

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PROB 87700 WVA STREET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 17 1975
DATE ENTERED	SEP 5 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Embassy Theater and Indiana Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Embassy Theater and Indiana Hotel

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

121 West Jefferson Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

Indiana

CODE

18

COUNTY

Allen

CODE

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Embassy Theater Foundation, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

Post Office Box 1266, 1105 South Harrison Street

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Recorder of Allen County, Indiana

STREET & NUMBER

One Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Fort Wayne

STATE

Indiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A seven story, rectangular brick and terra cotta facade encompasses the Embassy Theater and the Indiana Hotel. Work was begun in 1926 and was completed two years later on this lavish showpiece financed by Clyde Quimby.

The exterior includes a tower at each corner with four bays on each side. Corinthian columns with smaller spiral columns engage each bay extending from the third story to the top. A sculpted lintel caps all four bays. Decorative panels are below the other double hung windows. The upper story has a brick belt course and the brick takes on a criss cross pattern. The lower two stor<sup>y</sup>s are cut stone with a belt course extending around the periphery of the second story window line. The spans between the towers are unornamented except for the top floor whose windows have flush fans and balustrades. A sculpted cornice defines the roof line. A modern and an older cast iron marquee adorn the north facade, (an earlier, more lavish one was removed after the theater was renamed).

The interior is a splendid representation of uninhibited eclecticism, expressing both a social ideology and construction technology of an earlier period. The auditorium is 110 feet by 140 feet with a ceiling height of over 80 feet. A 60 foot diameter dome is recessed into the ceiling. A series of catwalks used for technical purposes fill acoustics. The spaces within the auditorium are a melange of Roman inspired decorum. The stage is framed by a rounded arch and shimmering curtains which conceal 1,150 organ pipes on either side. Black and white marble grace the main lobby which was constructed in the Italian architectural style. A grand marble staircase and an integrally related twenty foot mirror highlight the space. The ceiling, 35 feet above the floor, is barrel vaulted with ornate details. The sidewalls of the outer ticket lobby are paneled in a rare French marble. The lounge reveals an exotic Spanish motif.

Although the awe inspiring public spaces alone present a fascinating glimpse into the unprecedented urge in the 1920's to build theaters with a boundless design imagination, the theater also has an impressive functional aspect. A hugh 110 foot steel girder supporting the balcony and an innovative air conditioning system originally installed were both extraordinary technological feats for 1928. A working stage 95 feet by 30 feet, an operating mechanical orchestra platform lift, 12 dressing rooms and other facilities make it possible to stage even the most lavish productions. Much of the functional success of the theater stems from the design consultant, Chicagoan John Eberson, who was a very widely acclaimed theater specialist during the twenties.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1926-28      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      John Eberson

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When the Embassy Theater and the Indiana Hotel opened on May 14, 1928, it truly signified the exuberance of American society in the late twenties. Clyde Quimby had hired one of the most renowned theater specialists of the day, architect John Eberson of Chicago, to design the theater christened as the "Emboyd", in memory of his mother, Emma Boyd Quimby.

Mr. Quimby spared no expense when planning the 1.5 million dollar structure. The main face of the gem is the auditorium, where 2,875 seats rest under an intricate 60 foot dome. The large twenty foot mirror in the lobby reflects the uninhibited eclectic opulence of a bygone era. Intricate plaster mouldings were used for ceiling ornamentation, while various types of imported marble sumptuously covers the floor. A hugh 5 1/2 ton marquee costing \$15,000 adorned the front of the structure until it was renamed the Embassy.

The structure served as a glamorous escape from the banal, as scores of people came to be entertained throughout the thirties and forties by top billed vaudevillians such as Amos and Andy and Bob Hope, who used the Embassy for his inaugural performance as an emcee. Others include Olsen & Johnson, the Mills Bros., and Dick Powell. Motion pictures and the music of Ted Weems and Wayne King also attracted crowds. A unique feature of the auditorium is a rare four manual, 15 rank Page theater pipe organ with a wide range of sound effects.

The building also has some structural significance. An eleven foot steel girder weighing in excess of 200 tons supports the balcony and an air conditioning system was originally installed and is still operable. Both were extraordinary engineering feats in 1928.

Although many of these type theaters spring up around the country presenting top name entertainment, most have since been razed or are deteriorating. The Embassy is one of the few theaters left in the country in near perfect condition. The charm and warmth exuded by the irreplaceable detailing can still be felt today. In addition, the working parts of the theater are more than satisfactory for present production standards.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Restoration Report of The Embassy Theatre and Indiana Hotel", Philip L. Hodge and H. Roll McLaughlin, James Associates, 1974.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

UTM REFERENCES

656

A	1,6	65,52,6,0	4,54,86,15	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Eric Gilbertson, Ass't State Historic Preservation Officer

ORGANIZATION

Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources

DATE

7/11/75

STREET & NUMBER

202 N. Alabama Street

TELEPHONE

633-4948

CITY OR TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Joseph D. ... S.H.P.O.

DATE

7/11-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/5/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

**SEP 4 1975**

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER