

MOVING PICTURES IN MAYNARD

(Frank C. Sheridan)

On November 19, 1909, Maynard was treated to a showing of moving pictures by a concern called the American Moving Picture Company at what was then called Music Hall, or the "Rink", and some first class pictures were shown here for the first time, and were well received by the people.

A former resident of Maynard, who is now deceased, Mr. Henry Gilroy, was associated with a man named Sherman who was showing pictures in other towns. Gilroy severed his connection with Sherman and started to operate in Cooperative Hall, Maynard, and also in Association Hall, Concord Junction, now West Concord, and stated he would have the latest talking device which had just come on the market and also stated he would have only the best.

Jan. 20, 1910 he brought the pictures of the Nelson-Wolgast ~~and the xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx~~ fight, and on Wednesday night January 28, 1910 showed the pictures of the Johnson-Ketchel fight. These were at Cooperative Hall. John H. Murray was showing pictures at Music Hall and Gilroy was showing them at Cooperative Hall. An agreement was reached between Messrs. Murray and Gilroy to each take a night's showing. One would show pictures on Friday night and the other on Saturday night.

May 23, 1913 new chairs were put in at Cooperative hall to replace the old settees which had been in use for many years. Gilroy also procured two brass signs 30x40 inches with glass fronts to use them in the advertisement of his theatre.

Sept. 5, 1913 - Edison's latest and greatest achievement, a talking picture was shown at Cooperative Hall, including Raymond Hitchcock singing his famous song "What's the Use". This was the first time that a town the size of Maynard had been offered talking pictures. These being confined to the Keith Circuit and larger cities. Prices for the show were children-10¢- adults-25¢, and this same picture cost 50¢ at Keith's Theatre.

Feb. 20, 1914, B.J. Coughlin and George Creighton commenced to install booths and fixtures in the new Naylor Hall, which had just been completed. The fixtures arrived and were being installed to be ready for the opening of Colonial Hall. Their first show was the "Battle of Shiloh" of four reels and James B. Farrell, Maynard's popular tenor, had been engaged to sing at the opening. The operator of the pictures was Leonard Smith and the piano player was Bert Lawton. Chief of Police John Connors was to be present to preserve order. This new picture theatre was to be open on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday evenings, with a matinee for children on Saturday afternoons.

March 20, 1914 - Last week Lerer's store advertised 100 tickets to the movies (free) for the first 100 children who came into his store after 1:00 P.M. on Saturday. Mr. Lerer had over 500 children seeking the tickets.

March 22, 1914, the Colonial Theatre had a singer from Boston. On Thursday evening, Thomas King was the singer; Saturday eveingⁿ, James Farrell and Arthur Sullivan were the soloists. On Saturday afternoon a \$2.50 gold piece was given away and a \$5.00 gold piece in the evening. Henry Gilroy the movie man claimed that on Saturday afternoon he had the largest attendance at a matinee since he began to show movies.

On May 15, 1914 - a good attendance was present at Cooperative Hall to see a show called "Ten Nights in a Barroom", a fine production. A bycycle was won by Harold Lyons at the picture show at the matinee in the afternoon.

October 9, 1914 - work was commenced to change the hall in Haynes Block (Riverside Hall) so that it could be used for a moving picture theatre conducted by Samuel Lerer.

May 7, 1915 - Maynard Brass Band gave a concert and a moving picture show at the Colonial Hall. On May 15, Hugh Connors was the soloist.

August 13 to 15th, with the approval of the selectmen, Riverside Hall was

allowed to open as a movie theatre on September 1st under the management of B.J. Coughlin.

March 26, 1920 - two show houses projected. Stock on sale for Peoples' Theatre Company. Ground was broken by a Mutual Development Company for foundation on a lot fronting the store of B.F. Townsend. Price of shares in Peoples' Theatre, \$25 pr share. Asking business men's participation. To be built beside P.H. DeLee's Drug Store. Attorney Howard A. Wilson is preparing a charter for Mutual Incorporators (John Murray, B.J. Coughlin, William and Joshua Naylor) Colonial Hall property on which B.F. Townsend stands conveyed to Mutual. Ad announcing organization of Peoples' Theatre Company signed by James Coughlan, Hector Roberts and James J. Ledgard.

April 9, 1920 - Peoples Theatre Stock Selling - Mutual has decided corner of Main and Nason Streets better for their theatre site, 47' front and 120' depth. House occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Coulter to be moved down as far as Post Office - entrance to be on Main Street.

April 16, 1920 - Peoples Theatre Co. purchased lot of land from P.H. DeLee between drugstores of Macurda and DeLee. The rival theatre acquired the lot on the corner of Main St. and Nason St. Both parties busy with plans and architects.

September 24, 1920 - both parties finally decided to merge. Mutual decides to purchase shares in the Peoples Theatre, six directors were elected, which included three from each group, and about 35% was held by both groups.

May 6, 1921 - Peoples Theatre opened last Saturday with large attendance. Seating capacity 700 - balcony 250.

March 17, 1922 - Sam Lerer has offered to help Maynard High School Athletic Assn. by allowing them all the profits from candy sold at his new moving picture theatre, which opened Wednesday evening, called the Riverside Theatre with 400 seating capacity. Started off with three piece orchestra and hopes to continue their services.

April 7, 1922 - Ad at the Riverside Theatre -

"Hell Divers" (Wallace Reid)

"The Country Fair" (Wesley Barry, Helen Eddy,) and 2 reel
Western

"Man from Lost River" - 2 reel comedy.

three piece orchestra now at Peoples Theatre.

By Frank C. Sheridan