

**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC, MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY,
MURFREESBORO, TN**

APOLLO CLUB MINSTRELS SCRAPBOOK

97-036

Creator:

Apollo Club

Type of Material:

Scrapbook, Programs, Broadside Playbills, Correspondence, Newspaper Clippings, Manuscript Materials

Physical Description:

2 linear feet (10" X 14", 52 page scrapbook)

Dates:

1886 February - 1902 January

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):

This scrapbook was kept by the Apollo Club of Vermont and consists of programs, broadside playbills, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and manuscript materials documenting their minstrel performances, reviews, and inner club workings.

Access/Restrictions:

The collection is open for research use.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

This scrapbook was presented to the Apollo Club on April 27, 1886 by A.W. Ferrin. The scrapbook remained within the club's rooms and was available for members and guests. Members of the Apollo Club continued to add to the scrapbook as they had performances. The Center purchased the scrapbook from Savoy books in December 1997.

Subject/Index Terms:

Apollo Club

Minstrel shows

Minstrel music

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

J. Harry Engels is credited with organizing the Apollo Club in Montpelier, Vermont in the winter of 1884. The Club was formed for social, literary, and musical purposes, for mutual and general musical improvement, and to stimulate an interest in music in the community. Members, mainly business men and others from the upper strata of society, met initially in the basement of a Unitarian church, and subsequently in various locations before November 1885, when it moved to the Old Post Office building downtown. The Club, growing in membership, moved again to

the F. W. Bancroft block in October 1886 and ended up in the second floor of the Blanchard Opera House building where it remained. Albert W. Ferrin was its president for some time. Membership in October 1886 was 49, and up to 140 by 1892. Apparently the clubhouse itself was very well decorated, furnished, and maintained, and the etiquette standards of members and guests high.

Thirty singing members of the Club and several other specialists took part in a disciplined and reputable minstrel show that played at various locations in Vermont, notably Montpelier, Lyndonville, Wells River, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, and Woodsville (N.H.). They began performing shortly after the Club formed in 1884. There were apparently no shows in 1890-91, but they resumed in 1892.

Although this club was not nationally recognized, it typifies local social clubs with regional outreach.

Scope and Content:

This scrapbook consists of programs, broadside playbills, correspondence, and newspaper clippings documenting minstrel performances and reviews of the Apollo Club. The newspaper clippings include background information about the Apollo Club (including descriptions of the meeting rooms and the beginnings of the organization), club meeting and election results, personnel of some performances, repertoire, announcements of upcoming events, and detailed reviews of whole events.

In addition to the programs and a large fold-out playbill, items among the scrapbook include a petition of citizens pledging their support for another entertainment put on by the club, an invitation by telegram for a performance, letter of thanks for a donation to the ladies' library guild, a letter from an associate or club member, and a list of active members (circa 1892).

Arrangement:

The original arrangement of the scrapbook was maintained during processing. The sole exception to this arrangement is the lower portion of the large fold-out playbill or poster that has been removed from the scrapbook for preservation reasons and was placed in an oversize shelving unit.

Location:

This scrapbook is located among other manuscript collections by accession number, in an oversize box. The lower portion of the large fold-out playbill or poster has been removed from the scrapbook, placed in mylar, and is stored in the Manuscript drawer of the metal oversize shelving unit in the stacks.

Related Materials:

The InMagic database of CPM's holdings maintains records for other minstrel playbills,

photographs, programs, and memorabilia. The Billy Carter scrapbook, governed by the same accession number, is also an important scrapbook collection of minstrel performances.

Notes: The scrapbook has been photocopied and is available for research. It is located with the original scrapbook in the Manuscript section. The original was interleaved with buffered tissue in April 2003.

Processed by David Jellema, June 1999
Revised by Lucinda P. Cockrell, April 2003
Revised by Rachel K. Morris, June 2011