

2-19-79

PH0023961

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: | |
| COUNTY: | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | NOV 15 1973 |

1. NAME

COMMON:
MELODEON HALL

AND/OR HISTORIC:
MELODEON HALL

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
210 NORTH MORGAN STREET

CITY OR TOWN:
RUSHVILLE

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE INDIANA | CODE 18 | COUNTY: RUSH | CODE 139 |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|

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 type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) NONE |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
MR. THOMAS W. SMITH, MRS. WENDELL WILLKIE, MR. WAYNE BENEDICT

STREET AND NUMBER:
R. 1, ARLINGTON, IND.; R. 5, RUSHVILLE, IND.; 415 W. 9th, RUSHVILLE

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| CITY OR TOWN: ARLINGTON, RUSHVILLE, RUSHVILLE | STATE: INDIANA | CODE 18 |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
RUSH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

STREET AND NUMBER:
NONE

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| CITY OR TOWN: RUSHVILLE | STATE: INDIANA | CODE 18 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

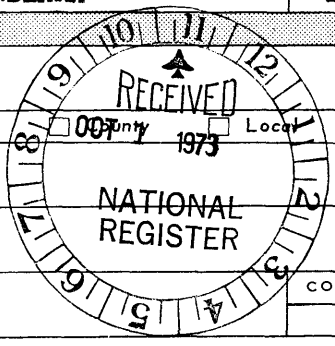
TITLE OF SURVEY:
NONE

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

| | | |
|---------------|--------|-------|
| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE: |
|---------------|--------|-------|



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Melodeon Hall is located on the second floor of a two-story brick building constructed in 1872. The entrance is on Morgan Street, up a flight of stairs eight feet wide, which opens into a large hall or vestibule, twelve feet wide, running back eighty feet, which is the entire length of the building. The audience room is approximately 58 feet wide by 42 feet long.

There are twelve large windows on the south and four on the north. The ceiling is twenty feet high. The stage, which was removed several years ago, is on the east end of the Hall. The proscenium, however, is still in place.

During the early years of Melodeon Hall, it was lighted by fourteen large bracket gas lamps. Each bracket had six burners and each burner had six jets of light, making a total of 504 jets.

During World War II, a temporary stage was built to be used by dance bands for American Legion dances. This stage is located to the right of the original stage. Once restoration is underway, this stage would be removed.

Over the years since the Hall has not been used, there has been some deterioration in the plaster ceiling and portions of the walls backstage. A false ceiling was also placed backstage during the war. It is in bad repair and will be removed once restoration begins. Above this false ceiling, however, there are many artifacts from the early history of the Hall. One poster announcing an upcoming play is still visible, plus the names of performers written in chalk from 1882.

The ceiling of the Hall itself is supported by iron columns which rest on three load bearing brick walls that extend through to the basement.

The lower floor is occupied by three shops; a photo studio, an associated art gallery, a floor covering shop, and a tavern. The original front of the building is maintained, with the exception of the floor covering shop and the tavern.



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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" 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

For over a half century Melodeon Hall served as the cultural center for Rush County, Indiana. In addition, it was the social and civic center as well. It was the site for live theater, lectures, concerts, dances, political gatherings, high school graduations. Furthermore, some of the noted performers of the last century appeared there, not to mention local performances by drama groups, school children, and others.

The first use of the Hall was for a lecture given by Lillian Edgerton on December 18, 1872. The following day all the Sunday School classes in the county held a successful meeting there. In 1873 the Catholic Fair was held in the Hall.

Blind Tom, an exceptionally gifted Black musician, blind from birth, performed in Melodeon Hall. Tom Thumb, the midget also appeared there. Recitals were given by James Whitcomb Riley, famous Hoosier poet, and Bill Nye. Hamlet was performed in Melodeon Hall by the famous Shakespearian actor, Walker Whiteside. For many years Uncle Tom's Cabin was an annual favorite of local theater goers. During the annual county fair, members of the Harris Repertoire Company of the Riley Opera Company would appear in the Hall.

With the invention of the motion picture, Melodeon Hall was used as a Nickelodeon for several years.

Architecturally, Melodeon Hall is typical of the Victorian Era. It is also typical of many of the buildings in the downtown area of Rushville, Indiana. Many examples of typical Victorian architecture can be seen around Indiana in the form of homes and private dwellings. Few restored Victorian Era buildings, however, exist. Melodeon Hall still retains the horseshoe arched cornices above the windows and the ornate brackets under the roof-overhang. It is hoped that the restoration of the Hall will lead to further restoration of the other buildings that reflect the period. Furthermore, it is planned to use Melodeon Hall for live theater again, as well as, for the cultural and social hub of the area. No adequate structure for this purpose exists in the county, and it is felt that its historic significance plus its revitalization make its restoration most worthwhile.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newspapers:

Rushville Republican, November 19, 1872 issue
 Rushville Republican, October 22, 1940 issue

Other documents:

Photograph of Melodeon Hall stage, date 1908, Rush County Chamber of Commerce
 Indiana History Bulletin, August 1972 issue
 High School graduation programs, 1892, 1894, Rush County Chamber of Commerce
 Bill of sale for land on which Hall stands, dated 1833, Rush Co. C of C
 Theater Program, dated March 5, 1875, Rush Co. Chamber of Commerce

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

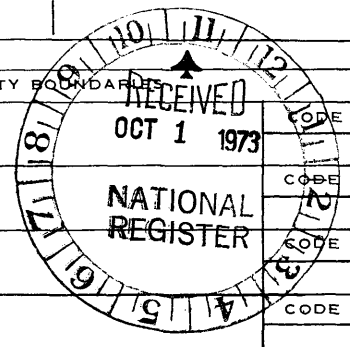
| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 39° 36' 30" | 85° 26' 43" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

UTM
 16/633400
 4385230
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|----------------|------|---------|------|
| NOT APPLICABLE | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Paul W. Barada, Executive Secretary

ORGANIZATION: **Rush County Chamber of Commerce** DATE: **August 30, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Rush County Courthouse - Third Floor

CITY OR TOWN: **Rushville,** STATE: **Indiana 46173** CODE: **18**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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: *Joseph D. Clark*

Title: **Indiana State Liaison Officer**

Date: **September 24, 1973**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ann A. Connolly
~~Chief, Office of Historic Preservation~~
 Associate Director, Professional Services

Date: **NOV 15 1973**

ATTEST:

Charles Affenyo
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: **11-9-73**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE | |
| INDIANA | |
| COUNTY | |
| RUSH | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | NOV 15 1973 |

(Number all entries)

1. Section 4 of National Register of Historic Places, Inventory - Nomination Form, Form 10-300 (July 1969) lists three owners of Melodeon Hall. As a note of explanation, the building which houses Melodeon Hall is owned by three parties, based on the shops on the lower floor. For example, the owner of the tavern on the extreme eastern end of the building, owns the portion of Melodeon Hall above his tavern. This is true of the two remaining owners. Long term leases have been obtained on Melodeon Hall from all the owners by the Rush County Chamber of Commerce. Plans are also being developed to one day purchase Melodeon Hall from its owners.

