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Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Nevada	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAR 4	DATE 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Nevada Theatre (known as "The Cedar Theatre" since the 1935 period)

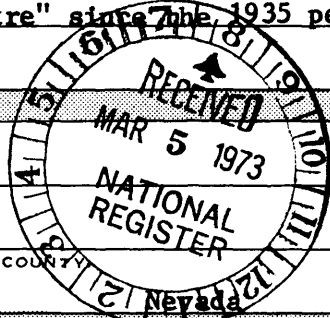
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Nevada Theatre

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broad and Bridge Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Nevada City

STATE: **California** CODE: **006** COUNTY: **Nevada** CODE: **057**



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress In use	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	Multipurpose auditorium	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	Theatre	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Nevada County Liberal Arts Commission (non-profit; public membership)

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 1066

CITY OR TOWN: **Nevada City** STATE: **California** CODE: **006**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Assessor's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: **Nevada City** STATE: **California** CODE: **006**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: **May-Sept. 1970** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: **Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission**
(Duplicate records in Historical Section, Nevada City Library)

STREET AND NUMBER:
529 East Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Nevada City** STATE: **California** CODE: **006**

STATE: **California**

COUNTY: **Nevada**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: **MAR 4**

DATE: **1973**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

No plans of the original building are extant except the extensive modification made in 1938 represented in the present structure. Nevertheless, considerable information about the original theatre exists in other sources. Some of these are listed in the bibliography.

Without doubt, the original building was contained within the brick walls of the present structure. Part of the present brick wall, however, is a recent addition. The side and back walls of the original stage house were made of wood; they rested on a brick foundation which comprised a ten-foot deep basement below the original stage. In 1938 that basement was filled in, and the wooden stage house walls were replaced by the present brick walls.

The original basement beneath the stage contained the dressing rooms and scenery storage space. This basement was reached by means of a staircase in the rear corner of the stage on the Bridge Street side of the building.

An entry to the building was provided in the rear wall near the Bridge Street side.

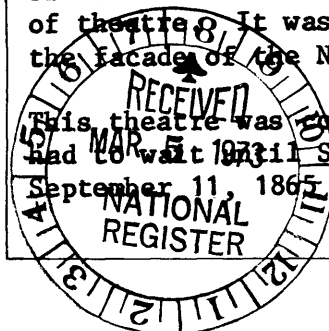
The original stage was 22 feet deep from the proscenium arch to the back wall. An additional apron of six feet was provided between the proscenium arch and the front of the stage.

The original footlights were oil or gas, and by 1906 had been electrified. The proscenium opening was 30 feet wide and 20 feet high. The stage 45 was feet wide.

The original auditorium had a flat floor and a large single balcony. The front edge of the balcony was about 35 feet from the front edge of the stage. The main floor and balcony together held 750 persons. In order to seat a large number of people, the original theatre did not include a lobby or lounge area. The audience entered one of the two large double doors directly into an aisle of the theatre; the seats reached to the front wall of the theatre. Even at that, space had to be cramped to contain 750 spectators. Access to the gallery (balcony) was gained by way of two staircases in the front corners of the building. The auditorium walls were pierced by several windows; three on the Bridge Street side, and two (presumably at the second story level) on the opposite side.

A wooden balcony supported by posts ran the full width of the front of the theatre. It included the building next door, and turned the corner of the theatre building running some twenty feet down Bridge Street side of theatre. It was, no doubt, very similar to the balcony preserved on the facade of the National Hotel.

This theatre was completed by July 1865. Because of the Summer season it had to wait until September for its theatrical opening. It opened September 11, 1865 with the then famous Worrell Sisters. The first manager



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	California
COUNTY	Nevada
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 5 1973

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

of the Nevada Theatre was the famous San Francisco manager, Tom Maguire. Maguire had opened the first Jenny Lind Theatre 15 years before in San Francisco. He subsequently became famous as the manager of the Baldwin Theatre where David Belasco received his early experience. William B. Campbell, a local artist, painted a "beautiful back drop curtain" for the opening.

The brick pilasters and graceful arches of the original building were covered with plaster and stucco in 1938 when the facade was modified to support a marquee and 40 foot neon sign; "moderne" style, typical of movie theatres of that period. The original iron shuttered double door entrances (2) were replaced by a thrust type box office flanked by recessed entrances that open into a lobby separated from an outer vestibule by swinging doors.

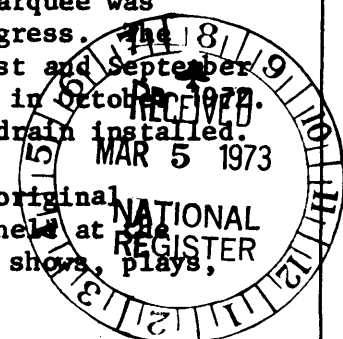
The original stage was removed and the auditorium floor was excavated to lower its level 3 to 4 feet. A movie screen was installed across the rear wall of the theatre and the stage service entrance in the north wall of the building was sealed with plaster. The auditorium floor of poured concrete was rebuilt to have a noticeable rake. The original basement was filled with concrete to support the new floor and a modern heating and cooling plant was installed.

The original single balcony was extended in size to create a large new balcony separated from the original balcony by a wide cross aisle. The resulting "first and second" balconies are supported by an I beam which is bolted to both side walls of the building.

Staircases at either side of the lobby give access to the balcony area. A corridor, of generous size, is located on the second floor serving as a passageway from staircase to balcony which is entered by a central cased opening. The balcony floor has a sharp rake.

A large wooden stage was built in July 1965 for the theatre centennial and remains in use. In May 1968 used theatre seats were installed on the main floor. The neon sign was removed in August 1968 and the marquee was removed in May 1970. Restoration work is presently in progress. The plaster and stucco covering the facade was removed in August and September 1972. The north wall was excavated to its foundation base in October 1972. Found to be in good condition, it was sealed and a French drain installed.

During restoration, the theatre has been operating in its original capacity as a playhouse for the community. Recent events held at the Nevada Theatre have included concerts, musical and variety shows, plays, lectures, and documentary film showings.



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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE California	
COUNTY Nevada	
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(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Architect's comments:

This impressive building has suffered callous alterations to its street front. And although the interior was adapted for use as a movie theatre the auditorium remains essentially unchanged. The structure is approximately 40 feet wide and 90 feet deep. The roof is double pitched running to a low sloped gable at the street. The peak of the gable is about 37 feet above the street line. The facade was altered some years ago to make a wide entrance with ticket window and marquee. And now shows the scars where marquee was removed. Above the gunite patches the original design is visible; four high arches in relief supported by pilasters with nicely formed capitols. The gable is finished with a neat, small cornice. The original exterior brick walls have been thinly stuccoed over.

Francis E. Lloyd, A.I.A.
P. O. Box 177
Cedar Ridge, California 95924



SIGNIFICANCE

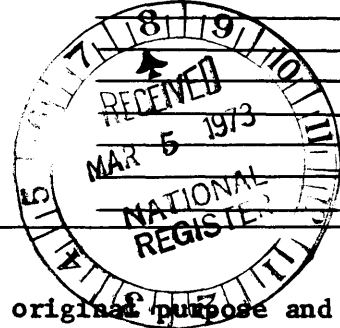
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Construction began 1864; completed July 1865**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Significance: Based on the criteria of original purpose and use theatre historians have termed the Nevada Theatre, in Nevada City, the earliest, original theatre extant in California. Early theatres faced a precarious existence being imperiled by fire, by becoming out-moded or by becoming a financially unsound business operation. Thus those that escaped death by fire were torn down either to be replaced by a more modern, updated theatre or to have their site converted to a more profitable use.

In the opinion of Dr. William R. James, of Santa Clara University, the Nevada Theatre (based on the aforementioned criteria) enjoys a "one and only" status in an area that reaches far beyond the state boundaries of California.

Architectural Significance: The facade of the original theatre gives a splendid example of the architectural style termed "Mother Lode" or "Gold Country". One historian found a "remarkable similarity" between the facades of the Nevada Theatre and of the Ford Theatre in Washington, D.C. If true, it might be more accurate to term the Nevada facade as example of Victorian style architecture.

Community Significance: County officials, concerned with county economy, have labelled the Nevada Theatre the most significant historical restoration project in the county relevant to its economic potential.

During the campaign to purchase the property the theatre was publicized as "The Big E" project with its benefits listed as Economics, Entertainment, Educational and Esthetics. The theatre has brought many benefits even at this stage of restoration and lack of equipment and dressing room facilities. In 1966, Dr. Harry Newstone, Director of the Sacramento Symphony, toured the theatre and declared its acoustics would permit programming ranging from Chamber Music to Grand Opera. The road company of the San Francisco Opera Co. presented three performances in the theatre during June 1970. The drama department of the University of California, Davis, presented repertory theatre for four weeks in August 1970. This included a workshop for children; also lectures for adults. Projected plans for programming include development of a University sponsored summer theatre; a stage presenting live performances to children and young people who have grown up limited to movies, television and recorded music, and attractions to please visitors and residents alike.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NO

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nevada Daily Gazette (Nevada City, Ca.) issues from Oct. 1864 thru Sept 1865
 Nevada City map by Sanborn-Perris Map Company, October 1989, p.8
 Julius Cahn's Official Theatrical Guide (New York, 1906) p.319
 Nicholas Vardac, Stage to Screen (Cambridge:Harvard University Press,1949)
 p.7

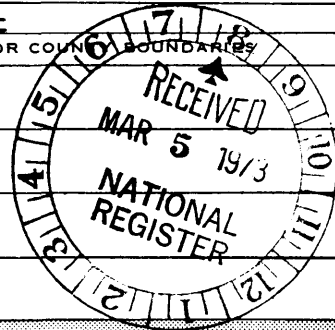
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 15' 46"	121° 01' 10"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **50 x 170 feet**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



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 10/670901
 4347621
 CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission

ORGANIZATION: **Mrs. Leland S. Lewis, Chairman** DATE: **January 10, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
529 East Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Nevada City** STATE: **California** CODE: **006**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 Title: **State Liaison Officer**
 Date: **FEB 12 1972**

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **3/14/73**

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: **3-9-73**