

## Purpose & Goals

The Harrington Opera House Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the rehabilitation and preservation of the Harrington Opera House for the purpose of providing and promoting cultural opportunities which will enhance community and economic development and which will also promote the cultural heritage of Harrington and the surrounding areas.

## Events & Activities

Since 1992, the HOHS has brought a variety of events to Harrington. Some were held in the school, churches or other local buildings when the Opera House space was under construction. In recent years, most were held in the Opera House auditorium, lobby, or art room. From folk and Country to opera, from school chorus & bands to professional musicians and even a harp and vocal group from Edinburgh, Scotland, afternoon teas, book reviews, choral groups, art shows, Humanities Washington presentations, theatrical performances, art classes, dance classes, piano lessons and more; the Harrington Opera House Society has provided a broad spectrum of arts and culture for area residents and visitors.



HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE

## Projects & Costs

Over \$750,000 has been raised and spent on this historic building since the Harrington Opera House Society organized in 1992.

**Recently completed projects include:** Building access – new south sidewalk and ADA access via The Art Room; purchase of a Boston by Steinway grand piano; grand stage curtains hung; wall & millwork refurbishing; auditorium floor refinishing; installation of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor ADA restroom, and the installation of the long awaited elevator.

**Upcoming projects:** include handicap access signage, the addition of south awnings; establish west fire exit on main floor; improve basement access; rebuild original staircase and hand rails; install new outside entry lights; refurbish dressing rooms; insulate & wire museum; update stalls in the first floor restrooms; purchase additional stage lighting, stage border & leg curtains, sound and media projection equipment; purchase an automated external defibrillator kit; and restore the proscenium.

**Support our efforts!** Membership & Donation form available from web site: [www.harringtonoperahouse.org](http://www.harringtonoperahouse.org) or:

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# HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE and BANK BLOCK



The Harrington Opera House Society was founded on January 11, 1992 to preserve the Bank Block Building, a.k.a. "the old Opera House." Membership is open to anyone interested in rehabilitating and maintaining the historic building to provide a regional venue for arts & entertainment.

**The Harrington Opera House and the Bank Block are registered on Washington and National Registers of Historic Places.**

# History of Harrington

In 1882 Mrs. Horace L. (Emily Harrington) Cutter purchased a quarter section of land where Harrington now stands, believing that the Northern Pacific Railway would build a railroad. It was not until 1892 that the Great Northern Railway began construction on a line through the Crab Creek section of Lincoln County and the Harrington Town site Company began selling Mrs. Cutter's lots.

The town of Harrington grew from a hotel, saloon, store, and post office into a busy wheat farming community. The California Land Stock Company, which had purchased 1,500 acres of farmland in 1882, added 25 sections to their holdings and did much to build the country around the town.<sup>1</sup>

Today, many of the buildings from Harrington's early history are still standing, providing the opportunity to showcase the region's cultural past as the community builds for the future.

<sup>1</sup> Richard F. Steel and Arthur P. Rose, eds. *An Illustrated History of the Big Bend Country Embracing Lincoln, Douglas, Adams, and Franklin Counties, Spokane, 1904*



## The Bank Block

The **Bank Block** is an imposing building sitting on the corner of Willis and South Third Streets. It was developed by John F. Green, Marion F. Adams, and Albert G. Mitchum, all pioneers who came to the Washington Territory in the 1880s.

The two-story brick building (the bricks were made locally) was designed and constructed by J.R. Burrill and Company, a Harrington firm, for \$25,000. Its hipped roof, dormers, lintels, balcony and arched entry to the Opera House hints at Romanesque Revival architecture used in the early twentieth century.

Completed in December 1904, the Bank of Harrington was located on the main floor. L.V. Sisum, owner of the Harrington Planing Mill, provided the wood interior and furnishings of the bank. Also on the ground floor were J.W. Dow's shaving parlors, R. Brenchley & Co. cigar and confectionary store, and the Harrington Citizen. There was a bowling alley under the cigar store and the Opera House was on the second floor separated by a wall from a lodging house which was above the cigar store.

## The HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE

On December 16, 1904 the **Harrington Opera House** opened with *The Lady Minstrels* to the "largest attendance in the history of Harrington"\* and continued as a venue for local entertainment until mid-century. There were vaudeville acts, boxing matches, recitals, dances, school commencements, black minstrels, balls, and church services.

The auditorium could seat 350 (160 being reserved seats) but often 400 spectators were in attendance. The "large and roomy stage" contained two dressing rooms and a "toilet room." Acetylene gas was used for lighting and a hot air furnace heated the auditorium.

Eight scenic canvases have survived, the first depicting the Alps surrounded by advertisements from Harrington firms and painted by Spokane Scenic Studios. Actor's signatures, graffiti and beautiful drawings, done while actors were waiting to go on stage, can still be found on the scenery, walls, & in the dressing rooms. The oldest date is 1906, over 100 years ago. (\**Citizen*, Dec. 23, 1904)

