

8 Just a moment pu-leases while the operator changes reels.

Impatient Indians whoped and cowboys squirmed on their merry-go-round chairs as Fred Mercy prespired in the hot projection booth so that "The Great Train Robbery" could continue on the bed sheet serving as a silver screen.

That was 25 years ago in the Majestic theatre when the motion picture was a feeble, flickering apology for entertainment.

Fred Mercy, Sr. recalled those days yesterday as he contemplated celebrating the silver ~~jubilade~~ jubilee next month marking his quarter of a century in the show business here.

Only Indians and cowboys went to the theatre in those days. There was no art in the theater then, he recalled.

The Majestic which stood at 215 East Yakima avenue had folding swivel chairs, water in the basement and a piano player who did his best to imitate everything from shrieks of the heroine to a train wreck.

The first theater of "Mercy's was the forerunner of many he was to build or purchase and remodel. He now operates five here and eight outside the city. One, the capitol, was the largest west of the Mississippi river when it was built and its stage ranks today the largest west of Chicago.

In the days of the Gem, Lyric and other early Mercy theatres feature pictures were about 30 minutes long but the operator often dragged them out longer for he turned the projection machine by hand and could pad the program at will. An evening's entertainment was from 45 to 60 minutes long. Song slides and advertisements took up time and audiences joined lustily in the singing between changing of reels.

Nedra Para, Willian Farnum, Maude Adams, Sarah Bernhardt, Maurice Costello, Pearl White and Flora Finch--those and others played their enthralled roles 25 years ago; Indian and fire pictures attracted the largest crowds. Patrons not content with seeing one show an evening, visited them all.

the Bird of Paradise, The Million Dollar Mystery, the Diamond From the Sky and Runaway June were some of the favorite films. Only 1000 feet long it took three reels to make a feature picture while today the feature will be around 12,000 feet long.

In that first theatre Mercy took turns operating the projection machine and Mrs. Mercy took tickets from the eager Indians who never tired of the uncomfortable seats or were bothered by the somewhat strong odor that hung over the hot theater.

"Those glamorous days of the old business are over," Mercy sighed. "But I'll never forget how terrible Sarah Bernhardt was in 'Queen Elizabeth'."

Yakima Herald, May 9, 1937.

Lillian Russell with a clever company presented a clever play at the Yakima last night in "The Butterfly."

Lillian Russell is still an exceedingly beautiful woman and to all appearances is as young as ever. Her company is strongly balanced and the vehicle is good.

The leading woman was compelled to respond with a French lyric to several encores--The Yakima Herald, May 22, 1907.

Cultural — SCHOOL DRAMATICS

The Yakima City Dramatic club will give its first entertainment on Friday evening, February 1, at the theater extemporized from the woolen mills building, Old Town.

The drama is called "The Last Loaf" and the rehearsals have demonstrated that it will be a howling success. A large party of young people will attend from this city--Yakima Herald, Jan 31, 1895.

Cultural - DRAMA (MUSICAL)

North Yakima is to be favored on Friday, January 18, with a visit from Calhoun Opera company in Czebulka's charming and tuneful comic opera, "Amorita" which had a run of ten straight months at the Casino in New York.

There are 45 people connected with the company and over \$12,000 have been expended on the costumes and scenery. Yakima Herald, Jan 3, 1895.

CULTURE — Dramatics

The Washington and Whittier Societies of the Yakima public school will hold the boards of the Opera House Saturday evening with Denison's drama, "The Danger Signal." The proceeds of the entertainment are to go to the school library fund. For an object so worthy there should be a general attendance of citizens. The following young people will participate in the drama: Elmer Marks, Jr, J.T. Parker, Fred Haines, R. Reeman, J.W. Baxter, Charles Marks, Charles Giezentanner, Maude Thomas, Clara Sinclair, Effie Cary and Belle Yeats. McGlothlen's band will furnish music for the occasion.

Date ?

C.L. Davis who has been painting the Charior Race on the curtain of Larson's theatre abandoned his job Wednesday. He claimed that he had grown so nervous that he could no longer work with credit to himself or the house.

Mr. Larson wired to Sheridan Jenkins of Seattle, to come over and finish the curtain. Mr. Jenkins has an excellent reputation as a scenic painter both in the east and west and will no doubt have the work complete in time for the opening, June 11--
The Yakima Republic, May 23, 1900.

Sheridan Jenkins returned last Friday from Seattle where he has been doing some rush work in the painting of scenery for one of the theatres. He has almost finished the drop curtain. He has almost finished the drop curtain for Larson's theatre. The picture is a beautiful representation of the Grand canal in Venice and is certain to please the Public--The Yakima Herald, August 24, 1900.

CULTURE - Movies

The Edison Waragraph co. under the management of Fleming Bros. who have won the confidence and praise of the public by their excellent exhibitions will be at the Syndicate block North Yakima Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

Two hours performances each evening and with the most wonderful picture machine of the age will show the most realistic fight between McCoy and Sharkey from commencement to finish and knockout. Also the naval battle at Santiago harbor, showing the destruction of the Spanish fleet. Return of Roosevelt's rough riders, including horses in Cuba and one hundred others of marvelous accuracy and beauty.

The entire program will be assisted by the Edison Mechanical opera, the renditions as loud as a brass band and the softness of the human voice. This alone is worth the price of admission. Don't fail to hear this, Edison's latest achievement. The building has been equipped with chairs and all will be made comfortable. Admission 25 cts and 35 cts. Yakima Herald, Sept. 7, 1899.

A.E. Larson
theaters.

A.E. Larson on Monday sold his theater building to John Cort of the Northwest Theatrical association.

The deal has practically been closed and possession of the property turned over to Mr. Cort and his associates although some of the papers have not yet been signed or made out. The price paid was \$18,000.

In talking about the deal today Mr. Larson said he had ~~made~~ been anxious to sell for some time as his business interests here in other lines have been so great that he could not give the theater proper attention. He also said that eventually he would sell his lumber yard and go to the Sound to live on account of his wife's health.

Mr. Cort will make a number of improvements in the theater and in the future will have some of the best plays on the road stop at this place. The Northwest Theatrical association, which Mr. Cort represents, owns theaters at Helena and Great Falls, Montana at Spokane, Portland, Tacoma and Seattle--The Yakima Herald, March 4, 1902.

Culture - DRAMA
& PHOTOGRAPHY

E.J. Hamacher has a very interesting class in photography, numbering 41. He reports all of them as progressing rapidly in the art, many of them already having valuable collections--Yakima Herald, April 20, 1899.

A large and well pleased audience greeted "The Devil's Auction" at Mason's opera house last night. The title of the extravaganza doubtless served in deterring many from attending, laboring under the misapprehension that there were objectionable features. The play, however, is of the same type of dairy dramatizations that have delighted theatre goers for half a century.

The spectacular pantomime of "Les Danse de Sousa," illustrating in rag time melody the popular successes of the "March King," "Sousa," "King Cotton"; "El Capitan," "Uncle Sam the Dog of War," "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Brittania" and other timely subjects, formed a ballet divertissement rarely equalled.

When a sleeper awoke and groaned, "Wake me up when they build a new opera house," the audience, appreciating the difficulties the troupe labored under in presenting the play on the present small stage broke forth in long and loud applause.... "Yakima Herald, May 11, 1899.

That theatre goers fight shy of spectacular productions where the stage facilities are limited to the capacity of a lecture platform has often been impressed upon the Yakima public. It is disheartening not only upon the performers but ^{depressing} ~~depending~~ upon the audience to see elaborate stage effects rendered useless. "The Pay Train" company and audience labored under these disadvantages at Mason's opera house on Tuesday night. North Yakima has gone beyond the barnstorming epoch and demands a large amusement hall.

Some of the jokes: The twice married washerwoman remarked that

her married life had been a successful failure." She observed that her second husband never touched a glass anymore--he drank out of a bottle. She thought her man would be president of the United States, yet, which led him to sigh, in a stage whisper: "That depends upon Mark Hanna." Yakima Herald, May 11, 1899.

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The spectacular pantomime of "Les Dames de Rome", illustrating in real time melody the popular successes of the "Arch King", "Hosanna--King", "Otto", "El Capitán", "Under the Dog of St. Peter", "Stars and Stripes Forever", "Britania", and other timely subjects, formed a ballet divertissement rarely equalled.

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Stephen C. Foster's dear old song, "The Old Folks at Home" or as it is more familiarly known "Way Down Upon the Suwanee River" is the source from which the late William C. Sterling has drawn his theme and title for the new comedy drama, "On the Suwanee River" which comes to Mason's Opera house next Monday evening, Feb. 13 for one performance only.

The play is said to have a healthy moral and has been treated in an intelligent manner. The story tells the old familiar tale of too mortgaged estates, love, intrigue and the final downfall of villany, but it is told in new language with new situations and therefore a new story.

Many pathetic and thrilling scenes are said to arise in the four acts of the play, one of the most thrilling of which is the scene where the blind girl, Dora, is seen about to cross a rustic bridge spanning a deep ravine. A portion of the bridge has been removed to make a death trap for the girl. As she approaches this part of the span the old refrain of "Suwanee River" comes floating through the air from a band of plantation singers in the distance. The girl's progress is arrested for a moment, on the very brink of the chasm. She stops, listens for a moment and turning starts in the direction from which the singing comes. The blind confidence of the girl on the bridge, the pathetic view of the audience, and the eventual safety of the girl certainly makes a new thrilling situation. Elaborate scenic detail has been provided and a competent company is promised. As to all at the following prices, children 25 cents, adults 50 cents and 75 cents--Yakima Herald, Feb. 9, 1899.

Yakima Customs
Movies

The cinematographe entertainment held in the opera house proved interesting to the large audience that filled the hall.

Many of these "living pictures" elicited much merriment and applause.

The entertainment on Saturday evening was marred by an accident to some of the electrical appliances and had to be postponed to Monday evening when the "Spanish Bull Fight" was shown for the first time.

Since showing here the company has visited Walla Walla and Dayton and been greeted with big houses--Yakima Herald, April 14, 1898.

Yakima Historical

A Modern Theatre

Yakima people do not neglect their pleasures and confort in their progress and growth. With their profit from well directed thrift and enterprise comes the need for something better than an ordinary hall with wooden chairs and inadequate stage room to rpresent the better class of plays. Accepting a rproposal made by Mr. A. E. Larson to the citizens of Yakima a committee of business men found for him the present site for the modern theater prictured here, which is in every way suitable for accommodating the high class attractions booked to appear from time to time.

Mr. Larson's various enterprises requiring his attention, he found ~~it out of the question to look after the interests of this project. So he brought here from Spokane Edward Fournier, a young man who had been~~ it out of the question to look after the interests of this project. So he brought here from Spokane Edward Fournier, a young man who had been

connected with various eastern theaters and managers of companies.

Mr. Fournier believes that a patronage so liberal in their support of really good things in the way of theatricals are deserving of the best. In booking his entertainments he has met with commendable success in securing the greatest stars and best in both music and drama, thus further illustrating the fact that the American perople will pay for what they want and especially that the Yakima Americans want the best in their education and pleasures as well as in their luncheon.

The Yakima Herald North Yakima, Wash.
Dec. 31, 1901

Opera House

A.E. Larson took the preliminary steps on Monday for the building of the new opera house. It is to be located on the three lots donated by the citizens on the northwest corner of Second and A streets. The plans have been drawn by an experienced architect of theater buildings, J.A. Pearson of Des Moines, Iowa. The cost of the edifice will be upwards of ten thousand dollars and it is to be completed by next June. It will be enclosed this winter and may be used for conventions early next spring.

The building will front east and the size will be 70 x 100 feet. The stage back of the curtain line will be 30 feet deep. Connected with the stage is designed a high rising loft 56 feet in height for the elevation of stage machinery into place. On the first floor opera chairs will be arranged to seat 500 people. There are to be four boxes two above and two below, for both sides.

In the front of the building a large lobby is arranged for. On one side of this are two reception rooms for ladies and gentlemen provided with modern accessories. Opposite these rooms is the ticket office for the manager. The second story will have a balcony and gallery with a seating capacity of 500. Surmounting all is a dome surrounded with border lights.

Fronting the second story is a balcony adjoining a band room located under the gallery. The side exit of the gallery is on the north side and the side exit of the first floor is on the south.

The stage will be supplied with up to date dressing rooms. The building will be frame. The building is under the direction of A.E. Howard--
Yakima Herald , Oct 5, 1899.

The Commercial club having taken hold of the new opera house proposition the much needed improvement will doubtless be pushed to completion.

A.E. Larson has made an unparalleled offer to the club. He will build and furnish an opera house or a theatre building after the style of the Murphy opera house, Olympia, at a cost of \$10,000 the size to be 75 x 90 feet. Mr. Larson only asks of the citizens that they purchase three lots for the purpose.

He prefers he said the lots diagonally opposite the Syndicate block on A and Second streets. They can be purchased from Wm. Ker for \$1,500. The site is an eligible one, just outside the fire limits. ...Yakima Herald, July 27, 1899.

Mattie Vickers Coming--The accomplished and pretty soubrette, Mattie Vickers, will appear in the opera house next Tuesday evening in "Jacquine " or "Paste and Diamonds." Miss Vickers is airy fairy, sparkling and vivacious. Her dancing is dainty, her singing charming and she is supported by an excellent troupe. The play is from the pen of the celebrated author, Charles Gaylor. The story it tells serves well the purpose--to amuse and display the talents of the principal members of the company--Yakima Herald, July 18, 1889.

WJ. Gilmore's new and highly praised legendary spectacle, Twelve Temptations, will appear at Mason's opera house Tuesday evening July 3--?

Aside from the immense company it takes a train of three railroad cars to carry all their effects. Mr. Fechter positively states that the new opera chairs will be placed in position as this is the grand opening attraction. A special railroad excursion train will be run from Ellensburg.

The play was produced in New York about 18 years ago by the late James G. Fisk, Jr. He was then proprietor and manager of the Grand opera house in that city. Though not featured, the ballet forms considerable prominence. Yakima Herald, July 25, 1889.

A lively round of amusements is promised to North Yakima commencing with November. Manager Howe of the Northwest circuit has engaged Mason's opera house for the following dates and troupes: Nov. 4, Milton Nobles; November 7, Around the World in Eighty Days; November 16, the ~~Faded~~ Fakir; Nov. 19, McKee Rankin; Dece. 28, Helen Blythe; Jan 15, Frank Mayo; Feb. 18, J.S. Murphy; April 3, A Night Off; May 27, Walter Matthews; May 30, Ada Gilman; June 6, Nellie McHenry; July 1, Charles Bowser-
Yakima Herald, Sept. 28, 1889