

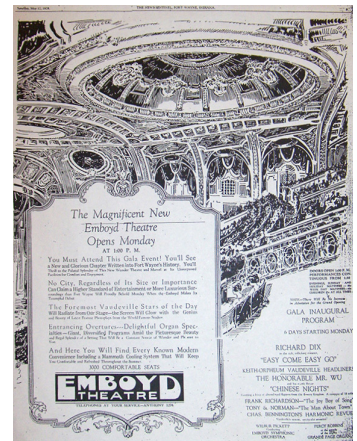
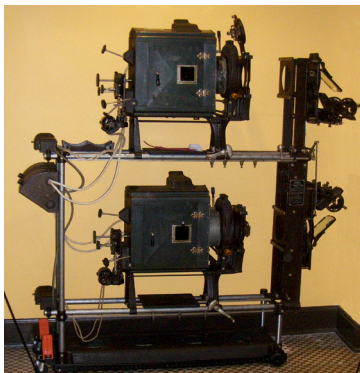


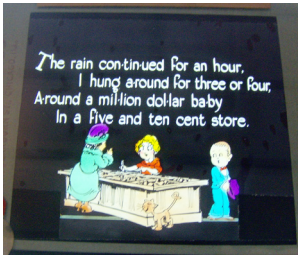
“Today at 1 P.M. Fort Wayne Proudly Receives Its Magnificent New Theater. Come to the opening today of the Emboyd. You’ll thrill to its sumptuous beauty—revel in its atmosphere of luxurious comfort—and marvel at the giant inaugural entertainment program. Follow the Eager Throngs to the Opening of Indiana’s Wonder Theater—a Gala Event the Memory of Which You’ll Cherish Forever!”

This exciting text appeared in the Fort Wayne *News-Sentinel* for 14 May 1928 in a large advertisement featuring a fanciful drawing of the theater’s interior and an enticing glimpse of the program of film (Richard Dix in *Easy Come, Easy Go*), vaudeville, and music provided by Wilbur Pickett’s Emboyd Concert Orchestra and Percy Robbins at the four-manual Grande Page organ. Over the following ninety years and the vicissitudes of fate, the theatre accumulated a substantial collection of historical materials, including glass slides for its original Brenograph projector manufactured by the Brenkert Light Projection Company, photographs, posters and play-bills, scrapbooks, legal documents, newspaper clippings, audio and video recordings, letters, memorabilia, works of art, and so on, but the material

was scattered all over the theatre from the projection booth down to forgotten closets in the basements.

It was clear that all this material needed to be organized, catalogued, and properly housed. The project began in 2011 with all the glass slides, including approximately 1,320 lantern slides (4" x 3") and thirty-four special effect slides (5" x 4"). Over the next several years, the collection was enlarged by another 340 special effect slides, manufactured primarily by Maurice Workstel Studios. Almost all of these effect slides were produced in pairs (as shown right) to be superimposed when projected by the Brenograph, creating a sort of three-dimensional effect.





Let's dig down deep,
Help buy a jeep,
(Dig, dig, dig, dig!)
Dig up our dough for taxes!
Come on, let's grin,
We're gonna win!
(Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah!)
All taxes axe the Axis!

In 2014, the Embassy acquired another large collection of slides from the Ohio Theatre in Columbus, and work began on photographing and cataloguing this new collection of 2,418 slides, which includes twelve of the very rare 5" x 4" Brenkert Light Projection Company effect slides. Most recently (2021), the Embassy's collection was further augmented by 1,147 slides when it acquired the Sam Cooper collection from Bob Martin. Cooper, who served for many years at the Oriental Theatre in Brooklyn, NY, assembled a very significant collection of sing-along parody slides that were especially popular with audiences during the World War II era.

Each of the 5,261 slides was cleaned and repaired as necessary and is now preserved in an individual envelope stored in special archival housing. Every slide is individually catalogued by title, manufacturer, lyrics, condition and notes (including the composer and lyricist), category (e.g., announcement, background, introduction, personality, song, etc.), and slide number, and each record includes a thumbnail of the slide. The catalogues are searchable and sortable, enabling any individual slide or groups of slides to be quickly and easily located. Full prints of the catalogues with useful introductions to each collection are also available online from links on the Embassy's website page devoted to the historic Brenograph: <http://fwembassytheatre.org/about-us/historic-brenograph/>

In 2017, work began on gathering together all the other archival material in a single room so that it could be sorted and organized prior to cataloguing. It is a vast and diverse array of material, including audio-visual media (LPs, CDs, reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, DVDs, VHS tapes, quadplex TV tapes), blueprints (Emboyd and Paramount), correspondence, documents (titles, contracts, minutes, reports, audits, etc.), newspaper clippings, photographs (signed, unsigned, and inscribed), photographic negatives, playbills, posters, programs, scrapbooks, stools (signed by various performers), and other (e.g., signed guitars, scripts and music for the 75th anniversary show, artifacts from the hotel, pins and buttons, plaques, notebooks, etc.). In order to control all this material, each record in the




Embassy Theatre (Fort Wayne, IN) Brenograph and Lantern Slides

An asterisk (*) in the title field indicates that the slide has not been positively identified with a song.

Catalogue No.:	S334
Title:	I'll String Along with You 01
Company:	??
Lyric or text:	"I'll String Along / with You" / (If You'll Sing Along With Me)
Condition and Notes:	Cracked. Border background with musical notes. Title slide. From the film <i>Twenty Million Sweethearts</i> (Warner Bros., 1934). Composer / lyricist: Harry Warren / Al Dubin. Cf. Ohio Theatre collection Oh-S0757-0760
Category:	Song
Slide No.:	HPIM1098
Index (old box/number):	08/466
Slide:	



catalogue includes the following fields: number of the archival box in which the object is stored, Archive index number, Object (i.e., the category of material); Name(s), if any or a description of the object; Date(s) if any; Dimensions and pagination as applicable; Description; and a thumbnail picture of the item or collection of items.

Embassy Theatre Foundation Archive		
Box(es): 5	Archive index no.: 424	
Name(s), if any: The Mills Brothers	Object: Photograph: inscribed to Bud Berger	Date(s), if any: 24–26 January 1941
Dimensions and pagination as applicable: 8" x 10"		
Description:		
 <p>"To / 'Bud' / The grandest of all Stage Mgr's / Thank you for a very / pleasant three days in your / Theatre. Lots of luck to / you always / Respectfully / Mills Bros." Each person has also signed (left to right): Herbert, Donald, John Sr., and Henry. Dates in Berger's hand. Publicity photograph labeled "The Mills Brothers, Four Boys and a Guitar." Management, General Amusement Corp. The Mills Brothers made more than 2,000 recordings for Okeh, Brunswick, and Decca, including many hits, and appeared internationally in vaudeville, on radio and television, and in a few films. For another act on the bill, see archive index no. 88.</p>		

Photographs Inscribed to Bud Berger



Some of the most interesting material in the archive is the collection of 600+ photographs of performers inscribed to Rudolph "Bud" Berger, stage hand and, later, manager at the Palace Theatre from 1916 to 1942 and the Emboyd (Embassy after 1952) Theatre from 1942 to 1959. The photographs range from some of the most famous bands and bandleaders to acrobats, animal acts, comedians, dancers, emcees, impressionists, instrumentalists, singers, ventriloquists, and so on, providing a veritable Who Was Who of entertainers of the period, some still famous and others now largely forgotten.

Among the most famous would surely be Bob Hope, who served as Master of Ceremonies from 16 May to 8 June 1929 and returned on a number of later occasions, including a benefit performance on 30 September 1978 in support of the theater's restoration.

Dancers were very popular at the theaters, and two of the most famous, representing quite different traditions, performed in the 1930s. Eleanor Powell appeared at the Emboyd on 9–11 March in the 1933 edition of George White's Scandals and later sent Berger an inscribed photograph commemorating her appearance in MGM's Broadway Melody of 1936. Powell's demure appearance is certainly in contrast to Sally Rand who also appeared at either the Emboyd or Palace Theater in the 1930s. Major Bowes' Collegiate Revue of 1938 brought the six winners of the National Collegiate Dance Championships to Fort Wayne, where they performed the Shag Dance and gave Berger an elaborately inscribed photograph.





And in the same year, Doris Dupont appeared with Count Berni Vici's revue and inscribed her photograph: "To Bud: From the 'rocky coast' of Maine, to the 'sunny shores' of California – there 'ain't' no better. Sincerely Doris Dupont."



Comic dance acts were also very popular. Some of these spoofed the conventions of ballroom dancing, others involved acrobatics, and still others such as the Four Clymas and the Appletons expanded on the tradition of Apache Dancing. *Billboard* (17 August 1940), p. 19, described the Four Clymas as "one of the most novel acts ever to play here [Hollywood]. In a Parisian underworld setting, the three males and a femme throw each other all over the place in a wild rough-and-tumble scramble of arms, legs, knives, and guns. Their stuff is strictly above the average. Joe Clymas and Loretta come on later to do a terp number in waltz time, a creditable performance." The Four Clymas appeared at the Palace Theater in 1936, and one of their members, Charles Carman, returned to Fort Wayne in January 1943 in a new group, the Appletons. *Billboard* (24 November 1945), p. 38, describes their act as a "familiar rough-house Apache act, and it is plenty rough. Kicks, prop busting over each other's heads, knife throwing, gun play and body tossing brings gasps from the mob...."



Music was always central to vaudeville, and the Emboyd and Palace Theaters hosted many of the popular bands of the day: Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Les Brown, Henry Busse, Cab Calloway, Eddy Duchin, Duke Ellington, Ted Fio Rito, Jan Garber, Horace Heidt, Art Jarrett, Spike Jones, Art Kassel, Ted Lewis, Little Jack Little, Vincent Lopez, Benny Meroff, Frankie Masters, Russ Morgan, Red Norvo, George Olsen, Tony Pastor, Artie Shaw, Orrin Tucker, Ted Weems, Lawrence Welk, and many others. Every one of these left an inscribed photograph for Berger's collection.



All these bands featured singers and frequently dancers, and they too left their own inscribed photographs, including Bonnie Baker, Blair Sisters, Perry Como, Harry Cool, Doris Day, Marvel Marilyn Maxwell, Billy Sherman, Step Brothers, Larry Stuart, Elmo Tanner, Liz Tilton, Gene Williams, and many others. Some bands also featured full-scale revues that included comedians and novelty acts. Among the most unusual were Woodie and Betty, an acrobatic roller-skating act that appeared with Eddie Camden's orchestra and as a solo act in vaudeville, and Rita Devere, an acrobatic contortionist who appeared with Benny Meroff's orchestra.



Comedians and comic ensembles were staples of the vaudeville circuit and, like Bob Hope, sometimes doubled as Masters of Ceremonies. Bob Hope was not the only famous example to appear in this capacity twice at the Emboyd: Will Mahoney appeared in 1929 in an act billed as "Why Be Serious featuring Will Mahoney" and again in 1952, billed as "One of the World's Greatest Entertainers featuring Will Mahoney, comedy" (on this occasion, he inscribed his photograph: "To Bud. Yours to the last 'Curtain,' Will Mahoney, Jan 25th 1952."). Many of the comedians who appeared are barely remembered today, but in their day, they were immensely popular and widely reviewed in *Variety* and *Billboard*. The Arnaut



Brothers, for example, were famous for their bird romance in an invented bird language and with head and tail feathers (unfortunately, the bottom of this picture was damaged over the years). Other examples might include Hap Hazard and Mary Hart, husband-and-wife comedians whose act was billed as “Hap Hazard, the Careless Comedian, and Mary Hart, Who Cares Less”; Jackie Jay, a comedian with Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians; and Jack E. Leonard, an insult comedian whose act anticipated Don Rickles.

Magicians, puppeteers, and ventriloquists capitalized on the aura of fantasy created by the movie palace, and many of them played at the Emboyd and Palace. Harry Blackstone, “The World’s Greatest Magician,” appeared in 1941; Jack Gwynne, who specialized in performing astonishing feats while completely surrounded by an audience, brought his show to the theaters in 1942; Dante’s revue *Sim Sala Bim* played in 1944; and Ade Duval, famous for his “Rhapsody in Silk,” followed in 1952. Probably the most famous ventriloquists and puppeteers to appear were Paul Winchell with his dummy Jerry Mahoney and Frank Paris, the creator of *Howdy Doody*, but audiences of the day



also applauded the LeRoy Brothers with Jimmy Durante “da marionette” and Bob Neller, whose dummy “Reggie” created remarkable effects with twelve different movements of the upper and lower lips and mouth, nose, eyes, eyebrows, hands, and feet. Lester Oman’s marionettes even operated their own marionettes. *Variety* (3 December 1941), p. 27, described his act: “He differs from usual presentation of puppets, being shown in the spotlight full length pulling the strings, with the spot narrowing down entirely to the marionettes as he starts manipulating the colored jitterbug stepper. Skeleton dance, with the elongated skeleton covered with phosphorescent paint, is a trim novelty as the different limbs appear to come apart while dancing. Little old lady doll gives a change of pace. Finale is a girl drum major, a bit stilted, but mops up when the puppet starts twirling her baton.”



Animal acts at the Emboyd included birds, dogs, bears, and even a seal! Bill Hughes, a ventriloquist, and Blackie appeared at the Emboyd billed as “World’s Most Educated Crow,” with the crow and Hughes engaging in comic dialogue. Ed Ford and Whitey, billed at the Emboyd as “Dog Gone Crazy,” were a dog comedy act, with Whitey dressed in top hat and tails playing an inebriated gentleman. Max and His Gang was an act described by *Billboard* (30 January 1943), p. 16, as taking in “two acrobatically-inclined pooches. However, Max is one dog fancier who doesn’t take the bows for his mutts. Earns plenty of them himself with a variety of stunts that includes an acro soft-shoe routine, hoop-whirling proficiency, and a complete body bend to turn his head around and back to pick up the floored hankie.” Trained bears appeared riding scooters and a motorcycle in 1943, but Sharkey the Seal eclipsed them with his appearance at the Emboyd on 8–9 December 1951, billed as “The Seal with the Human Mind,” in which he juggled, played cards, did tricks, and applauded himself.

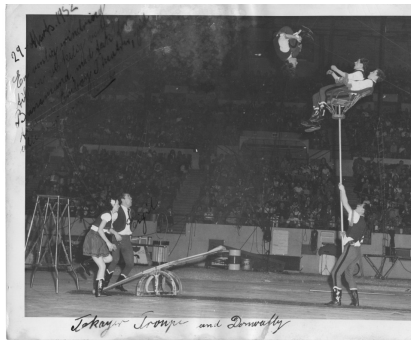
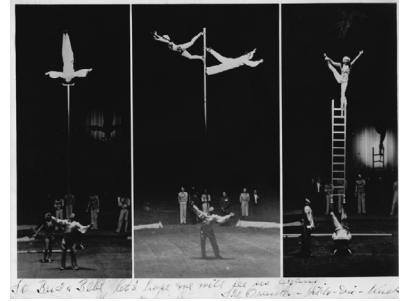


Finally, acrobatic routines were popular, whether as part of singing-and-dancing ensembles or as pure acrobatic acts involving teeter-boards, roller skates, swings, tight-rope walking, unicycles, or incredible feats of balance. The most famous of the singing- dancing-acrobatic ensembles to appear in the collection



of photographs is the O'Connor family, known as "The Royal Family of Vaudeville." Donald O'Connor, who went on to become a star on stage and in film and television, appears in front, second from the left (Berger's hand has added names to five of the six individuals, clockwise from top left: Bill, Jack, Nellie, Pat, and Don; the person on the far left is Effie, the matriarch).

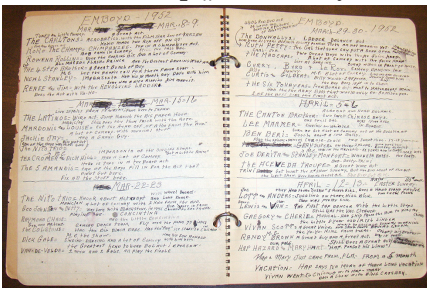
Other purely acrobatic performers appearing at the Emboyd and Palace include Frank and Dolorez Evers (tight-rope walkers); The Great Yacopis, The Langs, The Mar-Vels, and the Tokayer Troupe (teeter-board acrobats); and the Orantos and Walkmir (pole balancers). Some of their acts were exceedingly complicated and dangerous. *Variety* (3 August 1938), p. 46, described the Yacopis as doing "all the teeter-board stunts done by other troupes and add several hair-raisers of their own. Windup stunt is a complete double-up of the familiar one of the man jumping onto a teeter to back-flip his partner into a chair held on the shoulders of a third. As done by the Yacopis, they're standing four-high at the finish." Walkmir appeared in 1942 with an act in which he balanced a pole on his forehead [!] supporting as many as five people at a time, each of them performing some acrobatic feat of their own. The Langs' act, billed at the Emboyd as "Thrill-A-Batricks," was described by *Billboard* (18 June 1949), p. 45: "a sensational sight act. It's a good,



clean looking act with lots of class. Using two teeterboards, a perch chair and a high platform, the troupe went thru a routine that had them on edge. The stuff was deliberately built up for added suspense, including several studied fluffs, and won tremendous hands." Acrobats were still popular in the 1950s when both the Orantos and the Tokayer Troupe appeared at the Emboyd. Like Walkmir, the Orantos, billed at the Emboyd on 26–27 January 1952 as "European High Perch Experts," balanced the pole on which other acrobats performed amazing feats. For their part, the Tokayer Troupe, billed at the Emboyd on 29 March 1952 as "Perilous Acro, Difficult Unequaled Sensation," specialized in catapulting members of the troupe from a

teeter-board through the air to land on a chair held aloft on a pole.

The record for each photograph (almost all of them 8" x 10") includes the text of the inscription, which sometimes also provides the date or dates on which the act appeared at the Emboyd or Palace. Not all the inscriptions are in English: some are in Dutch, Danish, Swedish, French, and Hawaiian. But with the aid of internet searches of newspapers and trade journals, it was eventually possible to transcribe almost all of them and provide some identification of the performers beyond their names. The full catalogue of photographs inscribed to Bud Berger is available online from a link on the Embassy's website page devoted to the archive: <http://fwembassytheatre.org/about-us/contact-us/>



Bud Berger's Notebooks and Memorabilia

Throughout his long tenure at the Palace and Embassy Theatres, Bud Berger kept detailed notebooks on every act that appeared at the theatres, including comments about the quality of the act, the number of stagehands and their identities, changes in management, letters sent and received, deaths, and on a regular basis celebrations with beer and ribs ("Had two case of beer for Sunday"; "Bunch was out for rib"). The archive has two of the original notebooks (covering



1930–37 and 1952–54) and a photocopy of a third (1937–41), with many of the entries in the notebooks corresponding to the inscribed pictures. Berger was quite often the subject of newspaper stories and columns, and the archive preserves copies he framed or mounted on backing material, as well as a number of photographs of him with other members of the International Alliance of



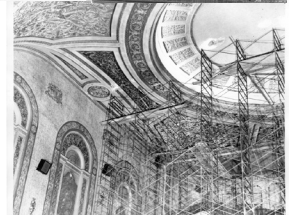
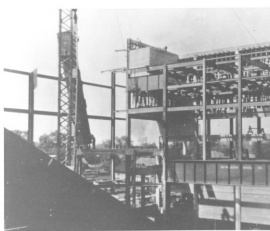
Theatrical Stage Employees Local 146 (he served as president for many years), including one showing him with Ray Hanna, the stage manager of the Paramount, on the occasion of receiving his IATSE Gold card in 1955. Following his death in 1965, Berger's ashes were scattered over the roof of the theatre, over which his ghost is widely rumored to keep watch.

Other Photographs

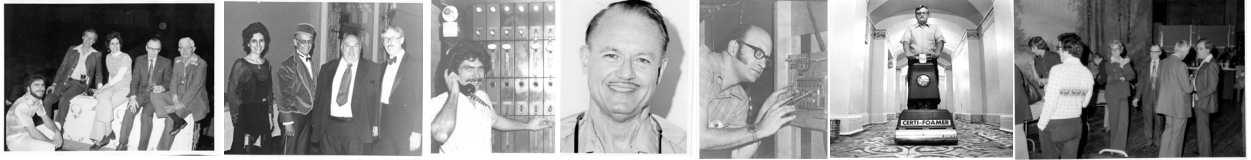
Beyond the photographs associated with Bud Berger, the archive contains seventy photographs autographed by such stars as Burt Bacharach, Bachman Turner Overdrive, Jim Brickman, Henry Busse, George Carlin, Rodney Carrington, Carrot Top, Harry Connick Jr., Phil D'Rey, Crystal Gayle, Dizzy Gillespie, Lee Greenwood, Wayne Newton, Donny Osmond, Lew Rawls, Doc Severinsen, the Smothers Brothers, James Taylor, The Temptations, and Paul Whiteman, as well as many photographs without autographs of stars and shows that have appeared at the theatre (including Jerry Seinfeld, David Brenner, Tony Bennett, Marilyn Maxwell, Art Garfunkel, Don McLean, Bob Newhart, Buddy Rich, and many others) and Hollywood film production stills from the Harvey Cocks collection.



The construction of the fabulous new Emboyd Theatre and Indiana Hotel in Fort Wayne was carefully documented by dozens of photographs—and even an artist's rendering of the interior of the auditorium—as the building began to take shape in 1926 and prepare for its grand opening on 14 May 1928. As a souvenir, the electrical contractor Dix-Kelly prepared a special book of artistic photographs printed on heavy paper showing the marquee, one of the organ grilles with its massive chandelier, the outer lobby with its inlaid floor and famous compass, and W. Clyde Quimby, the theatre impresario who developed the Emboyd, standing at the imposing controls for the theatre's house and stage lighting. Other historic photographs show the theatre under



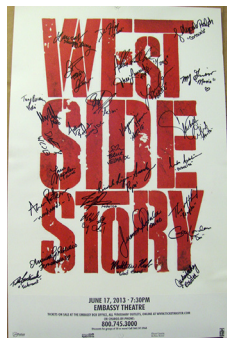
construction in 1926–28 and as it appeared on opening night, the original corps of ushers from 1928 and the ushers' ball of 1932, the original pit bands of 1928 and 1933, the theatre being cleaned and restored following its acquisition by the Embassy Theatre Foundation in 1975, many of the individual volunteers who worked tirelessly to restore and operate the theatre in the years following 1975, and early managers (including Rick Hammitt, Ray Mesler, Joann Leal, and Gayle Milne).



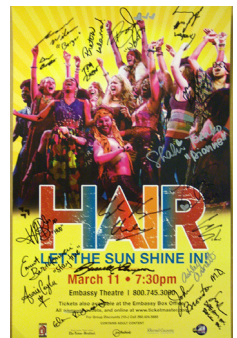
Among the early volunteers who helped rescue the building was the indefatigable photographer Ray Soughan who took hundreds of photographs of every aspect of work on the theatre, including the volunteers themselves, and compiled a number of scrapbooks documenting work and events in the theatre. The archive contains not only his prints but also many of the original 3" x 4" negatives, as well as the huge "Hitzemann Embassy Theatre Collection" compiled by Fred Hitzemann, another early volunteer. Most of the 470 photographs are 8" x 10" and 5" x 7", but a few are as large as 30" x 40" and some are 4" x 6" and 3.5" x 5". Each of them has an individual record in the catalogue, allowing any photograph to be quickly and easily located.

The archive also contains more than 3,250 smaller photographs (primarily 4" x 6" and 3.5" x 5") representing reconstruction work on the exterior terra cotta and roof, the Indiana Hotel and Theatre lobbies, the lambrequin, the marquee, individual performers and organists, the Grande Page organ console and pipework, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, restoration and renovation, volunteers and workdays, Doris Stovall and the Walk of Recognition, Festivals of Trees, anniversary celebrations, audiences, the Jefferson and Harrison Street overpasses, dressing room wall art, water damage in the dressing rooms, and so on. These are grouped together in individual catalogue records by subject. The full catalogue of photographs other than those inscribed to Bud Berger is available online from two links on the Embassy's website page devoted to the archive: <http://fwembassytheatre.org/about-us/contact-us/>

Posters, Playbills, Programs, Memorabilia

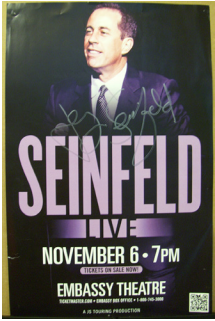


For many of the shows represented in the photographs, 364 posters, playbills, and programs are preserved in the archive, some of them signed by the performers, and there are also 28 stage stools and even 6 guitars autographed by stars and casts of shows that have played at the Embassy Theatre over the past forty years, ranging from classic and current Broadway shows to acrobatic groups, choral ensembles, dance shows, ballet, stand-up comedians, rock bands, country singers, travel films, silent films, theatre organists, and so on. Classic and much-loved Broadway shows playing at the Embassy Theatre include *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *West Side Story*, *Damn Yankees*, *Annie*, *Camelot*,



Cats, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Grease*, *Gypsy*, *Mame*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Les Misérables*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *The Sound of Music*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Peter Pan*, but the theatre has also presented such modern and in some cases controversial shows as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Blast*, *Mama Mia!*, *Jersey Boys*, *Rent*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Hair*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Miss Saigon*, *Avenue Q*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Cabaret*, *Chicago*, *Legally Blonde*, *A Chorus Line*,

Evita, Evil Dead: The Musical, Grease, Sister Act, Side by Side by Sondheim, Sunset Boulevard, Menopause: The Musical, Ghost Brothers of Darkland County, American Idiot: The Groundbreaking Broadway Musical, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee: A New Musical Comedy, and many others.



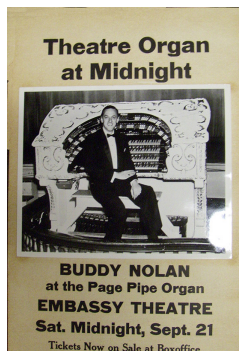
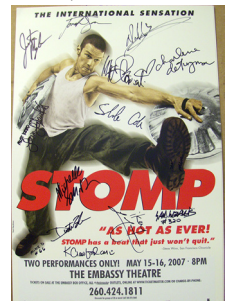
Comedians have been a regular feature at the Emboyd and Embassy Theatre since 1928. In more recent years, they have been joined by Jerry Seinfeld, Jim Gaffigan, Bill Engvall, Gabriel Iglesias, Rodney Carrington, Larry the Cable Guy, Red Green, Friends of Bob and Tom, Tim Allen, George Carlin, David Brenner, and Carrot Top, sometimes on several occasions. All of them have contributed to the archive by signing their posters and in some cases the stools they used on stage.



Likewise, the Embassy Theatre has also been a popular venue for jazz and vocal ensembles, rock bands, and country music singers as varied as Ray Boltz, George Jones, Bryan Adams, Alice in Chains, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Monkees, The Moody Blues, REO Speedwagon, The Soft Parade: A Tribute to the Doors, Styx, Weird Al Yankovic, ZZ Top, Diane Schurr, Jim Brickman, Straight No Chaser, Brit Floyd, Jamey Johnson, Goo Goo Dolls, Joe Bonamassa, Harry Connick Jr., Gordon Lightfoot, Willie Nelson, The Oak Ridge Boys, Brad Paisley, Loretta Lynn, and many others. On several occasions, these artists enhanced the archive by leaving behind not only signed posters and stools but also signed guitars (this one autographed by Sheryl Crowe, Michael Bolton, Brad Paisley, Chris Cagle, Weird Al Yankovic, and Anne Murray).



Magicians, acrobatic groups, and dance shows alike have been popular at the theatre from its opening days. Modern superstar magician David Copperfield has appeared on several occasions, and Cirque Dreams has presented three spectacular shows, *Jungle Fantasy*, *Illumination*, and *Holidaze*, contributing to the archive on each occasion a poster signed by the cast. Current dance ensembles continue to delight Embassy Theatre audiences on a regular basis, including *Celtic Woman*, *Tap Dogs*, *Barrage Vagabond Tales*, *Riverdance*, *Movin' Out*, *Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance*, *Fosse*, *Footloose: The Musical*, *Break: The Urban Funk Spectacular*, *Bob Fosse's Dancin'*, *Balé Folclórico da Bahia Carnaval 2000*, and multiple appearances of *Stomp*. The archive preserves posters for each performance, most of them signed by the cast.



The traditional arts, film, and of course the Embassy's famous Grande Page theatre organ have been regularly represented at the Embassy Theatre over the years by an annual concert in memory of the Embassy Theatre's long-time organist, Buddy Nolan, who was a leader in the efforts to save the theatre from destruction in the 1970s; visiting ensembles such as the Vienna Choir Boys, *Moulin Rouge: The Ballet*, the A Cappella Choir of Concordia University (Nebraska), the Purdue University Glee Club, the Pennsylvania Ballet, and the State Ballet Theatre of Russia performing *Swan Lake*; regular appearances of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, which is resident at the Embassy Theatre; film series, including travel films, filmed

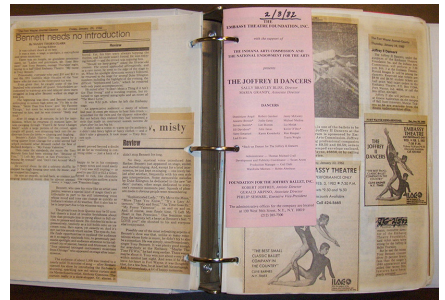


operas, and revivals such as the 40th anniversary tour of *Exodus*; and silent films accompanied by the Grande Page, featuring such stars as Lon Chaney in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, Buster Keaton in *The General*, Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last*, Rudolph Valentino in *The Eagle*, and many others. All of these events are represented by posters and programs in the archive.

Posters in the archive range in size from 11" x 8.5" to 36" x 24", but most of them are the standard 17" x 11" or 22" x 14". Each poster is preserved in an acid-free, lignin-free buffered folder, and the folders are housed in archival print boxes. The full catalogue of posters, playbills, and programs (signed and unsigned) and the stage stools and guitars signed by stars and casts is available online from a link on the Embassy's website page devoted to the archive: <http://fwembassytheatre.org/about-us/contact-us/>

Scrapbooks

Among the most interesting and historically useful materials in the archive are forty scrapbooks, all of them compiled by the early volunteers to document the history of the Embassy Theatre Foundation (established in 1972), the condition of the Embassy when it was acquired by the Foundation in 1975–76, their efforts to refurbish and restore it, and their activities during the first decades when the theatre was operated primarily by volunteers. Twelve scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings (including advertisements, stories, press releases, reviews, and letters to the editor), programs, brochures, calendars of events, budgets, copies of the Foundation's bylaws, and so on, covering 1963, the year of Buddy Nolan's first Midnight Concert, to 1970 and 1973 to 1992. These provide an extremely detailed history of the trials and tribulations of the Foundation in its efforts to save the theatre (including various lawsuits, early benefit performances, controversies over control, fundraising, etc.). Six of the scrapbooks (covering 1963–70 and 1973–86) were compiled by Harry and Amy Howell; one scrapbook, concentrating primarily on the Grande Page organ during the period 1975–81,



was compiled by Ray and Ione Danford; the other five (covering 1985–92) are anonymous. These are complemented by five scrapbooks of photographs, three of them by Ray Soughan. Two additional scrapbooks cover the period 2000–2004.

Seventeen scrapbooks provide a photographic record and programs for each Festival of Trees from its beginning in 1985 through 2001 (two for 1990 and a supplemental scrapbook without pictures for 1985–88), and four others document the Grande Page and its organists, beginning in 1928; the 1995 renovation of the stage and hotel lobby; Doris Stovall's retirement; and the Embassadors.

Newspapers

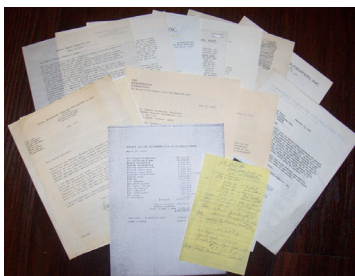


In addition to creating scrapbooks, early volunteers were inveterate clippers of newspaper and periodical articles, letters to the editor, advertisements, supplements, and so on. The archive contains ninety-two folders of these arranged in such topics as Alliance Theatres, Artists, Anniversaries, Convention Center, Festival of Trees, Foundation, Harrison Square, History, Hotel Indiana, Organ, Previews of Performances, Reviews of Performances, Saving the Theatre, and so on. Folders are also devoted to specific individuals such as Bud Berger, Harvey Cocks, Robert Goldstine, Marilyn Maxwell, Dick Moores (the cartoonist of

Gasoline Alley), Paul Nachtigall (the creator of all the decorative plaster in the theatre and hotel), Buddy Nolan, Dyne Pfeffenberger, each of the Embassy's executive directors, the stagehands, and others, and the archive contains an almost complete run of *Theatre Organ*, the journal of the American Theatre Organ Society, from 1964 (vol. 6, no. 3) through 2008 (vol. 50, no. 6). The thousands of newspaper clippings document nearly every detail of the theatre's history from its opening through 2020. Each scrapbook and folder is fully described in the archive catalogue.

Correspondence and Documents

The archive of any organization should preserve as many organizational documents as possible. Unfortunately, the records of the theatre prior to its acquisition by the Foundation are not preserved in the archive for the most part, with the exception of five early title records covering the period 1926–77. But fortunately the officers of the Foundation, executive directors, and early volunteers were diligent about keeping copies of their correspondence, detailed minutes of the Board of Directors and each committee, detailed financial records, and so on. Thus, the archive is very strong in this area.

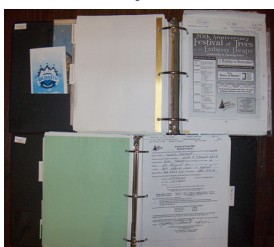


Forty-four files of correspondence are organized under such subjects as Anniversaries, Architects, Embassadors (including dispute and disbanding), Fort Wayne Philharmonic (including a letter from Allen Hughes of *The New York Times* extolling the theatre's acoustics), Foundation (bankruptcy of Cinecom and purchase of the theatre and hotel from Solar Sportsystems; saving the Embassy), Foundation Boards, Goettler Associates (fund raising), Grand Wayne Convention Center, Bob Hope, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Historic Preservation Review Board (pertaining to restoration funding), Indiana Hotel (A. A. Cooper and the Harrison Hotel Company), IATSE Local 146, James Associates (early restoration architects), Rebecca and Joseph Sumpter (early volunteers), and others.

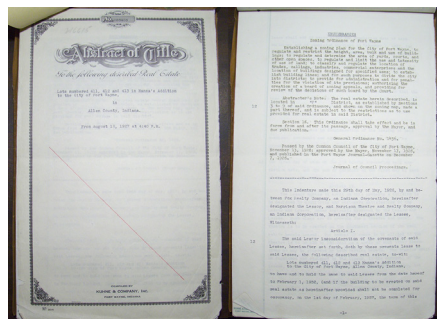
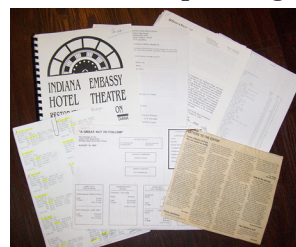


Thirty-seven files preserve various legal documents, including the Foundation's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, agreements with the City of Fort Wayne pertaining to the Convention Center, bid specifications, certificates of award (e.g., from the American Theatre Organ Society recognizing the Grande Page, the National Register of Historic Places, the League of Historic American Theatres), contracts (IATSE, lease and rental, organists and other personnel, roofing, service, etc.), easements, fire protection, insurance, IRS 501(c)(3) certification, petitions and resolutions, and title abstracts.

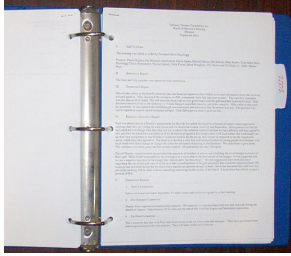
An additional 175 binders and folders preserve personnel files, audit reports, Louis Niezer's history of the Fox Realty Company's Embassy Theatre and Indiana Hotel, Robert Goldstine material, handwritten reminiscences by Fred Hitzemann, membership directories and Ambassador minutes and documents, planning



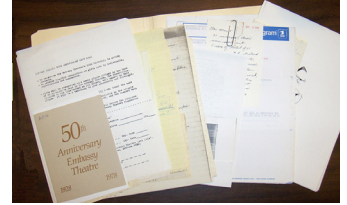
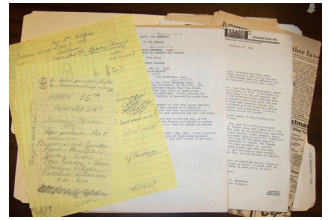
documents for the Festival of Trees (1985–2009 and 2011–12 [including financial documents for 1992–99]), copies of the Foundation's newsletters (*Communicator*, *Curtain Call*, *Spotlight on the Embassy*, *Centre Stage*, and *Encore*), documents pertaining to the Grande Page and organ concerts, plans for the redevelopment of the Indiana Hotel and the Embassy Plaza, Civic Center Renewal documents, other capital improvement project



proposals, Grand Wayne Center promotional material, research papers (on Embassy architecture, A. M. Strauss, Cincinnati's Palace Theatre), consultants' proposals and reports, long-range plans, proposals for logos, proposals and documents for major renovations in the 1970s, 80s, and 95 (James Associates; Gibson, Tourney, Kim; Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates; Votaw and Sons

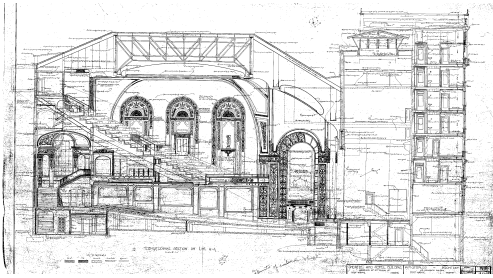


[new lighting system]; Goettler Associates, MSKTD), and multiple sets of minutes and reports for annual meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors (1972–2011 [including financial reports for 1975–2000]), some with handwritten annotations, as well as minutes and reports from the Booking and Policy (1975–99), Development (1990–99), Facilities (1974–75 and 1979–93), Grievance (1975), Organ (1979–2005), Personnel (1989–96), Program (1979–83), Public Relations (1994–97), and Safety (1993–95) Committees. Also preserved are performance materials for “Variety and Vaudeville” (1975); the 50th, 55th, 60th, and 75th anniversary shows; and many other miscellaneous items. Each of these files is easily located through the search functions of the archive catalogue.

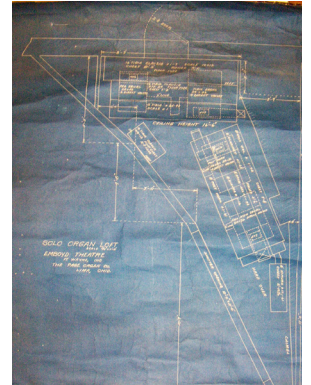


Blueprints

Among the most important historical documents in the archive are complete sets of the original

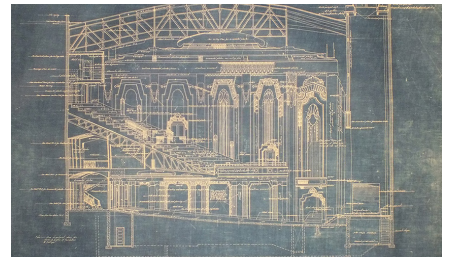


blueprints for the Emboyd Theatre and Indiana Hotel built by the Fox Realty Company (1926) and the Paramount Theatre built by Loop Realities Inc. (1929), both buildings designed by A. M. Strauss. The Emboyd and Hotel blueprints include twenty-four sheets showing every detail of the building from the



basement to the roof and eight sheets of plumbing and electrical details. Blueprints for the original lighting system designed by Frank Adam Electric Company show the pilot board, the remote board, and all the original color circuits and locations. A very rare blueprint prepared by the Page Organ Company shows the solo chamber of the Grande Page organ.

The Paramount, located at 121 E. Wayne Street, was demolished in 1962, but the forty sheets of blueprints make it possible to recapture some sense of the theatre that was Fort Wayne's most luxurious house throughout the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Both the Emboyd and Paramount were operated by Quimby Theatres, and both theatres are pictured in the archive's copy of *Selections from the Recent Work of A. M. Strauss, Architect. Fort Wayne, 1932* (New York: Architectural Catalogue Co., [1932]).



The archive also includes blueprints for the initial restorations undertaken in the 1970s (James Associates, Tiffin Scenic Studios); subsequent modifications and remodelings in the 1980s, including exterior wall repair and construction of the stair tower and Jefferson Street overpass (Wiss, Janey, Elstner; Gibson, Tourney, Kim); the major renovations and expansions of the stage and hotel lobby in 1995 (MSKTD & Associates, Votaw and Sons Electric, Stage Equipment Co., Wenger); the Walk of Recognition

in 2002–3 (MSKTD & Associates); the third floor renovations and Harrison Street overpass in 2008–9 (MSKTD & Associates; CSO Architects); and miscellaneous other blueprints and mechanical drawings for various projects. Some of the projects were overseen by an important early volunteer, T. Parker Ellsworth, P.E., and many of his drawings are preserved as well.

When architects were preparing plans for theatres, they sometimes prepared paintings and colored drawings to illustrate the color schemes and finished appearance of the interior and exterior of the building. Although it is not signed by the firm of A. M. Strauss, the large painting of the interior of the Emboyd in the archive was almost certainly prepared as such an illustration by one of its in-house artists because it represents the interior as it was conceived in the design stages and not exactly as it appeared when completed. A medallion in the lower right corner of the painting reads: “The Emboyd, Fort Wayne, Ind.” The painting, 30.5" x 40.5" (probably gouache), was simply stored without any protection at all and suffered some minor paint loss over the years; it has now been cleaned, restored, and framed as one of the treasures of the archive.



Audio-Visual Material

All of the other collections in the archive are enhanced by 607 35mm slides and 180 audio tapes (reel-to-reel and cassette), LPs, video tapes (VHS and Betamax), quadruplex TV spots, CDs (audio and graphic), and DVDs. In cases where the media can no longer be readily played on current equipment (e.g., 16mm film, audio cassettes, and VHS and quadruplex tapes), the content of the original media has been transferred to digital form and stored on CDs or DVDs.

607 slides and 1,590 photographs on CDs and a DVD (primarily jpgs) show opening night 1928, early and later performers and shows, the 75th anniversary show (the entire show is preserved on three DVDs), the new marquee, Festival of Trees, the Grande Page, the interior of the theatre, and downtown Fort Wayne.

Early recordings of the Grande Page include Buddy Nolan playing the organ in 1956 (subsequently reissued on CD for the theatre's 90th anniversary); his LP *After Midnight*; masters, cassettes, and an LP of *New Page* and *Embassy Grande Pipe Organ* (uncredited recordings by Robert Goldstine, Bob Ort, Dyne Pfeffenberger, and Bill Zabel); and a cassette of Ron Rhode's *This'll Make You Whistle* (1997). Robert Goldstine plays the Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer on an additional cassette. The archive also contains interviews with famous visiting organists Gaylord Carter and Virgil Fox.

Important historical information about the early days of the Foundation and its efforts to save the theatre, including details of the sale of the building by Solar Sportsystems to the Foundation, are preserved on two cassettes of Buddy Nolan interviewing Robert Goldstine, Bob Nickerson, Dyne Pfeffenberger, Ellsworth Smith, and Bill Zabel. An additional cassette preserves the entire meeting of the Foundation in September 1974, in which Goldstine explains the sale and answers questions.

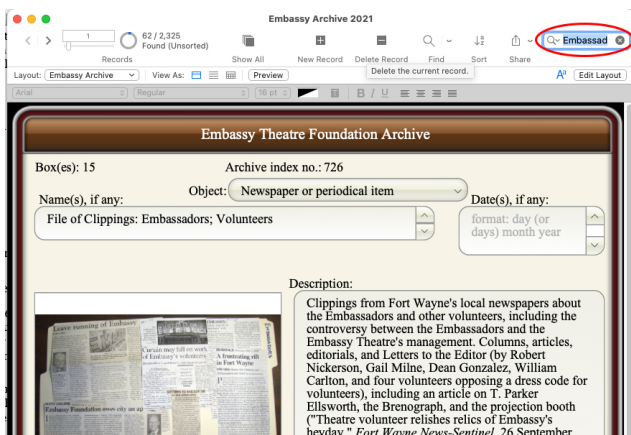
Later history is covered in recordings of Sandy Thompson of the Embassadors interviewing Robert Goldstine and Douglas Evans; an unidentified 2009 broadcast on saving the Embassy; Punch Films' *Saving the Embassy* (2014); promotions and broadcasts on the Festival of Trees (1986, 1988–95, 2000–2001, 2003–4, and 2007–9) by ABC's 21 Alive and other presenters; and transcriptions of *ARTSWeekly*, *Comcast Newsmakers*, *Comcast Spotlight*, *Insights in the Arts*, *Lifestyle*, *Mark in the Morning*, *News Now*, *Vagabond Indiana*, and other shows devoted to the Embassy, as well as 21 Alive's “*Salute to the*

Stars”: Fort Wayne Bicentennial, 1794–1994; and Mark Herman’s COVID-19 benefit concert for the Embassy broadcast on 3 October 2020.

Promotional materials for dozens of shows were supplied to the Embassy or created in house on reel-to-reel, VHS, Betamax, and quadruplex tapes, all of which are preserved in the archive and can be easily located in the catalogue and played once again.

The Catalogue and Its Use

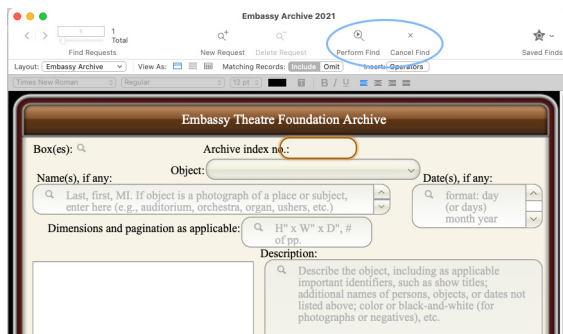
The catalogue of the archive may be used in consultation with the archive manager (contact the offices for further information). It was created in FileMaker, a database program that allows for ready access to individual records or groups of records located by “finding” words, names, and phrases in either individual fields or any field within each record. All the records in the database and in any “find” will be displayed in ascending order by their index numbers, but they may also be sorted alphabetically by name; by object (e.g., audio-visual, correspondence, document, photograph, etc.) and name; or in other manners. The following instructions provide some examples, but much more detailed instructions can be found by selecting “FileMaker Pro Help” under the application’s “Help” menu.



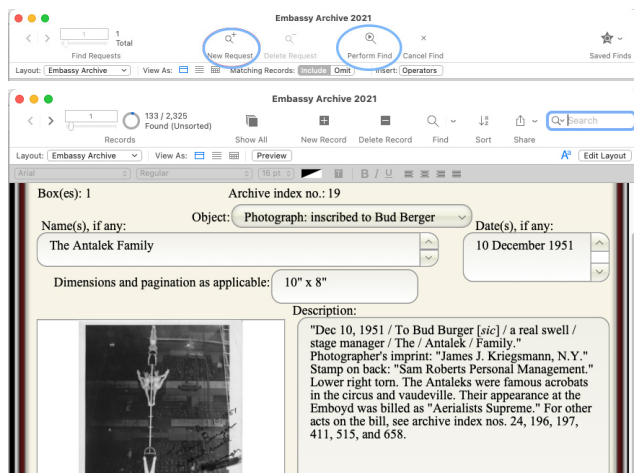
The **Quick Search** box will find every record containing any string of letters, word, or phrase anywhere in the database. For example, the string “Embassad” entered in **Quick Search** will find sixty-two records for “Embassadors” and “Embassadares” under the object headings **Audio-Visual Material**, **Correspondence**, **Document: legal**, **Document: minutes, reports, etc.**, **Newspaper or periodical item**, **Other**, **Photograph: unsigned**, **Poster**, **Program**, and **Scrapbook**. Placing quotation marks around a word or phrase will restrict the search to that exact word or phrase.

Clicking on the x at the right edge of the box clears the **Quick Search** box. Subsequent search strings can be entered without first clearing the box simply by typing over the current string.

More complex searches can be accomplished by clicking the **Find** button at the top of the screen, which will cause a blank record to be displayed. Selecting an option from the drop-down **Object** menu or typing strings or words in any of the fields and clicking **Perform Find** will result in finds that match all of the criteria (**Cancel Find** cancels the blank window and returns to the database). For example, selecting one of the options from the drop-down **Object** menu, such as **Poster**, will display the 299 records in that category. But selecting both **Poster** from the drop-down **Object** menu and entering “2004” in the **Date(s)** field will find only seven records. Entering “Nolan” in the **Name(s)** field will display all the records in which “Nolan” appears in that field but not those in which “Nolan” appears only in some other field, such as **Description**. To find all the records in which “Nolan” or any other words or string appear in any field, use the **Quick Search**.



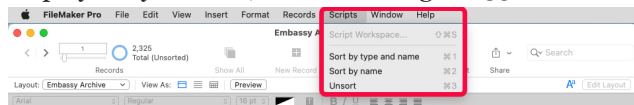
Note that multiple words entered in any field are interpreted as if they were connected by the Boolean operator “AND.” That is, all words must appear in the field (in any order) for the record to be selected. If a specific phrase is required, the words must be placed between quotation marks. For example, entering “75th anniversary” in quotation marks in the **Description** field will find any records with that exact phrase in that field but not those in which the words appear separately (for example, “the theatre’s 75th birthday was celebrated throughout the 2003 anniversary year”) or in other fields.



Chaining together multiple searches enables location of a range of records. For example, all records pertaining to jugglers, acrobats, and mimes can be found by first entering an initial find (as described above) with “juggl” in the **Description** field; then, clicking the **New Request** button to bring up a new blank record in which “acrobat” is entered in the **Description** field; repeating the process and entering “mime” in the **Description** field (these three searches are equivalent to the use of the Boolean operator “OR”); and then, clicking the **Perform Find** button (or pressing Return) to display 133 records.

It is also possible to chain searches in order to exclude certain records. For example, in order to locate documents pertaining to the Grande Page but not photographs of the organ, entering an initial find of “Grande Page” (in quotation marks to indicate this as a specific phrase) in the **Description** field, clicking the **New Request** button and the **Omit** button and selecting from the drop-down **Object** menu

Photograph: unsigned, and then clicking the **Perform Find** button will display eighty records. But it turns out that this includes many “false hits” because there are 35mm slides and recordings of the organ in the archive. Clicking on the little down arrow next to the **Find** button brings up the option of modifying the last find, and by adding an additional **New Request** together with the **Omit** button, selecting **Audio-Visual material** from the drop-down **Object** menu, and clicking the **Perform Find** button will display forty records, now excluding the 35mm slides and recordings.



When the desired records have been found, they can be sorted by selecting one of the scripts from the **Scripts** menu in the application’s menu bar. The first script will sort the records by the type of object (in the same order as the drop-down **Object** menu) and then in alphabetical order by the **Name(s)** field. The second script will sort the records in alphabetical order without regard to the type of object. The third script returns the records to their original order by archive index number. Other sorts are possible by selecting different fields that appear when clicking the **Sort** button, but sorting by dimension, date, or description will not produce useful results.



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— Thomas J. Mathiesen
September 2022