

HOLLYWOOD THEATER – TAHAWUS CENTER A BRIEF HISTORY

The Hollywood Theatre is located on Main Street right next door to the Tahawus Center on Rt 9N in the hamlet of Au Sable Forks, NY. Originally there were five theaters in the town: Kemp, Bridge, Au Sable Forks, Hollywood, and at one time, the theater in the high school auditorium, while the Hollywood was being built in 1937.

Tahawus Center was built in 1911 as a Masonic Lodge. Its two upper floors served as the Lodge, while the retail space on the ground floor was home at various times to a laundromat, post office, and newspaper publishing house, and most recently an antique store.

The Hollywood was the last of the small theatres in the area; operating longer than any others according to a film broker. The Hollywood Theatre was closed in the mid-1970s, after a 30+ year run.

The Hollywood was then bought by Dick Ward in 1978. He went on to purchase the vintage popcorn machine for his kids and ended up buying the entire theatre which he operated for several years. In 1983, the seats were removed and sent to Lake Placid Palace Theater to make a twin theatre. The floor was leveled with a wooden platform so that machinery could be brought in for a luge factory which operated for only a couple of years.

The building was again closed until 1993 when John Pattnos purchased it to expand his business for a warehouse for his carpets, appliances, and mattresses. Friends of the North Country, a local historical society, tried to raise money to restore and save the theatre. Bricks were used to replace the original marble façade. They kept some of the original details of the building. A realtor sold it in 2006. But the latest incarnation of The Hollywood has actually returned it to its historic beginnings. It was reopened as a theatre by the new owners Cory and Sierra Hanf in 2009. It has been remodeled and extensively repaired, and now boasts a new marquee, two screens, each with 98 comfortable seats.

In 2009 When Appleby Foundation – of which Rebecca Kelly and her husband Craig Brashear are principals -, acquired the Mason's building, it had been empty and neglected on the upper floors for 30 years. They began to turn the building into the Tahawus Center – *a place for ideas -- with room to move*. Today it houses the Windows Gallery, the Cloudsplitter Dance Studio, and a variety of education and cultural activities for all ages, with prime retail space on the ground floor.

In 2014 the non-profit Tahawus Center and the Hollywood Theater teamed up. The neighbors were awarded a NYSCA grant that enabled them to raise the funds for the two needed digital projection upgrades and the 2015 launch of the Au Sable Forks Film series bringing diversity to main stream fare. The project expands cultural and economic stability for Au Sable Forks, attracting visitors, new entrepreneurs, investment, and retaining the expendable income of residents. Such revitalization efforts strengthen the appeal of one of the Adirondacks older classic Main Streets as the activity center for the town and region.



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neighbors - Tahawus and Hollywood



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