

MENOMINEE



RANGE



MEMORIES

THE COLONIAL THEATRE COMPANY'S IRON MOUNTAIN VENUES



- The Bijou Theatre
- The Colonial Theatre
- The Braumart Theatre

By
William J. Cummings
2021

BIJOU THEATRE

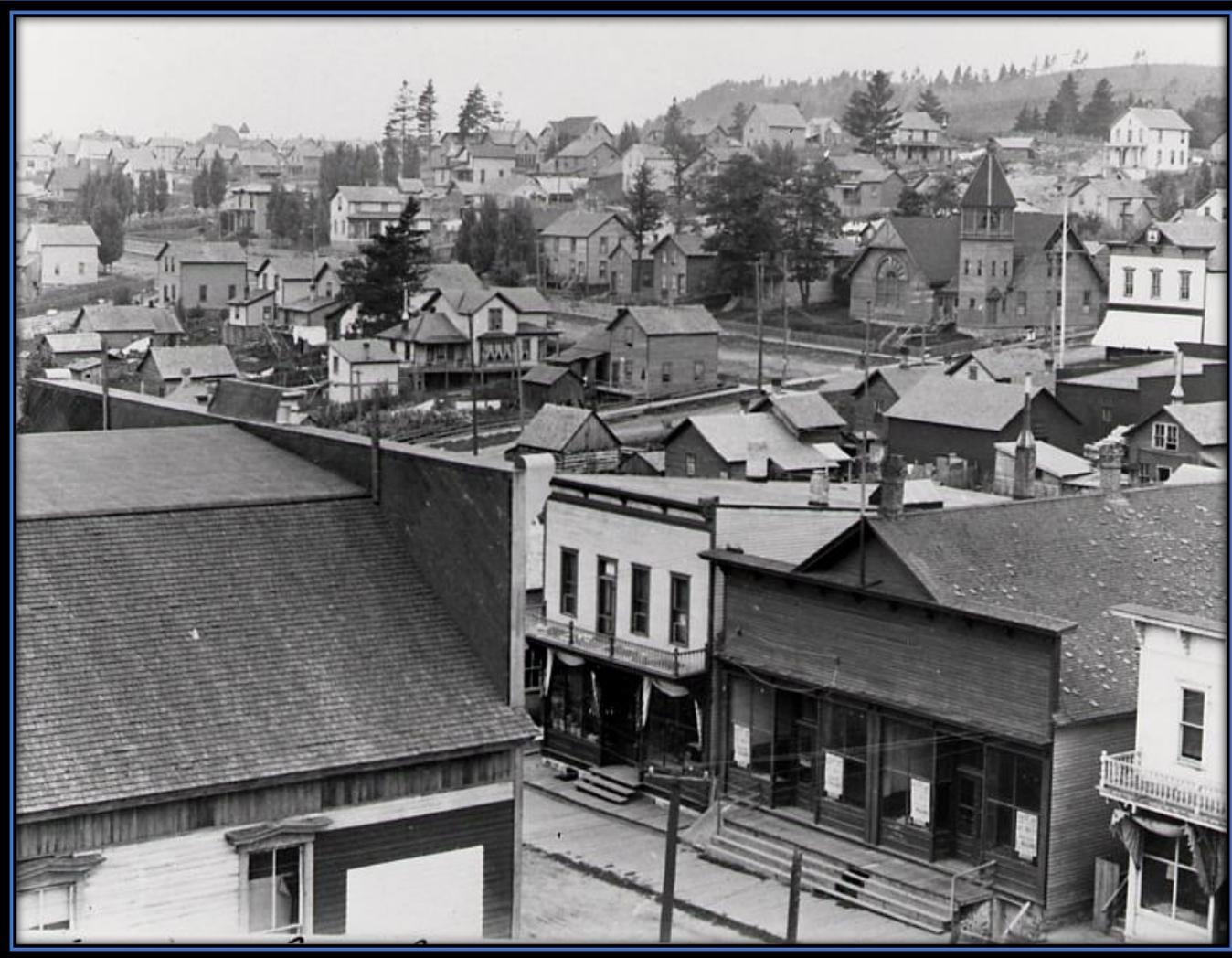
104-106 West Ludington Street

Opened
Circa 1906



Closed Between
1925 and 1935

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



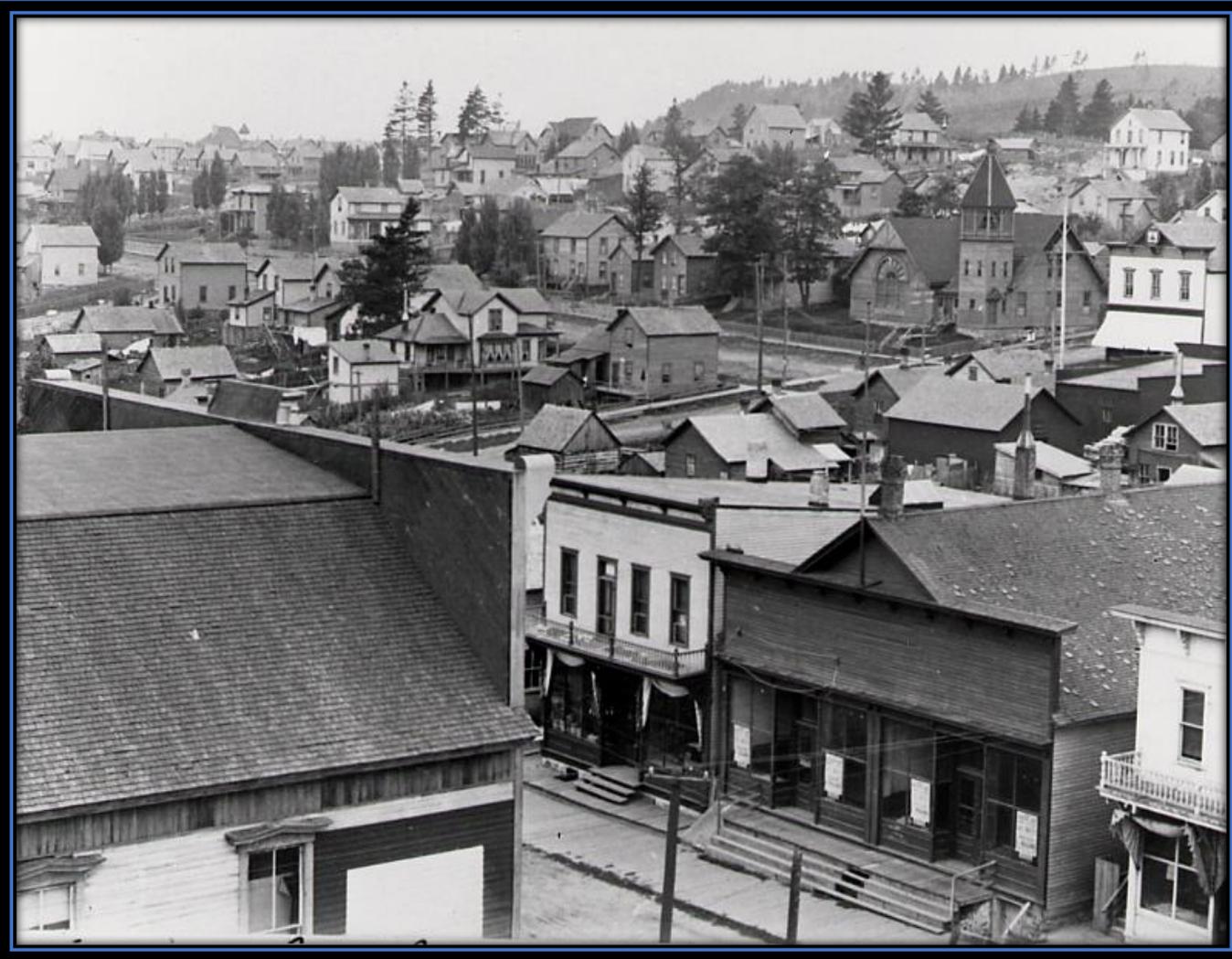
Taken in the late 1890s or possibly the early 1900s, the camera faced northwest, showing several buildings on the north side of the 100 block of Iron Mountain's West Ludington Street.

The First Presbyterian Church, built in 1885-1886, is visible on the northwest corner of Carpenter Avenue and West Brown Street. The church structure, then housing Francie's Traditional Designs, burned to the ground on October 22, 2013.

The rooftop in the left foreground covered Rundle's Hardware Store and Opera House (on the second floor), located at 101-103 West Ludington Street, just across the street from the Bijou Theatre which later occupied the dark building with two entrances.

The site of the Bijou Theatre – 104-106 West Ludington Street – was occupied by other businesses prior to 1907.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



In the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-94*, **DaPrato & Rigassi (John DaPrato and Charles Rigassi)** sold groceries at this site. **Thomas Williams** ran a second-hand store at 104-106 West Ludington Street according to the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and the Villages of Quinnesec and Vulcan, Mich. 1902-1903*.

The first account discovered so far which links **August E. Brauns** to the property occupied by the Bijou Theatre appeared in the March 22, 1906 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* under the headline “**Armory Hall**” which noted A.E. Brauns selected the name Armory Hall “for the reconstructed Bordeau building on West Ludington street.”

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



Probably taken in 1898, Dickinson County's Company E, 34th Michigan Volunteers, stood at attention in front of what became Armory Hall at 104-106 West Ludington Street. The reconstructed Bordeau building was named Armory Hall by August E. Brauns, the owner, in March 1906, when the structure was used as a roller rink. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

August E. Brauns (1868-1934) came to Iron Mountain in 1893 and in partnership with Ed Vandenbraek opened the city's first "cash and carry" grocery store at 204 East Ludington Street. A year later the partners entered the wholesale fruit and grocery business under the name Brauns & Van. Vanderbraek died in 1915, but the business continued until about 1924, when it was sold to the Carpenter-Cook Company of Menominee. The Carpenter-Cook Company purchased the Brauns & Van building at 109-111 East Ludington Street in about 1929.

August E. Brauns purchased the reconstructed Bordeau building which he named Armory Hall in March 1906, when the structure was used as a roller rink. He opened the Bijou Theatre at 104-106 West Ludington Street that same year.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

The single column advertisement on the right (divided into two) appeared in the April 25, 1907 edition of *The Iron Mountain Press*. Note that “**Armory Hall Bijou**” appeared at the top of the advertisement which included vaudeville acts and “new moving pictures” with the following titles: “Master’s Tea Service” – “Winter in Switzerland” – and “Chasing a Sausage.”

The Bijou Theatre was Iron Mountain’s first theater to regularly feature motion pictures.

Note the admission price of 15 cents with a matinee on Saturday for 10 cents.

ARMORY HALL BIJOU

....PROGRAM....
For Last Half of Week

FRANCIS & ROGERS
Refined Comedy Duo

A. ANDERSON
Impersonator

MILAN & ALVIN
in an entirely new act, entitled
“THE NEW WOMAN”
or “Training a Husband”

Mr. Josh Bridgman

in the beautifully
illustrated song,

Nobody Seems to Love Me Now

New Moving Pictures:

Hero Master’s Tea Service
Winter in Switzerland
Amateur Photographer
Chasing a Sausage

Admission 15cts

Matinee Saturday afternoon
at 4:30 o’clock.....

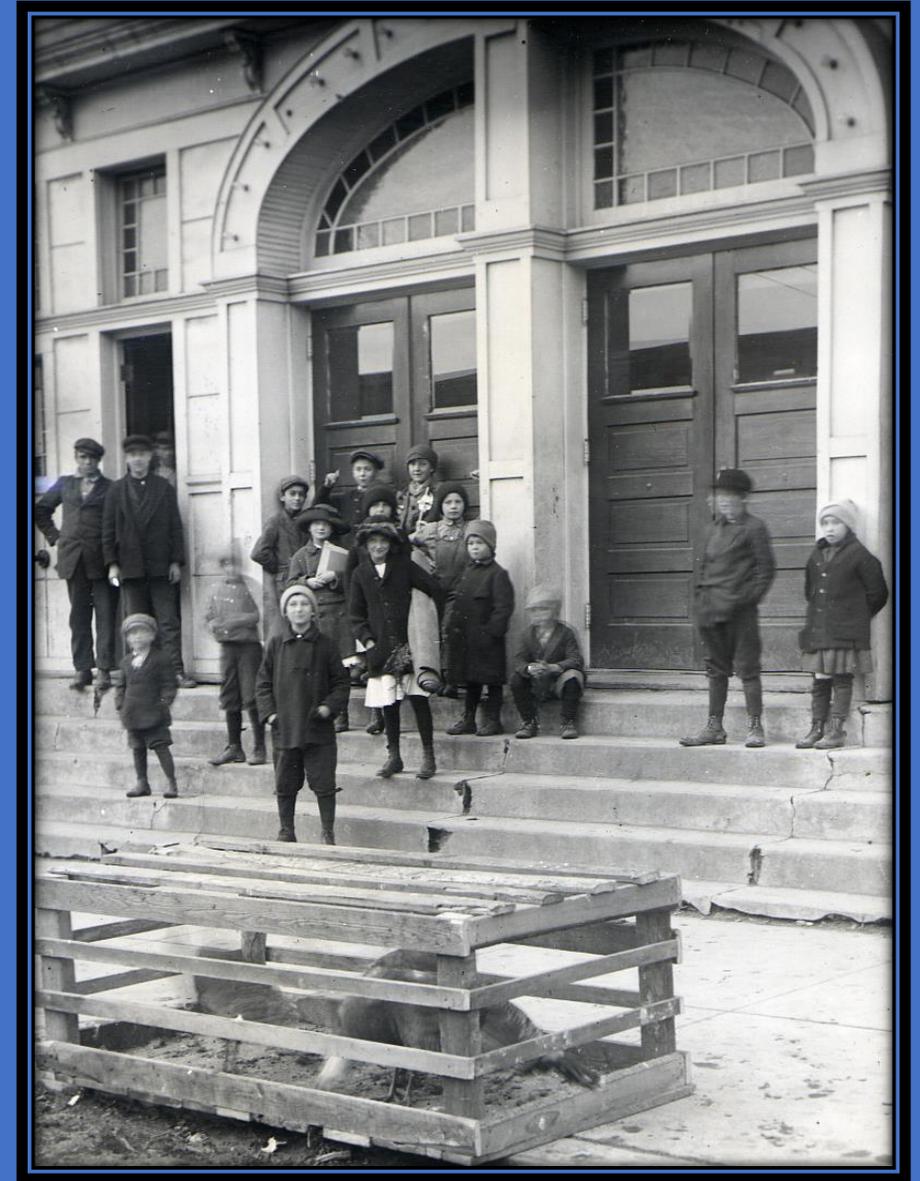
Admission 10c

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

The first phase of motion pictures, in the late 1890s and early 1900s, emphasized showing human motion. The second phase – telling a story – began around 1900. Early films were quite short, usually running five to eight minutes. They were called “one reelers” as they consisted of just one reel of film. These moving pictures typically appeared at the end of the program, as exemplified by the advertisement shown on the preceding slide.

In 1907-1908 **The Bijou Theatre**, a vaudeville theater, was in operation at **104-106 West Ludington Street** under the management of **Gustaf Holmberg**. **Frank Parent** was also listed at **104 West Ludington Street** selling liquors and cigars in 1907-1908.

Unidentified youngsters awaiting the opening of the **Bijou Theatre**'s doors for a Saturday matinee, possibly dreaming of winning one of the plump gobblers in the crate, offered as door prizes. Although the photograph is undated, it was taken probably taken after the 1916 remodeling project but before 1921, when the theater was extensively remodeled. Note the arch highlighted with electric light bulbs over the doors. [*Menominee Range Historical Museum*]



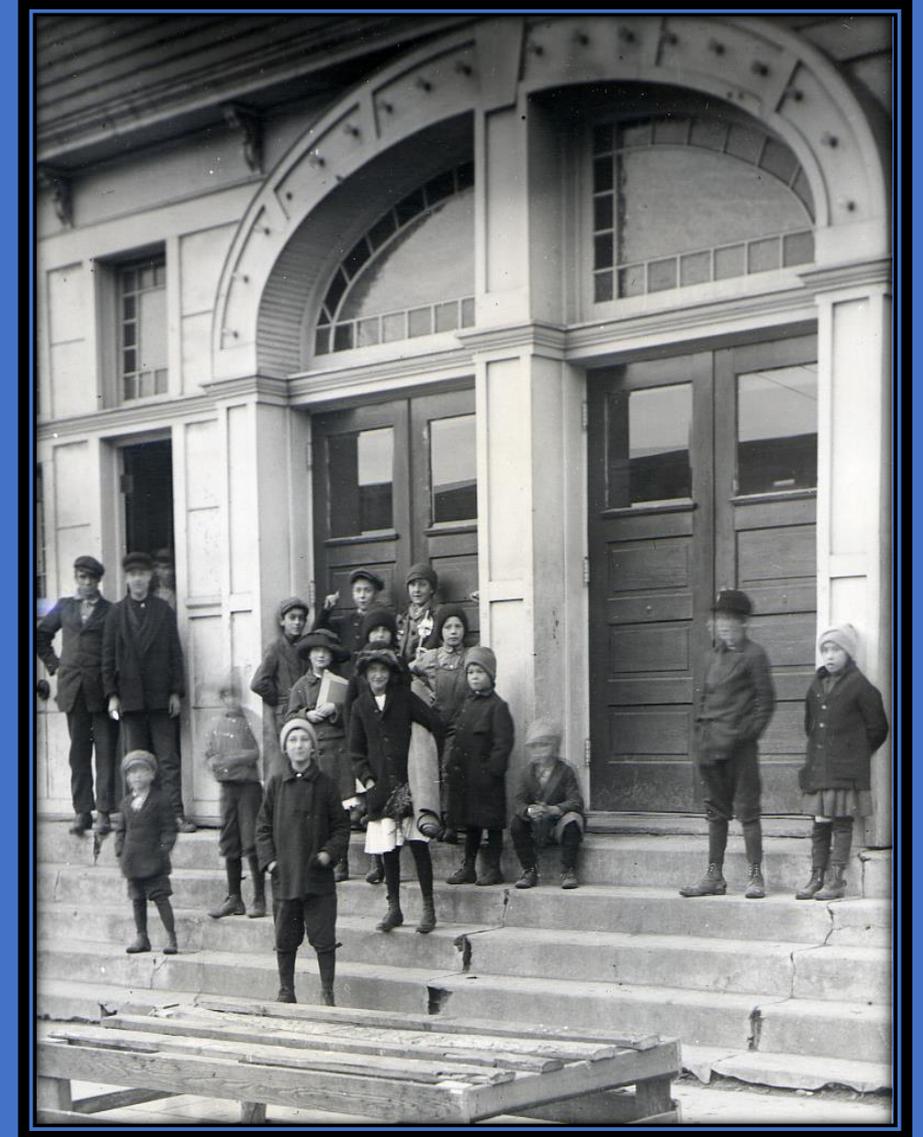
THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

An article in the August 22, 1907 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* announced the playbill under the headline “Bijou Theatre” as follows:

Three nights of high-class repertoire and up-to-the-minute vaudeville will be the rule at the Bijou Theatre, starting Monday, Aug. 26th, at which time the McPhee Imperial Stock company open their engagement. The plays are all new and guaranteed by the management. The stock company that can boast of specialists that can be featured are scarce. McPhee Imperials do not have them, but have the kind that pleases the people. This department is headed by the invincible Brothers Spaulding, Parisian novelty acrobats, who stand in a class of their own. The opening play, “For Her Brothers’ Sake,” is a new comedy-drama of the pleasing kind, overflowing with the best of comedy, a beautiful story, prettily told by a company of players equal to the best. Prices, 15, 25 and 35c [cents].

Under “Brief City News” in the January 23, 1908 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, the following notification appeared:

First masquerade of the season at the Bijou roller rink this evening. A good time is assured.



THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



According to the *Iron Mountain Press*, the Bijou was the site of the St. Joseph's Church Fair during the week of November 16, 1908.

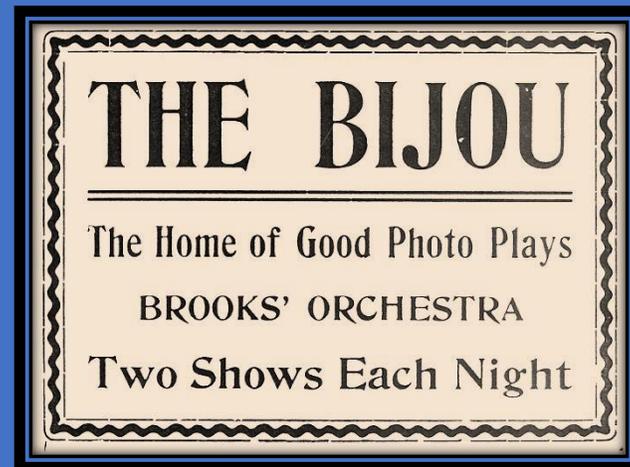
During the early years of the twentieth century **J.E. Becknell** successfully served as the Bijou Theatre's manager.

Across the street from the Bijou, where the Iron Mountain Post Office now stands, was the **A.J. Rundle Hardware Store** and **Rundle's Opera House**, in all probability the Bijou Theatre's biggest competitor, located on the second floor. While the *Iron Mountain Press* regularly featured news articles regarding the performances at Rundle's Opera House, as well as frequent reviews, the Bijou Theatre's first advertising campaign apparently began in March of 1911.

On March 30, 1911 an advertisement noted "The Harmony Four" would appear, as well as "One Illustrated Story."

Advertisements noted the Bijou's doors opened at 7:30 p.m. for the two evening performances scheduled at 8 and 9 o'clock. Music was provided by the **Brooks Orchestra** at that time. The advertisement at the right appeared in the April 13, 1911 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*.

By June 1911 the **Bijou Theatre** billed itself as "The Home of Good Photo Plays" and noted 3,000 feet of moving pictures were shown at each performance.



THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

However, an article under the headline “New Theatre” appeared in the *Iron Mountain Press* on October 19, 1911, noting **J.E. Becknell** was going to establish a new theater, the **Marion Theatre**, located at **207 East Hughitt Street**, as follows:

J.E. Becknell, who has been conducting the Bijou for several years, is arranging to open a new popular price theatre. He has leased the building on East Hughitt street lately occupied by J.F. Cowling and will remodel the same at once. The place is conveniently located for theatre purposes. Mr. Becknell's management at the Bijou has been very successful and he proposes to make the new house a model from the point of safety.

In the same edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, the following article appeared under the headline “**Leased the Bijou**”:

Martin Thomas has leased the Bijou and will take possession the first of the month. Mr. Thomas has been connected with the house in various capacities – from manager to electrician – for a number of years. He will leave for Chicago to-morrow [sic – tomorrow] evening to arrange for his films and other attractions. Mr. Thomas promises to conduct the house along first-class lines and his management should be successful.

The “**Brief City News**” column of the **November 1, 1911** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* reported:

Martin Thomas is now in charge of the Bijou Theatre, assuming the management yesterday. During his recent visit to Chicago he arranged for some extra good films.

In **August E. Brauns’** obituary it was stated that **Martin D. Thomas** became Brauns’ partner in 1911, five years after becoming his employee, but it would appear that the partnership was established near the time the Braumart Theatre was opened in 1925.

Under **Martin D. Tomas’** management, the Bijou Theatre booked highly-rated contemporary films as well as vaudeville acts.

One such example was “Cinderella,” a three-reel featured movie filmed in 1911 and released January 1, 1912. Billed as “Selig’s Greatest Motion Picture Masterpiece,” the movie featured **Mabel "Nell" Taliaferro** (May 21, 1887 – January 24, 1979), known as “the Sweetheart of American Movies.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



THE BIJOU

We take pleasure in announcing to the Patrons of Our Theatre that we have been able to arrange, at a great expense, for an exhibition of

Selig's Greatest Motion Picture Masterpiece

'Cinderella'

in Three Reels, with

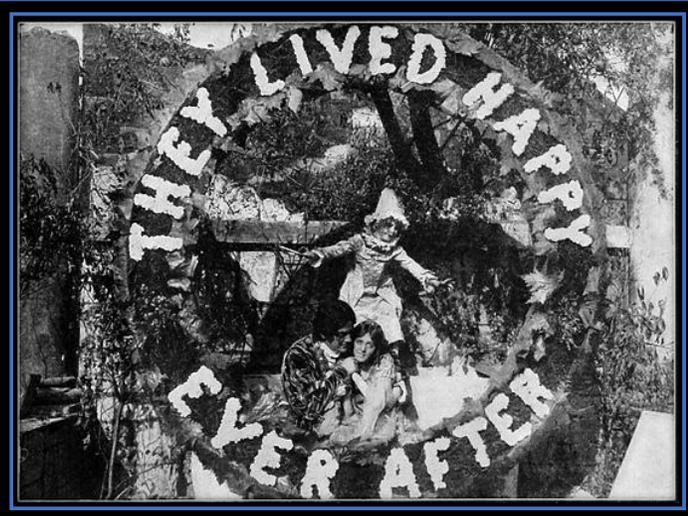
Mabel Taliaferro

one of the highest-priced Stars of the American stage in the name part.

Watch for the Date!



Mabel "Nell" Taliaferro, a child actress who first appeared on stage from the age of two, made her Broadway debut in 1899. She started in films with the Selig Studios in 1911. Her last major hit was the musical comedy "Bloomer Girl" (1944-1947).



The Bijou's advertisement for "Cinderella" was published in the February 1, 1912 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, just a month after the film's release.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

Martin D. Thomas was listed as manager of the **Bijou Theatre** in the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and Dickinson County with a List of Residents of Homestead, Wisconsin 1913*.

On Sunday morning, September 11, 1915, **Rundle's Opera House** and the **A.J. Rundle Hardware Store** burned to the ground at an estimated loss of between \$25,000 and \$35,000.

Obviously attempting to fill the void left by the destruction of Rundle's Opera House, the following item appeared in the September 23, 1915 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* under the headline "**To Remodel Theatre**":

Within a short time, the work of transforming the Bijou into a modern opera house will commence. The building will undergo many changes and when the work is completed it will be large enough to accommodate the largest road attraction. The present wooden floor, which is elevated, will be taken out and the new one built of concrete. The present stage will be greatly enlarged and extended to the rear of the building. It will have an opening of forty feet and will be fifty feet long. A loft will be constructed on top of the structure, will be [sic – which will] permit the use of drop scenery. The building will be equipped with a balcony and a new ventilating and heating system. A canopy will be built over the entrance. The new house will seat comfortably 800 people.

*While the work of construction is going on the building formerly used by the **Marion theatre** will be used by the management of the Bijou for motion picture shows. Many of the Bijou opera chairs will be transferred to the Marion.*

NOTE: The Marion Theatre was located at 207 East Hughitt Street. The existing Mitchell building was remodeled by J.E. Becknell, former manager of the Bijou Theatre, during October through December 1911. The second floor was removed and replaced with an arched steel ceiling. A balcony was erected over the main entrance. The building was strengthened and roomy and safe exits were provided. The theater could seat 425 patrons.

The Marion Theater, termed a photo playhouse as it was exclusively a movie theater, opened on Saturday evening, December 30, 1911. The management consisted of J.E. Backnell and Marion Higgin, for whom the theater was named. From a total of 147 proposed names the judges chose three finalists. The name was selected by drawing lots and Hugo Ohmen's entry won the \$25 prize.

In the March 27, 1913 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* the following article appeared under the headline "**Handsome New Curtain**":

A new gold fibre [sic – fiber] picture curtain has been installed at the Marion theatre. The curtain is something new and makes it possible to show moving pictures by daylight or in a well-lighted hall at night. Only one curtain of this kind is sold in any one place. Manager Becknell has the exclusive right to use the curtain in this city.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

In the January 20, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* under the headline “**Matinees for Children**” the following article appeared:

The Woman’s club has made arrangements with Manager Thomas for a special matinee for children at the Bijou Theatre each week, commencing next Saturday. The pictures will be of an educational nature and special prices will maintain. Next Saturday, in addition to the educational films, the fair story of Cinderella will be produced as well as a comedy. The club plans to have one of their members deliver a talk explanatory of the pictures.

The following week in its January 27, 1916 edition under the headline “**Bijou Changes**” the *Iron Mountain Press* reported:

A.E. Brauns, owner of the Bijou Theatre, has engaged the Foster Construction company to superintend the work of rebuilding and modernizing that place of amusement. The work will be done in accordance with plans drafted by Architect Charlton, of Marquette, who has designed nearly all the leading show houses of the peninsula. In addition to many interior improvements, including a greatly enlarged stage, the main floor will be lowered to the street grade and a commodious gallery will be provided. Provision will also be made for a large exit on the west side of the building. The work will commence as soon as the weather conditions will permit.

Two weeks later in its February 10, 1916 issue, the *Iron Mountain Press* carried the following article under the headline “**Triangle Pictures**”:

Manager Thomas, of the Bijou, has closed a contract for the production of the features of the Triangle Film company at his house. The incorporators and principle producers of Triangle plays are D.W. Griffith, producer of “The Birth of a Nation,” the most conspicuous photoplay success yet achieved, Max Sennett and Thomas H. Ince. Mr. Griffith was regarded as a premier producer even before he brought out “The Birth of a Nation,” and many of the innovations that have largely revolutionized photoplay production in the past year or two, including the fade away and the double exposure, were worked out by him. In the employ of the company are a notable galaxy of stars, and its offerings have won the highest approval from disinterested critics, to many cities the first releases of these programs have been offered at prices ranging from fifty cents down and at the Kinckerbocker in New York the scale has been from \$2 down. Manager Thomas says that he hopes to maintain the usual prices of admission at his house.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

In the April 13, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, under the headline “**Bijou Improvements**”, the following article appeared:

It is expected to commence the work of remodeling the Bijou at an early date. The house will be lowered to the street grade and will be provided with a canopy entrance. Large side exits will be arranged for and modern heating and ventilating systems will be installed; also a retiring room for ladies. As planned, the main auditorium will have a seating capacity of 500 and will have the latest opera chairs. The gallery will seat 300. Architect Charlton, of Marquette, has made the plans and will superintend the work.

In the spring of 1916, **August E. Brauns** announced plans for a new theater to be built at **209-211 East Ludington Street**, across the street from the Iron Mountain City Hall housed in Wood’s Sandstone Block. The **Colonial Theatre** opened **December 16, 1916**, and **Martin D. Thomas** was manager of both the Bijou and the new theater.

Plans to completely rebuild the Bijou Theatre were announced in the September 9, 1920 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* as follows:

Manager Thomas, of the Colonial Theatre, has let the contracts for the complete rebuilding of the Bijou Theatre on West Ludington street, and the work is now in hand. The building is to be lowered to the street level and provided with a new and modern front. The interior is to be entirely remodeled and modernized and when all the improvements are completed the Bijou will be one of the best theatres in the peninsula.

In the April 13, 1921 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Bijou Theatre Is Soon to Be Opened – Early in May Manager Thomas Will Begin Work at the Colonial**”, the following renovation update was reported:

The exterior alterations to the Bijou Theatre are nearing completion and manager Thomas hopes to open the house about the first of May. The alterations will include a new stucco front of a pleasing design, a new entrance and lobby and two toilet rooms. The auditorium has been entirely remodeled. It has been provided with a composition incline floor and will be furnished with the latest opera chairs – 600 of them and one of the very latest picture machines. A new heating plant of ample capacity has been placed in the basement. No expense has been spared to make the house comfortable, sanitary and safe.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET



The work of rebuilding the Bijou Theatre was underway in early September 1920. The building was to be lowered to street level. The exterior alterations were nearing completion by mid-April, 1921, and included a new stucco front “of pleasing design, a new entrance and lobby and two toilet rooms.” Frank Parent’s saloon at 102 West Ludington Street, is visible to the east (right) of the theater building. Interestingly, a team of horses pulling a wagon were used in remodeling the theater building. Note the ornate lighting fixture at the corner of the Bijou Theatre building with globes. *[William J. Cummings]*

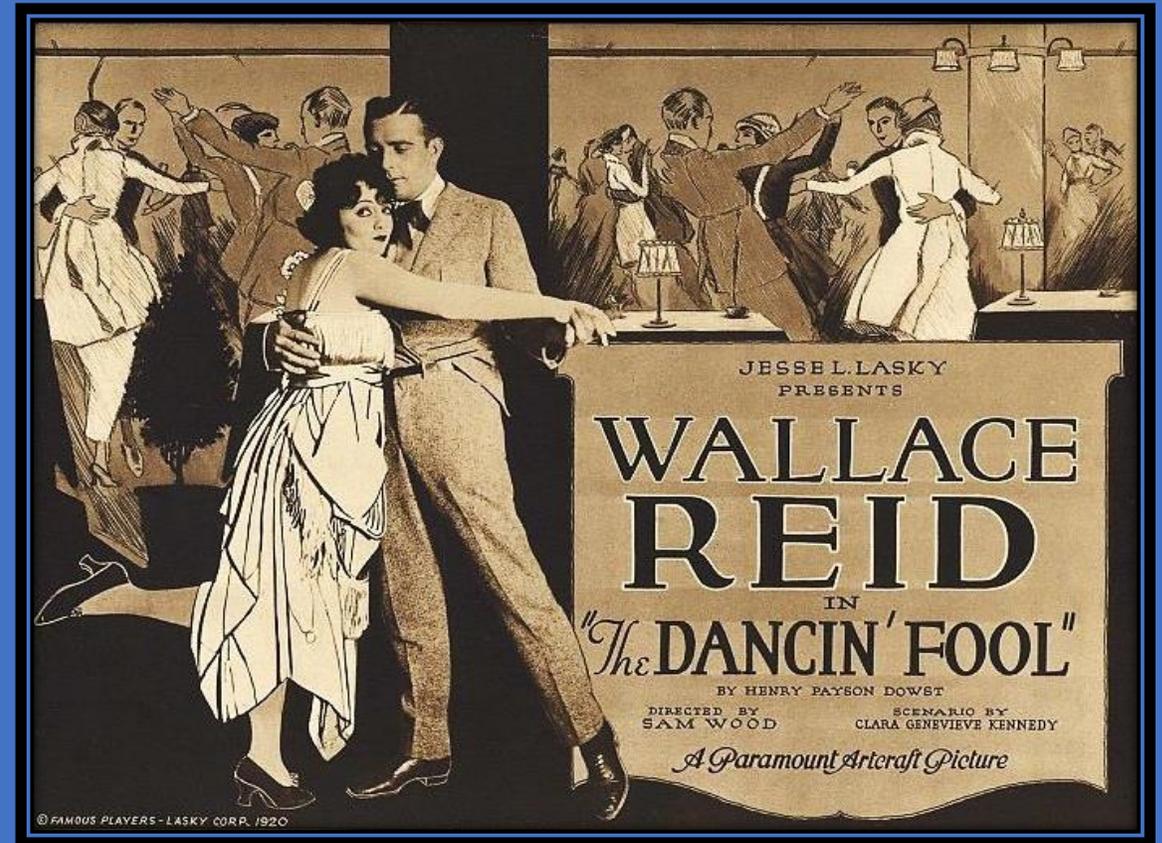
THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

Another article under the headline “**Bijou Theatre to Open Next Monday**” appeared in the April 22, 1921 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, announced the April 25 reopening of the theatre as follows:

The Bijou theatre, the remodeling and redecoration of which is practically completed, will open Monday, featuring Wallace Reid in “The Dancin’ Fool,” according to M.D. Thomas, manager of both the Bijou and Colonial theatres. Beginning next week the Rex stock company will open at the Colonial, featuring a number of popular plays on the week’s bill.

The article also noted the following regarding Wallace Reid’s movie “The Dancing Fool”:

In “The Dancin’ Fool” Wallace Reid is particularly amusing and entertaining as a youth who invades the “wicked city” in search of employment. He has a distinct liking for “jazz” music and the dance, which characteristically carries him through a series of entertaining episodes, much to the disgust of his staid old uncle. The wind-up, in which Wallie exploits his uncle’s stock in trade – earth jugs – by a clever advertising scheme, and his rather abrupt rise to fame, constitutes a story which is unusually interesting. Bebe Daniels makes an excellent dancing partner for Wallie – which is an added attraction.



“The Dancin’ Fool” featuring Wallace Reid (April 15, 1891-January 18, 1923) was the movie featured when the Bijou Theatre reopened on Monday, April 25, 1921, following a remodeling and redecorating.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

New Simplex projectors were purchased for both the **Bijou Theatre** and the **Colonial Theatre** which was to undergo remodeling when the Bijou reopened. Bijou Theatre seating capacity for approximately 700 persons was noted in this article.

Manager Castel, of the **Colonial Theatre orchestra**, was organizing a second group of musicians for the Bijou Theatre.

Manager **Martin D. Thomas**' plan was to use the Colonial Theatre for showing larger movies and road shows, while the Bijou Theatre would be used solely for "lighter attraction" motion pictures.

Unfortunately, box office business at the Bijou Theatre was less than anticipated, as noted in the following article under the headline "**Opening of Bijou Awaits Business**" which appeared in the November 16, 1921 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*:

*Except for intermittent exhibitions, such as the Swedish films to be shown within a few days, the doors of the Bijou theatre will remain locked until business improves, **Manager Martin Thomas** declared today. Present conditions do not warrant the operation of another theater here, he avers, and the newly outfitted show house will remain dark.*

The Bijou was completely remodeled and refitted last spring and two expensive motion picture exhibiting machines installed. The machines alone represent an investment of more than \$1,000, not including the electric equipment necessary to run them.

Open For Few Days

Following the completion of the alterations the theater was opened to the public but remained open for only a short time as business was not sufficient to keep both the Colonial and Bijou going. The theatre was closed and with the exception of one or two evenings when it was used as a lecture hall, has remained dark.

"As soon as business picks up and I find demand for another house, I will reopen the Bijou," Manager Thomas asserted, "but not at the present period of depression. I confidently believe, however, that before the winter is over the Bijou will be running continuously. When the theater is opened I plan to exhibit pictures of the same high caliber as those now being shown at the Colonial.

THE BIJOU THEATRE – 104-106 WEST LUDINGTON STREET

Another article appeared in the November 30, 1921 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* under the headline “**Bijou Theatre to Be Open Two Days a Week**”, as follows:

About Christmas time, according to Manager M.D. Thomas, the Bijou theater will be opened for motion pictures Saturday and Sunday nights. The variety program, at present being shown at the Colonial, will be transferred to the other playhouse and a feature will take its place. Thus, patrons who are following the serial may see it Saturday night, and then see the feature Sunday, or the reverse. In fact, they may even see both shows the same evening.

Divergence in the tastes of the theater's patronage is responsible for the change. Some people do not care for the serial and the varied program; others prefer it to a feature. Under the new system, they can take their choice.

Changes are also anticipated in the variety program. The Harold Lloyd comedies, the serial, and possibly Aesop's fables, [sic] will be retained, but interest in other “shorts,” Mr. Thomas says, do not warrant their continuance, and a feature will be substituted.

The Bijou Theatre was still operating in 1925. **Hector Golchic** sold soft drinks in the rear of the 104 portion building when Prohibition was in effect, and **Celina Gauthier** operated a restaurant in the rear at the same time.

In *Polk's Iron Mountain (Dickinson County, Mich.) City Directory 1935*, **Charles J. Johnson** operated a grocery store at **104 West Ludington Street** and **Albert Scholke** worked there as a tailor. **Hans Christensen** ran a bowling alley at **106 West Ludington Street**.

The Recreation Bowling Alley, managed by **Peter Tomassoni**, was located at this address in the *Iron Mountain and Kingsford 1939 City Directory*. In the 1941-1942 *Iron Mountain* city directory the **Recreation Bowling Alleys** were under the ownership of **Joseph Crispigna**, **Peter Tomassoni** and **Ray Derham**.

COLONIAL THEATRE

109-211 East Ludington Street

Opened
December 16, 1916



Closed
Circa 1956

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

The site of the Colonial Theatre – 209-211 East Ludington Street – was occupied by other businesses prior to 1916.

An item in the June 20, 1889 edition of *The Menominee Range* stated: *IRON MOUNTAIN can now boast of a Chinese steam laundry – the only one of its kind in this part of the country. The fixtures have just been put in by Sing Kee, the Hughitt street washee-washee.* Apparently Sing Kee moved to this address from Hughitt Street by 1892.

In the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-94* **Robert Drechsler** operated a tailor shop at **209 East Ludington Street** which was also occupied by **Sing Kee's Chinese Laundry**, advertising “first class and prompt work” and noting that “all work left at this laundry will be well washed and neatly ironed at reasonable prices.” **Sing Kee** also resided at this address, as did **Fred Eaton**, of **Davey & Eaton (Josiah Davey and Fred Eaton)**, who operated sample rooms next door at 207 East Ludington Street, featuring “fine wines, liquors, cigars, fresh beer and free lunches!”

According to the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and the Villages of Quinnesec and Vulcan, Mich. 1902-1903* **Sol Noble's blacksmith shop** was located at **211 East Ludington Street**, and Noble boarded at the **Wabash Hotel**, run by **Mrs. D. Jarvis** upstairs at **319 South Stephenson Avenue**.

There was no listing for 211 East Ludington Street in 1907-1908 or 1913.

John Blixt had a barbershop at **209 East Ludington Street**, according to the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and the Villages of Quinnesec and Vulcan, Mich. 1902-1903*. In *The Inter-State Directory Company's Directory of Iron Mountain and Norway and Dickinson County Gazetteer For the Years 1907-1908* **William Creuz** was listed as a manufacturer of cigars at this address, while **Victor E. Lundin** was listed as a tailor at 209 East Ludington Street in the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and Dickinson County with a List of Residents of Homestead, Wisconsin 1913*.



Sing Kee's Chinese Laundry advertisement appeared in the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-1894*.

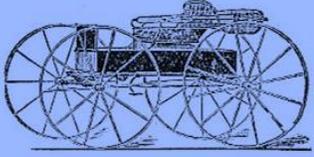
THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

SOL NOBLE,

Blacksmith &  Wagon-maker

— DEALER IN —

Cutters, Sleighs, Wagons
and Mining Gear.



AGENT FOR B. R. & H. L. Sweet's Common Sense Sleighs

Horse-Shoeing and Repairing.

213-215 EAST LUDINGTON ST.



Sol Noble's Blacksmith & Wagon-maker in the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-1894*. Ludington Street, Looking East, circa 1910 [William J. Cummings]

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

On May 16, 1916, **August E. Brauns** purchased the **Farmers' Hotel** property, located on Lot 4 of Block 11 of the Plat of Iron Mountain City from the **Commercial Bank of Iron Mountain** for \$3,500.

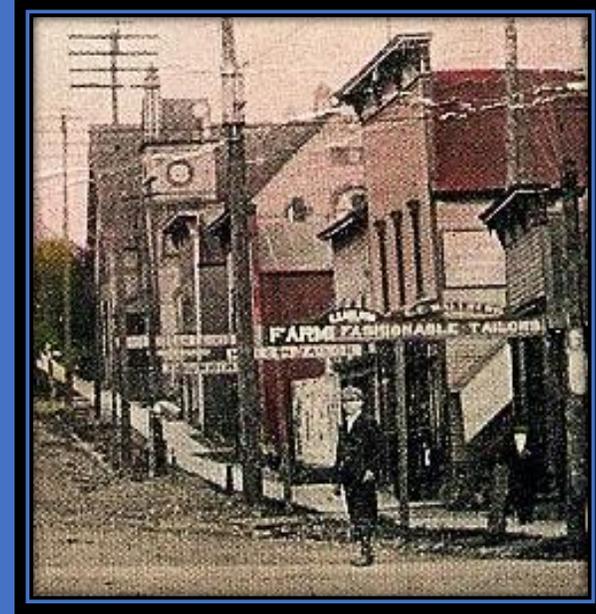
In the May 18, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, under the headline “**Build New Theatre – A.E. Brauns Will Erect a Fine House on E. Ludington – Modern in Every Feature, Will Seat Over One Thousand People and To Cost Over \$25,000**”, the following article appeared:

Iron Mountain is to have a theatre second to none north of Milwaukee.

*It will be erected by August E. Brauns, on the property opposite the city hall building, on East Ludington street, now occupied by two frame buildings and known as the **Farmers' Hotel**.*

The property was purchased by Mr. Brauns during the week from the Commercial Bank, and is splendidly located for the purposes of a modern theatre.

The theatre building will cover the entire property with the main entrance on Ludington street and exits on the side and rear alleys.



This detail shows the south side of the 200 block of East Ludington Street. The Farmers' Hotel was comprised of the two-story building with three windows to the right of center and the building to the east of this structure. Anton Meinch began removing these buildings which had been sold by August E. Brauns to Joseph Tamborini in early June 1916, in preparation for excavating the foundation of the new opera house. The Swedish Mission Church is the tall building at the southeast corner of East Ludington Street and Iron Mountain Street.

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

The property has frontage on East Ludington street of sixty feet and a depth of seventy-five feet, extending to the alley. There is also an alley on the west side.

The theatre building will cover the entire property with the main entrance on Ludington street and exits on the side and rear alleys.

[NOTE: Segments of this column are missing, resulting in an incomplete transcription of some paragraphs. Words in brackets are educated guesses based on the content.]

Architect Charlton, of Marquette, has the order to draft the plans for the theatre and his instructions are to [design] a house second to none in the upper peninsula. Mr. Braun's orders [are to] plan an opera house containing [every] thing that is modern and up-to-date in accordance with the [latest] sanitary and safety laws.

While the theatre will [only] show the higher grade [motion] pictures, such as the _____ now unable to produce _____ provided with a _____ sufficient to accommodate _____ theatrical companies _____ Marquette, Ishpeming, _____ country towns.

The opera house [will have a seating] capacity of one thousand [on the] main floor _____. _____ brick will be _____ -tion, and _____ make it st_____ estimated that _____ considerable more _____.

The decision _____ Iron Mountain _____ should meet _____ -tion at the ha_____. It is evidenced _____ Iron Mountain _____ Iron Mountain _____ Mr. Brauns _____ -ing his belief _____ sums of money _____ city proper, but _____ -ming resources _____ the vicinity. His several enterprises stamp him as a good citizen and in his latest enterprise he should have the hearty and undivided support of all citizens.

*In this connection it is pleasing to record that **Martin Thomas** will have the management of the new house. Mr. Thomas is in close touch with the likes and dislikes of Iron Mountain people and it is his constant endeavor to please theatre-goers and bring the better class of attractions here. With the new house he will be enabled to enlarge upon his ideas in this direction. His selection as manager will prove popular and assures Iron Mountain of a class of theatrical attractions of metropolilan [sic – metropolitan].*

*No decision has been reached relative to the future of the **Bijou**. It may be maintained as a picture house and it may be converted into a high-grade skating rink with added accommodations for balls and large gatherings.*

It is expected to commence work on the new house as soon as Mr. Charlton can formulate the plans.

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In the June 8, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, under the headline “**New Opera House**”, the removal of the Farmers’ Hotel was documented as follows:

Contractor Meinch has commenced the work of removing the frame buildings on East Ludington street sold by A.E. Brauns to Joseph Tambourini [sic – Tamborini], and as soon as the removal is accomplished excavating for the new opera house will commence. Architect Charlton is now working on the plans and will have his sketches ready for submission to Owner Brauns in a few days.

In the October 26, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* in the “**Brief News Notes**” column, updates on construction of the “new opera house” were reported as follows:

The new opera house will be illuminated with one thousand electric lamps, many of them of large power. The brick masons have finished work on the building and the scenery loft is about inclosed [sic – enclosed]. Plumbers , ventilating and water systems. The ventilating system will include all that is new and modern.

In the October 26, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* in the “**Brief News Notes**” column, updates on construction of the “new opera house” were reported as follows:

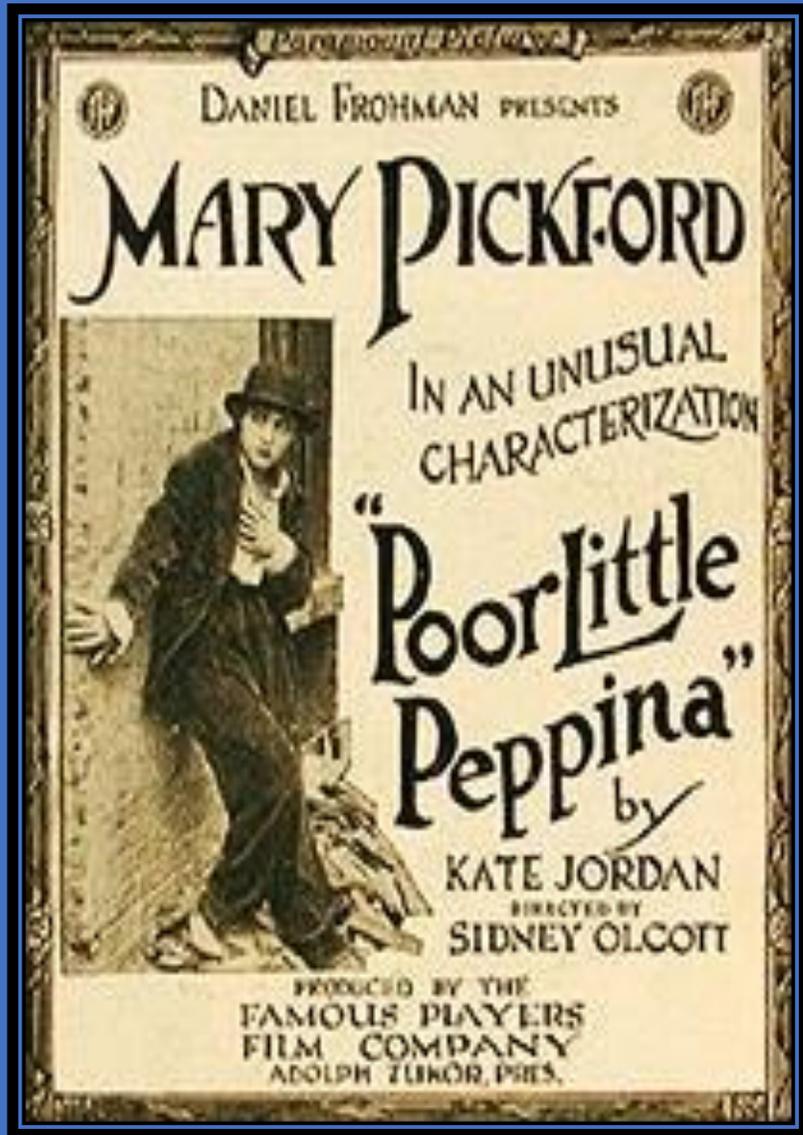
The new opera house will be illuminated with one thousand electric lamps, many of them of large power. The brick masons have finished work on the building and the scenery loft is about inclosed [sic – enclosed]. Plumbers are engaged in installing the heating, ventilating and water systems. The ventilating system will include all that is new and modern.

In the December 14, 1916 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, under the headline “**Named Colonial – Iron Mountain’s Modern and Pretty New Play-House – The House Will Inaugurate a Picture Service Saturday Evening: A Brief Description of House**”, a complete description of the Colonial Theatre was published, as follows:

“The Colonial,” Iron Mountain’s beautiful new play-house, will be thrown open to the public next Saturday evening.

The opening attraction is Mary Pickford in “Poor Little Peppina.” For this occasion all seats, in all departments, will sell for twenty-five cents. For future picture attractions the following schedule of prices will maintain: Main floor, 15c; balcony, 10c; box seats, 25c. Seats in boxes may be reserved for all occasions.

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The Colonial is second to no theatre in all appointments north of Milwaukee. The building is constructed of tile with a covering of grey stucco. The front is of a most artistic design. It has a frontage on East Ludington street of sixty feet and on the alley it is seventy-six feet wide. It has a total depth of one hundred and twenty feet.

The main auditorium has a bowl-shaped concrete floor and can be flushed directly into the sewer system, ensuring the utmost cleanliness. It is seated with 550 of the latest pattern in upholstered opera chairs. The balcony is seated with 360 opera chairs of comfortable design. There are three boxes, each with a seating capacity of seven persons. The chairs are of a neat wicker pattern. This gives the theatre a seating capacity of 931. There is not a "poor seat" in the house, everyone [sic – every one] affording an unobstructed view of the entire stage.

The stage has an opening 32x18 feet with a height of 50 feet from the floor to the gridiron, and is 30 feet in depth. It is so arranged that the largest attractions can be booked. The dressing rooms are large and comfortable and there are toilet rooms for women and men.

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The machine operating room is located in the front of the house directly under the balcony. It is fire-proof in every respect, ample in size and well ventilated. It is equipped with two of the latest motor driven machines.

The entrance to the theatre is very roomy. It has an artistic tile floor and the swinging doors are mahogany. To the left of the lobby is a rest room for ladies with a toilet. The toilet for males is on the right. Both are equipped with sanitary fixtures.

The ventilating system is what is known as the force system with which all modern theatres are now equipped. The heating plant is known as the down draft boiler system.

All the other appointments are of the latest in theatre construction.

*The plans for the theatre were made by **Architect Charlton**, of Marquette, and it is in keeping with his other work in this city – of a high order.*

*The theatre was erected under the supervision of **Hans Nelson**. The work was commenced about the middle of August. Mr. Nelson was on the job early and late and the speed with which the building was erected is most creditable to his ability as a master builder and superintendent.*

*The house is owned by **A.E. Brauns**. It is a magnificent monument to his enterprise and faith in the future of our city. The house is a beautiful one and Mr. Brauns is deserving of praise for erecting the same.*

*The Colonial will be managed by **Martin Thomas**. The gentleman has been highly successful in gauging [sic – gauging] the wants of Iron Mountain in an amusement way in the past, and with a modern theatre at his command he is certain to enlarge his capacity as a successful manager.*

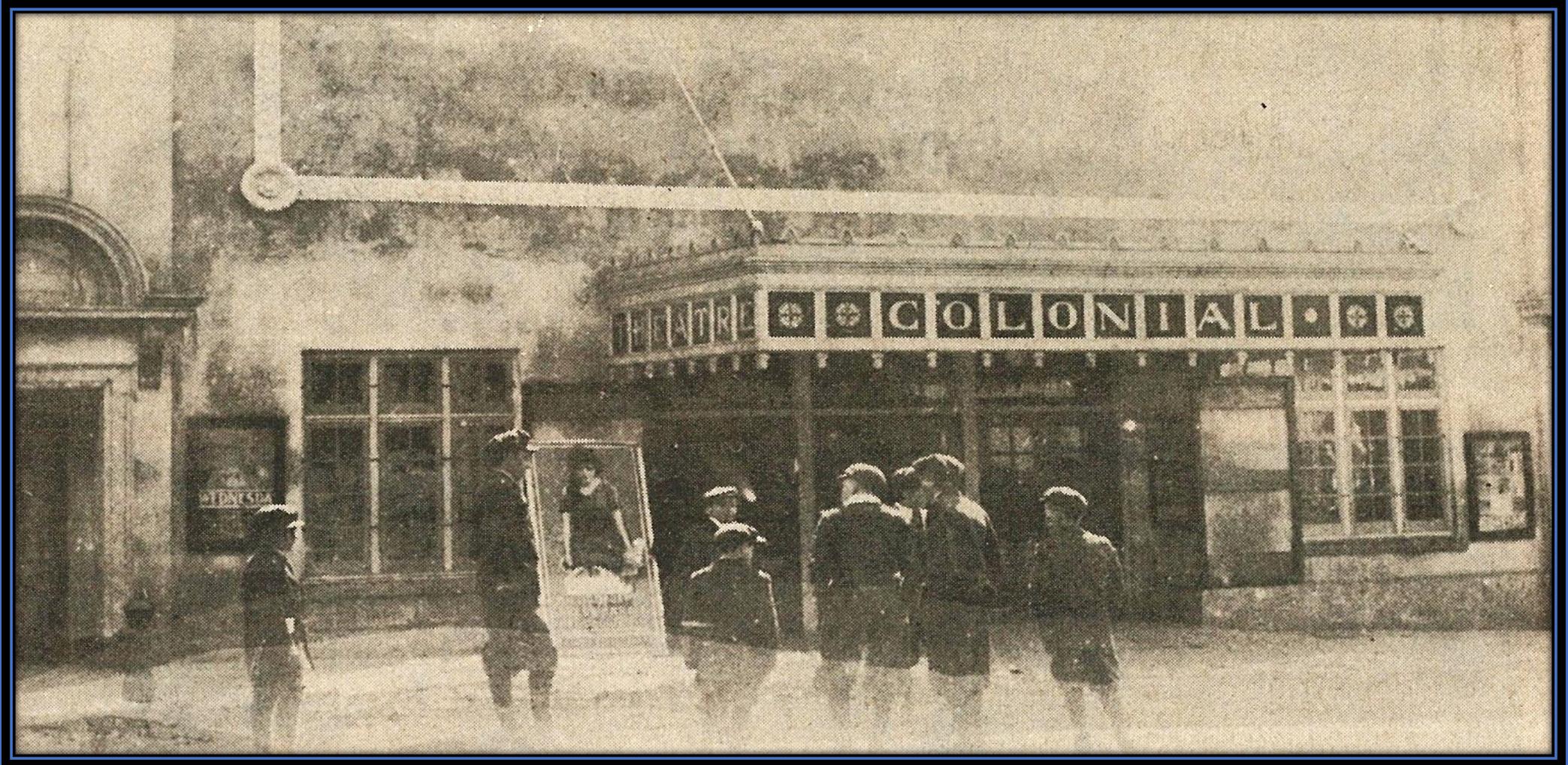
The Press wishes Owner Brauns and Manager Thomas every success.

*An item in the August 5, 1920 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* under the headline “**Another Theatre**” suggested another theater similar to the Colonial was to be erected, as follows:*

*While in Chicago recently, **Martin Thomas**, manager of the Colonial, completed arrangements for the erection of another theatre building in Iron Mountain. The new house will be similar in construction to the Colonial, which is one of the best theatre buildings in the west, but will have a larger seating capacity and will embrace all that is new in the latest amusement houses. Construction will start at as early a date as possible in the spring.*

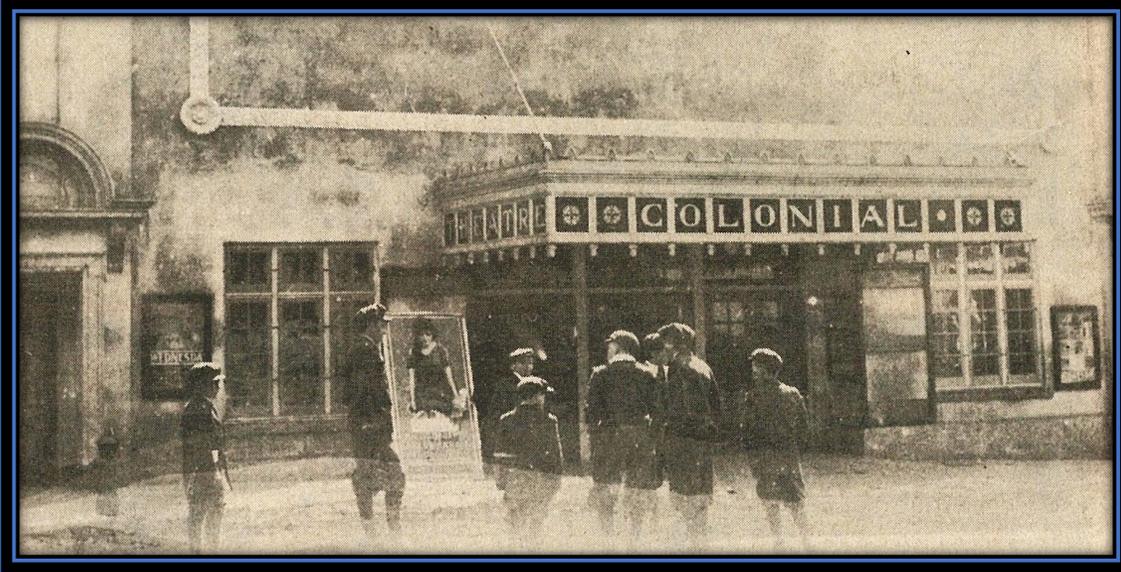


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The Colonial Theatre, located at 209-211 East Ludington Street, was built on a site previously occupied by the Farmers' Hotel. This photograph was taken in 1920 as a number of boys waited in front of the theater for the Saturday matinee. *[Keith Huotari]*

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Rundle's Opera House had burned September 11, 1915. August B. Brauns commissioned Architect E. Fred Charlton, of Marquette, to draft plans for the new theater which would show higher grade motion pictures and have a stage sufficient to accommodate larger theatrical companies. Martin Thomas, then manager of the Bijou Theatre at 104-106 West Ludington Street which was owned by Brauns, was to manage the new house. The Colonial Theatre opened Saturday evening, December 16, 1916. For the grand opening all seats in all departments sold for twenty-five cents. For future motion picture attractions the prices were: main floor, 15 cents; balcony, 10 cents; and box seats, 25 cents.

The Colonial was constructed of tile with a covering of grey stucco and had 60 feet of frontage on East Ludington Street. At the alley, the building was 75 feet wide, and the total depth was 120 feet.

The main auditorium had a bowl-shaped concrete floor and could be flushed directly into the sewer system, "ensuring the utmost cleanliness." There were 550 upholstered opera chairs of the latest design on the main floor, while the balcony contained 360 opera chairs "of comfortable design." There were three boxes, each with a seating capacity of seven persons. Thus, the theater had a seating capacity of 931, affording everyone "an unobstructed view of the entire stage."

The stage had an opening 32 x 18 feet with a height of 50 feet from the floor to the gridiron and was 30 feet deep. The dressing rooms were large and comfortable and there were toilet rooms for women and men. The "machine operating room" (projection booth) was located in the front of the house directly under the balcony.

The entrance to the theatre was very roomy, featuring "an artistic tile floor" and mahogany swinging doors. To the left of the lobby was a rest room for ladies with a toilet. The men's restroom was on the right.

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No new theater was built at that time, but property upon which the Braumart Theatre was constructed was purchased by August Brauns in mid-November 1922.

As noted in the previous section, the Bijou Theatre was reopened in late April, 1921, following an extensive remodeling. Perhaps this renovation was completed instead of building a new theater.

In the April 13, 1921 edition of *The Iron Mountain Daily News*, under the headline “**Bijou Theatre Is soon to Be Opened – Early in May Manager Thomas Will Begin Work at Colonial**”, the following plans for the Colonial Theatre were announced, as follows:

...

With the Bijou open, Manager Thomas will close the Colonial in order that it may be decorated anew and remodeled in some respects. A notable change will be made in rearranging and enlarging the lobby. It is proposed to place the ticket office in the center, which will greatly expedite the sale of tickets. Manager Thomas has in mind some changes in the balcony arrangement that will tend to the comfort of patrons.



In the April 22, 1921 edition of *The Iron Mountain Daily News*, the announcement of the Bijou Theatre’s opening on Monday, April 25, was announced, under the headline “**Bijou theatre to Open Next Monday – Wallace Reid in ‘The Dancin’ Fool,’ Opening Attraction**”. The article contained additional details regarding the Colonial Theatre’s remodeling, as follows:

The Colonial will be closed for a complete remodeling and interior redecoration May 29. The improvements planned by Mr. Thomas will transform the theatre into one of the most attractive playhouses in this section. The partitions at the rear and at both sides of the entrance will be torn out, widening both the foyer and the rear of the theatre proper. The stairs at the left of the entrance, leading to the balcony, will also be torn out and a new and wider flight built in.

New Seats In Balcony.

All new seats will be placed in the balcony, with the addition of a loge box arrangement similar to that used in a number of the more modern picture theatres throughout the country. The loge boxes will accommodate private theatre parties and are used, largely, for that purpose.



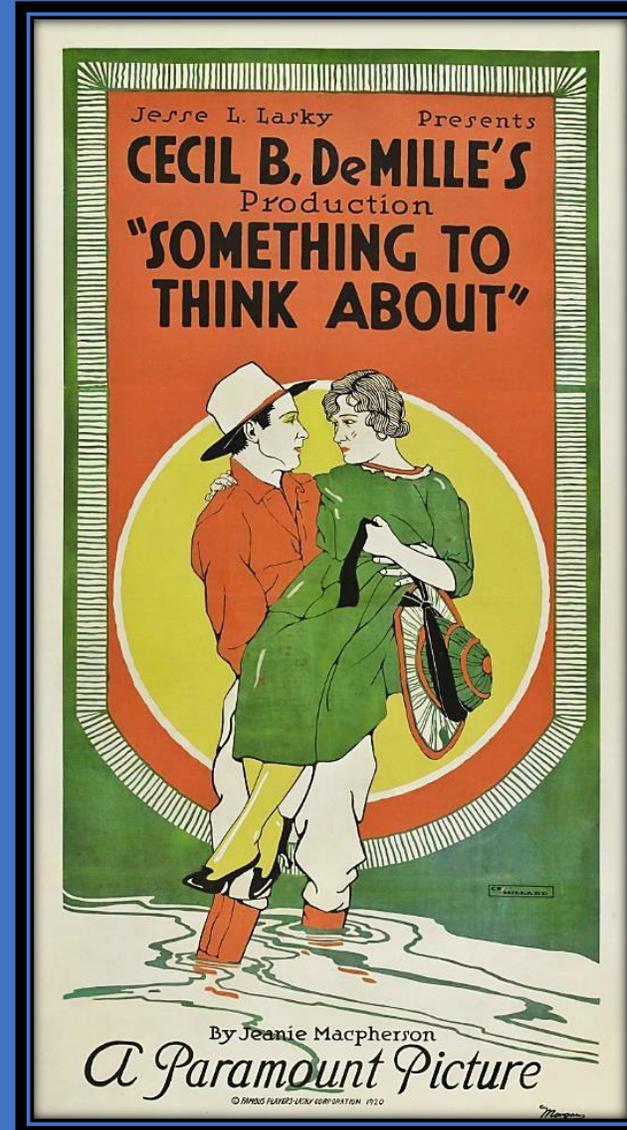
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New Simplex projectors will be placed in both the Bijou and the Colonial theatres. The Simplex is the best motion picture projector now in [sic – on] the market, and the type used for both local theatres will be somewhat similar to that used in the new Delft theatre, at Marquette, said to be the best equipped motion picture theatre in the district.

When completed the Bijou will seat approximately 700 persons, and the Colonial 900. Idealite screens – the latest innovation in motion picture screens – will be installed in both theatres. Manager Castell, of the Colonial orchestra, will organize a second group of musicians for the Bijou.

Features At Colonial.

It is Mr. Thomas' plan to use the Colonial largely, for showing of the larger feature picture, as well as the road shows, with lighter attractions at the Bijou, which will be a motion picture theatre only. The first attraction booked for the Colonial after the redecoration is complete is "Something to Think About," an intensely interesting screen drama and one which is showing to capacity houses throughout the country. In connection with this film Mr. Thomas has planned an advertising scheme which will, it is confidently expected, give the residents of Iron Mountain "Something to Think About" besides the actual story of the film.



Something to Think About is a 1920 American silent drama film directed by Cecil B. DeMille. The film stars Elliott Dexter and Gloria Swanson.

David Markely's (Dexter) affection for Ruth Anderson (Swanson) followed her from childhood and deepened with her womanhood. He is a young man of means but a cripple, while she is the daughter of a blacksmith. David persuades her father to allow him to have her educated. When she returns from school, the father realizes David's attitude towards Ruth and plans their marriage. Ruth, against her father's wishes, marries Jim Dirk (Monte Blue), the young lover of her heart. A few years later Jim is killed in a subway accident. Ruth returns to her father for forgiveness but finds him blinded by the sparks from his forge and on the way to the county poorhouse. He is stubborn in his unforgiveness of her. She is about to take her own life when David rescues her, offering the protection of his name for her and the child that is about to be born to her. As his wife she eventually realizes a great love for him which he refuses to admit is anything but gratitude.

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Live performances by traveling theatrical troupes were regularly featured at the Colonial Theatre.

The following review appeared in the July 21, 1921 edition of *The Iron Mountain Daily News*, under the headline “**‘Pollyanna’ Is Play at Colonial Tonight – ‘Dawn o’ The Mountains’ Pleased Audience Last Evening**”:

*“Dawn O’ the Mountains,” a play of the Kentucky hills, was the attraction presented by the **Gatlord** [sic] **Players** at the Colonial theater last evening, and was well received by a large audience. The production was on the order of “The Trail of the Lonesome Pine” and the parts were well portrayed.*

Tonight, the play will be “Pollyanna,” a dramatization of the book which scored such a phenomenal success. The play tomorrow evening will be “One Girl’s Experience.”

An article in the October 24, 1922 edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Hist! Plenty of ‘Moon’ Thursday – Musical Comedy Will Be Seen at the Colonial Theatre**” featuring black performers, appeared, as follows:

*A creole beauty chorus, the famous **Blue Devil jazz orchestra** and **Billie King**, comedian, are the outstanding features of “Moonshine,” a musical comedy that will be seen at the Colonial theatre Thursday evening.*

According to advance notices, “Moonshine” is one of the best of the lighter musical comedies now on the road. It hasn’t any plot to speak of but there is sufficient for a lot of tom foolery and amusement. The orchestra is composed of talented musicians.

The show is out of the ordinary in that all the performers are colored and dancing and singing are second nature to these residents of the south. The company enjoyed a long run in New York and Chicago and is at present making a tour of the upper peninsula.

The **Oklahoma City Blue Devils** was the premier American Southwest territory jazz band in the 1920s. Originally called **Billy King’s Road Show**, it disbanded in Oklahoma City in 1925 where **Walter Page** renamed it. The name Blue Devils came from the name of a gang of fence cutters operating during the early days of the American West.

Several prominent jazz musicians were members, including **Lester Young**, **William "Count" Basie** and **Buster Smith**. The Blue Devils disbanded in 1933, after which Basie recruited most of the group's members to join his group, which had begun in 1931, but then changed the name to the **Count Basie Orchestra**.

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William James "Count" Basie



“Moonshine,” a musical comedy featuring the Blue Devils jazz orchestra and comedian Billie King, performed at the Colonial Theatre on Thursday evening, October 26, 1922. William James “Count” Basie was a member of the orchestra.

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Plans for another remodeling and decoration of the Colonial Theatre were announced in the June 30, 1923 edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Colonial Will Be Re-Decorated – Plans Call For Making It Prettiest Theatre in Cloverland**”, as follows:

*The Colonial theatre will within the next several weeks be transformed into the prettiest theatre in Cloverland, according to plans for remodeling and redecorating the interior. A contract for the work has already been closed by M.D. Thomas, manager, with the **Decorative Supply company** and **Andrew Jasinski & company**. Both firms are located in Chicago.*

*The plans call for a large amount of decorative plaster work, including plasters [sic – pilasters] on the side walls and fancy moldings around the proscenium. The theatre will be thoroughly renovated and the color scheme of the painting will consist of old rose and gold and gray. **Ernest Bond**, local decorator, will be associated in the work.*

The present box office is to be removed and a new one built in the center of the lobby. New entrance doors are to be installed and the outside canopy rebuilt and painted.

The entire gallery of the theatre is to be equipped with new suits [sic – seats] and repairs will be made to the seats on the first floor. In addition, all aisles will be thickly carpeted and new lighting fixtures installed throughout.

The theatre will be closed July 30 and reopened about August 20. A large force of men will be employed on the work and no time lost in making the transformation. An expert in theatre decorating who is familiar with every show house in the peninsula declares that the Colonial will without question be the best appearing of all when the work is completed.

In the September 3, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, the following article announcing the performance of **Harry Blackstone Sr.** (September 27, 1885–November 16, 1965), the famed stage magician and illusionist, born Harry Bouton in Chicago, Illinois, appeared under the headline “**Famous Magician at the Colonial: Blackstone Here For Two Days; Carries Big Company**”:

Blackstone, famous conjurer, and his company of assistants will be the attraction at the Colonial theatre today and tomorrow, with matinee performances. Blackstone enjoys the reputation of being one of the country’s most noted magicians and carries with him elaborate settings for the performance of his tricks.

The entertainment value of the show is assured. All forms of known amusements have been called upon to contribute their share in the Blackstone amalgamation. There is magic, circus, musical comedy, revue, comedy and drama all rolled into one. Blackstone himself uses the somewhat grandiose phrase “a girliesque necromantic extravaganza.”

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Doubtless this is as a veracious and comprehensive description as it is possible to compass in some many words.

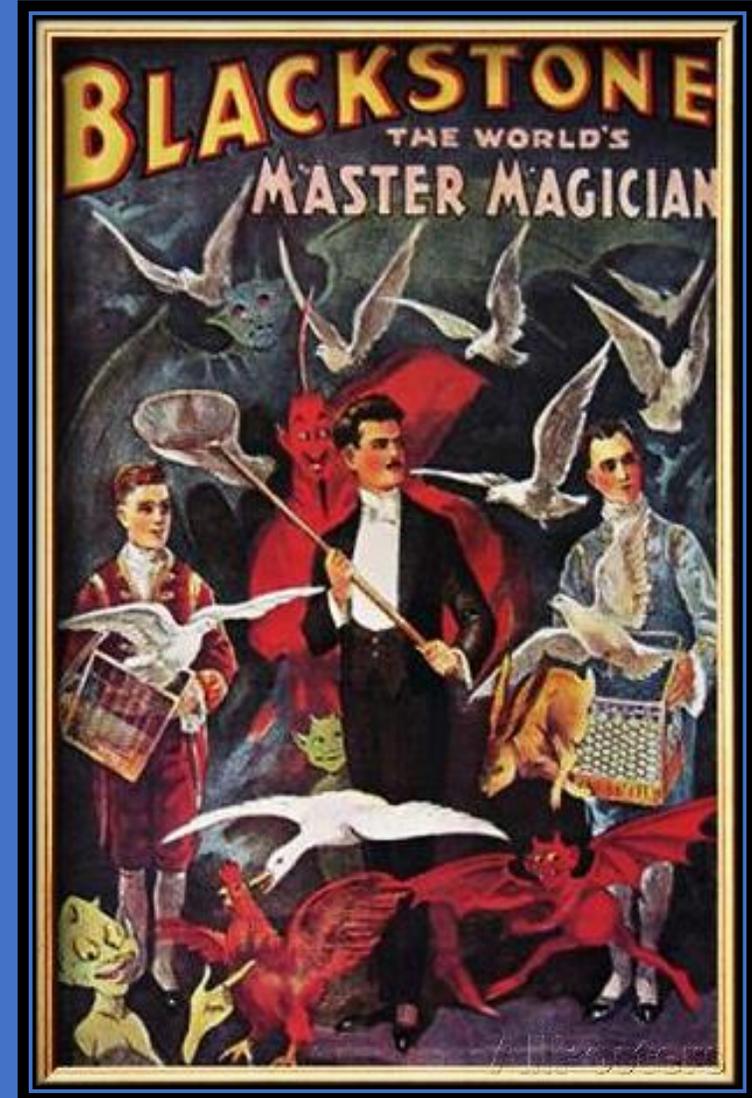
Oriental Nights, one of the many incidents in the Blackstone program, is a colorful pageant of the far east. Camels, horses, Arabs and a whole seraglio of intriguing nautch [sic] girls provide an exotic setting for a series of Blackstone mysteries themselves redolent of the occult Levant.

Burned at the Cross, Blackstone's sensational crucifixion and escape from decapitation, is an interlude in Oriental Nights.

Two double length railroad baggage cars are required to transport the paraphernalia and live stock [sic – livestock] of the Blackstone outfit. Twenty-eight persons, including the corps of beauty, are in the entourage. The performance is divided into two acts and 26 scenes.

In the September 4, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, the following review of Blackstone's performance appeared under the headline **“Large Audience Sees Blackstone – But It Doesn't See How He Performs His Tricks”**:

Blackstone, the famous, demonstrated to a large Colonial audience last night that he has lost none of the deftness and ability that has made him one of the foremost magicians in the country.



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Ably assisted by his large company, the past master in the art of staging a necromantic exhibition have a performance that has never been equaled here by other magicians. His tricks and illusions are clever, mystifying and, as far as the audience is concerned, impossible to solve. He makes things disappear or appear with the ease of a real miracle performer.

A baggage car of equipment is carried by the Blackstone company and includes a fair sized menagerie. It is the most elaborate production of its kind ever staged here.

A matinee performance was given today and the closing performance of the engagement here will be held this evening.

The local cast of a musical comedy titled “Springtime” to be performed at the Colonial Theatre was announced in the April 27, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **“Announce Cast of ‘Springtime’ – Musical Comedy to Be Given This Week At Colonial”**, as follows:

The cast of “springtime,” [a] musical comedy to be presented Wednesday and Thursday evenings at the Colonial theatre, was announced today.

Rehearsals for the play are being held both afternoons and evenings and a finished production is looked forward to. The show is being presented by the Woman’s club, the John B. Rogers Producing company directing.

“Springtime” is a romantic story that covers two periods of time. Costuming will conform to the vogue of the period that is being portrayed.

The cast follows:

Priscilla, Mrs. Ellen Andrews; Elvira, Miss Florentine Beering; Primrose, Miss Jane O’Neil; Zenabia, Mrs. H.W. Martin; Abigail, Mrs. Harold Sandercock; Joyce, Miss Clara Raho; Desiree, Miss Rose Philips; Sue, Miss Mae Selley; Thankful, Miss Alice Meighen; Mrs. Erkins, Mrs. A.G. Buchman; Jack Wainwright, Donnell Anderson; Bobby Brewster, Henry Burton; James Brewster, Ned Dundon; Tom Higgins, Morris Clauson; Parsons, Leo Lefebvre; Rainbow soloist, Miss Carpenter.

Master Jack, Robert Brauns; Priscilla, Catherine Gensch; Daisy, Coral Obermeyer; Vera, Elizabeth Richards.

Bridesmaids – Gwendolyn Skeels, Edna Hanna, C. Elliott, Lois Straub, Winifred Kingsford, Merle Malin, Babe Eisele and Mrs. Disher.

Wedding Guests – Jovan Basso, Ruth Vincent, Freda Peterson, Gladys Peterson, Marguerite Wallace and Lillian Williams.

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Jury – Carmen Conte, Dorothy E. Bonen, Marie Zonomski, Maxine Elliott, Elizabeth Ahrens, Lucile Payant, Audrey Hess, Esther DuChaine, Grace Spencer, Jean Cudlip, Helen Reigart, Avis Anderson, Ardelle Mahoney, Helen Larkin and Myrtle Beard.

Playmates – Jeane Parmelee, Martha Thompson, Guenivere Schenl; Leslie Coffin, John Reigart, Josephine Benzo, Maxine Tomilson, Jeane Oliver, Viola Feracca, R.F. Raidle, Billie Seaman, Robert Parmelee, Elizabeth McCamant, Kathryn King, Dorothy Parent, Betty Parent, Bobby Eisele, Dickie Boll, Jean Drury, Jeannett Will and Robert Pearce.

Guest girls – Claire Boyle, Marbell Peterson, Dorothy Coffin, Eleanor Van Laanen, Marjorie Taylor and Helen Richards.

Memories – Clare Unger, Alfie Malmberg, Lorrene Tollen, Naomi Holland, Lenora Nelson, Audrey Hess, Erna Hess and Dorothy Bonen.

Futurists – John D. Boyle, Ernest Brown, Wallace Wedin, Lester Goodney, John Richards, Clyde Detra, Edgar Erickson, Edward McKelvy, Philip P. James, Orville Hitchens and Marshall Barkhurst.

The following article ran the next day – April 28, 1925 – in the *Iron Mountain News* under the headline “Good Seat Sale for ‘Springtime’; Woman’s Club Show to Be Presented Tomorrow Evening”:

The advance ticket sale for “Springtime”, the musical comedy which will be presented tomorrow and Thursday nights at the Colonial theatre under the auspices of the Woman’s club, is growing rapidly and indications point to two capacity houses.

Rehearsals, which have been under the direction of Miss Mary Jane Casey, of the John B. Rogers Producing company, have been in progress for three weeks. More than 200 persons are included in the cast. The show has been presented in several nearby Wisconsin towns with great success but this will be its first presentation in the upper peninsula.

Additional members of the cast announced today are as follows:

Wedding soloist – Johanna Clifford.

Maids of honor and best men – Elsa Miller, Anna Goodrich, Eleanor Blixt, Adele Verville, Robert Steven and Emerson McGrath.

Society group – Antonette Van Laanen, Marjory Unger, Edith Levy, Irene Harvey, Gladys Gemlick, Edith Bennett, Olga Tramontine, Bernice Quinlan, Bert Harvey, Leo Lefebvre, William Bennett, William Sanderson, Morris Clausen, John Boyle, John Richards and H.W. Martin.

Flower girls – Joyce Israelson, Martha Betty Travis, Mary Alice King, Mary Hanchette, Mary Jane Peterson and Helen McNichols.

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Mardi Gras – Claire Boyle, Mabelle Peterson, Dorothy Coffin, Eleanor Van Laanen, Helen Richards, Clare Unger, Lorrene Tollen, Naomie Holland and Lenora Nelson.

Pillow bearers – Martin Travis and Russell Hanchette.

From the early 1900's, the **John B. Rogers Production Company** created a plethora of pageants using a formula. Located in Fostoria, Ohio, **John B. Rogers** began supplying the necessities for creating a pageant in 1903. Rogers supplied the costumes, sets, lights and scripts for amateur theatre.

The following article ran in the April 29, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Club Show to Open Tonight – ‘Springtime’ Due Then Anyway, If It Isn’t Here Otherwise**”:

Indications today were that a packed house will greet the opening presentation at the Colonial this evening of “Springtime,” the home talent production put on under the auspices of the Woman’s club.

A novelty touch to home talent productions will be the sale of candy between the acts by high school students. The girls will pass through the aisles and distribute the candy to those desiring to make the purchase. Mayhap they’ll also do a little sales talking in the old approved fashion.

The story of the play covers a period of more than 50 years and deals with the blighted romance of a scion of 1864 aristocracy and the daughter of the founder of the famous Brewster Pills. Their hopes are realized as nearly as possible in the marriage of their grandchildren in 1924.

*Special scenery and costumes have been provided for the show by the **John B. Rogers Production company**.*

*One of the features of the first act is the wedding scene in 1864, the solo part being taken by Miss **Johanna Clifford**. A group of 20 children dance and sing in the second act and in addition to a solo dance by Miss **May Seely** and the *Spirits of Memory* dance.*

The third act depicts a temple of fun, a rag time [sic – ragtime] jury in a court of love ending a hilarious mardi gras [sic – Mardi Gras] party.

Another home talent show, “Apple Blossom Time”, contracted with the **LaGrande Sisters Production Company** by the **Knights of Columbus**, was announced in the May 29, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Contract Signed for Amateur Show**”, as follows:

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The Knights of Columbus have entered into a contract with the LaGrande Sisters Production company for the presentation of another home talent show, “Apple Blossom Time,” which will be given at the Colonial theatre December 3 and 4, it was announced today.

The same company staged the “Doings of the Bowsers” for the organization last February. The new show is heralded to be even better than the last one. The sisters will take part in the production.

On September 25, 1925, **August E. Brauns** sold the Colonial Theatre, located on Lot 4, Block 11 of the Plat of Iron Mountain City, to the **Brauns & Thomas Company**, owned by **August E. Brauns** and **Martin D. Thomas**, for the sum of one dollar. At that time the actual sale price did not have to be included on the deed. The Braumart Theatre had opened on April 21, 1925.

A modernization program for both the Braumart Theatre and the Colonial Theatre, operated by the **Braumart Theater Company**, was undertaken in the summer of 1935. An article in the July 29, 1935 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Colonial to Be Reopened After Being Improved – Braumart Will Also Undergo Extensive Remodeling Program**”, announced that the Colonial Theatre would open with a matinee performance on Monday, August 3, 1935, as follows:

When the modernization program now in progress at both the Braumart and Colonial theaters, operated by the Braumart Theater company, is complete, the community will have two theaters which should compare favorably with any of their size in the state of Michigan.

The Colonial theater will be opened with a matinee performance Monday, August 3, and will be operated regularly thereafter. Both the exterior and interior of the theater have been rebuilt and redecorated along new and modern lines.

Attractive Decorative Scheme

*All decorating of the Colonial, inside and out, is being done by the **Bond Decorating company** of this city. The exterior is a terra cotta base, trimmed in dark brown. The terra cotta will be “high-lighted” to bring out a more effective blend with the trimming.*

Inside the decorative scheme has been worked out in a grayish-tan theme, with mulberry paneling, trimmed in gold. The wainscoting along the walls is of gray-tan, the outer panels of mulberry, with gold borders, and the inner panels of light green. The ceiling is finished in ivory, and the same grayish-tan motif prevails in the balcony and corridors.

The general effect, both inside and out, is very attractive and the design was prepared by the Bond company.

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New Sound Equipment

High intensity lamps, a new generator, a new wide range Western Electric sound system and an improved screen will bring the projection and sound equipment up to the highest approved standards. The new marquee at the front of the theater is being provided with hundreds of electric lamps and many feet of neon tubing to present a striking color effect.

Seats recently removed from the Braumart to make room for new ones will provide added comfort for patrons of the Colonial. All of the seats have been re-conditioned.

The Colonial will operate on the same schedule as now prevails at the Braumart, which will be closed while being re-fitted. Although the new seats have already been installed at the Braumart, the general program has only begun there.

Work on the Braumart will start the day the Colonial opens – August 3. Improvements to be effected there will include the tearing down of the electrical signs, the marquee, display frames and ticket office, and a complete remodeling of the entrance.

A new glass front, finished in royal blue with chromium trim, will be built at the Braumart, with the new ticket office constructed of blue glass and chrome and extended to the sidewalk line. Overhead will be a new marquee of enameled steel, with clusters of electric lights and neon tubing.

The theater name will be inscribed in electric lights across the front of the marquee, in a combination of both neon and silhouette letters. The display frames, or attraction boards at either side of the theater lettering, will be set at an angle and will be visible from both the front and sides. Silhouette letters will stand out from the background of illuminated opal glass, and the marquee will be considerably larger than the present one, extending almost across the entire front of the theater.

Improvements will also be made in the lobby, which will be finished with a blue glass wainscoting, terminating in a chrome trim. New chrome display frames will be installed, as well as modern lighting fixtures. Large circular French mirrors will be set in the side walls.

A new suite of rest rooms [sic – restrooms] will be reached by a wide, curving stairway extending down from the foyer. This stairway will lead directly into a carpeted lounge fitted with modernistic chrome furniture. To the right of the lounge will be situated two ladies' rooms, finished in shades of pale green and brightly illuminated. One room will be fitted with as a dressing and smoking lounge.

Two new men's rooms will be provided at the left of the lounge.

About 10 days will be required for the improvements, which will make the Braumart one of the most modern-equipped theaters north of Milwaukee.

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

In the *1939 Iron Mountain and Kingsford Directory* **Russell McNamee** worked as manager of the Colonial Theatre at 209 East Ludington Street. By 1941 **Alfred Wright** held that position. In the *1946 Iron Mountain and Kingsford City Directory* **Nelson Charles** was the manager.

The Colonial Theatre closed in June, 1952, but was reopened on Christmas Day, December 25, 1952. An article in the December 16, 1952 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Colonial To Reopen On December 25**”, provided the following information:

Frank Osteroth, of Hancock, a veteran of the Korean war, has been named manager of the Iron Mountain Colonial theater, which will be reopened to the public on Christmas Day. The theater was closed last June.

Mr. Osteroth, a graduate of Painesdale high school, entered the service on Sept. 26, 1950. He was trained at camps in this country and then was sent to Korea, where he fought with the 45th Infantry Division.

He was returned to the United States under the rotation plan and given his honorable discharge on Sept. 26, 1952, at Fort Custer. He was a corporal in the medical corps of the 45th division when discharged.

Starts Training.

Mr. Osteroth then went to work for the Thomas Theater company, which assigned him to Hancock for training in preparation for his new assignment here.

He is now in Iron Mountain for the final stages of his training before taking charge, on Dec. 25, of the Colonial.

He today announced that he would introduce a double-feature policy at the theater, with the show bills changed three times weekly. The theater will be open every night and for matinees on Saturdays and Sundays.

Redecorating and cleaning of the theater was started today under the supervision of Mr. Osteroth.

Perhaps no phenomenon shaped American life in the 1950s more than television. At the end of World War II, the television was a toy for only a few thousand wealthy Americans. Just 10 years later, nearly two-thirds of American households had a television.

With more and more American families owning televisions, manufacturers now had a new way to sell their products, and the television commercial was born. By late 1948, over 900 companies had bought television broadcast time for advertising. By 1950, sponsors were leaving radio for television at an unstoppable rate.

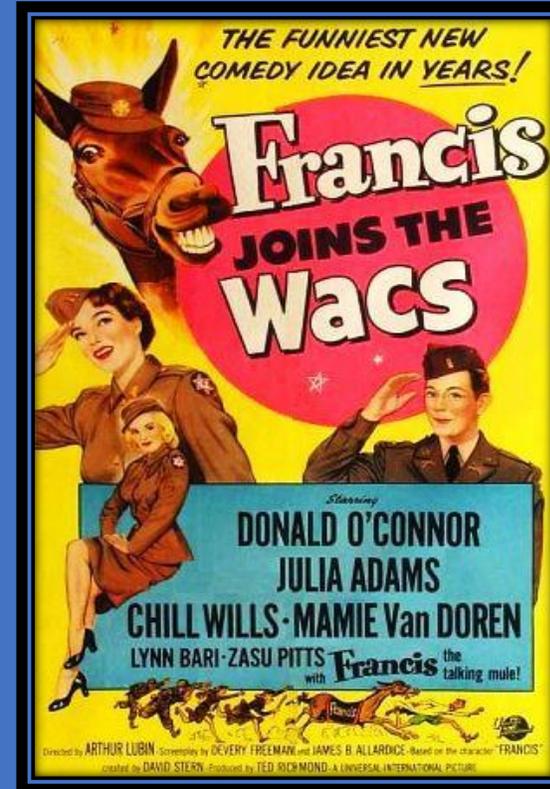
THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

As area residents acquired television sets and antennas sprung up on the rooftops of their houses, more and more people began staying home watching their television sets.

Local movie theater attendance may have diminished, causing the Braumart Theatre Company to re-evaluate the profitability of having two theaters operating, as well as a drive-in theater.

In the summer of 1952, the **Tri-City Drive-In Theatre** was opened near **Quinnesec** by the **Brauns & Thomas Company**. When searching microfilms of *The Iron Mountain News*, it was noted that in 1954 the Colonial Theatre was still operating, but when the Tri-City Drive-In Theatre opened on May 8, 1954, advertisements for the Colonial Theatre ceased.

In the fall of 1954, after the Tri-City Drive-In Theatre closed for the season, advertisements resumed for the Colonial Theatre until Saturday, November 4, 1954. The Colonial Theatre's advertisement on that date noted two "smash comedy hits" were ending that evening: *Francis Joins the WACS* with **Donald O'Connor, Julia Adams, Chill Wills, Mamie Van Doren, Lynn Bari, Zazu Pitts** and **Francis the Talking Mule**; and *Fireman, Save My Child* with **Spike Jones and His City Slickers, Buddy Hackett, Hugh O'Brian, Adele Jergens** and **Tom Brown**. There were two complete shows, one at 7:00 p.m. and another at 8:30 p.m.



The following notice appeared in a box at the bottom of the advertisement: *After tonight's performance, this theater will be closed until further notice.*

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

On June 13, 1961, **Clement F. and Mildred E. Fleury** purchased the **Colonial Theatre**, located on Lot 4 of Block 11 of the Plat of Iron Mountain City from the **Brauns & Thomas Company** for one dollar, according to the deed at the Dickinson County Court House. At that time the actual sale price did not have to be included on the deed.

In the June 15, 1961 edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, the following article appeared under the headline “**Purchase Of Theater Announced**”:

Clem Fleury, of the certified public accounting firm of Fleury, Singler and Cybulski, and Dr. Theodore B. Fornetti, Iron Mountain dentist, today announced the purchase of the old Colonial Theater in the 200 block of East Ludington street.

The theater and lot were purchased by Fleury and Dr. Fornetti from Brauns and Thomas Co., of Iron Mountain.

The new owners reported that the building will be torn down – starting about July 1 – and the lot prepared as the site for rental parking.

According to Dr. Fornetti and Fleury, 30 parking spaces will be prepared in the 120 by 60 foot lot. Rental will be through monthly or yearly contracts, they pointed out.

The parking areas will be available by Sept. 1, and next spring the entire area will be surfaced with black-top, after the ground settling period.

The purchase was negotiated by Dr. Fornetti and Fleury because the parking lot, when completed, will be adjacent to the Khoury Building, which Fleury and Dr. Fornetti own jointly.

The wrecker’s bar next month then will bring an end to an establishment that has played a prominent part in the entertainment history of Iron Mountain.

It was the evening of Dec. 16, 1916, that the Colonial Theater was opened. The first feature? It was the silent film “Poor Little Peppina,” starring Mary Pickford. On opening night, the late Dr. S.E. Cruse gave a congratulatory talk to the builders and operators of the theater. The owner then, as it was until the Fleury-Dr. Fornetti purchase, was the Brauns and Thomas Co., of Iron Mountain.

Theater goers in the early years will probably remember the favorites – Rex Stock Co., Beach-Jones Stock Co., and the Winner Stock Co. Engagements in those days usually lasted for a week. The first sound films were shown in 1933 or 1934.

It was also at the Colonial Theater that Castel’s Orchestra, of Iron Mountain, provided musical entertainment. Later, boxing matches were promoted by the late Sam Jacobs, of Iron Mountain.

THE COLONIAL THEATRE – 209-211 EAST LUDINGTON STREET

In the late 1920's, The Iron Mountain News, in cooperation with the theater management, brought the world [sic – World] Series in. Using a magnetic board on the stage of the theater, the Associated Press inning-by-inning account of each World Series game was shown. Admission was free for interested sports fans.

*The first manager of the Colonial Theater was **Martin Thomas**, of Iron Mountain, who started his career at the old **Bijou Theater** in Iron Mountain in 1907. When the Colonial Theater opened, the old Bijou was still in operation. The Bijou stood where the Recreation Alleys now are. The Colonial was closed permanently five years ago.*

Notice for the razing of the Colonial Theatre, scheduled to begin July 5, 1961, appeared as follows in the July 3, 1961 edition of *The Iron Mountain News* under the headline “**Kingsford Firm To Raze Theater**”:

*The **Richer-Luke Salvage Co.**, of **Kingsford**, has been awarded the contract to raze the old **Colonial Theater** in the 200 block of East Ludington street, it was announced today by **Dr. Theodore B. Fornetti**, Iron Mountain dentist, and **Clem Fleury**, of the certified public accounting firm of **Fleury, Singler and Cybulski**, proprietors of the building.*

*Richer-Luke Salvage Co. recently tore down another Iron Mountain landmark, the old **Ludington school in 25 Location**, on contract from the Iron Mountain board of education.*

*Dr. Fornetti and Fluery [sic – Fleury] recently purchased the theater and lot from **Brauns and Thomas Co.**, of Iron Mountain.*

The wrecker's bar will start demolishing the theater on Wednesday, July 5. The work is scheduled to be completed by Sept. 1.

The lot will be used as the site for rental parking and the area will be ready for use by Sept. 15. Over 30 parking spaces will be prepared in the 120 by 60 foot lot. The lot will be black-topped later this year. According to Fluery [sic – Fleury] and Dr. Fornetti, over half of the parking space have [sic – has] already been contracted for.



BRAUMART THEATRE

104-108 East B Street

Opened
April 21, 1925



Closed
January 1996

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The site of the Braumart Theatre – 104-108 East B Street – was occupied by other businesses prior to 1925.

In the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-94* **Josiah Hitchens**, a marble cutter, worked at 100 East B Street, next to the railroad track. There were no other businesses occupying this site listed between 1902 and 1925. In 1935 **Christ Anegon** and **Arthur B. Mitchell** operated the **Iron Mountain Grill** at 100 East B Street, according to *Polk's Iron Mountain (Dickinson County, Mich.) City Directory 1935*, and was still listed in 1939 and 1941.

There was no listing for 102 East B Street in 1892-1894 or 1902-1903. In 1907-1908 **Mike Mitchell**'s name appeared in the street index for this address. However, the alphabetical listing identified **Mike Mitchell** as selling “confectioneries, ice cream and fruits” at 421 South Stephenson Avenue. In the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and Dickinson County with a List of Residents of Homestead, Wisconsin 1913* **John Anegon** operated a confectionery shop at this location.

An article in the **October 21, 1921** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* announced the opening of a new restaurant on B Street which would be located in the building then being constructed by **Joseph Cordy** at 110 East B Street.



Christ Anegon's Iron Mountain Candy Kitchen was located at 102 East B Street. This photograph dates between 1910 and 1920. [Julia Cini]

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

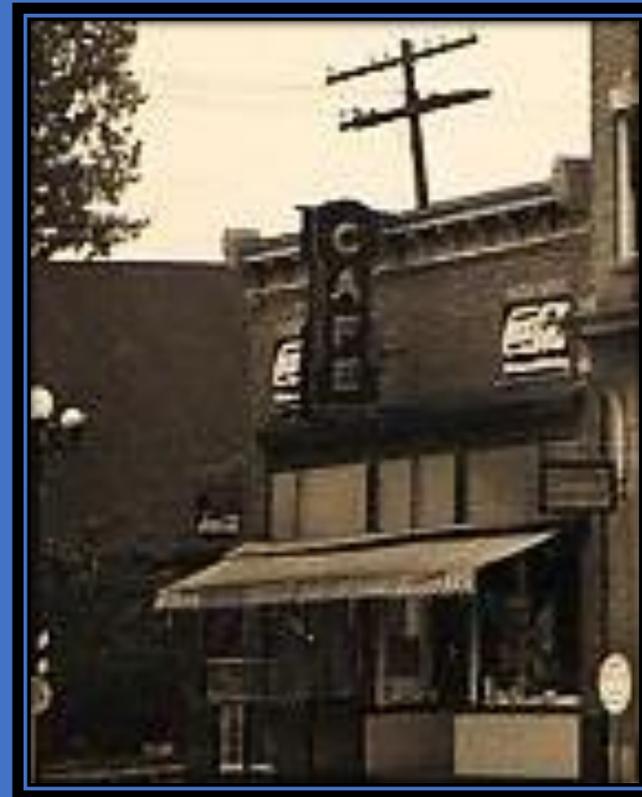
Christ Anegon & Company, Inc., a firm made up of four local businessmen, was to open this restaurant. Members of the firm included **Christ Anegon**, manager, and **Arthur Mitchell**, proprietors of the **Iron Mountain Candy Kitchen** at 102 East B Street, and the proprietors of the Liberty Candy Kitchen, located at 401 South Stephenson Avenue.

In the February 28, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* “**Mitchell & Anegon**, proprietors of the **St. Paul Candy Kitchen**, announced...the completion of plans for the enlargement of their establishment.” Twelve additional booths were to be installed, and the room in the rear then used for storage and manufacturing purposes was to be remodeled to accommodate the new booths. The walls of the entire store were to be changed and “paneled oak and plate glass” would replace the all-glass decorations then in use. The plan also included changing the ceiling, covering it with plate glass panels.

- Thieves broke into the basement of the **Anegon confectionery store** at 102 East B Street on the evening of Saturday, May 16, 1925, according to an article in the May 18, 1925 edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, making off with “eight large jars of maraschino cherries, a number of jars of crushed fruit and a complete shaving set.” Entrance was gained through a basement window, and the thieves were unable to get into the confectionery store on the first floor.

Authorities suspected “more than one was implicated” due to the amount of merchandise taken.

Charles Cherney, a photographer, occupied 104 East B Street according to the *Bunn & Simmons’ Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-94*. There were no listings for this address between 1902 and 1925.



The Iron Mountain Grill, Christ Anegon and Arthur B. Mitchell, proprietors, was operating at 102 East B Street by 1935, and still serving customers in 1946 with Christ Anegon, proprietor. [City of Kingsford – detail]

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



The evergreen arch which crosses Iron Mountain's East B Street near the Chicago & North-Western Railway tracks in this historic photograph was erected for the celebration of Dickinson County's formation held on Saturday, June 13, 1891. The previous day the six-year-old son of William H. Hancock, who was watching workmen erect the arch, was run down while attempting to escape from a speeding delivery wagon. [Ken Pavey]

The Milwaukee & Northern Railway Depot is at the left, the Commercial Hotel is in the center and Charles E. Parent's house can be seen toward the end of the south side of the 100 block. The two-story building at the right within the arch was called the McKinney Flats and contained a number of stores. The building to the right of the arch is the Central House, located at 106 East B Street.

Central House

John Parmantier, Prop.

*\$1.00 PER DAY
ELECTRIC LIGHTED*

Phones—Bell 308, Range 196

*Dealer in
WINES, LIQUORS and CIGARS*

*106 W. B Street,
Iron Mountain, Mich.*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The Central House, a hotel and saloon, was operated at 106 East B Street by Joseph Wenzel in 1892. Note the close proximity of the train tracks to the hotel building and the platform to facilitate loading and unloading railroad cars. The hotel was located across the street from the Milwaukee & Northern Railway Depot. By 1902 the establishment was run by John Parmenter, and by 1907 by Joseph Cordy, who was still here in 1913. August E. Brauns purchased the Central House and the vacant lots to the west of the hotel from Joseph Cordy in November, 1922, with a frontage on B Street of 92 feet, the lot extending back 125 feet. It is probable that 106 East B Street was actually today's 110 East B Street, as early photographs of the Central House show the train tracks on the east side of the building. The fact that there was no listing for this address in the 1925 directory and that the new Cordy Building was constructed at 110 East B Street in 1921 help prove this assumption. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*



THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The **Central House**, a hotel and saloon, was listed at 106 East B Street in the *Bunn & Simmons' Iron Mountain City Directory 1892-94*, operated by **Joseph Wenzel**. In the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and the Villages of Quinnesec and Vulcan, Mich. 1902-1903* **John Parmentier** [sic – possibly **Parmenter**] was listed as the proprietor of the Central House, apparently the only structure on the 100 block of East B Street at the time.

The Central House still operated at this address in 1907-1908 with Joseph Cordy, the proprietor, also residing here. The hotel and saloon still appeared to be the only building on the block. In the *Directory of the Cities of Iron Mountain and Norway and Dickinson County with a List of Residents of Homestead, Wisconsin 1913* Joseph Cordy still was the proprietor.

In 1920, **Henry Ford** began construction the **Iron Mountain Ford Motor Company Plant** south of Iron Mountain, where the **Village of Kingsford** was located three years later. The impact of this plant brought thousands of workers and their families to Dickinson County.

An article in the November 17, 1922 edition of *The Iron Mountain News* showed an ownership change for the **Central House** and vacant lots to the west of the hotel as follows under the headline “**Brauns Closes Big Land Deal – Buys Central House And Several Lots on East B Street**”:

*August E. Brauns has purchased the property on East B street known as the **Central house** and the vacant lots on the west from **Joseph Cordy**. The consideration is private, but the deal is one of the largest real property transactions to be closed in some months. The property has a frontage on East B street of over 92 feet and extends back to the alley more than 125 feet. Included in the deal is the Central house, a large frame structure, now tenanted by **Casmir Recla**. The Recla lease has more than a year to run. It is understood that Mr. Brauns will improve the vacant property. A year ago, a report was current that Marquette capitalists intended erecting a moving picture theatre on the site.*

By the mid-1920's Dickinson County was experiencing a population boom due to the construction and expansion of the **Iron Mountain Ford Motor Company Plant**. By February 16, 1924, the total number of local employees reached approximately 3,500 with a payroll of a half million dollars a month. By September 30, 1924, the payroll contained the names of more than 5,200 persons. By October 9, 1925, the Ford Plant employed more than 7,000 men with a payroll estimated at approximately \$1,000,000 a month. By November 12, 1925, the Iron Mountain plant was listed as employing 7,271 men – more than any other division of the Ford Company with the exception of the Detroit area.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The large number of workers at the Iron Mountain Ford Motor Company Plant and their families were a consideration when **Martin D. Thomas**, manager of the newly-formed **Colonial Theatre Company**, announced plans for the construction of a new theater on East B Street. The following article appeared on February 18, 1924 in the *Iron Mountain News* under the headline **“Theatre Building Here to Cost \$250,000 – Big Project Announced By M.D. Thomas; Construction Work Will Start in Spring – New Colonial Theatre Company Building to Be Located on ‘B’ Street; Will Contain Offices and Stores”**:

Construction of a combined theatre, office and store building costing approximately a quarter of a million dollars will be started here in the spring by the Colonial Theatre company, it was announced today by M.D. Thomas, manager. The project has been under consideration for several months and it has now been definitely decided to go forward with it, Mr. Thomas said.

The Colonial Theatre company, composed of A.E. Brauns and Mr. Thomas, owns and operates the Colonial and Bijou theatres in Iron Mountain and the Garrick, Bijou and Orpheum at Fond Du Lac, Wis.

Located on B Street

The new building will be located on East B street between the Cordy building and Anegon’s candy kitchen.

This property was purchased about a year and a half ago by the theatre company at what was considered to be a very reasonable price and since that time has grown considerable [sic – considerably] in value.

Capacity of 1,200

No name has as yet been selected for the new theatre. It will have a seating capacity of 1,200, making it perhaps the largest in the upper peninsula. The Colonial theatre seats 900. As far as beauty of design and equipment are concerned the theatre will surpass any north of Green Bay. It will be devoted solely to the exhibition of moving pictures.

The building is expected to be the most imposing in Iron Mountain and the architectural design has been placed in the hands of a well known Detroit firm which does similar work for the Ford Motor company.

*The structure will be **two stories in height** and of brick fireproof construction. It will have a full basement that will be finished and leased for business purposes. A central heating plant will serve the entire building.*



THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

*The property has a frontage on B street of 96 feet and a depth of 130 feet. The **Anegon candy kitchen**, however, extends back only part of this depth and the unoccupied ground in the rear, 29x60 feet, is included in the theatre purchase, making the total width in the rear 125 feet. This space of 125x60 feet will be devoted to the theatre proper.*

Stores In Front.

The front part of the main floor of the building will be divided into two or three stores with a depth of 70 feet and allowing a width of about 20 feet for the theatre lobby. The lobby will be in the form of a vamp [sic] that will extend back 70 feet to the auditorium. It will run north and south and parallel to it will be the stores. The auditorium will run east and west.

It is planned to model the lobby after those in the large cities. In the front will be the box office and the runway back of that will be fittingly decorated and equipped.

Although plans are not definite as yet, the seats in the auditorium will probably face west. The auditorium will also have a mezzanine floor upon which will be located the projection booth.

No provision will be made for showing other than motion pictures at the theatre. Road show companies will be played at the Colonial theatre.

*Special feature pictures will also be presented at the Colonial where a one show a night and reserved seat policy may be put into effect. No plans have been made regarding the **Bijou theatre** after the new showhouse [sic] is opened. It may be closed or kept open, depending entirely upon conditions at that time.*

The contract for the construction of the building will be awarded within 60 days, Mr. Thomas declared. It is expected that the total investment will approximate \$250,000 and arrangements for financing the undertaking have been completed.

Ready By Fall.

Construction work will began as soon as the weather is favorable and the hope is held that the theatre will be ready for use by fall. The store fronts will be the most modern in the city, it is claimed, and special attention will be paid to obtain the utmost in natural light on the interior. Although applications have already been made to lease the stores, no contracts have yet been made, according to Mr. Thomas. It is expected that there will be lively demand for the stores and no doubt leases will be signed during the next several weeks.

The second floor of the building will be arranged to suit tenants. It may be turned either into office rooms or fixed up suitable for lodge requirements. The suggestion has also been made that it include a large dance hall but it is doubtful if this will be carried into effect.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

“Increased patronage at the Colonial theatre and population growth have enabled us to go forward with this new project,” Mr. Thomas declared. “We expect to give Iron Mountain a theatre of exceptional beauty for a city of this size. It will be modern in every respect and operated upon a popular policy. We appreciate very much the patronage that has been accorded the Colonial and Bijou theatres and in return want to give the city a theatre that it can well be proud of.

“We believe that the new building will be a valuable addition to the business district of Iron Mountain. It is a move forward in the development here and marks part of the transition in the character of our business district.”

Stops Other Plans.

Reports have been current for some time that the Colonial company would go forward with the building project this year but Mr. Thomas’s statement today is the first definite announcement on the subject. It has been known that other theatre companies and individuals were prospecting the field here with the idea of building a theatre but in the face of the Colonial company’s decision and the size of the project it is thought whatever plans or proposals may have existed otherwise will be abandoned.



The new theatre will make the Colonial company one of the largest of its kind in this territory, and equaling in size the Delft Theatres Inc., which operates in Escanaba, Iron River, Munising and Marquette and at one time considered entering the field here.

In the May 21, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **“Theatre Plans Sent Builders – Delay Encountered In Obtaining Use of Part Of Alley”**, **Manager Martin Thomas** provided an update on the new theater construction, as follows:

*Plans and specifications for the new theatre building to be erected on East B street by the **Colonial Theatre company** have been forwarded to contractors desiring to bid for the work, it was declared today by **Martin Thomas**, manager of the theatre company.*

The project has been delayed to some extent by the time necessary to secure use of five feet of the blind alley in the rear of the property. The council granted the request of the company, vacating spent today at the company’s log- required alterations in the plans as the building will be extended five feet. [NOTE: It appears some missing lines here, but is transcribed as printed.]



THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

Despite the delay in starting work it is hoped to have the theatre ready for occupancy some time [sic – sometime] in September, Mr. Thomas said. The building will also include two or three stores and office quarters on the second floor. The auditorium will be located in the rear at right angles with the entrance which will be on B street. When completed it is expected to be the best theatre in the upper peninsula.

In the September 2, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Award Contract For Playhouse – Work on New Theatre Scheduled to Start Tomorrow**”, **Manager Martin Thomas** announced the beginning of construction, as follows:

*The contract for the new theatre to be built on B street by the Colonial theatre company has been awarded to the **Foster Construction company**, of Milwaukee, and work on the building will be started tomorrow, according to an announcement made today by **M.D. Thomas**, manager of the theatre company.*

It is hoped, Mr. Thomas said, to have the building enclosed before cold weather arrives. It is expected that it will be ready for occupancy the first of the year or shortly thereafter.

Several changes have been made in the plans as given out by Mr. Thomas last spring. Instead of the auditorium being in the rear of the building and parallel lengthwise with the street, it will run north and south.

*The auditorium will be 73x90 feet. In front of it and in the center will be the **foyer**, 25x30 feet, and on each side a **shop** 25x40 feet. In addition, another store, 26x120 feet, will be included in the same building, which will have a total area of 96x120 feet.*

The cost of the entire project, including the theatre equipment, is estimated by Mr. Thomas at \$200,000, or \$50,000 less than when the plans were originally drawn. Considerable time has been spent, however, in awarding contracts in order to secure the best possible price for a fireproof building. This contract has been awarded on a basis that will be more economical than was originally expected.

The auditorium will not have a balcony, as was first planned, but will seat 1,200 persons, or 300 more than the Colonial theatre. The stage will be 15x40 feet.

At the time the new theater was built, talking motion pictures, or “talkies” had not been introduced. Thus, the announcement of the purchase of a pipe organ in the January 28, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**New Theatre to Have Big Organ – Expensive Instrument Is Purchased From Wurlitzer Company**”, as follows, was not surprising:

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

Contracts for purchase and installation of a Wurlitzer-Hope-Jones electrically operated pipe organ were let yesterday to the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co., of Chicago, by the management of the new theatre being erected on East B street.

The organ [is] of the same make as the ones in the Chicago theatre, Chicago, and the New State theatre in Minneapolis, and represents a considerable investment.

*Electrically controlled and operated, the system permits use of two manuals, embracing saxaphones [sic – saxophones], traps and a complete assortment of “effects”. According to **Frank H. Marshall**, representing the Wurlitzer Co., the organ will be equivalent to a 35-piece orchestra.*

It is the latest type Mahogany horseshoe console, Mr. Marshall said, and will be “tailor made” for the new theatre here, with acoustics, size of the house, the chamber and other details being taken into consideration.

The organ, it was said, will eclipse any in use north of Milwaukee and will be the equal of any in theatres of similar size in the country.

The contract calls for delivery March 1 and for installation by March 15. A corps of workmen from New York will arrive here about the first of March to install the organ, Mr. Marshall said.

In the February 9, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**New Theatre Opens in April – Select Name of Braumart for Playhouse; Will Seat 1,000**”, a tentative opening date and the name of the theater were announced, as follows:

*With the grand opening of the new **Braumart theatre** tentatively set for April 4, workmen are today bending all their efforts toward speeding the work on the \$200,000 building so that the plans of its owners can be realized.*

Plaster work will begin on Wednesday of this week and as soon as that is completed a floor will be laid. The temporary scaffolding is to be torn away tomorrow and the coating of the walls started.

*Announcement has been made of the selection of a name for the theatre. It is to be formally christened the **Braumart**, derived from the names of the two principal owners, **A.E. Brauns and Martin D. Thomas**, on the opening night.*

As soon as the plastering is completed and the floor laid, decorators will begin their work of beautifying the interior of the structure. The theatre will hold approximately 1000 persons and is to be modern in every way the plans reveal. Two stores and a number of offices will also be housed in the building.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

News of the building progress continued to be of great interest to the public and detailed accounts were published in the *Iron Mountain News*, as evidenced by the following item in the **March 23, 1925** edition, under the headline “**Braumart Organ Is Received Here – Instrument in New Theatre Finest North of Milwaukee**”:

*When the new Braumart theatre is opened next month it will have a part of its equipment a **Wurlitzer-Hope-Jones Unit orchestra**, one of the finest instruments of its kind that is manufactured today.*

*The organ which, when installed, will be without question the best north of Milwaukee, has been received here, and the console, or keyboard, is on display in the window of the **McLogan-Pearce Music company**.*

*Installation of the instrument has already been started and is to be completed by the time that the theatre is ready for opening. **In conjunction with the organ the concert orchestra now playing at the Colonial will be transferred to the Braumart and the two will alternate in playing the pictures.***

Latest Achievement

The Wurlitzer organ is conceded to be the latest achievement in instruments of this kind.

*Among the instruments and effects produced by it are the **contra viol, tuba horn, clarinet, flute, viol, piccolo, tambourine, sleigh bells, xylophone [sic – xylophone], triangle, bass, cello, bass drum, kettle [sic – kettle] drum, snare drum, cymbals, bird, auto horn, fire gong, steamboat whistle, hore [sic – horse] hoofs, tom tom, chinese [sic – Chinese] block, electric door bell, the human voice and all the other combinations usual to the ordinary type of organ.***

The console contains the keyboards, stop tablets and combination buttons which are made to open and close the electric circuits that, in turn, control the maze of pipes and expression devices through the relay board, the union board and the switch board.

Combination Selection

The union board enables the organist to select any combination or set of pipes in the organ from either of the two keyboards and by such combination to quadruple the expressive capacity of the instrument.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The “Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra” (later known as the “Wurlitzer Unit Organ”) could provide a fullness of sound similar to an orchestra with a variety of instrumental sounds and effects but under the control of just one musician, who could watch the screen and match the music to the action in the film, just as a pianist would.



The Braumart Theatre’s Wurlitzer Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra organ would have been similar to the one pictured here which was built in 1925.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

Wurlitzer built their first “Unit Orchestra” in 1911, producing 2,238 organs (mostly theater style) over a 32 year period. Production peaked in 1926, when the factory turned out a completed organ for every working day of the year! On April 8, 1925, the Wurlitzer Organ Habitat Opus 1034, pictured here, was shipped to the New Gallery Cinema in England.



With the introduction of sound to American cinemas in October 1927 the market for theater organs dried up overnight.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

They [sic – The] keyboards have two touches. One touch forces the keys down a certain distance and with this finger pressure the organist brings into play part of the organ. Then, by pressing down the keys still further, an entirely different expression is brought into action, according as the organist may arrange the stops. This is the famous double touch or second touch that makes a two manual instrument as facile as a four manual in the ease and dexterity [sic – dexterity] with which the player may control the expressive mechanism.

The Relay Board

The relay board is both electrical and pneumatic. By depressing the keys, the small pneumatic bellows in the relay board are brought into action which, in turn, actuate magnets under each pipe, thus opening valves admitting air.

The amount of wiring in an organ is shown by the fact that the instrument being installed in the Braumart contains more than 100 miles of wire.

The organ pipes and sound producing units will be concealed in chambers built behind two huge grills, one on each side of the proscenium opening in the Braumart. Egress of sound from the organ will be by graduated shutters opened out in different degrees at the will of the organist.

The pipes in the instrument range in size from those not larger than a small flute to others as large in diameter as a telephone pole.

Under the headline “**New Projector Put on Display – Latest Type Machine In Braumart Theatre Equipment**”, another detailed account appeared in the March 27, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, as follows:

*One of the two motion picture projection machines to be installed in the new Braumart theatre has been placed on display in a window of the **Parent clothing company** and is attracting much attention.*

*The machine is the latest model **Simplex, manufactured by the Precision Machine company**, of New York. This make of projector is used by nearly all the larger theatres in the country and is **also in use at the Colonial and Bijou theatres.***

The Braumart projectors are equipped with the newly developed reflecting type of arc lamps. The machines are entirely automatic, two motors being needed to operate each.

Electric current will be supplied to the projectors by either of two motor generator sets which will change the ordinary city line voltage into the 55-volt direct current required.

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An item in the March 27, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* noted that one of the two new Simplex “motion picture projection machines to be installed in the new Braumart theatre” was on display in a window of the Parent clothing company.

The Simplex machine was of the latest model manufactured by the Precision Machine Company of New York. “This make of projector” was used by nearly all the larger theaters in the country and was also in use at the Colonial and Bijou theatres.

Are You Up to Date?

Before answering this question, consider carefully the motion picture machine you are using.

Projectors are like automobiles; they wear out, and besides, the modern Simplex machine of to-day so far out-classes the machines of three or four years ago, there is no comparison between them.

If your competitor has an up-to-date Simplex projector, and you are running an old machine, that may account for the falling off of your gate receipts.

INVESTIGATE THE

Simplex

ITS BENEFITS ARE MANY
Catalogue C tells much about it



Made and Controlled by

THE PRECISION MACHINE CO.
317 East 34th Street New York

Simplex

The Man
who has done more than any other individual for the Motion Picture Industry

Of him, Mr. Robert Grau, in his book, "The Theater of Science," wrote: "Edwin S. Porter will go down in the history of Motion Pictures as the father of the present form of photoplay."

Twenty-two years ago

In the season of 1895-1896, Edwin S. Porter began his career in the motion-picture business by operating the Edison Vitascope at Koster & Bial's Theater, New York; this being the first exhibition of motion pictures in any theater in the United States.

In 1897 he began manufacturing Motion Picture Projectors; machines that were remarkable in that they contained features now accepted as standard by all manufacturers to-day, such as the Single-Pin Movement, Movement Immersed in oil-bath, Outside Shutter, Rollers instead of velvet to keep film on sprockets; while his Framing Device is used on some American and on all European machines. His machines were in use in the houses of the Proctor and the Percy Williams Circuits, and also in the Eden Musee, where he met Francis B. Cannock, of whose career we gave a few glimpses last week.

In 1898 Porter and Cannock designed and built the Machine that was used in the Eden Musee for over twelve years.

In 1899 Porter was engaged by the Edison Mfg. Co. to design Projectors, Cameras, and Perforating and Printing Machines.

He was also manager of motion-picture production for this Company until 1909. Scenics and comics, from 50 to 300 feet long, had been the only subjects up to that time; but he produced the first photoplay as we know it to-day; with a definite plot, elements of suspense, heart interest, etc.

In 1902 he produced *The Great Train Robbery*, a film play that will never be forgotten, and which opened up a new era in motion pictures. In technique his first pictures have hardly been surpassed to this day. There were switchbacks, close-ups, double exposures, dissolving one scene into another, and fade-outs.

He was the first to take pictures at night, to use back lighting, silhouettes, fireplace scenes, and the first to take stop-motion pictures, from which the animated cartoons and other trick pictures developed.

In 1909, with Francis B. Cannock, he invented the Simplex Projector and organized the Precision Machine Company.

In 1910 he organized the Rex Motion Picture Company, whose productions Mr. Robert Grau, in the book mentioned above, pronounced the most artistic of that time.

In 1912 he was one of the prime movers in the merger of independent companies into the Universal Film Mfg. Co.

In 1913, realizing that the single-reel film had reached its limit, he determined to produce five- and six-reel pictures, with well known stage stars in them, and for that purpose he, with Joseph Engel and Adolph Zukor, organized the Famous Players Film Company, of which Porter was the General Manager and Treasurer, until in 1915 he disposed of his interests, and retired from the production end.

Now Edwin S. Porter is putting into the Simplex the result of practical experience extending over a period of

twenty-two years

What we have told you goes to show, that the Simplex is made by men who know.

THE PRECISION MACHINE CO. INC.
317 East 34th St. - New York

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Several spotlights will also be installed in the theatre, including one in the booth and others concealed in the ceiling above the orchestra pit. One of the lights is also on display at the Parent store.

The theatre screen will consist of a linen sheet with a thin surface of white rubber, the advantage of this type being that pictures are as distinct when viewing from the side as from the center.

The booth at the theatre is the first of the new “Denver” type to be installed in Michigan and is the last word in safety and convenience.

As the Braumart Theatre neared completion, the City of Iron Mountain required a lease for the ventilator which would extend over the alley, as noted in the following article in the April 8, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **“Must Rent Space For Ventilator – Projects Into Alley Way; City to Demand \$10 Yearly”**:

Martin Thomas and A.E. Brauns, owners of the new Braumart theatre, which is nearing completion on B street, will be notified by the city that they must enter into a lease with it for building a ventilator in the rear that projects over the alley-way.

The price was set by the city council last night at \$10 per year and the lease will be made out for a period of 10 years with a privilege of renewal. According to the council’s resolution, the theatre owners are obligated to pay \$100 in advance.

The original plans for the theatre building called for the structure to extend five feet into the alley, which is not used for traffic. The plans were altered, however, and the wall was built on the boundary line.

In order to build a ventilator, the contractors were obliged to extend it on to the alley-way. For this, leases must be secured.

The opening of the Braumart Theatre on Tuesday, April 21, 1925, was announced in the April 20, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **“New Braumart Theatre To Be Opened Tomorrow Night; Special Program Prepared – Finest Amusement House North of Milwaukee Will Be Turned Over To Public”**, as follows:

After being in the course of construction for several months, the new Braumart – the upper peninsula’s theatre de luxe – will be formally opened tomorrow evening.

The curtain will rise on the first show at 7 o’clock, dedicating the Braumart to its daily task of entertainment.

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The Braumart will rank as the finest amusement house north of Milwaukee, embodying as it does the most modern type of construction and the various and op-to-the-minute improvements in the technique of motion picture projection.

*Although having no balcony, the main floor of the big auditorium will seat 1,000 persons. Four aisle ways provide easy access to the seats, which are deeply cushioned and adjusted so as to give the utmost comfort. The aisles are heavily carpeted and entrance to them is gained through French doors leading off from the long **foyer**, which is arc shaped.*

Inset at several places in the wall dividing the foyer from the auditorium are groups of three arched windows fitted with stained glass that reflect in various tints the soft glow of the indirect lighting system.

Exceptional Decorations.

The true beauty of the theatre is fully appreciated in the auditorium. Decorations are in practically all of the well known tints and shades and a tapestry effect has been executed in the panels on the side walls. Pilasters along the walls are all highly decorated and each bears the well known sign of the theatre – the mask of comedy and the mask of drama.

Heating engineers declare that the Braumart has a perfect system for supplying a comfortable degree of heat although the ventilation system will be constantly driving in a great amount of fresh air drawn from the outside. Radiators are recessed in the side walls, above the heads of the audience, and are concealed by grill work.

*In the angles formed by the two walls as they shape inward to the proscenium arch at the front of the theatre are two large grills, one on each side of the stage. A false work gives them the appearance of boxes but they conceal the large chambers in which the **organ equipment** is installed.*

Special Screen.

The proscenium arch represents an exceptional example of interior decorating. It opens upon the stage, which is only a few feet wide as the theatre will be devoted entirely to motion picture programs. A special screen with a thin white rubber surface has been installed. The screen is of a type that will receive the picture rays in such a manner that no counteracting and distracting rays will be given off.

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At each side of the stage and located about 10 feet above the floor is a large chamber containing the organ equipment. The instrument purchased for the Braumart is a Wurlitzer-Hope-Jones and is the largest and most completely equipped in the upper peninsula and northern Wisconsin.

The equipment includes hundreds of pipes and a variety of orchestra instruments, all electrically controlled from a keyboard in the orchestra pit. These chambers are covered by the grill work previously mentioned and large shutters in back of the grill automatically regulate the amount of sound that reaches the audience.

Fresh Air Driven In.

The ventilation system of the theatre is unusual and very effectively installed. Instead of the customary process of extracting impure air by means of suction fans, a big fan located in the basement drives fresh air into the theatre under high pressure and this forces the bad air out through the vents. The fresh air is distributed through a series of ventilators in the top of the proscenium arch and is so well adapted that a waft of cigaret [sic – cigarette] smoke in the rear of the theatre is instantly caught up and whirled away.

As the Braumart will feature its orchestra and organ concealed lights have been placed in the ceiling so as to flood the orchestra pit for special numbers that are given.

The projection booth is located on the second floor of the building and access to it is gained only by using the stairway that leads to the offices in the front of the structure. There is no direct stairway from the theatre proper to the booth. Everything in the booth is electrically controlled and emergency apparatus has been installed so that if there is an interruption of the power supply on one line it can be transferred to another.

Automatic Light Regulators.

The equipment includes two Simplex projection machines, both of which can be controlled at three stations in the booth. The machines are even equipped with individual motors that automatically regulate the adjustment of the carbon arcs. In old style lamp houses the light was given directly to the screen through a series of lenses. The lamp houses on these machines, however, incorporate a new process of reflecting the light, thus doing away with bluish and brownish spots upon the screen.

In addition, there is a spotlight machine and other equipment to make the projection perfect. The operator is even relieved of the task of rewinding the reels, electricity also preforming [sic – performing] this job.

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The booth is absolutely fireproof and the portholes in front are guarded by automatic steel trap gates that will drop when the temperature reaches a degree sufficient to melt a short strip of metal fuse attached to each projector.

Has Offices and Stores.

*In addition to the theatre, the Braumart building includes a group of well lighted offices and two stores. Reservations for the offices, construction of which have is [sic] not completed, have already been made and they will be occupied by the **Fuller Brush company, Union Oil company, J.I. Corn Real Estate company** and **E.J. Dundon**, attorney.*

*The stores will be occupied by the **Riley and Lundell haberdashery** and the **Stronge & Warner Millinery company**.*

*The name Braumart was derived from a combination of the names of the owners, **A.E. Brauns** and **Martin D. Thomas**. It is a part of the chain of theatres included in the Colonial theatre group, which takes in the Colonial and Bijou theatres here and four houses located in Fond du Lac, Wis.*

Noted Organist Coming.

*A special and unique opening program has been prepared for the Braumart. Among the attractions will be **Ambrose Larson** [sic – Larsen], noted nationally as an organ player.*

Larson [sic – Larsen] played the organ for the opening of the famous Capitol theatre in Chicago and stopped every performance during the first week. He has been engaged for two weeks here.

The program will open with an overture, then a film announcement and dedication. This will be followed by Larson's [sic – Larsen's] solo numbers on the organ. Then will come the latest "Our Gang" comedy release, "Mysterious Mystery," which was reviewed last week in the Chicago Tribune by Mae Tinee, who urged her followers to be sure and see the picture. The feature film offering will be "Charlie's [sic – Charley's] Aunt", a late comedy release.



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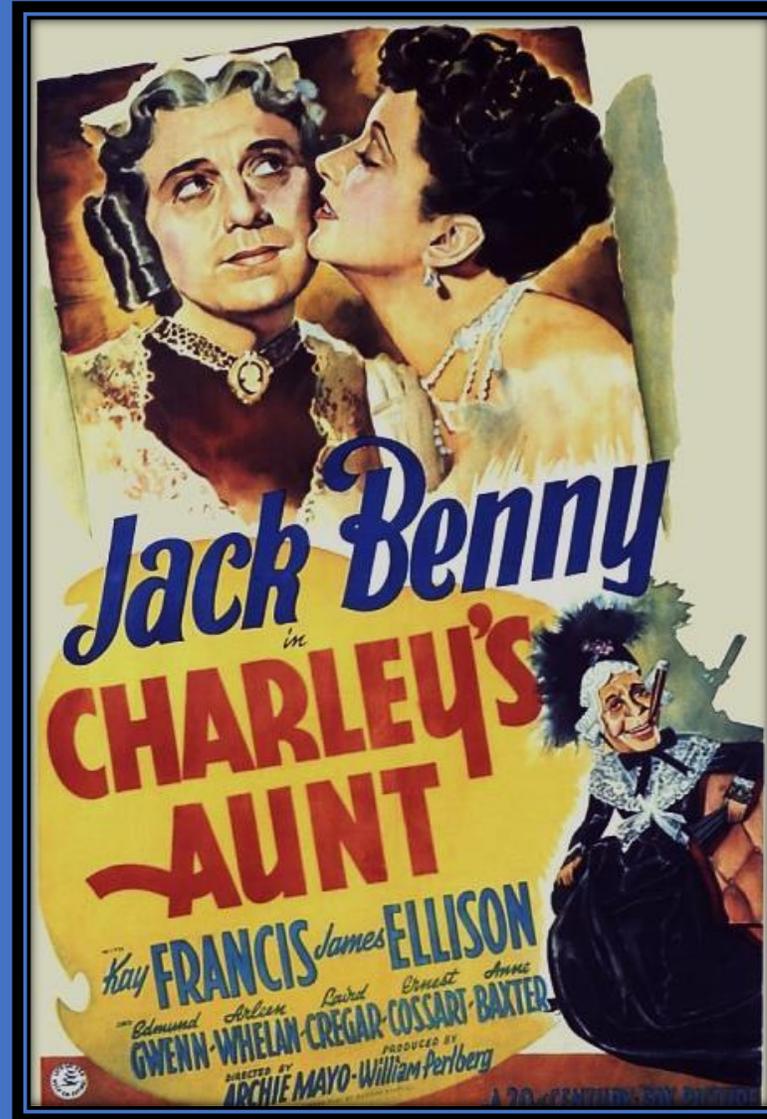
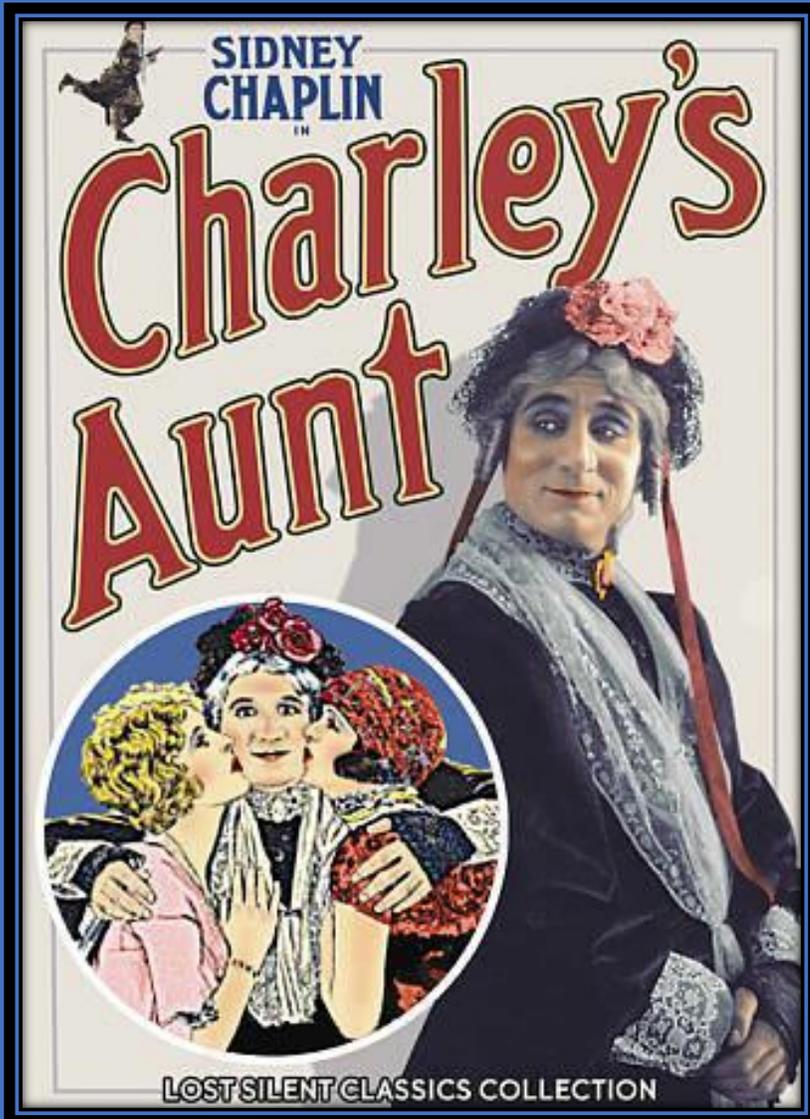
The original cast of “Our Gang”, also known as “The Little Rascals” or “Hal Roach's Rascals”, was a series of American comedy short films about a group of poor neighborhood children and their adventures created by comedy producer Hal Roach between 1922 and 1944. “Our Gang” notably put boys, girls, whites and blacks together as equals, something that broke new ground. The franchise began in 1922 as a series of silent short subjects produced by the Roach studio and released by Pathé Exchange. Roach changed distributors from Pathé to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in 1927, and the series entered its most popular period after converting to sound in 1929.

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Charley's Aunt was the feature film played at the opening of the Braumart Theatre on Tuesday, April 21, 1925. Charley's Aunt is a farce in three acts written by Brandon Thomas. The play was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds in February 1892. It was produced by former D'Oyly Carte Opera Company actor W. S. Penley, a friend of Thomas, who appeared in the principal role of Lord Fancourt Babberley, an undergraduate whose friends Jack and Charley persuade him to impersonate the latter's aunt. The piece was a success, and it then opened in London at the Royalty Theatre on December 21, 1892, and quickly transferred to the larger Globe Theatre on January 30, 1893, to complete its record-breaking run of 1,466 performances. Also a major success on Broadway, the play opened October 2, 1893, at the Standard Theatre, where it ran for another historic long run of four years. It also toured internationally and has been revived continually and adapted for films and musicals.



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Silent film versions of the play were released in 1915 and 1925, the latter featuring Sydney Chaplin, brother of Charlie Chaplin, and Ethel Shannon. Perhaps the best known film version was released in 1941, directed by Archie Mayo and starring Jack Benny in the title role.



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To close the program a novelty in “three dimension” projection has been prepared. It is known as plastigrams. The effect will be the same as produced when gazing at a picture through the old time stereopticons that were a part of every household. To execute the illusion, specially prepared colored lenses will be distributed to each person in the audience.

The box office will open tomorrow evening at 6 o’clock, the doors will open at 6:30 and the first show will start a half hour later. A second show will also be given at 9 o’clock. The regular schedule of the theatre will include a daily matinee starting at 2:30 o’clock. This will begin Wednesday.

On Wednesday, April 22, 1925, the *Iron Mountain News* described the opening of the new Braumart Theatre under the headline “**National Anthem Opens Braumart – 2,000 Persons Attend premiere of New Theatre Last Night**”, as follows:

The strains of The Star Spangled Banner coming from both orchestra and organ last night marked the formal opening of the new Braumart theatre.

Two thousand persons witnessed the opening shows and all were struck by the beauty and richness of the new playhouse. A special program for the occasion added considerable [sic – considerably] to the favorable impression created upon the audience.

Doors of the theatre were opened at 6:30 o’clock but an hour before that time there was a long queue of persons lined up to the box office, which opened at 6 o’clock. The house, which seats 1,000 persons, was completely filled 10 minutes before the starting of the first show, which was at 7 o’clock.

But those who came inside the theatre early had plenty to occupy their attention until the curtain parted over the screen. Rich draperies on the organ lofts, the beautiful trappings of the stage and the decorations and fittings of the auditorium kept the audience well occupied.

Larson [sic - Larsen] Stars

*Following the national anthem the program continued with a special number by the Braumart concert orchestra. This was followed by a “trip through the mighty Wurlitzer”, an organ log – a combination of organ and stereopticon slides – that put the big instrument through all its paces. **Ambrose Larson [sic – Larsen]**, noted organist who has been secured for a limited engagement at the Braumart, presided at the keyboard and was greeted with rounds of applause at the conclusion of the number. Then came [the] dedicatory announcement by the **Brauns & Thomas company**, owners of the Braumart.*

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When this had finished lenses were distributed through the audience for the presentation of the plastigram pictures which give three dimension effect – height, width and depth. So realistic were the pictures that there were those in the audience who “ducked” when an actor poked a long stick in their direction, or pointed a gun at them as he walked forward. An “Our Gang” comedy and a feature film concluded the program

So great was the demand for admittance that a number of persons were turned away at the second show, which started shortly after 9 o’clock. It was by far the most auspicious event of its kind ever seen in Iron Mountain. And the audience conceded that there are few theatres in the country in towns of like size that can compare with the Braumart.

- In the April 25, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Leon Goulard Held on Charge**”, the following article appeared:

Leon Goulard, director of the Braumart theatre orchestra, is being held in the Gogebic county jail at Bessemer on a serious charge preferred by an Ironwood woman. Goulard was arrested here by the Gogebic sheriff but has not yet been arraigned for hearing.

In the same edition of the *Iron Mountain News* the opening of one of the Braumart Theatre stores was announced under the headline “**Millinery shop Is Opened Today – Stronge & Warner Co. Has Place in Braumart Building**”, as follows:

The new Stronge & Warner millinery shop in the Braumart theatre building was opened today.

The shop will carry a complete line of millinery. It is in charge of Mrs. J.M. Record and her associate, Miss Lucille Applegate.

The interior of the shop is finished in French gray, the fixtures being touched off with a strip of red. Walls are of a dull brown.

A large show window provides ample room for the display and also floods the shop with light.

Organist Ambrose Larsen’s recital at the Braumart Theatre was announced in the May 2, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* under the following headline: “**Expect Many at Larsen Recital – Wurlitzer Will be Given Real Test Tomorrow Afternoon.**”

The big Wurlitzer organ in the new Braumart theatre will get a real initiation tomorrow at the recital to be given by Ambrose Larsen, noted nation wide as an organist.

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Larsen is just concluding a two weeks' engagement here and the concert, which will start at 1:15, is expected to be largely attended because of the following that he has already built up by his work at the organ.

The organ, the finest in the upper peninsula and the northern part of Wisconsin, combines instruments, all of which will be worked in at the recital.

The program follows:

Light Cavalry Overture.....Suppe
Prelude in C Minor.....Rachmaninoff
To Spring.....Grieg
Largo.....Handel
Humoreske.....Dvorak
Elegie.....Massenet
Andantino.....Lemars
Rustle of Spring.....Sinding
The Rosary.....Nevin
Somewhere a Voice Is Calling.....Tate
Tannhauser March.....Wagner

In the **May 21, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Lundell, Riley End Partnership**”, a change in ownership in one of the Braumart Theatre’s stores was announced, as follows:

*The dissolution of the partnership of **William Riley and Richard Lundell**, who were associated in the recently opened **Braumart shop for men** on East B street, was announced today. The partnership will formally terminate on May 29. Riley’s interests have been disposed of to **City Clerk Harold C. Lindholm** and the shop will hereafter be conducted by **Lindholm and Lundell**.*

In the May 22, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Work Started on Store Building – Owners of Braumart Theatre Erect Structure Next Door**”, the following article was published:

*Construction work has been started on a two-story building to be erected by the **Brauns & Thomas company**, owners of the new Braumart theatre, in the vacant lot next to the theatre building on East B street.*

*The lot is 25x120 feet and the building will be the same size. The contract has been given to the **Foster Construction company**, which also erected the Braumart, and completion has been promised in 90 days.*

The cost of the building will be approximately \$25,000. Construction will be of the same type as that in the theatre. The structure will have a brown brick front while the side and back walls will be of white brick.

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The building will have a full basement and the first floor will [be] designed for store purposes. Offices will be built on the second floor and will have the same stairway entrance as those on the second floor of the theatre building. This entrance is at the west side of the theatre building and gives access to a hall which will be connected with a hall in the store building. There will be room for seven offices in the new building.

A central heating plant will serve both structures.

In the May 28, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Cordy Building Sold for \$22,000 – Purchased by Owners of Anegon’s Confectionery Store**”, the sale of the building to the west of the Braumart Theatre was announced, as follows:

*Sale of the **Joseph Cordy building**, 102 East B street, occupied by the **Anegon confectionery store**, to **Christ Anegon and Arthur Mitchell**, owners of the store, was announced today.*

The purchase price was \$22,000. The deal has been pending for some time and was closed late yesterday.

*The building is a one-story brick structure and is advantageously located for the confectionery business, being next to the Braumart theatre. The building does not occupy the entire lot, the rear part of which is owned by **Brauns & Thomas**, whose original plans were to use it for the Braumart.*

No changes in the building are planned at this time, according to the new owners, although they will beautify the exterior.

Organist George J. Zorn’s first program was reviewed in the July 9, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**New Organist Is Well Received – Headliner Playing Indefinite Engagement At Braumart**”, as follows:

***George J. Zorn**, organ artist who has been headlined at the Rivoli and Tivoli theatres in New York city, is playing an indefinite engagement at the Braumart theatre.*

Zorn gave his first program yesterday and was greeted with considerable applause. Special programs will be arranged during his appearance here.

Zorn has an artistic touch and brings into play every part of the big Wurlitzer instrument. His combination effects are unusually good and patrons at the Braumart last evening heard reproductions on the instrument that have not been brought into use before.

In the July 17, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Organ Recital Sunday Event – Zorn Will Present Program at The Braumart Theatre**”, the following article announced a program by the famed organist:

*A musical treat is in store for Sunday afternoon when **George Zorn**, solo artist, will give an organ given to a messenger boy on the recital at the Braumart theatre. [sic – possible line missing]*

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Mr. Zorn, who came here recently, has already established a local reputation for his unusual ability and many persons have been looking forward to a recital by him.

The program will start at 1:15 o'clock preceding the regular matinee. It will be as follows:

*Raymond Overture.....Thomas
Roses of Picardy.....Wood
Cavatine.....Raff
Kiss Me Again.....Heroert
Tales of Hoffman.....Offenbach
Lustspiel.....Kela-Bella
Intermission
Poet and Peasant.....Von Suppe
Ave Marie.....Shebert Wilhelm
(Violin Solo on the Organ)
Quartette from Rigeletto.....Verdix [Verdi]
Schubert Serenade.....Schubert
Kashmiri.....Woodford Finden
Zampa.....Herold*

The announcement of another Braumart Theatre store opening appeared in the October 6, 1925 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Braumart Shoe Shop Is Ready – Formal Opening of Establishment Will Be Held Tomorrow**”, as follows:

The Braumart shoe shop, one of the most attractive in the upper peninsula, will be formally opened tomorrow.

The shop is located in the new addition of the Braumart theatre building and occupies quarters that have been attractively designed and laid out.

Fixtures are of mahogany and of the most modern style. Equipment includes 24 upholstered seats for customers and eight fitting stools to match. There are also several display tables. Men's and boys' shoes will be carried on one side of the shop and the other half will be devoted exclusively to women's footwear.

An exceptionally large stock will be carried, more than 3,000 pairs now being on the shelves. Both staple and fancy footwear will be shown and hosiery, rubbers and accessories will also be shown. Only standard makes of shoes are being carried and boxes will be individually labelled [sic – labeled] with the name of the shop.

*The store is owned by **R.J. Reynolds**, formerly of Watertown, S.D. Mr. Reynolds is an experienced shoe expert, having been a salesman for a number of years. He also conducted a store at Rochester, N.Y.*

His investment here is about \$20,000, it was stated.

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Two experienced clerks, Dan Constantini and Wilfred Collette, of Iron Mountain, are on the staff of the shop.

Final decorations for the opening tomorrow were being made this afternoon.

- In the April 7, 1927 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* a style show presented at the Braumart Theatre was described as follows under the headline **“Style Show at Braumart Wins Public Praise – So Successful An Extra Performance Will Be Given”**:

A style show so interesting that it even held the rapt attention of the men, a style show so abounding in revelations of fashion’s latest creations that it drew audible “ahs” and “ohs” from the feminine contingent in the audience, and a style show so all-around good that it was genuinely entertaining – that was the offering at the Braumart theatre last evening.

Iron Mountain may be more than 1,200 miles from New York, but the gowns, dresses, coats, hats and shoes exhibited last evening were convincing proof that in fashion at least the city is located on Broadway.

More than a score of models participated in the display, which advanced in a steady rhythmic manner. A runway, built out over the front seats, brought the models within close vision of the audience, so that every detail of the latest modes could be examined.

Extra Performance.

So popular was the public response to the show that it will not only be given again this evening, but an extra performance is to be held tomorrow night.

Although last night’s show was not scheduled to start until 8 o’clock, the theatre was packed 20 minutes before and hundreds were turned away at the door.

To attempt to describe the gowns, dresses and coats would be to engage upon a well nigh [sic – well-nigh] interminable or impossible task. It is sufficient to remark that they were without exception exemplary achievements in design, workmanship and chic appearance. And the models exhibited them in a graceful and artistic manner. Approaching from the right side of the stage, each would walk to the center, thence out on the runway, revolve slowly and then saunter off to the left exit.

*Four children, **Billy and Slater Harding**, twins, **Dickie Erdlitz** and **Juliet Huguet**, were especial [sic – special] attractions.*

Feature Pictures.

In connection with the style show was a “leader” picture depicting the contrast between the modes and customs of 1914 and those of the present day. It showed, among other things, a Henze-Tollen wagon loaded with real beer and a group of men who held in their hands bottles of the same beverage.

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The scene was a pathetic [sic] reminder to many and received a generous ovation. Then several young ladies appeared in front of Morgan's millinery shop, which was a popular establishment in the Iron Mountain of 1914, and gave first hand views of the latest in headgear.

The feature picture of the program, Colleen Moore in "Orchids and Ermine", was an especially appropriate and happy selection. The theme coincided perfectly with the style show and the picture itself is one of real mirth and interest.

The style show was sponsored by the Iron Mountain Woman's club and its direction was in the hands of Mrs. A.G. Buchman and Mrs. Melville Kelly. Its unqualified success was largely due to their ardent work and it is likely that the club will make it an annual event.

The participating merchants were as follows: A. Sackim company, Levy-Unger company, Oshins, Woman's Fashion shop, Gift and Tot shops, Vogue Hat shop, Style shop, Braumart hat shop, Mary Ann shop, L.J. Will jewelry store, Men's store, Braumart shoe shop, Fugere Bros., The Bootery, Braumart beauty shop and the Beauty shop.

The plot the 1927 movie "Orchids and Ermine" told the story of a telephone operator at an opulent hotel who falls in love with a young man who turns out to be a rich oil millionaire.



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Until the late 1920s movies had enjoyed a wide degree of popularity, but they still remained a secondary form of entertainment, largely due to their lack of sound. In the more popular vaudeville shows, many films were used as “chasers,” a term originally referring to performers playing last on the bill, so named as if they were so bad they chased audience stragglers out.

It was considered acceptable to talk while the movies played. Because people were allowed to voice their responses to the film, a common bond was forged among the audience when many patrons expressed a shared reply.

During the silent film era musical accompaniment was provided by the theater owners in the form of live orchestras or a pianist. The Braumart Theatre and the Colonial Theatre had an orchestra, and the Braumart Theatre also had its Wurlitzer-Hope-Jones Unit orchestra organ to provide background music to accompany the action on the screen.

By the mid-1920s, several competing systems had been developed to add sound to motion pictures. In 1923, inventor **Lee de Forest** demonstrated **Phonofilm**, in which music was recorded on a narrow strip at the edge of the film. When De Forest tried to sell Phonofilm to the major Hollywood movie studios, however, they rejected it, dismissing “talking pictures” as a novelty that was not worth the cost. De Forest’s sound-on-film system evolved into the **Movietone** sound process, introduced in 1927.

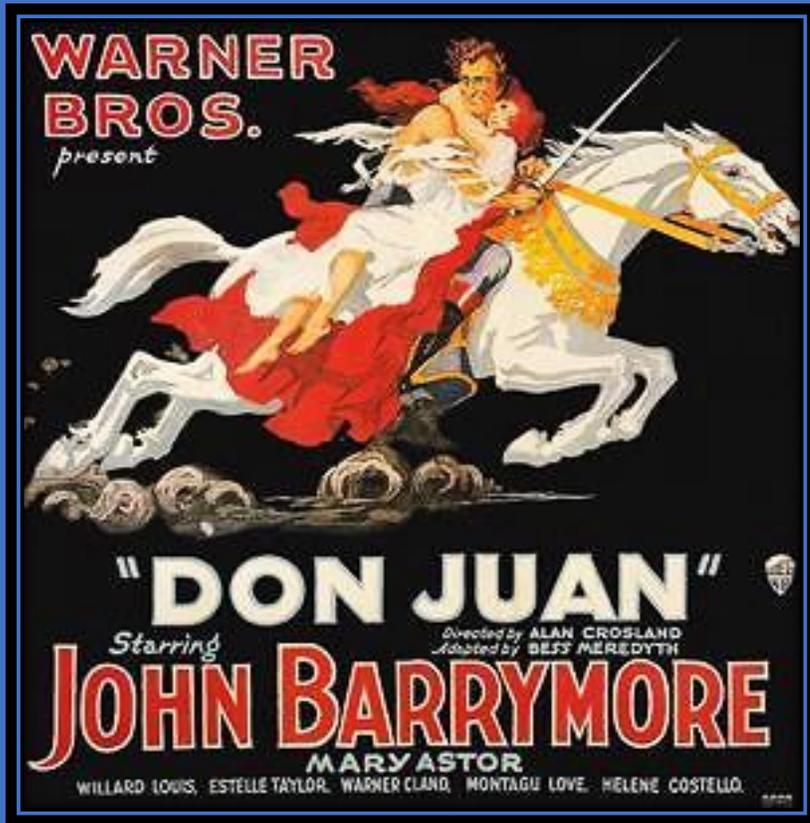
The major studios also turned away **Western Electric**, makers of **Vitaphone**, in 1925. The Vitaphone system logged sound on a record linked electronically to the projector, keeping sound synchronized with image. Because the precise alignment of projector and phonograph had to be set by hand, the system was prone to human error. Fitting a movie theater for a Vitaphone sound system was also extremely costly.

On April 20, 1926, **Western Electric**, the manufacturing arm of the **American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T)**, and **Warner Brothers**, then a minor studio which sank \$3,000,000 into the promotion of **Vitaphone**, announced it would use the new system to provide synchronized musical accompaniment for all its films.

Vitaphone debuted in August 1926 with the costume drama “Don Juan,” starring John Barrymore and Mary Astor, which featured an orchestral score by the New York Philharmonic.

In October of 1927, Warner Brothers released its second Vitaphone feature, “The Jazz Singer,” which included classical and popular music, as well as about 350 words of dialogue. The release of this first feature-length motion picture with synchronized sound heralded the commercial ascendance of the “talkies” and the decline of the silent film era.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Al Jolson, in the role of Jakie Rabonowitz, the lead character of "The Jazz Singer," performed six songs including "Toot, Toot, Tootsie (Goo' Bye)", "Blue Skies" by Irving Berlin, and "My Mammy."



The success of these two films led directly to the motion-picture industry's conversion to sound, as the major studios quickly lobbied to gain the rights to use Vitaphone as well. Warner Brothers agreed to give up its exclusive rights to the system in exchange for a share of the royalties, and by the spring of 1928 virtually every Hollywood studio had jumped on the sound bandwagon.

While the introduction of sound greatly benefitted the motion picture industry, talking pictures proved to be disastrous for vaudeville. Vaudeville performances could not compete with the technology of the talkies and many of its actors were unable to adapt to the format of sound motion pictures.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

Talking films also hurt the careers of the many orchestra musicians who provided the live score to many of the original silent movies. The speech and voices of certain actors also proved to be a difficult hurdle for many studios to overcome. This problem particularly plagued foreign actors whose accents were thought to disrupt the American idiom.

“Singin’ in the Rain,” a 1952 American musical comedy film directed and choreographed by **Gene Kelly** and **Stanley Donen**, starring Kelly, **Donald O’Connor** and **Debbie Reynolds**, offered a lighthearted depiction of Hollywood in the late 1920s, with the three stars portraying performers caught up in the transition from silent films to “talkies.”

With talking pictures audiences concentrated on hearing the movie, rather than those seated around them, leading many patrons to look down upon talking while the movie was playing. In his book *Movie Made America*, **Robert Sklar** observed that “talking audiences for silent pictures became a silent audience for talking pictures.”

The exact time that the Braumart Theatre and the Colonial Theatre began showing “talkies” has not been established.



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An article appearing in the June 15, 1961 edition of *The Iron Mountain News* at the time the Colonial Theatre had been sold and was to be razed noted that the first sound films were shown at the Colonial in 1933 or 1934. The Braumart Theatre may have also introduced “talkies” at that time, or audiences may have already been enjoying this innovation.

- There was no listing for this address in the *Polk’s Iron Mountain and Dickinson County Directory 1925*, although construction on the **Braumart Theatre** began September 3, 1924, and the grand opening was April 21, 1925. The **Cordy Building**, at **110 East B Street**, was the only listing on the 100 block in the 1925 directory.

Businesses listed therein were: the **P.H. Davis Tailoring Company**, **Emil Thorelius**, district agent; **Hugh McLaughlin**, insurance and real estate; **James W. Smith**, architect; **McLogan-Pearce Music Company**, **Irving G. Pearce**, president and manager, **L.G. Hillyer**, vice president, **C.W. Weidleman**, secretary-treasurer, selling pianos, Victrolas and radios; **Van Laanen Insurance Agency**, **John E. Van Laanen**, proprietor; **Itzoff Clinical Laboratory**, **Theodore A. Itzoff**, proprietor; and **Arens & Duchaine** (**Walter Arens** and **Floyd Duchaine**), barbers.

According to *Polk’s Iron Mountain (Dickinson County, Mich.) City Directory 1935*, the **Braumart Building**, in addition to the **Braumart Theatre**, under the management of **Lawrence D. Thomas**, contained the following professional offices and businesses: **Braumart Beauty Shop**, **George Chrest**, proprietor; **Dr. James L. Browning**, physician and surgeon; **Kathryn Colburn**, women’s wear; **Portrait Studio**, **Beatrice Johnson**, photographer; **Upper Peninsula School of Beauty Culture**, **George Chrest**, proprietor.

A modernization program for both the Braumart Theatre and the Colonial Theatre, operated by the **Braumart Theater Company**, was undertaken in the summer of 1935. An article in the July 29, 1935 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, under the headline “**Colonial to Be Reopened After Being Improved – Braumart Will Also Undergo Extensive Remodeling Program**”, announced that the Colonial Theatre would open with a matinee performance on Monday, August 3, 1935, as follows:

When the modernization program now in progress at both the Braumart and Colonial theaters, operated by the Braumart Theater company, is complete, the community will have two theaters which should compare favorably with any of their size in the state of Michigan.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

The Colonial theater will be opened with a matinee performance Monday, August 3, and will be operated regularly thereafter. Both the exterior and interior of the theater have been rebuilt and redecorated along new and modern lines.

Attractive Decorative Scheme

*All decorating of the Colonial, inside and out, is being done by the **Bond Decorating company** of this city. The exterior is a terra cotta base, trimmed in dark brown. The terra cotta will be “high-lighted” to bring out a more effective blend with the trimming.*

Inside the decorative scheme has been worked out in a grayish-tan theme, with mulberry paneling, trimmed in gold. The wainscoting along the walls is of gray-tan, the outer panels of mulberry, with gold borders, and the inner panels of light green. The ceiling is finished in ivory, and the same grayish-tan motif prevails in the balcony and corridors.

The general effect, both inside and out, is very attractive and the design was prepared by the Bond company.

- *New Sound Equipment*
- *High intensity lamps, a new generator, a new **wide range Western Electric sound system** and an improved screen will bring the projection and sound equipment up to the highest approved standards.*

The new marquee at the front of the theater is being provided with hundreds of electric lamps and many feet of neon tubing to present a striking color effect.

Seats recently removed from the Braumart to make room for new ones will provide added comfort for patrons of the Colonial. All of the seats have been re-conditioned.

The Colonial will operate on the same schedule as now prevails at the Braumart, which will be closed while being re-fitted. Although the new seats have already been installed at the Braumart, the general program has only begun there.

Work on the Braumart will start the day the Colonial opens – August 3. Improvements to be effected there will include the tearing down of the electrical signs, the marquee, display frames and ticket office, and a complete remodeling of the entrance.

A new glass front, finished in royal blue with chromium trim, will be built at the Braumart, with the new ticket office constructed of blue glass and chrome and extended to the sidewalk line. Overhead will be a new marquee of enameled steel, with clusters of electric lights and neon tubing.

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The theater name will be inscribed in electric lights across the front of the marquee, in a combination of both neon and silhouette letters. The display frames, or attraction boards at either side of the theater lettering, will be set at an angle and will be visible from both the front and sides. Silhouette letters will stand out from the background of illuminated opal glass, and the marquee will be considerably larger than the present one, extending almost across the entire front of the theater.

Improvements will also be made in the lobby, which will be finished with a blue glass wainscoting, terminating in a chrome trim. New chrome display frames will be installed, as well as modern lighting fixtures. Large circular French mirrors will be set in the side walls.

A new suite of rest rooms [sic – restrooms] will be reached by a wide, curving stairway extending down from the foyer. This stairway will lead directly into a carpeted lounge fitted with modernistic chrome furniture. To the right of the lounge will be situated two ladies' rooms, finished in shades of pale green and brightly illuminated. One room will be fitted with as a dressing and smoking lounge.

Two new men's rooms will be provided at the left of the lounge.

About 10 days will be required for the improvements, which will make the Braumart one of the most modern-equipped theaters north of Milwaukee.

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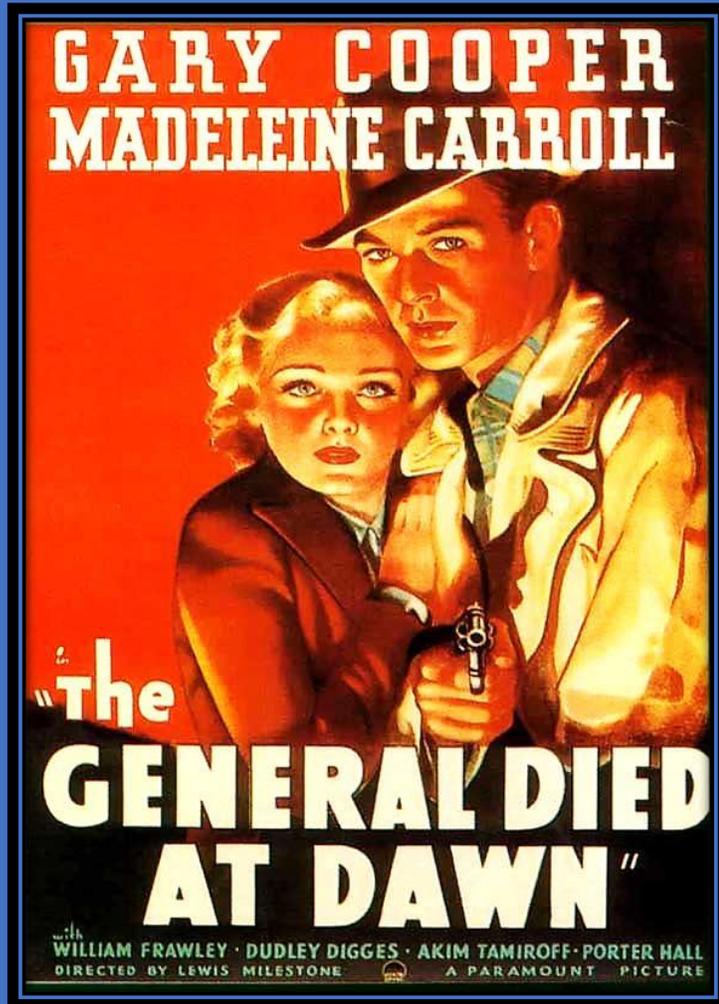
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This 1936 photograph of the Braumart shows the improvements made in 1935.
[City of Kingsford]

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



“The General Died at Dawn” came out in 1936, starring Gary Cooper and Madeleine Carroll. Cooper’s famous line – “We could have made wonderful music together.” – came from this film set in China. [*City of Kingsford*]

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The 1939 city directory placed the Braumart Theatre, under the management of **Edward Hickey**, at 104 East B Street (the **Braumart Building**), as well as the **Brauns & Thomas Company**, owned by **Martin D. Thomas**.

However, the Braumart Theatre was again listed at 106 East B Street in the 1941-1942 city directory, the Braumart Building, together with the **Braumart Barber Shop**, operated by **Floyd Duchaine**; the offices of **Dr. James L. Browning**, physician and surgeon; and the **Colburn Shop**, women's wear, operated by **Kathryn Colburn**.

When **Merton James Fox**, president of the **Von Platen-Fox Lumber Company** and widely-known lumberman of the region, died on Thursday, **May 1, 1941**, following a lingering illness, arrangements were made to hold his funeral in the **Braumart Theatre's auditorium** to accommodate the large number of friends and relatives from the area and beyond who were anticipated to attend his funeral. The service was set for 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, **May 3, 1941**.

The details of the funeral service were contained in his obituary which appeared in the **May 2, 1941** edition of the *Iron Mountain News*, as follows:

An organ prelude, consisting of several of Mr. Fox's favorite hymns, will open the memorial service at the theater. The Rev. Frank Blair, pastor of the Emanuel Baptist church, will read the scripture, and the Rev. N.U. McConaughy, pastor of the First Presbyterian [church], will read a prayer. A hymn, "A Child of the King," will be sung by the Central Methodist church [choir], and the Rev. H.A. Manahan, pastor of the Central Methodist [church], will give the eulogy.

Thereafter the choir will sing a hymn. The Rev. Fr. Frank A Seifert, former pastor of St. Mary's church in this city, will give the religious allocution. The service will close with organ selections.

The following notice also appeared in the May 2, 1941 edition of the *Iron Mountain News*:

Stores To Close – All member stores in the Iron Mountain Retail Merchants' association, and some others, will be closed from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., tomorrow, in respect of the late M.J. Fox, who died yesterday, and also to permit the proprietors and clerks to attend the memorial services, at 10:30, in the Braumart theater. In addition, the county building will be closed from 10:30 to 11:30, and the city building from 10:30 for the remainder of the day.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



A clown stood in front of the Braumart Theatre advertising the movie "3 Ring Circus" in 1954. Notice the ticket booth located between the two sets of double doors. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



“The Lone Ranger” [Mike Klobucher] appeared in front of the Braumart Theatre in 1956 to promote the movie of the same name. “Our Miss Brooks” was also playing. The Dickinson Hotel can be seen in the background. Based on The Lone Ranger television series, starring Clayton Moore (the Lone Ranger) and Jay Silverheels (Tonto), “The Lone Ranger” was the first of two theatrical features based on the popular TV series of the same name, the other one being “The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold” (1958). “Our Miss Brooks” was an American situation comedy starring Eve Arden as a sardonic high-school English teacher. It began as a radio show broadcast on CBS from 1948 to 1957. When the show was adapted to television (1952–56), it became one of the medium's earliest hits.

[Tom and Liz Renn]

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Patrons stacked canned goods in the lobby to gain admittance to the Braumart Theatre prior to the Christmas holidays to help the less fortunate in the late 1950s. Santa Claus and two uniformed ushers helped, and Frank Osteroth, theater manager, stood in the back. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Icicles and snowflakes adorned the concession stand at the Braumart Theatre prior to the Christmas holidays in the late 1950s. Santa Claus and Frank Osteroth, theater manager, were being helped by the sales clerks. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Clowns again promoted “The Big Circus”, playing at the Braumart Theatre in 1959. Notice the orderly line of patrons, largely children, and the sign at the left indicating Jacobs Restaurant (Bob and Lola Jacobs), where Polly’s Underground Pub was later located. “The Big Circus” starred Victor Mature as a circus owner struggling with financial trouble and a murderous unknown saboteur. Also featured in the film were Red Buttons, Rhonda Fleming, Kathryn Grant, Vincent Price and Peter Lorre. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



The banner held by a uniformed usher and Frank Osteroth, theater manager, at the Braumart Theatre in the late 1950s noted the Penny's Movie Party. Judging from the young audience, the matinee may have been sponsored with free admission. Note the architectural appointments of the theater's auditorium. Beginning in the mid-1950s the local Parent-Teacher Associations (P.T.A.) of the various school districts sponsored Saturday matinees. Students could purchase a card with ten perforated ticket strips for one dollar. The ticket strips were torn off from bottom to top. The Saturday matinees contained a serialized story, such as "Flash Gordon," a cartoon and the feature film. One of the highlights was an afternoon of cartoons in an era when children's programming on television was not extensive, except for Saturday mornings. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Chinese lanterns adorned the concession stand in 1961 when Rogers & Hammerstein's "Flower Drum Song" was featured at the Braumart Theatre. Mountaineer Bill Riske, accompanied by his date in a kimono, wore his varsity jacket. The railing separating the auditorium entrance and the stairway leading to the restrooms in the basement level can be seen at the far right. The film was unusual for its time as it featured nearly all Asian American cast members, including dancers, though two of the singing voices were not Asian ones. Starring in the movie were Nancy Kwan, James Shigeta, Benson Fong, James Hong, Reiko Sato and the original Broadway cast members Jack Soo, Miyoshi Umeki, and Juanita Hall, an African American actress who previously played the Pacific Islander Bloody Mary in the Broadway and film productions of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "South Pacific". *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Five young employees posed in front of the windows of the Braumart Theatre dressed in western gear to promote the 1962 movie “How the West Was Won”. This American Metrocolor epic-Western film-was one of the last “old-fashioned” epic films made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to enjoy great success. Set between 1839 and 1889, it follows four generations of a family starting as the Prescotts as they move ever westward from western New York state to the Pacific Ocean. The picture was filmed in the curved-screen three-projector Cinerama process. The all-star cast included (in alphabetical order) Carroll Baker, Lee J. Cobb, Henry Fonda, Carolyn Jones, Karl Malden, Gregory Peck, George Peppard, Robert Preston, Debbie Reynolds, James Stewart, Eli Wallach, John Wayne and Richard Widmark. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



Motorcycles appeared en force to promote “The Wild Angels”, starring Peter Fonda and Nancy Sinatra, which was playing at the Braumart Theatre in 1966. Leather jackets, however, were missing. The marquee lights highlight the entrance. In 1967 remodeling took place with rocking chair seats installed for “the ultimate in comfort.” *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

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THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



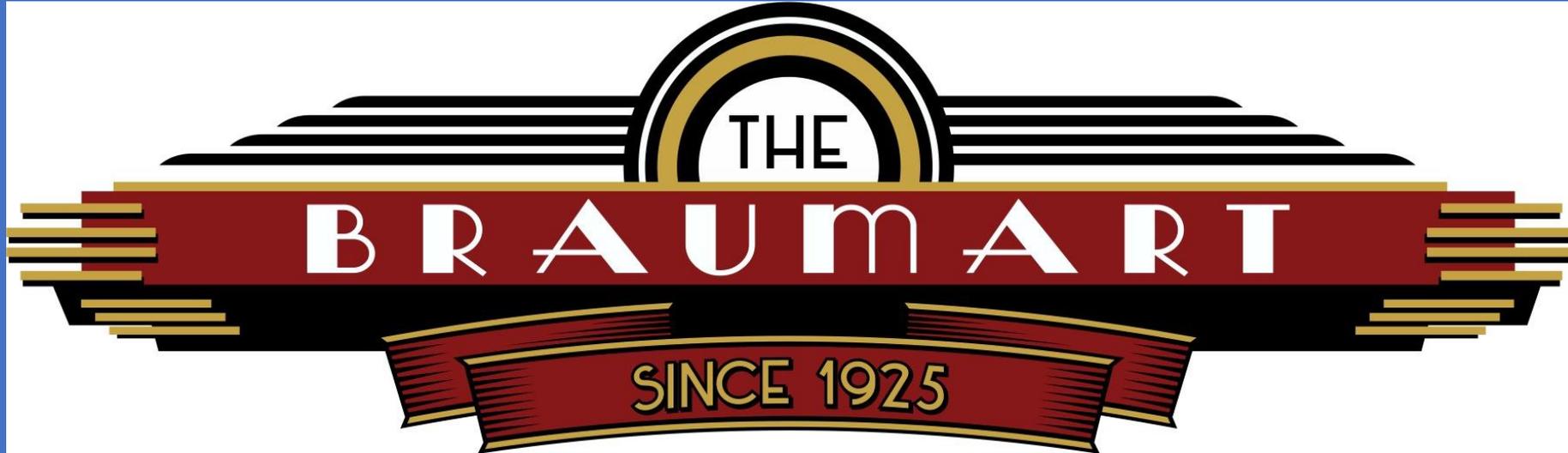
In 1968 Braumart Theatre patrons braved the cold to get their tickets for “Romeo & Juliet”, a much-acclaimed movie starring Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey in the title roles. William Shakespeare may have been upset that his name was misspelled on the marquee. The film won Academy Awards for Best Cinematography (Pasqualino De Santis) and Best Costume Design (Danilo Donati), and was also nominated for Best Director and Best Picture. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



The Braumart Theater's auditorium was divided into two parts in 1982. Note that the ticket booth was no longer between the two sets of double doors, and the red "Braumart" had replaced the lighted version. In 1983 "Mr. Mom" and "Risky Business" were playing. In April 1995, a new eight-screen cinema opened on U.S. 2 in Quinnesec. The Braumart showed second-run films for a while and again showed some new releases before closing in January 1996. *[Tom and Liz Renn]*

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET



The Friends of the Braumart was organized in 2007 as a theater redevelopment organization with the specific goal of purchasing, renovating and managing the Braumart Theater, located at 106 East B Street in Iron Mountain, Michigan, to bring this historic downtown theater to life.

The group incorporated as a non-profit organization as of January 2009, with the State of Michigan. The board developed the constitution and articles of incorporation, along with by-laws and a business plan. A financial plan was finalized with the goal of hiring a restoration architect to conduct a feasibility study.

The Friends of the Braumart is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with over 400 members from ten states. The group's mission is to develop the historic Braumart Theater into a dynamic cultural center which embraces all arts and artists. In addition, the group wants to provide cultural, educational and economic stimulus of the arts for the area, while providing a social and cultural gathering space.

The Friends of the Braumart is a partner/member of the League of Historic American Theaters, the Iron Mountain Main Street/Downtown Development Association, the Dickinson Area Partnership and the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development.

THE BRAUMART THEATRE – 104-108 EAST B STREET

Committees including Fundraising, Public Relations, Grant Writing, Building Acquisition and Maintenance were developed to assure the success of the project.

In 2013, the Milwaukee architectural firm of Engberg Anderson began an architectural, engineering and structural analysis of the building. This analysis showed that the building was reasonably sound and showed areas where existing features could be better utilized. Their study included schematic designs for a new Braumart Arts Center.

A donation by the Dickinson County 100-Plus Women Who Care in August of 2013 provided a nest egg of over \$19,000 for the building purchase fund.

On February 11, 2016, the Friends of the Braumart realized their dream and purchased the Braumart Theatre in Iron Mountain. Northern Michigan Bank & Trust and River Valley Bank financed the purchase and initial renovations, and Dickinson County 100-Plus Women Who Care donated over \$19,000 in August 2013 which was used for the down payment. In addition, the Iron Mountain-Kingsford General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) has taken on the Braumart as their community project for the next two years. The City of Iron Mountain, Downtown Development Authority, Zonta, the Northstar team and the YMCA have all supported this effort.

After buying the building, members cleared out over seven tons of trash and repaired the front doors.

The February 27, 2016 Open House was a huge success with an estimated 400 people stopping by to see the “before” picture of the Braumart. Musicians Adam Hayes and Doug Bacon entertained on the stage and several students from local dance studios practiced onstage and off. Art from local artists was displayed in the lobby along with preliminary designs for the future of the building. Tony Sertich, Executive Director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival (PMMF), announced that all five events of the 2016 Pine Mountain Music Festival season were held at the Braumart between June 18 and June 26.



THE END