

Municipal Auditorium Collection (SC166)

Introduction

This collection contains 35 black and white 8 x 10 photographs from a photo album by the Harkins Commercial Photo Company in Kansas City. The images are of interior and exterior views of the Municipal Auditorium taken around the time it was built in 1934-1935.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: The Harkins Photo Company
Title: Municipal Auditorium Collection
Dates: November 29, 1934, August 21, 1935, n.d.
Size: 0.21 linear feet, 1 box, 6 folders, 35 photographs
Collection Number: SC166

Donor Information

Received as a gift from the family of Meyer L. Goldman via Judy-Anne Goldman on September 2, 2010. Relatives of George Goldman who was the first director of the Municipal Auditorium.

Citation Note

Municipal Auditorium Collection (SC166), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Administrative Information

Related Collections: Additional information on Municipal Auditorium may be found in the Missouri Valley Special Collections local history collections. The department has numerous other photographs of the building and of events that took place there. These are available online and can be viewed by placing "Municipal Auditorium" in the search box of the Local History Index. Photograph Collections that include images of the Municipal Auditorium include the Robert Askren Photograph Collection (P35), Willis Castle Memorial Photograph Collection (P6) and the General Photograph Collection (P1). Several copies of the images in this collection were published in the Dec. 1, 1935 issue of the *Kansas City Star*, and a copy can be found in the vertical file. Similar published images and building plans can also be found in the March 1937 edition of *Architecture Forum* (66:3) with a photocopy available in the vertical file.

Historical Sketch

The Municipal Auditorium covers an entire city block in the heart of downtown Kansas City. The Auditorium is bordered on the north by 13th Street, the south by 14th

Street, on the east by Wyandotte and the west by Central Street. It was designed by architects Alonzo H. Gentry, Voskamp & Neville, with associated architects Hoit, Price and Barnes; structural engineer Erwin Pfuhl and mechanical engineer W.L. Cassell, all of Kansas City. The cornerstone was laid on November 29, 1934 and was completed in November 1935 at a cost of 6.5 million dollars. The Music Hall and Little Theater, under separate contract, were completed in June 1936. As Public Work Administration project number 954, the building was constructed with the aid of a P.W.A. 30 % grant with Kansas City furnishing its share of the money from a bond fund. This massive structure (426 x 332 feet), standing 10 stories tall, features a limestone exterior over steel and concrete, Art Deco design, and stylized medallions. Inside, different parts of the building include the Arena, Musical Hall, Little Theater, Exhibition Area and committee rooms. The auditorium was designed so that its many component parts could be used individually without interfering with activities in other parts or together when the whole structure is needed for one function with the Grand Foyer providing access to every part of the auditorium.

Scope and Content Note

The 35 photographs in this collection were part of a photo album titled: Photographs by The Harkins Commercial Photo Co. and contain black and white, 8 x 10 images of the Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Missouri. The images portray the exterior of the building as well as the various rooms inside the auditorium including two architectural drawings of the theater. The name of the photographer is unknown. There are only two notations indicating the date on the photographs. One is a photo of the building's cornerstone which is inscribed with the date November 29, 1934. The other is a printed indicator in the bottom right hand corner of the photograph that states: Date - 8-21-1935. There were no notations naming individuals in the photographs. Some of the images were published in *The Kansas City Star* Dec. 1, 1935 edition with captions describing the areas of the auditorium featured in the photograph and identifying two individuals, H.F. McElroy and Mayor Bryce B. Smith.

Collection Inventory

- f.1 Photographs, exterior, n.d., 1934, 8/21/1935
- f.2 Photographs, interior, Music Hall, n.d.
- f.3 Photographs, arena, n.d.
- f.4 Photographs, exhibit area, corridors, n.d.
- f.5 Photographs, committee rooms, n.d.
- f.6 Photographs, framework & HVAC systems, n.d.

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Processed by Jennifer Huffman, intern, January, 2014