

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

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IDENTIFICATION

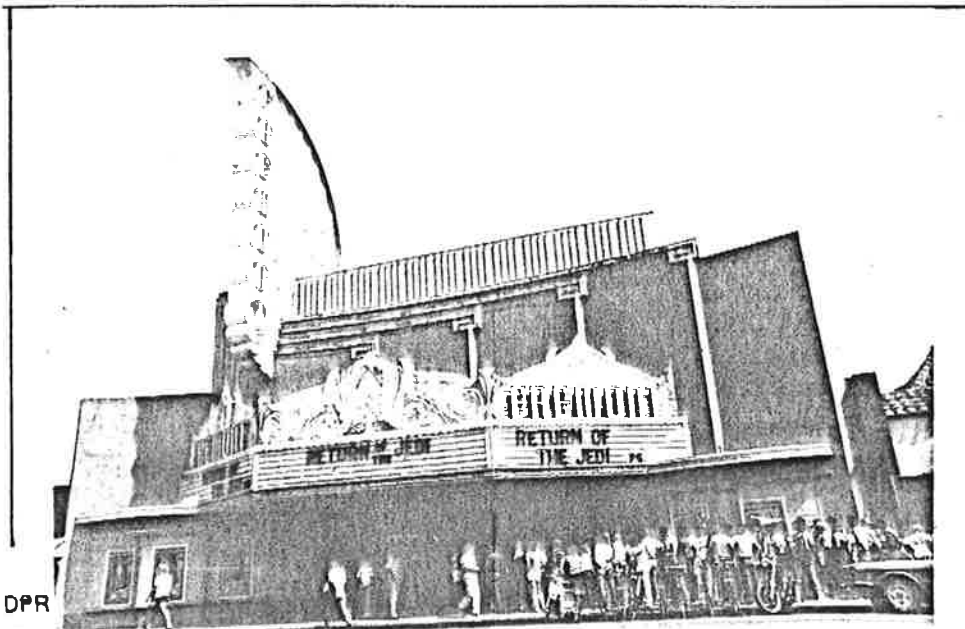
1. Common name: Fremont Theatre
2. Historic name: Fremont Theatre
3. Street or rural address: 1035 Monterey
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 County San Luis Obispo
4. Parcel number: 02-434-03
5. Present Owner: San Luis Obispo Theaters Address: 116 N. Robertson Blvd.
City Los Angeles Zip 90048 Ownership is: Public ☐ Private ☒
6. Present Use: Theatre Original use: Theatre

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Art Moderne
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The Fremont Theatre is one of the better examples of Art Deco that was a part of the architectural scene of the 1920's and 1930's. The building's major decoration is found in the marquee and large sign that dominates the facade. There is also a highly ornate ticket booth that carries some of the highly stylized lines of the sign and marquee to the ground level. The ground plane has intricate line patterns.

The entry to the theatre is centered underneath its centrally located marquee. The large sign that towers over the building is located on the building's right side.



8. Construction date:
Estimated _____ Factual 1941
9. Architect S. Charles Lee (?)
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 120' Depth 270'
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
October 1982

13. Condition: Excellent ____ Good ____ Fair X Deteriorated ____ No longer in existence ____

14. Alterations: _____

15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ____ Scattered buildings ____ Densely built-up ____
Residential ____ Industrial ____ Commercial X Other: Governmental

16. Threats to site: None known X Private development ____ Zoning ____ Vandalism ____
Public Works project ____ Other: _____

17. Is the structure: On its original site? Yes Moved? ____ Unknown? ____

18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)
The most outstanding representation of Art Deco architecture in San Luis Obispo is the Fremont Theatre. Built in 1941, it is the oldest extant movie house in the city today. The Fremont Theatre purportedly was designed by S. Charles Lee. In particular it is an example of the Streamline Moderne style. In its attempt to emulate the appearance of ocean cruiseliners, Streamline Moderne became a prominent symbol of the age of technology and machinery. The full Streamline effect, however, is only very vaguely alluded to in this structure. To some degree the Fremont is reminiscent of Hollywood versions of Art Deco theatres popular in Southern California during the 1920's and 1930's. However, its regency is not so boldly pronounced. The style came to San Luis Obispo some fifteen to twenty years after its peak in other parts of the country.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)

Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure 2
Economic/Industrial ____ Exploration/Settlement ____
Government ____ Military ____
Religion ____ Social/Education ____

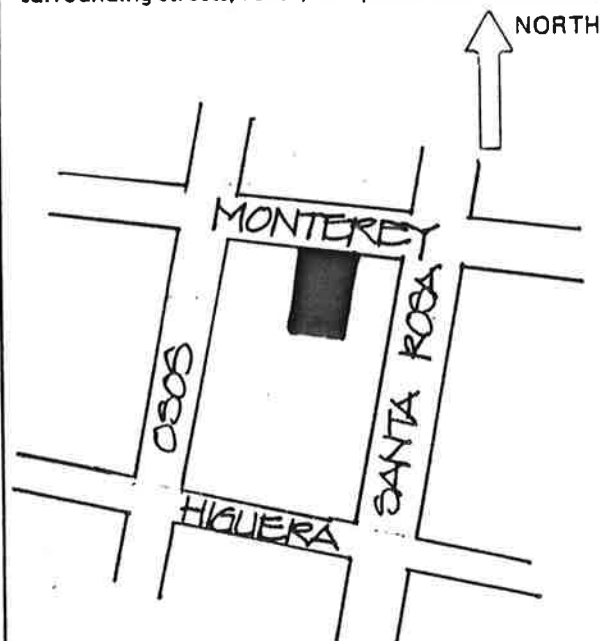
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

Gebhardt, D. and Winter, R., A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, 1977

22. Date form prepared June 30, 1983

By (name) Historic Res. Survey Staff
Organization City of San Luis Obispo
Address: P.O. Box 321
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401
Phone: (805) 541-1000

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):





FREMONT THEATER, 1025 MONTEREY STREET, c. 1942. The 1942 Memorial Day grand opening of the heralded Fremont Theater attracted Hollywood celebrities and local residents who gathered to support our troops, watch stars Tyrone Power and Joan Fontaine in the preview screening of *This Above All*, and celebrate the birth of San Luis Obispo's "theater of tomorrow." Opening night was glamorous and exciting—San Luis Obispanos crowded the streets, hoping to catch a glimpse of stars like Carol Landis, Constance Bennett, John Carroll, and Charlie Ruggles. The actors and actresses arrived by bus to sell war bonds at a rally that began in front of the courthouse across the street from the Fremont. When the rally moved to the theater, attractive, uniformed usherettes wearing wide-legged trousers and brass-buttoned jackets showed guests to their seats. The celebrities then took the stage to welcome the crowd. The Memorial Day fundraiser brought in \$778,000 in bond pledges, and all theater proceeds went to the local USO. Built in 1941, the Art Deco Streamline Moderne-style Fremont Theater was designed by theater architect Charles Lee. (City of San Luis Obispo, Community Development Department.)

Source: Janet Penn Franks, San Luis Obispo: A History in Architecture (2004)



FREMONT THEATER AUDITORIUM. Inside this 1,060-seat theater, 100-foot murals covered the walls. The ceiling held ultraviolet bulbs that created a “black light” effect on the patterned carpet, which was woven with fluorescent thread. When the house lights dimmed and the ultraviolet lights were turned on, the carpet looked like a painting on glass, drawing oohs and aahs from delighted moviegoers.

What's Playing At The Folly?

By Anne Sutton Canfield

Surely, some of the magic spell of the theater fell on those who designed America's turn-of-the-century opera houses and the grand movie palaces of the 1920s and '30s. In turn, the old theaters still tend to cast their spells on those who pass by.

You can sense it in the elaborate archways, the domes and columned entrances . . . in the velvet curtains, gilt-encrusted mirrors, plaster-of-Paris cherubs and trompe l'oeil ceilings that seem to twinkle with stars. Inside, the atmosphere is musky with the spirits of a thousand performers who walked the floorboards or left behind their celluloid aura.

Never mind the show; the theater itself can be the escape hatch to fairyland.

Now communities all across America are rescuing their historic theaters for future generations, sometimes saving the grand old palaces a heartbeat ahead of the wrecker's ball.

While many have been lovingly restored as showplaces for the performing arts, others have found interesting lives as shopping malls, churches or even athletic facilities. In St. Paul, Minn., for exam-

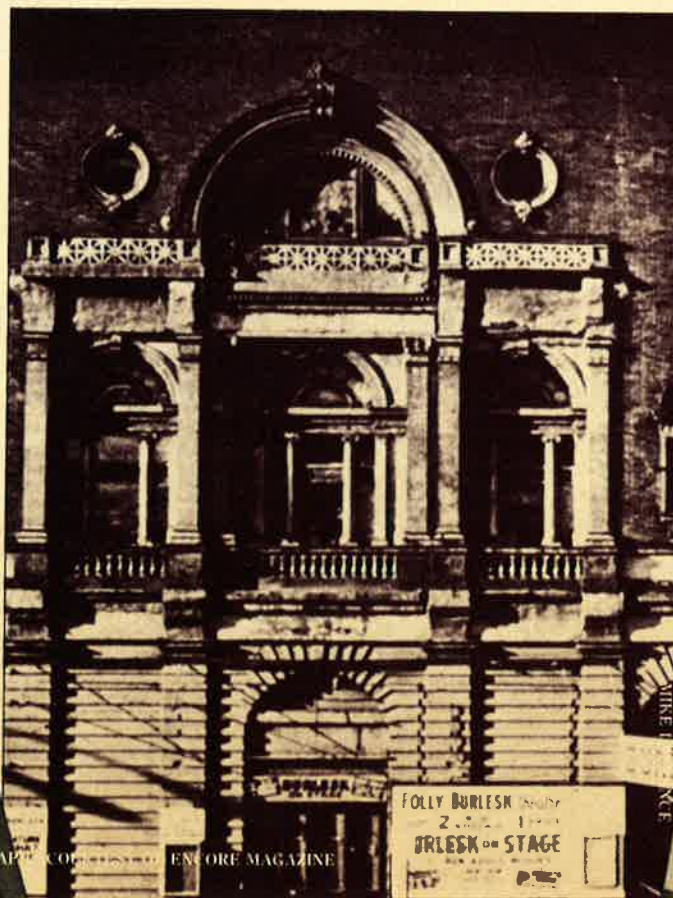
KANSAS CITY AND OTHER COMMUNITIES ACROSS AMERICA ARE RESCUING THEIR HISTORIC THEATERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, SOMETIMES SAVING THE GRAND OLD MOVIE PALACES A HEARTBEAT AHEAD OF THE WRECKING BALL

ple, racquetballs reverberate under the ornate ceiling of a former neighborhood movie palace, now the St. Clair Racquet Club. In Burlingame, Calif., a San Francisco suburb, the old Fox Theater shelters a cluster of classy shops and restaurants.

The repolished jewel of the entertainment scene in Kansas City, Mo., is the 1,078-seat Folly Theater, a turn-of-the-century landmark that was lovingly restored after a close brush with obliteration. In its heyday, it was a landmark on the 12th Street Strip, the rowdy area that spawned the Kansas City school of jazz and inspired the classic "Twelfth Street Rag." The Folly was the theater that proved everything was up to date in Kansas City . . . the big theater that they called the burley-cue, where for 50 cents—often less—you could see a dandy show. The Folly was presenting classic burlesque into the 1950s. But times changed: 12th Street declined and the Folly

became a seedy, X-rated movie house, then went dark. It was little more than a year ago that the Folly had its glittering reopening.

The story of how the Folly was saved from oblivion is typical of the dozens



16 FRIENDLY EXCHANGE

PHOTOGRAPHY

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

FOLLY BURLESQUE
2nd Floor
BURLESQUE STAGE

of theater restoration projects from coast to coast.

In Kansas City it was civic leader Joan Dillon who spearheaded the drive. The grand old theater sat deserted, across from the site of the city's shining new convention center. Dillon recalls how close the Folly came to destruction:

"What galvanized me into action was a phone call on Christmas day in 1973 from a friend in the wrecking business who told me he had just entered a bid to demolish the Folly. He was alerting me that my favorite building was to be torn down."

The New York owners of the property planned to build a parking lot to serve the convention center then under construction. The asking price for the property was \$2 million.

"I think I knew it was a tremendous gamble," Dillon recalls. "I remember saying to my husband, 'What am I doing trying to raise \$2 million for a beat-up old building that doesn't have heating or plumbing and smells terrible?' But if I didn't, I'd never know. That's when we moved into action to try to save the building."

With the help of city officials, the State Historic Preservation Office and Kansas City's Landmarks Commission, which successfully nominated the Folly to the National Register of Historic Places, Dillon was able to form a not-for-profit corporation to purchase the property for restoration.

Funds for the Folly project ultimately totaled \$5 million and came from an awesome array of sources, including individuals, corporations, local and national foundations, the City of Kansas City, the U.S. Department of the Interior and an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG).

More than simple nostalgia fueled the successful drive to save the Folly Theater. A study by the Midwest Research Institute showed that the Folly possessed architectural significance and was in a neighborhood that favored its success as a vibrant center for the performing arts.

The former burlesque house now has found re-

spectability as part of a downtown convention area that includes three other historic theaters and two recently restored smaller hotels. Rising from another site along the old 12th Street Strip is a \$53-million Vista International Hotel that will open in 1984 with more than 600 rooms for occupants who can be expected to patronize the Folly.

"Saving the Folly was a stroke of genius," says Walter Cronkite, who once worked as a reporter in the city, and who returned for the theater's gala reopening. "There is no one building of which I can think that is so expressive of the Kansas City past, of the great days when the 'gateway to the Southwest' became the embodiment of the frontier spirit and the entertainment capital of the plains."

In addition to bolstering conventions and tourism, theater restoration projects can be catalysts for downtown renewal, encouraging office, retail and residential revitalization. That happened in communities like Cleveland, Ohio, where Playhouse Square, a popular entertainment complex, has been created from three redeveloped theaters, and in Albuquerque, N. M., where renovation of the adobe Kimo Theater has been called a keystone for downtown revitalization efforts.

"One reason for our study of pre-1950 theaters was to sensitize people that old theaters can provide a focal point for revitalization," says Harry Henshaw of Woolpert Consultants in Cleveland. He is the consultant who prepared an inventory of the nation's theaters under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"These big old theaters are often the first things to be abandoned in a downtown area, and almost anything is better than leaving the theaters vacant or tearing them down," Henshaw says. "Either alternative is conducive to blight because, in effect, you're left with a hole the size of the theater."

Preservation experts emphasize that a feasibility study should precede any restoration attempt.

"Adaptive reuse is the key," says Robert B. Dustman III, the executive director of Kansas City's



PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE
FOLLY THEATER "BEFORE"
AND "AFTER"





Folly Theater. "You have to be sure the renovated facility will be economically viable in its new context in order to justify the cost of rehabilitation."

Dustman, who came to the Folly from the 1871 Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Del., stays in touch with preservationists across the country. The theater director is a member of the League of Historic American Theatres, an association whose members freely share information and insights.

"There's a pretty good word-of-mouth network," Dustman acknowledges.

Another resource Dustman recommends is the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which provides information on how to start a restoration project.



The lavish look of the Gay Nineties is preserved in Menomonie's 93-year-old Mabel Tainter Theater, left. Columbus' jewel of a restored movie palace, large photo, is Loewe's Ohio, a 3,000-seat multi-use facility that's home of the symphony.

Both the League and National Trust organizations are headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Dustin feels current economic and political climates threaten future theater restoration projects. Nevertheless, tax incentives continue to attract private investors, and Urban Development funding remains a possibility. And, despite difficulties, the urge to preserve historic theaters seems unflagging.

Nestled among the glass-and-steel skyscrapers of the 20th century, historic theaters "enrich the urban fabric," says William J. Murtagh, a vice president with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"At long last," says Murtagh, "the American psyche appears to have arrived at a point at which it is ready to accept a sense of continuum in our urban centers, a dimension which we consciously or unconsciously find so attractive about European cities."

And Alan W. McCracken, former president of the League of Historic American Theatres, adds: "As we rush toward the 21st century, there is a growing need to relate to as much of our past as possible. The theater becomes an heirloom to be passed down from one generation to the next." □

A SAMPLER OF RESTORATIONS

While there are dozens of movie palaces and opera houses throughout the United States, listed below are 10 favorites of Robert B. Dustman III, executive director of the Folly Theater and an authority on theater preservation. These are only a few of the excellent restorations to be found in virtually every state of the union.

East Haddam, Conn. The Goodspeed Opera House. Built in 1876, this 400-seat opera house is devoted to preservation of the American musical. *Annie*, *Man of La Mancha* and other musicals have been introduced here before achieving success on Broadway.

Wilmington, Del. The Grand Opera House. Built in 1871, this 1,100-seat opera house was restored at a cost of \$6.5 million to serve as a multi-purpose facility. Superb concert hall appointments have been achieved with a beautiful cast-iron façade.

Columbus, Ohio. Loew's Ohio Theater. A 3,000-seat movie palace converted to a multi-use facility, the Ohio is home of the Columbus Symphony, local performing arts groups and a successful classic film series.

Menomonie, Wis. Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater.

(Continued on page 42)

TAKE CONTROL

(Continued from page 27)

of the talking box. By doing so you will be performing a valuable service.

First, realize you are not alone in the struggle to understand and affect television viewing and programming; many organizations and resources are available to help. Second, realize you have options:

- **You can limit viewing time.**

"Cutting down to fewer than 10 hours a week makes sense for most families," says Charren. (She makes possible exceptions for bedridden or latch-key children, who may need television to fill a void in their lives.) Rosemond advocates *no* TV for preschoolers; and up to only seven hours per week for older youngsters. (His two children, ages 10 and 13, watch three to five hours of TV weekly; to keep viewing under strict parental control, the set is in the master bedroom, and the children must ask permission to enter and use it.)

- **You can choose what will be watched.**

"Watch programs—not television," says Charren. "Limit young children's viewing to the kinds of programs they can deal with," suggests Rowe.

- **You can—and should—watch TV with your children.**

Why? So you will know what they are watching; so you can ask questions about the programs and turn the session into a learning experience; so you can explain what is happening on the TV screen.

- **You can teach your children to be critical viewers.**

Make sure they understand there are different types of TV programs. Question them about what they've seen. Let them hear your own critical comments; point out to them what is real, what is not.

- **You can get involved with the broadcasting process.**

Television technology is burgeoning and the new word in TV, says Rowe, is "narrowcasting." Networks reach out to large, diverse audiences; new techniques enable TV to develop programs for small, specialized viewer groups.

Learn how you can become part of cable TV in your area (in many instances, cable franchises must legally offer studio access to the public—you can literally walk in the door and produce your own show). Learn about closed-circuit possibilities in your school system. Find out if your library or local public broadcasting station offers participatory TV activities for kids.

- **You can demand better TV programming for your children.**

Public airwaves are just that, says Charren—they are owned by the public. Stations must operate "in the public interest." As a parent, you have the right and the responsibility to voice opinions about programs available for kids and to demand better programming for them.

As for the recent government study that has prompted so much renewed interest and discussion of TV and children, here are two more points worth considering:

- Yes, violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior in children.

- Yes, children who watch a lot of television have poorer nutritional habits than children who do not watch as much.

The report cautions that we as a nation must begin to take TV and its impact seriously. TV is not just a casual part of daily life, not merely an electronic toy.

Rather, television is a powerful force we must learn to understand and control—for the sake of the children. □

Patricia Skalka is a Chicago freelance writer. Her latest book, On Our Own (St. Martin's Press, 1981; Avon paperback, 1982), tells the story of two nurses who established the first independent nursing practice in the Midwest.

WHAT'S PLAYING (Continued from page 18)

Built in the late 1880s by the parents of a young woman who died at age 20, this ornate 320-seat theater is a gem of Moorish splendor.

Milwaukee, Wis. The Pabst Theatre. An 1895 opera house restored in 1975 as an intermediate size (1,388 seats) facility for professional and amateur groups. Plush red interior and gilded ornamental plaster.

Kansas City, Mo. The Folly Theater. A 1,078-seat opera house with a handsome neo-classic façade and elegantly renovated interior. Built in 1900, the theater reopened in 1981 as a multi-use facility for entertainment events and meetings. Also in Kansas City: the Midland, an ornate 2,800-seat movie palace that shed cinematic trappings to host Broadway productions.

Concordia, Kan. The Brown Grand Opera House. This 621-seat theater was built in 1907 by Col. Napoleon Bonaparte Brown, an early-day Concordia banker. Restored in 1980, the theater retains the original painted fire curtain, a copy of a painting of Napoleon (the Frenchman, not the banker), the original of which hangs in the palace of Versailles.

Central City, Colo. The Central City Opera House. Built in 1878, the impressive stone building represents



Civic leader Joan Dillon, alerted by a phone call, spearheaded a \$5-million "gamble" to save Kansas City's Folly from demolition. The completed project was hailed as "a stroke of genius."

the earliest U.S. theater restoration (1932). It also houses a theater museum. Opera houses in the small mining towns of the American West are among the most opulent theaters built during the period.

Woodland, Calif. The Woodland Opera House. Restored in 1980, the 1896 opera house, with 525 seats, is a state historic landmark.

Oakland, Calif. The Paramount Theater, Art Deco home of the Oakland Symphony. One of the early renovations of the ornate movie palaces that dazzled moviegoers of the 1920s and '30s.

Anne Sutton Canfield has been a reporter for The Kansas City Star and editor of a twice-weekly newspaper in Kansas. As a freelance writer, she has contributed articles to newspapers and magazines across the country. In 1976 she wrote Kansas City, A Place in Time, an architectural history, and in 1981 she wrote a history of Kansas City's Folly Theater.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you want to learn more about restoration of old theaters, join the League of Historic American Theatres and you'll receive the league's monthly bulletins, quarterly newsletters and other information. Write Andrea Rounds, executive director, League of Historic American Theatres, Inc., c/o the National Theatre, 1321 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20004. Other reading on theater restora-

tion should include "Buildings Reborn, New Uses, Old Places," by Barbaralee Diamondstein (Harper & Row, 1978), and "Grand Experience: A History of the Grand Opera House, 1871-1976," by Toni Young (American Life Foundation, 1976). Copies of the latter book can be ordered for \$8.95, postpaid, from the Grand Opera House, 818 Market Street Mall, Wilmington, DE 19801.

Friends of the Fremont organize

By Barbara Kraus

The venerable 1930s Fremont Theater in San Luis Obispo has a lot of friends. In fact, that's what they call themselves — Friends of the Fremont. The newly formed, non-profit organization is determined that the art deco theater will not be carved up, torn down or otherwise desecrated.

With that in mind, the Friends appeared before the San Luis Obispo City Council April 21 to state their case. They were not alone. More than a dozen citizens came to voice their affection for the Fremont and to deplore the notion of carving it up into a "smaller" theater of some 350 seats, as a city-sponsored study had recommended.

City Council got the message. The Fremont will be included in the determinations as part of an overall plan to provide a badly needed home for the performing artists in the county, but they want more specific plans from the Friends on acquisition and administration arrangements.

The council also voted, 4 to 1, to enter formally into a joint venture with Cal Poly University and the Foundation for the Performing Arts to participate in the construction of a \$20 million theater on the campus, with the city picking up one-sixth of the tab.

"The Fremont's downtown location is ideal," says Friends chairman, Myron Graham of Los Osos, a long-time supporter of the arts. "The convenience of one-stop parking for an evening of dinner and theater appeals to those who love a small-town ambiance."

"And the acoustical design is exceptional," according to Alice Nelson of the Community Concerts Association, an organization that supports the Fremont as a performing arts center. "Someone speaking from the stage can be clearly heard in the back row — without amplification!"

Friends of the Fremont believes the theater can be purchased "for about \$750,000," says their treasurer, George Clucas, "plus an additional \$250,000 for minor modifications and refurbishing."

Fremont co-owners John King and Rob Rossi have expressed a willingness to work with either the city or a private organization, such as Friends of the Fremont, on either an outright purchase or a lease option.

Graham sees the potential for four roles for the Fremont. "We could be fully operational within a very short period of time and during the seven or so years it would take for the Poly project to be built. And the cultural appetite in the area is great enough to support two theaters, if and when the Poly theater is built. In case it doesn't get approval from the legislature, or if at some point in the future the university needs the campus theater entirely for its own use, we would already have a going operation."

The club is actively seeking a broad membership. If you're interested in joining, the dues are \$5 a year, \$3.50 for seniors and students. Those who join before June 1, will receive the special designation of charter member. For information, call 544-2229 or 543-1193.

(Barbara Kraus is a founding member of Friends of the Fremont and a freelance travel writer and photographer who lives in San Luis Obispo).



Some founding members of Friends of the Fremont pose in front of the theater in downtown San Luis Obispo. From left are Myron Graham, former San Luis Obispo Mayor Melanie Billig, Jan Clucas and George Clucas.

Photo by Barbara Kraus

Obituaries

1-30-90

S. Charles Lee; Architect of Art Deco Theaters

S. Charles Lee, who was hailed as the most prolific and prominent architect of movie theaters of the Art Deco period, died Saturday. He was 90.

Lee designed more than 400 theaters around the world, including the Tower and Los Angeles theaters in downtown Los Angeles and the Wilshire Theatre in Hollywood, said his daughter, Connie Keiter.

She said he also designed 10,000 residences and 5,000 factories and business buildings, including the Max Factor Building in Hollywood.

Born Sept. 5, 1899, in Chicago, Lee came to California in 1922 after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War I. He opened an architecture firm in Los Angeles.

In an interview with The Times in 1984, Lee said he believed he

was 20 years ahead of his time when he began designing theaters in 1929. "Auto traffic was not so great then, but in 1930 I proposed building an underground parking garage under Pershing Square. City officials thought the idea absurd, but 20 years later, they built it," he said.

The Society of American Registered Architects presented him with the "Synergy Award," its highest honor, in 1975.

At the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, an endowed chair honoring the architect was established in 1986. The school holds most of his drawings, pencil sketches and plans.

Lee is also survived by his wife, Hylda.

No funeral services will be held.



S. Charles Lee

Designer of the Fremont dies at age 90

The architect who designed San Luis Obispo's Fremont Theatre, called the "theater of tomorrow" when it opened in 1942, has died at the age of 90.

S. Charles Lee designed hundreds of movie theaters around the world in the same Art Deco style for which the Fremont is noted. He died Saturday in Los Angeles of an undisclosed cause.

Among the theaters Lee designed are the Tower in downtown Los Angeles and the Wilshire Theatre in Hollywood, his daughter told the Associated Press.

On the eve of its opening May 29, 1942, the Fremont was described in a Telegram-Tribune article as "an enduring testimonial to the creativeness of S. Charles Lee, the foremost architect west of the Mississippi."

The gala opening was attended by about 20 movie stars, including Jackie Cooper, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

The 1,100-seat Fremont took about 10 months to build at a cost of \$250,000.

According to the article, the theater's walls and ceiling were reinforced with steel to withstand earthquakes.

Lee was once scoffed at in 1930 for suggesting underground parking as the answer to the crowded metropolis, according to the AP.

In a 1984 interview with the Los Angeles Times, Lee said his theaters were innovative because the plans generally included underground parking.

"Auto traffic was not so great then," he said, "but in 1930 I proposed building an underground parking garage under Pershing Square (downtown). City officials thought the idea absurd, but 20 years later, they built it."

Lee's daughter credited her father with designing 10,000 homes and 5,000 factories and business buildings, including the Max Factor Building in Hollywood, the AP reported.



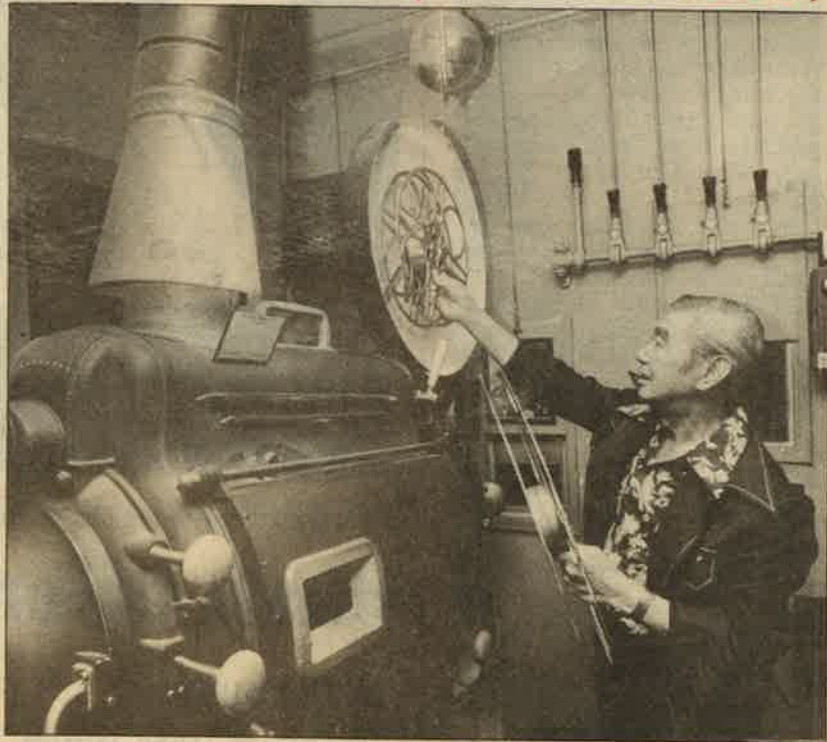
Telegram-Tribune

The Fremont Theatre, built in 1942, is a superb example of S. Charles Lee's Art Deco style.

The COUNTY TELEGRAM-Tribune

26 PAGES

Serving the Entire County of San Luis Obispo Daily *Mon July 25 1988* 25¢ ★ *Telegram Tribune*



Telegram-Tribune

Young Louis, son of an SLO pioneer, shown throughout his life. At top, Louis as projectionist for the Fremont Theatre in 1977; bottom, in 1959 with his four brothers, from left: George, Walter, Young, Fred and Howard; and left, holding a photo of his dad, Ah Louis, in 1986.

SLO's Young Louis dies at 94

By Warren Groshong
Telegram-Tribune

Young Louis, one of eight children of the legendary San Luis Obispo pioneer, Ah Louis, died of cancer Sunday at a San Luis Obispo hospital. He was 94.

Mr. Louis was former president of the county Historical Society, a member of the San Luis Obispo Rotary Club for more than 50 years, and a movie projectionist and photographer over a span of about 70 years.

He was born Oct. 15, 1893, in the family flat above the Ah Louis Store, now a state historical monument at the corner of Palm and Chorro streets. All of his sisters and brothers also were born in the flat.

Mr. Louis and his wife, Stella, who survives him, met during a church bazaar in San Francisco, were married in 1912 and were believed to be the longest-married

couple (75 years) on the Central Coast.

He was close to show business all his life, as manager of San Luis Obispo's now defunct Pavilion Theatre, which featured performances by such stars as Sarah Bernhardt, Lillian Russell, Al Jolson, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.

Over the years he was a projectionist at three San Luis Obispo movie theaters, the Elmo, the Obispo and the Fremont.

He also staged USO shows at Camp San Luis Obispo during World War II.

As early as 1906, he was the sound-effects man for silent movies at the Novelty Theatre in San Luis Obispo. He once said that to simulate the sound of a train he would whirl an egg beater inside a long stove pipe.

As a projectionist, he caught the eye of William Randolph Hearst and was often summoned by the news-

paper scion to run movies at Hearst Castle in the 1920s and '30s.

As a matter of fact, the architect for the Castle, Julia Morgan, sought Mr. Louis' advice about installation of a projectionist booth at the Castle in the 1920s.

Mr. Louis was the official photographer for the first Poly Royal queen contest in 1932 and for nearly every such contest for the next 50 years. He and his wife became so involved in photography that they set up their own studio and ran it from 1946 until 1954.

Mr. Louis was active in the Cal Poly Alumni Association, which he served as secretary for many years. He also belonged to the South County Historical Society, served as El Presidente of La Fiesta one year and he was a member of the Friends of the Pacific Coast Railway Historical Society.

He had considerable artistic ability, having designed and built floats

for early parades in town and many posters and other projects, including the cover for an audio cassette released recently by Kucheza and Ngoma, an Afro-American drum and dance company in San Luis Obispo.

Besides his wife, Stella, Mr. Louis is survived by six brothers and sisters, all in their 80s. They include Howard and Walter of San Luis Obispo, Fred of the San Joaquin Valley, George of Portland, Ore., Mae Watson of San Luis Obispo and Helen Jean of Chicago.

He also leaves his daughter, Elsie of San Luis Obispo, and some grand-nephews and nieces, including Dr. William Watson of San Luis Obispo.

The family plans no services. His body has been cremated and inurnment will be at Lawn Memorial Park.

Gifts should be sent to the Young and Stella Louis Endowment Fund, care of Alumni House at Cal Poly.