

# WABASH VALLEY

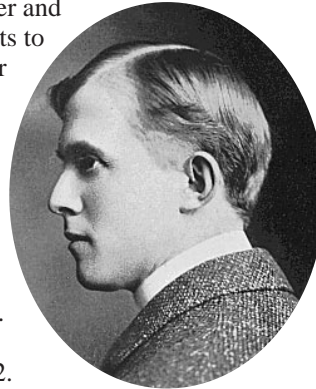
## PROFILES

*A series of tributes to hometown people and events that have shaped our history.*

### Theodore W. Barhydt

**T**he Indiana Theater, the former Hippodrome Theater and the home at 1121 South Sixth Street are monuments to Theodore Wells Barhydt, Terre Haute's premier "theater builder." Aptly, his name and his legacy sport identical initials, "T.B."

Born May 1, 1867, Barhydt was the son of a shoe merchant residing in Burlington, Iowa. His paternal uncle, for whom he was named, was among the city's most influential citizens: founder and president of Merchants National Bank of Burlington and Cedar Rapids & Northern Railroad as well as owner of the Delano Hotel. Uncle Theodore agreed to raise his nephew when Theodore's mother, the former Mary Copp, died in 1882.



After attending Elliott's Business College, Theodore was employed at his uncle's bank for five years. In 1891 he resigned to become manager of Burlington's Grand Opera House in partnership with F.W. Chambers. Barhydt-Chambers Co. swelled to include theaters in Davenport and Ottumwa, Iowa, and Peoria and Quincy, Ill. In Quincy, he met Henrietta Viola Schulteis, who became his wife on Oct. 23, 1897.

The wedding took place only a week before Barhydt assumed duties as the first manager of the Grand Opera House, erected at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets in Terre Haute following the July 1896 fire that ravaged the Naylor Opera House. The gala opening, featuring Katherine Germaine and Richard Golden in *The Isle of Champagne*, was held November 21, 1897. Barhydt soon increased his responsibilities by becoming president and largest stockholder of Lyric Theater Corp., operator of the Lyric (later the Orpheum Theater) and Variety (later the Liberty Theater) vaudeville houses on Wabash. Under his direction, the Lyric was converted into the city's first motion picture theater.

In late 1914 Barhydt began constructing the Hippodrome vaudeville house at the southwest corner of Eighth and Ohio, using Austrian-born theater architect John Eberson's German Renaissance design. Costing \$250,000, it opened in early 1916. Barhydt relinquished his duties at the Grand in 1918 and, two years later, sold the Hippodrome. Once the home of Community Theater and later the Wabash motion picture theater, it has been the Scottish Rite Cathedral and Masonic Museum since 1955. In late 1920, Barhydt organized a stock company to build the Indiana Theater — which opened in 1922 — at a cost exceeding \$750,000, incorporating Eberson's Spanish Baroque design motif. The theater's ornate ceiling was also installed at the Barhydt residence, now occupied by the Rose-Hulman chapter of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

In April 1926 Barhydt developed a throat infection diagnosed as being induced by an ulcerated tooth. Despite treatment at Mayo's Clinic and resorts throughout the country, he was soon confined to his home. He died April 5, 1927, at age 59. His only brother Nathan lived in Los Angeles. His widow married Terre Haute clothing manufacturer Albert D. Ehrmann, brother of author-poet Max Ehrmann. Henrietta Ehrmann died October 21, 1954, at age 80, at the Barhydt-Ehrmann residence.

TERRE HAUTE

(812) 238-6000



NATIONAL BANK

*Always Close to Home*