

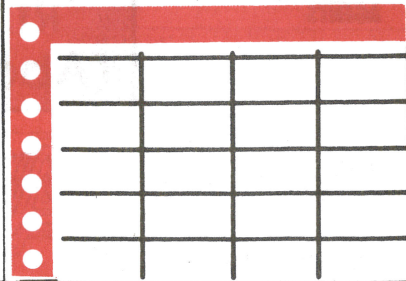
MATAWAN-ABERDEEN HOMETOWN SHOPPER™

NOW PLAYING



**THE MATAWAN
THEATRE**

**JUNE 1992
SUMMER ISSUE**



**Rivoli Theatre, 1922 - 1931
Matawan Theatre, 1931 - 1950's
(Building now occupied by Mid Towne Cleaners)
127 Main Street, Matawan
(see story on page 4)**

**MATAWAN-ABERDEEN
HOMETOWN
SHOPPER™**
P.O. Box No. 8
Matawan, NJ 07747
566-6637

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Matawan, NJ
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Rivoli Theatre
MATAWAN, N. J.

Saturday and Sunday
Mat. Sat. 2.30 P. M.—Children 10c

All Technicolor Comedy Riot!
"50 MILLION
FRENCHMEN"
— With —
OLSEN and JOHNSON
And An All Star Cast

Added Attraction
VITAPHONE SPECIAL
Henry Santrey & His Band
— AND —
OTHER ACTS AND NOVELTIES

Geran's Hall
MATAWAN, N. J.

Another High-Class
Vaudeville
Saturday Evening
Feb. 8, 1913.

Overture
Popular Melodies by
MRS. WEIMAR

JOHN EVANS
Song and Dance Artist

MISS LAURA WILLIAMS
Comediennes

HARRY DOBSON
Eccentric Comedian

FRANK HERBERT
Monologist

MISS ANNA HOWARD
Refined Melodies

JOHN NESBITT
Song, Jokes and Funny Stories

WILL HILTON
Novelty Entertainer

ADMISSION, ALL SEATS 25 CENTS
Children under 12 years, 15 cents

Performance starts at 7:30 p. m. sharp
Ticket office opened at 6:30 p. m.

NOW PLAYING

Matawan Theatres of Long Ago

As recorded by the old MATAWAN JOURNAL for the years 1913 through 1936, the townspeople of Matawan enjoyed entertainment as early as 1901 in the LYRIC THEATRE which was situated in the second story of WASHINGTON HALL for the purpose of showing motion pictures. Great crowds came from miles around to see shows presented here in Matawan. A great fire destroyed this building sometime in 1901. A new building went up and is presently the location of the MASONIC TEMPLE at 192 Main Street.

Vaudeville shows were performed at GERAN'S HALL by artists who traveled through six towns each week to entertain as shown in the 1913 advertisement reproduced on this page. This building no longer exists and was located next to the present MASONIC TEMPLE building; now part of the Central Jersey Bank and Trust Company parking lot.

The NEW LYRIC THEATRE opened on February 22, 1913 in a building now occupied by Sandford Pharmacy, 128 Main Street, Matawan. There were matinees and two shows every night. For 10¢ admission, one could see five reels of motion pictures, good music, and illustrated songs. The seating capacity was 350. An advertisement for the theatre read as follows: "Edison's latest and best machine has been installed, the theatre is well heated, ventilated, and perfectly safe. Good order and clean shows prevail." An open air theatre was built in the rear where motion pictures were shown during the summer months. There were even weekly drawings for dinner sets!

In June, 1922 the construction of a new theatre began; formerly located in a building now occupied by Mid Towne Cleaners, at 127 Main Street. It was named the RIVOLI THEATRE and opened in October of that year. The entrance was through three sets of double doors. Over the entrance was a sixteen foot half circle window. The auditorium had a seating capacity of 500. It had a sloping floor and elevated screen. In back of the screen was a fifteen foot stage across the entire building for presentation of plays and vaudeville. Overhead was a metal ceiling. The cost of the building was estimated at \$15,000. The program for the first performance consisted of five acts of vaudeville and the photoplay "The Valley of Silent Men".

Under new management, the RIVOLI THEATRE reopened in December, 1929 totally remodeled and introduced the first talking and sound pictures to be heard in Matawan. The latest features were shown at the same time they were featuring in New York City. The features changed three times each week. Admission for adults was 35¢ and 20¢ for children. In August, 1930 the RIVOLI THEATRE owner went before the council to seek approval for Sunday opening of his theatre with signed petitions of over 1,000 residents, but received strong opposition from church leaders and other residents as they felt "Matawan's Sunday should be preserved as a day of rest in order to worship." The theatre did open on Sunday but after church services were over. The RIVOLI closed for a while due to hard times, and the soreness left by the Sunday picture showing. The theatre also did not keep up with the progress of time.

In November, 1931, the old RIVOLI THEATRE, under new ownership, became known as the new MATAWAN THEATRE, totally renovated, two aisles instead of one, with a new marquee.

The newest Western Electric sound system was installed with new drapes throughout the building to break up the echo.

A November 6, 1931 news article announcing the opening of the new MATAWAN THEATRE read "It is to be hoped the people of Matawan will take advantage of the opportunity offered them and attend their hometown playhouse in order that it may better serve the community with good pictures at a very modest cost." During the 1930's, the MATAWAN THEATRE was leased to several managements. The theatre remained opened until the 1950's.

Cover:

MATAWAN 1686-1936, by the Federal Writers' Project
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Material in this article obtained from Matawan Journal news clippings about theatres during the period 1913-1936.

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