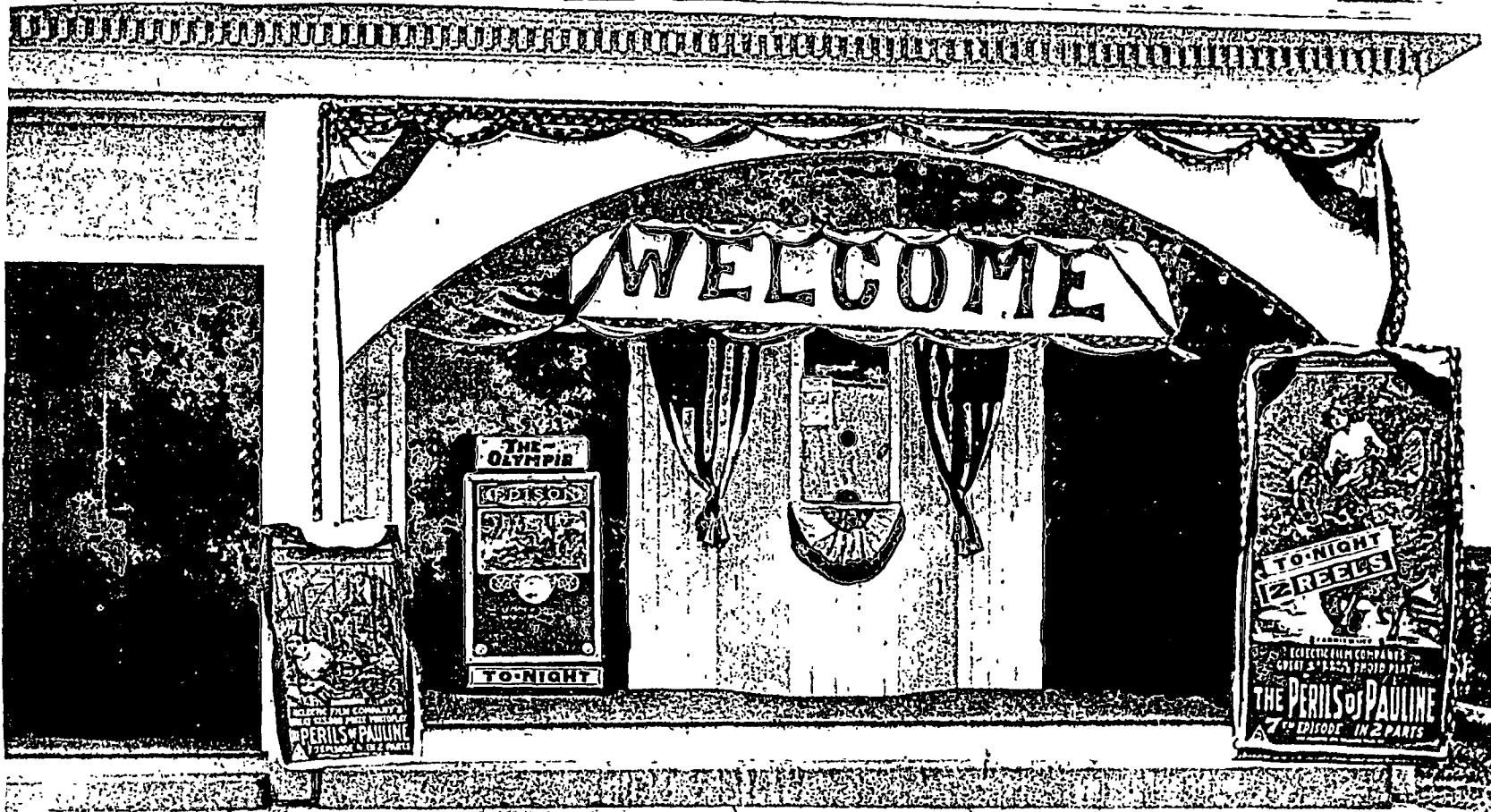


Proud old building gives way to parking lot...



It will not be long until the Knights of Pythias Hall will be completely demolished and work will begin on the parking lot that is to replace it. The lot will be for the use of bank customers and personnel and will alleviate, somewhat, Farmington's parking problem.

The people of Farmington realize that this a problem that cries for a solution. They know that the building has been empty and useless for some time. They watch with clinical interest the skillful engineering of the Charles DiPrizio crew as the building is taken apart piece by piece, in order to avoid injury to workers or passerbys and damage to closely adjacent buildings. But for many there is also a feeling of nostalgia as they watch the death of a landmark.

The charred wood that has been exposed in the course of demolition is a reminder of the fire that destroyed much of the original building in 1914. It was William Weare who had it rebuilt and then later sold the building to Harmony Lodge #11, Knights of Pythias. It changed hands again and finally was purchased by Walter Young, who continued to operate the theater as he had been doing long before he bought the building. Those were the years when the building was a busy and an active place.

The offices were filled with a procession of business and professional men - Arthur Wiggin, attorney, Oliver Baxter, real estate dealer; Dr. L. A. Clarkson, dentist; Dr. Joseph McLaughlin and later Dr. Lord, to mention a few. On the street floor there

was, besides the theater, a candy store, operated for years by Charlie Whitehouse.

Upstairs there was the Montauk club, a club for sportsmen where the businessmen of the day gathered for evenings of recreation and to plan the annual minstrel shows that attracted people from all the surrounding towns.

There were the Pythian Sisters, who sponsored, among other things an annual masquerade ball that was one of the social highlights of the season.

There was the theater where we saw "The Perils of Pauline" for the last time and "Gone with the Wind" for the first time. According to our age and inclinations, we went there to laugh, cry, hold hands or stamp, clap and hoot but always to enter a more glamorous world than the one we left outside.

The building is still called the "K of P" Hall, but Harmony Lodge has long been dissolved and its members have affiliated with the East Rochester lodge. At one time Harmony was the second largest lodge in the state, with over 250 members. The last Chancellor Commander, "Hap" Lougee, says that to the best of his knowledge there are only 7 members left, the oldest of whom is Walter Pulstka, who joined in 1895 and will be 95 next spring.

But all that was yesterday. Today we are curious about the mechanics of the demolition of such a large structure.

Tomorrow we will be grateful for extra parking spaces that will help relieve the congestion on the street during peak hours.

And so sentiment gives way to progress.

