



Tulsa Movie Theaters

By Steve Clem, Maggie Brown & the
Tulsa Historical Society and Museum

Images of America Series

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Explore the History of Tulsa's Theaters in New Book

Going to the movies has always been special. Tulsa's first theater opened in 1906 with a lineup of silent reels and live vaudeville entertainment. During the next two decades, dozens of movie houses opened downtown, including the "Big Four:" the Ritz, Orpheum, Majestic, and Rialto. As Tulsa grew, neighborhood theaters, including the Brook, Delman, and Will Rogers, became favorites. Drive-in theaters soon followed around the city boundaries. In 1965, Tulsa's first multiplex—the Boman Twin—opened.

Tulsans experienced blockbuster films at these theaters with multiple screens and increasingly smaller auditoriums. Tulsa also hosted star-studded movie premieres. Among them were *The Outsiders* and the 1949 premiere of *Tulsa*, featuring the biggest parade and crowd in Tulsa's history. Perhaps the most well-known theater—the Dreamland on Black Wall Street—was destroyed during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Although it was rebuilt, images of the Dreamland in ruins are iconic.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With a lifelong love of movie theaters, coauthor **Steve Clem** grew up attending Saturday Westerns at the Rialto and Disney films at the Delman.

As a museum curator, coauthor **Maggie Brown** has researched and designed nearly 150 exhibits on Tulsa history, including several featuring movie theater history.

The Tulsa Historical Society and Museum is filled with artifacts from Tulsa's past, including many photographs of theaters shared in this book. These images bring flickering memories into sharper focus.

