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Clanton Moving Picture Shows/Theatres History

By Derric Scott

The information in this article is from online Union Banner newspapers. I welcome any additional information or corrections. The focus is on movie theatres, however in the early days buildings would often double as venues for live entertainment.

1909 April – a new (stage) theatre opened in Chandler's building with the play, "*A Terrible Tinker - A Farce in 1 Act*," by Thomas J. Williams, written 1867. The Chandler Building was the 2nd store east of the railroad on the south side of 2nd Ave.

1911 August – "Clanton now has a new **Moving Picture Show**." This may be the first reference to a movie theatre.

1913 July/August – "**The Picture Show** is drawing good crowds."

1913 September – "**The Lyric Theatre** will be moving into the Mullins building on 2nd Ave N, with opera chairs and other improvements."

1913 December and **1914 February** – **The Lyric Theatre** was presenting concerts and other live entertainment, including "Baby Athlone" – a ten-year old singing star, Montevallo Minstrels, and vaudeville acts.

1915 May – **Dixie Theatre** manager, Brit Allen, was called home to Athens, Alabama due to the death of his father. A couple of weeks later he sold the theatre to W. L. Stapleton of Bay Minette. Stapleton "will continue using the Mutual service" (one of the first movie distribution companies).

1915 June – "electric fans have been placed in **the picture show**." In August it is "drawing good crowds."

1915 October – Ed Driver sold the **Dixie Theatre** to Rowe and Odom of Prattville.

1916 April – "**Dixie Theatre** tickets are for sale by John Teel."

1916 August – **Dixie Theatre** re-opened, Sept 2, 1916, under new management of P. C. Smith "at the **Candy Store**." It was advertised in March 1917 as the **Ideal Theatre** so it seems likely it was renamed by the new owner.

October Meeting: Sunday, October 11, 2020, 2 PM

OCTOBER VIRTUAL "ZOOM" MEETING

Download the Zoom app from your phone App Store or the program for your computer at:

https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting

For help, contact me: Derric Scott, 205-531-5590

Test meeting Sunday, October 4, 2 PM

I need Email addresses or cell phone numbers for everyone in order to send the meeting ID. CALL ME!

CREDITS: *Chiltonian* is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.

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Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644

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Individual \$10 Family \$15

Student \$ 5 Lifetime: \$250

NOTE: On your address label, the two-digits after your name is the year through which you are paid. "L" = lifetime

1917 March – Mention was made that people were happy that the "picture show" (**Ideal Theatre**) "in the rear of the **Candy Store**" had been reopened by Mr. P. C. Smith. Advertisements appeared for the **Ideal Theatre**.



1917 Sanborn Fire Ins. Map



Union Banner - May 2, 1918

1921 June 13 – Paul C. Smith, owner of the **Candy Store** and later the **Ideal Theatre**, died suddenly. He was buried in Pinehill Cemetery, Jemison.

1921 October – apparently after P. C. Smith's death, the **Candy Store** closed and by October W. A. Reynolds was running a general store in "the old **Candy Store**." The **Ideal**

Theatre was sold in December 1921 and was bought by Frank Hardee of Anniston. He renamed it **The Strand** and renovated it to be a “first class amusement house.”

1922 June – C. W. Wade of Calera opened the Clanton **Wadesonian Theatre**. He had bought out **The Strand Theatre** a few weeks before and was “making a new home for the show.” He remodeled the old Baptist Church building: “the windows have been stopped up, a large stage built with dressing rooms on either side, a balcony built for the colored people, inside painted and varnished, equipped with several electric fans, and for seating there are nice opera chairs. Soon he will have two shows a week, on Tuesday and Saturday.” Unfortunately, this was short-lived and the old Baptist Church burned at 1:30 A. M. on Sunday morning, August 5th 1923. Shows were temporarily run in the Miles Garage Building (Downs Warehouse).

1924 February – “Mr. C. W. Wade has moved his picture show from the **Downs Warehouse** building into the building on the west side of the railroad recently vacated by Mr. B. L. Jones.” New seats have been installed. He also ran shows in Thorsby, Calera, Montevallo, Columbiana, and Maplesville.



Wadesonian near opening in 1924



New Wadesonian ca. 1950s

1936 April – C. W. Wade and son Charles opened the **New Wadesonian Theatre** on April 15th with all new equipment. Admission was \$0.10 and \$0.25. “The old theatre west of the railroad will continue to be operated also.”

1949 October 15 – **Clanton Drive-In** theater opened.

1976 January 16 – **Bowie Mart 1 and 2** opened in the Chilton Mart Shopping Center.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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