



PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Volume 32, Nos. 5 - 6 • May – June, 2020

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**Still stuck at home because of Covid?
Suffering from theatre organ withdrawal?
Better days are surely coming soon! Meanwhile...**

Nearly a century ago, had you lived in Klamath Falls, Oregon, you could have enjoyed hearing Seattle's own Sandy Balcom play the opening concert on a new FOTO-ORCHESTRAL ORGAN at the Empire Theatre!

"Foto-Orchestral Organ" was the fancy name given to the 2/4 Robert Morton pipe organ installed by Sandy.

The Empire Theatre later became the Esquire Theatre.

OPENING OF OUR NEW
**Foto-Orchestral
Organ**
TO-NIGHT

With the showing of Theodore Roberts in
his latest and best production
"GRUMPY"

Sandy Balcom engaged to play the opening
concert and Feature Program. Concert
starts at 7:15.

EMPIRE THEATRE
"Always the Best for the Empire Guest"

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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**Joining Puget Sound
 Theatre Organ Society is
 FAST and easy!**

Simply click on the link below and select your preferred level of membership.

- Secure!
- No checks!
- No stamps!
- A few clicks and it's done!



<http://www.pstos.org/membership/new-member.htm>

Rare Opportunity!

FOR SALE by PSTOS

Console from Wurlitzer's historic first truly successful theatre pipe organ installed in Seattle's Liberty Theatre in 1914!



Originally installed in the Seattle Liberty Theatre in 1914, the organ received rave reviews and for sometime was considered to be Wurlitzer's show piece.

In 1955, the theatre was razed, and the organ was acquired by Pacific Lutheran University near Tacoma where it was installed in the gymnasium.

In 1973, the university sold the organ to Spokane First Nazarene Church.

A few years ago, the church found a more elaborate console and offered the original for sale. PSTOS at that time wanted to "bring the historic console back home," and purchased it to upgrade the Haller Lake organ.

However, when member Ray Whelpley passed away, his family offered his beautifully equipped Wurlitzer to PSTOS. That console now runs the organ at HLCC, making the Liberty console available.

- **Begin your own pipe organ project**
- **Use as the console for a VTPO (Virtual theatre pipe organ)**
- **The original stop tab blow boxes are available. There is no wiring in the console. Keyboards are original.**
- **Good condition**
- **Located in Kenmore WA**
- **For more information contact**
bob@pstos.org

Things are happening in Leavenworth, part 2

David Johnston has a new valve modification for his Kimball tremolo . . . and a meal-size ice cream cone to celebrate!

Hey everybody, the snow shovels in Leavenworth have been returned to their hooks to rest and now the lawn mowers are at the ready. I have stopped complaining about the cold and snow as this wonderful transition from winter to summer moves along and in no time at all I can start complaining about the heat of July and August.

In the last issue of the Pipeline I gave an account of my adventure into releathering a couple regulators and a planned valve modification to enhance the tremolo effect for my Kimball organ. Well, the new valve has been installed and I am declaring the change a success. There was a brief moment of doubt when I fired up the blower, flipped the Trem tab and nothing happened, but with

adjustments of air flow to and air escape from the trem unit itself, the fluctuating action of the regulator came alive. As I watched the steady undulating regulator, which I could see was more pronounced, the words of Greg Smith came to mind, "Don't get too much Ethel Merman warble going on!" Yes, we don't want too much of a good thing but I think Greg will approve of my changes to this organ that did suffer from a weak tremulant. Moving forward, the regulator for the five-rank chest will receive the same valve treatment.

When I was looking for someone with a proper wood turning lathe to carve the original valve I was directed to the Wenatchee

Woodworkers Guild. A member of the guild, Stan Simmons, contacted me to drop on by his shop out in Malaga to explain what I needed done. And what a shop it is. Inside his brightly lit shop we find a CNC machine, Bridgeport mill, a lathe, welders, test equipment for orchard tools, and even a restored 1934 Ford sedan delivery. Any of you organ club members who enjoy puttering in a shop would be envious of this little slice of heaven. After a couple days, Stan called to say my piece was ready and with the new valve under my arm ready to leave, I asked what I owe him. "I want an invite to see what a pipe organ in a house looks like." Deal! New valve installed, Stan and his wife came by for a visit and he brought the second valve with him.



In the photo, Stan is holding the original valve with the red felt in his left hand. The new valve he carved is taller with less taper, which forces the regulator top to have more movement to pass air from the high pressure side to the regulated side, thus more "warble." Well, that's what I think is going on in there,

my ears tell me the Tibia sounds better, and the ears are what count.

My work on the organ will lapse a bit for the summer while outdoor projects get priority.

At a car guy friend's garage the other day the oldie station played a great summertime 1960s song by *The Lovin' Spoonful*, "Daydream." Remember it? "And even if time ain't really on my side, It's one of those days for takin' a walk outside, I'm blowin' the day to take a walk in the sun, And fall on my face in somebody's new-mowed lawn." Crank up those mowers everybody! Happy summer.



PS: I want to share a great quote from Russ Evans on this photo I sent to him.

"Forget about pipe organs. I want to know where you get ice cream cones like the one you're annihilating!!!!!!!" Rusty's Drive In, Cashmere, Russ. I finally found a distraction that will take Russ's mind off pipe organs.

Links to a number of enjoyable theatre organ recordings, plus one Bach

Lyn Larsen plays Richard Rodgers' "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" on the famous Wichita Wurlitzer. 6:24 minutes <https://tinyurl.com/y47qzefg>

Mighty Morton organ holiday concert with Clark Wilson at the Ohio Theatre. 34:19 minutes <https://tinyurl.com/y5eoozrk>

A cut, "Leap Frog," from the 1982 ATOS convention, Charlie Balogh at the

Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor, with drummer Tim Froncek. 3:10 minutes. <https://tinyurl.com/y238qr2x>

Simon Gledhill and Richard Hills, "The Dream of Olwen." 4:33 minutes. <https://tinyurl.com/y6zxbd2x>

Organist Monte Maxwell plays selections from "The Sound of Music" on the Midmer-Losh organ at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. 8:45 minutes.

<https://tinyurl.com/y2xexm3r>

Jim Roseveare at the Oakland Paramount - "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year." 2:54 minutes. <https://tinyurl.com/y8zw8dpg>

Angela Kraft Cross posted on Facebook, "Ever refreshing and full of the spirit of spring, Bach's joyful "Prelude and Fugue in G major." 7:52 minutes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuGw_i7KJg8

Remembering Lou Magor, Kenyon Hall's Hero



Though his accomplishments are many, Lou Magor's West Seattle neighbors may know him best as the keeper of Kenyon Hall, the historic event venue at 7904 35th SW. Suddenly, the hall is without its hero, as Mr. Magor has died at age 75. His death was announced by the pastor of Wallingford United Methodist Church, where he served as music director.

Lou shared his talents far and wide, also as longtime accompanist of the renowned Total Experience Gospel Choir, and as a Kindermusik teacher for the littlest visitors to Kenyon Hall, which started its life as the Olympic Heights Social Hall more than a century ago.

In Lou's years of managing the hall, it has not only showcased the circa-1929 "Mighty Wurlitzer" pipe organ that it houses, but has also seen performances by musicians and actors from unassuming community groups to superstar Eddie Vedder (who played two semi-secret shows there in 2008). The hall also hosted many fundraising galas for local nonprofits, especially those whose performances benefited from its excellent acoustics.

More recently, Mr. Magor kept Kenyon Hall going through the pandemic shutdown by presenting a series of online events that also served as fundraisers for the nonprofit operation. Beyond his work, as the pastor's announcement of Mr. Magor's passing noted, he was known for his personality: "It is his warmth, laughter, friendship, and presence that we will perhaps miss the most."

Update on young Sawyer Best's ambitious Kimball-Wurlitzer organ project

Sawyer Best has been posting on Facebook about the removal of Jack Gustafson's 3/14 Kimball/Wurlitzer hybrid organ from his Palm Springs home.

"I and a few friends have moved the instrument up the coast to Seattle, where it is stored in two locations. The truck loading process took two days and the drive another two and a half days. Now's the time for a little breather* before diving into some rebuild work. The first item will be the bottom half of the 3-rank windchest, which has water damage dating back to the San Jose days of the instrument.

*Ignoring the ever-present search for a fitting multipurpose venue to house the organ.

Most likely it will be in storage for a time while we go over it and perform some minor repairs, but we hope to have it playing in a public space in the next few years at best.

The organ itself is quite an interesting instrument with a lot of history and potential. It's very exciting to be playing a part in its next stage of life.

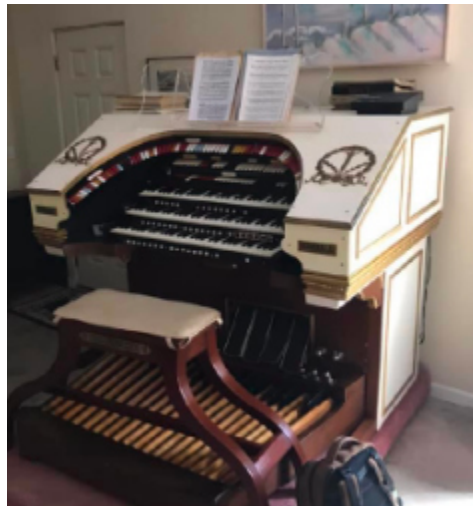
If you want to learn more about the organ, the move, or future plans, email wwwtosboard@gmail.com."



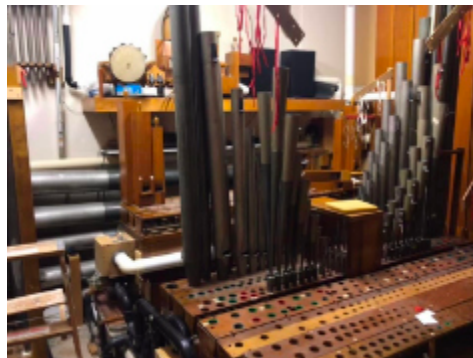
Chime action wrapped for shipment



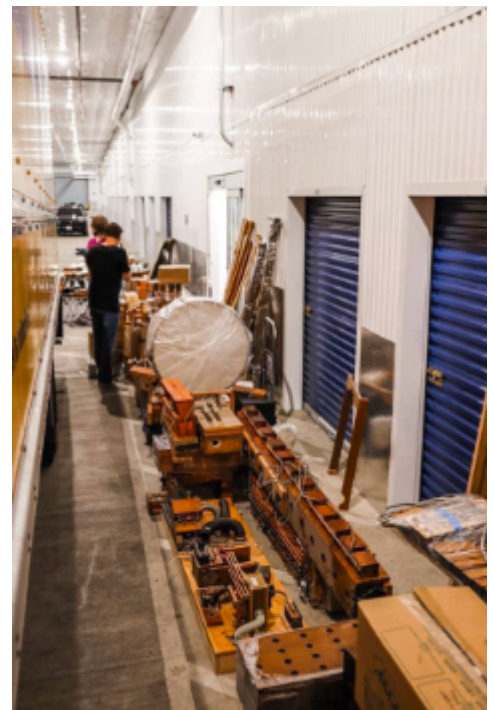
Console on the moving truck



Console in the Gustafson home



Removal in progress



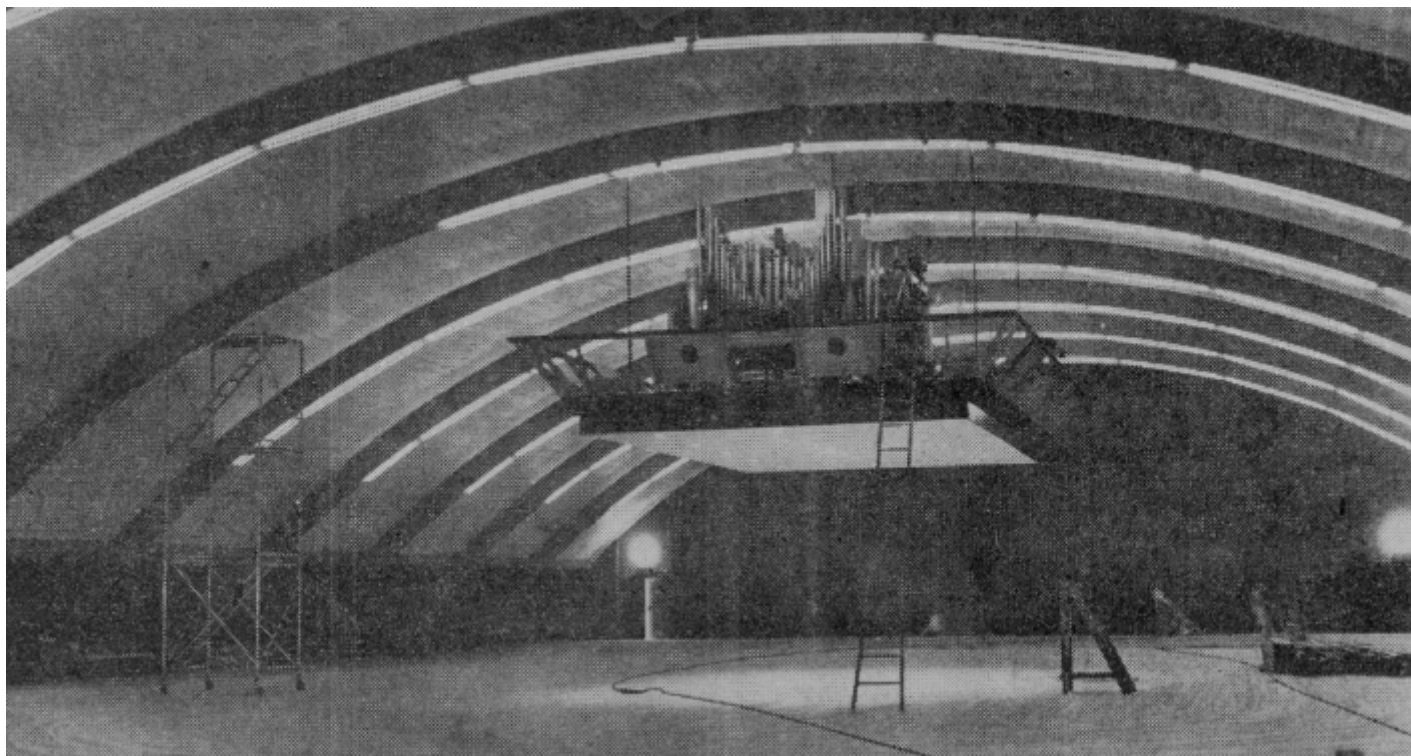
Moving into the Seattle storage facility

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . 1953

As reported in a local newspaper February, 1953

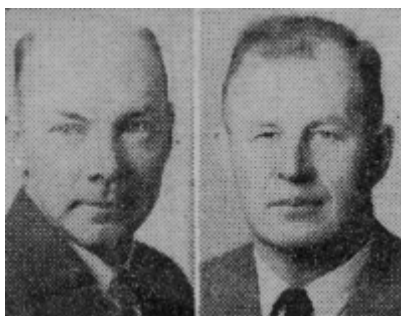
From the Wm. Bunch archives

U Rolladium Features Skating Area With Oval Flooring



A corner of the interior of the new University Rolladium, Seattle's only roller skating rink, is pictured above, as workmen readied the Rolladium for the grand opening Saturday, Feb. 14. Unusual features of the mammoth (26,000 square feet) building are a floor with specially constructed oval flooring, zeon lighting, which

provides constant illumination, and laminated trusses, supporting the half-circle dome. The trusses are visible in this picture as supports for the zeon lighting. Suspended from the ceiling in the center of the picture are the pipes of the Wurlitzer organ, which is played from a console at the left of the entrance.



Murphy and Bergquist

"We're particularly interested in serving the old and young of Northeast Seattle," Bergquist said. "Everyone from two to ninety. At the Rolladium, parents, as well as children, can come and skate, making it a family activity."

From the PSTOS website:

The Rolladium Wurlitzer was originally installed December 1924 in Long Beach, California. It was repossessed by the Wurlitzer company and re-sold in 1933 to the Arcade Theatre in Los Angeles. In 1934 it was moved to Spokane radio station KFPY where it gained a three-manual console. In 1953 the organ found its way to the Seattle area and was installed in the Rolladium Skating Rink by Balcom & Vaughn.

The Rolladium is owned by O.G. Murphy and Ivar Bergquist. Bergquist came to the U.S. from Sweden in 1926 and formerly owned Century Woodcraft. Murphy is a builder of custom homes, and at one time was manager of the Vasa Roller Rink at Lake Sammamish.

Bergquist and Murpny are enthusiastic about their roller rink. The two men feel that it will be a splendid addition to the city's recreational facilities.

BEST WISHES TO

IVAR BERGQUIST
and **O. G. MURPHY**

Progressive Builders and
Operators of the University
ROLLADIUM



**WE HAVE JUST INSTALLED
THEIR LARGE WURLITZER
ORCHESTRAL ORGAN**
(3 Pedal Manual and Redol)

*Enjoy Skating in Melodious Rhythm to
the Music from this Wonderful Organ.*

Remember too — that we now have the new Wurlitzer Spirit
Home Organ — that will be displayed by us at the Seattle
Home Show — Feb. 14 - 22.

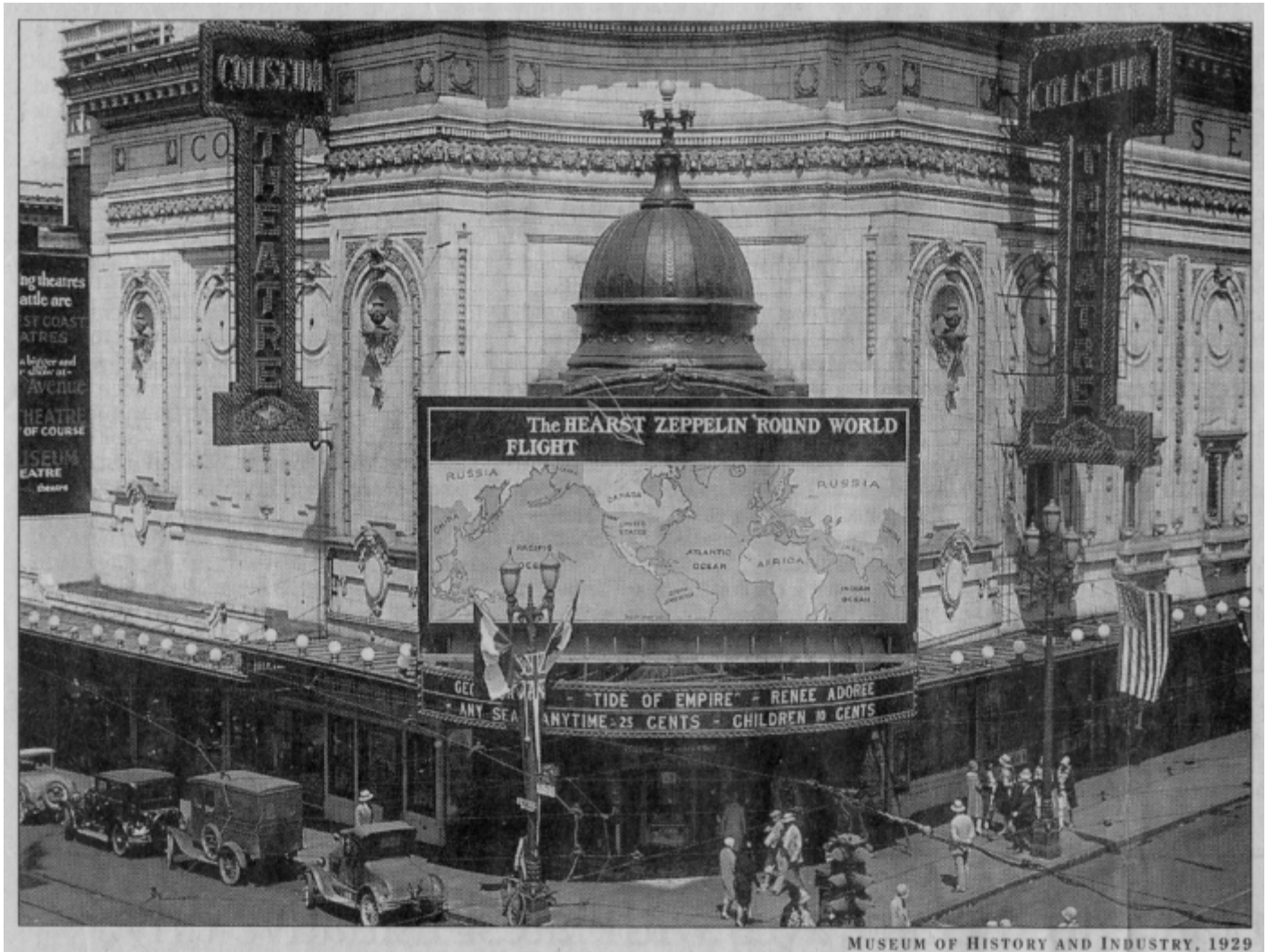
Balcom & Vaughan
5413 Meridian ME. 8555

Balcom & Vaughan ad, February 1953

PAGES FROM THE PAST . . . *continued*

Seattle's Love Affair With Film

Excerpts from a Seattle Times article, June 15, 2001



A quarter could place you in any seat in the Coliseum in 1929. Kids got in for a dime.

Soon after the turn of the last century, Seattle had a handful of regular movie houses, later dubbed nickelodeons. By 1902, Edison's Unique Theatre had opened on Second Avenue, and Le Petit Theatre was around the corner at 222 Pike St. Neither lasted long, but more-or-less permanent movie houses soon began to appear. With names like the Bijou, the Odeon and the Dream (reportedly the first house in the country to install a pipe organ for musical accompaniment), the growing popularity of motion pictures with Seattleites was plainly evident.

After 1910, increasing sophistication in motion-picture production and distribution not only made movies more popular with the public, but also a more profitable venture for local exhibitors. In 1911, the vaudeville theatre, Alhambra, was converted exclusively to show motion pictures. This was the first serious attempt to put films on an equal

footing with the stage. The Alhambra was converted back to a vaudeville house within five years, but the gamble was nonetheless a sign of the times. The motion picture was here to stay, and it was attempting to compete for the same audiences as traditional stage plays, vaudeville and stock theatre.

If theatres alone are an indication of popularity, then Seattle really took to the movies between 1910 and 1915. When James Q. Clemmer opened the Clemmer Theatre at 1414 Second Ave. in 1912, it was the city's first large venue constructed solely for presenting motion pictures. In 1914, Jensen and von Herberg built the Liberty Theatre across from the Pike Place Market, which boasted a seating capacity of 1,700 [Editor's note: and Wurlitzer's FIRST truly successful theatre organ]. Two years later, they topped themselves by opening the Coliseum at Fifth and Pike, dubbed the finest motion picture

house west of the Mississippi when it debuted.

By the end of 1915, no fewer than 80 new movie theatres had flung open their doors during the preceding five years. In Seattle, there was no denying that motion pictures had become a formidable challenger to the legitimate stage.

Once the downtown and Pioneer Square areas were saturated with first-run houses, exhibitors began opening modest second-run theatres throughout Seattle's growing neighborhoods. Ballard seems to have led the way with the Ballard, Crystal and Tivoli theatres as early as 1910. By 1912, the Queen Anne Theatre, West Seattle's Olympus, and other neighborhood theatres were running.

Over the next few decades, many of the city's once-glorious picture palaces were closed or torn down altogether as a result of a shifting pattern in local audiences. But many neighborhood theatres continued to flourish.