



WEST VIRGINIA
HISTORIC
THEATRE TRAIL





West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail

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All historic theatres included in this trail are listed in The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

www.wvculture.org/shpo/shpindex.aspx

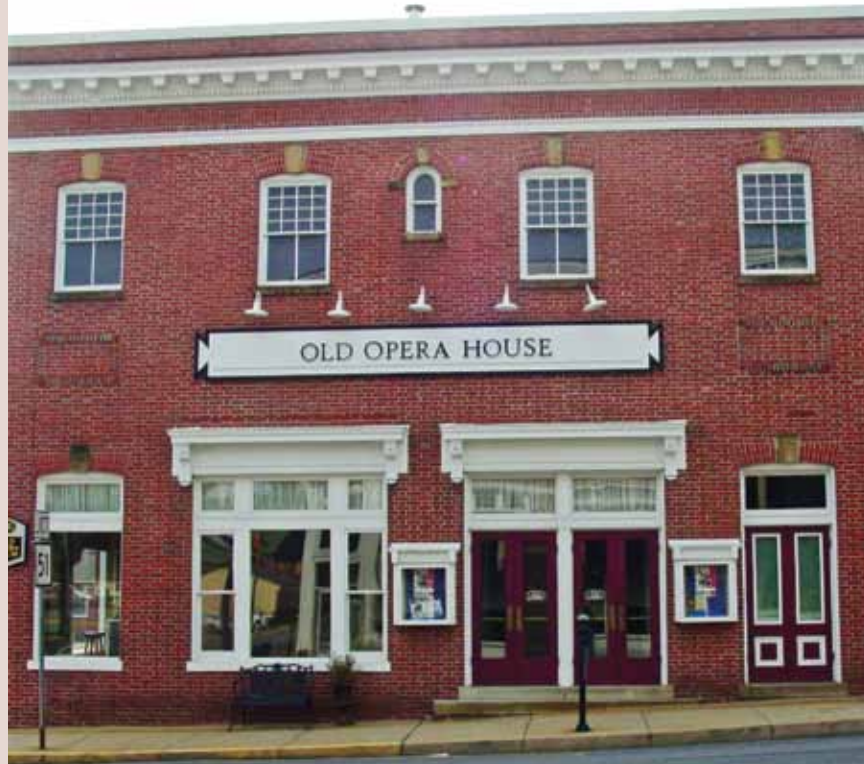
Old Opera House

204 N. George St., Charles Town, WV

304.725.4420

www.oldoperahouse.org

In 1910, Annie G. Packett raised \$50,000 and employed Washington, D.C. architects A.B. Mullett & Co. to construct the New Opera House. Designed in a classical revival style, this theatre included a proscenium stage complete with fly-space for hanging scenery, an orchestra pit, a curved balcony and seating for 500 people. The theatre remained open through two wars, the Depression and the advent of radio, but in 1948 its stage went dark. In 1973 the building was donated to a local theatre group and in 1976 the “new” Old Opera House opened to the public. The season now offers six main stage productions, a summer children’s program, art shows and classes in dance and acting. (Listed NRHP 1978)



1

REGION 1 | EAST
Old Opera House

REGION 1 | EAST
Apollo Theatre

2



Apollo Theatre

128 E. Martin St., Martinsburg, WV
304.676.6386

www.apollo-theatre.org

In 1913, the Apollo Theatre became the social and cultural center for the Martinsburg area; built by owner H.P. Thorn and designed by architect Reginald Geare, notable for designing the Knickerbocker Theatre in Washington DC. This three story, Classical Revival style building has served multiple purposes, from presenting motion pictures, plays, touring shows, such as vaudeville, music groups, singers and comics. The Apollo continues to provide a venue for, classic films, community gatherings, such as weddings, parties, dances, etc., in addition to its 6 play season and a Youth Summer Theatre Workshop. Its most striking features are the repeated segmental arches over each bay in addition to triple sash transoms; the bracketed cornice is also distinctive with a brick balustrade above. (Listed NRHP 1979)

Star Theatre

N. Washington St. & Congress

Berkeley Springs, WV

304.258.1404

www.starwv.com

Built in 1916 as a car storage garage, this brick structure was renovated and began showing films as the Berkeley Theater in 1928. The last major renovation in 1949 by the Alpine theatre chain included the notable marquee that truly “lights up” the downtown every weekend. Present owners have kept the interior and exterior of that period. Known as the Star since 1977, this single screen, neighborhood movie house features one film that changes each weekend. One of the favorite attractions is popcorn with real butter made in a 1949 Manley popcorn machine. Today’s concession room, with the feel of a 1940’s parlor, served as the town’s telephone exchange from 1937 to 1967. (Listed NRHP 2009)



3

REGION 1 | EAST
Star Theatre

REGION 1 | EAST
Old Brick Playhouse

4



Old Brick Playhouse

329 Davis Ave., Elkins, WV

304.637.9090

www.theoldbrick.org

Formerly the Randolph Garage Company, circa 1919, this late Edwardian style brick building is a contributing structure to the Downtown Elkins historic district. In 1992, M&J Enterprises purchased the building donating three quarters of it to The Old Brick Playhouse Company, a newly formed educational arts organization. Together with the Elkins Area Community Theatre, this partnership presents theatrical experiences and educational opportunities for children and youth through both local and touring programs. The Old Brick Playhouse also presents Vaudevillian style entertainment similar to that found during the age of the Silo Circuit popular during the railroad era in many small rural towns such as Elkins. (Listed NRHP 1995)

Randolph County Community Arts Center

2 Park St., Elkins, WV

304.637.2355

www.randolpharts.org

Built in 1928, the former St. Brendan's Catholic Church, served the Catholic community until 1999. Walter F. Martens, the architect who designed the Governor's executive mansion in Charleston, designed the church using a Romanesque Revival style. The building features locally quarried sandstone blocks on the outside with a border of stone relief angels around the entire building. In 2000, the Randolph County Community Arts Council purchased the building, renovating and reopening it in 2001. The original nave has been transformed into "The Great Hall," retaining the beautiful original lighting fixtures and religious icons. The Arts Center hosts 16 exhibits, 24 concerts and more than 100 art and music classes each year. (Listed NRHP 2006)



5

REGION 1 | EAST
Randolph County Community Arts Center

6

REGION 2 | SOUTH The Landmark



The Landmark

401 Main St., Sutton, WV

304.765.7366

www.landmarkstudio.org

Built in 1886 as a Methodist Church in the Victorian style, the Landmark Studio for the Arts (LSA) retains the original 20 foot stained glass window, the woodwork and steeple. In 1988, a grass roots arts group renovated the church to incorporate the stage and add two dressing rooms. Since 2003, a new roof, new lobby floors and front doors have been installed. There are plans to repair the mortar and windows. The community theatre group, who owns the building, presents theatrical productions and sponsors a youth troupe of students who are mentored in dramatic arts and are provided a space for their productions and activities. Open year round for public programs; check website for schedule. (Listed NRHP 1987)

Pocahontas Opera House

818 Third Ave., Marlinton, WV

304.799.6645

www.pocahontasoperahouse.org

Built in 1910, this Victorian building with reinforced concrete walls was the first of its kind in West Virginia. Railroad rails of steel were used to reinforce the concrete. Interior woodwork includes beadboard wainscoting and a beautiful American chestnut railing along the balcony. Locally produced plays, minstrel shows, Lyceum Courses and solo artists were also part of its theatrical world. The Opera House was more than a performance space; it saw use as a basketball court, roller-skating rink, and religious sanctuary. After the late 1920's, the building was used as an automobile dealership and lumber storage warehouse. Now restored to its early glory, the Opera House hosts a variety of performances. It is open to the public during scheduled events and available for private functions. (Listed NRHP 2000)



7

REGION 2 | SOUTH
Pocahontas Opera House



Carnegie Hall

105 Church St., Lewisburg, WV

304.645.7917

www.carnegiehallwv.org

In 1902 philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie and community members built Carnegie Hall as a classroom and performance space for the Lewisburg Female Institute. The structure was designed by architects Barrett & Thompson in the Greek Revival style, characterized foremost by its Ionic order portico with pediment, shouldered architrave trim, tall first floor windows and cornice with dentils. In 1972 it closed and became part of the Greenbrier Center. Carnegie Hall, Inc. was incorporated in 1983 as a not for profit arts and education center. A major restoration project was completed in 1997 with additional renovations completed in 2006. It is one of only four Carnegie Halls still in continuous use today and is part of the Lewisburg Historic District. (Listed NRHP 1978)

Lewis Theatre

113 N Court St., Lewisburg, WV

304.645.6038

www.myspace.com/thelewis theatre

The Lewis Theatre was designed in functional, post deco style by R.L. Whitten, Architect, Charleston, WV and constructed in 1939 for presenting film and “small” vaudeville. This two-story, longitudinally symmetric theatre is built primarily of hollow, glazed terra cotta block, popular from about 1900 into the 1930’s. The front was originally faced at street level with black Vitrolite slabs, shown in historic photos along with the original marquee. The Lewis has operated continuously since completion, serving the local community and visitors. The building is open a half hour before films and by appointment. The Trillium Performing Arts is now the company in residence. www.trilliumperformingarts.org (Listed NRHP 1978)



6

REGION 2 | SOUTH
Lewis Theatre

10

REGION 2 | SOUTH

Fayette Theatre



Fayette Theatre

112 Court St., Fayetteville, WV

304.574.4840

www.historicfayettetheatre.com

The Historic Fayette Theatre is located in a renovated movie house built in 1937. It is one of the few Depression era movie houses still in use in southern WV. Visitors can view the original movie projectors which remained in use until the 1960's. The Fayette County Historical Society began renovation in 1992. Adorning the walls inside the renovated theatre are many paintings and pieces of art that depict life and entertainment from the 1930's era. The theatre stages ten performances per year along with special nights by request. The building is open for tours on Fridays from late May until the third Saturday in October. (Listed NRHP 1990)

REGION 1 | EAST

Warner's Drive-In | 11a

Hwy. 220/ Lee Dr., Franklin, WV
304.358.3680

Opened: 1953 Sound: FM (91.3)
Capacity: 200 Cars Season: May - Sept.
Screen: Single

REGION 3 | WEST

Mt Zion Drive-In | 11b

SR 16, Mt Zion, WV, 304.354.9405
www.mountziondrivein.com

Opened: 1945 Sound: FM (91.5)
Capacity: 200 Cars Season: May - Aug.
Screen: Single

Jungle Drive-In | 11c

6600 Old St. Marys Pk., Parkersburg, WV
304.464.4063

Opened: 1953 Sound: Speakers
Capacity: 308 Cars Season: April - Oct.
Screen: Single

REGION 4 | NORTH

Sunset Drive-In | 11d

Highway 19, Shinnston, WV
304.592.3909

Opened: 1947 Sound: FM Speakers
Capacity: 400 Cars Season: May - Sept.
Screen: Single

Grafton Drive-In | 11e

US Route 119, Grafton, WV
304.265.1096

Opened: 1949 Sound: Speakers
Capacity: 250 Cars Season: April - Oct.
Screen: Single



11

WV HISTORIC DRIVE-INS

12

REGION 3 | WEST WVSU Capitol Center Theatre



WVSU Capitol Center Theatre
123 Summers St., Charleston, WV
304.342.6522
www.capcenter.wvstateu.edu

Opened as the Plaza Theatre in 1912, it featured high-class vaudeville entertainment and novel attractions. In 1921, the building was remodeled with a Wurlitzer pipe organ and a projector room. A 30 foot electrical sign and a marquee were added on the front. The facility was renamed the Capitol Theater and offered silent movies and vaudeville. In 1923, a fire collapsed the roof; the loss estimate was \$175,000. The owners rebuilt immediately and with "talkies" the theatre was wired for sound. In 1982, changes to the economy and the downtown community as well as competition from movie chain theatres forced it to close. In 1985, the theatre reopened as the Capitol Plaza. In 1991, the building was given to West Virginia State University and renamed the Capitol Center. It is open for walk-in tours from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and during events. (Listed NRHP 1985)

Municipal Auditorium

224-232 Virginia St. E., Charleston, WV
304.345.1500

www.charlestonauditorium.com

The Auditorium is a monolithic concrete and steel structure completed in 1939 as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project and designed by local architect Alphonso Wysong. The classic styling of the “Art Deco Grande Dame,” has a high level of architectural integrity, enduring functionality and affiliation with the New Deal-era. As Charleston’s premier playhouse, it is a venue for musical and theatrical shows, concerts and other performances. The Auditorium has made a substantial and lasting contribution to the area’s cultural heritage for seven decades. Among its famous guests, President Harry Truman “gave them hell” in a campaign speech that was a live national radio broadcast on October 1, 1948. (Listed NRHP 1999)



13

REGION 3 | WEST
Municipal Auditorium



Keith-Albee Theatre

925 Fourth Ave., Huntington, WV

304.696.5436

www.keithalbeearts.org

In 1928, after 14 months of construction, 550 tons of steel, several million bricks, “high-tech” piping and ventilation this opulent palace theatre began as a vaudeville and movie picture house. Thomas Lamb, the architect, far exceeded the initial \$250,000 budget which soared to an eventual \$2 million sum because of the detail throughout the grand structure. Lamb designed a theatre to seat 3,000, making it second in size at the time only to the Roxy in New York City. The theatre still retains the original Spanish evening decorative treatment on the ceiling. The interior is gradually being restored to its original “atmospheric” style. Open to the public during events and by request. (Listed NRHP 1986)

Robey Theatre

318 Main St., Spencer, WV

304.927.1390

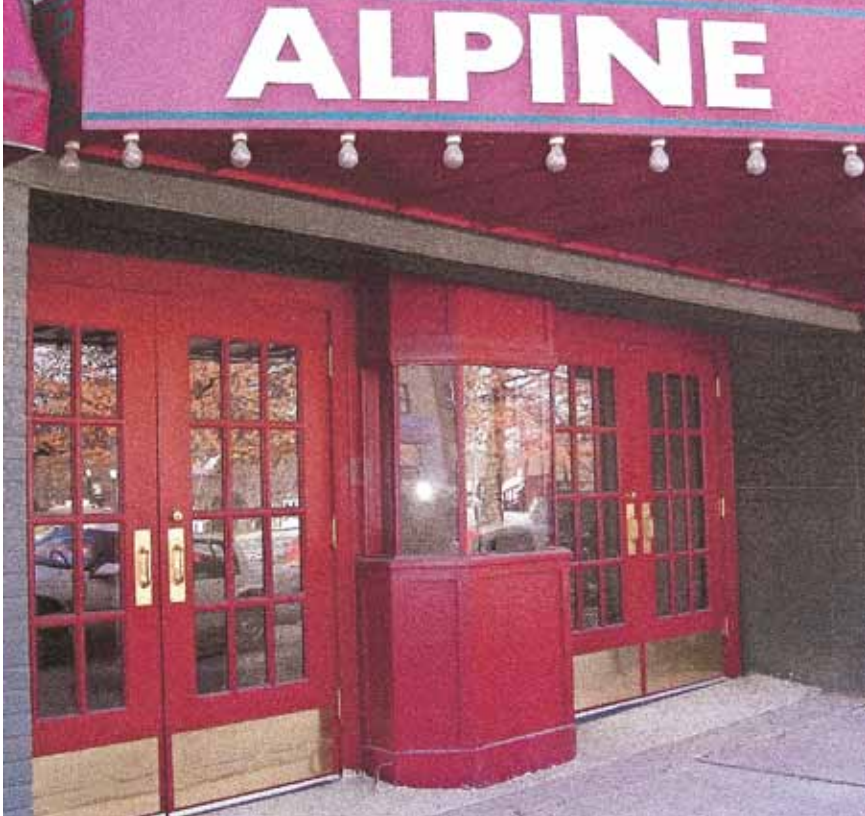
www.robeytheatre.com

The Robey Theatre was built by Hamond Robey in 1911 specifically for the exhibition of films. Robey moved his theatre operations several times within Spencer before he erected the 1911 building; he decided to expand and remodel this theatre in the summer of 1926. Completed by the architectural firm of Carmichael and Millspaugh, this \$100,000 remodeling, with the exception of a few later minor changes, remains intact today. The remodeling, changed the facade and enlarged the stage and the theatre was reopened with much pomp and ceremony. In the late 1920's the Robey was one of the first theatres in the area to install sound equipment. It is open to the public at 7 p.m. 364 days a year. (Listed NRHP 1989)



15

REGION 3 | WEST
Robey Theatre

**Alpine Theatre**

210 W. Main St., Ripley, WV

304.372.1637

www.alpinewv.com

The Alpine Theatre opened December 25, 1936. Admission was 25¢ per adult and 15¢ per child. Candy was 5¢; popcorn and soda were 10¢. Used as a movie theatre and for live shows, the Alpine is a good example of the Modern style. It is a two-story, flat roof, commercial building with a stepped parapet wall in the front. It has a red brick facade and its marquee along with the lights. There is a central ticket booth flanked by the original paired doors. The original "coming attraction" poster frames are intact and are situated on the pilasters flanking the double doors. This building is in "as built" condition and vividly illustrates what downtown meant to many residents of Ripley. It is in the process of being rehabilitated and is now used for concerts, movies, music, plays and workshops. (Listed NRHP 2004)

Smoot Theatre

213 Fifth St., Parkersburg, WV

304.422.7529

www.smoot-theatre.com

Originally a 1926 vaudeville house, various traveling shows performed here, including, in 1931, Singer's Midgets of the Wizard of Oz. Warner Brothers purchased the building in 1930 and converted it into a movie theatre. The company elaborately remodeled the theatre in Art Deco style, with hand-cut Austrian chandeliers, beveled mirrors lining the walls, and mahogany and brass doors. The Smoot Theatre was saved from the wrecking ball by volunteers in 1989. The restoration of the building by volunteers was based upon old photographs, drawings and the memories of townspeople. The interior was repainted, using the original white, cream and gold paint scheme, 1930's era carpeting was selected, the chandeliers cleaned, and the marquee relit. The imposing Neo-Classical facade and brightly lit marquee are once again a centerpiece of downtown Parkersburg. (Listed NRHP 1992)



17

REGION 3 | WEST
Smoot Theatre

18

REGION 4 | NORTH Metropolitan Theatre



Metropolitan Theatre

371 High St., Morgantown, WV

www.mettheatre.org

In 1924 the Metropolitan Theatre opened its doors to the public as a vaudeville house designed by Charles W. Bates (#20 Capitol). The Neo-classical revival style features fluted concrete ionic pilasters with egg and dart detail and two smaller brick pilasters and a concrete entablature with circular medallions and "Metropolitan" engraved in the frieze. Only two years after the theatre was established, a damaging fire melted the crystal chandeliers and damaged the high style interior design. After repairs and a new décor were completed, the theatre went on to host some of the most popular entertainers of the day. In 1990, a foundation acquired the building which is in the process of being historically restored. It is owned by the City of Morgantown and is available for rent to the public. (Listed NRHP 1984)

Tanner Theatre

107 High St., Morgantown, WV

304.292.3325

www.monartscenter.com

Originally a federal building, this 1913 Neo-classical structure was donated in 1976 to be developed and maintained as a cultural center for Monongalia County. In 1976 the Monongalia County Arts Center was chartered and after two years of planning and development was opened to the public. In 1979 the Benedum Gallery was established. In 1981 the Mabel DeVries Tanner Theatre was dedicated and is home to community theatre, featuring the M.T. Pockets Theatre Company, producing energetic, daring, avant-garde, cutting-edge theatre. In 2005 the Robert M. Davis Gallery for Emerging Artists opened on the Second Floor. MAC is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Mon.-Fri., and Sat. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Listed NRHP 1979)



19

REGION 4 | NORTH
Tanner Theatre

20

REGION 4 | NORTH Capitol Theatre



Capitol Theatre

1015 Main St., Wheeling, WV
304.232.3087

www.capitoltheatrewheeling.com

The Capitol Theatre opened Thanksgiving Day in 1928 at a cost of a million dollars. The architect, Charles W. Bates (1879-1928) specialized in fireproof buildings made with reinforced concrete. He designed this “marvel of harmonious beauty” in the Beaux Arts style characterized by the arched windows, classical details, bas-relief panels, garlands, cartouche and balustrades. The Capitol has offered many brands of entertainment and is one of the oldest and largest performance venues in West Virginia. September 2009 the Capitol re-opened after more than two years and again provides nationally touring acts, locally produced performances, and the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra. Also hosting for 35 years, WV Jamboree, the second longest running national radio program, this grand Beaux-Arts theatre is still the gem of downtown Wheeling. Check the website for programs. (Listed NRHP 1979)

21

REGION 4 | NORTH Victoria Theatre



Victoria Theatre

1228 Market St., Wheeling, WV
304.233.7476

www.victoria-theater.com

First opening its doors in 1904, Victoria Theater is the oldest operating theater in West Virginia. Located in the registered historic market district of Wheeling, the Victoria is a 720 seat Victorian style theater with many Beaux-Arts design influences. In 1934 the Victoria Theater served for a short period as home to the WWVA Jamboree. Today, the Victoria Theater, also known as the Victoria Vaudeville serves as a venue for live acts, including an Elvis impersonator, country, bluegrass, rock, and gospel music. (Listed NRHP 1979)



Towngate Theatre

2118 Market St., Wheeling, WV
304.242.7700

www.oionline.com

Built in 1850 as the Zion Lutheran Church, Towngate was acquired by the Oglebay Institute in 1969 for use as a community theatre. The two story Gothic, Greek and Italianate Revival style building has a façade with a central tower and large Gothic Revival windows. Early renovations involved removing pews from the nave and replacing them with theatre seats from an area movie house. A stage replaced the altar area and the church's balcony became a lighting booth. Since then, the building has been upgraded and refurbished with particular care to preserve its architectural integrity. The theatre seats 166 and operates year round with 10 theatrical productions, 25 weekend movie screenings, 2 film festivals and 5-6 unplugged music events. (Listed NRHP 1984)

22

REGION 4 | NORTH
Towngate Theatre

WEST VIRGINIA HISTORIC THEATRE TRAIL

REGION 1 | EAST

- 1 Old Opera House
- 2 Apollo Theatre
- 3 Star Theatre
- 4 Old Brick Theatre
- 5 Randolph County Community Arts Center
- 11a Warner's Drive-In

REGION 2 | SOUTH

- 6 The Landmark
- 7 Pocahontas Opera House
- 8 Carnegie Hall
- 9 Lewis Theatre
- 10 Fayette Theatre

REGION 3 | WEST

- 11b Mt. Zion Drive-In
- 11c Jungle Drive-In
- 12 WVSU Capitol Center Theatre
- 13 Municipal Auditorium
- 14 Keith-Albee Theatre
- 15 Robey Theatre
- 16 Alpine Theatre
- 17 Smoot Theatre

REGION 4 | NORTH

- 11d Sunset Drive-In
- 11e Grafton Drive-In
- 18 Metropolitan Theatre
- 19 Tanner Theatre
- 20 Capitol Theatre
- 21 Victoria Theatre
- 22 Towngate Theatre

