Days Gone by Recalled As
Old Theater Organ Moved

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Some of the last vestiges of an age gone by were removed from a local theater yesterday.

Parts of an old theater organ, which was probably built to accompany both stage shows and silent movies, was hauled away yesterday from the Jefferson theater by a young man who plans to rebuild it at his ranch in Mexico. All that remained of the instrument were the wind chest and pipes which were found in the original organ chamber of the theater.

R. B. Clay, manager of the Jefferson, said that he didn't know the theater had an organ until Richard Markwardt of Saltillo, Mexico asked him if he could check the organ chamber.

Located near the screen - end of the theater, the chamber is entered through a three-foot square opening in the ceiling. It took Markwardt and a friend about three hours to remove what was left of the instrument.

One account has it that the rest of the organ was shipped to a church in Texas years ago after the theater stopped using it.

No one seems to know when the organ was first used. Perhaps it was once played in the old theater built in 1902 that once stood where the Jefferson is today.

Markwardt, who is an organist, plans to restore the instrument he found here by getting parts from other theater organs around the country. He said that many people are interested in purchasing and rebuilding the organs that once accompanied silent films.

Built in the '30s, the Jefferson was equipped for both stage productions and silent movies. The theater owner hardly had a chance to use the new equipment before "talkies" were shown here.

The orchestra pit is about all that remains of the theater's stage show days. Backdrops and other equipment were given to the Lafayette Little Theater.

Now the organ which once entertained Lafayette residents has been carted away.