

## SOWDEN OPERA HOUSE

Squire Sowden had the Opera House built in 1892, and it seated 500 people. There was an outside set of stairs up to the second floor. At one end of the Hall, there was a well-equipped stage. At the rear there was a lounge and smoking rooms. As well, there was a series of private boxes lining 3 gallery sides of the Auditorium. These were rented out by the season. Maud Sowden is credited with the design of the opera boxes. The Opera House was touted to be one of the finest halls in the West for its day.

The Opera House offered many different forms of entertainment: Opera, Musicals, Variety Performances, Traveling Plays, Vaudeville Shows, Magicians and even a Hypnotist. There were even guest appearances by Helen Keller and Nellie McClung. The size of the Auditorium allowed Church dinners to be hosted there. Later local musical theatre productions were offered including, HMS Pinafore and The Mikado. After 40 years of constant use, the Opera House started showing its age, and could not be repaired. It was eventually demolished. In its place today is an apartment sized house.



*Picture 1913 - built 1892*

### *8 Crescent Avenue*

*Squire Sowden's Opera House (upper storey) also was a theatre for Newells Moving Picture 1920, Adanac Theatre*

