256# Hippodrome Theatre (Script by Joanna Grey Talbot and Peggy Macdonald)

Along with the Clock Tower, the building that is now home to the Hippodrome Theatre is one of the most iconic symbols of downtown Gainesville. In 1911, architects Thomas Ryerson and James Knox Taylor completed this monumental building, which was designed as a focal point and physical terminus of First Street. The former Federal Building is elegantly trimmed with carved limestone. Its north façade is dominated by a grand portico with six Corinthian columns. The richly plastered interior, bronze entry doors and terrazzo floors are also noteworthy. At the time it was built it had innovative features such as an elevator and steam heat.

The post office occupied the first floor, the federal courthouse was on the second floor, and the U.S. Land Office was on the third floor. The building served as Gainesville’s main post office until 1964.

In 1972, six artists formed the theatre group that later became the Hippodrome. Their first building was a converted hardware/convenience store. In 1975, the Hippodrome relocated to a warehouse. In 1980, the former Federal Building was renovated under the guidance of architect Al Dompe and became the new home of the Hippodrome State Theatre. In 1979, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Hippodrome opened its doors in 1980. The building has a 276