



THE STRAND THEATER



The late 1910's to 1967

Photos Pettitt Photo Service

(Excerpts from The Douglas County Museum Cabin Chatter by Lynnita Brown.)

The history of Tuscola's **Strand Theater** can be traced back to the late 1910's. Lester E. "Brownie" Linton had established what was to become Tuscola's grandest theater. Frieda Rhodes was playing the piano and cueing pictures at the time the Linton's owned the Strand because it was still the era of silent movies. In 1929 George Barber came from southern Illinois to purchase the Strand. In October of 1929 new equipment arrived which allowed talking pictures. During the 1930's Barber bought the Hunt's



George Barber

Grocery Store building which was located between the Library and the Douglas Hotel for a temporary theater while the Strand on W. Sale St. was being remodeled. Jim and Peg Pettitt bought the building after the new movie house was ready for occupancy sometime after September of 1938. Ted Cox had moved to Tuscola from Arcola in 1938 and became the staff pianist to accompany radio personalities when they sang.



Ted Cox

The newly remodeled Strand Theater held 600 patrons in comfortable chairs rather than the previous 375

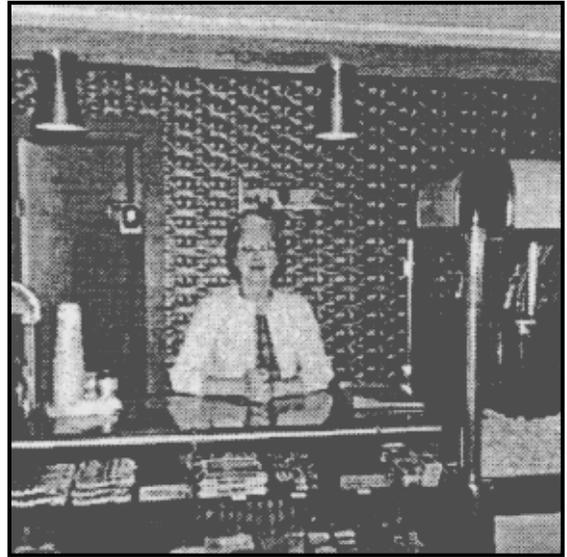
wooden seats in the old movie house. Delbert Kinney did the electrical wiring. The basement held an air-conditioning system which featured a 5,000 gallon tank to hold ice, as well as a circulating pump. John Chapman and Chester Brinkley hauled ice in 300 pound blocks from Tuscola's ice plant. A fan blew cool air across the theater. Bob Stallsworths and Dale Mooday remember hauling the ice also.

Delbert Kinney remembered an orchestra playing in the orchestra pit of the Strand every Sunday afternoon before the show. Well-known entertainers included: Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, Smiley Burnette and the Hilton Siamese twins. Children paid five cents to see a movie in 1938. This was not the only theater that was located between the library and hotel. Milas Thomas, TCHS 1927, remembered that the **Globe Theater** existed on that block in about 1920. Kelsey's furniture showroom on E. Sale St. is now part of that building. **Kenny Hinkle** also ran a movie house on W. North Central Ave. Naomi Wartens said that her mother, Hazel Sterling play the piano when silent movies showed at Hinkle's. Harry Sherman Marsh remembered seeing Ben Hur there for the first time in 1929.

In the 1950's, Myrtle Froman became the first female theater manager after the Kerosotes theater chain bought the Strand from Barber. Myrtle was assisted by her husband, Montelle, and children, Monte and Mona. On December 25, 1967 the theater burned down. The fire had started in the Montgomery Ward store next door and came under control early Christmas morning.



Strand Ad
February 28, 1938



Myrtle Froman



Among the children pictured here:
R to L: Michelle and Dirk Allen, Ann Charnetzki, Sandi Helm,
Lynnita Aldridge, Cheryl Carnine, Debbie and Cathie Cooley,
Nancy Horath, ?, Sara Rowe, and Edie and Charlie Nater.

George Barber built the Tuscola Drive-In in 1953 on ground leased from Ivan Rahn. In 1960, George sold the Drive-In theater to Kerasotes theater chain and Myrtle Froman managed it along with her family. The theater closed in the late 1970's.



Dale Mooday became the circuit manager for George Barber and has fond memories. In 1999 he completed this scale model of the Strand complete with lights and all.



Tuscola Drive-In Theater



Mona, Montelle and Mrytle Froman

