

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 12 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name Bijou Theatre Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1722-1726 Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Marinette N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Marinette code 075 zip code 54143

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. of contributing resources
previously listed in the
National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ___ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date 2/6/93
Historic Preservation Officer-WI
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet

Entered in the National Register

Delores Byers

3/11/93

___ determined eligible for the National Register. ___ See continuation sheet

___ determined not eligible for the National Register.

___ removed from the National Register.

___ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date _____

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ Theatre
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

VACANT/NOT IN USE
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

<u>Classical Revival</u>	foundation	<u>Stone</u>
	walls	<u>Brick</u>
		<u>Stucco</u>
	roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
	other	<u>Wood</u>
		<u>Concrete</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Description

The Bijou Theatre is a two-story multi-purpose polygonal plan brick building whose classically inspired main facade faces southwest onto Main Street, historically one of the city of Marinette's most important commercial thoroughfares. This 60-foot-wide by 112-foot-deep building was designed to house a small 383 seat theatre that was used primarily by vaudeville acts, and the west part of its first story was also designed to house a small, still extant retail store. The building was constructed in 1905, and most of its first and second stories were given over to the theatre and its backstage area. Within a few years, however, the theatre had become primarily a movie house and by 1924, competition from now-vanished competitors had resulted in the complete remodeling of the interior into additional retail space. This remodeling also resulted in the redesign of the first story of the main facade and in the creation of a still extant suite of offices that were placed across the front part of the second story. Much of this remodeled space was itself modernized in 1960, and the original rear elevation of the building (which fronts on Ludington Street) was also remodeled and given a modern appearance. As a result, the only parts of the interior of the Bijou that are historic are the second story office suite dating from the ca.1924 remodeling and the first story retail space at the left (west) end of the main facade. The main facade of the Bijou as remodeled ca.1924 is still totally intact, however, and is in very good condition, making it one of the relatively few historic commercial building facades left on Main Street that has not been modernized.

The Bijou (French for 'jewel') was designed to fit an irregularly shaped lot placed near the triangular-shaped western tip of a city block that is bounded by Main Street, Ludington Street, and Wells Street. This block is located in the heart of the historic commercial center of the city of Marinette on flat land that is located two blocks from the Menominee River, a waterway that serves as the border between Marinette and its sister city of Menominee, which is located across the river in Michigan.¹ The tip of the block faces into Dunlap Square, a space located at the intersection of five streets that has historically been the center of retail and commercial activity in Marinette. The most important of these streets are Hall Street and Main Street, both of which are still partly lined with two and three-story commercial buildings representative of prevailing architectural trends in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. These streets, however, also now contain a number of modern buildings that have replaced earlier ones, the Bijou now being one of only four historic buildings left on its side of the block between Dunlap Square and Wells Street.²

¹ The 1980 population of Marinette was 11,965.

² These buildings are: 1714-1718 Main Street; 1706-1710 Main Street; 1618-1628 Main Street; and 1608-1616 Main Street (the Masonic Temple). All of the facades of these building have been either completely or partially modernized.

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When the Bijou was built it replaced three smaller frame construction commercial buildings that had previously occupied the site and some of the stone basement walls of these buildings were incorporated into the basement walls of the new building. This location also originally placed the Bijou next to a polygonal plan two-story stone-faced brick building (non-extant) that then occupied the western tip of the block and to a triangular-shaped lot on the east which was largely filled with two now demolished frame construction two-story commercial buildings (1720 Main Street and 1647 Ludington Street). As a result, the original east and west side elevations of the Bijou were not visible from the street and were never meant to be seen. In recent years, though, the corner building to the west and the later buildings to the east of the Bijou have been torn down. Now, a new one-story commercial building has been placed to the west of the Bijou and the lot to the east has been landscaped and is now part of a pedestrian passageway that links Ludington Street to Vine Street. Consequently, the side elevations of the Bijou are now either totally or partially visible, a situation that was not planned for by its designer, and the purely utilitarian nature of the design of these elevations is now evident.

The Bijou was originally constructed using a combination of masonry and steel framing. In the ca.1924 remodeling, massive concrete piers were used to support a new reinforced concrete first story floor. The brick exterior walls of the building rest on roughly shaped ashlar stonework foundation walls inherited from earlier buildings (most notably beneath the main and east elevations) and on walls fashioned from concrete block (beneath the west elevation). These walls enclose a full basement story that has a poured concrete floor and the space contained within these walls is now divided into several rooms by modern concrete block partition walls.

The main facade of the Bijou is 60-feet-wide, faces southwest onto the concrete sidewalk that fronts Main Street and was originally nearly symmetrical in design. A very poor quality photo of the front that predates the ca.1924 remodeling shows that the original first story was clad largely in brown brick veneer and that its length was divided into bays by pilaster strips and terminated by pilasters with metal covered capitals. These bays were then surmounted by a full-width lintel (still extant) that is covered over with metal that resembles classically derived molding. The right-hand bay (east) contained a flat-arched one-light over three-panel entrance door that probably gave access to the second story. The next bay contained the main entrance to the theatre, which consisted of a pair of one-light over one-panel doors that were surmounted by a four-light transom that reached to the base of the lintel. The next three bays appear to have contained no openings and the sixth and final bay contained a storefront that consisted of a centered door surmounted by a transom flanked by two display windows placed above shallow bulkheads.

The original second story of the main facade was almost identical to the one visible today and all the original elements are still in place. This story is also clad in brown brick and it was originally five-bays-wide and the wider center bay contains a

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triple window group set into a single broad three-centered arch opening. This opening has a concrete sill and the three windows consist of two smaller one-over-one light double hung windows that have a fixed upper sash flanking a wider center window of the same type. The upper sash of all three of these windows are curved to conform to the arch of the opening.³ This window group is flanked on either side by two segmental-arched window openings. These four openings are identical to each other and they all have concrete sills and are filled with flat-arched one-over-one light double hung wooden sash. These windows are set into a full-width sunken panel that is framed by end pilaster strips and corbelling. The facade is surmounted by a large bracketed metal-covered cornice whose ends were originally capped with hollow metal urn-like finials, the right-hand one of which still survives.

When the Bijou was remodeled in 1924, the only change made to the second story was the addition of a small flat-arched one-over-one light double hung window in the wall surface between the second bay from the right and the center bay. The first story, however, was thoroughly remodeled into a more modern three-bay-wide design. The framing elements of this story (the end pilasters and the full-width lintel) were left in place. A center bay was then created by adding two new pilasters which flank a large two-light metal frame display window. These new pilasters are noteworthy for their classically derived design, which feature limestone capitals and bases at either end of a brick shaft that exhibits pronounced entasis. The center bay is flanked on the right by a single bay that features a canted, deeply inset entrance and a large three-light display window. A similar bay flanks the center bay on the left. The only difference between these two end bays is that a part of the east end of the left-hand bay is given over to a second entrance door that leads up to the second floor. This door contains a single large light and is surmounted by a two-light transom. All of the display windows are surmounted by transoms as well, and are filled with wood panels.

The east-facing side elevation of the Bijou runs back at a 65° angle from Main Street. This elevation is clad in painted brick for two-thirds of its length and the remaining third (which corresponds to the backstage portion of the original theater) is clad in deteriorating stucco. Just to the left of the point where the painted brick meets the stucco are two segmental-arched window openings and a door opening, all of which have been bricked shut. The upper portion of this elevation is terminated by a parapet topped with modern metal coping. This parapet follows the saddle-shaped roofline of the original theater, which reflects the downward slope of the roof over the theater itself and the upward slope over the backstage portion.

³ The early photo shows that there were originally single vertical strips of electric lights on either side of the triple window group. These are no longer extant but the holes left by the fasteners are still evident.

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The rear or north-facing elevation is two-stories in height. While no photos showing its original appearance have been found it is likely that this elevation was unornamented in any way and that it was probably pierced by just a window or two and a stage door and/or loading door. When the elevation was remodeled in 1960⁴ the first story was resided in red brick veneer, a metal and glass door that is framed by a two-light sidelight and a transom was centered on it, and a large group of four metal-framed display windows were placed to the left. A second wood-framed entrance door, transom light and window group was placed at the right-hand edge of the elevation. The second story was wholly covered over with a stucco-covered veneer scored to resemble stone.

The two-story west-facing side elevation is V-shaped when seen from above. It is clad in brick and has no openings or decoration of any kind. Its first story is covered by the building next door.

Little of the historic interior of the Bijou remains. The first story is now given over to two much-altered spaces, the smaller westerly one of which dates to the construction of the building. The remainder of the first story is mostly given over to a single large irregular plan space that extends from the front to the rear of the building. This space now has carpeting placed over the earlier rubber tiles placed on top of the concrete floor. The ceiling has been lowered by using a suspended ceiling and all of the original walls are now covered over with wall board. This wall surface is set about eight inches out from the original, deep enough so that the original radiators that still line the east wall of the first story are actually boxed in by the new construction. Two stairs that descend from this space into the basement story have also been added since 1960.

The second floor entrance on the main facade opens onto a quarter-turn flight of stairs that lead up to central hall off of which a suite of five offices is located that take up the front third of the second story of the building. This area is divided up into offices by plaster-surfaced partition walls, with the eastern-most office being the largest. The remaining offices consist of a separate group of four interconnected spaces grouped across the center and the east half of the front of the building. These offices all have simple wooden window and door casings, but are otherwise unornamented.

The remaining portion of the second story consists of a crawlspace located over the still intact ceiling of the original theater space. Still visible are the original steel trusses that support this roof. The ceiling of the crawlspace is then itself supported by wood trusses.

The exterior of the Bijou is in very good condition today, but considerable damage to the interior is being caused by ceiling leaks.

⁴ Blueprints dated 5/24/60 for the remodeling of the Sengstock Building (as the Bijou was then known) are in the possession of the owner.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: nationally statewide X locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B X C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

 Architecture

 1905 - ca.1924⁵

 1905

Cultural Affiliation

 N/A

Significant Person

 N/A

Architect/Builder

 Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Significance

The Bijou Theatre building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register (NR) criterion C. More specifically, the Bijou is being nominated because of its associations with the NR significance area of Architecture, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Research centered on the Neo-Classical Revival subsection of the Architectural Styles Study Unit of the CRMP and a draft of the Twentieth Century Commercial style subsection.⁶ This research identified the Bijou as a fine, highly intact, representative example of transitional commercial architecture, whose overall design and sense of order was inspired by Classical Revival style precedents.

The Bijou was built in 1905 by Frank Lauerma, Marinette's most prominent retail merchant, and it replaced a smaller theatre of the same name housed in another building Lauerma owned located on Dunlap Square a block away. Lauerma apparently needed all the space in the older building for warehouse space for the large new department store on Dunlap Square that he and his brothers had moved into in 1904. Since the original theatre had been a success, however, Lauerma apparently decided to build a new one nearby and the building that is the subject of this nomination was the result. The new theatre was also a success initially, but its date of construction coincided with the nationwide trend away from live vaudeville productions hastened by the advent of the new motion picture medium. Consequently, after a few years as a vaudeville house the Bijou was transformed into a movie theatre, but its small size (383 seats)

⁵ Marinette City Directories, 1903-4, 1905-6, and 1907-8.

⁶ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management Plan, Vol. 2. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. (Architecture), pg. 2-18. Also, draft subsection on file at the State Historic Preservation Office.

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put it at a disadvantage when newer theaters catering exclusively to the movies were built nearby. By 1924, the Bijou building was transformed into commercial office and retail space and this usage has continued to the present day. Because of modernization and demolition activities in the downtown commercial district of Marinette, the Bijou is now one of most intact of the district's remaining early twentieth century commercial buildings.

The Bijou is the sole surviving example of a building in Marinette constructed as a theatre. When the Bijou was built, the city of Marinette possessed just one active theatre, the Scott Opera House (non-extant), which had been built in 1890 to supersede the older Stephenson Opera House (non-extant). The previous Bijou Theatre was then located in what is now known as the Lauerman Brothers warehouse building (extant: 1713-1715 Dunlap Avenue, NRHP -2/24/92) and occupied a now dismantled former third story lodge hall. The construction of the new Bijou was an important event for Marinette because it increased the types of entertainment available and the low cost of admission brought quality public entertainment within reach of nearly everyone in the city.⁷ Before long, however, newer theatres were constructed that served the same population. "By 1917, silent movies had swept the country and there were no less than eight theatres in the twin cities (as Marinette and Menominee are often called)."⁸ In the years since then, however, all the buildings that were built as theatres have been demolished save for the Bijou. As a result, the Bijou is now the only building remaining in Marinette that represents this aspect of the city's history, although it lacks sufficient historic integrity to represent that part of its history.

Historic Context

A good overview of the history of the city of Marinette, its architecture, and its performing arts and motion picture history is included in the recently written Intensive Survey Report of that city.⁹ Consequently, the history that follows is concerned primarily with the city of Marinette around the turn-of-the-century and with the development of the Bijou Theatre.

The city of Marinette is located on the south bank of the Menominee River at its point of entry into the Green Bay. This river forms the eastern boundary [of] Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula.¹⁰

⁷ Marinette Daily Eagle-Star. Nov. 12, 1904. This issue contains a public announcement of the theatre management's decision to raise evening performance prices from 10 to 15 cents "in order to raise the standard of attractions appearing here." Matinees, however, would continue at the old price.

⁸ Emich, Howard L. "Menominee River Memories: Twin City theatre fare was excellent." Menominee Leader-Herald, Menominee, Michigan, May 1, 1976.

⁹ Sundberg-Carlson & Assoc. Intensive Survey Report: Architectural and Historical Survey Project, Marinette, Wisconsin. City of Marinette Redevelopment Authority, Dec. 1991.

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 12.

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With the need for lumber to build the large fast growing cities of Milwaukee and Chicago to the south and the ready supply of timber in the large expanse of the forests nearby, saw-milling soon became a major activity along the Menominee River and bay shore areas. The twin cities were perfectly situated for the lumber trade. The Menominee River cut a northwestern water highway through the heart of the timber region, allowing the logs to be easily floated down to the mills. The lumber was then shipped south, initially by boat via the bay of Green Bay and Lake Michigan, and later by rail. The growth of lumbering had a major affect on Marinette. As noted earlier, the settlement's population was 478 in 1853. In 1860, the federal census put Marinette's population at 3059. Marinette was incorporated as a city in 1877. The city's major period of growth corresponded to its lumber boom, between 1890 and 1900, the population soared from 7710 to 16,195, making Marinette the tenth largest city in Wisconsin. By 1900 Marinette had gas and electric service, a waterworks system, several newspapers, a number of churches, a new brick city hall and courthouse, an opera house, two hospitals, a new telephone exchange, two banks, intercity railroad service, street railway service, regular steamboat service, more then a dozen hotels and boarding houses, over two dozen saloons, and a variety of other services.

Marinette and Menominee's lumber boom peaked about 1895, when some two dozen sawmills lined the Menominee River and Green Bay shorelines. With the sawmills came other lumber-oriented industries; such as sash, door, blind, broom and box manufacturers. Marinette was a typical lumber boom town. As the new century started, the area's timber resources were depleted and many sawmills began to stop operations. Some of the sawmills were demolished, others were dismantled and moved elsewhere, while others were destroyed by fire. The last logdrive on the Menominee took place in 1917. The last of the river's sawmills closed in 1931.

Marinette's population reflected the loss of lumbering. After increasing by nearly 8500 between 1890 and 1900, the city's population fell by more than 1500 in the following decade. Except for minor fluctuations, the population has remained fairly constant since that time. Marinette's twin city of Menominee has experienced a similar population pattern in this century.¹¹

Not all aspects of Marinette's commercial life were circumscribed by the decline of the lumber industry, however. One of the most successful retail operations in the northern half of the state was the one founded by the three Lauerma brothers in Marinette in 1890.

Back on April 20, 1890, Joseph Lauerma, then 22 years old, of Muscoda, Wis. joined with Donald McDonald to open the Savings Bank Store in Marinette. It was located at 1517 Main St. and was the forerunner of the store that was to become famous as "The Largest Small City Store in America."

¹¹ Sundberg-Carlson & Assoc. Op. cit., pgs. 15-16.

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Today (1971) a third generation of Lauermans operates the business in the block-square four story building in downtown Marinette.

The building was completed by the then U.S. Senator Isaac Stephenson and occupied in 1904. It was about the time that McDonald sold his interest in the company for \$1500 to the Lauerman Brothers. Joseph Lauerman was joined first by his brother Frank, who became a partner in 1892. They were joined by their younger brother, Charles in 1896, and he became the company's vice-president.

The original store was 25 by 80 feet and had 200 square feet of space, compared with the present structure's total of 150,000 square feet.

When the company moved to its present location in 1904, it became known as Lauerman Brothers Company. Since that time the store has had three additions, first in 1913, again in 1919 and finally in 1924 as it attained its present growth when the one-story annex was razed and the entire block completed. The wholesale storage building directly behind the retail store across Vine St. was constructed shortly after the firm moved to Dunlap Square.

Lauerman Brothers Company pioneered a retailing practice that since has become widespread throughout the area and the nation. For more than half a century the store has provided additional savings through its personalized savings stamps. The familiar green books and stamps have become a Lauerman trademark with generations of customers.

Besides its Marinette operation, Lauerman's has branches in Shawano and Clintonville which it opened in 1928, and also one in Manistique, Mich., which has been in operation for 50 years.

Branches in Oconto and Escanaba were closed five and 16 years ago, respectively. The company had a number of branches in sections of Iowa which also are now closed.

Joseph Lauerman died in 1922 at the age of 55. Charles died in 1950 when 76 years of age and Frank J. (Sr.), last survivor of the original brothers, died in 1959 at the age of 90.¹²

The expansion of the Lauerman Brothers Company and other joint and individual activities of the brothers such as the organization and management of the Marinette Knitting Mills (1712 Pierce Street, extant) touched many different aspects of Marinette's existence including the development of its theaters. How this came about is conjectural since it involves both the collective activities of the

¹² Marinette Eagle-Star. "Lauermans Store Opens 82nd Year of Twin City Service." June 26, 1971. Centennial Edition, Section D, pg. 16.

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brothers and the private real estate activities of Frank J. Lauerman Sr. When the new Lauerman Brothers Department Store building (1701-1711 Dunlap Square, NRHP-2/24/92) was being constructed in 1903-1904, it necessitated the removal of the existing three-story brick building known as the Wilson Block (1701 Dunlap Square) then located on the corner of Main Street and Dunlap (John) Avenue.

An interesting sidelight of the present store's construction period was that the three-story warehouse building across Vine Street from the main building was moved from the location of the current (1976) men's department without cracking a brick-not many, anyway.

The red-brick structure had been the home of Daniel J. Madagin's restaurant and confectionery as well as Fairchild's drug store, home of the twin cities first telephone exchange. A picture furnished by John Burke, retired advertising manager of Lauerman's, shows the building was jacked up on rails, jacks affixed the length of the structure at frequent intervals and, at the blast of a whistle by a foreman, workmen took a half turn on their jackhandles. For years after the move, the building housed a theater and was the headquarter's of Dana's Third Regimental Band.

Later, Lauerman's operated a wholesale department and also issued a mail order catalog with orders filled from the venerable building.¹³

A larger addition was added to the warehouse in 1920, resulting in the building visible today. Sanborn-Perris maps of Marinette and city directories make it clear, however, that the space used as a theater in the moved building had originally been a fraternal order lodge hall that only began to be used as a commercial theater immediately before the move.¹⁴ The first city directory to show Dana's Orchestra and Third Regiment Band or a theatre at this location dates from 1903-4. In the next one (1905-6) the theater is named the Bijou and its new location is at the corner of Dunlap and Vine; the location that the building and its theater was moved to in 1904.¹⁵ The next directory (1906-7) lists the Bijou at its current location on Main Street and the listing for the old theatre ceases. The Bijou Theatre that is the subject of this nomination was constructed in 1905, and Frank Lauerman is usually credited with its development.¹⁶

Perhaps the explanation for this unusual departure from the usual commercial activities of Frank Lauerman can be explained by his long-time association with

¹³ Emich, Howard L. Op. cit.

¹⁴ Fire Insurance Maps of Marinette. Sanborn-Perris Map Co., New York: 1884, 1895, 1901, 1910, 1921, 1935.

¹⁵ Marinette City Directories. R. L. Polk & Co., Chicago: 1903-4, 1905-6, 1907-08, 1909-10. The formal opening of the Lauerman Department Store building was recorder in the Marinette Eagle-Star on April 22-23, 1904.

¹⁶ Sundberg-Carlson & Assoc. Op. cit., pg. 82.

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Daniel Madagin, the former proprietor of a restaurant and confectionary located in the building that became the Lauerman Brother's warehouse. Certainly, the improbable nature of the relationship was obvious to the contemporaries of the two men and moved one local historian who knew them both to comment on "the community's never-ceasing wonder at the oil-and-water life-long friendship of Frank Lauerman, Sr., rigidly disciplined retailing genius and worldly-wise Dan Madagin, insurance and real estate man with an outrageous tongue (who was) a ceaseless searcher for practical joke opportunities."¹⁷ Whatever the story behind the friendship, the Madagin-Lauerman Real Estate Co. that the two men formed about the time of the construction of the Department Store eventually became the largest owner of downtown commercial properties in early and mid-twentieth century Marinette.

One of the first ventures of the partners appears to have been the creation of the new Bijou Theatre, whose first manager was William H. Hopper. At first this was a vaudeville house that featured two shows every evening and matinees on Saturday and Sunday and the new motion pictures were shown only as one more variety act. The novelty of the new medium quickly turned into a national craze, however, and new moving picture theaters were soon springing up all over the twin cities area.

Over the years there were several Bijous, one of them located for a time on Main Street in Marinette, another in the present (1976) Lauerman warehouse, which was moved across Vine Street in 1904 from the site of Lauerman's mens clothing department, and a third Bijou briefly on First Street (Main) in Menominee at the approximate location of Bay Electric Co.

Menominee's Finntown, the area straddling north 13th street (Broadway), also was the site of a movie house. It was operated before World War One by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kartheiser on the present site of the Bunny Bread bakery outlet opposite their cabinet shop and was a triumph of teamwork.

The new name of this store-front entertainment spot was "Dreamland" and it shared films with the Marinette Bijou. The evening started with Mrs. Kartheiser singing a few songs to the accompaniment of a piano while a messenger named "Motorcycle Mike" stood by at the Bijou to snatch the first reel of film off the hand-cranked projector and rush it across the middle bridge to Frenchtown and up Broadway to the Dreamland while Kartheiser peered anxiously down the street.¹⁸

Such informal organization did not last long, however, and by the beginning of the 1910s the Bijou was being administered by the Bijou Amusement Company, which was headed by Madagin. Indeed, Madagin's interest in the new theater venture was such that by 1913-14 he was managing the Bijou himself. This provided him with first

¹⁷ Emich, Howard L. "Menominee River Memories: Tidbits from an historian's notebook." Menominee Leader-Herald, Menominee, Michigan, November 20, 1976.

¹⁸ Ibid. May 1, 1976.

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hand knowledge of the operating side of the new industry and the apparent success of his venture coupled with the potential of the real estate side of the business apparently led the Madigan-Lauerman Real Estate Company to decide to engage in the business in a more serious way.

During the 1920s the company purchased Marinette's two largest theatre's, the Rialto (originally the Stephenson Opera House, then renamed the Cozy Theatre, 1826 Hall Avenue, non-extant) and the Marinette Theatre (originally the Scott Opera House, then the Marinette, and later the Fox Theatre, 1730 Stephenson Street, non-extant). The company also built the Strand Theater (1700-4 Main Street, non-extant) in 1920, just down the street from the Bijou. This was Marinette's first theater built specifically for the showing of movies and in the first year of its operation it shared its manager - Conrad Foster - with the Bijou. In addition, the lodge hall in the Masonic Temple (which was built in 1907, and is located almost next door to the Strand at 1612 Main Street - extant), was also converted into a movie house called the Lyric Theatre.

It soon became apparent, however, that Main Street could not support three movie theaters located within the same block, so the Madigan-Lauerman Company made a decision to close the Bijou and convert the building to other purposes. By 1924, all of the theater space was gone except for the roof and the first story had been rebuilt and was occupied by the Parlow Brothers, who conducted an auto sales business from it. Other automobile related businesses (the Gamble Store, the Blue Front Store) occupied this space until the 1950s and these were followed by a variety of businesses, including most recently, a daycare center.

Today, most of the first story and all of the second story are vacant, but chance has resulted in the Bijou now being the only surviving building in Marinette that was originally built as a theater.

Architecture

The architectural significance of the Bijou Theatre building resides primarily in the design of its principal facade, which is a fine example of the transitional stage between late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial building design.

The most outstanding difference between late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings is the gradual widening that such buildings underwent. The principal facades of most nineteenth century commercial buildings have a decided vertical rectangular massing, but this emphasis gradually gave way to a more horizontal massing in the twentieth century. Both trends can be seen in the original design of the Bijou as evidenced in the surviving second story. Here, the relatively broad width of the facade is underscored by the large triple window group centered on it, but this group is flanked on both sides by window openings having a

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segmental-arched design that can be traced back to the early days of the Italianate style sixty years previous. The elaborate classically inspired bracketed metal cornice also looks backward rather than forward in terms of its design.

The first story, however, which gained its present appearance when the building was remodeled in the early 1920s, reflects the mature realization of this trend towards greater width. The emphasis is on the storefronts and every effort was made to ensure that what was for sale inside the building was clearly visible to those passing by. The Twentieth Century Commercial Style subsection of the CRMP's Architectural Theme section gives as one example of that trend the Hoff Department Store building in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, and notes that "The storefront windows are large plate glass sheets with low bulkheads which make maximum use of the storefront for commercial display."¹⁹ This same approach was also utilized in the design of the remodeled facade of the Bijou.

In addition, the history of the design of the facade also reflects trends noted by architectural historian Richard Longstreth, in his recent book on American commercial architecture. In his book Longstreth notes that:

A number of buildings erected between the late 1880s and the early 1900s are transitional in nature. They possess some of the agitated qualities of High Victorian design; however, their ornament may be more restrained and some of their elements are more closely related to one another.

By the turn of the century, a sense of order and unity prevailed in most work. The means of expressing these values became even more diverse than in previous decades. Many examples have a classical sense of order but contain few if any references to past periods. Some buildings are extremely plain, bearing certain affinities to their early 19th-century predecessors.²⁰

Both tendencies find representative architectural expression in the designs of the different stories of the Bijou's facade and the building is believed to be of architectural significance as a result. The Bijou is a distinctive local example of turn of the century commercial architecture. In a community which has lost many important historic commercial buildings, the Bijou represents an important period of architectural design, just after the turn of the century, when the ornamental designs of the Italianate and Queen Anne were giving way to more restrained and utilitarian designs. As noted earlier, the Bijou represents this period in the ordered simplicity of its facade, its subdued Classical ornamentation, and the transition to a more horizontal massing. The building stands out as a local landmark in terms of its size, visual prominence and architectural character.

¹⁹ Draft subsection on file at the State Historic Preservation Office.

²⁰ Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987, pgs. 40-41.

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Approved 2/87

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In addition, the facade of the Bijou Theatre Building is now one of the most intact of all the historic commercial buildings that now line Main Street. This fact is of significance because the property has just been purchased by the Alexander Companies of Madison, Wisconsin, who plan to restore the building as a multi-use project with the aid of tax credits stemming from listing on the NRHP. The Alexander Companies are now in the midst of renovating the Lauerman Brothers Department Store building, which is located nearby, and it is hoped that the combined impact of the sensitive renovation and reuse of these two projects will have a major effect on efforts to restore other buildings in the area.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blueprints dated 5/24/60 for the remodeling of the Sengstock Building (Bijou).

Emich, Howard L. "Menominee River Memories: Twin City theatre fare was excellent." Menominee Leader-Herald, Menominee, Michigan, May 1, 1976.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

X See continuation sheet

- 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:
- X State Historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A	<u>1/6</u>	<u>4/5/0/4/5/0</u>	<u>4/9/9/3/9/8/0</u>	B	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / / /</u>	D	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / / /</u>

 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Part of Lots Forty (40) and Forty-One (41) in I. Stephenson & Co.'s Addition to the Village of Marinette, now the city of Marinette, Marinette County, Wisconsin, described as follows: Commencing at a point in the North line of said Lot 40

 See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

These boundaries contain all the land that is historically associated with the Bijou Theater.

 See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy F. Hegglund/ Consultant for the Alexander Companies

660 W. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703

organization _____ date July 4, 1992

street & number 1311 Morrison Street telephone (608) 251-9450

city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

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Major Bibliographical References, Continued

Emich, Howard L. "Menominee River Memories: Tidbits from an historian's notebook." Menominee Leader-Herald, Menominee, Michigan, November 20, 1976.

Fire Insurance Maps of Marinette. Sanborn-Perris Map Co., New York: 1884, 1895, 1901, 1910, 1921, 1935.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987,

Marinette City Directories. R. L. Polk & Co., Chicago: 1903-4, 1905-6, 1907-08, 1909-10.

Marinette Eagle-Star. April 22-23, 1904; November 12, 1904; June 26, 1971.

Sundberg-Carlson & Assoc. Intensive Survey Report: Architectural and Historical Survey Project, Marinette, Wisconsin. City of Marinette Redevelopment Authority, Dec. 1991.

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Cultural Resource Management Plan, Vol. 2. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986.

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Boundary Description, Continued

(being the South line of Ludington Street) 26 feet west of the northeast corner thereof; thence southwesterly to a point on the northwest line of Main Street, 9.4 feet southeasterly from the most southerly corner of said Lot 41; thence northwesterly along said northeast line of Main Street to a point about 118.5 feet distant from the intersection of said last named line with the south line of Ludington Street, said point being also the most southerly corner of a brick building owned by Lewis Gram; thence northeasterly and northerly following the exterior surface of the wall of said building to the northeast corner thereof in said south line of Ludington Street; thence east along same to place of beginning.