



## **Boller Brothers Architectural Records (K0065)**

**Collection Number:** Boller Brothers Architectural Records

**Collection Title:** K0065

**Dates:** 1910-1982

**Creator:** Boller, Robert O., 1887-1962

**Abstract:** The Boller Brothers Architectural Records consist of both personal and business correspondence, business publications and advertisements, personal photographs, and military and architectural certificates issued to Robert Boller. Additional material includes a family history entitled "Turning the Blues into Bluebirds," written by Mrs. Robert C. Boller in 1932. The records also contain sixty-five sets of architectural drawings of theatres dating between 1912 and 1953 which were constructed in the Midwest portion of the United States.

**Collection Size:** 9.31 cubic feet  
(24 folders, 65 rolled items)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [kansascity@shsmo.org](mailto:kansascity@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

**Restrictions on Use:** The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Boller Brothers Architectural Records* (K0065); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Kansas City].

**Donor Information:** The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Ivan L. McElwee on June 26, 1981 (Accession No. KA0094). An addition was made on July 24, 2009 by Mrs. John Hall (Accession No. KA1728). An addition was made on June 1, 2011 by Dorothy Boller (Accession No. KA1947).

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the Boller Brothers Architectural Records can be found in the following collections:

*Alfred Edward Barnes Architectural Records* (K0004)

*Missouri Valley Chapter-Society of Architectural Historians (MVC-SAH) Architectural Records* (K0006)

*Noelle Louise Soren Papers* (K0525)

*John T. Delich Collection* (K0592)

**Processed by:** Processed by Rachel Forester, January 2018

**Historical Note:**

Carl (1868-1946) and Robert (1887-1962) Boller were the architects of the architectural firm Carl Boller and Brother, later renamed Boller Brothers. The firm specialized in designing theatres during the first half of the twentieth century. The brothers were born to German immigrants Charles William and Pauline W. A. Grutzmacher Boller in St. Joseph, Missouri. Little is known regarding their early years. It is unclear if either brother had any architectural training.

In 1905, Carl Boller opened an architectural office in Kansas City, Missouri. His brother, Robert, began working as a draftsman for the office that same year and the firm became known as Carl Boller and Brother. Together, the brothers secured several commissions for theatres throughout the Midwest, primarily in the states of Missouri and Kansas, between 1905 and 1917. The firm was not affected by America's entry into World War I, even though Robert Boller would be drafted into the United States Corps of Engineers, leaving Carl to keep the firm running until his brother's return. By 1919, the Boller brothers had designed approximately sixty-five theaters across the Midwest. In 1920, the firm's name was changed to the Boller Brothers.

Carl and Robert Boller believed that decoration should be elegant and refined. They strived to design their theatres with both affordable luxury and comfort, often times favoring Spanish and Italian themes in their theatre creation. The brother's attention to detail, willingness to provide the most ornamentation at affordable prices, and their work ethic helped to establish them as the premier architectural firm for theatre design in the United States. The firm continued to grow and expand through the 1920s, and by the end of the decade the Boller Brothers had designed or remodeled approximately eighty-eight theatres in the Midwest.

The firm fell on hard times after the stock market crash of 1929. With mounting expenses and no new construction projects, the firm dissolved in 1931 having designed or remodeled nearly 300 theatres.

Carl Boller died in California on October 31, 1946, and his brother, Robert, died in Dallas, Texas, on November 24, 1962.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following four series:

Personal Papers

Business Papers

Oversize

Architectural Drawings

**Scope and Content Note:****Personal Papers**

This series contains material pertaining to Carl and Robert Boller. Materials include correspondence between Carl Boller and the American Institute of Architects-Kansas City Chapter for membership renewal and some correspondence during Carl's time as president of the chapter. Additional correspondence includes a letter written by Robert Boller to his sister, Marie Clark, dated December 6, 1918. Other materials include photographs of the Boller family home located in St. Joseph, Missouri, Robert Boller's military promotion certificates, and his architect certificate issued by the state of Missouri.

Of particular interest is a short story entitled, "Turning the Blues into Bluebirds," written by Mrs. Robert C. Boller in 1932. The short story tells of the personal experiences of the family during the prosperous 1920s and the family's financial misfortunes during the Great Depression. Mrs. Boller had submitted the short story to the *Ladies Home Journal*.

**Business Papers**

This series consists of correspondence between Carl and Robert Boller to their clients, building material providers, and their inquiry into progress updates on construction projects. Also included are publications and advertisements for and about the architectural firm. Additional materials include miscellaneous sketches and notes, a colored rendering of the Cooper Theatre located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and two unused postcards depicting theatres presumably built by the Boller Brothers.

**Oversize**

This series contains a newsletter entitled *Preservation News*, dated May 1979 which features an article on the Boller Brothers entitled, "Voters Save Albuquerque Theater." Also included is a colored photograph of the Zone at Camp Funston, Kansas. In addition, there are two photographs, the first is titled, "Architectural Group, Missouri, River Division, U.S. Engineers, Fort Peck Construction Camp," dated 1934. The second is titled, "The Builder's Association 58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Banquet, Kansas City, Missouri," dated April 3, 1945. Lastly there are two panoramic photographs both of which are titled, "Company A, Fourth Training Regiment of Engineers, Camp A. A. Humphries, Virginia," dated September 1918.

**Architectural Drawings**

The architectural drawings constitute the bulk of the collection. There are sixty-five sets of architectural drawings dating between 1912 and 1953. These architectural drawings are predominately of theatres that were designed in the Midwest. Additional buildings include an education building for the Memorial Christian Church of Kansas City, Missouri, St. Marks Church with an unknown location, a garage for G. W. Williams, and a residence for Chas. Blaine. Other architects include the architectural firm of Besecke and DeFoe and the architect George M. Williamson.

These drawings have been arranged by their assigned aperture card number and are available to view on microfilm except for number 150.018. Note that drawings located in box 008x3 have no

aperture card number assigned to them. These drawings have been arranged chronologically and are numbered one through eight by the processor.

### Container List:

f. 1-5	Personal Papers
Box 001 f. 1	Correspondence, 1916-1918
f. 2	Military Certificates, 1918
f. 3	Architect Certificate, 1942
f. 4	Family History, 1932
f. 5	Photographs, no date
f. 6-21	Business Papers
f. 6-14	Correspondence, 1910, 1914-1919, 1921
f. 15-16	Publications, 1929, 1950, no date
f. 17	Advertisements, 1912, 1917, 1929, 1948, 1982, no date
f. 18	Miscellaneous sketches, no date
f. 19	Miscellaneous notes, no date
f. 20	Rendering, no date
f. 21	Postcards, no date
f. 22-24	Oversize
Box 002 f. 22	<i>Preservation News</i> , May 1979
f. 23	Photographs, 1934, 1945
f. 24	Panoramic Photographs, 1918, no date

### Architectural Drawings

#### Box 003x3

Roll 035.001	Theatre in Marshall, Missouri
Location	Marshall, Missouri
Architect	Robert Boller
Date	1948-1949
Note	Geo. H. and Leo Hayob, owners
Roll 035.002	Missouri Theatre, reconstruction
Location	Maryville, Missouri
Architect	Robert Boller
Date	1944
Note	Mr. J. Ray Cook, owner
Roll 035.003	The Ponca Theatre
Location	Ponca City, Oklahoma
Architect	Boller Brothers
Date	1926
Note	Ponca Theatre, Co., owners

- Roll 035.004 Missouri Theatre, reconstruction of  
Location Maryville, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1944  
Job/Plan No. 10395  
Note Mr. J. Ray Cook, owner
- Roll 035.005 The Drake and Ritz Theatres  
Location Bolivar, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1945, 1947  
Note Mr. Jerry Drake, owner
- Roll 035.006 Theatre in Easley, South Carolina  
Location Easley, South Carolina  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1945  
Note Mr. E. A. Armistead, owner
- Roll 035.007 State Theater Building, reconstruction of ships in  
Location Manhattan, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller and Dietz Lusk, Jr.  
Date 1951  
Note Theatre Enterprise Inc., owner
- Roll 035.008 The Electric Theatre and alterations to  
Location St. Joseph, Missouri  
Architect Boller Brothers; Robert Boller  
Date 1926, 1946
- Roll 035.009 Theatre in Mapletown, Iowa  
Location Mapletown, Iowa  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1948  
Note E. W. Kugel, owner
- Roll 035.010 The Marshall Theatre  
Location Manhattan, Kansas  
Architect Carl Boller  
Date no date
- Roll 035.011 Mr. J. R. Cook, a theatre building for  
Location Maryville, Missouri  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date 1926

Roll 035.012 The Uptown Theatre  
Location Clinton, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1946-1947  
Note Mr. J. T. Ghosen, owner, Uptown Theatre, Sedalia, Missouri

Roll 035.013 Regal Theatre, alterations  
Location St. Joseph, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1941  
Note Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Muskav, owners

Roll 035.014 Theatre in Richmond Heights, Missouri  
Location 814 Chestnut St., St. Louis, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1938-1939  
Note The Eleanor Realty Co., care of Mr. Sam Shuchart

Roll 035.015 Theatre at Branson, Missouri  
Location Branson, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1935

Roll 035.016 Crest Theatre in Wichita, Kansas  
Location Wichita, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1948-1949  
Note Sullivan Independent Theatres, owners

Roll 035.017 Theatre in Rolla, Missouri  
Location Rolla, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1941

Roll 035.018 The Princess Theatre  
Location Aurora, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1943  
Note Mr. J. Glen Caldwell, owner

Roll 035.019 Theatre in Sabetha, Kansas  
Location Sabetha, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1947-1948  
Note Mr. E. M. Block, owner

Roll 035.020 The Electric Theatre  
Location 546 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, Kansas  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date 1922

Roll 035.021 Theatre at Cherokee, Iowa  
Location Cherokee, Iowa  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1939-1940  
Note Mr. George R. Norman, owner

**Box 004x3**

Roll 035.022 The Hall Theatre  
Location Cassville, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1945-1946  
Note Mr. Glen Hall, owner

Roll 035.023 Dickerson Theatre  
Location St. Joseph, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1950  
Note Dickerson Inc., owner

Roll 035.024 Orpheum Theatre, remodeling for Mr. Hugh Gardner, stage alterations  
Location Neosho, Missouri  
Architect Bescke and Defoe; Robert Boller  
Date 1927, 1953

Roll 036.001 The New Aileen Theatre, for Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Kerby  
Location Worland, Wyoming  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1953

Roll 036.002 Dream Theatre, reconstruction of  
Location 819 Main St., Russell, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1948  
Note Gertrude B. Danielson, owner

Roll 036.003 Theatre building, Leko Realty Co.  
Location S. E. corner of Natural Bridge Rd., and Grand Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1936  
Job/Plan No. 5616-1  
Note Care of Sam Levin Atty, owner

Roll 036.004 Theatre at Leavenworth, Kansas  
Location Leavenworth, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1937  
Note Dubinsky Brothers, owners

- Roll 036.005 Theatre in Chillicothe, Missouri  
Location Chillicothe, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1948  
Note Theatre Enterprises Inc., owner
- Roll 036.006 Peak Theatre, reconstruction of  
Location Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1949  
Note Westland Theatre Inc., owners
- Roll 036.007 The Orpheum Theatre  
Location St. Joseph, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1933  
Note Mr. Nate Block, owner
- Roll 036.008 Theatre at Perryville, Missouri  
Location Perryville, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1934  
Note The Electric Theatre Co., owners
- Roll 036.009 Rialto Theatre, alterations in  
Location Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1935  
Note The J. H. Cooper Enterprises, owners
- Roll 036.010 Theatre building at Wichita, Kansas  
Location Wichita, Kansas  
Architect Carl Boller and Bro  
Date 1915  
Note Southwestern Amusement Co., owners; Palace Theatre
- Roll 036.011 Rialto Theatre, alterations in  
Location Pueblo, Colorado  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1938  
Note The Chief Investment Co., owners
- Roll 036.012 Criterion Theatre, alterations in  
Location Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1934  
Note The Standard Theatres Corp., owners



Roll 036.013 Orpheum Theatre  
Location Lincoln, Nebraska  
Architect Carl Boller and Bro  
Date 1915

Roll 036.014 The Cooper Theatre  
Location Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Architect Carl Boller and Bro  
Date 1919

Roll 036.015 The Center Theatre  
Location Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1946-1947  
Note State Theatres Inc., owners

Roll 036.016 Orpheum Theatre, alterations in  
Location Lincoln, Nebraska  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1938-1939  
Note Lincoln Theatre Company, owner

Roll 036.017 The Theatre at Pueblo, Colorado  
Location Pueblo, Colorado  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1924  
Note The J. H. Cooper Enterprises, owners; Mr. Louis J. Firske, general manager

Roll 036.018 The Varsity Theatre, remodeling of  
Location Lawrence, Kansas  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date 1926  
Note Glen W. Dickson Enterprises, owners

Roll 036.019 Orpheum Theatre, alterations to the  
Location St. Joseph, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1946  
Note Durwood Dubinsky, Bros. Theatres, owners

Roll 036.020 Palace Theatre, alterations for the  
Location Wichita, Kansas  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date 1928  
Note Southwestern Amusement Co.

Roll 036.021 State Theatre  
Location Larned, Kansas  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1947-1949  
Note D. E. Burnett and H. L. reed, owners

Roll 036.022 The Capitol Theatre  
Location Jefferson City, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1935  
Note Dubinsky Brothers Theatres, owners

Roll 036.023 Pioneer Theatre  
Location Nebraska City, Nebraska  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1948  
Note Theatre Enterprises Inc., and Stanley McSwain, owners

Roll 036.024 The State Theatre  
Location 1415-1417 O St., Lincoln, Nebraska  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1941  
Note The State Building Corp., owners

### **Box 005x3**

Roll 036.025 The Coleman Theatre  
Location 9<sup>th</sup> St. and Locust St., Kansas City, Missouri  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date 1928  
Note Geo. L. Coleman, owner

Roll 036.026 Greer Lawn Company and C. J. Roberts, commercial building and theatre for  
Location Santa Fe, New Mexico  
Architect Boller Brothers and Geo. M. Williamson  
Date 1930

Roll 036.027 Theatre at Sedalia, Missouri  
Location Sedalia, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1935  
Note Mr. J. T. Ghosen, owner

Roll 036.028 Varsity Theatre, proposed addition to  
Location Lincoln, Nebraska  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1946  
Note Nebraska Theatre Inc., onwer

Roll 036.029 Coleman Theatre, new marquee and entrance alterations  
Location Miami, Oklahoma  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1947

**Box 006x3**

Roll 065.020 The Leko Theatre, detail of stepped rows  
Location St. Louis, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1936

Roll 065.034 Theatre and shop building  
Location Maryville, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1939  
Note C. E. Cook, owner

Roll 065.035 Liberty Theatre, alterations in  
Location Lincoln, Nebraska  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1940  
Note Nebraska Theatre Inc., owner

**Box 007x3**

Roll 150.018 Educational Building  
Location 72<sup>nd</sup> St. and The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri  
Architect Robert Boller  
Date 1949  
Note Memorial Christian Church, owner

**Box 008x3**

Roll 1 Map of the City of Clovis Map  
Location Clovis, New Mexico  
Engineer Hitchcock and Son, Civil Engineers  
Date no date

Roll 2 St. Marks Church, alterations to  
Location Unknown  
Architect Carl Boller and Bro.  
Date no date

Roll 3 Mr. Chas. Blaine, building for  
Location Henryetta, Oklahoma  
Architect Boller Brothers  
Date no date

Roll 4 Mr. G. W. Williams, garage building for  
 Location Seneca, Kansas  
 Architect Carl Boller and Bro.  
 Date no date

Roll 5 The Pubic Square  
 Location Springfield, Missouri  
 Architect Unknown  
 Date no date

Roll 6 City of Hannibal Official Street Map  
 Location Hannibal, Missouri  
 Designer B. F. Smiley  
 Date 1912

Roll 7 Unidentified balcony plan  
 Location Unknown  
 Architect Carl Boller and Bro.  
 Date 1918

Roll 8 The Fox Theatre  
 Location Hutchison, Kansas  
 Architect Boller Brothers  
 Date 1930

**Index:**

Index Term	Folder
Besecke, Walter A. (1885-1945)	035.024
Boller, Carl (1868-1946)	1, 6-16, 22-24, 035.010, 036.010, 036.013, 036.014
Boller, Robert (1887-1962)	1-4, 6-16, 22-24, 035.001, 035.002, 035.004, 035.005, 035.006, 035.007, 035.008, 035.009, 035.012, 035.013, 035.014, 035.015, 035.016, 035.017, 035.018, 035.019, 035.021, 035.022, 035.023, 035.024, 036.001, 036.002, 036.003, 036.004, 036.005, 036.006, 036.007, 036.008, 036.009, 036.011, 036.012, 036.015, 036.016, 036.017, 036.019, 036.021, 036.022, 036.023, 036.024, 036.027, 036.028, 036.029, 065.020, 065.034, 065.035, 150.018
Capitol Theatre (Jefferson City, Mo.)	036.022
Center Theatre (Oklahoma City, Okla.)	036.015
Coleman Theatre (Kansas City, Mo.)	036.025
Coleman Theatre (Miami, Okla.)	036.029
Cooper Theatre (Oklahoma City, Okla.)	20, 036.014

<b>Index Term</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Criterion Theatre (Oklahoma City, Okla.)	036.012
DeFoe, Victor J.	035.024
Dickerson Theatre (St. Joseph, Mo.)	035.023
Drake Theatre (Bolivar, Mo.)	035.005
Dream Theatre (Russell, Kas.)	036.002
Electric Theatre (Kansas City, Kas.)	035.020
Electric Theatre (St. Joseph, Mo.)	035.008
Fox Theatre (Hutchinson, Kas.)	Roll 8
Hall Theatre (Cassville, Mo.)	035.022
Kimo Theatre (Albuquerque, N.M.)	21
Leko Theatre (St. Louis, Mo.)	065.020
Liberty Theatre (Lincoln, Nebr.)	065.035
Majestic Theatre (St. Louis, Mo.)	21
Memorial Christian Church (Kansas City, Mo.)	150.018
Missouri Theatre (Maryville, Mo.)	035.002, 035.004
Motion pictures and architecture	6-17, 20-22, 035.001-035.024, 036.001-036.029, 065.020, 065.034, 065.035, Roll 8
New Aileen Theatre (Worland, Wyo.)	036.001
Orpheum Theatre (Lincoln, Nebr.)	036.013, 036.016
Orpheum Theatre (Neosho, Mo.)	035.024
Orpheum Theatre (St. Joseph, Mo.)	036.007, 036.019
Palace Theatre (Wichita, Kas.)	036.010, 036.020
Peak Theatre (Colorado Springs, Colo.)	036.006
Pioneer Theatre (Nebraska City, Nebr.)	036.023
Ponca Theatre (Ponca City, Okla.)	035.003
Princess Theatre (Aurora, Mo.)	035.018
Regal Theatre (St. Joseph, Mo.)	035.013
Rialto Theatre (Colorado Springs, Colo.)	036.009
Rialto Theatre (Pueblo, Colo.)	036.011
Ritz Theatre (Bolivar, Mo.)	035.005
St. Marks Church	Roll 2
State Theatre (Larned, Kas.)	036.021
State Theatre (Lincoln, Nebr.)	036.024
Uptown Theatre (Clinton, Mo.)	035.012
Varsity Theatre (Lawrence, Kas.)	036.018
Varsity Theatre (Lincoln, Nebr.)	036.028
Williamson, George M.	036.026