

THE DAILY MISSOURIAN

EIGHTH YEAR

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, 1916

NUMBER 308

The Hall Theatre

Souvenir Section



TOM C. HALL
(Owner of the Theater)



—Photo by Parsons

THE NEW HALL THEATRE



THEDA BARA



WILLIAM FARNUM

On a certain night back in 1832, Columbia, then scarcely large enough to be termed a settlement, presented a scene of excitement that might have been expected in a town twice its size, but would have caused a stranger, entering the village to curiously inquire the cause of the unusual bustle.

One reason—a very natural one—was that it was Christmas night. Santa Claus had come and gone—and we may reasonably suppose that his going did not leave any heartaches among the little ones when most Christmas presents were obtained through the marksmanship of the head of the family. But on that night the children of Columbia did not seek rest at an early hour—as is usual now on Christmas night.

Columbia's First Show

Was on December 25, 1832.

Instead, they reflected the excitement and hurry of the older folks. They too were dressed in their "best" and they too—like many little ones of the present—were saying, "Mama may I go to the show tonight."

And that question tells the other cause for excitement and bustle prevalent in Columbia that night.

For, on December 25, 1832, Columbia's first show was staged. Eighty-

five years ago, when the men-folks dared not leave their homes unarmed and when the women kept the doors barred and hugged their children a little closer when the door rattled slightly as if some one were trying to open it—usually only the wind against the heavy slabs of oak—Columbia was the scene of the first presentation of a theatrical performance in this section.

It was not Forbes Robertson, Sothorn or any of our later day actors and actresses whose names are by-words in almost every household now that was to appear on that night, but only a small amateur production. The play presented was "Pizarro, or the Death of Rolla." Following this act of a more serious nature, "My Uncle" a farce was presented.

The performance was a success. Colonel William F. Switzler in his history of Boone County says the actors were "complimented and encouraged * * * encouraged by the plaudits of an appreciative audience." Another performance was presented later. The admission price at that time was 50 cents. Children and servants were admitted for half price.

This started the ball rolling. Co-

lumbia has progressed until now it is known as one of the best cities in the state. It has kept in line with the times and is now in every way a modern city. New buildings and splendid residences have sprung up. The University of Missouri and other schools have since come to Columbia. Railroads have built through Columbia, many large industries have located here and today no man, when in other parts of the world need be ashamed to say, "I am from Columbia, Mo." **Cannot Bring Too Much Credit to the Promoters.**

One of the greatest marks of Columbia's advancement and an enterprise that cannot bring enough credit to the men backing it is the Hall

Theater. Tom C. Hall has for several years been at the head of the Star Theater, which shows some of the best attractions in Central Missouri, but anxious to keep abreast of the times and appreciating the fact that Columbia would support anything that is an asset to the town, Mr. Hall decided to build a new theater.

And Mr. Hall does not do things halfway. His new theater is a worthy asset to Columbia and is characteristic of its promoter—the best that can be had. Columbia today boasts of the best theater in Missouri outside of St. Louis and Kansas City and there are many first-class theaters in these two cities that are not comparable with the Hall. Expense was not spared in its construction, for its estimated cost was \$60,000 and the final cost is closer to \$70,000. Everything in it is first-class from the imposing front of solid Bedford stone, the best picture screen that can be purchased and the modern systems of heating, cooling and ventilating, down to the smallest electric light fixture.

Only the best photoplays and vaudeville that can be secured will be shown, and the theater is truly "up to a standard and not down to a price." From the building itself and the attractions that have been booked

to the employes everything is up to a standard—and up to the highest standard.

Mr. Hall Doesn't Claim Credit for the Theater.

Mr. Hall is modest about his theater. He does not claim any credit. The credit he gives to the people of Columbia. The people of Columbia have shown their appreciation of good things in the past and are willing to support a good thing.

But Mr. Hall is too modest. Whenever a large enterprise is established in a town a bonus is given. Mr. Hall did not receive a bonus. He did not even ask for one. He simply made his plans, let the contract and then announced to the people of Columbia that he had invested \$60,000 in a business enterprise in Columbia.

Columbia showed its appreciation through its Commercial Club. The business men asked Mr. Hall to turn over the first performance to them—let them handle it entirely.

And tomorrow night, eighty-five years after the first theatrical performance here, first performance at the new Hall Theater will take place—and the Commercial Club in general and Dr. L. M. Defoe, its president, in particular are in charge.



O. B. WILSON
(Manager of the Hall Theater)