

## Guide to the Lyceum Theatre Collection

*The History Center in Tompkins County*  
110 North Tioga Street, Suite 204A  
Tompkins Center for History and Culture  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
607-273-8284  
[www.thehistorycenter.net](http://www.thehistorycenter.net)  
[archives@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:archives@thehistorycenter.net)

### Collection Number V-1-5-3

### Accession Number: 1993.17 (and others)

See also S-288 in Scrapbooks. The bound volume includes assorted Lyceum Theatre programs and ephemera glued to its pages, dating from 1904-1913.

Compiled in 2020

### COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Lyceum Theatre opened in 1893 and served the Ithaca community for forty years until it was demolished in 1933. It was located at the intersection of South Cayuga and Seneca Streets. The Lyceum hosted a wide assortment of events, including: operas, plays, musicals, minstrel shows, films, dances, high school graduations, charity events, and even an automobile show.

The bulk of the collection is composed of theatre programs from 1893-1924. Performers such as John and Ethel Barrymore, George M. Cohan, Lillian Russell, and John Philip Sousa graced the Lyceum stage (Sousa more than once). In 1906 alone, the Lyceum hosted *Ben Hur*, the John Philip Sousa Band, and a concert headlined by William Grant Egbert, founder of the Ithaca Conservatory of Music (which eventually evolved into Ithaca College). Also in 1906, a play called *The Clansman* was performed. Ten years later the play returned to the Lyceum in the form of the now infamous feature film *Birth of a Nation*. The play and the film presented a racist interpretation of post-Civil War politics and society in the southern states; however, both initially received widespread public support among white Americans. Similarly, many of the productions put on by various local social clubs and Cornell University clubs include images and concepts that would be considered inappropriate today.

Advertisements in the Lyceum Theatre programs reveal a downtown Ithaca that was home to many small businesses, few of which remain today. Researchers will also find a variety of correspondence from Max M. Gudstadt (Theatre manager for thirty years), blank forms with Lyceum letterhead, seating charts, and architectural specifications (not drawings) for the building itself, including finishes, lighting, and materials to be used in construction.

## CONTAINER LIST

Folder 1: Historical Information, Office Forms, Correspondence, and Construction Specifications from the Architect (1893-1933)

Folder 2: Assorted Clippings (1901-1961)

Folder 3: Lyceum Theatre Programs (undated)

Folder 4: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1893)

Folder 5: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1894)

Folder 6: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1895-1901)

Folder 7: Lyceum Theatre Programs; ten-year anniversary edition (1903)

Folder 8: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1902-1903)

Folder 9: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1904)

Folder 10: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1905)

Folder 11: Lyceum Theatre Programs (January-April 1906)

Folder 12: Lyceum Theatre Programs (May-October 1906)

Folder 13: Lyceum Theatre Programs (November-December 1906)

Folder 14: Lyceum Theatre Programs (January-April 1907)

Folder 15: Lyceum Theatre Programs (May-December 1907)

Folder 16: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1909)

Folder 17: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1910)

Folder 18: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1911)

Folder 19: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1912)

Folder 20: Lyceum Theatre Programs (January-April 1913)

Folder 21: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1913-1914)

Folder 22: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1915)

Folder 23: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1916)

Folder 24: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1917-1920)

Folder 25: Lyceum Theatre Programs (1921-1922)

Folder 26: Lyceum Theatre Programs; includes thirty-year anniversary edition (1923-1924)

Folder 27: Lyceum Theatre Programs, Special Events: charity events, automobile shows, *Birth of a Nation*, concert featuring W. Grant Egbert, founder of Ithaca College (1906-1924)

Folder 28: Lyceum Theatre Programs, Vaudeville a la Mode: annual benefit of the Associated Charities (1915-1921; missing 1918-1920)

Folder 29: Lyceum Theatre Programs, Cornell University Clubs: The Cornell Masque; Cornell Dramatic Club/Women's Dramatic Club; Cornell Glee, Banjo, & Mandolin Clubs; The Savage Club (1894-1924)

Folder 30: Lyceum Theatre Programs, American Legion Follies: includes script for 1921 show *The Island of Yap* (1921-1923)

Folder 31: Lyceum Theatre Programs, Social Clubs: Elk's Minstrels, Lodge no. 636; Odd Fellows' Minstrel Shows and Band Concert (1914-1924)

Folder 32: Lyceum Theatre Souvenir Booklets "Reminiscences, Theatres, Concerts" (1913)

Folder 33: Lyceum Theatre Advertisement in the *Elmira Telegram Supplement* (1893)