AMERICA'S FIRST MOVIE THEATER

The HISTORIC Vitascope HALL

On July 26, 1896, America's first fixed-seating movie theater opened at 623 Canal Street in New Orleans. The 400-seat theater was created in a showroom fitted with a projector and filled with chairs and used church pews. Admission was one dime.

For an additional ten cents, theater patrons were offered a glimpse behind the curtain to see the innovative Edison Vitascope projector that converted still, black and white photos into moving images up to a minute long.

VITASCOPE HALL

In Vitascope Hall, 400 seated patrons watched 10-12 short films for 10 cents on white fabric stretched across a frame. Black canvas covered the windows.
For 10 cents more, patrons viewed the Vitascope projector in the projection booth, and for another 10 cents, patrons took home a scrap piece of film.
So many wanted to see the projector that soon the price increased to 50 cents.
In 1896, of the 40 Edison Vitascope territories in the U.S., only Louisiana was financially successful.
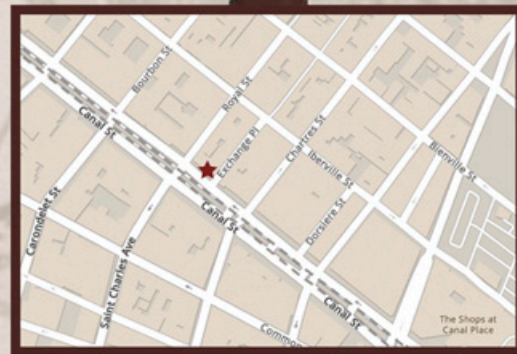
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The Vitascope Hall

While the theater is no longer standing, its location is commemorated with an historic marker that celebrates New Orleans' pioneering role in the motion picture industry.

623 Canal Street at Exchange Place

To learn more about the history of this theater visit www.NewOrleansEntertainment.org/VitascopeHall.

AMERICA'S FIRST MOVIE THEATER
Vitascope Hall, 623 Canal Street

On July 26, 1896, William T. "Pop" Rock & Walter J. Wainwright, shown with 2 patrons, and projectionist William Reed (r to l) opened the first indoor seated movie theater in the United States.

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