



Arthur Clinton Draper Papers (R0112)

Collection Number: R0112

Collection Title: Arthur Clinton Draper Papers

Dates: 1899-1944

Creator: Draper, Arthur Clinton, 1872-1944

Abstract: The Arthur Clinton Draper Papers contain newspaper articles, correspondence, advertising material, scripts, and memorabilia of Arthur Clinton Draper of Lebanon, Missouri. Draper produced minstrel shows in the central and western states for over thirty years. He specialized in benefit performances at Elks lodges.

Collection Size: 0.5 cubic foot
(1 volume, 5 folders, 1 roll of microfilm)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Arthur Clinton Draper Papers* (R0112); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were loaned for microfilming to the University of Missouri by Emma Gibbs Phillips on May 17, 1982 (Accession No. RA0126). Some of the original materials were donated on October 17, 2007 by Carolyn Doyle, Judy Crawford, and Arthur Draper.

Alternate Forms Available: The collection was originally loaned for microfilming and all materials are available in that form. The originals of volume 2 and folders 1-5 were donated later.

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Arthur Clinton Draper Papers can be found in the following collections:

Arthur Clinton Draper Photograph Collection (R0847)

Lynn Morrow Collection (R1000)

Draper-McClurg Family Papers (C3069)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, June 23, 1982. Revised by Kathleen Seale, April 23, 2020.

Biographical Note:

Arthur Clinton “Clint” Draper was born in Oswego, Kansas, in 1872. His mother was a music teacher who had moved there from the east, and his father was a physician who had relatives living near Lebanon, Missouri. Draper was reared in Oswego, after which he moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where for twelve years he was a partner in Carpenter and Draper, a retail grocery business. He was also a member of the Colorado Springs Opera House orchestra and a member of the Centennial State Band. He was well known as an amateur entertainer.

Draper's break into professional entertaining came with an invitation to join Haverly's Mastodon Minstrels, a popular troupe then playing Colorado Springs. However, Draper preferred to develop his own show, and he performed with Haverly's for only a short time. In 1900, he went into business with Harry Miller of Paris, Texas, a producer of minstrel shows. Instead of forming a traveling troupe of professionals, Miller and Draper acted as producers, staging their productions with local amateur performers. They contracted to provide all scenery, props, costumes, songs, special acts, and orchestrations. They also helped with advertising and publicity, and took full responsibility for rehearsals and final stage production. The sponsoring organization agreed to provide a pianist for rehearsals, a carpenter for building stage elevations, and, of course, a theater and the necessary talent for the shows.

Miller and Draper were members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (B.P.O.E.), and it is not surprising that they specialized in benefit performances for that fraternity. Although they contracted occasionally with other similar organizations, nearly all of their shows were staged under the auspices of the B.P.O.E. Working with groups such as the Elks also assured that the producers would have a ready pool of amateurs to be directed in the “burnt cork” performances. Miller and Draper traveled extensively, producing shows on an average of twice a month in a territory that ranged from the Pacific coast to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Evidently their shows were well received, for they played some towns year after year.

The partnership dissolved in 1920, with Miller taking the eastern part of the territory and Draper the western. Draper continued producing benefit shows through the mid-1930s, one of the last being staged in his adopted home town of Lebanon, Missouri. He lived briefly in Grand Island, Nebraska, in 1935-1936, where he was appointed director of membership activities of the Elks lodge. Ultimately, he retired to his farm near Lebanon, where he died in 1944. The Lebanon newspaper noted his passing, and remarked on his status as an entertainer. Quoting the obituary of another minstrel and contemporary, the paper referred to Draper as one of the last “top-flight minstrels,” who ranked in prominence with Bert Swor, Al Fields, and George Primrose, the leading blackface performers of the minstrel era.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following two series:

Volumes

Business Papers

Scope and Content Note:**Volumes**

This series contains two volumes with newspaper clippings of articles spanning the whole of Draper's minstrel career. The articles include stories on his profession debut, reviews of shows, and announcements of his partnership with Harry Miller. Many of the reviews contains detailed accountings of the shows. There are hundreds of reviews from over twenty states. The series is arranged chronologically.

Business Papers

This series consists of materials relating to Draper's minstrel career including correspondence from groups they performed for, music publishers, and journalist. Also included in the series are programs, show scripts, and advertising materials including playbills, flyers, and posters. Nearly all of the programs and advertising materials show performers or illustrations of people in blackface. The programs in folders 2 and 3 are represented by their covers in the microfilm copies. The back covers bear local advertising and were not originally microfilmed. The series is arranged chronologically.

Container List:

v. 1-2		Volumes
Roll 1	v. 1	Newspaper clippings, 1899-1944
Box 001	v. 2	Newspaper clippings, 1903-1905
f. 1-5		Business Papers
	f. 1	Correspondence, 1899-1921
	f. 2-3	Programs, 1899-1936
	f. 4	Scripts, circa 1900-1930
	f. 5	Advertising materials, circa 1900-1930

Index:

Index Term	Folder	Medium	Image
Benefit performances	1-3, 5	v. 1-2	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	1-3, 5	v. 1-2	
Blackface entertainers	1-3, 5	v. 1-2	Yes
Dockstader, Lew	1		Yes
Draper, Arthur Clinton, 1872-1944	1-5	v. 1-2	
Draper, Arthur Clinton, 1872-1944	1-3		Yes
Elks (Fraternal order)	1-3, 5	v. 1-2	

Index Term	Folder	Medium	Image
Elks Imperial Minstrels	1		
Entertainers	1-5	v. 1-2	
Haverly's Mastodon Minstrels		v. 1	
Kirk, William F.	1		
Lebanon (Mo.)	2	v. 1	
Miller and Draper	1-5	v. 1-2	
Miller, Harry	1-5	v. 1-2	
Miller, Harry	1, 5		Yes
Minstrel shows	1-5	v. 1-2	Yes
Musical revues, comedies, etc.	1-5	v. 1-2	Yes
Witmark, Julius P.	1		
Joplin (Mo.)	1		