



Farmville - Prince Edward Historical Society

P.O. Box 546

Farmville, Virginia 23901

March, 2010

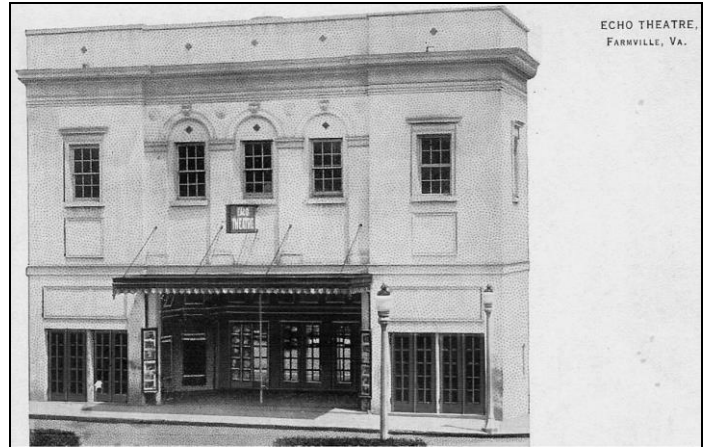
EACO /State Theater

**presentation by
Chris Brochon**

**Tuesday, March 16, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

**PE Co Agricultural Center
Hwy 15 South to 100 Dominion Drive**

Board Meets at 6:00 p.m.



Theatre Entertainment in Farmville

As a center for recreation and leisure, Farmville's first municipally owned building was its "Opera House." It was contracted to be built on September 9, 1885, by Messrs. Burton and Davis at a cost of \$4,400. Traveling road shows and opera companies provided seasonal entertainment. Political rallies and public meetings were also held there. The building survives to this day and until recently was the town municipal building.

The Opera House later became unsuitable for motion pictures. In 1921, Dr. L.D. Whitaker organized the Education Amusement Company for the purpose of constructing a modern theater. A capital stock of \$40,000 was subscribed to by about 100 local citizens and the EACO Theatre was soon completed on the corner of Main and Fourth Streets.

In 1940, the Richmond-based firm Neighborhood Theatres, Inc. purchased the EACO Theatre and renamed it The State Theatre. The last organization to use the building was Farmville's theater group The Waterworks Players. The theater collapsed unexpectedly on February 11, 1994, thus ending a 72-year old landmark for entertainment in Farmville.

Prince Edward County Virginia 1754-2009, submitted by Bob Flippen.

Exterior, Interior Renovations Are Underway at State Theatre



Neighborhood Theatres, Inc. operators of the State Theatre and Farmville Drive-In Theatre, announced that major renovation and redecoration of the State Theatre has begun. The cost of this project will be in excess of \$25,000.

Included in the extensive remodeling plans are a new modern marquee, bronze aluminum entrance doors and box office, and resurfacing of the building face with aggregate stone material. The lobby will also be expanded in size to allow easier flow of patrons. The entire theatre interior, including lobby, auditorium, concession stand and restrooms will be redecorated throughout.

The State Theatre was purchased by Neighborhood Theatres in 1940 from the Education Amusement Company (EACO Theatre). The Richmond based firm now operates 38 theatres in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

Local manager for Neighborhood Theatres is a Farmville native, William "Billy" Wilkerson. Wilkerson began his career at the Farmville Drive-In in 1952

The Farmville Herald Bicentennial Highlights, September 19, 1969

This Day in Prince Edward County History

- 3-1-1841 Blanche Kelso Bruce, first black U.S. Senator (elected from Mississippi), born in Farmville
- 3-1-1899 Gov. P.W. McKinney died at his home in Farmville
- 3-1-1917 Farmville Guard returned from Mexican Expedition.
- 3-1-1943 Word War II canned goods rationing began
- 3-2-1942 World War II defense training classes begin for Prince Edward citizens
- 3-2-1964 Prince Edward Hotel collapses while under renovation
- 3-3-1884 Farmville and Powhatan Railroad chartered (narrow-gauge line to James River)
- 3-4-1903 Tobacco factory known as "Dunlop's" burned, half million pounds of tobacco lost
- 3-4-1913 Farmville Guard marches at Woodrow Wilson's Inaugural
- 3-4-1949 East wing of State Teachers College burned, displacing 46 students
- 3-5-1839 Farmville Female Seminary established by local supporters (official birthdate of Longwood University)
- 3-5-1846 The South Side Rail Road chartered
- 3-6-1935 Birth of Barbara Johns, organizer of 1951 student strike at Moton School
- 3-7-1884 Virginia General Assembly passes law establishing State Female Normal School to train teachers at the already-existing "female seminary"
- 3-7-1886 State Female Normal School incorporated
- 3-7-1921 J.B. Wall purchased *The Farmville Herald*
- 3-8-1938 Farmville Rotary Club organized
- 3-10-1816 Judith Randolph, Farmville's "matriarch" died in Richmond, far from Bizarre plantation
- 3-12-1896 Farmville Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy organized
- 3-12-1956 "Southern Manifesto" introduced in U.S. Congress as regional attempt to offset effects of *Brown v. Board of Education*
- 3-13-1926 Devastating fire on Main Street. Burns 8 buildings in seven hours
- 3-13-1974 Uniroyal began finishing golf balls in the Farmville plant
- 3-15-1781 Peter Francisco and dozens of Prince Edward volunteers support Continental Gen. Greene at Battle of Guilford C. H. in North Carolina
- 3-15-1924 Star Warehouse burned to the ground
- 3-17-1917 Garden Club organized
- 3-19-1872 Last session held in 118-year old county court at Worsham
- 3-20-1775 Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech in Richmond
- 3-20-1821 Hampden-Sydney trustees begin plans for its signature building New College (Cushing Hall)
- 3-21-1891 Gen. Joseph Eggleston Johnston died in Washington D.C.
- 3-21-1903 All saloons closed under the dispensary act
- 3-22-1807 Former U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr spends night as prisoner at Prince Edward tavern on the way to his trial for treason
- 3-23-1861 The tobacco factory of Peters & Blanton burned
- 3-23-1902 "Billy" the *Herald's* office mocking bird found dead
- 3-24-1975 Amtrak's first stop in town "The Mountaineer" made the pull
- 3-26-1872 First session of carpetbagger-sanctioned county court at relocated judicial site in Farmville
- 3-27-1837 Farmville and Danville Railroad Co. chartered
- 3-28-1954 Fluorine is added to the water supply
- 3-28-1962 Martin Luther King, Jr., visits Farmville in support of reopening the public school system
- 3-29-1897 McDaniel family opens county's first private school for black children
- 3-29-1957 Hampden-Sydney's McIlwaine Hall burns under suspicious circumstances
- 3-31-1938 Farmville Rotary Club chartered