

EDMONDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

THE PRESERVATIONIST

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3 SEPTEMBER 2009

THE ODD FELLOWS HALL

In the middle of the 500 block of Main St. stands a grand old building which has born witness to our changing pioneer town for more than a century.

The Edmonds Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall at 542 Main St. was built and formally dedicated as an I.O.O.F. lodge in 1891. The Rebekka Lodge #65 Order for Woman was organized here in 1896. The building has been continuously occupied for more than 100 years and was the first, and for a long time the only, public meeting place in Edmonds.

In the mid 1890's the I.O.O.F. Grand Lodge was considering several sites for the Washington State Odd Fellows Home, a facility for the care of the widows and orphans of Order members. While the Walla Walla location was ultimately selected, Edmonds was high on the list of potential sites, and the *Proceedings Grand Lodge Washington, I.O.O.F.* from September 5th 1896, contains a detailed description of the Edmonds site as it existed at the time:

"It consists of forty acres of

land, one half of which is cleared, an orchard of forty fruit and nut trees, a three-story house containing twenty-one rooms, a good barn 36x36 feet, two stories; good out-houses, poultry yards, etc; a good stream of water runs through the land; water is conducted through iron pipes to both house and barn. The whole place, except about 5 acres, can be irrigated; has frontage of about sixty rods on Puget Sound. The Great Northern Railroad runs along the front, with contract for station when needed. The land is about

one mile from the town of Edmonds. A good country road runs from Seattle and Edmonds to the place, which is one of the most sightly places on Puget Sound."

The building is a vital thread in the fabric of our community, having served as the venue for a myriad of organizations and countless functions over the years. Many churches and other organizations used it for their services and other functions while waiting to acquire their own premises.

These included The Edmonds Masons, The American Legion, and the Edmonds Church of God. Political rallies for all parties were held there as well as stage productions, dances and school classes. Between 1909 and 1913 the Hall served as Edmonds' first motion picture theater (see *The Preservationist*, June 2009), where silent movies were accompanied by Orma Orton on the electric piano .

In 1926 the Edmonds



The Odd Fellows Hall served as Edmonds first motion picture theater between 1909 and 1913, when the Union (later Princess) Theater opened two blocks away. (see *The Preservationist*, June 2009, for more move theater history)



EDMONDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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The Preservationist is published by the City of Edmonds, Edmonds Historic Preservation Commission. Editor and desktop publishing, Larry Vogel. Back Issues available at: http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/hpc_newsroom.stm



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.

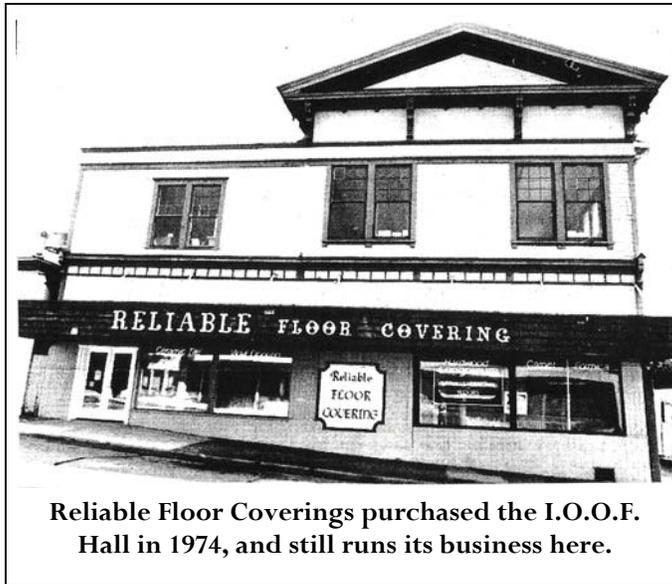
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ODD FELLOWS HALL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Chamber of Commerce held a gala celebration commemorating the newly established ferry runs to Kingston, Port Gamble, and Port Ludlow, and in 1927 the Independent Telephone Association of the State of Washington held its convention here.

The next 50 years saw numerous occupants including William Gardner's furniture store, The Vedder Garment Company, Edmonds Shurfine Foods, The Shopping Cart Grocery, Mr. Rollins' Beauty Salon, Belle's Flower shop and Steve's TV.

This well-built and well-maintained building was originally painted white with brown trim and is built in a style which depicts the pioneer's concept of the Greek classic. The taller west section of the building is the original hall, with the eastern portion being added in 1927. On August 8th 1972 the building was added to the



Reliable Floor Coverings purchased the I.O.O.F. Hall in 1974, and still runs its business here.

State level of the National Register of Historic Buildings and in 2009 was added to the Edmonds Register of Historic Places.

The building was purchased in 1974 by Reliable Floor Coverings which, 35 years later, still occupies the space. The owners have done a great deal to preserve the building. While adding some elements to tailor the build-

ing to their business including a new staircase and period windows on the west side, they are to be commended for their efforts to preserve as much as possible of the original structure.

The I.O.O.F existed in Edmonds until December 31st 2006 when the lodge charter was voluntarily surrendered.

"If these walls could speak, what a story they'd tell."

VIGNETTES

FROM EDMONDS PAST

ODD FELLOWS FLOAT STAR OF 1904 JULY 4TH PARADE



Members of the Edmonds Odd Fellows and Rebekka Lodge show off their 1904 July 4th Parade float entry.

(photo courtesy of The Edmonds Historical Museum)

The gala civic Fourth of July celebration has been a tradition in Edmonds for more than a century. The Odd Fellows and Rebekka Lodge were regular participants, as this photo attests.