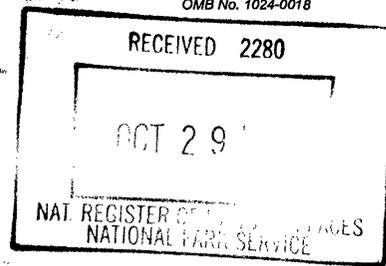


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

COVER



National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information for additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Motion Picture Theater Buildings in Idaho (1897-1949)

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Recreation and Tourism in Idaho

C. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Linda Morton-Keithley</u>	date	<u>July 30, 1998</u>
organization	<u>Idaho State Historical Society</u>	telephone	<u>208-334-3863</u>
street & number	<u>July 30, 1998</u>	state	<u>ID</u>
city or town	<u>450 N. Fourth St.</u>	zip code	<u>83702</u>

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Susan P. Neitzel
SUSAN P. NEITZEL, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

10/22/99
Date

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

11/30/99
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contents

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

See continuation sheet

F. Associated Property Types

See continuation sheet

G. Geographical Data

See continuation sheet

The geographical area covered by this Multiple Property Documentation Form is restricted to the actual site location of each motion picture theater. All buildings are situated on their original locations and all are located within the State of Idaho. Site-specific UTM coordinates are identified in each individual nomination form.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

See continuation sheet

I. Major Bibliographical References

Primary location of additional documentation:

<input type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office	<input type="checkbox"/> Local government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other State agency	<input type="checkbox"/> University
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Specify repository: Idaho Oral History Center/Idaho State Historical Society

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 1 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Introduction

The development of motion picture theaters in Idaho is reflective, although to a much less flamboyant extent, of the industry's development in the broader United States. Motion pictures were shown in Idaho less than a year after their introduction on the East Coast and "going to the movies" soon became an important part of community life in towns across the state. Buildings which had been constructed specifically for live performance theater found themselves sharing the stage with motion pictures, store fronts were converted into nickelodeon-style theaters, and literally hundreds of theaters dedicated to moving pictures were built.

A number of Idaho movie theaters have previously been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, most notably the Egyptian (built 1927, listed 1974) in Boise, the Nuart (built 1929, listed 1977) in Blackfoot, and the Panida (built 1927, listed 1984) in Sandpoint. This context will supplement those earlier individual listings by providing an overall context for the development of Idaho's motion picture theaters for the period from 1897, when moving pictures were first shown to the mass public in Idaho via Thomas Edison's Vitascope,¹ until 1949, the current ending date for National Register eligibility.

Live Performance Houses - 1897 to 1908

Motion Pictures were initially exhibited in traditional Live Performance theaters. Indeed, the earliest documented group showing of a motion picture in Idaho occurred on March 22, 1897 at the Opera House in Pocatello. The local newspaper reported, "The Opera House is crowded every night to see Gunning, the hypnotist, and the Vitascope."² A week later, Boise audiences were treated to showings of the Vitascope, also in connection with live entertainment, at Sonna's Opera House and at the Columbia Theater, with slightly more fanfare:

The exhibition of various scenes by means of the vitoscope [sic] was remarkable for its realistic nature. While the hall was darkened the representation of the Empire express

¹Introduced by Thomas Edison in 1896, the Vitascope was the first widely-distributed equipment that projected a moving image onto a screen which could then be viewed by a number of people, as opposed to the earlier (1894) Kinetoscope which operated when an individual customer dropped a coin in the machine and viewed the moving image through a peephole.

²*Pocatello Tribune*, 28 March 1897, p. 10 c. 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

running at 70 miles an hour was thrown upon the stage screen. The New York fire department was also shown, with other interesting scenes, all of which elicited hearty applause from the audience for their life like appearance.³ Thus began Idaho's entry into the world of motion pictures.

Most Idaho towns had long had some sort of permanent facility used specifically for live performances and other public gatherings. Various called an opera house, theater, or town hall, these structures housed a variety of activities. For example Champion Hall, which was constructed above the existing Crane building in Silver City in 1873, was used for balls and parties, stage productions, meetings, lectures, church services, at least one wedding, a private school, and as the county court room.⁴ Live performances in the early theaters were as varied as amateur or professional dramatics presented by local or traveling theatrical troupes, music, minstrel and vaudeville shows, or individual performances by a magician, hypnotist, or other artist.

These early theatrical facilities could be a simple wooden structure, but often were substantial and imposing. In describing the aforementioned Columbia Theater in Boise, the *Idaho Daily Statesman* reported:

There will be 600 colored electric lights in the building, the heating and ventilation arrangements will be perfect, and there will be a fire wall with fire proof curtain separating the stage from the auditorium. A large number of exits have been provided and every precaution has been taken to secure both safety and convenience. The main entrance will be twenty feet wide, two rooms each twenty feet wide being left on either side. The building will be of pressed brick and cut stone and will be finished and decorated in French renaissance.⁵

The live performance theaters generally included an attractive lobby with box office, one or more balconies, a ladies' retiring room, mens' smoking room, substantial stage and proscenium, and dressing rooms, in addition to the auditorium itself. Photographic evidence suggests that while the exteriors of the buildings could be architecturally ornate, signage was generally modest, often no more than a strategically placed placard or handbill, or name of the building tastefully placed above

³*Idaho Daily Statesman*, 30 March 1897, p. 6 c. 3.

⁴Julie Hyslop, *Foundations of Silver City: Stone Buildings in a Wooden Town*, (self published, 1989), pp. 65-67.

⁵*Idaho Daily Statesman*, 27 May 1892, p. 5 c. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3

Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

the entrance. Neon-lit marquees and towers would not appear until much later. Other less permanent facilities, such as a saloon or tent, were used for live entertainment and public gatherings as well.

In many cases, these structures intended for live entertainment would add moving pictures to their repertoire as the demand for film grew. Little was needed to adapt an existing theater for the use of moving pictures, primarily the addition of projection equipment and some sort of screen. Ticket booth, lobby, auditorium, and other spaces were unchanged. Boise's Pinney Theater, built in 1908, was one of the last of the large, ornate live performance theaters to be built in the state during this era. Contemporaries described the structure as:

one of the nicest little playhouses in the Northwest. . . Located on the first floor will be three boxes, one on each side of the theater. The same number will be located on the balcony floor, making a total of 12 boxes in the playhouse. The building is to be built fireproof. The construction will be of brick and reenforced [sic] concrete. . . The proscenium opening will be very wide, measuring about 39 feet. The stage will be large and fully equipped with every modern convenience. The entire building will be nicely decorated.⁶

Even this elegant building succumbed to the advance of moving pictures; by 1920, it was offering primarily film to its audiences.

Nickelodeons and Combination Houses - 1904 to 1917

Nickelodeons and combination houses shared many characteristics. Both offered regular, cheap entertainment, live and film, intended for the working-class public. Operating during the same approximate time period, the difference between these two forms of theater might best be defined by their focus. Nickelodeons were moving picture houses with a minimum of musical accompaniment, while combination houses presented primarily vaudeville acts with moving picture features.

Published histories of the movie theater industry generally define a nickelodeon as a theater that charged a very low admission (often a nickel) and was relatively simple in decor. Nickelodeon-style theaters might be a building specifically constructed for motion pictures, but were more often an existing commercial space renovated for use in showing movies. Most sources agree that a nickelodeon was not much more than four walls, benches or hard chairs, the projection equipment, a

⁶*Idaho Daily Statesman*, 23 January 1908, p. 3 c. 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 4 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

piano for musical accompaniment, and a screen (often a bed sheet or painted wall) at the front of the auditorium.

In Idaho, there is broad evidence of renovated commercial space used for motion pictures. Newspapers abound with references to the opening of moving picture theaters in existing space, such as:

Announcement is made this week that the Lyric theater [Grangeville] will move shortly to the building now occupied by the grocery department of the Big Buffalo cash store. . . The new location will be an ideal one for the theater and as it is to be fitted up thoroughly modern the establishment and maintenance of an excellent place of amusement is assured. The new location will provide for a seating capacity of about 250.⁷

In referring to his first theater (1920) in the town Blackfoot, owner Paul DeMordaunt reflected that, "We just took a storeroom and remodeled it with a projection booth in it and seats and a screen. . ." ⁸

Combination houses might also be located in a renovated commercial space, or be in a building constructed for the express purpose of housing a theater. Because combination houses had a heavier emphasis on live entertainment, accommodations were generally made for dressing rooms and appropriate stage area. Again, Idaho newspapers make numerous references to these structures, such as:

One of the neatest and most attractive playhouse [the Elk in Weiser], or moving picture and vaudeville theaters, in the state has just been opened in this city by Charles H. Fraser in what is generally known as the Brewery building on the corner of First and East Commercial. . . has been thoroughly remodeled, splendidly arranged and finished throughout, with a seating capacity of 350 raised seats and attractively arranged stage.⁹

In Lewiston, the Family Theater, which opened in the renovated Binnard Opera House in 1907, advertised primarily a vaudeville program, with moving pictures almost as an afterthought:

⁷*Idaho County Free Press*, 5 August 1909, p. 1 c. 1.

⁸Paul DeMordaunt, interviewed by Pam Morris, Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, September 15, 1980, p. 4.

⁹*Weiser American*, 16 June 1910, p. 1 c. 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

9 Big Acts With No Stops, 75 Minutes Solid Fun. McGeel Collins in a comedy sketch entitled a colored highball. (a big hit.) Chas G. Carrolton in black and white. He is great. The two Rynersons. Hypnotists introducing a unique program of Mirth and mystery. The only act of the kind on the vaudeville stage. Must be seen to be appreciated. Don't fail to see the blind drive. Free. Fine moving pictures and a lot of them. Our illustrated song singer can't be beat.¹⁰

In some cases, descriptions of newly-opened combination houses suggest that the buildings were nearly as ornate as the earlier live performance theaters, including comfortable seating, extensive stage scenery, and modern, attractive decor.

A review of Idaho newspapers shows that admission to both nickelodeons and combination theaters generally cost 10¢ or 15¢, with reserved seats costing as much as 20¢. At the same time, admission to so-called legitimate theater could cost from \$1.00 to \$1.50. In all instances, the moving picture programs were promoted as appropriate for audiences of all ages and both sexes.

As was the case in other areas of the country, the era of World War I brought a major decline to the number of traveling theatrical troupes, causing many combination houses to close or rely more heavily on motion pictures as their primary entertainment.

Motion Picture Theaters - 1917 to 1949

Although the Liberty Theater in Lewiston, built in 1921, was one of the first movie houses in Idaho to advertise itself as a picture palace, the era of buildings constructed specifically for the purpose of showing moving pictures dates a few years earlier. To differentiate motion picture theaters from the earlier nickelodeons and combination houses, it is again important to note focus and scale. Motion picture theaters were clearly intended to be first and foremost for the purpose of showing film. (This despite the fact that live musical accompaniment continued to be a part of the movie experience until the introduction of talking pictures in 1927.) At this same time, motion picture theaters were designed to provide a certain special experience for the public and began to incorporate features such as plush seating, distinct architectural characteristics, restrooms, and other specialized areas such as crying and smoking rooms. Extensive stage areas were generally not necessary, nor were dressing rooms, although some exceptions to this rule can be found in the state. Emphasis was placed instead on comfort for the patron and the most up-to-date projection equipment.

¹⁰ *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, 18 October 1907, p. 5 c. 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 6 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

There are numerous examples of extant motion theater buildings in Idaho that date to this time period. The Roxy Theater in Cascade (1939) was designed to seat 415 people and included a smoking room for men and a room where ". . . mothers who have babies who would rather cry than watch the show can enjoy themselves without annoying others."¹¹ The Liberty Theater in Hailey (1938) included seating for 450 people on the main floor and balcony seating for an additional 85. Newspaper accounts noted the neon marquee and tower and attractive decor. A 1940 remodel of the Star Theater (1917) in Weiser added a balcony with a crying room and included seating for 650. Weiser's Star Theater is also one of few movie theaters that incorporated dressing rooms and a functional stage for live entertainment, even after the 1940 remodel. But despite this general lack of adequate facilities, motion picture theaters often served their local community as a gathering place for large groups of people, as had the earlier live performance houses. Newspaper articles report a wide variety of activities, including political speeches, benefit performances for other local organizations such as a public library local school theatrical performances, and New Year's and Fourth of July celebrations.

Also common throughout this time period were portable circuits. Many theaters owners, particularly in the smaller towns where low population density made it difficult to maintain an adequate income, ran portable theaters to other smaller, outlying towns. Lloyd Hall of Bovill recalls that during the 1930s, his older brother not only ran movies at the Bovill Opera House one night a week but also:

. . . had a little Ford wagon with wood sides and everything. And he carried the machines; he had portable machines and he would go to Elk River and go to Deary; he'd go to Clarkia. He had a place every night that he showed all week and he'd take this one film and go with it for a week and then be back here. . . mostly I.O.O.F halls and stuff like that; lodges, gymnasiums.¹²

The era of portable circuits came to an end shortly after World War II when personal automobiles and improved roads allowed better access to theaters in the larger towns.

Motion Picture Theater Architects, Suppliers, and Owners

¹¹*Cascade News*, 10 March 1939, p. 1 c. 1.

¹²Lloyd Hall, interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley, Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, August 27, 1997, p. 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 7 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

Although records are scanty, there is no evidence of the nationally-known theater architects, such as Crane, Lee, Eberson, Lamb, Rapp & Rapp, or Priteca, having been commissioned for theater buildings in Idaho. On the other hand, several local and regional architects did work in the state, including Tourtellotte and Hummel, Boise, who designed the Egyptian (1927) and Pinney (1908) theaters in Boise and the Gorby Opera House (1914) in Glenns Ferry; Frank Moore, Salt Lake City, designer of the Star Theater (1917) in Weiser; Walter DeMordaunt, Denver, who was commissioned by his brother to create the Nuart Theater (1929) in Blackfoot; Burton Morse, Twin Falls, who fashioned the Ramona Theater (1928) in Buhl; Hans Hulbe, Boise, designer of the Roxy Theater (1939) in Cascade; and Edward A. Miller, Portland, creator of the Panida Theater (1927) in Sandpoint.

There is also evidence of contractors who worked closely with owners in the design and construction of theater buildings. Examples include J.R. Adkinson, Clarkston, Washington, who worked with owner Al Wagner to design and build the Blue Fox Theater (1930) in Grangeville and Jack Rutter, Hailey, designer and builder of Liberty Theater (1938) in Hailey who stated: "I built several buildings on Main Street. . .and most of the buildings that I built down there, I drew my own plans. Just like the theater. . ." ¹³ Additional design inspiration for Idaho motion picture theaters may have come from out-of-state, most likely as part of a package from theater supply houses located in major film centers such as California, Washington, and Utah, or occasionally Colorado and Oregon.

Architectural styles for Idaho theaters were varied, but given the location and population base of the state, none reached the epic proportions in size and decor of theaters in cities such as New York, Chicago, Seattle, or Los Angeles. Many buildings fall into the ubiquitous category of "budget Deco," but other styles are present as well, including Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival, Egyptian Revival, Moderne, and more recognizable Art Deco. Idaho is even home to one Quonset hut-style movie theater, the Ace in Wendell. Given the wide variety of architectural styles employed in Idaho theater architecture, this Multiple Property Submission will not attempt to establish criteria for nomination of theaters under Criterion C. An individual theater nomination will have to make its own unique case for Criterion C significance.

Idaho motion picture theaters occasionally incorporated additional retail space in the design of the building. "Port" Wagner, whose father owned and operated the Blue Fox Theater in Grangeville, recalls that rental income from two retail spaces and two apartments in their family

¹³Jack Rutter, interviewed by Bob Waite, Ketchum: Community Library Association, October 16, 1982 (not transcribed).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 8 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

theater was a welcome addition to the profit margin, even if a bit of a nuisance to manage.¹⁴ The Rich Theater, which opened in Montpelier in 1923 (and now known as the Centre), incorporated the movie house, a confectionery store, garage and machine shop, two new car showrooms, an electrical goods store, and a grocery store, all in one building.¹⁵

Idaho lacked even a rudimentary support system for local motion picture theater operators, that is, most theater furnishings and equipment, and the film itself, was shipped in from out-of-state vendors. For example, sources suggest that interior design service for the Roxy Theater in Cascade (1939) came from Salt Lake City and furnishings for the Blue Fox (1930) in Grangeville came from Seattle. Lewiston's Liberty Theater (1921) was furnished by Western Theater Equipment of Seattle, while the 1940 remodel of the Star Theater in Weiser was the work of the B.F. Shearer Theater Company, with offices in San Francisco and Seattle. In earlier years, the Star had an exclusive license with General Talking Pictures Corporation of New York City for its "junior combination" sound equipment package, including "two control, one 'B' amplifier and power supply unit, one loud speaker, tubes necessary to complete installation, two Synchronous turntable devices."¹⁶

Local city directories show only one film exchange having ever been located in Idaho - Williams Feature Film Company in Boise. Arthur C. Williams was listed as treasurer/manager in 1916 and 1917; by 1918 he had moved to Ogden, Utah.¹⁷ A number of current and former theater owners recall that Salt Lake City, for theaters in southern Idaho, and Seattle, for northern Idaho, were home to the major film distributors.

The majority of Idaho's motion picture theaters were locally owned and operated, as opposed to being owned by one of the major studios, as was the case in many other states. Even in the instances where several Idaho theaters were operated as a circuit, the owner was still generally from Idaho or a neighboring state. Examples¹⁸ include DeMordaunt and Drennen of Blackfoot, with theaters in Blackfoot, Idaho Falls, Rexburg, St. Anthony and Salmon; Harris-Voeller Theaters, Burley, with properties in Buhl, Burley, Jerome, Montpelier, and several out-of-state locations; Liberty Theater Corporation, Lewiston, with theaters in Lewiston and Clarkston, Washington; and the

¹⁴Al "Port" Wagner, interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley, Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, May 4, 1995, p. 17.

¹⁵*Bear Lake County News*, 17 April 1923, p. 1 c. 3.

¹⁶Washington County (Idaho), Leases, Volume Z, pp. 314-316.

¹⁷*Boise City and Ada County Directory*, Salt Lake City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1918, p. 321.

¹⁸The examples cited come from *The 1946 Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures*, edited by Jack Alicoate.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 9 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

State Theater Company, Livingston, Montana, with one property in Hailey and additional theaters in Montana.

At this same time, only four large theatrical companies operated in the state, including Fox Intermountain Theaters, Inc., Denver, with theaters in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Wyoming; Intermountain Theaters, Inc., Salt Lake City, with properties in Utah and Idaho; North Coast Theaters, Seattle, with theaters in Idaho and Washington; and Paramount Pictures, Inc., New York City, operating in nearly every state in the nation. It is quite possible that this lack of dependence on the major studios, combined with limited utilization of professional architectural assistance, is the primary basis for the modest presentation of Idaho motion picture theaters.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 1 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

I. Name of Property Type Motion Picture Theater

II. Description

A theater is defined in Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language as "a place where plays, operas, motion pictures etc. are presented: especially a building expressly designed for such presentation" For the purposes of this nomination this definition will be refined to include only those buildings which historically exhibited motion pictures during the stated period of significance (1897-1949). Motion picture exhibition must have been a substantial part of the functional history of the building in order to qualify for listing within the scope of this document. It must be demonstrated that the building to be nominated contributed to the overall social and recreational life of the community in which it is located.

Theaters will share several general physical attributes--the most important being an auditorium with seating for a significant number of persons oriented toward an principal display area which will feature space for a projection screen. All of these buildings will contain separate space for film projection equipment and may exhibit other features such as: stage, fly, dressing rooms, green rooms, balcony, crying room, ticket booth, lobby, concession stand, storage areas, men's and women's restrooms, and office space. Some examples will also have separate independent commercial, office or dwelling units which function to enhance theater revenues.

III. Significance

The theater is the only property type associated with this Multiple Property Submission and the context identified in Section B. From the beginning of Euro-American settlement, communal entertainment has played a vital role in the social life of Idahoans. One of the most significant innovations in communal or mass entertainment was the invention of the motion picture at the end of the 19th century. It would be hard to understate the place that the movies and the motion picture theater achieved in the social life of Idaho communities large and small in the first half of the 20th century. The motion theater quickly became the center of entertainment and leisure time activity across Idaho. Only the arrival of television in the 1950s served to remove the movies from their dominant place in mass entertainment in Idaho. Beginning in the 1960s, the motion picture theater began to truly fade from the social scene in many Idaho communities. Numerous towns in Idaho have had their motion picture theaters close. Recognition and preservation of this property type is essential to understanding the impact motion pictures and mass entertainment had on the state of Idaho

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 2

Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

IV. Registration Requirements

It is expected that properties to be listed within the scope of this document will generally retain a high level of historic integrity. Integrity of location is quite important and, for most examples, is quite likely as theaters tend to be large structures not subject to easy removal from their historic location. While some physical modifications of theaters is to be expected, a property must retain all of the principal historic characteristics which identify it as uniquely a theater. The exterior should not have been substantially remodeled during the non-historic period, although some modifications to entrances and signage may be acceptable. The interior of the building must retain its principal spaces--particularly an unsubdivided auditorium. It is not necessary that the property still be used for motion picture exhibition--as long as the new use has not dictated modifications which destroy the ability of the property to convey its motion picture heritage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 1 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

Initial identification of selected motion picture theaters was the result of reconnaissance level survey of theaters in Idaho conducted in 1997 and 1998. Although not comprehensive for every city in the state, an effort was made to survey towns in each of Idaho's major geographical regions - north, southwest, and southeast - and also provide representation for various town sizes, from Boise, population 125,551 (1990) to Bovill, population 256 (1990). Additional survey is recommended for future inclusion in this Multiple Property Documentation Form.

The historic context information came from a variety of archival sources. Relatively few primary sources are available on the topic of motion picture theaters in Idaho. There are several small collections of theater records, such as daily cash books, in the hands of private individuals and the Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives. Likewise, there are a few instances of architectural blueprints, primarily from the firm of Tourtelotte and Hummel, and construction information, such as project bid records from the construction firm of J.O. Jordan and Son (later Jordan-Wilcomb) who built Boise's Egyptian Theater. Some building-specific information was also found in Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and city directories. Additional research was conducted with oral history interviews, both existing and newly created for this project; existing National Register of Historic Places nominations; newspapers articles and advertisements; and local histories from a variety of Idaho towns.

A wide array of books have been published on the development of motion picture theaters in the United States. Although not specific to Idaho, these publications were useful in developing the overall historic context for this nomination and helped guide the identification of the three specific property types listed herein. Registration requirements were developed in accordance with National Park Service standards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 1

Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

I. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Books:

Alicoate, Jack, editor. *The 1946 Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures*. New York: The Film Daily, 1946

Fritzen, Mary Jane, editor. *Idaho Falls, City of Destiny*. Idaho Falls: Bonneville County Historical Society, 1991.

Gomery, Douglas. *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.

Hyslop, Julie. *Foundations of Silver City: Stone Buildings in a Wooden Town*. Nampa, Idaho: By the Author, 1989

Kissane, Leedice. *Pocatello Memories: A Collection of Columns from the Idaho State Journal*. Pocatello: Idaho State University, 1983.

Margolies, John and Emily Gwathmey. *Ticket to Paradise: American Movie Theaters and How We Had Fun*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.

Scott, Donna, editor. *A Tribute To The Past, A Legacy For The Future*. Twin Falls: Twin Falls County Business History, 1990.

Sharp, Dennis. *The Picture Palace and Other Buildings for the Movies*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.

Valentine, Maggie. *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: An Architectural History of the Movie Theater, Starring S. Charles Lee*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994.

Newspapers:

Bear Lake County News (Montpelier).

Cascade News (Cascade).

Hailey Times (Hailey).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 2

Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

Idaho County Free Press (Grangeville).

Idaho Daily Statesman (Boise).

Lewiston Morning Tribune (Lewiston).

Pocatello Tribune (Pocatello).

Weiser American (Weiser).

Weiser Signal (Weiser).

Oral History Interviews:

Breyen, Annette. Interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, April 22, 1998.

Cornwell, Karen. Interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, June 30, 1998.

DeMordaunt, Paul. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, September 15, 1980.

Gordon, Bruce. Interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, April 9, 1998.

Harris, Irvin G. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, September 18, 1980.

Harris, Shirley. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, October 11, 1980.

Morris, Jennie. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, September 18, 1980.

Morris, Richard M. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, September 16, 1980.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1 Page 3 Name of Property Motion Picture Theaters in Idaho, 1897-1949

County and State N/A

Nelson, Owen L. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, April 26, 1981.

Read, Etta. Interviewed by Pamela Morris. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, April 26, 1980.

Rutter, Jack. Interviewed by Bob Waite. Ketchum: Community Library Association, October 16, 1982.

Wagner, Al "Port." Interviewed by Linda Morton-Keithley. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, May 5, 1995.

Other:

Averett, Richard A. *The History of the Auditorium Theater in Pocatello, Idaho, From 1893 to 1939*. Master's Thesis, Idaho State University, 1970.

Eggers, Robert Franklin. *A History of Theater in Boise, Idaho from 1863 to 1963*. Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, 1963.

Garwood, Bob. *Photoplay in the Palouse*. Idaho and Pacific Northwest History, University of Idaho, April 15, 1974.

Jordan-Wilcomb Construction Company (Boise). Records. MS 535.

Orpheum Theater (Twin Falls). Records. MS 57.

Polk, R.L. and Company. City directories.

Ripley, Carol. *Declaring the Liberty Theater a Historical Landmark*. Business Writing 313, Lewis-Clark State College, December 12, 1986.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. Maps.

Tourtellotte and Hummel. Architectural drawings.