1-1-1960

Monticello's old opera house being restored

Hampton Dunn

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub

Part of the American Studies Commons, and the Community-based Research Commons

Scholar Commons Citation
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/flstud_pub/2898

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Collection - Florida Studies Center Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
MONTICELLO'S OLD OPERA HOUSE BEING RESTORED

By HAMPTON DUNN

MONTICELLO --- Citizens of North Florida are happy about the restoration of the great old Opera House in the Perkins Building on the Courthouse Circle in downtown Monticello. The circle is where U.S. 90 and U.S. 19 highways intersect in this Jefferson County seat.

The ancient entertainment center has been closed for 10, these many years, but now is making a comeback.

A quaint description of the way it was in the early days was contained in a news article in The Monticello News in a special issue of Feb. 22, 1907. An excerpt:

"One of the largest establishments in Monticello is that of Mr. J. H. Perkins; he owns a whole block, which is divided into his own mercantile establishment and department store, sewing machine depot, the opera house and a seed store...

"Mr. Perkins owns the opera house building, which is tastefully fitted up with a drop curtain, handsome scenery, comfortable chairs and electric lights."

The News of 1907 also noted that "Mr. Perkins has a beautiful home, where, with his estimable wife, he enjoys that comfort and prosperity that he so richly deserves. He is said to be one of the wealthiest men in this county."

The old opera house was built in 1890 by Perkins, who had visions of bringing live theatre to his community but these dreams were shattered by the rigid demands of the churches of the community, whose members considered the theater immoral. It was finally forced to close in 1927. There are still tell-tale signs of traveling companies that performed here. Graffiti indicates that the Springer & Lewis company shined on the boards.