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6/19/87

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Alexis Opera House  
other names/site number McKnight Hardware Store

### 2. Location

street & number 101-105 N. Main Street  not for publication  
city, town Alexis  vicinity  
state Illinois code 012 county Warren code 187 zip code 61412

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>        </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

*Michael D. ...* Signature of certifying official June 15, 1987 Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Recreation and Culture -- music facility  
Commerce/Trade -- department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Commerce/Trade -- specialty store

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival  
Commercial Style

foundation Limestone  
walls Brick, glass  
roof asphalt  
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Alexis Opera House is located on the northwest corner of Main Street and Broadway, Alexis, Warren County, Illinois. The two story detached brick commercial building measures approximately 60 feet by 64 feet, and it stands at its original location at the northern end of the two and one half block long Main Street business district. The building, which has excellent integrity in terms of its design, materials and workmanship, is the largest standing 19th century commercial structure in the community. To the north stands a two story wooden commercial building, and to the west (rear of the building) is located a contemporary one story brick structure which once served as a livery stable.

Constructed in 1889, the Alexis Opera House incorporates three commercial storefronts on the first, or ground floor, and the lobby, box office, and open opera house space on the second floor. The front, or east facade is composed of three bays, each with a recessed glass storefront and brick second story. Lit by large plate glass windows supported by two slim cast iron columns, the store facades are decorated with clerestory windows bordered with stained glass blocks. Tall double doors with upper glass panels are at the center of each store entrance. Second story windows are arranged in threes in each bay, with a large center window and two narrow side windows. Clerestory windows at the second story level are delineated by limestone stringcoursing below. Each bay is divided by brick piers which are corbelled at the second story level and rise through the parapet roofline to create a crenellated effect. Decorative brickwork at the parapet level and limestone stringcoursing below and above the second story windows add variety to an otherwise plain common bond masonry building.

The side, or south, facade is divided into four bays, each with a slightly different window/door composition. The rear, or westernmost bay, contains the large, double door entrance to the opera house at the street level and a window with clerestory section at the second story. The entrance has a transom window and jack arch lintel. The next bay forward has a square first story window and a window and clerestory window above. The third bay has a

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first story square window and on the second story there is a large semicircular window divided into three vertical sections and decorated with a limestone sill and two brick piers with stone caps below the sill. This window is positioned in the center of the rear wall of the opera house auditorium space. The two first story double hung windows have rusticated limestone sills and flat lintels. The easternmost bay has a storefront plate glass window and a window and clerestory window at the second story level. Each bay has decorative brickwork at the parapet level, and each is divided by corbelled piers at the second story level. Limestone stringcoursing divides the first and second story, and the second story and parapet level. Rusticated limestone foundation blocks are visible just above the concrete sidewalk.

The rear, or west, facade has five bays. Three tall windows with segmental arched clerestory sections light the interior lobby space on the second floor. The two northernmost windows have retained the metal fixtures for exterior shutters. A door at the second story level leads to the storage room adjacent to the stage at the north end of the building. (The stair which ran parallel to the rear wall and provided access to this door is no longer in existence.) On the first floor a single tall window and door are found at the north and middle store rooms. Access to the south store room is also provided by a rear door. Two exterior stairwells lead to the basement below the north and middle store rooms. The side, or north, facade is a solid brick wall with no window or door openings. This is due to the close proximity of the building to the north which stands approximately two feet away from the opera house building.

The Alexis Opera House has a limestone foundation with several courses of brick support below the metal storefront stoops. The building is supported by two interior loadbearing walls which extend from the basement through the first floor store rooms. They serve to divide the three store rooms. The basement has an unfurnished, dirt floor. The storefront cast iron columns and metal stoops were supplied by the Frost Manufacturing Company of Galesburg, Illinois. The opera house auditorium space is supported by six metal columns; two at either side of the stage, two in the center of the room, and two to the rear. Both floors and roof are supported by frame construction. The building has two chimneys, one small concrete block chimney at the northwest corner of the building, and the other centered on the west wall of the theater space. The slightly sloping roof (from east to west) is finished in tarpaper and asphalt.

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The interior of the first floor of the building is simply arranged with three store spaces extending the full depth of the building, except for the southern room, the rear of which has been partitioned off as a separate office with a stair to the second floor to its rear. A small bathroom is located beneath the stair. The middle store has a small partitioned office in the right rear corner. This remodelling has recently been completed by the present owners. The northern room presently stands unaltered. Each store originally had built-in counters and wall shelves. All but one counter has been removed from the south store room. The middle store has had all of the built-ins removed, and the north store room retains all built-in fixtures. Each store room also retains the raised wooden display platforms immediately inside the store windows. Access between the store rooms was through wide openings in the loadbearing walls approximately forty feet to the rear. The doorway from the south store room to the middle store is being remodelled by shortening and narrowing it. The door from the middle store to the north store has been drywalled and plastered, and it is no longer visible. The original wooden floors have been covered with plywood and floorcovering. At some earlier time the original ceilings were dropped slightly and finished in wood slat and plaster panels. Interior woodworking are either plain frames with no ornamentation, or a molded frame with decorated incised corner blocks. The only exterior alteration is the removal of the original double doors on the south storefront. Presently, a metal and glass door has been placed into the original door opening.

The interior of the second floor is occupied by the lobby or foyer for the theater space, a box office, the opera house auditorium and stage area, a general purpose room, and storage room for props and backdrops. Finished in shiplap panelling, a grand, wide stairway leads from the first floor entrance at the southwest corner of the building to a spacious two-story lobby. (See floor plan sketch.) The box office is located at the southwest corner of the lobby, and it also doubled as a cloak room. A double door opposite the box office enters the actual house area of the theater. Two tall, large shuttered windows on the interior wall between the lobby and house area provided ventilation for the upper rooms. To the north of the lobby is a large, all-purpose room, and to its rear is a narrow storage room for theater props. The stage area is entered through this storage room by a short flight of open stairs. The house area is finished with shiplap wainscoting (as is the lobby) and plaster walls and ceiling above. Essentially rectangular in plan, the house area is lit by two sets of triple windows on the east, and two windows on either side of a semicircular window on the south. The stage is flanked by two angled walls, and a doorway to the left of the stage leads to the stage wing. The stage wall is decorated with ornamental metal cornices and faceted columns which have a foliage design below the simple capital. Dark colored studs punctuate the double row of cornices. Elegant wallpaper panels picturing dancing muses appear on the walls flanking the stage.

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The stage area is remarkably intact, including four of the original eight backdrop sets and the front curtain. Two dressing rooms, lighting board, and curtain machinery platform are located one half flight of stairs up stage right. The unfinished dressing rooms have metal clothing hooks on the walls and they show the faint remains of graffiti left by the many performers at the theater. All of the backdrop flats and curtains have the names of past actors written on them. An interesting feature of the stage is a trap door located directly in the center. In its heyday the opera house was lit by kerosene lamps. The stage was constructed with a footlight trough designed to hold the v-shaped lamps. The trough is inscribed with these warning words: "This is not a cuspidor!" The kerosene lamps were replaced with electric lights, and reflectors were suspended from the stage ceiling. None of the original house furniture or the large stove which heated the space have survived. However, the sheetmetal floor pad for the stove is intact.

The dimensions of the theater are as follows:

House: 40 ft., 6 in. -- width  
45 ft. -- length

Stage: 13 ft., 8 in. -- height  
20 ft. -- width  
41 ft. -- length

Wing space: 7 ft., 6 in. - width (stage right and left)

Proscenium Arch -- 26 ft. -- width

The integrity of the opera house building is excellent. Structurally, the building is basically sound. However, some sill replacement is needed on the east side of the building. Window alterations have taken place over time, including the boarding up of several second story windows and portions of two storefront windows. Exterior door and interior store alterations have been previously discussed. The curtain and backdrop sets on the stage are in poor condition, due to water damage and natural weathering. They are in need of immediate conservation. Water damage is also apparent on the stage walls, causing the wallpaper to discolor and detach itself from the wall.

Approximately twenty feet to the rear of the opera house building is a one-story rectangular brick structure which served as the livery stable for the opera house. It appears to be contemporaneous with the opera house. The street, or south, facade has a large opening with sliding wooden doors; wide

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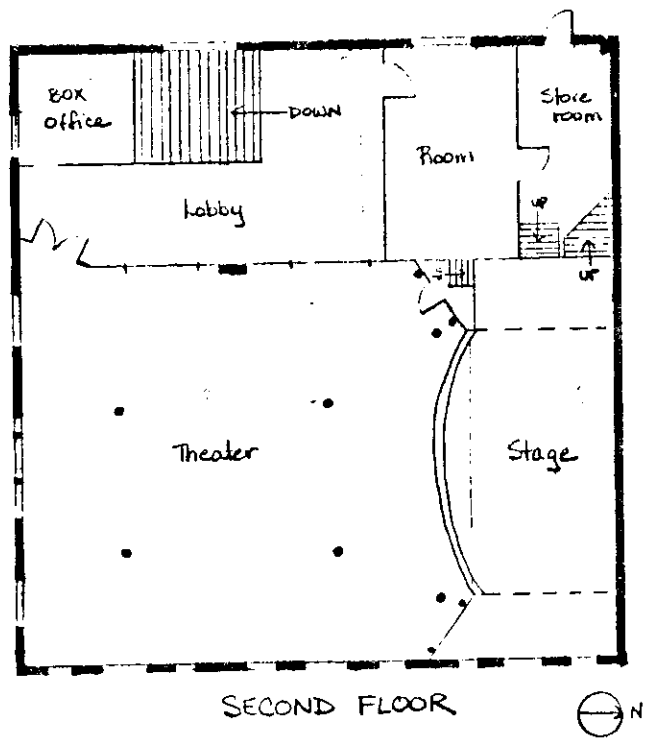
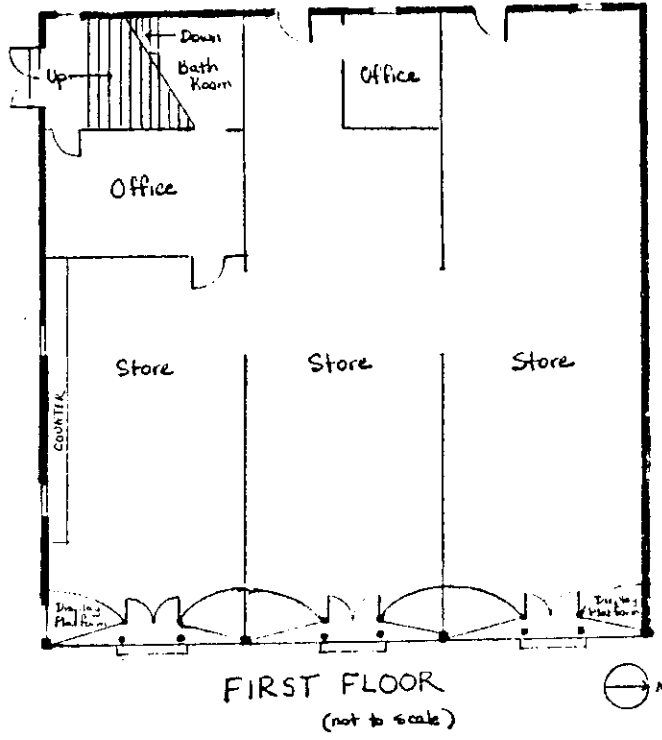
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enough for horses or carriages to enter. The east facade has a centrally located door with a segmental arch lintel and sidelights, and two double hung windows to either side. The rear facade has one window and an exterior chimney. The west facade has only one window opening at the north end of the facade. The plain gable roof of the building is covered with metal sheeting. The building is presently unoccupied., and it is in fair condition.

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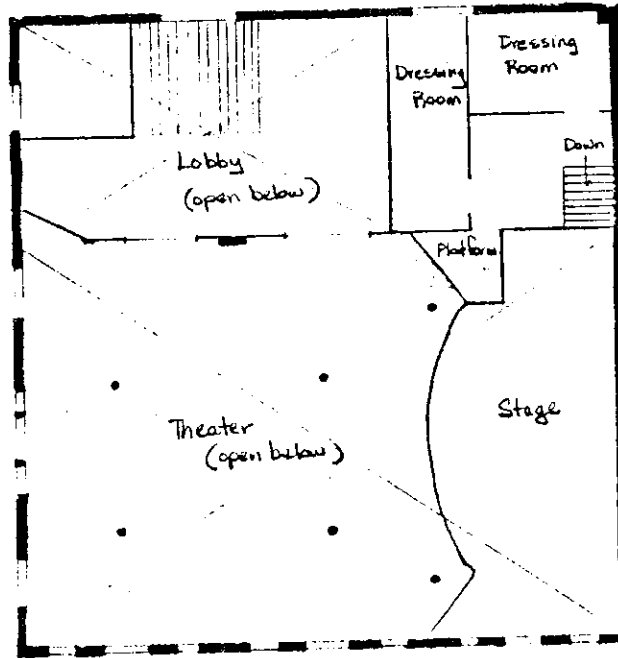
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THIRD FLOOR





**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance  
1889-1920

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Alexis Opera House meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a locally significant building associated with an important grassroots trend in American cultural and entertainment history during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; namely, the widespread demand by rural and small communities for cultural and intellectual entertainment that required a specialized theatrical facility, the opera house. Economic prosperity and the growing network of railroads made it possible for smaller communities in Illinois, and elsewhere in the country, to accommodate amateur and professional entertainment which earlier had been enjoyed, for the most part, only by larger communities. In addition to its theatrical function, the opera house was often utilized for a wide variety of purposes, including community events. The Opera House

"functioned in its community as an integrating force, the catalyst that brought together all aspects of the society that surrounded it. These aspects, political, social, intellectual, religious, aesthetic, humanistic and recreational, were experienced by people meeting together at a common place, the Opera House, to share in such experiences and to discuss them. The Opera House was a forum where local decisions and values were forged."<sup>1</sup>

Townspople and local farming families were entertained and gathered for public meetings and events at Alexis' opera house. Built in 1889, it provided a stage not only for theatricals, but also for the rural community's social life and intellectual and cultural development. Although Alexis was never any larger than 1,000 people, it supported a cultural institution found in communities ten or hundred times its size.

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The history of the small town opera house is linked to the extraordinary expansion of the theater during the last three decades of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> Stage entertainment had included since earlier in the century several specialized forms. Variety, "Tom Shows" (touring productions of Uncle Tom's Cabin), the circus, burlesque, and minstrel shows were organized to operate on an unprecedented national scale after 1870. Previously, a small community may have entertained itself with local theatrical groups, however, about 1870 the road show, or touring company, began making its impact on the cultural life of smaller cities and towns. Few companies were in operation before the 1870s, in part because transportation was restricted to stagecoach, riverboat, and relatively few rail lines between major cities. However, with the expansion of the railroad system, by 1880 road show bookings in smaller communities were possible and sought after. Rural towns, such as Alexis, more than likely made bookings with regional touring repertoire companies, rather than those based out of New York. These stock troupes were to become 2000 strong by 1910.<sup>3</sup>

The design of buildings constructed for entertainment purposes in small towns and villages was influenced by the growth of the theater business. Before the Civil War, social and cultural events were held in general utility halls which were usually located on an upper floor of a larger building. Public halls very often were no more than long, rectangular rooms designed to accommodate dinners and dances, as well as theater performances. A stage or sloping house floor for improved viewing of theater entertainment were rare design features in small public halls. Structures specifically designed as playhouses generally began to appear in small towns after 1870. The increase in theatrical activity caused small town businessmen to build opera house that met the needs of the touring company. However, like general utility halls, they were often used for non-dramatic events and many were situated above commercial establishments. While the stage was a crucial feature for the increasingly popular touring company, the floor of the house area usually remained flat and furnished with removable chairs or benches. Sometimes small balconies were constructed at the rear and sides of the room. Exceptions always prove the rule, for some small towns, such as Raritan, Illinois, constructed separate buildings to serve as opera houses. However, the Alexis Opera House, with its three storefronts on the street level and opera house space above, was typical of the late 19th century small town theater building.

It was important for opera houses to have the latest stage improvements in order to attract the better and more elaborate touring companies. Opera houses were designed to have dressing rooms, set scenery, lighting and curtain machinery, and trapdoors. Although Alexis' opera house had several of these features, it was essentially a small time operation which, more than likely, was never able to accommodate large, national touring companies. Nevertheless, its two, unfinished dressing rooms, one trapdoor, and eight sets of scenery were more than adequate for regional troupes and local theatricals.

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Opera houses also differed from the earlier halls in regard to their operation. Community halls were usually the direct responsibility of the owner of the building. Local groups would rent the room for public events, and the owner would not actively solicit bookings. Due to the public demand for regularly scheduled theater entertainment, opera houses required managers specifically hired to make theater bookings and schedule other community programs.<sup>4</sup> William S. Weir, the owner of the Alexis Opera House, hired the cashier of his bank, W. R. Stevenson, to manage his opera house. The Alexis Opera House also provided a livery stable at the rear of the building for theatergoers who came on horseback or by carriage.

An assessment of the extent of small town opera houses in Illinois is necessary to establish a context for the property type. In 1981 a survey mailed to all Illinois towns with a population of under 10,000 resulted in approximately 200 responses with information about the local opera house. Of the 200 communities, 71 structures were still standing in various stages of repair.<sup>5</sup> In many cases, the buildings had limited historic integrity due to remodelling, neglect, and abandonment. Alexis' opera house was included in the 71 buildings, and due to its excellent physical integrity, both on the exterior and interior, it is an excellent candidate for listing in the National Register. Further field investigation of Illinois' small town opera houses is needed to determine the present extent of the property type and the physical integrity of each structure.

At present, 5 opera houses are individually listed in Illinois in the National Register of Historic Places: the Sesser Opera House, Sesser; Galva Opera House, Galva; McCartney Music Hall, Metropolis; Woodstock Opera House, Woodstock; and Phoenix Opera House, Rushville. In terms of its physical integrity, the Alexis Opera House compares favorably with the above listed buildings. In terms of the property type, the Galva, Metropolis, and Rushville buildings are similar in that they have street level commercial spaces and a second floor opera house space. The Sesser and Woodstock buildings are detached structures built to either house only a opera house, in the case of the Sesser Opera House, or several community services, as at Woodstock. The Alexis Opera House is a good representative of a late 19th century small town opera house, and it is worthy of being listed.

During the latter part of the 19th century and into the 20th century, national theater/public hall directories were published to assist touring companies, theater/hall owners and managers, and agents in making bookings. Four directories, dating from 1870, 1878, 1884 and 1908, were surveyed. They contained theater/hall listings for a total of 216 Illinois cities and towns. Sweet's Amusement Directory & Travelers Guide of 1870-71 listed 24 Illinois cities. Eight years later, 132 communities were included in Jno. B. Jeffery's

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Guide and Directory. The season of 1884-85 in Harry Miner's American Dramatic Directory recorded 178 communities with theatrical facilities. By 1908 Illinois had 127 listings in Julius Cahn's Official Theatrical Guide. The majority of the listings in each directory were for larger towns (over 1,500 population) and cities. This is particularly apparent when comparing the 1981 survey of 71 communities with extant opera houses with the directories. Only 26 of these smaller towns were included in the directories. Although a complete survey of all theater directory editions has not been completed, it is very probable that small towns not advertised in the directory, such as Alexis, did not receive many, if any, bookings from the national circuit of touring companies. More than likely regional companies, which catered to the small town and regularly returned each successful season, were the bulk of Alexis' bookings.

The history of the town of Alexis is typical of many agriculture-based service communities in Illinois and the midwest. Platted in 1870, a year later the future of Alexis was assured with the completion of the Rockford, Rock Island and St. Louis Railroad line to the village. Alexis is located 30 miles south of Rock Island and 13 miles northeast of the Warren County seat, Monmouth. It served as the commercial and transportation center for the farms immediately surrounding the town and several small nearby villages. The town grew quickly and in 1873 an election was held to establish a town government. In 1874 Alexis had eight passenger trains a day and four freight trains. The 1877 history of Warren County recorded that the books of the railroad company "show that from this point there has been shipped 500 cars of stock a year, and sometimes 140 cars of grain per month."<sup>6</sup> Major local industries were the Alexis tile and brick works (1878-1920s?) and the Alexis Pottery Company (1892-1900), originally called the Alexis Stoneware Company. A variety of smaller businesses flourished during the 19th century including wagon and carriage shops, a creamery, flouring mill, lumber yards, and many retail establishments. In 1887 the community of approximately 400 people opened the first of its banks, the Bank of Alexis. Alexis also suffered from a number of major fires (1878, 1879, 1890, and 1917), each destroying a portion of the business district.

There are references to two halls in Alexis prior to the opera house. The first was Churchill and Wray's hall where the first town elections were held. No additional information as to its location or description has been found. During the 1870s two Alexis businessmen, George Evans and John Blayney built a two-story frame building on the west side of Main Street. A general store was housed on the street level, and the second floor was reserved as a hall for the community. It was used for meetings, and although the appearance of the interior hall space is not known, more than likely it was a large room with a

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flat floor and no stage. The lack of abundant water in town and the history of disastrous fires in Alexis may have prompted W. S. Weir, the president of the Bank of Alexis, to invest in the construction of a substantial masonry structure for his new opera house in 1889.

William S. Weir, a very successful Monmouth businessman, was familiar with opera houses, as Monmouth had two such theater facilities. The Opera House (listed in both the 1878 and 1884 directories) could accommodate 1,500 people and "first-class troupes" were encouraged to book there.<sup>7</sup> Claycomb's Hall had a seating capacity of 800 and appears to have had a stage. Weir's interests in Alexis had begun in 1887 with the Bank of Alexis, and the Alexis Opera House was undoubtedly viewed as another good investment in the growing community. Evans and Blayney's hall would continue to serve as a meeting place, but theatricals would patronize the well-equipped opera house. During the summer of 1889, the Monmouth Daily Review regularly reported on the construction progress of the building. Built of local brick and lumber, the owner commissioned H.B. Keller of Columbus, Ohio to design the scenic front curtain. On November 1, 1889, the May Bretonne Company was the first theatrical troupe to play the Alexis Opera House.<sup>8</sup>

For the next 30 years, the Alexis Opera House hosted out-of-town entertainment and opened its doors for local theatrical events and public programs. As early as May of 1890 the Alexis High School held its commencement at the opera house, and it would continue to do so until the theater closed in 1920. Although the local newspapers from 1890 to 1917 have been lost, information about groups playing in Alexis can be gleaned from the Monmouth Daily Review, the stage set graffiti, and the memories of Alexis citizens. In 1969 Helen Pollack, a Monmouth College student, wrote a paper on the Alexis Opera House which drew from many interviews with local people. She writes that "an advertisement for the opera house once read: 'one attraction every three weeks'. . . Such attractions as the Crow Sisters, Blind Boom, and John Thomas appeared there in the early years. . . Thomas was a top-notch comedian while Blind Boom was a singer of songs and player of the piano."<sup>9</sup> In the February 1, 1895 issue of the Monmouth Daily Review the Lyceum Theatre Company was reported to be scheduled to perform for a week beginning February 4. Lectures were also held -- the Rev. C.N. Thomas appeared on a Monday evening, December 23, 1895. The topic of his lecture is not disclosed. Inscriptions on the backs of flats read "C. Tubs, April 13, 1897; Hazel Adams, July 14, 1898; and Ella Gladman, pianist, September 1 and 2, 1898." The Georgia Troubadors entertained the town on August 29, 1910, and the Matherville Dramatic Company played a one-night stand on February 28, 1914, with Professor Arkle performing dances between acts. Local use of the building included a Social Party on October 23, 1890; a public meeting regarding the proposed electric plant in February, 1895; the firemen's ball on

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January 7, 1904 and January 6, 1905; the senior class play, "Little Ruby", in the spring of 1905; an open meeting of the Warren County Fair on Friday, October 13, 1913 with entertainment by the Monmouth Glee Club; and a local production of "The Count of Babylon" on April 15-16, 1915. During its final years, the Alexis Argus (for which issues are only available after December 6, 1917) reported a steady stream of local performances and meetings at the Opera House. On December 6, 1917 united evangelistic services, under the auspices of Alexis' churches, ran a half page advertisement promising "Good Preaching!, Inspiring Music!, and A Hearty Welcome." The services were held nightly, and the newspaper reported on December 20 that the "Monday evangelist meeting covered patriotic songs and lectures." It is interesting to note that although Alexis had a new movie theater by 1913, the opera house continued to hold live performances and meetings until the fire marshall closed it due to code violation. The Alexis Argus read on June 17, 1920: "WILL CLOSE ALEXIS OPERA HOUSE -- STATE FIRE MARSHALL SETS ALEXIS BACK A DECADE BY HIS INSISTANCE ON CHANGES." William A. McKnight, who had acquired the building 3 months earlier, would never make the changes required to open the opera house again. A fire escape was needed and the marshall stipulated that the chairs had to be fastened to the floor. "To accomodate [sic] this fellow would make the hall good for shows only, and would mean quite an expense and considering these facts Mr. McKnight has decided to close the opera house and may convert it into undertaking parlors." McKnight operated a hardware store and undertaking business in the building until 1950.

There is little doubt that for the people of Alexis the opera house was a "forum" where emotions were could be expressed, opinions given, decisions made, and pleasure and instruction appreciated. Events as important as the results of a national election were transmitted directly to the opera house by telegraph.<sup>13</sup> The coming of electricity to Alexis was publicly discussed in the theater. The community coped with the sorrows and hardships of World War I by sponsoring fairs, benefit dances, lectures, and evangelical services. No other hall in the community could physically accommodate these events, but also no other meeting place could extend itself to all portions of Alexis' society. The opera house was apolitical, nondenominational, and open to all ages, occupations, and cultures. Throughout its 30 year period of operation the Alexis Opera House was an important outlet for the imagination and energy of the community.

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ENDNOTES

1. Jerrilee Cain, Illinois Opera House: A Time of Glory, (Macomb: Western Illinois University, 1982), p. 3
2. William Lawrence Slout, Theatre in a Tent: The Development of a Provincial Entertainment, (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), p. 1-21.
3. Helen Pollack, "The Alexis Opera House: A Study of a Small Town Theatre," (unpublished paper, Monmouth College, 1969), p. 3
4. Slout, op. cit., p. 6.
5. Cain, op. cit., p. 9

The following towns were listed as having standing opera houses:

Alexis	Altona	Amboy	Anna	Arthur
Benson	Bowen	Bushnell	Camp Point	Carbondale
Carterville	Chadwick	Crossville	Cuba	Du Quoin
Ellisville	Enfield	Equality	Farina	Farmersville
Fillmore	Galva	Gardner	Grafton	Grayville
Greenup	Hanover	Harvard	Hennepin	Hillsboro
Industry	Irving	Latham	LeRoy	Lewistown
Lostant	Medora	Metamora	Metropolis	Millstadt
Murphysboro	Ohio	Orion	Oquawka	Orangeville
Pawnee	Pecatonica	Philo	Pinckneyville	Plainfield
Raritan	Reddick	Rochelle	Sandwich	Sesser
Staunton	Stewardson	Tremont	Vermont	Versailles
Viola	Warren	Warsaw	Waterloo	Watseka
Webster	Williamsville	Wilmington	Woodstock	Wyoming

6. The Past and Present of Warren County, Illinois, (Chicago: H.F. Kett & Co., 1877), p. 168.
7. John B. Jeffrey, Jno. B. Jeffrey's Guide and Directory (1878), p. 46.
8. Pollack, op. cit., p. 20.
9. Ibid., p. 24.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Alexis Argus, selected issues from 1917-1920.  
 Cahn, Julius, Julius Cahn's Official Theatrical Guide, Vol. XIII. New York: Empire Theatre Building, 1908.  
 Cain, Jerrilee. Illinois Opera House: A Time of Glory. Macomb: Western Illinois University, 1982.  
 Centennial Alexis 1870-1970: The American Home of the Clydesdale. Alexis, Illinois, 1970.  
 Bateman, Newton (ed.). Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Warren County, Vol. II. Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1903.  
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See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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7	10	5	3	8	10
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4	15	4	18	4	10	10
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies lots #31, 32 and 33 in the city of Alexis with an additional parcel of land adjacent to the west which measures 50 feet to the west and 65 feet, north to south. The north and south boundary lines of the additional parcel are an extension of the north line of lot #33 and the south line of lot #31.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Ann V. Swallow date \_\_\_\_\_  
 organization Illinois Historic Preservation Agency telephone 217-785-4512  
 street & number Old State Capitol state Illinois zip code 62701  
 city or town Springfield



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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- Dunbar, Willis Frederick. "The Opera House as a Social Institution in Michigan." Michigan History Magazine, Vol. 27 (Oct.-Dec., 1943).
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- The Past and Present of Warren County, Illinois. Chicago, H.F. Kett & Co., 1877.
- Poggi, Jack. Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968.
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- Sozen, Joyce Lorraine Chalcraft. "Annals of the Opera House in Beardstown, Illinois, from 1872-1900." M.A. University of Illinois, Urbana, 1957.
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The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were excluded from a previous notice:

CONNECTICUT, Fairfield County, Stamford, Turn-of-River Bridge, Old N. Stamford Rd. at Rippowam River (07/31/87)

CONNECTICUT, New London County, Preston, Preston City Historic District, Amos, Old Shetucket & NW Corner Rds., & CT 164 (07/31/87)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Best Brewing Company of Chicago Building, 1315—1317 W. Fletcher (07/30/87)

ILLINOIS, Warren County, Alexis, Alexis Opera House, 101—105 N. Main St. (07/30/87)

IOWA, Henry County, Mt. Pleasant vicinity, Pleasant Lawn School Historic District, Off IA 218 (03/25/87)

MISSOURI, St. Louis County, Jennings, Seed, Miles A., Carriage House, 2456 Hord Ave., rear (03/25/87)

WASHINGTON, Klickitat County, Glenwood vicinity, Whitcomb Cabin (Proposed Move), 8 mi. S of Glenwood along County Rd. 163 (07/30/87)

The following properties have been removed from the National Register of Historic Places:

FLORIDA, Duval County, Jacksonville, La Villa Boarding Houses, 830, 832, & 836 Houston St. (02/24/81)

MAINE, Kennebec County, Gardiner, Christian Science Church, 17 Lincoln Ave. (08/05/87)

MAINE, Oxford County, Lovell, Knight's Country Store, ME 5A (08/05/87)

OHIO, Clinton County, Wilmington, Smith Place School, N. South St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, Newburgh Town Hall, 9213 Miles Rd. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Erie County, Sandusky, Exchange Hotel, 202—204 E. Water St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Erie County, Sandusky, Ohio Theatre (Sandusky MRA), 205—211 W. Market St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Fairfield County, Canal Winchester vicinity, Loucks Covered Bridge, Township Rd. 207 (10/29/85)

OHIO, Fairfield County, Pickerington vicinity, Stemen Road Covered Bridge, Violet Township Rd. 226 (10/29/85)

OHIO, Hamilton County, Cincinnati, Salway, William, House (Samuel Hannaford & Sons TR), Gray & Winton Sts. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Lucas County, Toledo, Wheeler Block, 402 Monroe St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Mahoning County, Youngstown, Idora Park Merry-Go-Round, Idora Park on Canfield Rd. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Muskingum County, Zanesville, Achauer-Linser Brewery and Mansion, 978—988 E. Main St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Muskingum County, Zanesville, Zanesville YMCA, 34 S. Fifth St. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Richland County, Mansfield, Spreng, Wilfred, J., House (Park Avenue West MRA), 414 Park Ave. W. (10/29/85)

OHIO, Shelby County, New Barn vicinity, Turtle Creek Culvert and Embankment, W of New Barn (10/29/85)

OHIO, Summit County, Peninsula vicinity, Everett Road Covered Bridge, SW of Peninsula (10/29/85)