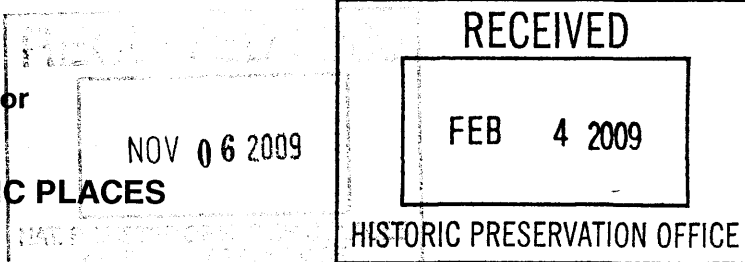


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



1100

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Carlton Theatre
other names/site number The Count Basie Theatre

2. Location

street & number 99 Monmouth Street not for publication
city or town Red Bank Borough vicinity
state New Jersey code NJ county Monmouth code 025 zip code 07701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Amy Cradic Signature of certifying official Date 5/20/09

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 12-18-09
[Signature]

other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival/Neoclassical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lehman, William E. (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
Name of Repository: New Jersey Historical Society, Newark Public Library, Lehman Architectural Group, PC

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Description**

Section 7 Page 1

The Carlton Theatre, known today as the Count Basie Theatre, was constructed in 1926 in the Neoclassical Revival style. The Theatre is located on Monmouth Street at the center of a commercial block within the downtown that is bound by Maple Avenue and Pearl Street in the Borough of Red Bank, New Jersey. Commercial buildings are located to the north, east, and west of the Theatre and a scattering of one- and two-story residences are located to the rear (south). The Theatre's street façade is consistent with the size and scale of the surrounding commercial buildings (Photo 1). The Carlton Theatre has retained many of its original features, and alterations to the original structure have been minor (Photo 2).

The Theatre rests on a brick foundation and is a brick over steel frame building. Its plan is roughly L-shaped, with a two-story lobby section forming the street façade at the north side (Monmouth Street), and a four-story performance space to the rear. The longer arm of the building stretches along the south side of the property and behind an adjacent two-story brick building at 101 Monmouth Street. The Theatre is separated from 101 Monmouth by an L-shaped alleyway.

The building is capped by a flat asphalt roof over the two-story lobby area, and a hipped roof over the theatre area. The lower flat roof holds air handling units and skylights and is enclosed with an approximately 3 foot tall parapet wall, visible above the pediment at the north (main) elevation. The upper roof features simple terra cotta coping tiles around the parapet. A brick chimney rises from the alleyway between the Theatre and 101 Monmouth Street.

The primary, or north, elevation of the Theatre serves as the main entrance to the building (Photos 2 and 3). The symmetrically arranged façade is divided into five bays by fluted pilasters with simplified bases and decorative acanthus leaf capitals. The north elevation is dominated by the Theatre's marquee and an ornamental pediment (Photo 4). The marquee that exists today is not original to the building, although the architect's 1925 drawings for the Theatre show a marquee in this location. The pediment has a carved egg and dart cornice with a central medallion with the initials "S T" inscribed in the center, a testament to the Theatre's name during construction, the State Theater (Photo 4). Winged griffins flank the pediment (Photo 5).

Double pilasters support the pediment but terminate at the roof of the marquee (Photo 3). Original drawings and historic photographs show the pilasters extending all the way to grade; this feature may have witnessed modification when the current marquee was installed. The entablature above the pilasters has a simplified molded architrave. The frieze is simplified as well, with medallions carved above the pilasters. The entablature is finished with an egg and dart cornice.

At the street level, four storefronts with recessed entrances and plate glass windows flank the Theatre's main entrance at the center (Photos 2 and 3). This entrance, two bays in width, is recessed more deeply than the storefront entrances and is located directly under the Theatre's

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Description**

Section 7 Page 2

marquee. The storefronts, feature pivoting, leaded glass transoms that survive today but are presently obscured (one is visible from behind, at the Theatre office stairway entrance). Windows at the second story are 8/1 double hung sash, sheltered by awnings. A terra cotta stringcourse separates the first and second stories.

Side and rear elevations of the Carlton Theatre are simple and undecorated. The west elevation is a relatively unadorned brick expanse, which is partially obscured by surrounding buildings. Rear access to the Theatre at this elevation is via a tall, metal, double door that leads to the back stage area at the south. There is a wooden fence enclosing the L-shaped alley that leads from the north elevation. The east elevation of the Theatre is angled towards the north facade. There are three windows at the third story level that have all been infilled. Because of the building's position on the lot, this elevation is obscured by surrounding buildings and overgrown foliage.

The south (rear) elevation is dominated by a fire escape that extends from metal double doors at the third floor level, spans across to double doors at the second story level, and meets grade near the western side of the elevation. There are also two sets of metal doors partially below grade that provide egress.

Since the Theatre's opening in 1926, little has changed on the interior. While the use of smaller, ancillary spaces may have been altered, the main spaces have retained their original program and many original finishes. The storefronts at the Theatre's north façade no longer serve as commercial rental space, but are used as a box office and storage for the Theatre itself.

When entering the Theatre through the main entrance doors at the north elevation, a sloping floor leads up to the outer lobby (Photo 6). This space has a trompe l'oeil mural painted in 2000 by Andrew Tedesco that gives the impression of marble walls and columns, a marble fireplace, rich drapery and wallpaper. While this mural is new, other ornamental details in this space are original. For instance, the plaster cornice molding, which features a carved acanthus leaf design, has layers of paint that have built up over the years but the design itself has not been obscured. The ceiling has raised plaster work that culminates in a central ovular medallion that supports a chandelier; the same ceiling ornamentation (without the chandelier) appears in historic photographs of the theatre from the mid-1950s (Photos 7 and 8).

Two sets of doors at the east wall lead to the inner lobby. The inner lobby is defined by two sets of stairs, one at the north end and one at the south end, leading to the balcony lobby areas. Both retain their original geometric metal railing and wooden handrail (Photo 9). The north stairs are grander in appearance and hug the wall, creating an open center as they wrap towards the second story. The southern staircase has only one turn, with the majority of the stair along the east wall.

The stairs lead to the upper lobby on the second floor (Photos 13 and 14). There is a large, open well in the center of the lobby that overlooks the inner lobby on the first floor. The floor of the

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**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Description**

Section 7 Page 3

lobby is concrete but has been covered with modern carpeting. The ceiling is plaster with a slight barrel vault that is decorated with plaster ribs spanning the width of the lobby. Two arched openings in the west wall lead to the lower level of balcony seating.

Directly across from the inner lobby entrance is a concession stand set within the opening underneath the stairs to the balcony (Photo 9). Two sets of double doors lead to the Theatre's interior on the west wall. The moldings at the base and cornice in this space are simplified, and vertical wood wainscot ornaments the west wall. The ceiling is decorative, with a diamond patterned plaster molding.

The theater space is roughly rectangular in plan with a curved east wall (Photo 10). The two corners near the stage have been partitioned off and now serve as storage areas and exits to the exterior. Seats have been removed at the rear to accommodate an open sound control booth. The seats were replaced in 2004 in the original seating configuration, giving the theater a total seating capacity of 1543. The concrete floor slopes gently down towards the stage and the seats are arranged to provide two aisles to the stage area and orchestra pit. The theater's plaster walls are divided into bays by Ionic pilasters. The two corners near the stage are defined by organ lofts that are accentuated by engaged Ionic columns (Photos 11 and 12). On the face of the organ lofts are arched doorways with metal organ screens above, decorated to give the appearance of a theater box. The screen itself is an arched opening with a quatrefoil design. The box repeats this design behind two curved dragons over a flowered border, and is supported by acanthus leaf plaster brackets.

The auditorium is separated from the stage by a rectangular proscenium (Photo 10). The proscenium arch retains original decorative plaster relief molding around the sides and top with an ornamental plaster sculpture at the top of the arch. The stage itself is 27' by 85', including backstage areas. The north side of the backstage area contains four levels of dressing rooms, starting at the stage level. The audience chamber is covered with a large central domed ceiling with a plaster sunburst decoration.

The configuration of the second floor offices has been slightly altered to allow access from the lobby. The northeast office has been expanded and modified to create a rehearsal room. The offices retain their original size but some walls have been added to change the configuration of the interior spaces, creating storage closets and reception areas. The interior finishes were updated at some point and are not original.

The upper balcony is accessed by stairs at the lower balcony (second floor) level. These stairs lead to seating in the upper balcony and a projection room toward the rear of the Theatre, along the east wall. The projection room has been divided into three rooms containing lighting, electrical equipment and film projectors. A ladder through the ceiling leads to the domed attic

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**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Description**

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space above the audience chamber's central dome. Doors at either end of the upper balcony open onto the roof areas at the north of the Theatre and a fire escape south.

The basement of the Theatre is divided into four separate and distinct areas, which can be accessed three ways: via the street, the lobby or from the backstage area. Contained within these spaces is the boiler room and other support spaces, including a dressing room, Technical Director's office, orchestra pit, kitchen, green room, storage and scene shop, and electrical service. The basement areas have been finished with concrete on the walls and floors but the ceilings expose the framing of the floors above. The basement finishes and configuration have been slightly changed over time to suit the needs of the Theatre.

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**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Statement of Significance**

Section 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Carlton Theatre is eligible under Criterion C, as one of the most significant works of William E. Lehman, a prolific and important Newark, NJ based architect. The Carlton was constructed in 1926 as the State Theatre, and its name was changed to the Carlton Theatre by the time construction was completed.¹ It celebrated its opening night on November 11, 1926 and remained open as the Carlton Theatre for 47 years, longer than any other theatre in Red Bank. The Theatre exemplified the "Golden Age" of Hollywood and was designed to showcase both live performances and moving pictures. It operated as the Carlton Theatre until December 26, 1973, when it was sold to the Monmouth County Arts Council and operated as the Monmouth Arts Center.² In 1984, the Theatre was renamed the Count Basie Theatre in honor of Red Bank native William (Count) Basie, shortly after his death. The Count Basie Theatre, Inc. was established in 1999 as an independent, nonprofit corporation to maintain ownership of, manage, program, and preserve the Theatre. The Theatre continues in its original use today.

EARLY BUILDING HISTORY – THE CARLTON THEATRE

Red Bank, a coastal town, grew gradually during the mid and late 19th century as advances were made in the shipping and rail industries, and as an emerging tourist trade in the neighboring towns brought greater numbers of residents. Red Bank became a borough on March 10, 1908.³ At the time of the building of the Carlton Theatre in the mid-1920s, there were already four theatres operating in the Borough of Red Bank, including the Strand Theatre, which opened in 1917 on nearby Broad Street.

A newspaper article dated July 29, 1925 first announced the developer Joseph Oswald's concept for the new Carlton. Although no architectural plans for the theatre existed yet, outline plans showed the location of the theatre on the lots. The article went on to describe the theatre:

The theater will seat about 2,000 persons. It will be equipped for moving pictures, vaudeville, and dramatic shows. The theater itself will be approximately 90x110 feet. On the Monmouth Street front of the theater will be four stores, with a wide lobby or

¹ Originally, the theatre was to be named the State Theatre. While it was under construction in 1926, it was also referred to as the Red Bank Theatre, but when it opened in November, 1926, it was as the Carlton Theatre. The name "State" was retained in the building's pediment on the main elevation.

² While some sources report that the theatre closed during the several years prior to purchase by the Arts Council, the Count Basie Theatre retains a ledger documenting attendance, ticket receipts, and concession receipts from January 1969 through December 1973. On December 25, 1973, a matinee of "Snoopy Come Home" was shown, as well as an evening double feature of "Paper Moon" and "Play it Again Sam." The following day, December 26, the building was sold to the Arts Council.

³ Gail Hunton and James McCabe, *Monmouth County Historic Site Survey: Summary Report*, (New Jersey, Office of New Jersey Heritage, 1980-1984), 31.

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The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Statement of Significance

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theater entrance. Each store will be about twenty-four feet and forty or fifty feet deep. The theater lobby will be between the four stores, two of the stores being east of the lobby and two being west of the lobby. The stage entrance for scenery will be from Pearl Street, a strip of land ten feet wide at the rear of the Dr. Rafferty site being used for this purpose.”⁴

Oschwald was serving as developer for a partnership of three investors: Joseph Stern, a pioneer of the moving picture theatre movement; Walter Reade, one of New Jersey’s largest theatre owners at the time; and the Burnes and Schaffer Amusement Company.⁵ The new theatre would replace two dwellings. The clearing of the property to make way for the theatre began on Monday August 3, 1925 and a sign placed on the property claimed that the theatre “will seat 2,000 people and that it will be ready for use by the first of next April.”⁶

The original plans for the theatre were drawn by New York architect Thomas Lamb. At the time Lamb was commissioned, he was already a well-known theatre and cinema architect. His New Jersey theatres include the State Theatre in New Brunswick (1921), the Strand Theater in Lakewood (1922), and the Fox Theatre in Hackensack (1932).⁷ In August, 1925, the *Red Bank Register* announced that Thomas W. Lamb was drawing plans for the theatre: “It will be built of white terra cotta-The interior will be finished in Old Gold and Red.”⁸ Construction documents for Lamb’s design were sent to contractors, but two months later, the plans were recalled. New plans, designed by architect William E. Lehman of Newark, gave the building an even larger seating capacity and a “much finer appearance.”⁹ The new plans changed the seating style from stadium seating to a plan that incorporated raked seating with a balcony.¹⁰ Paul Oswald, the son of Joseph Oswald, oversaw construction for his father, and noted that the new plans would delay the work, but not delay the completion date.¹¹

With the plans for the theatre drawn, construction began in December, 1925. The contract for the construction was awarded to Oswald Construction Company, whose principal owner, Gustave Oswald, was also a son of Joseph Oswald. The contract stated completion of the building by September 1, 1926. Stryker & Stryker was awarded the contract for excavation and hauling of materials, and was just one of the subcontractors hired for work on the Theatre. The contracts were announced in an article that also stated that the new building would be 150 feet by 145 feet deep, principally enclosed with brick with a lobby entrance thirty feet wide. The four stores would have thirty

⁴ “Theater to be Built,” *Red Bank Register*, July 29, 1925, home edition.

⁵ *Ibid.* At the time of the theatre’s construction, Joseph Stern was already operating several theatres in Newark and the surrounding areas; Reade already owned Red Bank’s Palace and Strand Theatres.

⁶ “Demolishing Two Houses,” *Red Bank Register*, August 5, 1925, home edition.

⁷ *Cinema Treasures*, s.v. “Thomas W. Lamb” (by various authors), <http://cinematreasures.org/architect/66/> (accessed April 28, 2008).

⁸ “Reade Theater Plans” *Red Bank Register*, August 19, 1925, home edition.

⁹ “Bigger Theater Plans” *Red Bank Register*, October 7, 1925, home edition.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Statement of Significance

Section 8 Page 3

foot street fronts. The theatre had grown to accommodate 2,800 persons and was estimated to cost \$250,000.¹² The ground was broken and construction began on December 9, 1925.

Construction was progressing when, in April 1926, one of the three investors, Joseph Stern, sold his interest in the theatre to his two partners, Walter Reade and the Burns and Schaffer Amusement Company. The name of the Theatre was also changed briefly from the State Theatre to the Red Bank Theatre, and then finally to the Carlton Theatre in time for the building's opening, a change that would seem to have been linked to the shift in ownership although no formal mention of this was made. The original name of State and the initials ST still exist in the pediment on the main elevation, however, as construction was already underway before the final name was agreed upon.¹³

A month before the opening of the theatre, M.H. Jacks was named the manager. Jacks had earlier been employed at the Strand Theatre in Red Bank, also owned by Walter Reade. An October 12th article in the *Red Bank Register* claimed that in addition to showing moving pictures and vaudeville shows, the theatre would be used to screen shows that would go on to play in New York. With the theatre nearing completion and the finishing touches being administered, the theatre was described as:

...substantial and attractive. It is the finest playhouse in the county. It will seat 2,000 persons. Everything about the place is up-to-date and commodious. The entrance and lobby are very handsome. On a wall in the lobby will be a huge painting, thirty feet long and ten feet high. The arched dome which covers the main part of the theatre is a striking feature. It is painted in many colors. The ceiling is studded with vari-colored lights, numbering about 1,500. The lights are so arranged that the bulbs cannot be seen. The ventilating and heating systems are the most modern and the most approved. A complete change of air can be produced every 15 minutes. The theater has every modern improvement for the comfort and convenience of the patrons.¹⁴

The day before the grand opening of the theatre on November 11, crews were working around the clock to put the finishing touches on the theatre, including the installation of a \$25,000 organ. The theatre opened with two performances, and many prominent business and political figures in Red Bank attended the opening performance of "The Quarterback" starring Richard Dix. The *Red Bank Register* described the interior the day before opening night:

The Carlton Theater is a marvel of beauty, convenience and comfort. Outside and inside it is a veritable architectural triumph...Color and light are two of the outstanding features

¹² "Theater For Red Bank" *Red Bank Register*, December 2, 1925, home edition.

¹³ "Theater Lease Sold" *Red Bank Register*, April 28, 1926, home edition. On November 2, The Asbury Park Evening Press reported that the theatre would open on November 11th under the name the Carlton Theatre. The next day an announcement was printed in the *Red Bank Register* for the "Opening of Reade's Carlton Theatre." No discussion of the name change was located.

¹⁴ "New Red Bank Theater" *Red Bank Register*, October 13, 1926, home edition.

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The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
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of the new building. Thousands of electric lights stud the ceilings and side walls. In the center of the main part of the building is an enormous dome-like sunburst illuminated with myriad concealed lights. A very large glass chandelier is suspended from the center of the dome. This contrivance is brilliant with lights. The interior of the theatre is rich with colors harmoniously blended. These colors will stand out more prominently six months from now than they do at present. This is especially true of the side walls. The material used in the walls is of such a character that time brings out color.¹⁵

The opening of the Carlton signaled a new wave of theatre in Red Bank. The Carlton was a multi-purpose theater able to accommodate numerous types of shows. With its opening, live theaters such as the Palace and the Strand closed their doors, some temporarily, and some permanently.¹⁶ The Carlton thus became a focal point in Red Bank entertainment.

The Carlton Theatre changed over time to accommodate new technology. In September, 1928, the Carlton installed a Western Electric sound projecting system, containing 2,000 feet of piping and electrical wires that allowed sound to be distributed from a picture machine in the rear of the theater to four speakers hidden behind a new picture screen. This was a non-synchronous sound system that allowed the theatre to show "talking movies."¹⁷ The theatre also expected to install a synchronous system, allowing both types of films to be shown. The *Red Bank Register* reported that "only a few New York theaters are now equipped with this device."

Throughout the next several decades, Walter Reade operated the Carlton under several different holding companies.¹⁸ Its continued existence was notable given the closure of Red Bank's other theatres and competition from other forms of entertainment such as television and drive-in theatres. In 1973, the Monmouth County Arts Council received an anonymous donation that enabled them to purchase the Theatre, and it was renamed the Monmouth Arts Center. The Arts Council would operate the Theatre for the next twenty-six years, until a long-running internal debate about the council's mission (to serve the county's cultural community vs. managing the Theatre) resulted in the divestiture of the council and the

¹⁵ "New Theater Opening" *Red Bank Register*, November 10, 1925, home edition. Few historical photos exist of the interior, leaving first hand accounts to provide insight into the original interior of the theatre.

¹⁶ The Strand Theatre, on Broad Street, opened its doors in March, 1917, but was a smaller theater with only 821 seats. The Strand closed in 1950, became a department store, and was then converted to its current use as an office building. The Palace Theatre (known as the Lyric Theatre until the 1920s) was roughly two blocks away from the Carlton Theatre, on the corner of Front Street and Wharf Avenue. This was an early theatre in Red Bank, built in 1912 for moving picture shows and vaudeville acts. The Palace was demolished in the early 1940s. Another early theatre, The Majestic (originally known as the Bijou Theatre), opened in 1911 and is now closed. It was located roughly two blocks away from the Carlton Theatre on Monmouth Street, across from the train station. The Empire Theatre, also on Monmouth Street, was open by 1913. It was a small, one-story theatre built for vaudeville shows and moving pictures. In 1920, snow from the roof of an adjacent building fell on the roof of the theatre, causing considerable damage that ultimately resulted in its closure.

¹⁷ "Pictures Which Talk" *Red Bank Register*, September 12, 1928, home edition.

¹⁸ "History of the Count Basie Theatre," Count Basie Theatre, <http://www.countbasietheatre.org/history.php>, accessed 4 May 2008.

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**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Statement of Significance**

Section 8 Page 5

Theatre, and in 1999 the Count Basie Theatre, Inc. was established as an independent nonprofit corporation to maintain ownership of and to manage, program, and preserve the Theatre.

William Basie, for whom the theatre is currently named, was born on Mechanic Street in Red Bank on August 21, 1904. As a child in Red Bank, Basie did chores for the Palace (Lyric) Theater in exchange for free tickets, and also accompanied films on the piano in the orchestra pit when the house piano player was unable. His musical career was launched when he won first place in an Asbury Park piano competition, and after his junior year of high school he moved to Asbury Park with saxophone player Elmer Williams.

Basie ultimately became a staple of the jazz and swing movement, whether performing and recording his own hit songs, or backing other singers like Frank Sinatra. His single entitled "The Kid From Red Bank" was one of his most famous songs and paid tribute to the town where he was born. Basie performed at the theatre in the 1970s and early 1980s, and shortly after he died of cancer on April 26, 1984, the Carlton was renamed the Count Basie Theatre in his honor.¹⁹

The Carlton Theatre, now the Count Basie, is the only early 20th century theatre in Red Bank that continues to exist in its original form and retains its original use. According to the theatre, Tony Bennett calls the Basie "My Favorite Place," and Art Garfunkel commented "This hall is to a singer what a Steinway is to a pianist."²⁰

ARCHITECT WILLIAM E. LEHMAN

The architect of the Count Basie Theatre, William E. Lehman (1874 – 1951), was a prolific and significant designer who authored thousands of buildings on the east coast but was principally focused on his home state, New Jersey. Lehman received an architectural degree from Cornell University School of Architecture in 1895.²¹ In 1896, at the age of 22, he opened his own office in the old Prudential Life Insurance Building at Broad and Bank Streets in Newark, New Jersey. He was a licensed architect in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Alabama and Canada, but he is best known for his designs for public buildings, residential structures, and movie theatres in New Jersey. Early in the firm's history, William collaborated with his brothers Jack and Lester, who specialized in construction and in real estate. The firm celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1996, and continues today as Lehman Architectural Group, PC and Lehman Construction Corp. with offices in West Caldwell, NJ.²² In addition to being one of New Jersey's oldest and most prolific architectural firms, Lehman Architectural Group is

¹⁹ Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny also played at the Count Basie in the 1970s, during their formative years (personal correspondence, Numa C. Saisselin, CEO, Count Basie Theatre, Inc., 14 May 2008).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ D. Mucchetti, *Building New Jersey: Designs By William E. Lehman Architect*, exh. cat. (Newark New Jersey: The New Jersey Historical Society, June 6- September 1, 1979).

²² The firm name changed from William E. Lehman, Architect to Lehman Architectural Partnership in 1977.

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The Carlton Theatre
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distinguished by the fact that it remains under the ownership and direction of a direct descendent of its founder, Thomas C. Lehman, Jr., the great nephew of William E. Lehman. The architecture of William E. Lehman was celebrated in a 1979 exhibition entitled "Building New Jersey," at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. The catalogue that was produced for the exhibition provides an overview of the firm's work from its inception through the 1930s, one of its most creatively fertile periods.²³

Upon establishing his practice in Newark, William E. Lehman's first commission in 1896 was for the design of a residence at the corner of Sussex Avenue and Jay Street in Newark. This "House for Mr. John O'Hagen" was a multi-story, Queen Anne style building, with corner turrets and a dumbbell plan – a style typical for urban centers in the late 19th century.²⁴ In 1897, Lehman published a book entitled *City and Suburban Homes*, which served as a guide to building homes with "complete and accurate plans and specification furnished together with thorough supervision."²⁵ In his book, William was able to discuss his view of building and various aspects of building and designing a home, expressing his ideas in designing for comfort and convenience, not style. In 1906, ten years after Lehman founded his firm, he was still being commissioned to design residential structures in Newark, such as the two-story Sussex Street dwelling for J.A. Karet, although in keeping with stylistic trends Lehman had turned his attention away from the Queen Anne and was producing simple but elegant versions of the Neoclassical. Other significant early structures in Newark included Temple B'Nai Abraham (1896) and the Progress Club (1899).²⁶

William E. Lehman's brother, David, became a partner in his firm in 1912, and the firm moved from the Prudential Building to the Scheuer Building at Broad and Commerce Streets. In 1923, their address changed again, to a building of their own design at 972 Broad Street, where they remained until the 1970s.²⁷ Lehman's son William E. Lehman, Jr., AIA, joined the firm in 1929 after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania. The 1920s and 1930s were important years not only for the City of Newark, which experienced expansion of its industrial and commercial base, but also for Lehman's firm. The buildings designed by Lehman during this period were not stylistically innovative, but were highly competent and well within the parameters of popular architectural taste. Lehman was a versatile architect, able to move easily from a decorative Interwar Vernacular (as seen in his Borden's Farm Products Plant in Newark, 1927) to Beaux Arts (at the Post Office and Federal Building in Newark,

²³ The exhibition included sketches, models, working drawings and photographs, and drew upon the approximately 5000 drawings donated to the New Jersey Historical Society circa 1977 by the firm. Additional firm archives documenting the first fifty years of the practice were donated to the Newark Public Library's New Jersey Reference Division.

²⁴ The house remains standing today, although modified.

²⁵ D. Mucchetti, 6.

²⁶ The Progress Club was a Jewish social organization; Lehman designed a second building for the Club on 37 Fulton Street in 1930 (D. Mucchetti, 15).

²⁷ D. Mucchetti, 5. The firm's (undated) marketing materials from the 1960s – 1980s provide an address of 972 Broad Street in Newark until circa late 1970s or early 1980s, when they relocated to 301 South Livingston Avenue in Livingston, NJ. Thomas Lehman, Jr. reports that this was due to a combination of factors including the decline of Newark and the firm's increasing reliance on more suburban projects. The firm also maintained New York City addresses during the mid-20th century; they were located at 4 Albany Street and 140 Cedar Street.

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Red Bank, New Jersey
Statement of Significance**

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1937) to a variant of Art Deco/ Stripped Classicism (at Loveman, Joseph and Loeb Department Store, Birmingham, AL, 1936).

Lehman was perhaps at his most creative when designing theatres, which he began to do in the 1910s, during what would become known as the "golden age" of movie palaces. Lehman designed at least six other theatres in New Jersey and the surrounding metropolitan area over a fifteen year period. With the exception of the Count Basie, all of his known theatres have either been demolished or substantially altered.²⁸

The Adams Theatre in downtown Newark (28 Branford Place) was built in 1912, opening as a playhouse. Its design was a relatively simplified Beaux Arts, with terra cotta tile and a Greek key frieze. The Adams remained operational until circa 1986, and most recently has been rented out to film crews, with much of the original interior detail suffering from neglect and water damage. Lehman's Proctor's Palace in Yonkers, NY, was built behind a six-story, Italianate office building facade. It opened in 1916 as a vaudeville house and was converted to movies in the 1920s, closing its doors in the 1970s. It was subsequently converted for office and retail use, and redevelopment of the building is currently being contemplated by the City.

Two of Lehman's known theatres from the 1920s are no longer extant. The Oritani Theatre in Hackensack opened in 1922. It was a single floor auditorium with a tent-like domed ceiling constructed of fireproof fabric. The theatre closed in 1983 and was demolished. The Sanford Theatre in Irvington was also built in the 1920s and is reported to have had a design similar to that of the Oritani. The Sanford closed in 1970 and was demolished in the late 1980s.

Both the Maplewood Theatre in Maplewood NJ, built in the 1920s and converted to show movies in the 1940s, and the Clairidge Theater in Montclair, NJ (1921-1923) survive today, although modified into multiplex cinemas. The Clairidge, like Proctor's Palace, was a component of a larger commercial enterprise that held the theatre at its core but provided important street presence for the entrance and lobby.

Lehman's practice became increasingly focused by the end of the 1930s and into the 1940s and 50s on institutional and commercial projects, including a number of public school buildings for the City of Newark and surrounding municipalities (one of the finest of which was the Hoboken High School, a local interpretation of the International Style). The ornamental, historicizing designs of the 1910s and 20s that had characterized Lehman's theatrical production were replaced by minimalist schemes in the Modern vernacular. In the mid-1960s, the firm was still contributing buildings of importance to the Newark City skyline, the most notable of which was the Peter D. Rodino Federal Office Building,

²⁸ For information on all of Lehman's known theatres, see <http://cinematreasures.org/architect/66/> (accessed April 28, 2008). This website has listings for thousands of theatres, and can be searched by architect or location. The entries are user posted.

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completed in 1967 (with W.O. Biernacki-Poray of Montclair).²⁹ Community redevelopment projects occupied a portion of the firm's attention, as they completed designs for Belle Mead Military Housing, an urban renewal development on Hill Street in Newark, and Housing for the Elderly in Long Beach, LI. Commercial projects during the second half of the twentieth century included work for New Jersey Bell (Bell was a significant client, providing the firm with over 40 projects), Sears (more than 60 buildings), Woolworth, and W.T. Grant. By the 1970s and 1980s, the firm was increasingly producing commercial work for chains such as Kids "R" Us and Toys "R" Us (throughout the eastern US), and designing shopping "centers" such as Liberty Village Factory Outlets (Flemington, NJ), Olde Shrewsbury Village (Shrewsbury, MA), and Woodbury Common Factory Outlets (Central Valley, NY).³⁰

CURRENT RESTORATION EFFORTS

Today, Lehman's Count Basie Theatre is undergoing restoration. August 21, 2004, marked the 100th anniversary of Count Basie's birth and the opening of the Theatre after the first phase of its restoration project. The Theatre replaced its 1,400 seats with 1,543 historically accurate seats, returning to the original seating configuration.³¹ In 2007, the Count Basie Theater, Inc. retained Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC to prepare a Concept Design for restoration, renovation, and possible expansion. A report was prepared which included a building conditions study, a programming needs study, recommendations and cost estimates for six scopes of work to address various repairs and expansions needed to not only bring the building up to code, but to further its mission of providing the community with a variety of quality arts programs and educational opportunities.

Farewell Mills Gatsch has begun restoration efforts. Restoration of the auditorium and lobby includes plaster repairs, decorative painting, and custom lighting, new mechanical and electrical systems, new patron lounge, and improvement of theatre style lighting and audio systems.

²⁹ Lehman also completed an addition to the Red Bank Public Library at 84 West Front Street in 1968. (R. Gabrielan, *Images of America: Red Bank*. Dover: Arcadia Publishing, 1995, 58; for a brief history of the library, see http://www.lmxac.org/redbank/history_of_the_library_building.htm (accessed 15 September 2008).

³⁰ William E. Lehman Architect Archives, West Caldwell, NJ. Archives include miscellaneous marketing materials, construction documents, photographs, and other memorabilia; they were made available by Thomas C. Lehman, Jr.

³¹ "Count Basie reopening after \$1M in renovations", *Asbury Park Press*, August 20, 2004, home edition.

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Red Bank, New Jersey
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**The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Verbal Boundary Description**

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Boundary Description

The Count Basie Theatre is located in the Borough of Red Bank, Monmouth County, New Jersey at 99 Monmouth Avenue, Block 43, Lot 3. The boundary lines of the nominated property follow the property lines as indicated on the attached Site Plan. The Site Plan is from a survey conducted on January 21, 1998 by Seneca Survey Company Incorporated and is included in the Accompanying Documentation pages.

Boundary Justification

Boundary lines follow legally recorded property lines.

Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs:

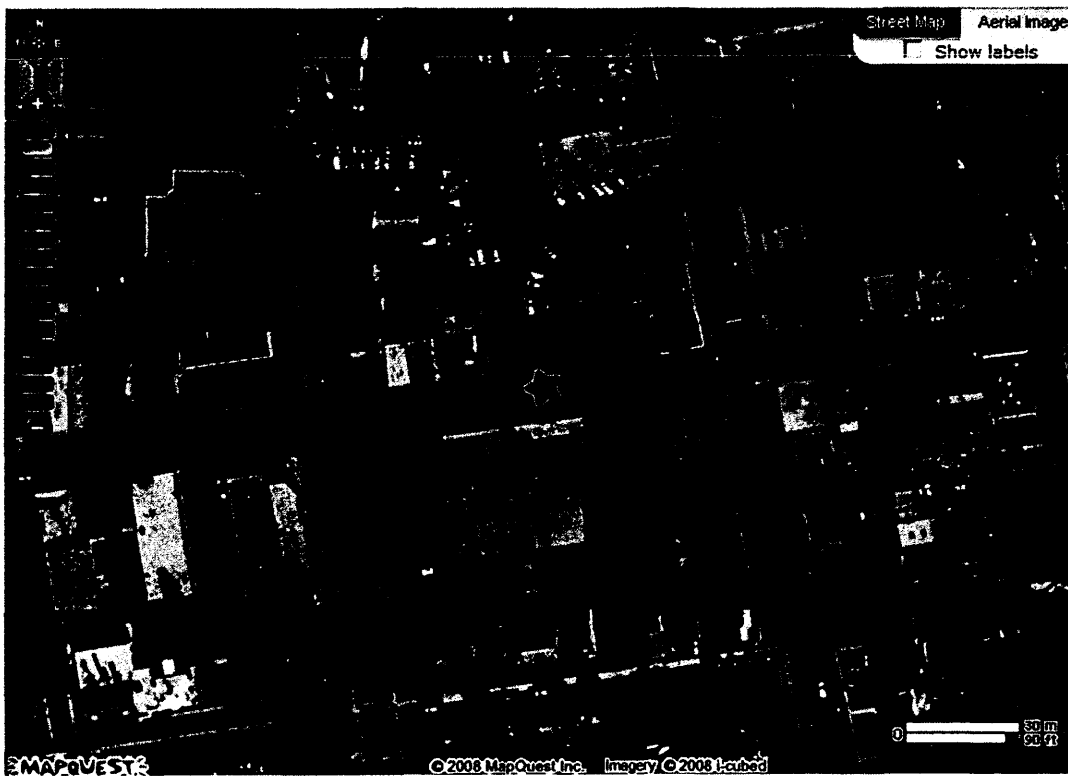
5. Location of Digital Files: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

<u>Photo</u>	<u>Subject/Location</u>	<u>Photographer</u>	<u>Date</u>
Photo 1	Aerial view of Red Bank from Theatre roof	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 2	North elevation, view looking south	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 3	Detail, north elevation, marquee and box office entrance	Nicole McKairnes	June 19, 2007
Photo 4	Detail, north elevation, terra cotta pediment	Andrew Burian	February 19, 2008
Photo 5	Cast stone griffin at north façade pediment	Nicole McKairnes	June 19, 2007
Photo 6	Trompe L'oeil mural by Andrew Tedesco at first floor outer lobby	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 7	View from outer lobby towards main entrance on north facade	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 8	Plaster ceiling in first floor outer lobby	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 9	Concession stand under stairway at first floor lobby	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 10	Theatre interior, looking west toward stage from second floor balcony	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 11	Interior view of unrestored organ loft	Nicole McKairnes	June 19, 2007
Photo 12	Interior view of restored organ loft	Nicole McKairnes	June 19, 2007
Photo 13	Second floor lobby showing plaster arches, crests, and well to lower lobby	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007
Photo 14	View of second floor lobby from the north	Nicole McKairnes	June 18, 2007

The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation

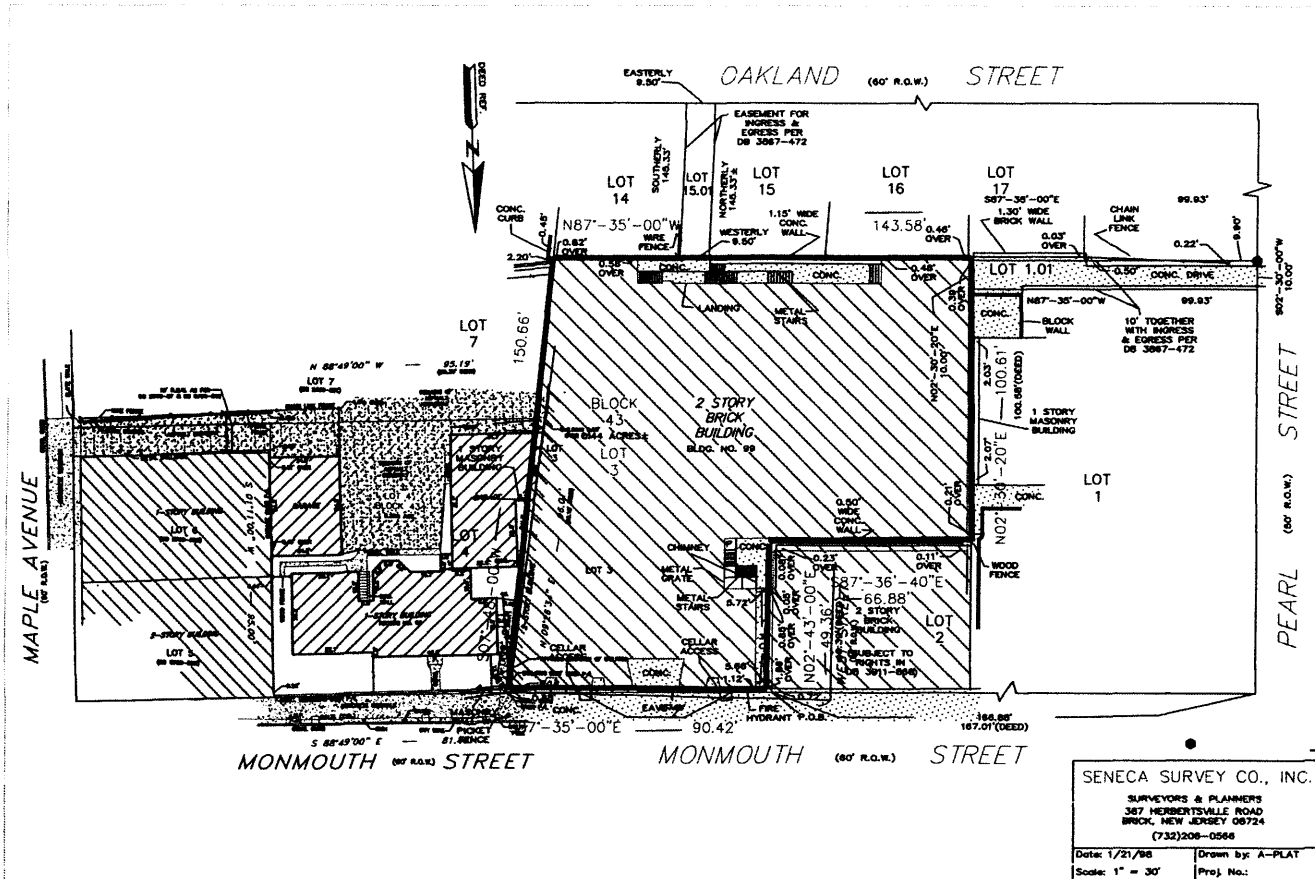


Location of Count Basie Theatre within northern New Jersey.



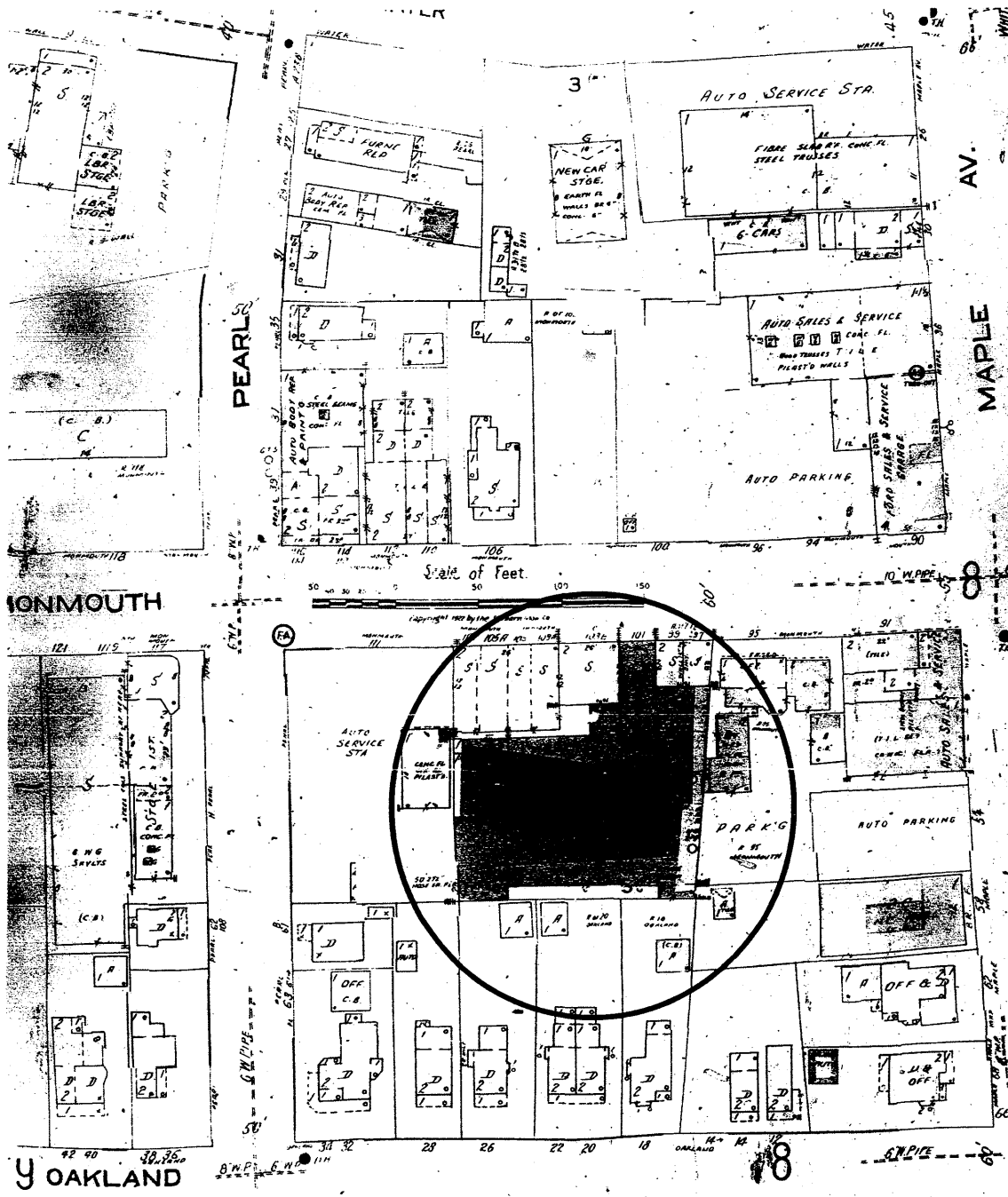
Location of Count Basie Theatre within the Borough of Red Bank.

The Carlton Theatre
 Red Bank, New Jersey
 Accompanying Documentation



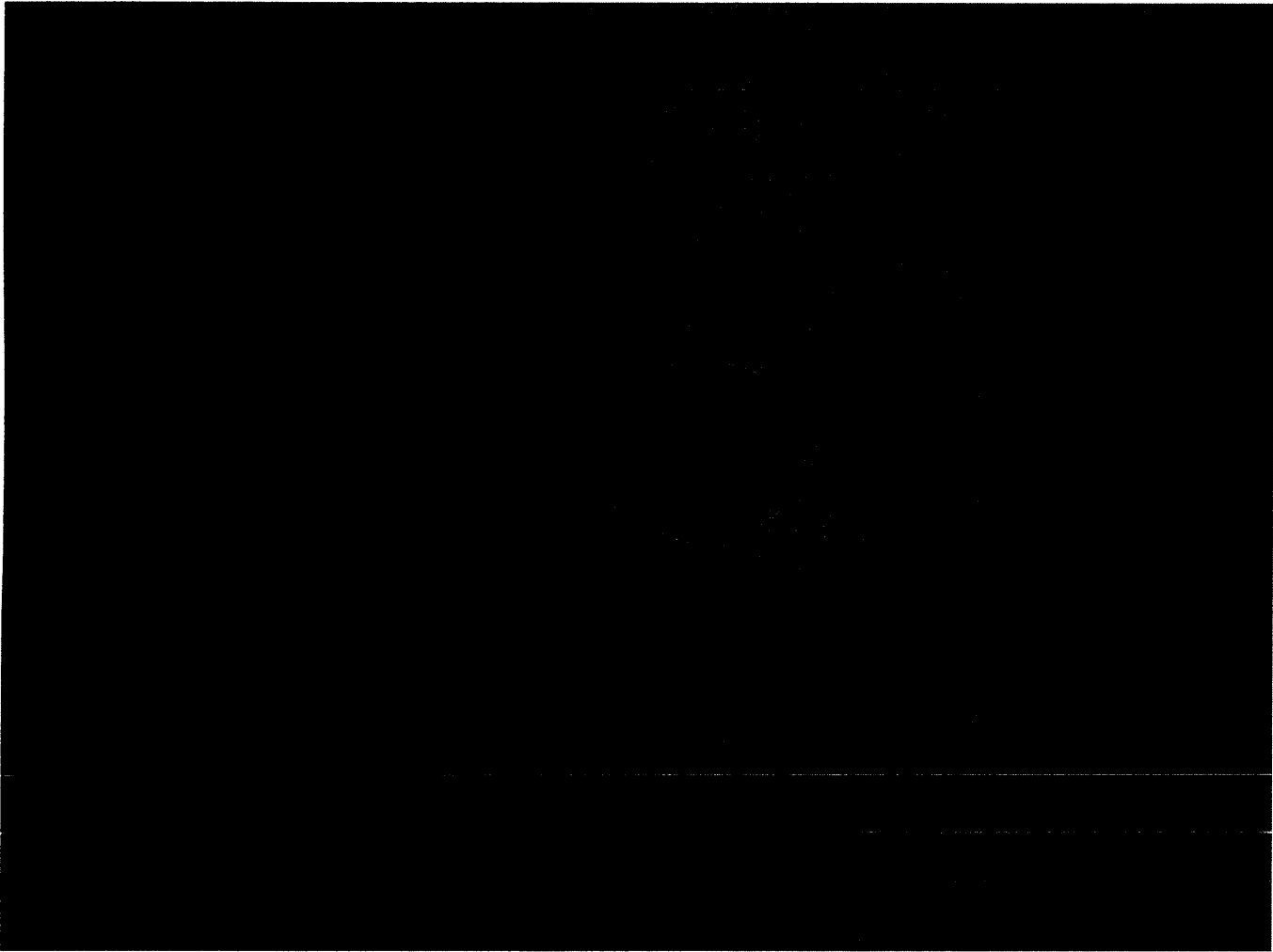
Survey of Block 43 by Seneca Survey Company, Inc., January 21, 1998. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



The Sanborn Map of 1922, updated to 1969 shows the Count Basie Theatre as "Carlton Theatre."
Sanborn Map Company, 1922/1969. (Courtesy Special Collections and University Archives,
Rutgers University Libraries.)

The Carlton Theatre
Red Bank, New Jersey
Accompanying Documentation



Monmouth Street and the Carlton Theatre, in 1941. (Franklin Survey Company, *Plat Book of Monmouth County, New Jersey Vol. 1*, 1941, plate 41. Courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.)

CHRYSANTHEMUMS
In Pots, \$1.00
WILLIAM MEARS
RUMSON, NEW JERSEY.
Phone 361 Rumson.

STRAND THEATRE
FRANCE ST. RED BANK, N. J.

Today, Wednesday, Nov. 10th
Lola Moran and Louise Dresser

"PADLOCKED"

Tomorrow—MATINEE ONLY
Rudolph Valentino and Alice Terry

"The Conquering Power"

MADDEN'S
THREE WAREHOUSE STORES

Formerly Connected with Liggett
In the Red Bank Candy Kitchen
A corporation drug store in Red Bank made about 17% percent net profit last year. How much of this profit did they contribute towards the affairs conducted by the various churches, benevolent and charitable organizations either by purchasing tickets or advertising in their programs? The answer is NONE. FAVORITE YOUR LOCAL DRUGGIST. HE LIVES HERE. HE INVESTS HIS MONEY HERE TO YOUR INTEREST AND TO HELP HIM CONTRIBUTE TO ALL CHARITABLE AND BENEVOLENT CAUSES. MADDEN SELLS THE SAME MEDICINE AT THE SAME PRICE AS THE CHAIN STORES AND DELIVERS. CALL RED BANK 1619.

Specials For November
FOUNTAIN PEN
STATIONERY
BATH POWDER
COCOA-NUT OIL SHAMPOO
WHISK BROOMS
LITTLE CHEF ELECTRIC STOVE
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ONLY
LUNCH
NOTICE

WITH THE LEADERSHIP
Party of Members.
A certain party was given last week for the Carlton Theatre. The party was largely in the nature of a "Red Bank" party and part of the party was given at the Carlton Theatre. The party was given at the Carlton Theatre. The party was given at the Carlton Theatre.

THEIR COULDF WEDDING
The wedding of Miss Louise Dresser and Mr. William Mears was held at the Carlton Theatre. The wedding was held at the Carlton Theatre. The wedding was held at the Carlton Theatre.

Top Soil and Sod for Sale
Good rich top soil for sale by the load or carload. A quantity of good and for sale.
Douglas R. Bullock Co., Inc.
Red Bank, New Jersey.
P. O. Box 151
Phone 1011

LE BON TEMPS
47 Monmouth Street, Red Bank, N. J.

Opening Dance
—TONITE—
Wednesday, Nov. 10th
Music Broadcast Direct From Floor.


DON'T LONG FOR JEWELRY — OWN IT
THE NECESSARY of goods that give the elegance that is the mark of distinction. The elegance that is the mark of distinction. The elegance that is the mark of distinction.

AMERICAN
A BRAND STREET, RED BANK, N. J.

This is National Canned Food, Wash and a Very Good Thing to Lay in a Little Stock.

<p>DEL MONTE SLICED Pineapple Large Can 25c</p>	<p>DEL MONTE Asparagus Large Can 29c</p>	<p>RED RING Sweet Peas 3 Cans for 23c</p>
<p>DEL MONTE Tomatoes No. 2 Size, 15c</p>	<p>Red Beans Large Can, 15c</p>	<p>Red Beans Large Can, 15c</p>
<p>Red Beans Large Can, 15c</p>	<p>Red Beans Large Can, 15c</p>	<p>Red Beans Large Can, 15c</p>

GALA OPENING
Thursday Evening,
November 11th
READE'S CARLTON
"The Theatre Beautiful"
KEITH-ALBEE VAUDEVILLE
—ALSO—
RICHARD DIX
QUARTERBACK



Opening Night—2 Complete Shows—8:30 and 9:00 P. M.
Thereafter Matinee Daily at 2:40 P. M.—Evenings 8:45 and 9:00 P. M.
Sundays and Holidays Closed

Note—Friday and Saturday Only

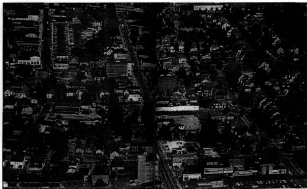
GENE TUNNEY
In the 9th Chapter of
"THE FIGHTING MARINE"

The Following Prices Will Prevail at Reade's Carlton:

<p>Matinee Loges, 50c Orchestra, 30c Balcony, 25c</p>	<p>Evening Loges, 75c Orchestra, 50c Balcony, 40c Saturday and Holidays All Seats 50c Children, 25c Loges 75c</p>
--	--

Coming Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, November 15, 16, 17
"The Temptress"
Antonio Moreno and Greta Garbo and KEITH VAUDEVILLE

Advertisement in Red Bank Register for the opening of the theatre, November 10, 1926. (Courtesy Red Bank Register Archives.)



1940s aerial view of Monmouth Street showing massing of the theatre behind its street facade.
(Courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.)



1956 view of north façade; note rental shops on either side of the theatre's main entrance.
(C) Kathy Dorn Severini, Dorn's Classic Images, Used by Permission.



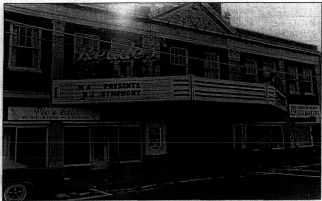
1956 image of theatre patrons lined up outside the entrance under the marquee. (C) Kathy Doem Severini, Doem's Classic Images, Used by Permission.



Interior view of the theatre space during a 1956 performance of the Marine Band (C) Kathy Dorn Severini, Dorn's Classic Images, Used by Permission.



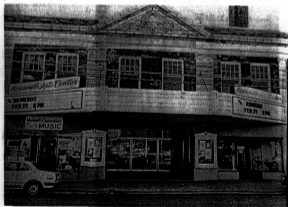
1956 image of the Kiddie Club Kids lined up in the theatre's inner lobby. (C) Kathy Dorn Severini, Dorn's Classic Images, Used by Permission.



Reade's Carlton Theatre, January 1973. (Gabrielan, Randall. *Images of America: Red Bank*. Dover: Arcadia Publishing, 1995.)



The Carlton Theatre, 1975 photo. The sign has been changed, but otherwise the façade remains unaltered two years after it closed. (Randy Gabrielian, *Images of America: Red Bank Vol. 3*, 1998, page 88. Courtesy Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.)



Exterior photo of the Count Basie Theatre when it was known as the Monmouth Arts Center, after 1973. (Robert Van Benthuyssen and Audrey Kent Wilson, *Monmouth County: A Pictorial History*, 1983, page 194. Courtesy New Jersey State Library.)



William E. Lehman, undated photograph. Courtesy Lehman Architectural Group, PC.



FRONT - ELEVATION

William E. Lehman Architect. Residence for J.A. Karet, Sussex Street, Newark, NJ, 1906.
Courtesy Lehman Architectural Group, PC.



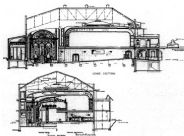
William E. Lehman Architect, Adams Theatre, Newark, NJ, 1912. Photo Jules Spohn, 2002.
(<http://virtualnewarknj.com/tusind/images/theatres/adams/adams2002is.jpg>)



William E. Lehman Architect, Oritani Theatre, Hackensack, NJ, 1922. Photo undated.
(<http://www.hackensacknow.com/images/postcardOritani.jpg>)



William E. Lehman Architect, Maplewood Theatre, Maplewood, NJ, 1920s. Photo S. Weintraub, 1973. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sweintraub/244966710/in/set-72157594274871640/>



William E. Lehman Architect, Clairidge Theatre, Montclair, NJ, 1921. Courtesy Lehman Architectural Group, PC.



William E. Lehman Architect, Clairidge Theatre, Montclair, NJ, 1921-23. Photo 1951.
(<http://www.quickpix.com/JPGMLIBRARY/IMAGE/025332/91.jpg>)