

Small Categories Series

Theatres

Ah! Theatres! Half my childhood was spent in theatres. My father ran a small diner in downtown Los Angeles, and when I was on summer vacation he would send me to the movies to get me out of the restaurant (!). I remember that the movie venue always changed on Wednesdays, and by the time Wednesday would roll around I had seen every movie worth seeing...but then it was Wednesday, and I would start all over again on the new movies! I loved it!

This was in the 1950s. The theatres charged between .75¢ and \$1.50, depending on the theatre, and *of course*, for that price, you saw two movies, a cartoon, previews of coming attractions, and the news! *Sigh!* Look what you get today—\$7.75 tickets, 1 movie, a bunch of commercials, and \$5.00 popcorn.

The theatres I went to in Los Angeles were palatial—huge, balconies, curtains, pillars, everything gilded in gold. If I remember correctly, most of the theatres back then were either owned or contracted directly to the movie studios, so that *this* theatre was an RKO theatre, and *that* theatre was an MGM theatre, and so on. The pinnacle of such theatres, at least on the West Coast, was Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Just going to that theatre was an experience, irrespective of what movies were being shown. From 1973-2001, it was renamed Mann's Chinese Theatre, but, fortunately, I had moved on by then. It wasn't the same.

I collect Theatres; I collect Drive-Ins. I keep them separate, though. Drive-Inns were a completely different experience.

