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Tulsa History Museum Writing New Book on City's Historical Movie Theaters
Information and Memories Requested from Community

The Ritz, Orpheum, Majestic, and Rialto are familiar names to many Tulsans who grew up in a time when downtown movie palaces still existed. Others remember the early neighborhood theaters like the Delman, Will Rogers, and the Brook. Those memories, and many others, will be captured in a new book being written on Tulsa's historical movie theaters.

The book, being published by Arcadia as part of the "Images of America" series, is co-written by the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum and Sand Springs native Steve Clem, retired from Public Radio Tulsa and author of a popular book about Tulsa's KAKC Radio. According to Clem, "Tulsa had such wonderful movie theaters and now, sadly, most of them are gone. Documenting these entertainment houses will serve as a catalyst for sharing personal experiences and help preserve the rich history of Tulsa's movie theaters for future generations."

Tulsa Movie Theaters will include photographs and information featuring the extensive and memorable history of movie theaters throughout the Tulsa area, from the earliest, silent-era film houses and glamorous movie palaces to drive-ins and multiplexes.

Authors are currently seeking help from the community in gathering memories, images, and memorabilia related to Tulsa's movie theaters. Clem describes the popularity of discussing movie theaters on social media: "people love sharing memories of seeing a Disney film at the Delman or talking about their first job as a movie usher or ticket-taker."

Research has already uncovered more than 100 theaters in the Tulsa area, although some represent the same theater with multiple names. A number of early theaters also moved from location to location. While many of those distinct movie houses are represented in the Museum's collection, others are missing. Anyone with memories, images, or artifacts to share is encouraged to contact the museum by email at mbrown@tulsahistory.org or visit the THSM website (tulsahistory.org/theaters) to answer survey questions about those personal experiences.

Maggie Brown, Director of Exhibits for the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum explains: "The museum's mission is not only to collect and preserve Tulsa's history for future generations but also to share those stories with the community. Interest in movie theaters has long made it a popular topic of programs and exhibits at the museum. This project provides another opportunity to share local history with Tulsans."

Tulsa Movie Theaters will be available by Fall 2021. An exhibit at the museum will accompany the book's release.

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About the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

Established in 1963, the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum (THSM) holds an extensive collection of resources on Tulsa's vibrant past. The Museum chronicles the city's history through rotating exhibit galleries, special events, and activities for adults and youth utilizing its permanent collection of artifacts and other community resources. The THSM collection contains nearly 200,000 still photographs, books, maps, documents, textiles, architectural elements, building furnishings, and personal artifacts. Housed in the iconic Travis Mansion in midtown, THSM is the only institution focused on building and presenting a broad-based, general collection of Tulsa's history.

The Tulsa Historical Society & Museum currently has reduced hours from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Call 918.712.9484 for more information, or visit the museum's website at www.tulsahistory.org.