

DATA SHEET

PH 0695700

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 29 1979
DATE ENTERED	MAR 9 1979

**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

Cotillion Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Crystal Ballroom

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 406 S. W. 14th Avenue

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Portland

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oregon 97205

41

Multnomah

051

**CLASSIFICATION**

*Multnomah*

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED partially	<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 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 type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mune and Ann Louie

STREET & NUMBER 134 N. E. 86th Avenue

CITY, TOWN Portland

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE Oregon 97220

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Milnomah County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 1021 S. W. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN Portland

STATE Oregon 97204

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE None

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On July 28, 1913 a building permit was issued for the construction of a "Dance Pavillion and Garage" at the corner of S. W. 14th Avenue and Burnside in Portland. Completed early in 1914 and named "Ringler's Cotillion Hall", the three-story building with a trapezoidal plan is located on an irregular block caused by the intersection of the City of Portland plat and Couch's Addition to the north. The long sloping edge of the trapezoid faces Burnside (north) and the short end faces 14th Avenue (west). Located at the edge of "Downtown", the area contains a mix of uses-hotels, lodges, auto facilities and a variety of retail and wholesale firms-housed in low to mid-rise buidings most of which were erected during the years 1910-1930.

## STRUCTURE

The basic structural system is post and beam with nine approximately equal bays running the short dimension of the building (north/south). Bays are framed in an unusual variety of materials: reinforced concrete columns and beams in the partial basement (westerly two bays); wood, steel, and concrete columns with wood and steel beams at the 2nd, 3rd and Balcony floors (steel beams are generally used where spans exceed 25 feet-spans vary due to the trapezoidal plan); and steel and concrete posts with clear span wood trusses at the roof.

At each floor line on the east and south property line walls is a continuous reinforced concrete girder. Exterior walls throughout are infilled with solid brick, 13" thick.

Structural floors at the basement and 1st floor are concrete. Upper floors are solid wood decks: 2 x 6 fir on edge at the 2nd floor, and 2 x 8 on edge at the third floor.

## INTERIOR

The partial basement is unfinished and is used for elevator machinery and storage.

The main entrance is located at the southwest corner on 14th Street, and proceeds to a small lobby. Original detailing is intact. The ceiling is formed with a plaste segmental arch barrel vault with ribs having a running rosette pattern in the soffits. Flooring is white 1" ceramic hexagonal tiles with grey, black and green border tiles in a Greek fret pattern. At the east end of the lobby is the elevator and "wrap around" stairway, both of which extend from the basement to the balcony level above the 3rd floor. The elevator hoistway is enclosed with clear wire glass in bronze framing.

(see Continuation sheet)

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The remainder of the ground floor originally housed an auto sales and service business and a parking garage for the dance hall. The sales office was located at the southwest corner of the building with the service and parking facilities to the east. Most of the original service area has subsequently been altered and converted to retail and wholesale offices. The original sales office has had several interior alterations and is presently occupied by an insurance company.

The second floor originally housed dance studios, classrooms and related facilities for Ringler's Dancing Academy and in later years for other dance schools. The City in 1970, after many years of vacancy, approved use of the second floor as a parking garage. A vehicle ramp from the ground floor was built at the east end, a concrete slab was poured over the wood deck, and all partitions were removed. Original finish work remaining includes part of the plaster ceiling, trim on some posts and beams, and window trim. The parking operation never materialized and the space has remained vacant to the present.

The primary space in the building is the 3rd floor Dance Hall and Balcony. Richly decorated, this unique space retains nearly all of its original features, though considerable repair and refinishing is needed. Egress from the elevator or stairs is to a small "Parlor" or foyer under the Balcony. To the west is the "Ladies Parlor" and "Locker Room", and to the east, occupying 7 bays is the grand Dance Hall. The trapezoidal space measures approximately 95' at the east end, 56' at the west end adjacent to the Parlor, and has a mean longitudinal dimension of about 110'. Floor to plaster truss soffits measures 17'. At the ceiling, centered in the third and sixth bays are octagonal skylight/ventilators, 15' wide.

A "Musicians Balcony" or platform is situated at the northeast corner 3' above the main floor. A lowered ceiling, installed in the 1950s, presently obscures the upper portion of the three-centered arch that frames the platform.

Above the Parlor is the stepped Balcony which is designed for viewing the activity on the dance floor below. To the rear of the Balcony is the "Men's Smoking Room", and a small dressing room.

Plaster ornament in a variety of classical forms is used throughout the Dance Hall walls and ceilings and at the Balcony railing. East and south wall articulation is achieved with pilasters and arched panels in a Palladian manner reflecting the

(see continuation sheet)

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arched window treatment of the north wall (Burnside Street). Upper portions of pilasters are paneled with acanthus leaf decoration. A sub-capital trim course with a continuous rosette pattern extends laterally from the pilasters to the arch where it turns to become the archivolt. Each plaster rosette (approximately 8" o. c.) has a light bulb socket. An identical rosette band is seen around the base of the octagonal skylight openings. Pilaster capitals feature a central mascarón (or mask) surrounded by classical forms. Above are consoles with acanthus decoration which in turn support richly decorated beams (bottom portion of roof trusses). Beam soffits have a reed and leaf pattern, while the sides, which extend 2' to the plain plaster ceiling, have egg and dart molding, a running scroll pattern of acanthus leaves, and a crowning cornice mold. Similar enrichment is used in the curved Balcony fascia: running acanthus pattern, cartouches with light sockets, cable, bead and reel, and other classical moldings. One early observer described the space as having, "ivory beams and a dark gold interior."<sup>1</sup>

Of particular interest is the dance floor construction, known as a "Ball Bearing Floor", or a "Floating Floor" (see attached sketch). On top of the solid 2 x 8 deck are wood "cradles", curved on the bottom, 3-1/2" wide x 1-3/4" deep x 5'-0" long, and spaced 16" o. c. and 6'-0" end to end. Attached and perpendicular to each cradle end is a continuous wood "ratchet strip", 3-1/2" x 1-3/4", used to adjust the "flex" in the floor system. On top of each cradle end is a ball bearing "rocker" which supports a continuous, spliced, 3-1/2" x 1-3/4" wood strip parallel with the cradles. Nailed to the stripping is the finish floor of 3/4" thick tongue and groove maple. This ingenious system provides a resilient dance floor that can be adjusted to accommodate various loads, rhythms and dance types. The dance floor is believed to have been fabricated by H. D. Carter & Co., a sash and door firm, and is presently in good condition.

The Parlor west of the Dance Hall is framed by a pair of fluted wood columns with egg and dart capitals. Typical interior doors are painted fir with five equal panels. Frames have channeled casings and simple frieze board and cornice at the heads. Baseboards are 6" high with top and shoe molds.

EXTERIOR

The symmetrical main facade facing Burnside (north) displays Renaissance influence and expresses the 9 structural bays.

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End bays are treated as pavillions and feature paneled parapets with cast stone trim and a diamond motif centered in each panel. Below the parapet is a two-story panel headed by a brick dentil course. Panel brick is stacked headers. 2nd & 3rd story windows are paired and centered double-hung wood sash, 3 lights over 1. Windows at the Balcony level are triple 6 light casement sash.

The seven bays between end pavillions are framed with brick pilasters extending to round arch windows at the third floor. The facade is horizontally divided at the second floor line by a painted metal belt course.

Pilaster brick is laid in Flemish Bond. Capitals are formed by projecting header courses with a 5 course panel between of alternating red and buff colored stretchers. Arch spandrels are filled with 9"x9" red and buff tiles laid in checkerboard pattern. Above the arched bays is a sloped parapet with overhanging eave, two eyebrow dormers, and a standing seam tin covering.

Windows at the 2nd floor are double-hung, and at the 3rd floor, fixed and casement. At the center 3 bays are paired glazed doors leading from the Dance Hall to the wrought iron fire escape.

The unusual molded face brick is dark red with beveled edges, and measures 8-3/4" x 2-1/2" x 4-1/4". Joints are deep raked, 1/2" wide.

Originally ground floor bays had alternating wood framed store fronts and overhead doors for garage access. Only the two westerly bays remain as designed. Other bays presently have modern store fronts and some brick has been stuccoed. All ground floor brick and stucco surfaces are now painted.

The narrow two bay west facade continues the pavillion treatment described above. The main entry fills the south bay and is covered by a vaulted metal canopy with flaired ends and features a fluted frieze, paneled glass skirting and a crowning acroterion. Panelled oak entrance doors are in a recess with paneled wood side-walls, presently painted. The entry floor is ceramic tile in the same colors and pattern as the Lobby.

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MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL

The building is heated by original cast-iron steam radiators with the steam coming from the central Pacific Power & Light Co. steam plant.

Original lighting throughout was incandescent with extensive use of rows of bare bulbs in the Dance Hall (see above). The Dance Hall also had two large chandeliers in each bay which are now gone. Two original small bowl type chandeliers still exist in the third floor Parlor.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The second and third floor has recently been leased to the Crystal Development Corporation which plans to restore the third floor Dance Hall and Balcony as close as feasible to its original appearance, and to operate it as a night club and ballroom. A Kitchen to serve the night club will be located on the second floor.

1. The Oregonian, June 14, 1968.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Entertainment
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1914                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Robert F. Tegan

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cotillion Hall achieves significance as an innovative and unique building type in Portland. It was the first and only building designed primarily as a public dance hall, and was also an early if not the first example of a commercial or entertainment facility with integral off-street auto parking. Also of significance is the design of the 3rd floor Dance Hall with its ball bearing dance floor and richly decorated interior. (See 7. Description).

Cotillion Hall was built and initially owned by prominent insurance agent Paul van Fridagh and his widowed sister, Hortense van F. Taylor. The van Fridagh family had owned the property for many years. However, the guiding light behind the project appears to have been Portland's leading dance master of the era, Montrose M. Ringler.

Ringler came from Chicago in 1897 to become the physical director of the Portland YMCA, a position he held until 1903 when he opened his own physical culture studio on Alder Street. The following year his business was listed in the City directory as, "Physical Culture and Dancing". By 1905 Ringler's work was exclusively in the field of dance. In 1912 the Ringler Dancing Academy moved into an upper floor of the Mulkey Building on Morrison Street. According to later reports, the heavy streetcar traffic on Morrison Street caused the rickety floor to tremble and led Ringler to seek a backer for a new specially designed dance facility. Reports also suggest that it was Ringler who secured the services of a German born architect, Robert F. Tegan, who designed ball bearing dance floors in Chicago and Los Angeles, and possibly other locations. Little is known of Tegan or his other work except that he opened his Portland office in 1910 and departed in 1917 or '18.

Early in 1914 Ringler opened Cotillion Hall with a formal dress ball. The Hall was apparently a great success. Dance clubs held weekly dances and had to lease the space for a year at a time. Wednesday and Saturday nights were reserved for public dances. Successful too was Ringler's dancing school where young Portlanders were taught the rudiments of ballroom dancing, and with their elders, the stylish steps of the period - the tango, hesitation waltz, Charleston, fox trot, shag, varsity drag and many others.

(see continuation sheet)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .235 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,0 5,2,4 7,2,0 5,0 4,0 8,6,0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                    
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                  

D                  

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

T. L. #1 of Block, 108, Couch's Addition  
City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George A. McMath, A.I.A.

ORGANIZATION

Allen, McMath, Hawkins, Architects

DATE

November 30, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

213 S. W. Ash Street, #210

TELEPHONE

(503) 228-5154

CITY OR TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97204

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

*George A. McMath*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE January 15, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Adams*

DATE 3-9-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*W. Ray Price*

DATE 3/6/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Ringler operated Cotillion Hall until 1921 when he opened a dancing school at Broadway Hall. From 1924 to 1927 Directories indicate Ringler operated as a dancing teacher from his own home in Laurelhurst. A year later he opened another studio on Union Avenue. Apparently it was not a great success as Ringler left Portland in 1930 or 31, allegedly to San Francisco.

Following Ringler's departure Cotillion Hall continued under several operators including the Patterson-Downie School of Dancing and T. J. Watson. The Hall was closed from 1931 until 1935 when it was acquired by Ralph E. Farrier who opened the Portland Health Dancing Club. Farrier, who was also associated with the Oregon Casket Co., ran the Hall as a public dance facility until the final grand ball on New Year's Eve of 1961. In spite of the name change to Crystal Ballroom in 1951 the dance hall was a money loser and Farrier was forced to close. In subsequent years the Hall was periodically rented to rock groups. Final closure came in 1968 due to fire exit and other building code deficiencies.

During a 1961 interview, Farrier commented on the dance floor, 'The floor of the Crystal "gives", something like a mattress, as one walks or dances on it. It's called a ball bearing floor because each of the scores of rockers supporting it has ball bearings.'

'You never get a Charley horse dancing on this. It's because the floor keeps time with the music. You can't get out of step.'

'With 800 people out there, the floor goes down when their feet go down. So if you try to go down at the wrong time, you find the floor coming up at you.'<sup>2</sup>

An early ground floor tenant was the McCracken Motor Company which sold a variety of vehicles including Moreland, Commerce & Vim trucks, and Pan American touring cars.

2. The Oregon Journal, December 30, 1961.

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"Pictorial Oregon". Portland Press Club, Portland, Oregon, 1915, p. 156

Sunday Journal, April 27, 1958

The Oregonian, June 14, 1968

The Oregon Journal, December 30, 1961

The Oregonian, May 17, 1968

Downtowner, July 7, 1975

Microfilm of 1913 working drawings, Bureau of Buildings, City of Portland

Portland City Directories