

# THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

152 N. York St., 2nd Floor, Elmhurst, IL 60126  
historictheatres.org

## Finding Aid for the NAT BRANDT COLLECTION

Acc No.: 08-019  
Future Additions Expected: No  
Finding Aid creation: Sept 18, 2013  
Size: 2 linear ft.

### Abstract

The Nat Brandt Collection consists of 2 record boxes with 79 file folders containing clippings, photo copies, correspondence, and research notes. The material was collected by Nathan H. "Nat" Brandt (1929- ) in preparation for his book "Chicago Death Trap: The Iroquois Theatre Fire of 1903."

### Background Information

Nathan H. "Nat" Brandt (1929- ) is a long-time journalist. He has been a reporter for The Newark Star-Ledger, an editor for The New York Times, the managing editor of American Heritage, the editor in chief of Publisher's Weekly, and a senior news writer for CBS News.

Brandt also had an active career in television. Since CBS, he worked during election coverage for ABC News and was a writer for CBS's bicentennial minutes. He worked for the PBS television series "The Crucible of the Millennium," which won five awards for excellence.

A native of New York City, Brandt majored in history at the University of Rochester in New York. He wrote many articles dealing with American history. He has been a freelance author since 1980, and taught as an adjunct professor of journalism in the Graduate School of Arts and Science at New York University and at St. John's University in Queens, New York. Brandt's book, "The Man Who Tried to Burn New York" won the 1987 Douglas Southall Freeman History Award. In 1993, he was Journalist-in-Residence at the Thurber House in Columbus, Ohio, taught a course in magazine writing at The Ohio State University, and was a consultant for the Columbus Dispatch.

Some of Brandt's other books include "Mr. Tubbs, Civil War"; "Harlem at War: The Black Experience in WWII"; "The Town That Started the Civil War"; "The Congressman Who Got Away with Murder"; "Massacre in Shansi"; "Con Brio: Four Russians Called the Budapest String Quartet"; and "When Oberlin was King of the Gridiron: The Heisman Years."

Brandt has lectured on the East and West Coasts on Civil War subjects and at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. on both the Civil War and Harlem during World War II.

Besides donating his research papers dealing with "Chicago Death Trap" to the Theatre Historical Society of America, the three Oberlin College works were donated to that school's Archives, and those from "Con Brio"

were sent to the Music Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The research materials of the remaining books have been sent to the Rush Rhees Library at the University in Rochester, New York.

### Scope and Contents Note

The Nat Brandt Collection consists of 2 record boxes with 79 file folders. The collection was organized by Nat Brandt and the file division, titles, and order have been maintained. Some folder names and topics have been repeated and may not be consecutive. The folders contain clippings, photo copies, photographs, correspondence, and research notes.

Box 01 has 49 folders. Materials in Box 01 include personalities, victims, heroes, city ordinances, construction scandals, weather, the Chicago Fire, history of the Chicago Fire Department, eyewitness reports, Coroner records, reactions in the media in various cities, reaction by the public.

Box 02 has 30 folders. Materials in Box 02 include the aftermath, architects' reactions, memorial association and monument, other theatre fires, the Northwestern University building, fire research, photographic prints, and the author's notes for the final revision of the book.

The material was collected by Nat Brandt's during research for his book "Chicago Death Trap: The Iroquois Theatre Fire of 1903" and donated to Theatre Historical Society of America by Mr. Brandt in June 2008.

### Related Materials

**Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following resources in the THS holdings:**

Robert Brubaker Collection

**Other materials in the Theatre Historical Society holdings may relate to the topics in this archive. Consult the archivist for further research assistance.**

**Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following resources found in **other institutions**:**

Oberlin College Archives, Oberlin, Ohio

Music Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

### CONTENTS LISTING

Box No.	Folder No.	Folder Name
01	01	Personalities
01	02	Cast Members
01	03	Ordinances
01	04	Fire – Eddie Foy
01	05	Inland Architect
01	06	Fire Scenes
01	07	North Wall Fire Escape
01	08	Victims – Adult

01	09	Victims – Children
01	10	Principals
01	11	Guenzel Photos
01	12	Research - Fire
01	13	Chicago Fire
01	14	Bibliography
01	15	Prophesy
01	16	Chicago – The City
01	17	Chicago Fire Department
01	18	Chicago History – Fire Department
01	19	Weather
01	20	Iroquois Theatre - Scandals
01	21	Iroquois Theatre
01	22	Construction Scandals
01	23	Opening Night
01	24	Blue Beard
01	25	Eyewitness – Garrick Theatre
01	26	New York and Out of Town
01	27	“Mr. Bluebeard” – New York Production
01	28	Causes – Reforms
01	29	Causes
01	30	Prophesy – Iroquois Aftermath
01	31	New York City Newspaper Accounts
01	32	Iroquois – Aftermath
01	33	Coroner Records and List of Witnesses
01	34	Chicago Newspaper Accounts
01	35	Eyewitness Accounts and Reporters
01	36	Mourning and Theatre Closings
01	37	Later Accounts of Fire
01	38	Survivors
01	39	Death Toll Lists and Morgue Scenes
01	40	Lists of Dead
01	41	Morgue/Death Stories
01	42	Rescuers/Heroes
01	43	Heroes/Rescuers
01	44	Theatres – New York
01	45	Reaction U.S and Abroad
01	46	Eddie Foy – Cast Reaction
01	47	Cast, Orchestra, Staff
01	48	Eyewitness – 15 year old remem
01	49	Reporters
<b>Box No.</b>	<b>Folder No.</b>	<b>Folder Name</b>
02	01	Mourning
02	02	Guenzel Report
02	03	Aftermath – Chicago

02	04	Memorial Association and Monument
02	05	Architects' Reaction
02	06	Clippings – Originals
02	07	Northwestern University Building
02	08	Gerry Society
02	09	Armour
02	10	Architecture
02	11	Weber and Fields
02	12	Other Theatre Fires
02	13	Fire Research
02	14	Fire – New Research
02	15	Photos – Photocopies
02	16	Personalities – Names and I.D.s
02	17	Northwestern Building/Panic/Songs
02	18	Fire – Chicago Trip
02	19	Official Papers
02	20	Blame and Inquiry
02	21	The Inquiry
02	22	Mizz
02	23	Freeman Report
02	24	Official Reports, Etc.
02	25	Survivors
02	26	Temple of Tragedy
02	27	Notes – Research for Final Revision
02	28	Songs
02	29	Correspondence
02	30	Photos with captions
<b>END</b>		

Access Restrictions: There are no access restrictions on the materials and the Collection is open to all. However, the researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming to the laws of libel, privacy and copyright which may be involved in the use of this Collection.