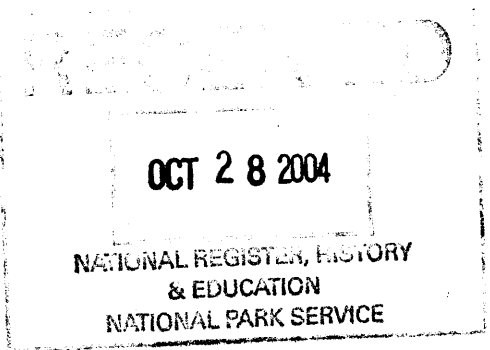


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**



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 an 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 Fowler Theatre  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 111 East 5th Street N/A  not for publication  
city or town Fowler N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Benton code 007 zip code 47944

**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 36CFR 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.)  
  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date 10-26-04  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Signature of the Keeper Gordon H. Beall Date of Action 12/6/04

Fowler Theatre  
Name of Property

Benton IN  
County and State

**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
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN: Art Deco  
MODERN: Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
METAL  
roof ASPHALT  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1940-1954

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Eugene, Alexander K.

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 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic 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:

Benton Review, Fowler, Indiana

Fowler Theatre  
Name of Property

Benton IN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	472700	4496170	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Amy J. Bott; Amy Walker  
organization Prairie Preservation Guild, Ltd.; DHPA date 05-25-2004  
street & number 608 E. 6th St. telephone 765/ 884-0708  
city or town Fowler state IN zip code 47944

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Prairie Preservation Guild, Ltd--Karen Moyars, President  
street & number P.O. Box 527 telephone 765/ 884-1902  
city or town Fowler state IN zip code 47944

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

**Description**

The Fowler Theatre is located in the Town of Fowler (pop. 2,519) in rural Benton County in northwest Indiana. It occupies a site on East Fifth Street in the downtown business district. This balanced one-story building was designed by Chicago architect Alexander K. Eugene and completed in 1940. The Fowler is a brick masonry building on a concrete foundation topped with a flat asphalt roof. There is an overall streamlined horizontal emphasis to the theatre; it has an exterior in the Art Moderne style and an interior with both Art Moderne and Art Deco features.

The south-facing main façade is a single story along the sidewalk but has a second floor penthouse for the projection room. The front façade was originally covered with enameled steel plates with a darker blue below and lighter blue above separated by a red marquee and banding (see historic photo). The panels and banding were removed c.1995. Today only the fluted corner plates remain and the current exterior is red brick (photos 1, 2). However the form of this façade and many of the decorative elements remain to illustrate the Art Moderne feel. The recessed entrance bay is flanked by matching poster cases that were set back into the brick. The added shutters hide the size of the original opening but by looking through the slats, one can see the open space behind. The front walls curve inward toward the original ticket booth that is bordered by matching recessed entrance doors. The curving walls continue onto the ticket booth where all of the corners are rounded and the roof cascades down in three separate tiers. A set of three vertical metal bands are centered on the ticket booth roof. The top half of the booth is plexiglass that is chamfered at the corners. The bottom portion of the booth is covered by blue enameled plates and decorative horizontal banding just below the counter. On either side of the ticket booth there are Terrazzo floors leading into the theatre. The pattern has three bands overlaid with an arrow that directs patrons through the entrance doors and continues on the interior. These aluminum doors have oval glass windows and aluminum door handles that spell out "Fowler" and "Theatre" (photo 3).

Dominating the entire façade is a portion of the original marquee. The exterior metal supports and the lettering are still intact. The shadow of the remaining elements is visible on the sidewalk in photo 1. However, the marquee no longer provides shelter to patrons waiting in line for tickets. In the early to mid-1990s the underside of the marquee, once covered with over 800 lights, was removed.

The east and west facades are more of the same red brick. An alley runs along the east side of the theatre and a small access drive to the neighboring building abuts the west side. The only embellishment on these elevations is a series of five evenly spaced pilasters with concrete caps on either side (photos 5, 6).

The north façade faces an alley behind the theatre (photo 7). The rear of the building has a door at both ends of this elevation. The one to the east is a large steel door that is operable. The opening on the west end has been boarded up and is no longer used. A small window was placed above each doorway but both have been covered.

The interior of the Fowler Theatre is combination of Art Moderne and Art Deco details. Upon passing through the exterior doors there is a continuation of the terrazzo flooring from the exterior (photo 14).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana

Description-continued

Carpet covers the remainder of this space. The lobby contains a late 1940s concession stand, restrooms, and entry doors to both the auditorium and the ticket booth. Like the exterior, all of the corners are curved, with the exception of those on the modern concession counter (photo 8). This addition impedes the view of the twin yellow and green neon cascades that are recessed between the auditorium doors and run from floor to ceiling. On either side of the concession stand are sets of doors leading into the auditorium. These recessed wood doors have round port-hole like windows in each panel and are topped by a convexly fluted plaster bulkhead (photo 9). Bands of stylized plaster chevrons and sunbursts cover another bulkhead that runs the entire depth of the lobby ceiling (photos 10, 11, 12). The bands are painted a metallic silver to mimic the look of metal. The bands run across the entire ceiling, down the south wall and stop just above the door into the ticket booth (photo 11).

Like the east and west walls of the exterior, these interior walls mimic one another. Just inside the exterior doors is a pair of original display cases, one on each wall (photo 13). They consist of plaster frames painted the same metallic silver as the ceiling decoration. The colonnettes have the same convex fluting as the bulkhead while the sill has incised banding. The oversized streamlined bulkhead also has the similar banding and contains recessed lighting. Around the corner from these display cases are the restrooms, men's on the west and women's on the east. Between the restrooms and the entry doors into the auditorium are round mirrors hung in recessed coves that conceal lighting behind them (photo 10). These are replacements of an original feature (the original mirrors were tinted blue).

The auditorium space is divided into three sections—a central row of eight seats and side aisles of four seats per row. The theatre can seat 196 patrons in c.1970s seats. There is more than ample leg room since every other row was removed. The floor, which gently slopes toward the stage, is concrete but the aisles are covered with carpet (photo 15). Above the seats on the side walls are a series of decorative elements (photo 16). The bottom row is a band of convexly fluted plaster similar to that above the auditorium doors in the lobby. Above this is a row of stylized forms based on an acroterion. As the floor slopes down, these bands step down at regular intervals. To make the transition from one level to the next, there are fluted rectangular forms that align with both rows (photo 17). Light fixtures are placed adjacent to these transitional forms—wood panels cut to mimic the shape of vertical fluorescent tubes with three metal radiating bands that contain recessed lighting. The movie screen is suspended above the stage and is flanked by a set of three horizontal bands. From the back of the auditorium they appear to be painted stripes but they are actually cut out areas with recessed lighting. Below these bands, in the rounded corners of the auditorium space, are two doorways. All of the doorways in the auditorium (two flanking the stage and two leading into the lobby) have backlit woodcut exit signs above bands of decorative plaster similar to those in the lobby and the side walls of the auditorium, only the bands contain stylized ears of corn.

The doorway to the west of the stage has been covered but the other one is still in use. It leads to the backstage area and to then to the exterior of the building. The stage area measures approximately 24x15 and is currently blocked from view by the movie screen. Engaged fluted columns form the sides of a subdued proscenium arch. The stage itself gently bows out into the auditorium space.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 & 8 Page 3

Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana

**Description-continued**

The south wall of the auditorium contains the two entry doors into the lobby and a third door (near the southwest corner) that leads to the projection room on the mezzanine (photo 18). In the southeast corner is a small storage room. Another storage area is located between the doorways that lead into the lobby.

The projection room contains a reel-to-reel projector that is estimated to be 50 years old. A c1970s platter system has been installed as well. This equipment utilizes the same technology used today but the fact that it is still being used by the Fowler Theatre makes it unique. Additionally, the fire screens, metal shutters over the projector openings, are still intact.

**Statement of Significance**

The Fowler Theatre is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It is located in Benton County, one of the remaining counties in Indiana that has not yet been surveyed. The Fowler, designed by Chicago architect Alexander K. Eugene and constructed in 1940, is a notable example of an Art Moderne/Art Deco building and possesses remarkable integrity despite the removal of the exterior coated steel panels and, therefore, qualifies under Criterion C for its architecture. It is also eligible under Criterion A for its impact on entertainment/recreation in Benton County. It is the sole functioning theatre, historic or modern, in the county. The period of significance is 1940-1954.

Evolution of American Movie Theaters

Prior to 1905, most motion pictures did not have permanent homes. Instead they were shown in borrowed spaces including stage theaters, music halls, sideshow tents, and converted stores.<sup>1</sup> Nickelodeons, with their low prices to appeal to the masses, required very little in order to put on a show. "Often a sheet for the screen, ten to twelve rows of benches, a box for collecting admission and a curtain separating the 'lobby' from the screening room sufficed. Entrepreneurs reasoned that if motion pictures turned out to be a passing fancy, these makeshift theaters could easily be converted back into retail space."<sup>2</sup> These early motion pictures consisted of "flickering black-and-white images—generally 10-minute silent melodramas or comedies".<sup>3</sup>

Advances in film production in the 1910s resulted in photoplays—more developed narratives captured on celluloid.<sup>4</sup> With these more sophisticated movies and in an effort to gain respectability, permanent theaters began to emerge. America's first movie palace opened in New York City in 1913.<sup>5</sup> These buildings were not the opulent show houses of the 1920s but were large enough to house "hundreds or

<sup>1</sup> Sklar, Robert. A World History of Film. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2002, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Halnon, Mary. Some Enchanted Evenings: American Picture Palaces, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/palace/early1.html> accessed 8/24/04.

<sup>3</sup> Naylor, David. American Movie Theaters. Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Halnon, accessed 8/24/04.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana

Statement of Significance-continued

even thousands of patrons.”<sup>6</sup> The shows in these new structures consisted of both vaudeville acts and motion pictures. This combination continued through the 1920s with movies eventually becoming more popular and eventually forcing the demise of live acts.

By the mid-1920s movies has made significant strides. Some early film exhibitors were successful enough to form film studios in Hollywood. Fox (1913), MGM (1924), Paramount (1912), RKO (1929), United Artists (1919), Universal (1912), and Warner Brothers (1923), were all established movie studios by the end of the decade. Technology allowed, for not only longer films and more complicated stories, but also for sound. The first “talkie” was *The Jazz Singer* in 1927. The industry in general had gained acceptability and such entertainment was enjoyed by all classes. In was in this environment that the movie palaces came to be. “As movie-going became an established practice across the country, patrons witnessed the birth of a distinctly modern and quintessentially American architectural creation: the motion picture palace.”<sup>7</sup> These buildings portrayed a world of opulence and exoticism through the architecture, thereby attracting a crowd who not only wanted to be entertained by the movie but also have access to the fantasy and wealth such theaters exhibited. This was the way for the average (or below average) person to taste the good life, even if only for a short time. The building was as much of a drawing point as the show itself and it has been said that movie palaces were a “social safety valve in that the public can partake of the same luxuries as the rich, and use them to the same full extent.”<sup>8</sup> Movie theaters were awash in decoration—the soaring lobbies, the elegant lounges, and the immensely lavish theaters. Interiors were a hodge-podge mix of exotic architectural features drawn from Egyptian, Asian, East Indian, Tudor, Mayan, and the more traditional Italian and Spanish Revivals. However, one architecture critic commented in 1928 that “No more pitiful degradation of an art has ever been presented than the prostitution of architecture that goes on daily in the construction of these huge buildings...taste and beauty abased to the lowest degree.”<sup>9</sup>

It is out of this opulent environment that the geometric forms and simplicity of the Art Deco style emerged in the late 1920s.<sup>10</sup> “By the 1930s movie going was a ‘socially acceptable form of behavior and no longer needed an architectural defense,’ hence the ability of theater architects to dispense with classical, Old World references.”<sup>11</sup> Despite the effects of the Depression, movies were coming of age in the 1930s and Hollywood was producing high quality films.<sup>12</sup> RKO produced the first full-length color feature film (*Becky Sharp*) in 1935.<sup>13</sup> This popularity lasted most of the decade but by 1941 World War II was in full swing and Americans did not have the time, resources or inclination to go to the movies.

<sup>6</sup> Naylor, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Naylor, 19.

<sup>8</sup> Halnon, accessed 8/24/04.

<sup>9</sup> Naylor, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Naylor, 25.

<sup>11</sup> Halnon, accessed 8/24/04.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sklar, 196.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

**Statement of Significance-continued**

Following World War II the film industry experienced yet another resurgence and in 1946 Hollywood had its most successful year in history.<sup>14</sup>

It was about this time that the Fowler Theatre was constructed in northwestern Indiana. Many smaller towns did not have the population to support a large scale movie theater but the interest was there. The population of Fowler in 1940 was 1,903 residents and they were able to support a 425-seat movie theater.

**Architectural Significance**

The exterior of the building contains design elements typically associated with the Art Moderne style. The horizontal emphasis of the building is evident in that it is wider than it is tall. The flat roof and terra cotta coping also visually lowers the building as do the horizontal lines formed by the marquee and the banding around the ticket booth. Another traditional Art Moderne feature is the curvilinear elements. The curved corners of both the exterior walls and the ticket booth exemplify the streamlined feel. While the windows on the ticket booth are not curved, they are chamfered, so the visual impression is that the corners curve. The windows on the entrance doors also form an oval shape that downplays hard edges of the rectangular doors. With the exception of the marquee there is very little ornamentation on the exterior of the theatre. This simplicity of form follows the Art Moderne style, where metal panels were considered decoration.

Interiors are especially significant for theaters, since this is what was likely to impress patrons. The interior of the Fowler is remarkably intact. While the exterior of the theatre is in the Art Moderne style, the interior is a blend of Art Moderne and Art Deco. The lobby exhibits the same curvilinear detailing as the exterior—curved corners and walls and rounded edges and windows. It also has a horizontal emphasis that is noticeable on the interior as a result of the low bulkhead over the concession stand and the horizontal banding above the display cases and on the terrazzo floor. Other Art Moderne features include the round ornamental mirrors near the restrooms and the metallic finish of the decorative plaster meant to mimic stainless steel. The dominant Art Deco feature of the lobby is the decorative plasterwork on the ceiling. The paired bands have alternating stylized chevrons and sunburst patterns that run the entire depth of the lobby ceiling. Another Art Deco element is the reeding and fluting above the auditorium doors and around the display cases and the relatively simple trim around the entrance doors.

The auditorium continues many of the themes found in the lobby. Curved corners and the banding on either side of the movie screen demonstrate the Art Moderne style, as do the wall sconces with horizontal banding. One row of the decorative plaster banding includes stylized acroterion forms and is painted in the same metallic paint as the lobby ceiling.

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<sup>14</sup> Sklar, 278.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

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**Statement of Significance-continued**

All of these architectural elements remain intact on both the exterior and interior of the Fowler Theatre. With so many intact design details associated with the Art Moderne and the Art Deco architectural periods, this building serves as an excellent example of these styles.

The Fowler Theatre is the only intact theater in Benton County that has continued to function as a theater. Other nearby communities also had theaters but the ones in Kentland, Oxford, and Boswell are long gone. The closest theaters are located in Attica, Indiana (35 miles south) and Lafayette, Indiana (30 miles southeast). The Devon Theatre in Attica, Indiana, is a 1938 Art Deco building that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 as part of the Attica Downtown Historic District. The Art Deco building was designed by Attica architect Louis Johnson with seating for 650 patrons. The building has been restored and now has 360 seats with room for 100 additional chairs. It is covered in cream and red enameled steel plates and has the original marquee. The Devon has been in continuous use since it opened (with the exception of the seven month restoration) and shows first run movies seven days a week. Movie-goers come from a roughly 40-mile radius.

The closest historic theater is the Lafayette Theatre in Lafayette, Tippecanoe County. The Lafayette Theatre, located within the National Register listed Upper Main Street Historic District, is a 1938 Art Moderne building that is at least double the size of the Fowler Theatre. It has a vertically oriented façade that is covered in square limestone blocks and glass and stainless steel. It has a centrally located ticket booth flanked by single entrance doors. The interior has experienced some alterations. The seating has been removed and sections of plaster have given way. It was last used as a theater in 1990 and has housed a series of unsuccessful businesses since. In 2002 the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation and the New York LLC joined forces to save the theater from demolition. The Lafayette is currently undergoing both exterior and interior restoration and will eventually be a dinner/movie theater.

Dick Vlastos came to Fowler to manage the Dreamland Theater but his dream was to run his own theater. He hired Chicago architect Alexander Eugene to design the Fowler just down the street. It is unknown how long the Fowler Theatre continued to show movies. It housed an auction house for several years and then transferred to a private owner in the early 1990s who proceeded to remove the enameled steel panels and possibly interior seats and light fixtures while the theatre sat vacant. The owner was ready to remove the remnants of the marquee and add a shed roof to the front when a local resident who was working across the street ran over and made an offer. Then the Prairie Preservation Guild formed to save the theatre. They were able to raise the necessary money and obtained ownership of the theatre in July 2001. Six months later, December 2001, they began showing movies. Working solely with volunteers, the efforts of the Prairie Preservation Guild are succeeding. They show movies Friday-Sunday and have been able to book first-run movies on opening weekends. They continue to fund-raise and in summer 2004 the Fowler received a new roof. Future plans include the restoration of the enameled steel panels and the marquee.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 7

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 & Photos Page 8

Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The East Forty-Two (42) feet off of Lot Three Hundred Thirty-Eight (338) in the Original Plat of the Town of Fowler, in the County of Benton and State of Indiana.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The boundary is the recorded legal description of the property.

**Photographs**

The following information applies to Photos: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14

2. Benton County, Indiana
3. Photographer: Kay Tabert
4. Date of Photograph: June 1, 2004
5. Location of Original Negatives: Benton Review, 102 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Fowler, IN 47944

The following information applies to Photos: 2, 15, 16, 17, and 18

2. Benton County, Indiana
3. Photographer: Kyra Tabert
4. Date of Photograph: May 1, 2004
5. Location of original negatives: Benton Review, 102 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Fowler, IN 47944

Photo #1

Camera facing north, main façade

Photo #2

Camera facing north, main facade

Photo #3

Camera facing north, ticket booth

Photo #4

Camera facing north, ticket booth and marquee

Photo #5

Camera facing southwest, east exterior wall

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_ Page 9 \_\_\_

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

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**Photography-continued**

Photo #6

Camera facing southeast, west exterior wall

Photo #7

Camera facing south, rear exterior wall

Photo #8

Camera facing north, lobby/concession area

Photo #9

Camera facing north, entrance doors to auditorium

Photo #10

Camera facing east, interior lobby

Photo #11

Camera facing south, interior south wall entrance

Photo #12

Camera facing north, detail of ceiling in the lobby

Photo #13

Camera facing west, interior west wall and display case in lobby

Photo #14

Camera facing south, interior entrance door and Terrazzo

Photo #15

Camera facing north, auditorium

Photo #16

Camera facing west, auditorium frieze detail

Photo #17

Camera facing west, auditorium frieze and light fixture detail

Photo #18

Camera facing south, seating and rear auditorium wall

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number      Photos      Page   10  

**Fowler Theatre  
Benton County, Indiana**

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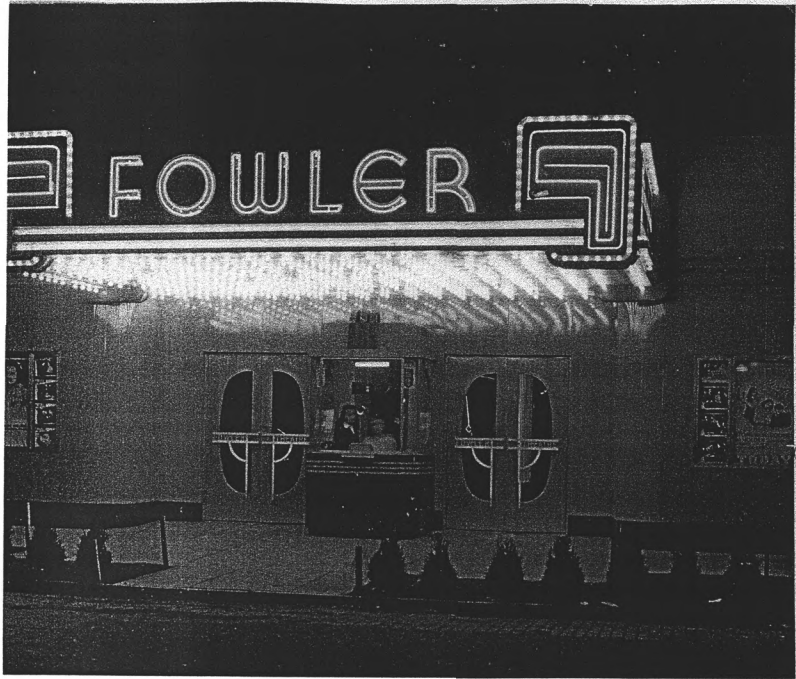
**Photography-continued**

**Historic Photos-**Photographer for Photos #1-#5 and #8 is unknown; Gene Gladson was the photographer for Photos #6-#7

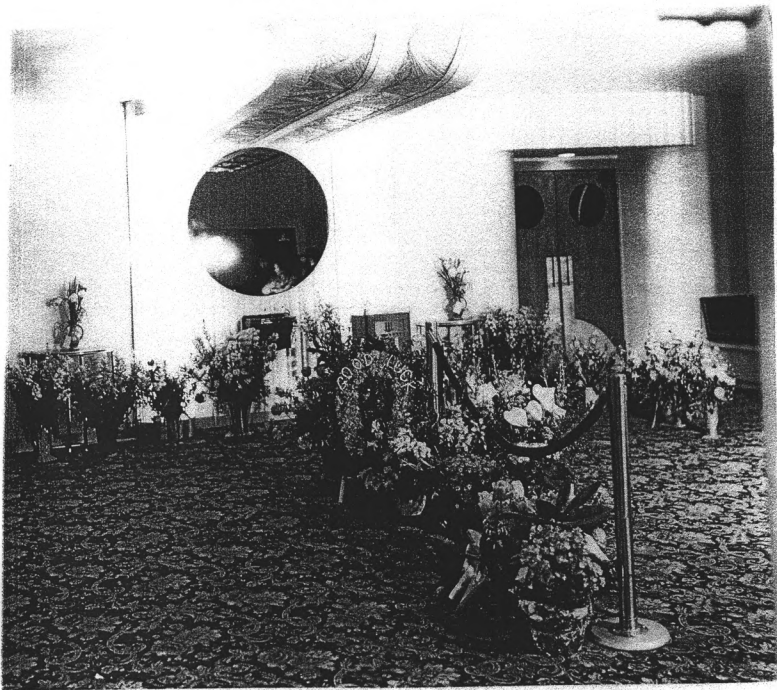
- #1-Exterior of Fowler Theatre on opening night (March 1, 1940)
- #2-Lobby on opening night
- #3-Lobby on opening night
- #4-Auditorium on opening night
- #5-Wall sconces on opening night
- #6-The Fowler Theatre c.1980
- #7-The Devon Theatre in Attica, Indiana, c.1981
- #8-The Lafayette Theatre in Lafayette, Indiana, c.2000

**Historic Items**

Two news articles from Benton Review, February 29, 1940



*Take seed  
trees to  
grow like  
ledge*



Funeral  
for  
Lobby.

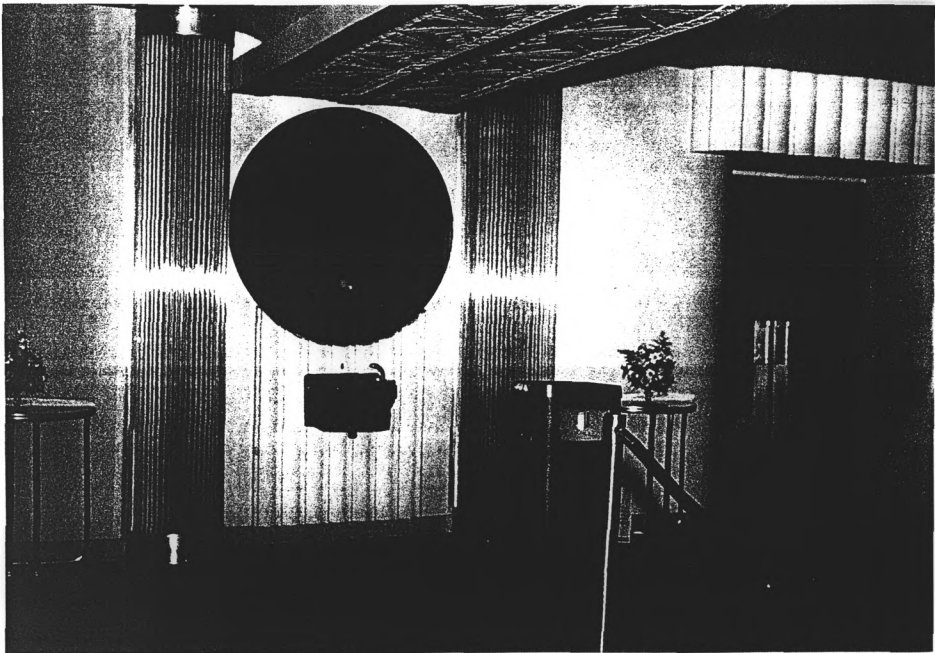
Untitled

Carpenter's  
Red ground  
with varol's  
teal & coral  
flowers



Letter from L. Russell Wood & well known  
government. Like top & trim.

HISTORIC PHOTO #3

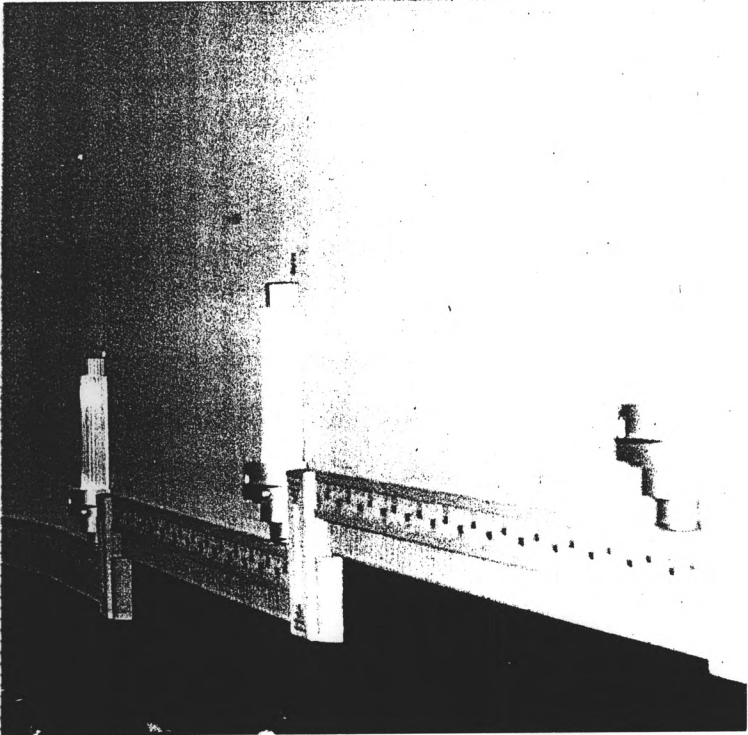


... with silver top & letter (colored be

HISTORIC PHOTO # 4



*Openings kept  
notes tall  
wall screens  
also inside  
wall*



Karen this shows better detail on side screens,  
 They were glass tubes (2 lengths @ least 4' tall overall)  
 set into silver lined base. the freeze was silver  
 & turquoise embossed metal.  
 Colored lights used inside.

HISTORIC PHOTO # 6



The Fowler Theatre c. 1980  
From the Gene Gladson Photo Collection

Historic Photo # 7

BEVON  
WALT DISNEY'S  
ANY

From Mrs. Cass Anderson Photo Collection

HISTORIC PHOTO #8



Lafayette Theater c. 2000

# "R" THEATRE OPEN

## MAGNIFICENT PICTURE HOUSE WILL BE FORMALLY OPENED ON FRIDAY NIGHT OF THIS WEEK; FINEST IN THIS SECTION

The formal opening of Fowler's new magnificent theatre, the "Fowler", will be tomorrow, Friday night, and it is going to be a big event in the history of the community.

In appreciation to Dick Vlastos for his enterprise in providing the people of this vicinity a theatre of its magnitude, the town is taking on gala attire with the business section decorated with flags and bunting.

Mr. Vlastos in receiving the congratulations of everyone on the completion of the new "Fowler", was one of the most modern and finest theatres in this part of the state.

As a preliminary to the formal opening on Friday night, there will be a preview at the theatre tonight at 7:30 o'clock and the invited guests will be representatives from the various civic

### HELD FOR BY ED GARDY

Janey, whose critical condition in last week's fire, was taken to a hospital at Florida, and will be in his recovery.

It said he was unconscious had been revived several times and would be in a hospital at Florida, and will be in his recovery.

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### SQUARE AND COMPASS DANCE

Informal Dance given by Square and Compass Club, Wednesday, March 5, 8 p. m., in the social rooms in the Municipal Hall. Misses Stern and their guests invited.

Social Committee.

### FINGERS LACERATED BY SAW IN ROOM AT SCHOOL

Two fingers on Paul Altapeter's left hand were severely cut by a saw in the second building room of the school Monday afternoon. He was working with the saw from which the guard had been removed when the accident occurred.

The faculty judge and teachers of the school and five fingers were badly lacerated and several stitches were required to close the wounds. First aid was rendered by Dr. V. L. Turley, after which Paul was taken to the St. Elizabeth hospital, Lafayette, but he was able to return home the same evening and was back in school the following morning. He is a junior in the high school.

### TEND FARMER-SMEN MEETING

IF AAA EXPLAINED TAKERS TO AU. INCE OF 1940

Farmer-tenant sponsored by the Committee, which was held at the public school building by about 300, the representative business men and farmers of the county. Dinner was served by Parent-Teacher Association during the evening one of the Fowler school by Prof. Harold Bergis, chairman of the committee, acted as hostess. The meeting was the purpose of the meeting which he requested business men and the purpose of the meeting the exchange ideas that would profit both the business men who are on each other.

The committee of the event, C. J. McCormick, of member of the Indiana Conservation Commission, held at length the AAA of farmers of the county last Sat.

I cut that the three main the organization was to be to improve the soil, to be nations, to stabilize and equate food supplies, and

### INDIANA RANKS HIGH IN SAVING OF LIVES FROM TRAFFIC DEATHS

Indianapolis—Indiana outstands all but New York and Georgia in the nation in the number of lives saved from traffic deaths in 1939. It was announced by the Governor's Coordinating Safety Committee. Based on figures released by the National Safety Council, the state traffic fatalities were reduced by 79 over the figure of the previous year. Despite total of 1222 in 1939, 7099 in 1938 and 1201 in 1937.

Greatest gains were in pedestrian safety inasmuch as a reduction in pedestrian deaths amounted for 58 out of the 69 lives saved. The Fowler state was twelfth in the nation, on a percentage of reduction basis, with a 9 percent decline under 1939.

The Committee stated that on the basis of miles traveled through Indiana the state showed a 12 percent reduction with a mileage death rate of 12.3 persons per hundred million.

The state's fatality rate was 23.6 fatalities per 100,000 population.

Comprising the Governor's Coordinating Safety Committee are T. A. Thomas, chairman of the State Highway Commission, Frank Finney, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Don F. Stiver, Director of the Department of Public Safety, and Fred L. McHenry, Superintendent of Public Instruction, with Governor M. Caffery Treasurer as honorary chairman. Integrated activities of these four departments will be credited by the Committee for the available dig in the death rate.

Twenty-two motor vehicle bureau field men and state police officers co-

(Continued on page 6)

### DRUNKEN DRIVER SENT TO STATE PENAL FARM

TONY WEST STATE'S GUEST FOR 90 DAYS; ARRESTED BY OFFICER GERHOLD

Tony West, 40-year-old farm laborer, living five miles southwest of Fowler, was taken to the penal farm yesterday to start serving a thirty-day sentence following his arrest and conviction for drunken driving. In addition to the sentence, he will be obliged to pay a fine of \$50 and costs or spend a few extra days at the state institution.

Widow, married and the father of three children, was arrested last Thursday afternoon by state policeman Ed Gerhold, after he had run his automobile off the pavement into a ditch-one-half mile northwest of Earl Park.

He was arraigned before Hon. H. L. Ladd, magistrate, who assessed the fine and imposed the penal farm sentence. West was given the drunk-as-far as the West Lafayette state police arrester, before his arraignment and the driver declined that he had taken on an over-supply of liquor.

### BULLDOGS CLOSE REGULAR SEASON WITH A VICTORY

The Fowler Bulldogs closed their regular season of play Friday night at Earl Park, winning from the Cardinals by a score of 23 to 15.

As expected the Cardinals put up a good defense and the game was no lack touch for the Bulldogs. The Bulldog defense also functioned in good style as they held the Cardinals to 1 basket in each of the first two periods.

The half ended 11 to 4 in the Bulldogs' favor and the Cardinals added three more baskets in the second half and also took advantage of Bulldog fouls to make good 7 of nine free throws.

Paul Stevens entered the game in the second half to chalk up 8 also shots for the larger part of Bulldog's scoring and added two charity tosses



Dick Vlastos

and other organizations and contractors who had a part in the construction of the building. The preview will be followed by a banquet at 8 o'clock in the gym of the public school building.

For the opening show, Mr. Vlastos was fortunate in booking "His Girl Friday", one of the big features that is now being exhibited in the larger city theaters. Gary Grant and Rosalind Russell are starred in this picture that is rated by critics an almost perfect.

The first show will be at 7:30 o'clock with the second starting at 9:00 and the admission will be 30c and 50c, the prices that have prevailed at the old Dreamland for many years. "His Girl Friday" will also be the attraction at Saturday's matinee, starting at 2:30 o'clock.

(Continued on page 6)

### SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF MR. AND MRS. P. B. MARTIN

The reception Sunday afternoon in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Peter B. Martin

### DR. GOVERNOR\* (AN HERE MARCH 6

sign for David Hogg, of a candidate for the position for Governor, will to Benton county on Wednesday 23, when a "Hogg" caravan calls at Fowler features an Indiana

## MAGNIFICENT THEATRE

### OPENS FRIDAY NIGHT

(Continued from page 1)

at 8:30 o'clock, and Saturday night. The new theatre is situated on the site of the east wing of the old hotel building that was dismantled to make room for the new improvement.

It is a beautiful structure and strictly modern in every particular. Mr. Alexander K. Eugene, of Chicago, the architect, specializes in theatre buildings and no expense has been spared by Mr. Vlastos to give the people here the best. His confidence in Fowler and its future is to be commended.

In the construction of the 130x40 foot building, a total of 162,000 bricks were laid. Other major materials used were: 393 barrels of cement, 334 tons of sand and gravel and 14 tons of plaster. The walls are 13 inches thick and acoustically treated for sound according to recommendation of the R. C. A. Manufacturing Company.

There are 854 light bulbs, 17,030 feet of electric wires, 2,100 feet of conduit, 125 feet of Neon tubing and 54 separate fuse lighting circuits.

Between 425 and 450 patrons can be comfortably seated in specially arranged double-spring seats that are double spaced with room enough between each row to allow patrons to enter or leave without causing anyone to stand up to let them pass.

The spacious foyer is artistically decorated and the ladies' lounge and rest room is on the west side of the foyer with the men's rest room and steam heating plant on the opposite side. There is a stage large enough to hold 1,000 people.

The entire equipment is brand new and the most modern on the market, including new organ, new projecting machines, etc. The building is air conditioned throughout, a feature now found in only the better city theatres.

Modernistic design with its streamline effects and the pleasing color harmony of turquoise blue and coral combine to make the interior of the building one of carefully planned splendor—an accomplishment Dick Vlastos, owner, credits to Mrs. Vlastos, who chose the color schemes and furnishings.

And from the marquis with its 854 lights, through the foyer and down to the silver screen of the auditorium, mirrors, the glow of indirect lighting effects, and the bright finish of chromium furniture contribute brilliancy.

Entering the foyer the eye is immediately attracted to the large columns of tubular glass that form the main decoration of the back wall. Neon lighting illuminates these columns a green and gold which with the silver base and capital of the column gives impressive beauty. A touch of contrast is added by the black porcelain drinking fount and blue mirror above it. They fill the space between the columns.

Added interest to this grouping but mechanical rather than artistic, is the fact that the drinking fount has an automatic eye, operating electrically.

Walls of the foyer are painted sepia with the wide ornamental plaque that runs the middle of the ceiling from the cashier's booth to the space between the columns at the back wall, done in deeper tones of sepia to bring out the design. The plaque's purpose is not entirely ornamental for it also furnished the overhead indirect lighting for the foyer.

The entire foyer floor except for a few feet of terrace flooring just inside the street doors, is covered with heavy carpeting. The color scheme of coral, turquoise blue and sepia is carried out in its floral design. The back ground is deep blue. The carpeting is also used in the aisles of the auditorium.

On each side wall of the foyer and adjacent to the doors leading to the auditorium are built-in benches, leather upholstered, in keeping with the color scheme. Large circular blue mirrors above them are indirectly lighted.

The doors opening into the auditorium are finished a turquoise blue with silver hardware and the turquoise is carried out again in the ceiling of that room. The upper and side walls are painted coral with the lower walls and floor a deep maroon. Breaking the plainness of the wall and running between the two colors, is an ornamental band of turquoise and coral with touches of silver.

The band, running the length of the side walls, drops, step-like, at four places as the walls of the theatre becomes deeper, due to the sloping floor. At these "steps" four on each wall, are three foot tall wall lights. In design these resemble large candle holders and candles with bases of silver and long white enameled glass tubing resembling large candles. Each contains sixteen lights, furnishing two-color combinations.

Trough lights high in the front wall on either side of the stage contribute further to the indirect lighting. Six lights, flush with the ceiling provide bright light for clearing the theatre and cleaning purposes.

The seats carry out the color

## CENTER FARM BUREAU TO MEET TUESDAY EVENING

The Center Township Farm Bureau will meet Tuesday evening, March 5, at 7:30 in the Fowler school building. A Farm Credit program has been arranged with L. I. Freedland explaining Federal Land Bank loans and emergency loans. D. Butler will explain the Farm Security Administration program, Robert Wilson the Production Credit Association and Myrtle Quick Stone the Credit Union. This should be a very interesting meeting for any farmer who ever has to borrow money, so come and bring a neighbor.

Each family bring a plate of sandwiches. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Datzman, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Larsen, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Jasheway, Committee.

## INDIANA RANKS HIGH IN TRAFFIC SAFETY

(Continued from page 1)

Examined 161,624 persons for driving licenses in 1939, of which 51,834 were beginning drivers. Eye tests, examinations in rules of the road, and road tests insured the competency of the drivers. The Bureau suspended or revoked 16,316 driving licenses during the year where repeated traffic arrests, warning tickets, or accidents indicated the driver was becoming a menace on the highway. A total of 1,325,917 driving licenses were granted by the bureau last year, Mr. Vinton said.

State police officers have made 27,746 traffic arrests during the year for flagrant violation of the motor vehicle code, and have issued 34,823 warnings for minor violations. Troopers have personally investigated more than 40 percent of the accidents in Indiana and have found it necessary to make arrests for the violations causing these accidents in 41 percent of these cases. A considerable increase in arrests and a vastly increased use of the warning tickets has been accorded by Director Sliver with a more wholesome respect for the law on the part of many drivers.

As required by law, the teaching of safety has been conducted in 2,223 elementary and junior high schools of the State, and by requirement of the State Board of Education, courses in health and safety education have been taught in the 804 high schools. Six colleges offer safety courses, principally for safety teachers. Mr. McMurray pointed out that a health and safety education course of study was published in 1939 for the guidance of teachers. He also indicated that 6,500 school buses were inspected in the fall of the year by the state police to determine if they were safe for the transportation of more than 212,000 rural school children in the state who travel 180,000 miles each day to and from school. For approximately five years no school child has been killed while riding in an Indiana school bus.

The seats carry out the color scheme further, with the backs of turquoise velour and the seats upholstered in black leather and coral velour. Aisle lights on 12 seats and staggered the length of the aisle illuminate them.

The stage curtain and exit drapes are made of velour, a royal blue, and tied back with a heavy silver cording.

The ladies' lounge, is carried out in a blue and sepia color scheme, with the lower wall painted blue and upper sepia. Two dressers of chromium and black porcelain and chromium chairs, upholstered in blue and yellow leather, make up its furnishings. Circular blue mirrors above the dressers are illuminated by fluorescent lights.

Persons whose hearing is affected, will be provided with ear phones. They have not arrived in time for the opening but are expected within the next few days. This is just one of the many features of the new "Fowler" that are not found in even the larger city theatres.

## Federated Club

\* News \*

MRS. G. L. RORY, Chairman  
Press and Publicity

## AMBIA WOMAN'S CLUB

The Golden Jubilee was observed by the Ambia Woman's Club Thursday afternoon at the home of Mrs. W. F. Mowery, assisted by Mrs. Alvin Field. Twenty-five members responded to roll call with items concerning the history and the birthday of the General Federation.

A silver offering was taken for the Foundation Fund. At the business session it was voted to continue the rental library at Murr's Drug Store. However, it will not be restocked with new books until fall. Books may now be rented two weeks for ten cents. The topic of the program was "Citizenship and Legislation". Papers were given by Mrs. Charles Jacobson and Mrs. Clara Turner. A paper prepared by Mrs. S. L. Beebe was read by Mrs. W. K. Shockey. A paper on the new marriage law effective March 1, 1940, prepared by Mrs. Dale Slater, was read by Mrs. C. W. Morgan. Concluding, Mrs. N. E. Lindley gave a monologue, "The Last Leaf", by O. Henry.

## WOMAN'S LITERARY CLUB

THE OLD INTERESTING MEETING The February meeting of the Woman's Literary Club of Otterbein was held Wednesday at the home of Mrs. C. G. Lawler.

The president, Mrs. D. E. Harrington, presented the club with an American flag. The program opened with the pledge to the flag by Mrs. W. S. Webb, chairman of American Citizenship.

There were two interesting papers on sponges given by Mrs. James Christian and Mrs. E. W. Thomas. They told of this being one of the oldest industries known to man and of sponge fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea many centuries before Christ, of the Greek mythology of the coral sponges, the western hemisphere, also the manufacturer of rubber and cellulose sponges. Several varieties were displayed.

Mrs. Anna Moore, chairman of the blind, exhibited a table of articles made by the blind women which are for sale. Mrs. John Doughty, chairman of poetry and drama, gave a short sketch of the Pulitzer prize-winning play, "Our Town". Mrs. C. W. Davis read an outline of the programs for next year, which includes programs on international relations and miscellaneous subjects.

The members were invited to attend the Council meeting in the American Legion Hut in Fowler on Friday, Feb. 23.

## BOSWELL RESEARCH CLUB

Mrs. O. M. Fluck was hostess to the Research Club at her home Thursday, Feb. 22. Federation news and reports were given and plans for the future were discussed. The club voted to give \$1.00 to the Student Loan.

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## MEETING OF

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Fowler's new ultra-modern theatre, the "Fowler", that will be formally opened on Friday night of this week. For the opening night, Dick Vlastos has secured one of the best pictures of the year, "My Girl Friday". Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell, take the leading parts. This picture will also be exhibited at Saturday's matinee, starting at 2:30 o'clock, and Saturday night.

## NEW FOWLER THEATRE IS FORMALLY OPENED

BEAUTIFUL PLAYHOUSE TALK  
OF COMMUNITY; NO FINER  
IN THIS SECTION

Dick Vlastos is being showered with compliments following the opening of the new "Fowler" theatre last Friday night. The new playhouse is beyond the fondest expectations of anyone and quite naturally, the community joins in expressing appreciation to Mr. Vlastos.

The grand opening Friday night was attended by a packed house and large crowds have attended each regular show since. The program for the opening was brief with no long delay between the time the doors were open and the showing of the first reel.

A ribbon was stretched across the front doors and promptly at 6:45 o'clock the ribbon was cut and patrons were admitted to the beautiful foyer where they were greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Vlastos, and little daughter, Evelyn, the latter presenting each woman with a red rose.

The foyer was decked with beautiful flowers, gifts from different organizations and individuals. The young lady ushers were in uniforms which is a new innovation for Fowler and in keeping with the splendor of the new theatre.

Promptly at 7 o'clock, Mr. Vlastos, Tom McConnell, president of the Business Men's Association, and Rev. Benjamin Rist, pastor of the Methodist church, appeared on the stage. Mr. McConnell made a brief address and introduced Mr. Vlastos who thanked everyone for attending the opening show and stated the building of the new theatre was made possible by the splendid patronage at the old Dreamland. He said he would bring to the people of this community the best pictures obtainable. Rev. Rist then offered the invocation and the first film of the evening's program was flashed upon the screen.

The special preview showing on Thursday evening was attended by about 175 guests, including representatives of the different civic organizations in town, contractors who helped erect the building, theatre owners and representatives of film exchanges and supply houses.

Following the preview, the guests assembled in the gym of the school house where a sumptuous banquet was served by the Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist church.

Richard Stockholm acted as toastmaster and introduced the speakers who commended Mr. and Mrs. Vlastos for the fine theatre that means so much to the community. Among the speakers were: Edward Klentzer, president of the Fowler Town Board; Tom McConnell, president of the Business Men's Association; M. D. Butler, representing the Rotary Club; Rev. Peter Soudah; Glen E. Buzick; Rev. Benjamin Rist; Joe Neiger, representative of the Fox Film Co., and Alexander K. Eugene, of Hammond, the architect in charge of building the theatre.

During the evening, music was furnished by the high school band and the crowd was led in singing popular songs by Prof. Harold Sarig.