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# Bits and Pieces

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*Photo Courtesy of Elizabethtown News*

The A&P Grocery Store, located on the public square in Elizabethtown, had the misfortune of being run into by an auto in this 1948 photo. A&P Store Manager Mr. Jake Payne, in the white shirt and tie, supervises the clean-up, while talking with spectators.

## *Mammaw's Trip to the A&P* SHE JUST RAN INTO TOWN - SO THE STORY GOES...

By Anita G. Goodin, HCHS member

As we get ready to move the County Clerk's Office to the new Hardin County Government Building, it seemed fitting to write an article about the many business that have called this building home. Johnny Lay was kind enough to scour old newspapers for articles about many of the businesses and give them to me to read. While reading about the A & P Grocery Store, I came across a familiar name.

Well almost. In the article titled, "Car Smashes A & P Window", dated April 9, 1948, it told about the show window of the A & P Store being smashed by a Mrs. W. A. Cook of Route 1, Elizabethtown. I recalled that my Mammaw's address used to be Route 1 before it was changed to Hawkins Drive. And, she was commonly called Mrs. W.H. Cook. Knowing that typos were a common occurrence in



*Photo Courtesy of Elizabethtown News*

Pictures above is the store front of the Elizabethtown Public Square A&P Grocery on opening day. The April 9, 1948 issue of the Elizabethtown News reports excitement experienced at that location.

news reporting at that time, I had a sinking feeling that it might just be my Mammaw Cook that crashed her car into that store window.

I don't recall ever hearing this story told at family gatherings, so I was not completely sure that it was her. I surely would've remembered that story. The best way to find out was to call my uncle Austin, who is eldest of my extended family. He is my dad's brother, Mammaw's eldest son, and the one who would have been old enough at the time to remember this event. He happens to be 83 and with a fantastic memory of our family history.

When I relayed my suspicions to him, he immediately laughed and confirmed that it was indeed her. He said that she had driven to town in her 1937 Dodge car and when attempting to park at the curb, her foot slipped off the brake and hit the gas pedal. This sent the front half of her car into the front display window of the A & P Grocery Store. Mammaw was badly shaken up, but thankfully no one was injured.

He also said that when Pappaw found out about the accident, he felt so bad about the damages that he

## Car Smashes A. & P. Window

Corner show window of Elizabethtown A. & P. store was smashed Wednesday morning by Mrs. W. A. Cook, Elizabethtown, Route 1, who drove her car into it.

Intending to park at the curb, Mrs. Cook's foot evidently slipped off the brake onto the accelerator, and the car lunged across the sidewalk into the window. Before it stopped about half the car was inside the building.

Neither Mrs. Cook nor any of the passengers were hurt, but she suffered a severe nervous shock. Damage to stock was estimated by J. A. Payne, store manager, at \$100.

The building is owned by Mrs. M. C. Marion.

mess. With help, he gathered all of the dented soap boxes up, and even brought in one of his shovels to save what he could of the spilled soap powder off the floor. My Pappaw was not one to waste a thing, having lived through the Great Depression. Soap powder being no exception. Uncle Austin said that he remembered Pappaw and Mammaw giving away lots of soap powder to family and friends for a long time after that.

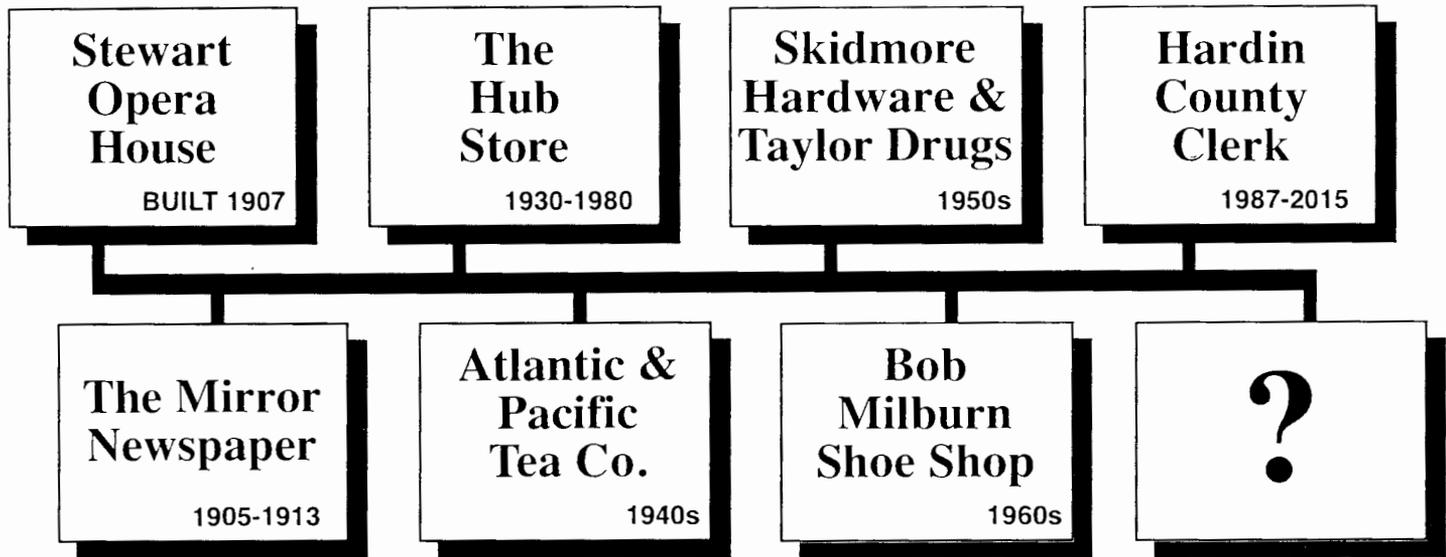
I'm not sure why I had never heard this particular family story before now. I have to admit it was a little shocking to find out about it this way. My Mammaw was 37 or 38 years old when this occurred, which is around the age I am now. And, it happened to have destroyed a portion of the R. R. Thomas Government Building, where I have worked for the over 19 years. I walk past that very window on a daily basis.

Thinking back, I remember the former County Clerk, Kenny Tabb, telling us the story about the car driving through what was once a his office window. The name of the driver was never mentioned, or I would've put two and two together long before now. *Talk about history coming to life!*

# A PICTORIAL HISTORY

## *R.R. Thomas Government Building*

### *...108 Years and Counting*



By Anita G. Goodin, HCHS member

The following newspaper articles and photos are of the various business that have leased the space in the R. R. Thomas Government Building, originally known as The Stewart Opera House. Some of the businesses located in this structure were: The Stewart Opera House, Cresap Dry Goods Store, Skidmore Hardware, the Post Office, The Mirror, The Hub Store, A & P Grocery, Taylor Drugs, Bob Milburn's Shoe Shop, and lastly, numerous county government offices.

The Hardin County Clerk, PVA, Planning and Zoning, Child Support Division of the Hardin County Attorney, Hardin County Judge Executive's office and the Hardin County Sheriff's office have all called this building home at least for a while.

Enjoy your look back at the many tenants, on this corner, facing the public square, as we piece together a pictorial history from yesteryear!



RIGHT: Bob Milburn Shoe Shop was once located on the Public Square - 1960s.



## A NEW STORE.

### LaRue Cresap to Open New Dry Goods Store in the Stewart Block March 1.

Mr. LaRue Cresap the veteran dry goods dealer, who is connected with Loevenbart Clothing Co., of Louisville, and who was at different times engaged in the merchandise business in this city with his father, Mr. G. M. Cresap and afterwards with his brother, Mr. J. T. Cresap, hung a mammoth streamer on the Stewart Theater building yesterday morning announcing that he would open up for business in the vacant store room in the Stewart block on March 1, with a full line of shoes, dry goods, clothing and haberdashery. Mr. Cresap has a long experience in the dry goods business and with a complete new stock of goods well no doubt make a success of his new business venture. Mr. Cresap has many friends in the city and county who are pleased over his intended return to his native city.

TOP: This photograph of the Stewart Building showcases the early tenants of the large brick building. Located on the first floor of the building left to right were the LaRue Cresap Dry Goods Store and the Printing Offices of the *Mirror*. On the right end of the building was the entrance to the Opera House located on the top floors.

LEFT: The January 2, 1908 issue of the *Elizabethtown News* announced the grand opening of a Dry Goods store in the Stewart Building.

BOTTOM: Photographic image of the interior of the *Mirror*. Notice the old telephone mounted on the post in the right foreground.



## NEW OPERA HOUSE FOR ELIZABETHTOWN.

With a Handsome New Business  
Block on East Side Square.

Mr. Walker Stuart and his sisters, who together own three store rooms on the East Side of the Public Square are contemplating tearing them down and erecting in the spring a very handsome business block with two large store rooms thirty feet front each and extending back not less than seventy feet. Above these store rooms there will be built an up-to-date modern Opera House with a stage sixty feet wide and thirty feet deep to be equipped with all modern conveniences and handsome scenery. Mr. Walker Stewart when approached on the subject of the building said he had the matter under consideration and that it would be built if he could lease the new store rooms to desirable tenants for a period of not less than three years. He said that several parties had approached him on the subject of wanting such store rooms, as he had under consideration and if he was able to lease them right to the right kind of parties the block would be built. The Opera House he thought would easily earn a good investment on the upper story.

- Elizabethtown News  
February 5, 1907

## PLANS OF NEW OPERA HOUSE.

Mr. Walker Stewart Consults Archi-  
tect and Is Preparing to Erect  
New Block.

Mr. Walker Stewart, who is making preparations to build a new business block and opera house on the northeast corner of the Public Square, was in Louisville last week to engage an architect to draw plans and write specifications for the proposed building. He and his sisters propose to begin the work of tearing away the old buildings and erecting the new as soon as the time of the present tenants expires. The opera house, which will be over two business houses each about 30x40 feet, will be equipped with a fine hard-wood floor, a 60 foot stage half as deep as long with appropriate scenery, and will have a seating capacity of at least 600. It is probable that it will also have a balcony in addition to the seating capacity on the main floor, although this has not been definitely determined upon. The entrance to the opera house will be at the lower end of the house, in the corner.

The new building will be one of the handsomest business blocks in the town and will have a very attractive front. It is understood that one of the business houses has already been spoken for. The business houses are to be completed by the first of September.

Mr. Stewart has secured one of the most experienced brick layers in the country and will have his own brick burnt for the new building. It will be burned on the Stewart field, at the north end of Main street where the clay is of very superior quality for brick.

- Elizabethtown News  
February 26, 1907

## STEWART BUILDING CO.

Incorporated With Capital Stock of  
\$10,000.

The Stewart Building Company, of this city, filed articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State yesterday. The capital stock is \$10,000, and the incorporators are J. Walker Stewart, Margaret M. Stewart and Mrs. Ida S. Fischer, heirs of the late John H. Stewart.

Mr. Walker Stewart has employed Contractor J. M. Osborne, of this city to erect the new Opera House and business rooms on the Public Square, and Paul Linde to burn the brick for the building. Mr. Linde is an experienced hand at this business and it is understood that a very large kiln will be burned, consisting of a good many more brick than will be used in the new structure. The kiln will be burned on the Stewart lot at the north end of Main street

- Elizabethtown News  
March 1, 1907

## A FINE SHOW.

Was The Lunatic and The Lady at  
The Opera House.

One of the best musical comedies ever presented to an Elizabethtown audience was "The Lunatic and The Lady" at the Stewart Opera House last Thursday night. The company consisted of twenty four high-class actors, the star being Frank Christie as the lunatic, who kept the house in a uproar of laughter from start to finish.

- Elizabethtown News  
December 24, 1907

**STEWART OPERA HOUSE**  
ONE NIGHT ONLY  
FRIDAY NOV. 29TH  
THE GREAT  
**ROSAMOND MINSTRELS**  
28 PEOPLE 28  
Uniformed Band, Orchestra, Street  
Parade 2 p. m.  
PRICES: 25c, 35c and 50c.  
Showers & Phillips Drug Store.  
GALLERY FOR COLORED PEOPLE ONLY -  
25c and 35c.

- Elizabethtown News  
November 26, 1907

**Did you know that William Jennings Bryan spoke here while on a political tour of the country?**



## Remember Shopping and Parking Meters?

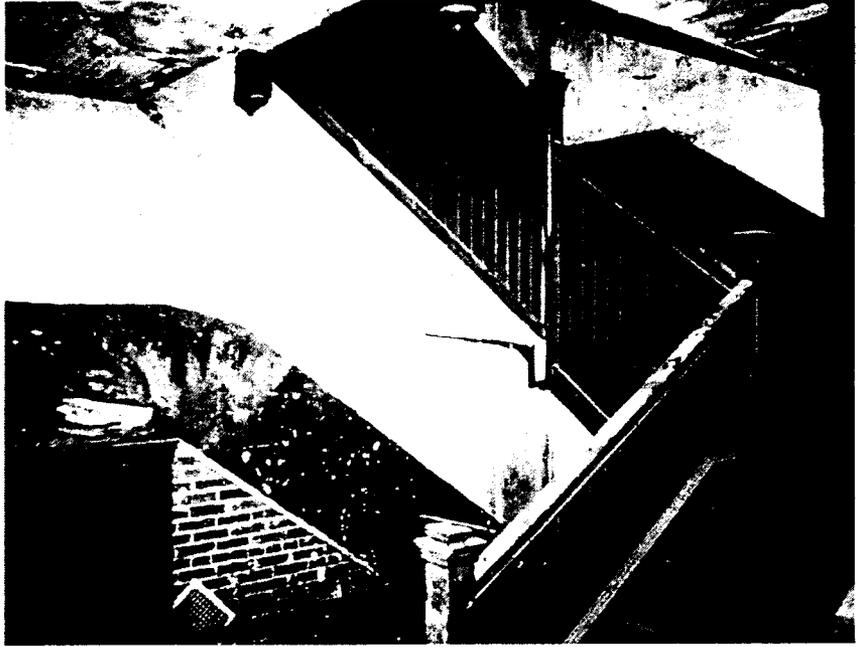
Between March and October of 1907, the Opera House began providing unparalleled entertainment to the citizens of the county. Performances included vocalists and pianists, as well as minstrel shows. Even holidays were made more festive by being celebrated on the promenade of the Stewart Opera House. Fun-loving patrons would dress in costume, and join a march headed by a Wizard Goddess through the downtown square.

In January of 1914, the Opera House was sold to M.C. Marion who continued to lease rooms to multiple types of business for the next few decades.

By the 1950s, businesses like Skidmore Hardware and The Hub Store occupied the Stewart Block with Taylor Drugs next door.

October 24, 1966, saw the Hub Department Store open its doors to a larger floor area when it expanded into the space that Skidmore once occupied.

In 1987, the Stewart Block was bought by Hardin County Government and the building renovated to accommodate the public. At this time the upper floors, the old Opera House, experienced some renovation as well. The great staircase rising from the square to the second level was removed and alterations were made to the stage and dressing room area. Photos snapped by Embry Lay tell of the renovations; however, the bones of the old business are still visible in the upper floors of this historic, grand old building.



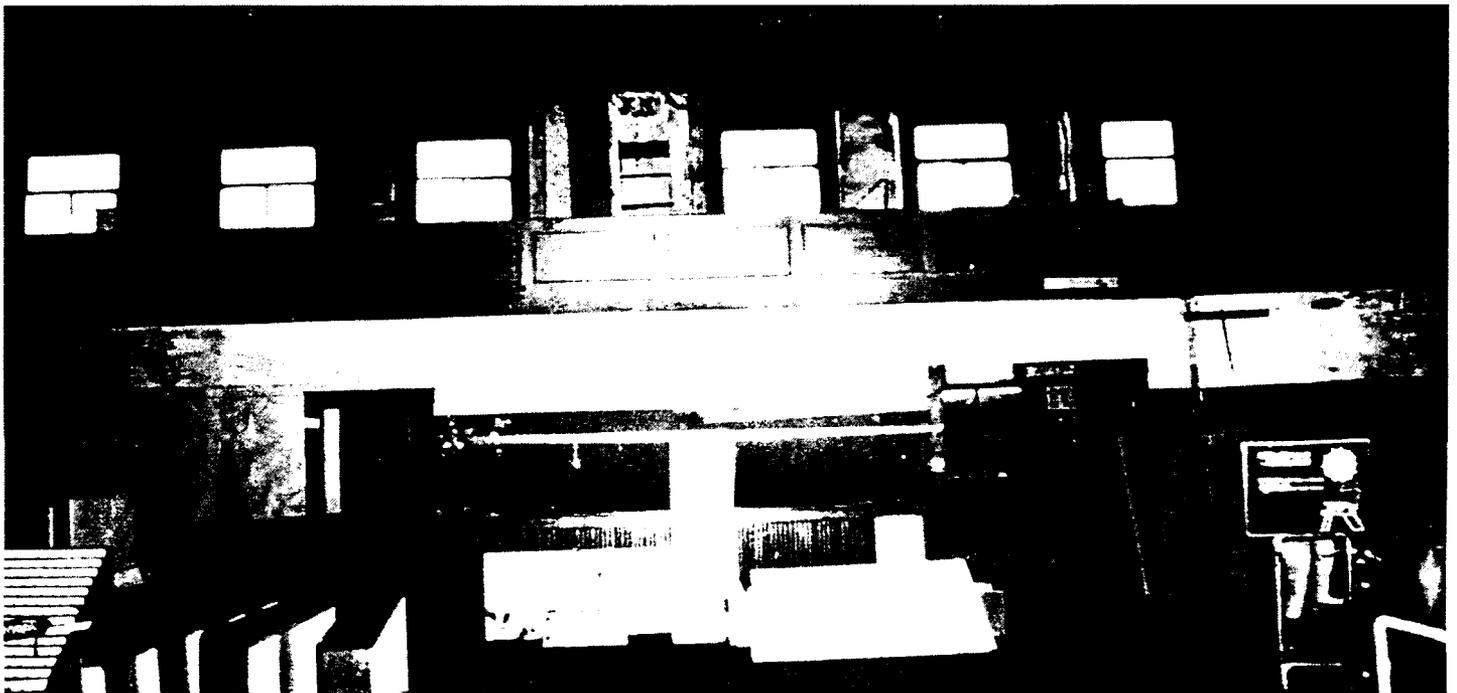
# There Once Stood A Grand Old Opera House in Town...

LEFT: John Lay checks out a ladder leading to the roof of the building, resting near a stage dressing room door.

TOP: Staircase leads from the street to the second floor Opera House Entrance.

RIGHT: Opera House Entrance.

BELOW: Opera House auditorium & balcony.



# Historical Society announces next meeting

## It's Election Time!

A NEW SLATE OF  
OFFICERS WILL BE  
ANNOUNCED AT  
THIS MEETING FOR  
2016-2017 TERM.

The Hardin County Historical Society will meet Monday evening, October 26th, 2015, at TONY YORK'S ON MAIN, in downtown Glendale.

The dinner will be served at 6:30 PM. The price is \$10.00 per person. Call Twylane VanLahr at 270-765-2515 by **Friday, October 23rd, for dinner reservations**; later reservations for the meal cannot be guaranteed.

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The dinner is followed at 7 P.M. by a very special program, *Hardin County to the White House: The Life and Times of Abe and his Mary*, a first person account presented by Larry and Mary Elliott.

The Elliotts, dedicated Lincoln Impersonators, have studied this intriguing couple for several years in order to bring real life to their characters.

Come enjoy a tale or two told by Hardin County's most favored native son as we end the 150th year anniversary of his untimely demise and the close of what many Southerner's referred to as "Mr. Lincoln's War."

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