasters together on the facade, and each pilaster has a stone entablature. At the cornice level between each set of pilasters is an ornate cartouche. Directly above the doors is an entablature with dentil moulding, which runs across the entire center panel. The whole ensemble is capped by an unadorned pediment.

The east facade of the building itself features a stone water table, about eighteen inches above that of the entrance facade, which runs along the sides of the vestibule and along the front of the building, stopping just after it turns the corner onto the sides of the building. At the second story level are three square, casement windows with stone lintels and sills. A bracketed cornice with dentil moulding runs between small parapets that adorn the corners of the facade. A third parapet wall is centered on the facade above the cornice.

The north and south (side) elevations were originally identical, but the north elevation had two of its nine relieving-arched windows bricked in and a doorway added in 1919.

A two story stage area with a gambrel roof is centered on the west facade of the building. The gambrelled portion of the wall has horizontal siding, with two window openings, symmetrically arranged. In 1952 a small cupola was placed on the gambrel roof, to house the siren for the fire station. Two overhead garage doors have replaced the original eighteen-foot door that led to the backstage area for the accommodation of scenery and props.

Inside the small vestibule were two ticket booths, originally located along the side walls. Just beyond these booths were two curtained arches leading into the seating area. Two "L"-shaped stairs, located in the rear corners of the auditorium, led to the balcony. The stage floor was originally four feet above the house, and the proscenium arch was twenty-five feet square. The arch was fashioned to resemble a French restoration stage. On each side of the arch were large murals, painted on the plaster walls. Two levels of dressing rooms were located in triangular areas on either side of the stage. A catwalk was located around the top of the backstage, used to operate the riggings for scenery.

The seats, balcony and stairways were removed in the late 1940s, when the building was transformed into a Youth Canteen. In 1952 the City moved its offices into this area. In addition, the stage floor was raised, the basement filled with gravel and capped with concrete, and the old eighteen-foot door replaced by the overhead doors, to accommodate the firetrucks and other city-owned vehicles. Only the proscenium arch, the dressing room, and the catwalk were left relatively intact.

Plans are to restore the building so that it can be returned to its original use as a publicly available auditorium.

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/ 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1906 **Builder/Architect** VanHoy and Sons

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mitchell Opera House, completed in 1906, is significant as the only remaining building in Mitchell and surrounding area that once housed the type of outside entertainment available to small towns in the early twentieth century. It is also significant as the former seat of government for Mitchell, from 1952 to 1979.

According to the Mitchell Commercial published at the time, the public hall was originally conceived by three local businessmen, who appealed to the Lawrence County Commissioners on July 3, 1903, to construct a building for public meetings in the south end of Lawrence County. The Commission did not agree to the idea until late 1904. Van Hoy and Sons of Loogootee were awarded the contract to build the structure under the supervision of architect Pritchard. It was completed early in 1906.

At some point the building was turned over to the City of Mitchell. However, it was not maintained and fell into disrepair. In 1916 it was rented to Menlo Moore, a professional theatre man, who remodeled it in 1919. It opened on September 4, 1919 as the Mitchell Opera House, featuring minstrel shows, silent films, local talent shows, political rallies and debates, musical comedies and dramatic plays. It was also on the B.F. Keith Vaudeville circuit. Celebrities appearing at the Opera House included John Phillip Sousa's band, Blackstone, and the silent film star Norma Talmadge.

In 1927 the Opera House closed its doors, although the reason is not certain. The City renamed the building City Hall, and it once again was available for public meetings and entertainment. In 1945 an attempt was made to turn it into a youth canteen, but the attempt failed. In 1952, Mayor Roy Ira moved the city offices into the structure. They remained there until a new City Hall was built in 1979.

It is claimed locally that this building was the only County Hall to have been constructed under an enabling act for Coliseum Building Associations that was passed in 1903 and repealed in 1971. This has not been substantiated.

Plans are to restore the building to its early appearance, and return it to its role as an opera house.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- James M. Guthrie. Thirty-Three Years In The History of Lawrence County, Indiana; 1958; Greenfield, Indiana; Mitchell-Fleming Printing, Inc.
 - A.N. Palmer; Mitchell's Journal of Memories; 1953; Mitchell, Indiana: Tribune Printing Co.
 - Mitchell Tribune's from 1916-1929 (and other miscellaneous issues)
- SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre.

Quadrangle name Mitchell, IND

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
---	---

5	4	5	7	10	10
---	---	---	---	----	----

4	2	8	17	2	12	10
---	---	---	----	---	----	----

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a rectangular lot 132' X 82', bounded on the North by Brook St., on the East by 7th St., the South and West by private property.

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 Douglas L. Hartzell, President

organization Opera House, Inc.

date December, 1979

street & number Box 37

telephone (812) 849-2337

city or town Mitchell

state Indiana, 47446

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

[Handwritten Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 2-6-81

For HCRS use only

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

Lynn A. Beebe

date 4/2/1981

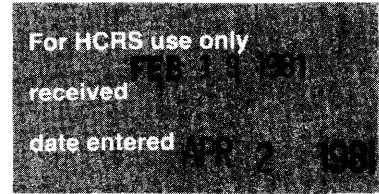
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *[Handwritten Signature]*
Chief of Registration

date 3-23-81

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

- Mitchell Commercial. May 14, 1903; July 9, 1903; March 5, 1906; and others.
- Acts of 1903, Chapter 17, Indiana Code 23-6-2-1