

Visit Botetourt County and the Buchanan Theatre

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior, the Buchanan Theatre has been recognized as Botetourt County's oldest standing theatre.

The theatre first opened as A.E. McCurdy's Open Air Theatre. McCurdy's was purchased in 1914 by Elmer Shank. Shank and his family cut all of the lumber themselves and completed construction of the current theatre building in 1919.

Old photographs of the property indicate that in its early days the theatre was known as the Star Theatre.

The exterior of the building had "Mouse-Tooth" shingles in the front gable and a two story covered porch where the current concession stand is located just inside the front door.

This two-story porch provided shelter for those waiting to enter the theatre while providing an outdoor area for those who lived above the theatre. As with theatres of the day, the facility was segregated with an exterior entry for African Americans to enter for seating in the balcony.

Eventually the Star Theatre became the Buchanan Theatre and it operated continuously until 1985. Over the years the building has been remodeled several times and what can be seen today is a mixture of the thumbprints left by each generation of owners.

Notable exterior features include the Art Deco concrete details on the facade, the neon sign and freestanding ticket booth.

Inside, one finds a pressed metal ceiling, knotty pine paneling and a curved wall around the concession area which features a 1950s era popcorn machine and candy counter.

The stage area is in remarkable condition and the cinemascope movie screen is ready for use. The movie projectors are relatively new as well.

SOURCE: www.buchanantheatre.com

