

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Galli-Curci Theatre

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 801 Main Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Margaretville

☐ vicinity

state New York

code NY

county Delaware

code 025

zip code 12455

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally, ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date 1/23/06

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Galli-Curci Theatre

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)

☐ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

COMMERCE/TRADE/business, specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

concrete

walls

brick

roof

rubber

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Galli-Curci Theatre
Margaretville, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Galli-Curci Theatre is located on the north side of Main Street (NY 30), just east of its intersection with Bridge Street, in the heart of the small village of Margaretville. Margaretville is located in the southeast corner of Delaware County, near the Ulster County line, in the western Catskills region of the state. Delaware County is characterized by steep, mountainous terrain and narrow valleys created by the two major branches of the Delaware River and its numerous smaller tributaries and streams. The village marks the intersection of NY Routes 30 and 28, the two principal transportation corridors through eastern Delaware and western Ulster Counties. NY 30 travels north-south, paralleling the east branch of the Delaware from its headwaters north of Roxbury; at Margaretville, both the river and the road turn sharply west toward Hancock. West of Andes the river has been dammed to create the Pepacton Reservoir. NY 28 generally travels northwest-southeast, connecting the larger cities of Kingston, on the Hudson River, with Oneonta, on the Susquehanna River. The theater occupies a village lot, approximately 72' by 170,' and is surrounded by a mixture of small-scale commercial and residential buildings. The central business district, which primarily reflects the village's growth as a resort in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is fairly intact and has potential for historic district designation.

The theater, constructed in 1922, is long and narrow in form, 50' wide by 142' deep. The building has two principal components: the decorative front section, which housed commercial space, offices, the theater lobby, projection booth, and restrooms, and the long, utilitarian auditorium behind it. The front section of the building, constructed of brick, is two stories tall, four bays wide, and thirty feet deep and sits on a poured concrete foundation. The first story is divided into three sections: a theater entrance with marquee in the east bay, an entrance to the commercial space and second floor in the west bay, and a storefront in the center. The marquee was added sometime after the building's construction and before 1949, when records indicate that the theater entrance was widened, eliminating one of four original storefront windows. First-floor entrance doors were also replaced in this same period. The current entrance, two sets of double wooden doors, is recessed and sheltered

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by a trapezoidal marquee suspended from iron rods. The tin-sheathed wooden marquee has panels for hanging movable letters on the east and west sides and raised "Galli-Curci" lettering on the front with sockets for light bulbs. The storefront consists of three large plate-glass windows within metal frames topped with panels of pressed glass in a checkerboard pattern. A brick pier separating the eastern window from the other two marks the center of the façade. Changes to the grade of the sidewalk are reflected in the entrance to the store and second floor; originally at street level, the entrance is now slightly raised above the sidewalk and accessed by three concrete steps. The original entrance, multi-pane glass and wood double doors surmounted by a transom, was replaced by a large double wooden door with half-moon glass panels. Changes to the street grade have also obscured an original row of four-pane basement windows, which are now sealed, and the well has been filled in.

The second floor features pairs of windows with large double-hung wood sash and one-over-one glazing. Each pair of windows is set within a single brick lintel and bluestone sill and surmounted by a rectangular brick panel enclosing decoratively patterned brick and terra cotta. The center of the façade wall rises to a rectangular parapet graced by a wooden sign identifying the building as the "Galli-Curci Theatre." On the east and west elevations of the main block, single windows are irregularly spaced. On the east elevation, there are remnants of a below-grade access door to the basement near the sidewalk; however, the stairs have been filled in with earth and the door and windows boarded up. There is a secondary entrance to the interior stairs on the west elevation.

Behind the two-story main block, the large single-story auditorium, more than 100' feet in length, extends to the rear (north). The auditorium was constructed of concrete block covered with stucco. A small concrete block and wood-frame coal shed with a shed roof and wide double doors once attached to the rear wall has been recently removed. The roof of the entire structure slopes gently from front to back, paralleling the grade of the raked concrete floor and falling three feet over the 142' length of the building. In 2005, an EPDM rubber roof was instated over the original roof. Original terra-cotta coping tiles were removed, numbered and saved for

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Margaretville, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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future restoration. There is one idiosyncratic roof feature: the upper portions of two large wooden trusses, apparently added after the building's construction to provide additional support for the ceiling but too large to be contained with the building itself.

On the interior, the general division of spaces remains even though some of the spaces have been altered. The first floor retail space features hardwood floors and a decorative pressed-metal ceiling. On the second floor, the original offices in the front of the building were converted for use as a small apartment; this space retains hardwood floors and original moldings.

Entrance to the auditorium is up a narrow carpeted ramp. Although the large rectangular space remains completely open, a level wooden floor was constructed above the original sloped theater floor so that the space could be used for commerce, and several low, temporary partitions were constructed along the sides of the room as booths for antique dealers. Despite this change, many original theater features survive and appear to reflect the c1949 remodeling. A small lobby is divided off from the seating area at the rear of the auditorium by two of the original three five-foot wooden standee walls. On the lobby side, these walls retain a c1949 color scheme. Spaces between the standees mark the original theater aisles. Behind the middle standee, a portion of the original sloping concrete floor can be seen before the wooden floor obscures it. The projection booth, located in the rear of the two-story front section, also survives, and two projector ports (now closed) are visible high in the south wall of the auditorium. Below them are rest rooms for men and women, now deteriorated; a space that originally served as a lounge outside the women's rest room was later converted to a concession stand; it is also deteriorated.

There are four sets of fire doors on the long side walls, which retain remnants of Art Deco fabric covering, and one Art Deco style electric exit sign above one set of doors. The same fabric can be seen on the rear (south)

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wall. The unadorned plaster ceiling slopes to the north, paralleling the original floor. Three rows of fluorescent light fixtures suspended from chains now run the length of the auditorium; there is no evidence of original light fixtures. There are indications of where the screen and curtains hung, approximately twenty feet from the north wall. In the northeast corner of the auditorium is a full height boiler room that houses a giant coal burning furnace, now derelict. Near the furnace, there is access to what is now a crawl space below the contemporary wooden floor. From this location, the original sloping floor can be seen and a number of gray and red metal auditorium seats are visible, some installed in rows and some piled up. Based on what can be seen, it appears that portions of the original theater floor and fixtures are intact below the wooden floor. In addition to the surviving 1949 seats, several of the original 1922 seats, upholstered in deep red and brown tones, and many iron frames without upholstery or seat backs, also survive in storage.

On the exterior, the Galli-Curci Theatre retains an exceptional level of integrity to the historic period. Although there have been some interior modifications, the building retains its original spatial divisions and many historic finishes. Other features have been obscured or are deteriorated but restorable. With its prominent place in Margaretville's business district, the building is an important link to the village's resort era heyday. Following completion of an ongoing restoration project, the theater will once again contribute to the village's tourism industry.



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| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------|--|------------|----|---|---------|-------------------|--|-------------|-----------|
| Section | 56 | Block | 507 | Lot | 14 | Condo-Bldg | | Condo Unit | | Town | Hempstead |
| Address | 1542 Wantagh Ave, Wantagh, 11793 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Village | | | | | | School | Wantagh | | | | |
|  | | |  | | |  | | | | | |
| Enlarge photos | | | View Area Maps | | | View Tax Map | | | | | |

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[General and School Taxes](#)
[Property Description](#)

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|--|----------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|---|--|
| Roll Year | 2005-2006 | | Property Dimensions | 150 X 168 I | | Liber & Page | 1 | |
| Item Number | 1918 | | Property Size Code | | | Change Order Number | | |
| NYS School Code | 282023 | | Property Class Code | 210.01 | | Change Date | 5 | |
| NYS SWIS Code | 282089 | | Land Title | One Family Year-Round Residence | | Lot Grouping | 1 | |
| Land Category | Residential | | Land Description | A One Family Dwelling Constructed To Accommodate Year-Round (Adequate Insulation, Heating, Etc. Includes Duplex Type One Half Row Type Individually Owned. Note: If Not Constructed To Accom Round Occupancy, See Property Class Code 260. | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|---|---|---|---|------------------|-------|---|
| Roll Year: 2003 | | | | | | | | | |
| Land Type | L | L | | | | | Func Dep | 19 | |
| Frontage | 100 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Phy Dep | 30 | |
| Depth | 166 | 163 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Grade | B+10 | |
| Unit Price | 20 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Occ | 1 FA | |
| Unit % | 118 | 117 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Condition | F | |
| FF Price | 23.6 | 23.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Construct | | |
| Cor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | RepValue | 12984 | 0 |
| Depreciation | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | PhyValue | 7362 | 0 |
| Size | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Age | 1838 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--|
| Number of Rooms | | Interior Finish | | Floor Construction | | Water and Bath | |
| Basement | 0 | Basement | | Basement | CEMENT | Bathrooms | |
| 1st Floor | 4 | 1st Floor | PINE | 1st Floor | PINE | Toilet | |
| 2nd Floor | 4 | 2nd Floor | PINE | 2nd Floor | PINE | Lavatory | |
| 3rd Floor | 0 | 3rd Floor | | 3rd Floor | | Extra Sink | |
| Additional | 0 | Additional | | Additional | | Bidet | |
| Heating | | Roofing | | Tiling | | Extra Shower | |
| Heating Type | STEAM & VAPOR | Roof Type | GABLE | Bath | | Water Closet | |
| Heating Fuel | OIL | Roofing Material | ASPHALT | Toilet | | Walls | |
| Fireplaces | 3 | Roof Insulation | | Kitchen | | Interior Walls | |
| Fireplace Stacks | 2 | | | Other | | Party Walls | |
| Additional Features | | | | | | | |
| Attic Finish | FLOOR & STAIRS | Basement Area | 4 | Plumbing | Y | | |
| Bulkhead | CLOSED | Basement Garage | | | | | |
| Rec Room | | Dormers | Linear Feet | | | | |

Galli-Curci Theatre

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

8 Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

entertainment/recreation

social history

architecture

Period of Significance

1922-1955

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Clarke A. Sanford

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

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Summary

The Galli-Curci Theatre is significant as a distinctive example of a small-scale early twentieth century regional theater building in the Catskills region of New York State. Designed to accommodate both entertainment and commercial spaces, the building is characterized by brick construction, patterned and corbelled brick embellishment, a central parapet, symmetrical fenestration, and large plate-glass storefront windows. The theater was built in 1922 by Clarke A. Sanford, a prominent local businessman, to house three of his ventures: a car dealership, newspaper offices and printing plant, and a silent movie house. Sanford, who served in a number of local offices, is significant for his contributions to the economic and civic life of Margaretville in the first half of the twentieth century and particularly for his association with the *Catskill Mountain News*, which was published from this building from 1923 until the late 1960s. The weekly, which Sanford acquired in 1904, has been an important regional newspaper for almost a century and is still published by the Sanford family today. An auto enthusiast, Clarke Sanford was among the first to introduce automobiles to the area and later served as one of New York State's first commissioners of motor vehicles. Sanford opened a dealership and garage in Margaretville as early as 1914, and when the nominated building was completed, its first floor served as the showroom for the Sanford Chevrolet dealership. Sanford began his movie exhibition business in 1914, showing silent films on the upper floor of a nearby building before constructing the Galli-Curci Theatre specifically for theater use. Although built in the era of silent films, the Galli-Curci was modernized to show "talkies" in the 1930s and again to show widescreen movies in the 1950s. One of two local theaters operated by the Sanford family in the 1930s-40, the Galli-Curci recalls the resort industry, one of the most important components of twentieth-century economic and social life in the Catskills. The building retains a high level of integrity on the exterior, with the only significant change being the expansion of the marquee. The interior retains its general functional divisions and many historic finishes. Although the original theater space has been somewhat altered to allow for modern commercial use, the building clearly illustrates its historical and architectural significance and many of the changes are reversible.

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Town of Middletown

Middletown is located in a mountainous area of the western Catskills. Its topography is characterized by steep rocky hillsides traversed by numerous narrow river and stream valleys of the Delaware River and its tributaries. Originally part of Ulster County, Middletown was incorporated in 1789. It is one of the oldest towns in Delaware County and once encompassed most of the southern half of the county. The town falls within Great Lots 7, 8, 38, 39, and 40 of the Hardenbergh Patent, an enormous early eighteenth century land grant that encompassed much of the land between the Rondout and Delaware Rivers. The earliest documented European settlers in Middletown were Dutch farmers, who arrived c1763. During the Revolution, the town became a Tory stronghold and most of the early settlers were driven off. Many returned after the war, however, and permanent settlement was established by the early nineteenth century.

Margaretville

The village of Margaretville is located on the East Branch of the Delaware River in the south-central part of the town. The earliest European settlers arrived just after the Revolution. Once known as Pakataghkan, or "the meeting of the three rivers," the early village was named Middletown Center. In 1850, it was re-named Margaretville in honor of Margaret Lewis, a granddaughter of Robert Livingston, whose family once owned large portions of the Hardenbergh Patent, including the site of the village.

Margaretville began to develop as a village in the early 1840s. Among the village's earliest and most influential citizens was Dr. Orson M. Allaben. Allaben was born in 1808 near the village of Delancy and began his practice in Dry Brook. He married Thankful Dimmick in 1839, and in 1843 he acquired land in what became the core of the village of Margaretville from Salmon Scott. In 1845 Allaben built a Main Street residence and office, which also served as the location of the first village store. He also ran a printing press and published the village's first newspaper, the *Utilitarian*, in 1863. Allaben held several public offices, serving as supervisor for

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seven terms and as a member of the New York State Assembly (1840; 1870) and Senate (1864-65). He also sold off some of his land as building lots. Among the purchasers was David Ackerly, who built the Ackerly House hotel in 1845 on the corner of Main and Walnut Streets, now near the center of the village.

The village developed rapidly between 1843 and 1869. The Beers map of that year depicts about eighty buildings, mostly along Main Street, and a scattering of buildings on parallel or intersecting streets. While Main Street was laid out on the north side of the East Branch of the Delaware River, a small channel, known as the Binnekill, had been diverted from the river closer to Main Street to serve the village's industrial concerns. Development included a mixture of industrial, residential, and civic buildings. In addition to tanneries, foundries, and saw mills, early businesses included a cobbler shop, wagon shop, harness shop, cooperage, cabinet and paint shop, and blacksmith shop. Social and civic enterprises included a post office and school, several doctor's offices, the Methodist church, built in 1851, and the Margaretville Masonic Lodge and the Odd Fellows' Pakatakan Lodge, both organized in 1855. There were still several farms in and around the village, as well as a few hotels and a cemetery.

As with much of the Catskills, the development of Margaretville was influenced by the coming of the railroad. During the 1870s, the Ulster and Delaware (U&D), one of the major lines connecting the Hudson River (and thus New York City) to Delaware County, traveled northwest from Kingston to Phoenicia and then through Fleischmanns, Arkville, Kelly's Corners, Halcottville, Roxbury, and beyond on its way to Oneonta. Located a few miles west of Arkville, Margaretville was just off the U&D line. However, in 1905 the Delaware and Eastern Railroad, later Delaware and Northern (D&N), was developed to extend the U&D line west from Arkville along the East Branch of the Delaware River with major stops in Margaretville, Dunraven, Andes, Downsville, and East Branch, where it met the main line of the Ontario and Western. Margaretville was thus now connected with the two major railroads serving the Catskills region. The D&N located its terminal yards

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and shops at Margaretville and the railroad gave major impetus to both the agricultural and the resort industries in the village and in the town of Middletown. Several creameries were built and, as in the adjacent town of Roxbury, butter was an important product. The Margaretville station also served as the point of departure for the local cauliflower crop. Introduced into the region in the 1890s, cauliflower became one of the town's most important exports.

There were hotels or boarding houses in the village as early as the 1840s. The largest boarding house, Briar Cliff Lodge, sited on a hill overlooking the village, was built as a sanitarium but never used for that purpose. Others were located in and around the village. By the early twentieth century, Margaretville had become one of the most popular resort towns in the region and, despite the decline in tourism in the 1950s and 60s, it remains a thriving community today.

Clarke A. Sanford

Clarke A. Sanford (1879-1964) was a member of one of Margaretville's most prominent families, and the name is still well known throughout the region today. Among other enterprises, the family controlled the People's National Bank until its failure in 1933, regaining control again after its reopening. Clarke Sanford was born in Dunraven, where his parents owned a farm and boarding house. Like many other families, the Sanfords lost their home when Dunraven was flooded for creation of the Pepacton Reservoir. C.A. Sanford began his career as a teacher in a small local school. Local histories state that he was befriended by one of his family's boarders, who provided funds for one year of study at the Onconta State Normal School. Upon graduation, Sanford took a job with the *Oneonta Star*, which marked the beginning of his career in journalism. In 1904 he returned to Margaretville, where a "Mr. Eels," the owner of the local newspaper, had died suddenly. Eels, reportedly a native of Walton, had purchased the village's first newspaper from Orson Allaben and changed its name to the *Margaretville Messenger*. It was Eels who apparently changed the name again, to the *Catskill Mountain News*,

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in 1902, shortly before his death. Sanford purchased the newspaper from Eels's widow and operated it initially from the bank building at the corner of Main and Bridge Streets. In 1912, he built a large concrete building on nearby Bridge Street to house the newspaper's offices and press and published it from that location until the early 1920s, when he relocated to temporary quarters and then into the new building on Main Street.

In addition to the newspaper, Sanford had his hand in a number of different local businesses, including a car dealership and a movie theater. Clarke Sanford's enthusiasm for the automobile is legendary and he apparently brought the first car, a Pope-Toledo, to the village in 1907; however, the story of his bringing the vehicle to the region by boat to Kingston, then overland to Margaretville, only to run over an outbuilding on his property, is perhaps only apocryphal. In 1914, Sanford formed a partnership with Earl Jenkins to open a garage and automobile sales business, which sold Fords, Buicks and Packards and operated out of Sanford's Bridge Street building. When the partnership was dissolved in 1923, Jenkins purchased the Bridge Street building and continued in business there on his own.

In 1922, Sanford constructed a new building on Main Street to house the editorial offices (on the second floor) and printing facilities (in the basement) of the *Catskill Mountain News*. The new building also provided space for the Sanford Chevrolet dealership, which occupied the first floor storefront, and a theater, which was equipped to show silent movies and featured a player piano. Sanford rented the remaining second-floor office to the Delaware & Eastern Railroad, which occupied the space until 1942 (when the railroad, then the Delaware and Northern, disbanded), after which the newspaper expanded into the railroad's former offices (which were later renovated for use as an apartment).

Sanford rose to prominence in the village and served in a number of prominent positions, including village president, chief of the fire department, member of the board of education, master of the Masonic lodge,

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president of the Margaretville Fair, and bank director. He was later appointed one of New York State's first commissioners of motor vehicles.

Galli-Curci Theatre

Sanford began his movie exhibition business in 1914, showing silent films on the upper floor of his Bridge Street building. This was apparently a "cottage industry," with Sanford's wife, Bertha Moss Sanford (a high school teacher), making popcorn at home to sell in the theater. Construction of the new theater coincided with a boom period in the area, with the dairy, cauliflower, and lumber industries thriving alongside a profitable tourist industry. The significant growth in regional tourism in the early twentieth century was fueled by the availability of convenient train transportation and the phenomenal growth in automobile use in the 1920s.

The majority of space in Sanford's new Main Street building was occupied by the theater. He named the new facility after Amelita Galli-Curci (1882-1963), a Milan-born coloratura soprano who made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1921. Highly successful, Galli-Curci later earned more per performance than Caruso. Shortly after her debut, Galli-Curci and her husband began construction of an estate, "Sul Monte," in nearby Highmount. Galli-Curci apparently agreed to sing on opening night after Sanford offered to name the theater after her. She closed the performance with "Home Sweet Home."

The movie business carried Sanford's other ventures through the Depression, with special attractions like "Bank Night," where a cash prize was awarded by drawing ticket stubs out of a barrel on stage, proving especially popular. The arrival and almost overnight success of "talking pictures" in the early 1930s propelled Hollywood studios into a golden age of production. Sanford added a sound system to accommodate the new form of entertainment, and throughout the 1930s and 40s, the Galli-Curci, like most regional theaters, changed its program three times a week. Sanford also supplemented the theater's income with touring stock companies

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presenting stripped down plays "straight from Broadway," as well as minstrel shows, locally produced dramas, and school and community functions. By the 1930s, Sanford's son Roswell was assisting him in managing the theater and the Sanfords were also operating the Maxbilt Theater, another small resort-era theater/commercial building in the nearby village of Fleischmanns.

In 1946 the Sanfords leased the Margaretville theater to the Kallet theaters chain on the condition that the company would invest in improvements. C.A. Sanford negotiated the deal so that he would keep the profits from the concession stand. In 1948, the Kallet company undertook a substantial remodeling, primarily on the interior. Renovations include filling in the original orchestra pit to increase the seating capacity to 615, installing new seats, rebuilding the projectors and updating decorative finishes, such as the wallpaper and lights. Roof trusses were strengthened to support the roof and new furnace.

The post WWII drive to complete the Pepacton Reservoir, part of the immense New York City water supply system, dealt a blow to the region's economy. Once the nine-hundred-worker construction crew departed and the five towns that lay in the reservoir's path were dismantled and engulfed (c1955), the population of the Margaretville area declined significantly. In 1955 the theater was outfitted with a Cineramascope and widescreen projection lenses for showing the Technicolor epics of the era; three years later, the Sanfords cancelled the lease to Kallet and took over operation of the theater once again. Unfortunately, business, which had suffered another blow with the onslaught of television, fell enough that in 1963 C.A. Sanford he made a successful claim of lost business before the special commission set up for the purpose of compensating farmers and other businesses hurt by the reservoir project.

By the time Clarke Sanford died in 1964, Roswell Sanford had assumed the reins of the movie theater and the newspaper; however, the younger Sanford soon moved the newspaper offices to a new building farther east on

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National Park Service

Galli-Curci Theatre
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Section number 8 Page 8

Main Street (it has since moved to Arkville) and converted the second floor of the theater for use as an apartment. In 1964, the younger Sanford sold the building to Donald Conine, who operated it as a movie theater until selling it to Ben Resnick in 1975. Resnick continued to show movies into the mid-1980s, when the home video revolution (like television before it) changed the economy of big-screen entertainment. At some point in the 1980s some of the auditorium seats were removed to make way for a bigger stage suitable for rock and roll shows. In 1987 the building was sold to Jack and Leslie Goth, who converted it to an antiques store. It was the latter change that precipitated the addition of a level wooden floor in the auditorium space. Other changes in this period included dismantling of the projection and sound system. The current owners, Jonathan Starch and David France, acquired the building in 2005 and are in the process of rehabilitating it for use as a theater once again.

Architecture

The Galli-Curci Theatre is a typical example of the small-scale commercial buildings built in villages and hamlets throughout the state in the early twentieth century. The building was constructed of brick and modestly embellished with corbelled and patterned brick and a small parapet. Its symmetrical façade is distinctive for the broad expanses of glass, particularly the original four-panel plate-glass window with pressed-glass transom. As originally constructed, entrances to the retail space and the theater were nearly identical, each occupying an end bay and marked by a double door with multi-pane glass. Shortly after construction, the theater entrance was given more prominence with the addition of a marquee. The only significant exterior changes since that time were made in 1949, when the marquee was widened, eliminating one of the four storefront panels. At the same time, new doors were installed to the retail space. A series of grade changes to the sidewalk resulted in the loss of below-ground basement windows on the façade.

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National Park Service

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On the interior the layout and spatial divisions accommodated the building's three functions: car showroom and offices in the front, theater in the rear. The retail and office spaces retain original finishes such as hardwood floors and decorative pressed-tin ceilings, while the theater space has been altered several times to reflect changes in function and taste. These include the transition from silent films to "talkies" in the 1930s and the introduction of widescreen entertainment in the 1950s. The most significant change occurred in the 1980s, after the theater had gone out of business, when the movie screen and projection equipment were removed and a level floor was installed over the original sloping theater floor. Small temporary booths were constructed in the large space to accommodate individual retailers. Despite this alteration, the large, open auditorium space, the feature most important in conveying the building's original function, remains, as does period wallpaper and other decorations. Interestingly, the level floor seems to have been installed on top of the auditorium seating, obscuring it while preserving its integrity to 1949.

The relatively restrained and unassuming form of the Galli-Curci contrasts with the some of the more ornate opera houses, theaters, and, later, picture palaces constructed in larger cities in this period; however, it is typical in the Catskills region. In particular, the Margaretville theater resembles the Maxbuilt (1929), its counterpart in Fleischmanns, as well as the Rivoli (1923) in South Fallsburg and the Rialto (1921) in Monticello (the latter two are NR listed). All are modest two-story brick buildings containing commercial and theater space that blend comfortably into their streetscapes. Like the Galli-Curci, all three were built in the early 1920s and later altered to accommodate newer forms of entertainment.

Galli-Curci Theatre

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 529021 4666146
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen LaFrank, Program Analyst

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date October 2005

street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x 3261

city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Galli-Curci Theatre
Margaretville, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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<http://www.dcnhistory.org/gary/marghome.htm>

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Conine, James (stepson of Donald Conine). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

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History and Stories of Margaretville and Surrounding Area.
www.dcnhistory.org/gary/marghst2.htm

LaFrank, Kathleen. "First Presbyterian Church of Margaretville National Register Nomination," 2003.

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Moore, Pat (granddaughter of C.A. Sanford). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

Myers, Nancy (daughter of C.A. Sanford). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

Sanford, Dick (grandson of C.A. Sanford; editor, *Catskill Mountain News*). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

Santiago, Tony (former owner). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

Weiss, Alton (former employee, sometime editor, *Catskill Mountain News*, 1949-1981). Interview by Jonathan Starch, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Galli-Curci Theatre
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the property historically associated with the theater. This is coincident with the current boundary.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**Galli-Curci Theatre
Margaretville, Delaware County, New York**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 1

Research and draft nomination prepared by:

Jonathan Starch
PO Box 281
New Kingston, New York 12459

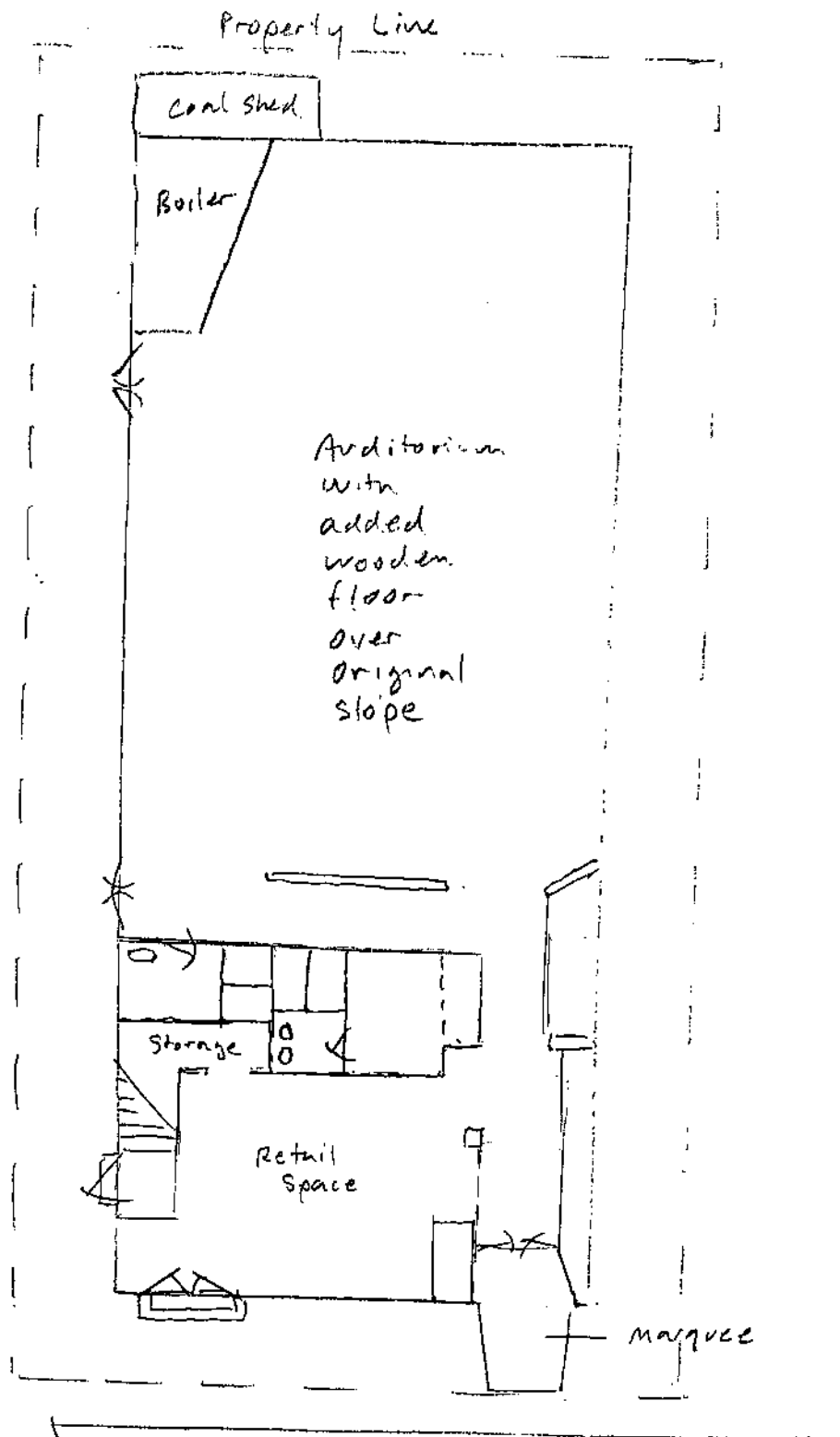
Galli-Curci Theatre
Building



Margaretville
NY.

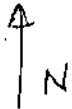
The
Commons
Building

Main Street



Applicant: Galli-Curci LLC
PO Box 281
New Kingston NY 12459
Phone 845 586 1171

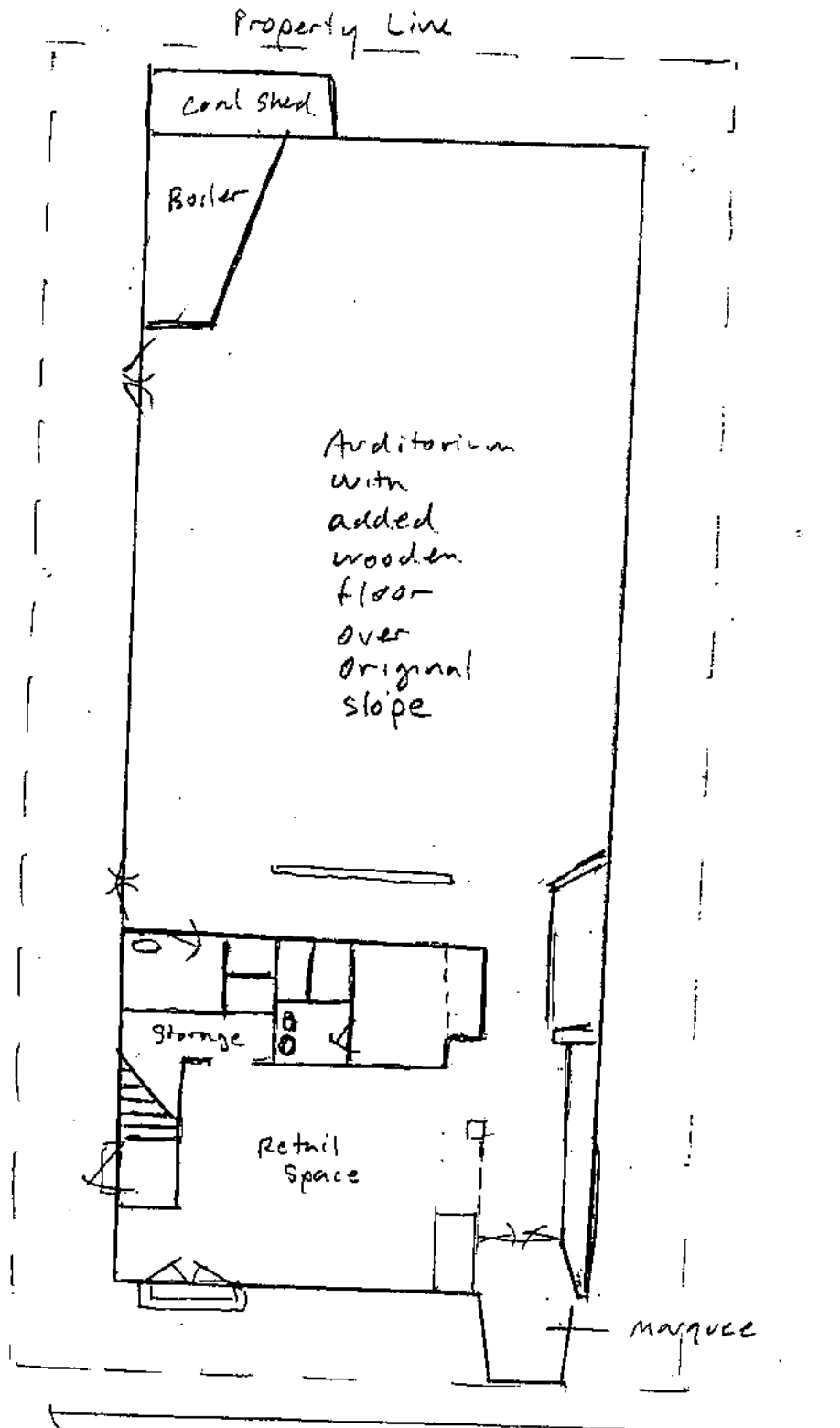
Galli-Curci Theatre
Building




Margaretville
NY.

The
Commons
Building

Main Street



Applicant: Galli-Curci LLC
PO Box 281
New Kingston NY 12459
Phone 845 586 1171



311
1.3 AOC
41460-78261

20-4426-782
VILLAGE OF
MARGARETVILLE
TAX EXEMPT

STREET

(40) ROW.

CHURCH

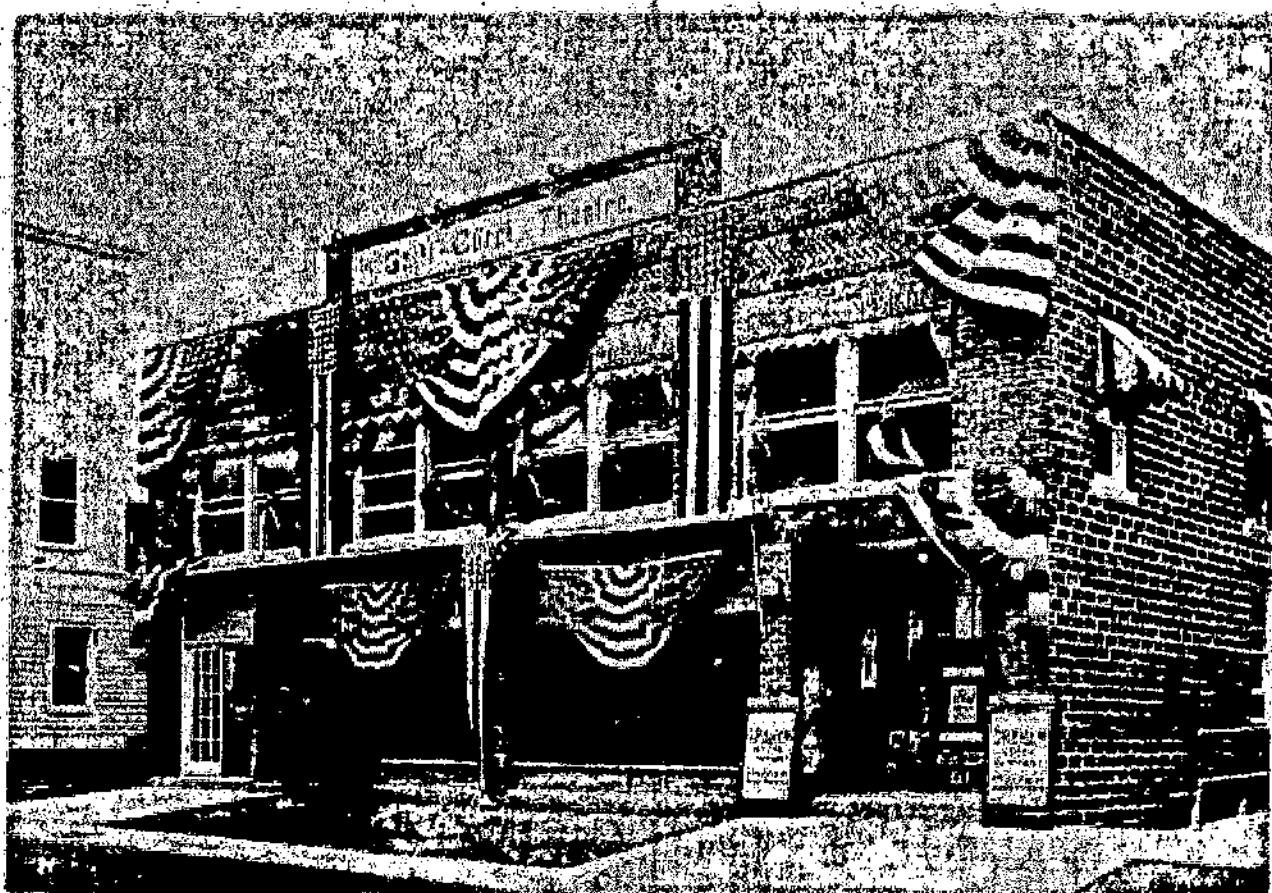
U. M. ETH. PARSONAGE

MAPLE

BRIDGE

PAGE 18

HARRY W HAWLEY INC

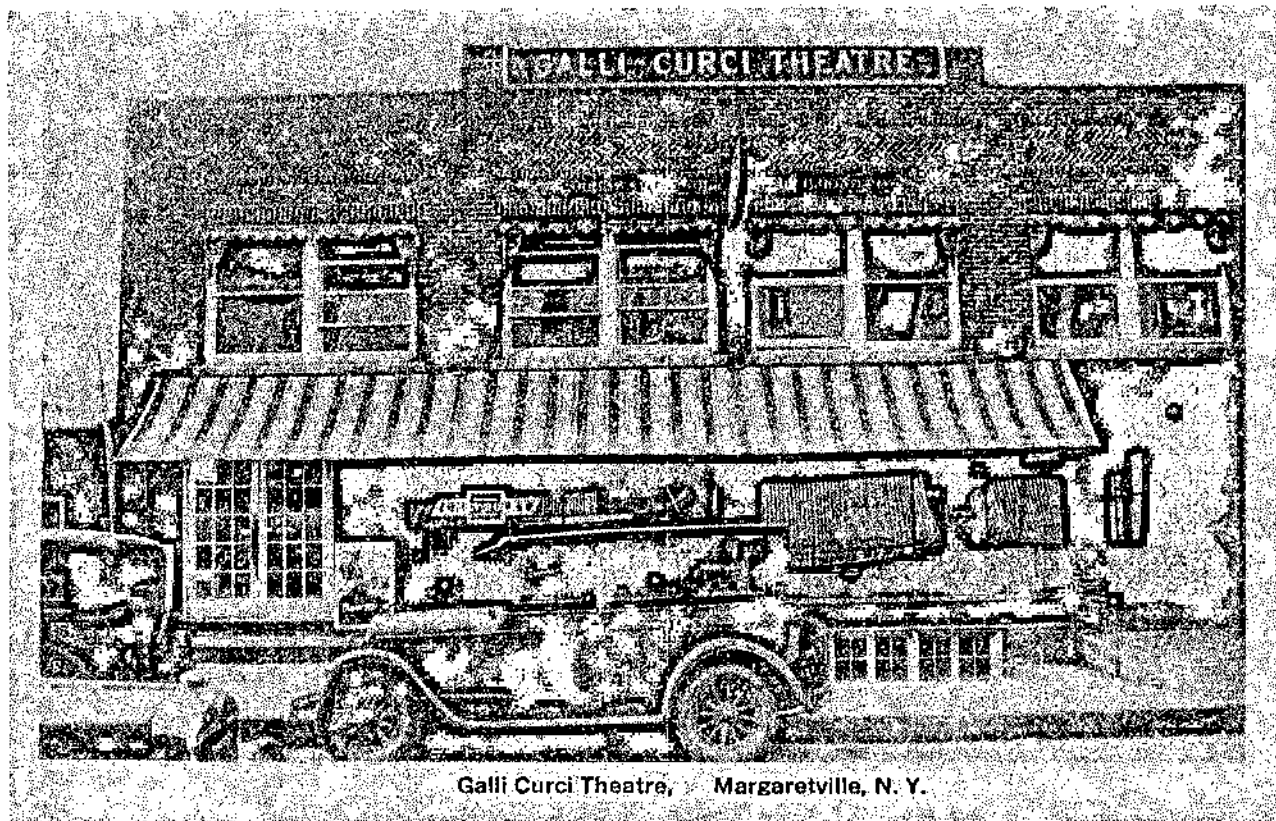


Margaretville's Theater Building Erected in 1922

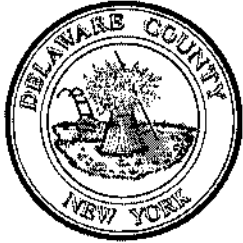
The Galli-Curci Theater building, which was erected in 1922, is decked out festively for a gala event of the mid-1920s. A road company of stage players was giving performances when this photo was taken. Officers and clerks of the

D&N railroad are shown in windows of upper story, where railroad occupied offices. Sanford Chevrolet company was on the ground floor. Building facade was altered shortly after this photo by addition of marquee.

From the Centennial Edition of "The Catskill Mountain News", 1964



Postcard from 1925; note the basement windows at sidewalk level and the Sanford Chevrolet dealership sign in the storefront window

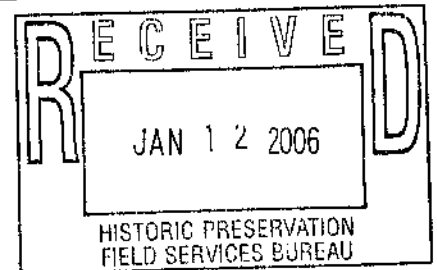


DELAWARE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Highway Department Building • P.O. Box 367 • Delhi, New York 13753
Phone (607) 746-2944 • Fax (607) 746-8479 • Email: pln@co.delaware.ny.us

December 28, 2005

KL



Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

The Delaware County Planning Board was pleased to be informed that the Galli – Curci Theatre of Margaretville will be considered by the State Review Board at its next meeting for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The Galli – Curci Theatre is such a unique building. A public establishment such as a theatre can play an important part of a community's history. It is important to preserve such historic places that reflect a particular time in a community's past.

The Delaware County Planning Board supports the Galli – Curci Theatre of Margaretville to be nominated to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

John Hamilton
Chairman

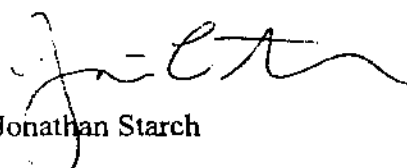
Galli-Curci, LLC
PO Box 281
New Kingston, N.Y. 12459
845-586-1171

Kathleen LaFrank
C/o New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189
Waterford, N.Y. 12188-0189
Fax 518-233-9049


Dear Kathleen:

Please allow this letter to show our formal support, as owners of the building, for adding the Galli-Curci Theatre building at 801 Main Street Margaretville NY 12455 to the NY State and National Historic Registers.

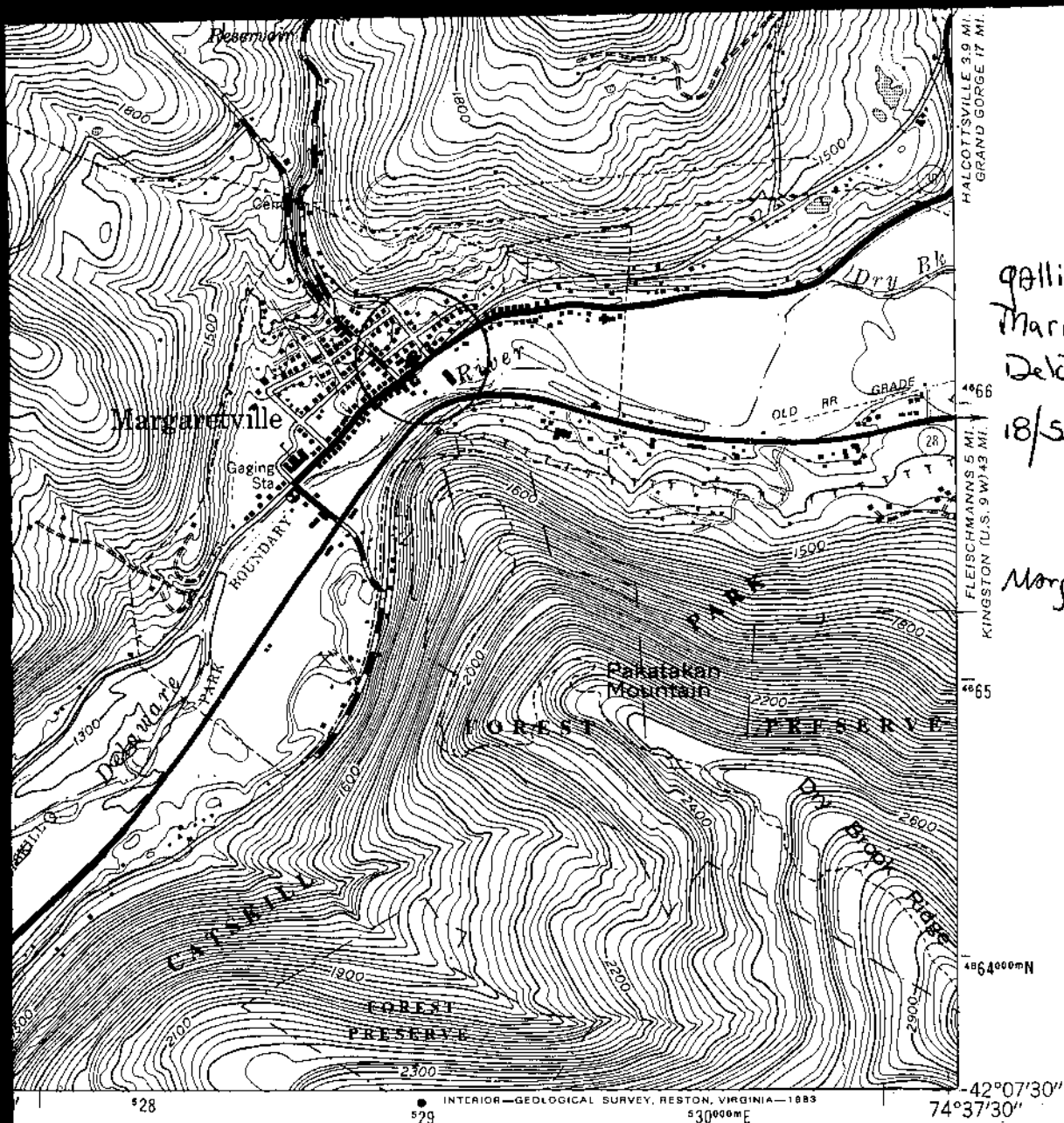
Yours truly,



Jonathan Starch



David France



galli-Curci Theatre
Margaretville
Delaware Co. NY
18/529021/4666146

Margaretville Quad

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ... Light-duty ...
Medium-duty ... Unimproved dirt ...

○ State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

MARGARETVILLE, N. Y.

N4207.5—W7437.5/7.5

1945

PHOTOREVISED 1982

DMA 6068 II NW-SERIES V821

ations shown in purple and woodland compiled by
Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken
1 and other sources. This information not field
ked. Map edited 1982