People

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BRLT to mark 40th season

As it is known today, the Baton Rouge Little Theater officially dates from 1946. But community Theater activity in Baton Rouge began in the early days of the century. The name of the groups varied: The Little Theatre Guild, El Teatro Pequeno, Town and Gown Players, Community Players.

Whatever they called themselves the groups managed to find stages all over town. Plays were performed in the old silks theatre (now of Third Street and Florida Boulevard), the former and present Woman's Clubhouse, Nicholls and Darrow elementary schools, Baton Rouge High School, the Community Center and the old Teatro house on Lafayette Street.

World War II brought an end to most local theater activity. It was the determination of a group of interested Baton Rougians that established, in the spring of 1946, what would become today's community theater organization. Under the direction of an LSU graduate student, James Tharber and Ethel Negreauc's comedy, The Male Animal, opened on Dec. 9, 1946, in the Woman's Clubhouse - the first production of the Baton Rouge Civic Theater.

Jerry Leggins, left, and Neva Gage in BRLT's 1976 summer musical, 'Kismet'.

A scene from the 1956-57 production of 'Anniversary Waltz' — the shrugging teen-ager in the middle is Henry Avery

The late Lee Edwards, BRLT's first fulltime artistic director.

The first home of Baton Rouge Little Theater, on the grounds of what is now Metro Airport.

Since 1961, BRLT has made its home in this modern playhouse adjacent to Bon Marche Mall.