

Clifton Opera House History

- *1893 - Designed by Springfield architect C.A Cregar
 - Built by contractor D.B. Moon (of S. Solon)
 - Could seat 400 in tiered seating
 - Minstrel shows then Medicine shows were performed
- *1950's - Square dances were held
 - Used by Clifton Union School as auditorium for after school activities, basketball games & day care
- *1960's - Used as Village Offices
- *1983 - Used for twice weekly services by Christ Life Church
- *mid 1980's - roof deteriorating and walls bowing out
 - Howard Printz obtained permission from Village Council to restore building
 - Clifton Historical Society began collecting donations (the first \$1 from a passer-by who saw Howard collecting bricks), holding bake sales and yard sales, and volunteering time & effort to clean out and reclaim the building. Old Clifton Days proceeds also used.
 - Seats for main floor donated from Memorial Hall & Masonic Temple of Springfield. Now seats ~200 with ~140 on main floor & ~60 original seats in balcony
- *1985(?) - Programming began under direction of Lois Bailey (Howard's sister). Americana Series every Saturday night from March through November, \$5 donations, homemade pies & other foods sold
- *1989 - Historical Society began lease of building for \$1 / year and continues to hold the performances.
- *1999 - Howard Printz passed away
- *2010 - Historical Society membership dwindles. They give up lease of building. Running of performances is taken over by the Village Council with the help of several volunteers. Brenda Walter takes over booking shows and expands the performance to shows on Friday and Saturday nights (plus some Sunday matinees) year round (with several weeks off in Dec/Jan)
 - Attempt to get building listed on National Register of Historic Places unsuccessful since the original tower was removed from the building.
- *2011 (June) - Brenda Walter becomes Opera House Manager
- *Sharon Benedict completes mural on stage back-drop after 3 years work during closings.
- *2013 (June) - Brian Ehlers takes over as OH Manager
- *2017 (April) - Christin Zerbe-Lecky takes over as Manager
- *2020 - Closed due to COVID
- *2021 - Performances resume on Saturday nights (and a few others) from late February through early December with the help of many volunteers. Paula Lazorski handles the booking.
- *2022 - Food trucks are added for each performance night with bistro tables in the building for dining.
 - Robert Baldwin, Jr is recognized for his generous donations to the Opera House through the Carry Baldwin Endowment.

Proceeds from the show are split between the performer and Village of Clifton which uses the funds to maintain and improve the Opera House.