

Ferguson Has A History Museum

As we said last month in a similar article, “Actually, Ferguson has had a History Museum for many years. It’s called the History House and it is located behind the Ferguson Community Center on Smith Avenue.” There you can answer questions about Ferguson’s history – like the following:

Have you ever wondered why Ferguson’s local banquet center is called the Savoy? The name goes back the 1930’s when a Mr. Harry Hulett began showing motion pictures at the Masonic Temple (the building next to Central Elementary School). With the money he made he built a theatre on Florissant Road – the present site of the Savoy Banquet Center. The theatre opened on Christmas Eve in 1936. The movie was *Ramona* starring Loretta Young and Don Ameche. Guess what he named his theatre – the Savoy. In the 1940’s and 50’s it was a Saturday morning gathering place for the kids – featuring westerns, spy movies and outer space serials (designed to bring you back next week). The rest of the time were films aimed at an older audience. The building consisted of a theatre and two small businesses on each side of the theatre. When I was a kid in the 1950’s the shop to the left was a Record Store (remember 45’s and LP’s). The one on the right was a gift shop run by a friend’s mother, Ruth Ohlemeyer.

That all faded away in the 1960’s with the age of television. In 1963 Wehrenbrg Theatres remodeled the building and renamed the theatre the Crown. The Crown, after 20 years, closed in 1993. At some time, the small store to the right was taken over by the Teakwood Shop which was closed in the mid 2000’s when the remaining barber, Marty, retired in his mid 80’s. Today it is the Savoy Banquet Center named after the famous Ferguson landmark - the Savoy Theatre. Inside the center you can still see where the screen was located. The window on the opposite wall is the location of the “cry room” – reserved for (usually) ladies with small children. Times change!

Now you know more about a piece of Ferguson History. Want to know more – wait a month or - why not come visit the History House. Inside you will find displays of historic Ferguson artifacts, photographs and documents dating back to the early days of Ferguson. There are no regular hours, so each tour is an individual experience. Maybe you have some items to donate – to fill out our history. **We are planning to be at the Farmers Market on October 9th. Stop by for a selection of Ferguson gifts and books – or just to visit.**

For visitation, contact Keith or Kathy Eckberg at eckberg7@aol.com

For other matters contact Jerry Benner at fjbenner@mindpring.com