

Gems & Jewels

Corning Opera House

Article #2 - March 2011

January 1, 1902 - A meeting was held of the Corning business men to discuss the possibilities of an opera house with the first floor used for offices & the opera house on the second floor. FC Reese & CF Anderson were appointed to look into building one for less than \$15,000 on the SW corner of 8th & Davis. Six other men were to solicit subscriptions for stock which were "succeeding admirably well" by the end of January.

February 1, 1902 - Mr. Richards, a competent architect from Chicago, developed the plans for a stage 28 x 41, audience room 44 x 62, & a semi-circle gallery 30 x 44, with a total seating for 781. Mr. Reese proposed to the citizens if they would take \$6,000 in stock, he would take \$9,000 in stock & provide "the best opera house of any town in Iowa the size of Corning." There would be a full basement. The entrance to the upstairs will be a wide stair way at the north side of the building leading from Davis Avenue & an exit at the SE corner onto Seventh Street. The building will be pressed brick, trimmed in stone, & heated by steam. "Everything will be modern and first class." 300 upholstered chairs have been obtained from the Creston Congregational Church (if new they would cost \$8). There will be cheaper seats in the gallery.

April 23, 1902 - Notice to contractors - sealed bids were accepted until noon, April 26, 1902, for the brick work. Certified check for 10% must accompany the bid. Notice of Incorporation - Articles of Incorporation have been signed & the name shall be Corning Opera House Company.

August 2, 1902 - The slate roof was put on and the cornice work put in place. The plain chairs have arrived. "If the opera house is ready by fair week, it will not be considered the opening."

August 27, 1902 - The Opera House was open every night during fair week. The Morey Stock Company presented, "Mam'selle Satan" with their own special scenery and "Michael Strogoff." Prices were 25, 35, & 50 cents.

September 10, 1902 - The formal opening was scheduled for September 26, with William Owens & Company presenting "The School for Scandal". Admission was 75 cents & \$1. During fair week, receipts totaled \$1,394.75.

October 9, 1902 - "Sandy Bottom", comedy of the south

October 31, 1902 - "The Man in the Iron Mask"

October 30, 1902 - Republican Speech, Hon. WB Allison

November 19, 1902 "A Millionaire Tramp", one of the cleverest plays ever woven

November 25, 1902 - Hoosier Daisy Company

December 13, 1902 - Presbyterian Ladies Christmas Bazaar

December 19, 1902 - Philharmonic Quartet of Chicago - ladies

December 31, 1902 - "The Hottest Coon in Dixie"

