AVONDALE PLAYHOUSE COLLECTION, 1959–1965, N.D.

Collection Information

Historical Sketch

Scope and Content Note

Series Contents

Cataloging Information

Processed by

Laurie Randall
Supervised by Dorothy A. Nicholson
January 2007
Revised June 2008

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 boxes of Photographs and Programs,
5 OVC Photograph folders


PROVENANCE: William B. Lewis, Indianapolis, Indiana
HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Avondale Playhouse (1954-1966), also known as “Avondale-in-the-Meadows,” was a popular summer stock theater located at The Meadows Shopping Center on E. 38th Street in Indianapolis.

The theater-in-the-round hired out-of-town headliners, such as Margaret O’Brien, Jack Palance or Dorothy Lamour, to lead casts of local talent. The plays spanned light comedies (“Three Men on a Horse”) to modern drama (“Tobacco Road,” “The Country Girl”). Movie actresses Frances Farmer, Esther Williams and Vivian Vance were among those national names that toured in summer stock and performed here. Its rival, Starlight Musicals, also offered summer entertainment at that time.

Two founding fathers, and long time members of the Board of Directors, were Indianapolis residents Allen W. Clowes and W. Taylor Wilson. When the Board tried to expand to other cities, a failure in Louisville, in 1965, forced the company to sell its assets. A proposed Avondale “Playhouse on the Lake” (Keystone at 116th) was never constructed.

Sources:

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection, while not inclusive of the entire life of the Avondale Playhouse, contains approximately 350 publicity photographs and portraits of the cast and crew and 45 programs. Julius Marx, a sound engineer with the company, made the photographs between 1959 and 1965. The materials are organized into two series, Series 1, Photographs and Series 2: Programs. These are both organized alphabetically by the titles of the plays. With each play is listed the year when it was performed, if known, and the names of the visiting headliners. Some of the plays and programs are not dated.
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**Series 2: Programs, 1959–1965, n.d.**

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“The Young and the Beautiful”, 1960
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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: http://opac.indianahistory.org/
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P0067).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.