

Springer Opera House (MC 379)

Historical Note

Located at 103 10th Street in downtown Columbus, Georgia, the Springer Opera House is now the State Theatre of Georgia. It opened for business on February 21, 1871, and was considered the finest opera house between New York and New Orleans. Six hundred people attended the first performance which was an "amateur concert by the ladies and gentlemen of Trinity Church". The Springer had 1,250 seats, two balconies, boxes with chandeliers over each one, a marble-floored lobby and frescoed walls. The Opera House had been built by Francis Joseph Springer, who before the Civil War had immigrated to Columbus from Alsace. Springer brought talent and business acumen to his theatre. He placed his theatre in the center of a commercial complex that included his wholesale grocery business, the Springer Hotel and rental space. The Springer attracted many well-known personages including: Blind Tom, Edwin Booth, Oscar Wilde, Tom Thumb, Booker T. Washington, John Philip Sousa, Lily Langtry and Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the 1900s, the Springer became a movie house. In 1959 the Springer closed and stood deserted until 1964 when it was slated for demolition. The idea grew to save it from the wrecking ball. A group called the Springer Opera House Trustees was formed to raise money to purchase and preserve the building. The Springer reopened on October 6, 1965 with an original musical production of *St. Elmo*, a melodrama based on the novel of the same name by Augusta Jane Evans. In 1971, its centennial year, the Springer was designated The State Theatre of Georgia. The theatre was designated a National Historical landmark in 1978.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of one box of materials relating to the Springer Opera House in Columbus, Georgia. Programs from 1939 to 2013 are included

Permission to Publish

Permission to publish material from the Springer Opera House must be obtained from the Columbus State University Archives at Columbus State University. Use of the following credit line for publication or exhibit is required:

Springer Opera House (MC 379) Columbus State University Archives Columbus, Georgia

Provenance

The materials in this collection are from the archives' vertical file and donations from Linda Broccato.

Note to Researchers:

See also:

[MC 29 Loretto Chappell Collection](#)

[MC 73 Edith Kyle Crawford Collection](#)

[MC 87 Metro Columbus Urban League Collection](#)

VF Historic Places- Springer Opera House

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Folder 1 - History of the Springer Opera House and restoration, 1965-1989

Folder 2 - Mailings to patrons of performances, 1992-1995 & nd

Folder 3 - Newsletters 1989-1992, 2011-2012

Folder 4 - Seasonal brochures of upcoming performances, 1989, 2000, 2005-2010

Folder 5 - Springer Children's Theatre, 1968, 1992, 2007, 2011 & nd

Folder 6 - Springer programs-single performances 1938, 1964-1980

Folder 7 - Springer programs-single performances 1994-1999

Folder 8 - Springer programs-single performances 2000-2013

Folder 9 - Springer programs-single performances, nd

Folder 10 - Springer Studio II, 2003-2010

Folder 11 - Volunteer invitations 1969-2012

Folder 12 -Springer programs and flyers for 2017 season