

WORLD'S OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING MOVIE THEATER

PLAZA 1907 CINEMA

209 S Main, Ottawa, KS

Cinephiles, this one's for you. Carve out a few hours during your Kansas City trip to take an hour's drive to Ottawa, Kansas, and see a movie in the world's (yes—world's) oldest continuously operating movie theater.

You wouldn't be faulted for expecting this cinematic landmark to be on the East Coast, or in Europe. Instead, the Plaza 1907 Cinema remains open for business amid the charming surroundings of downtown Ottawa. So many landmarks—including many listed in this book—suffered damage or total destruction as the result of fires. As Plaza 1907 Cinema owner Scott Zaremba explained in a 2019 Associated Press story, movie theaters were especially susceptible to fires because early films were made of flammable materials.

Since its opening on May 22, 1907, with showings of *Bad Mother*, *A Trip to the Stars on a Soap Bubble*, and *Two Wives for One Husband*, the Plaza 1907 has operated in the same location. When the *Guinness Book of World Records* investigated an application submitted by theater staff in 2017, research indicated that the Ottawa theater predated a movie house in Denmark by a mere two days. The next year, the *Guinness Book* added the Plaza 1907 to its pages as “the world's oldest operating purpose-built cinema.”

These days you can catch first-run movies on one of the theater's two screens. Save time for a trip through the theater's movie museum, an assemblage of memorabilia including props and scripts that pay dual homage to the trajectories of the theater and the film industry.

Inflation, indeed! When the Plaza 1907 Cinema opened, movie tickets cost five cents and included two films and a live music performance.

Photos courtesy of Visit KS

