

About the Collections

The Theatre Historical Society of America (THS) exists to encourage and insure the acquisition, preservation and publication of historic photographs, documents, artifacts and other information and material related to American theatre architecture and history, and to encourage the preservation and use of historic American theatres.

THS's **American Theatre Architecture Archives** is dedicated to preserving the architectural, cultural and social history of America's theatres. It contains information on more than 15,000 theatres, primarily in the United States. Every period and style of theatre architecture is represented: 19th century opera houses, nickelodeons, vaudeville houses, small town and neighborhood theatres, open-air theatres, drive-ins, and grand movie palaces. Holdings consist of images, books, periodicals, corporate and business records, blueprints, supplier and trade catalogues, architectural artifacts, theatre furnishings, ushers' uniforms, and countless other items relating to theatre buildings and their history.



Uniforms: (clockwise from top right) Paramount-Publix page boy jacket circa 1928; Usher's jacket circa 1927 from Chicago's Regal Theatre; Doorman's cape circa 1925

*The Archives is considered an 'interested party' in the donation. To qualify as acceptable for income tax use, the appraisal must be performed by an objective, qualified appraiser, unconnected with either you or THS, consulted for this purpose. To locate a certified appraiser THS recommends contacting the Appraisers Association of America (www.appraisersassoc.org) or the American Society of Appraisers (www.appraisers.org).

For More Information Contact:

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Donate Your Theatre Materials to the THS American Theatre Architecture Archives



Archives room in the American Theatre Architecture Archives.

Why Donate My Materials?

Why should I donate to an Archives?

For thousands of years, written records have provided essential clues to the past. Through letters, diaries, and unpublished writings of many types, and also the audible and visual records of recent times, researchers have been able to study and understand much about history.

An archival repository is a place where professional archivists and curators care for and

preserve historically significant documents and objects. An archives can provide secure storage for records, can safeguard the records by monitoring their handling and use, and more importantly can provide research access to the information in the records.



Wurlitzer Organ Co. Catalog, circa 1925

Why THS Archives?

The THS American Theatre Architecture Archives is the largest facility of its kind in the United States. It contains information on more than 15,000 theatres, as well as material on allied subjects. Architects, researchers and preservationists from around the world, students and those simply seeking a photograph of their childhood theatre, have consulted the Archives. Your donation will help THS to better document theatre history. THS is an IRS 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your donation may also be tax deductible. Please note that THS cannot place a value on the materials. *See back panel for more details.

What materials does the THS Archives accept?

The Archives accepts materials which help to document the rich history of America's theatre buildings. These could be corporate and business records, personal snapshots, theatre industry trade publications, artifacts from the theatres including fragments of the building itself, blueprints, information on theatre architects and designers, and other objects or documents which relate to theatre architecture.

What will happen to my materials?

Materials donated to the Archives will be processed (inventoried and described), catalogued, and stored in closed stacks (not accessible for browsing by the public). Once they are catalogued, materials are made available to the public for research and are used **only** in-house under the supervision of archives staff and volunteers.

Additionally, materials may be exhibited in the American Movie Palace Museum, used in THS publications, or made

available for other publications unless prohibited by copyright or in the donation agreement.



Rendering of the Belmont Theatre, Chicago, IL from the office of architect Walter W. Ahlschlager.

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