



Picture taken in the late 1920s of the Paramount building

The Paramount Theatre has been a part of Cedar Rapids for close to 100 years.

The Paramount Theatre, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of just 300 movie palaces left in the United States according to a story in USA Today. Built in the architecturally extravagant 1920's, the theatre annually hosts concerts, fundraisers, corporate meetings, dance recitals and Broadway series. The Theatre is also home to Orchestra Iowa, the region's premier symphony orchestra.

Cedar Rapids is fortunate to have the Paramount Theatre as a performing arts center. In November 1926, a conference was held to discuss plans to build the theatre. By April 1927, work was well underway on the foundation of the building, and by September 1, 1928, the theatre opened as the Capitol Theatre. For one year, the Capitol provided a live stage show with a full range of comedians, singers, dancers, acrobats, along with an audience sing-along, the Wurlitzer organ and a film. When the theatre was built, they're dreams were to make it feel like a palace and focused on high class details.

The theatre was bought by the Paramount Studios and renamed the Paramount Theatre in 1929. It was then gifted to the city of Cedar Rapids in December 1975. At that time, a fifteen-member Commission was named and it was decided the theatre should be restored to its original state. No

tax money was spent on the restoration. Instead, a fund drive conducted by the Commission raised over \$400,000 in pledges and donations from industry, businesses, and individuals.

Our records only go back to 1978, but the theatre has welcomed many artists and shows as well as being home to the Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra (now Orchestra Iowa). Some of the well-known artists include George Carlin in 1997, BB King in 1995 and 2012, Three Dog Night in 2022 and many more.

The Paramount Theatre has undergone renovations many times including the biggest project after the flood of 2008. However, there are still many original details still remaining from the beginning.

The next time you visit, we invite you to take a closer look!