

EDMONDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

# THE PRESERVATIONIST

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## THE EDMONDS PRINCESS THEATER

The Edmonds Princess Theater was constructed in 1923 and is a great example of simple Art Deco styling. But the story of the theater and the movie theater business in Edmonds begins in a different location and more than a decade earlier.

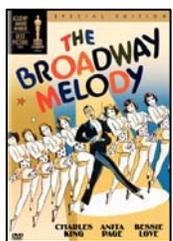
Moving pictures came to Edmonds in September, 1911 when the Odd Fellows building was leased to operate a picture show. The first permanent location was established in October 1913 when F.A. Fournier acquired the Lemley Building, on the south side of Main St. between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, where he opened the Union Theater.

The theater changed hands several times in the ensuing years, and in April 1921 was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Berry and renamed the Princess Theater.

The new owners had grander plans, and in May 1923 announced that a modern building would be erected across the street for the new Princess Theater. The building was constructed by John McGinnis.

November 1923 saw a grand opening celebration for the new theater. Festivities included the Edmonds Band and speeches by local dignitaries. The original premises became the Edmonds Electric Bakery, which still operates in this location today.

In August 1929, the first “talkie” came to Edmonds. There was a full house on hand to see “Broadway Melody.”



The theater survived the great depression though it was certainly being felt in 1932

when a ticket prices were lowered from 32c to 25c. But business was still good, and in March 1938 the Princess Theater was updated with new seats, carpets, projection lamps and sound equipment.

Helen Berry, who had run the Princess Theater for 18 years, passed away on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1941. By the time “Gone with the Wind” came to Edmonds in March



The Union Theater, later the Princess Theater, in its original location in the Lemley Building, circa 1916.



The Edmonds Princess Theater, shown here as it appeared in 1956, remains a local historic gem.



## EDMONDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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The mission of The Edmonds Historic Preservation Commission is to actively encourage the conservation and retention of the city's historic resources through initiating and maintaining a register of historic places. Toward this end, the Commission works to raise community awareness of the city's history and historic resources and serves as the city's primary resource in matters of history, historic planning, and preservation.

WE'RE ON THE WEB! [HTTP://WWW.CI.EDMONDS.WA.US/HPC.STM](http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/hpc.stm)

## PRINCESS THEATER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

of the same year, Mr and Mrs Lionel Brown, who had been involved with the Theater for more than 30 years, had taken over ownership.

In September 1942 the Princess Theater held a special Army Relief Fund benefit to support the war effort, which raised an impressive \$14,075 in War Bonds.

A refreshment counter was added in February 1948, replacing the beauty shop which had occupied the theater's west room for 23 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown sold the Theater to J.B. Geizentanner on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1952. In the late 1960s it changed hands again when retired Edmonds dentist Jaque Mayo took over ownership. The current manager is Robert Rine.

With 252 seats, the theater still holds its historic ambience. The original balcony remains intact, along with many other historic features.



**This view, circa 1921, shows the Princess Theater in its original location in the Lemley (later Chandler) Building. The Theater moved across the street to its current location in 1923, and the Edmonds Electric Bakery took over the space. The bakery still operates in this location today.**

In part to keep up with its much larger multiplex cousins, the Princess received new seats, flooring, sound system and screen in 1999. Extra care was taken during this remodel to ensure that the theater's historic character remain intact.

With first run movies, low ticket prices (and free pop-

corn for the kids), the now Edmonds Theater, radiates charm and character. It is truly a gem and a living piece of history. It is one of the last independently owned, single screen movie houses in the state and will, we hope, remain an Edmonds institution long into the future.



## VIGNETTES

FROM EDMONDS PAST

### MAIDEN VOYAGE OF THE CITY OF EDMONDS



*The Edmonds Park Band sails to Kingston to celebrate the maiden voyage of the City of Edmonds*

When the ferry City of Edmonds made its maiden voyage to Kingston on April 16, 1923, the city declared a holiday and local citizens along with the Edmonds Park Band sailed to Kingston for a picnic.