

Watching Movies:
The History of
North Omaha
Movie Theaters

Watching Movies

The History of North Omaha Movie Theaters

Adam Fletcher Sasse
NorthOmahaHistory.com

Watching Movies: The History of North Omaha Movie Theaters. © 2020 Adam Fletcher Sasse.
All Rights Reserved.

This document is for nonprofit educational purposes only. Reuse of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Permissions are granted for nonprofit educational purposes only.

For more information contact: Adam Fletcher Sasse, PO Box 6185, Olympia WA 98507-6185.
For more details visit northomahahistory.com, or email info@northomahahistory.com or call (360) 489-9680.

Special thanks to Michaela Armetta and Micah Evans for reviewing this document.

Recommended citation:

Fletcher Sasse, Adam (2020) *Watching Movies: The History of North Omaha Movie Theaters*. Olympia, WA: NorthOmahaHistory.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
The Coliseum.....	7
The Diamond,.....	8
The Finch, The Lake.....	8
The London	9
The Franklin	10
The Alhambra, The Star	11
The Ritz	12
The Palace	13
The Park, Cass, Holiday	14
The Circle	15
Dundee Theater	16
The Lothrop.....	17
The It.....	18
The Ivy.....	19
The Benson	20
The Alamo	21
The Clifton.....	22
The Joyo	23
The New Star.....	24
The Hamilton, The Winn, The 40 th Street.....	25
The Grand	26
The Loyal	27
Carter Lake Club Theater	28
The Frolic.....	29
Krug Park Airdome	30
The Hippodrome	31

The Beacon	32
The Corby	33
The Military	34
The Minne Lusa	35
The Suburban	36
The Airport Drive-In	37
The Northampton Four	38
The Fort Omaha	39
Ruth Solokof Theater	40
North Star, Ames.....	41
Historic Theater Directory.....	42

Introduction

Today, movie theaters ring Omaha like a necklace, with a few art theaters in the city's core. However, for the first 55 years of movies (1895-1950), moviegoers flocked downtown to huge theaters, and to small movie houses in almost every neighborhood throughout the city.

The reason why Omaha had so many theaters was simple supply-and-demand economy. There were a dozen movie-related businesses either based in Omaha or with major offices in the city, which was recognized as the center of a territory including the entire states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and the Dakotas. This book will also feature the story of a motion picture company established in Omaha, the first of its kind in the nation.

According to my ongoing study of theaters in Omaha, Nebraska which is summarized in the appendix of this booklet, between 1895 and 1990 North Omaha had the most neighborhood theaters in the city. There were no fewer than 35 places to watch movies north of Dodge Street and east of North 72nd Street. In the same region of the city where there have been 35 before, today there are only two theaters.

This booklet documents each one of the theaters, including illustrated songs, nickelodeons, mainstream films, open-air facilities, foreign films and drive-ins. The opening and closing dates of each one, along with other details are featured. When a picture of the theater could be found, it was included; otherwise I've inserted an advertisement.

To verify the information here, I used the online *Omaha World-Herald* and *Omaha Star* newspapers extensively to research the theaters in here. Between 1941 and 1952, the *World-Herald* welcomed reader contributions to the paper noting "ghost theaters," which were theaters in the city that had closed and were largely not talked about by that point. Readers accounted for dozens of theaters throughout the community. Continuing in my quest to compile as many details as possible, I also used industry magazines, journals and guides available online through Google Books and other sources.

I hope you enjoy this brief history. I invite you to send additional facts, pics and other details to info@northomahahistory.com.

—Adam Fletcher Sasse
May 2020

#1

The Coliseum

2218 North 20th Street



Pic courtesy of the Durham Museum.

The picture above shows the Ak-Sar-Ben Den in 1921. This building was constructed as North 20th and Grant Street in 1888. Originally, it was called The Coliseum and it housed big events. Eventually, Ak-Sar-Ben bought it and called it their "Den." This building might have shown the first movies in North Omaha. It did show special features throughout the three decades it existed. It burned down in 1926. In the 1950s, the site became the home of the Eugene Eppley North Omaha Boys Club and is now the location of the Hope Center for Kids.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2017/05/11/aksarben/>

#2

The Diamond, The Finch, The Lake

2410 Lake Street



Pic from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

In 1912, the Diamond Moving Picture Company was built as a movie theater for predominantly African American moviegoers, and remained that way through its entire existence. In 1913, it was obliterated by the Easter Sunday tornado, killing several moviegoers inside. It was rebuilt soon after and operated as the Diamond Theater, exclusively showing films distributed by Universal Pictures. It was renamed the Finch Theater soon after. It was closed in 1923, remodeled and reopened as the Lake Theater in 1924. It was closed again in 1929 and later operated as a nightclub and bowling alley before it was demolished in the 1970s. Today, it is an empty lot. The picture here is from 1926.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#3

The London

2211 Cuming Street



THE LONDON
OMAHA'S NEWEST THEATER
2211 Cuming Street.

A strictly up-to-date playhouse showing the very latest in moving pictures and illustrated songs.

DOORS OPEN:
EVERY EVENING at 7 O'clock
SATURDAY, 1:30 P. M. and 7 O'clock
SUNDAY, 1:30 P. M. and 7 O'clock

Admission—Week Days, 5c. Sunday,
10c and 5c.
Program Changed Every Other Day.

M. LONDON, Manager.

Pic from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

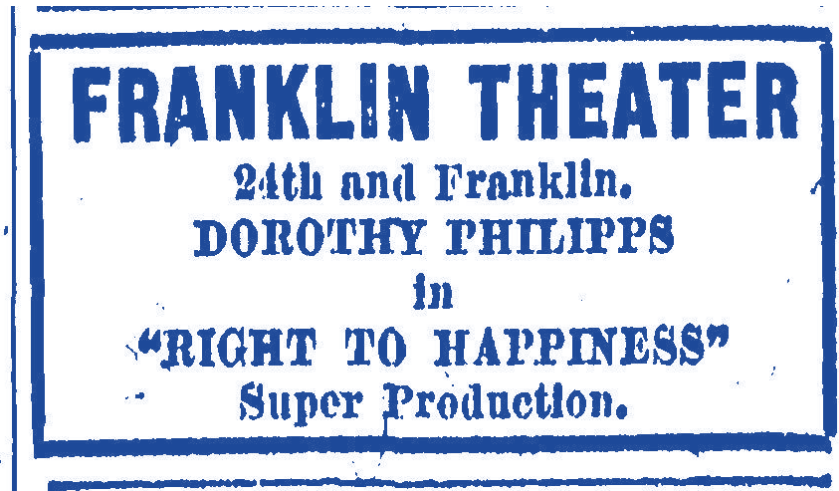
Mr. M. London opened the London Theatre at North 21st and Cuming Streets in 1909. There is no indication that it lasted more than two years, when the same address was used as a laundry business. Today, the site is home to Metro Area Transit. The advertisement shown here is from 1909.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#4

The Franklin

1624 North 24th Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

In 1909, veteran entertainment businessman Frank E. Goff opened the first 5-cent theater in Omaha at North 24th and Franklin Streets and called it the Franklin Theater. A theater that cost 5-cents was called a “nickelodeon.” The Franklin was located on the southwest corner of North 24th and Franklin, and was located just a block away from Goff’s house. The theater was rebuilt after it was destroyed by the 1913 Easter Sunday tornado. In a 1914 feature, the newspaper said his wife, Mrs. Mary E. Goff, was the proprietor of the theater and quoted her husband saying she ran the theater as well or better than he or any other man ever could.

The theater was originally racially segregated and allowed only white moviegoers into the 1920s. In the early 1920s, it was a favorite of Jewish moviegoers from the surrounding neighborhoods. Around 1925, it was integrated and its moviegoers were quickly predominantly African Americans. After a fire broke out in the projection room at the Franklin in April 1926, the theater wasn’t mentioned again in the newspaper. However, a grocery store was open at the location by 1930 and stayed there into the 1960s. Today, the site is an empty lot. The advertisement here is from 1911.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2020/01/04/a-biography-of-frank-e-goff/>

#5

The Alhambra, The Star

1814 North 24th Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

Opened in 1911, the Alhambra Theater was on the southeast corner of North 24th and Parker Street. Originally hosting vaudeville and other live acts, the theater featured a 5-piece orchestra in its earliest days. Owned by Frank E. Goff, the theater was advertised as a “glittering movie palace” and films ran there after they were shown at the Franklin Theater. In 1914, the theater was closed for renovations and promised to reopen as the Star Theater. By 1916, it was known as the Alhambra again. The theater was originally racially segregated and only allowed white people into the 1920s. During the early 1920s, the Alhambra was popular among Jewish moviegoers who lived in the surrounding Jewish neighborhoods. In 1925, the Alhambra was managed by Harry L. Taylor. He owned the Alhambra the rest of its days, and later built the Ritz Theater. The Alhambra integrated and became a predominantly African American theater in 1926, and then closed permanently in 1930. Afterward, the building became a social hall that played host to political rallies, civic clubs and other events, as well as a grocery store and skating rink. The Alhambra burned to the ground in 1946, and today there is an empty lot where it stood. The image above is from 1911.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2018/11/23/a-history-of-north-omahas-alhambra-theater/>

#6

The Ritz

2043 North 24th Street



Photo courtesy of the Durham Museum.

The Ritz Theatre opened at North 24th and Patrick Street in 1931. The theater opened as a predominantly African American theater. Seating 600 moviegoers, it closed in 1967. It was built and owned by Harry L. Taylor its entire existence. Located in a historically packed business district, the theater was demolished in the 1970s and today the lot sits empty.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#7

The Palace

2303 Davenport Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

The Palace Theatre was open at North 23rd and Davenport Street in 1911. In 1914, the Palace used films distributed by Universal Pictures. The building was demolished in the 1950s and today is occupied by an apartment complex. This advertisement is from 1912.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#8

The Park, Cass, Holiday

516 North 16th Street



Pic from the Omaha World-Herald archive

In 1911, the Park Theatre opened at North 16th between Cass and California Street. In 1916, the City of Omaha Health Commissioner arrested L. E. Elder at the Park and several other theater owners for violating special safety regulations enacted by the City to protect moviegoers from a Scarlet Fever epidemic. The next year in 1917, the theater suffered a fire that caused a stampede among children who were watching a film. Everyone escaped without serious wounds, and the theater was barely damaged.

The theater was bought by the Epstein Theater Corporation in 1936 and rebranded as the Cass Theater. In 1949, it was closed down because of bad wiring. A fire damaged the lobby that year, and it was sold to Jack Holiday, who reopened it as the Holiday Theater in 1950. The theater was closed permanently after another fire that year.

Today there's a pawn shop in the location with no sign it was ever a theater. The building is not recognized for its historical significance, is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is not designated as an official Omaha Landmark.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#9

The Circle

524 North 33rd Street



Pic courtesy of the Durham Museum archives.

Circle Theatre opened at North 33rd and California Street in 1926, seating 450 moviegoers. The Circle was owned by the Epstein Theater Corporation. It closed in 1953. The building has been demolished and the lot sits empty today. The pic shown here is circa 1948.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#10

Dundee Theater

4952 Dodge Street



Pic courtesy of the Durham Museum archives.

A single-screen movie house that opened at the intersection of North 49th and Dodge Street in 1925, the Dundee has remained a movie theater ever since. After changing hands several times, a local theater company owned by Denny Moran bought the iconic theater. Moran operated it for more than 30 years, making the Dundee a truly independent theater during an era when large movie chains operated every other theater in the city. In 2015, it was purchased by a local organization called Film Streams, which renovated and reopened it in 2017. Today, it shows independent films and cult classics. The pic here is from 1941.

Learn more at <https://filmstreams.org/dundee-theater>

#11

The Lothrop

3212 North 24th Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

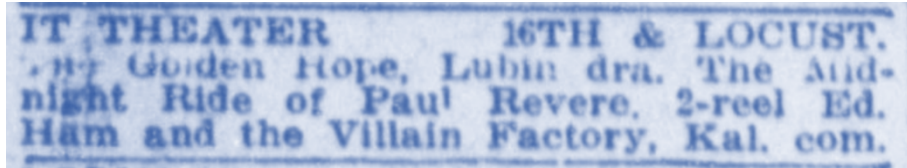
The Lothrop Theatre opened in 1924 between Spencer and Lothrop Street. In 1925, the Lothrop was managed by two men named Harms and Groebeck. They were fined by the City of Omaha building inspector during a citywide inspection for allowing rubbish to collect at the back exit; making it "impossible to open the door to the north exit from the inside, and; having two steps out of the stairway leading to the exit. In the 1940s, the Lothrop was owned by the Epstein Theater Corporation. It closed permanently in 1955. This building was demolished in the 1970s, and today the lot sits empty. The pic here is from 1911.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#12

The It

2910 North 16th Street



Advertisement from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

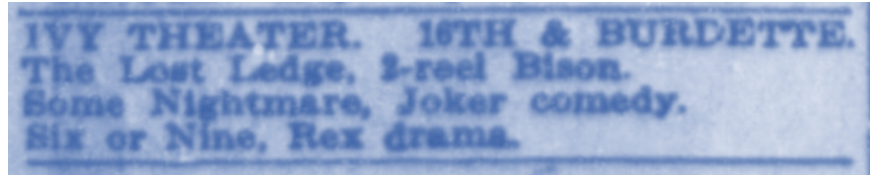
The It Theatre was opened at North 16th and Locust Avenue in 1914 and stayed open until 1916. According to the Douglas County Assessor's Office, the building at this address was constructed in 1910, making it the one-time home of the It Theater. It has not been recognized for its historical significance though, and is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as an official Omaha Landmark. The advertisement shown here is from 1914.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#13

The Ivy

2128 North 16th Street



Advertisement from the Omaha Bee archives.

Ivy Theatre was opened at North 16th and Burdette Street in 1910 and showed films exclusively from Universal Pictures. In 1914, F. W. Zotzmann took ownership of the theater. He bought a new machine that was noted for being able to show two-reel features without stopping to change reels. That same year, the Omaha Police Department uncovered a plot by an "arson squad." This group of Italians was implicated in a series of arsons in Little Italy, and were caught by a police sting when they were dousing the exterior of the theater with gasoline. By 1919, Ivy Theater was closed. The building was demolished around 1980, and today the lot sits empty. The advertisement here is from 1910.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#14

The Benson

6048 Maple Street



Pic from the Durham Museum archives.

Opened in 1914, the Benalto Theatre was opened at North 61st and Maple Street in downtown Benson. Seating 400 moviegoers, in 1914 it used films distributed by Universal Pictures. In 1925, the Benson was managed by George McArdle. He was fined by the City of Omaha building inspector during a citywide inspection for having an exit slightly washed by rain. The Benson closed in 1926. It was bought by the Epstein Theater Company, renovated and reopened in 1927, and stayed open until 1953. The building served as several other businesses until 2019, when a local campaign began restoring the space as the Benson Theater again. That work is underway now. The pic shown here is from 1948.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#15

The Alamo

5303 North 24th Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

The Alamo Theatre was opened near the intersection of North 24th and Fort Street in 1914. It showed films from Universal Pictures for several years.

In 1923, it was renovated and reopened as the Victoria Theater. It became the Victoria Theater in 1931 and closed in 1938. The next year it was bought by the Epstein Theater Corporation and renovated again, reopening as the Fort Theater. William H. Creal owned it for a while and renamed it the Victoria International Theater, staying open until 1945. Today there is an empty lot where the theater stood. The pic shown here is from 1914.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#16

The Clifton

2201 Military Avenue



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

Clifton Theatre was opened at North 45th and Burdette Street in 1914. Managed by Rex Law Head, the Clifton was a "modern suburban house" that was well-attended. However, it only stayed open for three years, closing in 1917. The advertisement shown here is from 1914.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#17

The Joyo

8525 North 30th Street



Pic from Google Earth.

In 1913, the Joyo Theatre was opened at North 30th and Tucker Street. In 1914, the Joyo used films distributed by Universal Pictures. It operated for fewer than five years, and became the Florence Odd Fellows Hall, and later a longtime drug store. The pic shown here is from 2017.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#18

The New Star

2906 North 16th Street



Pic from the Omaha Bee archives.

The New Star Theatre opened on the northwest corner of North 16th and Locust in 1915. Built and operated by M. M. Aaronson, it was closed by 1925. There is no sign of the original structure today. Pic shown here is from 1915.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#19

The Hamilton, The Winn, The 40th Street

4006 Hamilton Street



The Management of The
Hamilton Theater
at 40th and Hamilton
announces their
GRAND OPENING
TODAY
with pictures de luxe, ideal
ventilation, artistic appoint-
ments.
Omaha's Finest Theater.
Matinee 2:15. Evening shows
start 7:15.
Prices, Adults 10c; Children 5c.

Advertisement from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

In 1916, the Hamilton Theater was opened near the intersection of North 40th and Hamilton Street. In 1925, as the manager of the theater, M. H. Garvin was cited by the City of Omaha building inspector during a citywide inspection for not having a fire extinguisher in the projection booth, and having a pipe running across an exit. The building was renovated in 1930 and reopened as the Winn Theater. During this era, the Winn operated as an independent movie theater. In 1944, it was renovated again and reopened as the 40th Street Theater. The 40th Street Theater had 400 seats. It was owned by Omaha Suburban Theaters, Inc. The advertisement shown here is from 1916.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#20

The Grand

2918 North 16th Street



Pic from the Durham Museum archives.

For a period of time, William R. McFarland (1874-1950) was the most important movie theater owner in Omaha, owning more than six motion picture houses at different times. His only property in North Omaha was built in 1914 near North 24th and Binney Streets. Originally called the McFarland Motion Picture House, it was soon renamed the Grand Theatre. An apartment building was constructed on the parking lot behind the theater by the next owner. In 1925, the Grand was managed by J.E. Kirk. He was cited by the City of Omaha building inspector during a citywide inspection for having locked exits and too few lights. The Grand stayed open until 1931 and was closed because of the Great Depression. Today, the theater is a church and in 2019, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The picture here is from 1920.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#21

The Loyal

2406 Caldwell Street



Advertisement from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

Opening in 1908, the Loyal Theatre was just west of North 24th and Caldwell Street. Paul Sutton operated the theater, and D. R. Cohen was his assistant. The theater showed illustrated pictures before switching to movies around 1912. From the time that happened, the Loyal served mostly African American moviegoers, and was advertised as "the first and only colored theater in Nebraska." In 1916, the City of Omaha Health Commissioner arrested M. Selicow of the Loyal and several other theater operators for violating special safety regulations enacted by the City to protect moviegoers from a Scarlet Fever epidemic. A 1921 advertisement said the theater was operated by Walker and Dorsey. The advertisement shown here is from 1911.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#22

Carter Lake Club Theater

North 15th and Avenue Q



Pic from the Motion Picture News at Google Books.

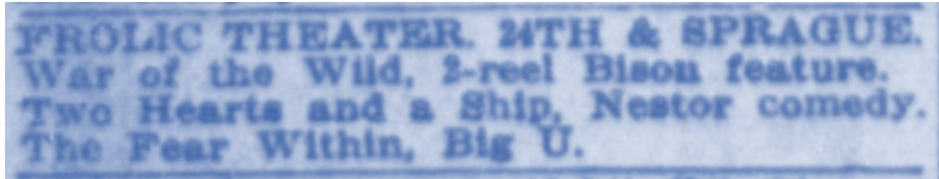
The Carter Lake Club theater opened before 1924 and sat 450 moviegoers. Charging no admission because it was a private theater, they showed "the very best pictures obtainable." It stayed open into the 1940s. In 1976, the old theater was renovated and repurposed to become the new Carter Lake Ballroom, aka The Warehouse. It was a rental facility that regularly served as a concert venue and bingo hall. In 1992, The Warehouse was closed and demolished to make way for a new housing development around a new shoal. There is no sign of the building's existence today. The image shown here is from 1924.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2018/05/02/a-history-of-the-carter-lake-club/>

#23

The Frolic

4116 North 24th Street



Pic from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

Built in 1911 by the Schollman Brothers, this building on North 24th between Sprague and Sahler Street was opened as the Frolic Theater. By 1914, its name was changed to the Burt, and it showed films distributed by Universal Pictures. It stayed open for less than a decade, and was later called the Crown Theater in its later years. The Schollman Brothers later opened a long-time hardware store at the location. Today there is a vacant lot at this address. The advertisement shown here is from 1912.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#24

Krug Park Airdome

4016 Hamilton Street

NEW
KRUG PARK
THE HOME OF PICNICS

"Coolest Spot in Omaha"

FREE MOVIES

In the Airdome
TONIGHT
The Famous Screen Star
AL. ST. JOHN
in
"The Big Secret"

And Also a News Weekly
Continuous Show 9 to 11 p. m.

**REMEMBER—Swimming Pool Opens Sunday at
8 A. M.**

Advertisement from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

The Krug Park Airdome opened in 1921. The Airdome was an outdoor theater with benches painted in all white enamel paint, colored lights hanging in the interior and white crushed rock on the pathways. The Airdome only ran for five months out of the year, and wasn't advertised again after 1927. The advertisement shown here is from 1926.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#25

The Hippodrome

2414 Cuming Street



Pic from the Durham Museum archives.

In 1914, the Hippodrome Theater was opened at 2514 Cuming Street. In the early 1920s, it was renamed the Capitol Theatre and stayed open until 1928. In 1925, the Capitol was managed by G. Pellican. He was cited by the City of Omaha building inspector during a citywide inspection for having a poor exit and no lighting on the exit. Today it is the site of the parking lot at CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center. The pic shown here is circa 1921.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#26

The Beacon

2910 Ames Avenue



Image shown here from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

In 1926, the Beacon Theatre was opened at on the northwest corner of North 29th and Ames Avenue. When it was opened, the Beacon sat 480 moviegoers. Built by longtime theater operator William H. Creal, later it was owned by Omaha Suburban Theaters, Inc. In addition to a glassed-in baby room, there were reclining seats and regular giveaways for attendees. The Beacon was renovated in 1954, with the addition of a tall lighthouse with a working beacon, and the inside featured a nautical theme. It closed permanently in 1966. The advertising image shown here is circa 1955.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#27

The Corby

2805 North 16th Street



Pic from the Durham Museum archives.

The Corby Theatre was opened at North 16th Street and Corby Street in 1926. Brothers Louis and Samuel Epstein and the World Realty Company owned the theater through their Nebraska Theater Company. Designed by popular Omaha architect James T. Allan (1890-1957), the theater was built and originally owned by Alex Beck. In addition to 800 original seats, there was also a “cry room” for mothers with young babies. It was designed in the Moorish Revival style, covered in light-colored brick highlighted with terra cotta detailing around the building. There was a single screen, along with three storefronts at the front. In the 1940s, the Epstein Theater Corporation owned the Corby, completely renovating the theater in 1949. It was permanently closed in 1957. After holding many businesses, today the building sits empty but still stands. It is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as an official Omaha Landmark.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2018/12/18/a-history-of-the-corby-theater/>

#28

The Military

2216 Military Avenue

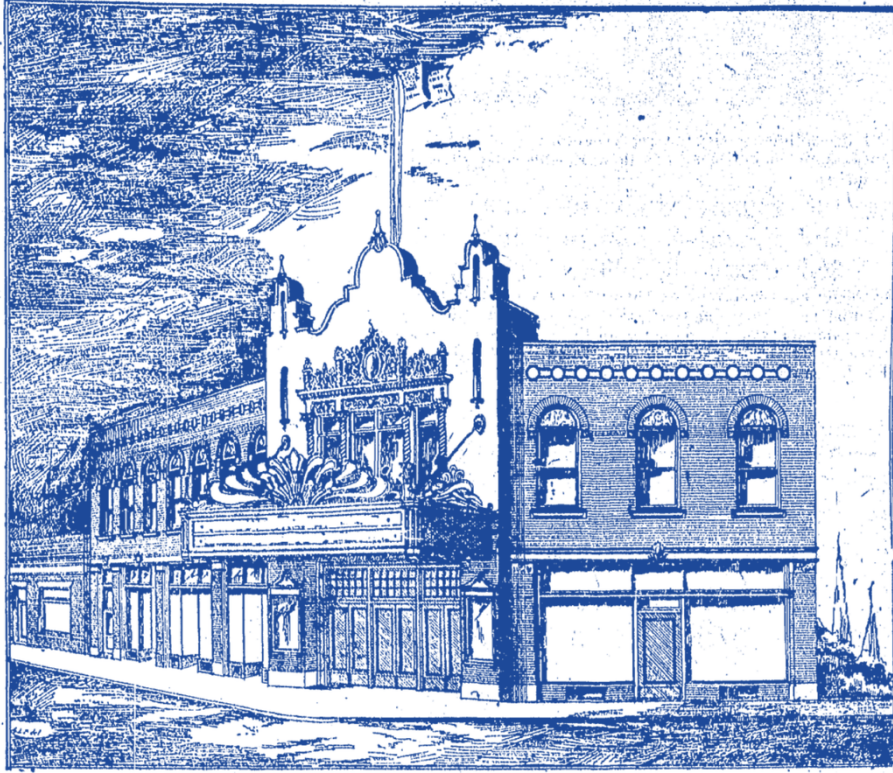


Image shown here is from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

The Military Theatre was built in 1928 at the intersection of North 45th and Military Avenue. Designed by architect George L. Fisher (1859-1931), it cost \$150,000 to build and sat 1,000 moviegoers. It was owned by Omaha Suburban Theaters, Inc. After closing as a theater in 1974, the building was repurposed as a church and is still standing today. The advertising image shown here is from 1928.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#29

The Minne Lusa

6720 North 30th Street



Pic from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

The Minne Lusa Theater opened at North 30th Street and Titan Street in 1929. In the 1940s, the Minne Lusa operated as an independent theater. It stayed open until 1958. In the 1990s, the building was renovated to become home to Heartland Family Service, which moved out recently. Today the building is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as an official Omaha Landmark. The pic shown here is from 1929.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2016/11/02/minne-lusa-theatre/>

#30

The Suburban

4414 North 24th Street



Pic shown here is from the Motion Picture News in 1908.

The Suburban Theatre was opened around 1900 just south of North 24th and Ames Avenue. Owned by Charles Jacobsen, it opened as a vaudeville and was converted to a movie theater within a decade. Jacobsen was a Danish immigrant who was one of the first horse-drawn streetcar drivers in Omaha. His theater, run by his son Fred Jacobsen, was credited with being the first theater that wasn't located downtown. It closed by 1920. In 1925, William H. Creal was the owner of the Suburban. He was fined by the City of Omaha building inspector for allowing the rear door of the theater to be blocked by rubbish. The theater was closed shortly after that. Later, Creal's son owned the theater. They closed it to open The Beacon. Built of brick with a wooden façade, after it was a theater the space was a grocery store, a restaurant, a pool hall and then a bar and grill called Kato's that was there for almost 50 years. Today there is a barbecue and liquor store in this historic building which is not designated as an official Omaha Landmark or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The image shown here is circa 1912.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#31

The Airport Drive-In

1137 Locust Street



Pic from the Durham Museum archives.

Airport Drive-In Theatre was opened at 11th and Locust in 1954. It was called the Capri Drive-In for a period of time, and closed permanently in the 1970s. The pic shown here is circa 1967.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#33

The Northampton Four

5200 Curtis Avenue



Pic from Google Earth.

Opened in 1973, the Northampton Four Theaters at 56th and Redick. It became Country Club Four Theatres in 1978, and closed permanently in 1990. The image shown here is circa 2016.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#34

The Fort Omaha

South Road and West Road



Image courtesy of the Douglas County Historical Society.

The Fort Omaha theatre was used only during World War II, from 1941 to 1945. Stage shows and movies were shown here for the US Army troops at the fort. The cinder block building was demolished by the 1960s. The pic shown here is circa 1944.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2015/09/09/a-history-of-20-movie-theaters-in-north-omaha/>

#35

Ruth Sokolof Theater

1340 Mike Fahey Street



Pic from Google Earth.

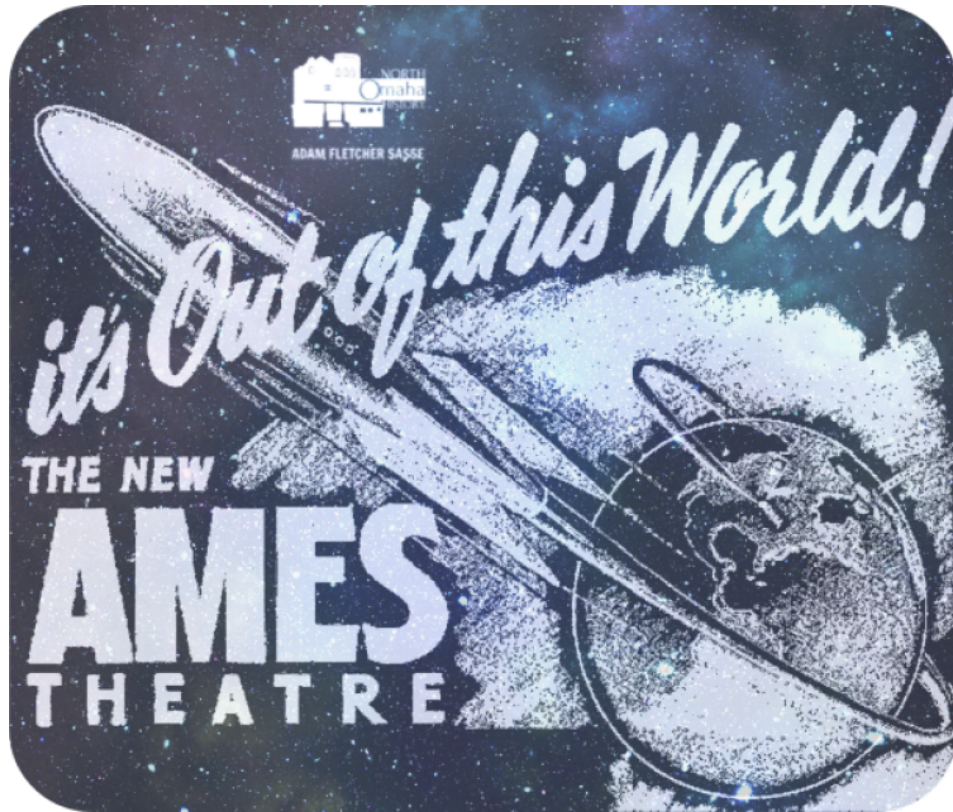
Opened in 2007 by a nonprofit organization called Film Streams, this theater sits on the corner of North 13th and Mike Fahey Street. As the first new theater built in North Omaha in more than 50 years, it is an anchor of the North Downtown neighborhood. Today, the theater shows independent, foreign and classic films, and hosts special events with filmmakers. Learn more at <https://filmstreams.org/ruth-sokolof-theater>

The pic shown here is circa 2017.

#36

North Star, Ames

2417 Ames Avenue

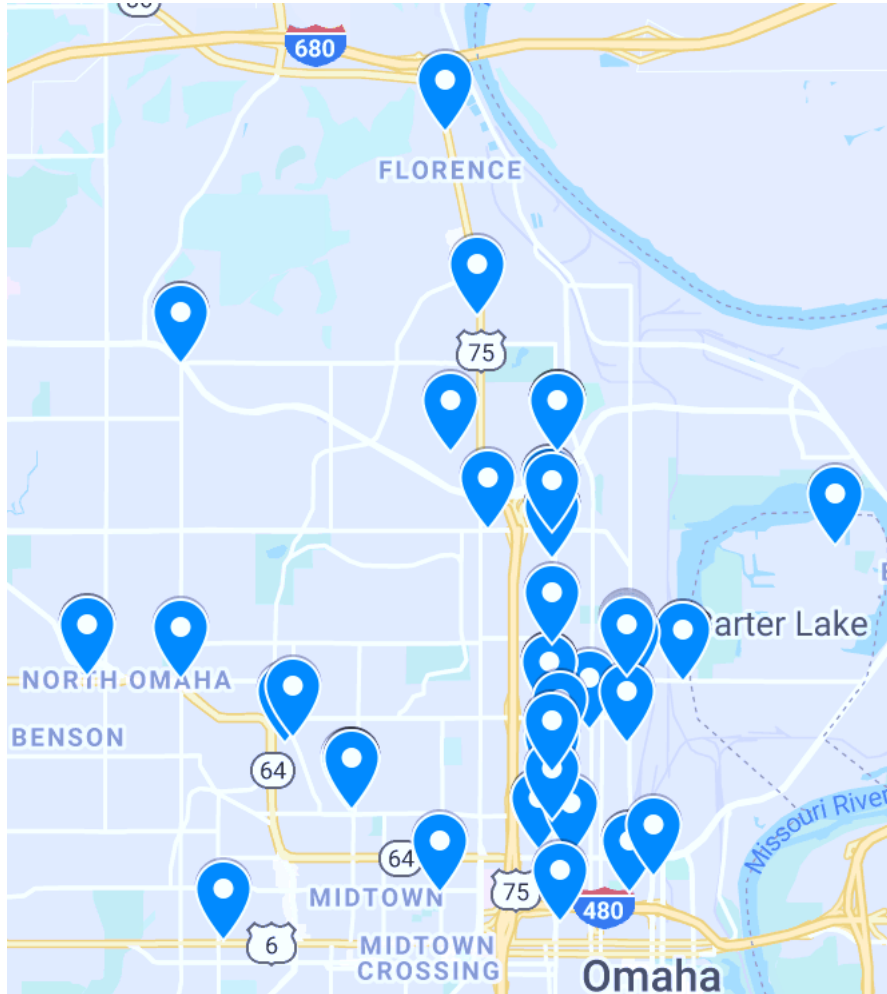


Advertising from the Omaha World-Herald archives.

Opening in August 1925, the North Star Theater located near the intersection of the North 24th and Ames Avenue in the heart of the historic Saratoga neighborhood. The building was originally designed by prolific Omaha architect Everett Dodds (1898-1958). The theater was L-shaped with the lobby at a right angle to the auditorium. The Epstein Theater Corporation owned the company in the early 1940s, and sold it to the Popular Amusement Company, who sold it to Walter Creal (1900-1979), owner of the Beacon Theater. In 1946, he hired local architect Henry A. Raapke (1876-1959) to redesign the building. In 1949, Ralph Goldberg's Pioneer Theater Circuit acquired the theater, closed it and rebranded it as the Ames Theater when it reopened in 1950. The theater closed permanently in 1957. Today, it's a warehouse with no identification as a neighborhood institution. Its not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as an official Omaha Landmark.

Learn more at <https://northomahahistory.com/2019/08/31/a-history-of-the-ames-theater-in-north-omaha/>

North Omaha Historic Theater Directory



This map marks the location of many of the theaters in the following directory.

This is a directory of movie theaters throughout the history of North Omaha. It is sorted by address.

Theater	Years Open	Address
Airport Drive-In Theater	1954-1967	1137 Locust St
Capri Drive-In Theater	1968-1972	1137 Locust St
Ruth Solokof Theater	2007-present	1340 Mike Fahey St
Fort Omaha Theater	1942-1945	15 West Rd
Carter Lake Club Theater	1923-1940	1502 Avenue Q

Franklin Theater	1909-1929	1624 N 24th St
Alhambra Theater	1911-1930	1814 N 24th St
Star Theater	1914-1916	1814 N 24th St
Ritz Theater	1931-1967	2043 N 24th St
Ivy Theater	1910-1919	2128 N 16th St
London Theater	1909-1911	2211 Cuming St
Military Theater	1928-1975	2216 Military Ave
Coliseum	1888-1926	2218 N 20th St
Palace Theater	1911-1916	2305 Davenport St
Loyal Theater	1908-1921	2406 Caldwell St
Diamond Theater	1912-1914	2410 Lake St
Finch Theater	1914-1923	2410 Lake St
Lake Theater	1923-1929	2410 Lake St
Ames Theater	1950-1957	2416 Ames Ave
North Star Theater	1925-1949	2416 Ames Ave
Hippodrome Theater	1914-1929	2514 Cuming St
Capitol Theater	1925-1933	2614 Cuming St
Corby Theater	1926-1957	2805 N 16th St
New Star Theater	1915-1925	2906 N 16th St
Beacon Theater	1925-1966	2910 Ames Ave
It Theater	1914-1916	2910 North 16th St
Lothrop Theater	1924-1955	3212 N 24th St
40th Street Theater	1945-1946	4006 Hamilton St
Hamilton Theater	1916-1929	4006 Hamilton St
Winn Theater	1930-1944	4006 Hamilton St
Airdome Theater	1915-1917	4016 Hamilton St
Burt Theater	1914-1917	4116 N 24th St
Crown Theater	1917-1918	4116 N 24th St
Frolic Theater	1911-1914	4116 N 24th St
Suburban Theater	1900-1925	4414 N 24th St
Clifton Theater	1914-1917	4510 Burdette Ave
Dundee Theater	1925-present	4952 Dodge St
Cass Theater	1936-1949	516 N 16th St
Holiday Theater	1950-1950	516 N 16th St

Park Theater	1911-1936	516 N 16th St
Country Club 4 Theater	1978-1990	5200 Curtis Ave
Northampton Four Theater	1973-1978	5200 Curtis Ave
Grand Theater	1914-1931	5202 Maple St
Krug Park Airdome	1921-1927	5202 Maple St
Circle Theater	1926-1953	524 N 33rd St
Alamo Theater	1914-1923	5303 N 24th St
Fort Theater	1938-1945	5303 N 24th St
Victoria Theater	1923-1938	5303 N 24th St
Benalto Theater	1914-1924	6084 Maple St
Benson Theater	1926-1953	6084 Maple St
Minne Lusa Theater	1929-1958	6720 N 30th St
Joyo Theater	1913-1918	8524 N 30th St