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The present structure is the third to stand on this site. The first theater was built in 1840 and was known as the Athenaeum Theater. It was enlarged. remodeled and renamed the City Hotel in 1846. The City Hotel continued as a site for theatrical performances, as did its successor, the Peosta House. In 1877 the Peosta House was torn down and the 4th Street or Dubuque Opera House was built on the site. The Opera House was remodeled and became known as Bartell's Vaudeville House in 1896. In 1903 it was renamed the Coates Opera House, and in 1904 its name was changed to the Bijou. In 1909 the Bijou was extensively remodeled and renamed the New Bijou in 1910. The New Bijou stood less than six months, as it burned down in early 1910. In 1910 the Orpheum was built. At that time it was called the Majestic Theater and later the Spensley. The Orpheum Theatre of today looks much the same as the Majestic of 1910.

The present building was designed by C. W. and George L. Rapp, Chicago architects, as a music hall or vaudeville house. /It is an original design in the Flemish Renaissance style and bears similarities to such famous Paris theaters as the Marigny, the Trianon Lyrique, the Moulin Rouge and the Olympia.

The facade of the building is ornately designed and decorated with Bedford stone and pressed brick. The exterior contains decorative stone panels and columns with arched openings as well as period lighting fixtures at the second floor level. From the mansard roof to the ground level floor there is stone sculptured and designed to appeal to the eye but not to distract from the overall beauty of the structure.

The interior of the building is also ornately sculptured, elaborately decorated and scrolled to create a feeling of the fashionable elegance of a bygone era. The interior contains arched openings, decorative columns and paneling. A canvas ceiling mural although painted over is still in place.

The theater house includes an orchestra section, a dress circle (mezzanine boxes), a balcony and a gallery with the original wood benches. The gallery has its own street level entrance and stairway. There are tiered proscenium boxes on either side of the stage. The seating capacity is approximately 1000 persons. The distance from the floor of the stage to the grid is approximately 65 feet and there is approximately eight feet head room from the grid to the roof. The fire curtain is fully rigged and is interconnected with fire doors throughout the stage house. There are two scenery docks on stage left and one counterweight dock on stage right. The orchestra pit has been floored and there are 14 lower level dressing rooms beneath the stage area. Although the theater is now used as a motion picture theater, many of the features in the stage area have been left undisturbed. The acoustics throughout the theater house are excellent.

The interior of the theater remains basically the same today as originally constructed. Exterior changes include the installation of a marquee, vertical sign and replacement windows of glass block and aluminum sash tiltout windows. It is feasible to restore the exterior to its original appearance. A longitudinal section of the theater is on an attached page. S

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Paramount       Paramount         Omaha       Orpheum         (Under restoration)       Mr. Morrison has been retained by the Five Flags Center Fund (more fully described on a following page) as a special consultant to advise and to collaborate with the principal architect retained to develop (1) the restoration program for the theater, (2) the design for the attached exhibition-arts building, and (3) the necessary site plan for the balance of the block. Mr. Morrison is presently associated with the Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is also the Archivist of the Threatre Historical Society of America.         The Five Flags Center Fund established a Historic Registration Committee to assist in the preparation of this application and to assure the authenticity of the restoration work. Their membership includes the following persons, all of whom are members of the Dubuque County Historical Society.         Dr. Kenneth Hazlet, Chairman       Mrs. Helen Mercer         Mr. John McDonald       Mr. Robert A. Sullivan         The Orpheum Theatre was purchased by the City of Dubuque as a part of the Downtown Urban Renewal Project, Iowa R-15, for the purpose of demolishing the improvements and combining the cleared land with additional cleared land in the same block for sale for redevelopment by private or public interests.	<u>New York</u>		
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An Iowa non-profit organization known as the Five Flags Center Fund was	Downtown Urban Renewal Project, Iowa R-15, for the improvements and combining the cleared land	with additional cleared land	
	An Iowa non-profit organization known as the Fi	ve Flags Center Fund was	

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Form 10-300a		UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	STATE	
(July 1969)		NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Iowa	
	NAT	TIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY	
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organized to restore this theater while it was under threat of demolition. Additionally, this organization proposes to construct adjacent to and in connection with the theater, a large year-round public assembly hall. The completed project would then be donated to the City of Dubuque for use as a community center for a wide variety of public functions and activities.

The Governing Body of the City of Dubuque by resolution has endorsed the total project, and demolition of the theater has been cancelled. A copy of this resolution together with copies of special market reports by Real Estate Research Corporation of Chicago are enclosed as supporting documentation.

The attached exhibition-arts building will consist of a two level public use facility containing 20,000 square feet of exhibit area with dividers for multipurpose usage; meeting rooms; an art gallery housing a permanent collection; galleries for touring collections; special exhibits, photo, craft and hobby shows; and individual studios and workshops for group and self-expression in the arts and crafts.

A public solicitation campaign is currently under way to raise the necessary funds to restore the theater and to construct the additional proposed improvements. The Five Flags Center Fund has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service and contributions to the funds are tax exempt to the donor.

The total estimated cost of the project is 1.3 million dollars as itemized below, and to date the Five Flags organization has raised in excess of \$660.000. It is further proposed to apply for restoration funds through the appropriate federal agency.

Public Use and Arts Building	\$ 700,000
Theater Restoration	165,000
Equipment	110,000
Site Acquisition	200,000
Site Improvements	60,000
Administrative Expenses	65,000

\$1,300,000



Ferm 10-300a (July 1969)

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM** 

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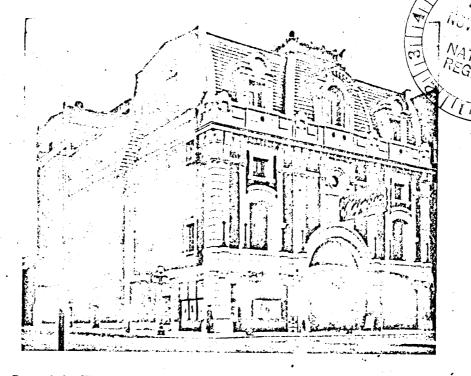
### DESCRIPTION FROM 1911 PUBLICATION OF GREATER DUBUQUE INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION

## **Majestic Theatre**

1910, the initial performance was given at the New Majestic Theater. The opening of this beautiful playhouse proved an innovation to Dubuque theater goers as well as a source of pride to the city and a satisfaction to the owner and manager, Mr. Jake the Kohl and Castle circuits in

On the evening of November 16, Paris, long considered one of the handsomest in the French capital. According to the statement of experts who have examined the building, it is as fire-proof in every respect as pos-sible. The Majestic Theater is affiliated with the Keith and Proctor circuits in the east and the Orpheum a

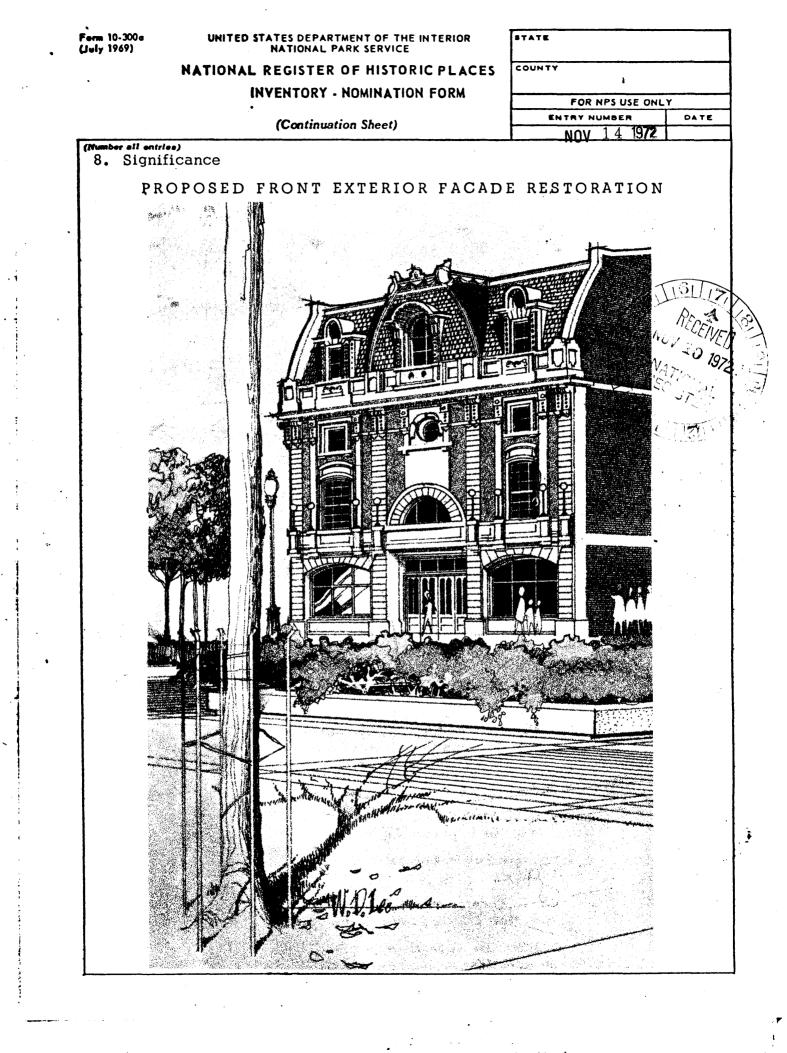
STATE



Rosenthal. The newly built structure stands upon the site of the old Bijou, which was destroyed by fire less than thirteen months ago. The architects and contractors who had the building in charge have produced the most beautiful and safest theater in Iowa at a cost of \$90,000. Architecturally, the Majestic is replica of a theater in ties.

west ,and as these cover the entire Advanced Vaudeville field from New York to San Francisco, the manage ment has first and exclusive call on the services of all leading stars and specialties. Patrons may therefore be assured that they will enjoy the best of attractions in the world of varie-

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#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM** 

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9. Major Bibliographical References Continued.

Legal Abstract of Title to Southerly 63'7" of Lot 68 in the City of Dubuque, Iowa

Daily Express and Herald, Vol. IX., J.B. Dorr & Co., Main and 5th Street, Dubuque, Iowa

The Telegraph-Herald, 8th Street and Bluff Street, Dubuque, Iowa

Notes from Doctoral Dissertation - Charles Geroux



Mch. 23, 1897, filed in office of Recorder, Dubuque County, Iowa, copy of United States Commissioners' Map of "Town of Dubuque", certified by Commissioner of General Land Office, Washington, D.C. (Seal) Feb. 3, 1697, to be true copy of the Map in his office. This pontion of said Map shows the STREET 173 This portion of said Map shows the Sald Map approved Commissioners 1 ation of Lot by 174 28. Nov.1,1838, 3 filed in Land 175 2 30 56 Office, Dubuque, 145 FIGHTH lowa Territory, 212 176a 2 21 51 Feb.3,1850. ż 144 621 176 101 58 648 THE. -12 626 ŝ 59 .649 25 STREET え 625 PU 111 60 2 5 113 650 624 111 1 117 2 に 651 e H 623 118 117 1 751 652 R 64 FT. SEVENTH 23. STREET E. 75<sup>5</sup> 179 64' た 750 に 22 754 180 STREET 74<sup>9</sup> 64' 113 256 12 21 12 PUBLIC STREET 75<sup>3</sup> 113 748 SQUARE 113 TLARTZ 752 181 に 13 20 182 259 61 19 SIXTH 183 100 ふ 64 FT. 114 4.2 1 62 た 18 184 101 15 111 12 99 43 もしさ 140 やち 11 STREET 102 98 64 139 14 113 nt 103 91 185 AWOI 113 ,14 138 ř -7e 104 16 5 114 186 137 65 リテ 15 FIFTH 114 5 et. 96 187 MAIN 64 PT. 114 12 1 66 たち 14 188 105 14/2 THE 95 LOCUST 113 61 えき 136 7 × 114 STREET 13 106 にし 94 68 135 107 BLUFF 93 FOURTH67 134 nt. 5/4 108 114 4 133 64 FT. متسلس

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