



## #7: The Old Jewel Theatre

One of the most recognizable landmarks in Humble is the Jewel Theatre building on Main Street. As a child, I remember going to the Jewel Theatre to see Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory starring Gene Wilder. A fire in 1981 ended its days as a theatre, but the exterior easily brings back memories to long-term Humble residents. The history of the theatre actually dates back to 1912. In those days, it was a wooden building known as the Dixie Theatre and Roller Skating Rink, owned by R. B. Rodgers. The name was changed to the Star Theatre in the 1920s. When E. N. Collins was the owner in the 1930s, it became known as the Lindell Theatre. Mrs. Nellie Collins would play the music at her husband's theater. Back in those days, it was 25 cents for an adult ticket, while a ticket for a child under 12 was 10 cents.

In 1947, E. N. Collins sold Humble's Lindell Theatre to the Long Theatre Circuit. That same year, the Jewel Theatre in Texas City, also owned by the Long Theatre Circuit, was damaged during the 1947 Texas City Disaster. The circuit's owner had the Jewel Theatre sign moved to Humble, and the Lindell Theatre in Humble was renamed as the Jewel Theatre. That sign is the one that still hangs in front of the building today. Harvey Dale Ivy was the projectionist for the theatre before and after it was sold to the Long Theatre Circuit. He eventually became the owner. For many years, the theatre would show a movie on its single screen each weeknight at 7. On Saturday, people could attend a matinee at 1:30, and then a regular show at 7. According to Humble historian Charles Goodwin, Mrs. Ivy used to walk up and down the aisles of the movie theater to make sure the youngsters were behaving themselves.

The Jewel Theatre was gutted by a fire on February 4, 1981, and was eventually remodelled for use by businesses. Fortunately, the fire did not damage the original Jewel Theatre sign, although bad weather and the brutal Texas summers caused the sign to deteriorate. In 2007, the Humble Beautification Committee worked with the manager and landlord of the building to restore that sign back to its original condition. Sign Mart of Humble performed the work, and the sign was re-installed in front of the theatre. Once the sign was lit, vandals repeated threw rocks at it to break the lights. Regrettably, the owners turned off the sign to prevent it from further damage.

On any day I find myself in downtown Humble, I always make it a point walk in front of the Jewel Theatre at marvel at the history of the building. As time progresses, we always tend to lose some important landmarks from our past. We have been fortunate that the Jewel Theatre is still here to remind us of the fun we had during a more innocent era.