

K Kansas City Convention Hall Records, 1897-1937
0269 7.63 cubic feet
NSA

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INTRODUCTION

The records contains administrative, financial, and event records related to the construction, maintenance, and business of the Kansas City Convention Hall. The records also include scrapbooks and photographs providing information about the variety of events held at the building.

DONOR INFORMATION

The records were received as part of the collection of the Native Sons of Greater Kansas City on July 17, 1990 (Accession No. KA0590). An addition was made by the *Kansas City Star* Library on January 18, 1995 (Accession No. KA0849).

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RELATED COLLECTIONS

Missouri Valley Series Papers, 1962-1965 (K0241)
Edwin McKaig Clendening Papers, 1887-1929 (K0262)
Anderson Kansas City Scrapbooks, ca. 1900-ca. 1960, (K0520)
Business Men's Portraits of 1897, 1937 (K0542)
Convention Halls and Municipal Auditorium Scrapbook, 1899-1954 (K0938)

INSTITUTIONAL SKETCH

The Kansas City Convention Hall was built in response to the public's demand for a permanent structure to hold civic events and to compete with other western cities for national attention. The original building was designed by Frederick E. Hill and constructed at 13th and Central Streets at a cost of \$225,000. The Convention Hall opened February 22, 1899, with John Philip Sousa's band as the main attraction. A fire on April 4, 1900, destroyed the original building.

The new Convention Hall building, known as the "90 Day Wonder," became a symbol of the Kansas City spirit. Redesigned by Hill and rebuilt on the original site at a cost of \$500,000, the fireproof Convention Hall was completed in time to host the Democratic National Convention on July 4, 1900. Events at the new Convention Hall

included Sarah Bernhardt in *Camille*, a dinner honoring William Howard Taft, amateur and professional sports, trade shows, the Republican National Convention in 1928, and a number of civic events.

In 1936-1937, as a part of an ambitious public works project, the Convention Hall was dismantled. The site became a parking lot for the new, multi-purpose Municipal Auditorium, located at 211 West 13th Street.

Many prominent businessmen in Kansas City, Missouri, served on the Convention Hall Board of Directors. One businessman of note is Louis Shouse, who served as secretary until the Convention Hall was sold to the city. Mr. and Mrs. Shouse worked in tandem, as is indicated in the board minutes. Nearing the Convention Hall's dissolution, Mrs. Shouse was granted the final bank balance, which was over \$700.00, for the assistance she provided to the secretary.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records have been arranged into the following seven series:

Administrative Records

Financial Records

Events

Photographs

Artifacts

Scrapbooks

Oversize

The **Administrative Records** series contains materials related to the land acquisition, organization, and dissolution of the Convention Hall, Declaration of Trust, and By-laws, Articles of the Association, Warranty Deed, Description, and Letters, dated 1897-1898. The original Campbell plat map is placed with oversized items. Administrative materials also include Executive, Directors, and Stockholder meeting minutes such as the building committee and Convention Hall committee minutes. Trustee records consist of the stock trust agreement, trustee meeting minutes, trustee letters, notices, proxy, and trustees of the conventional hall rosters from 1916-1936. The General Relief Committee minutes, including the 1903 flood materials are contained in this series as well. The materials are arranged by type and then chronologically.

The **Financial Records** series consists of materials pertaining to business transactions including correspondence, bank deposits, event receipts, and expense reports and ledgers. The bulk of this series consists of stock certificates (1898-1935), cancelled stock certificates, and lists of stockholders with five or less shares. Please see the oversize series for financial ledgers. The materials are arranged by type and then chronologically.

The **Events** series contains event contracts, rental fees and contract information, and seating arrangement charts.

The **Photographs** series contains professional photographs that span the lifetime of the Convention Hall and document many local, national, and international events. The photographs are arranged by event and then chronologically within each folder. A large portion of the photographs document the popular Food Show and the 1928 Republican National Convention. The photographs are arranged by event and then chronologically.

The **Artifacts** series consists of three items from the 1928 Republican National Convention and one Convention Hall Building Company stamp.

The **Scrapbooks** series consists of microfilmed scrapbooks that trace the media coverage of the history and activities of Convention Hall, as well as many of Kansas City's civic events. Almost all of the information is from Kansas City area or Missouri newspapers. The scrapbooks contain materials dating 1900-1936 and of special interest are the clippings that cover World War I's effect on Kansas City (1916-1918); the influenza epidemic (1918); the Board's decision making process that eventually allowed the Ku Klux Klan's use of Convention Hall (1922-1924); and Bishop Thomas Lillis' Golden Jubilee (1935). Some of the articles in the scrapbooks were disintegrating and/or torn. The names of the newspapers and clipping dates usually appeared at the top of articles. The scrapbooks are only available on microfilm.

The **Oversize** series contains two large format photograph albums, photographs, and ledgers. The Shouse Photo Album, kept by Louis W. Shouse, Convention Hall secretary, is similar to a scrapbook with identification on every page. The second photograph album dates 1899-1908 and is particularly important since the album contains photographs of the first Hall before, during, and after the fire. The oversize photographs detail various events held at the Hall, much like the photographs series. Many of the financial and operational costs of the Convention Hall can be found in the oversized ledgers.

PREFERRED CITATION:

Specific item; box number; folder number; *Kansas City Convention Hall Records, 1897-1937 (K0269)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

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Processed March 2017