

RICHARD O. REISEM PAPERS
PERSONAL PAPERS, EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC ARCHIVES

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UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

Accn. no.: 2009/9/18
Shelf location: A3A 1,1
Extent: 0.5 linear feet

Biographical Sketch

Richard O. Reisem (*b.* April 15, 1930) was born in Oregon. He attended Iowa State University, completing major studies in architecture, history, and journalism and serving as editor of the university newspaper. Following his graduation in 1955, Reisem joined Eastman Kodak's Communications and Public Affairs department and relocated to Rochester, NY. He worked for the company for the duration of his 31-year career, including as a speechwriter and as special marketing promotion producer. Reisem developed a strong interest in local history and architecture. He was a member of the Rochester Preservation Board and, in 1980, helped found the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. Additionally, Reisem served as a trustee of the Landmark Society of Western New York for more than two decades. Following his retirement in 1986, Reisem authored 16 books on local (i.e., Rochester and western New York) history, including six about Mount Hope Cemetery. An avid avocational organist, he was also a member of the Rochester Theater Organ Society. In 2012, the Landmark Society of Western New York awarded Reisem with a Special Achievement Award for his contributions to upstate New York as a researcher, author, and preservation activist.

Reisem initiated the S.T.O.P. (Save the organ, please!) project after hearing that the Eastman Theatre renovations of 1971 would place the future of the theatre's organ in jeopardy. He organized a mailing list, appeared in the local newspapers and wrote letters to the school administration, including a detailed report to Richard Sproull, President of the University of Rochester.

Although his project failed and the organ was removed, his documentation of the organ during this incident provides insight into its history.

Provenance

These papers were received as a gift from Richard Reisem on September 18, 2009.

Restrictions and Use

There are no restrictions on research use of the Richard Reisem Papers.

Associations

The Special Collections department houses several other collections and scrapbooks related to local music history. In addition to several individual and organizational collections that are of particular local interest, the department maintains a local history file that contains assorted materials relating to Rochester-area music, including people, organizations, and institutions. Additionally, the department houses approximately 200 scrapbooks containing press clippings pertaining to musical life in Rochester, with a particular focus on musical events and news with connections to the Eastman School of Music; the clippings, which are primarily from Rochester-area newspapers, date from 1921–1979.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

The Richard O. Reisem Papers have been divided into two series, which are further divided into the sub-series outlined below.

Series 1: Eastman Theatre Organ

This series includes correspondence, newspaper articles and pamphlets compiled by Richard Reisem regarding the S.T.O.P. (Save the organ, please) project, which was created in an effort to preserve the Eastman Theatre organ. They are separated by subject into the sub-series noted below.

Sub-series A: Photographs

This sub-series includes 96 color photographs in an album as well as negatives and color slides of the Eastman Theatre Pipe Organ.

Sub-series B: Organ specifications

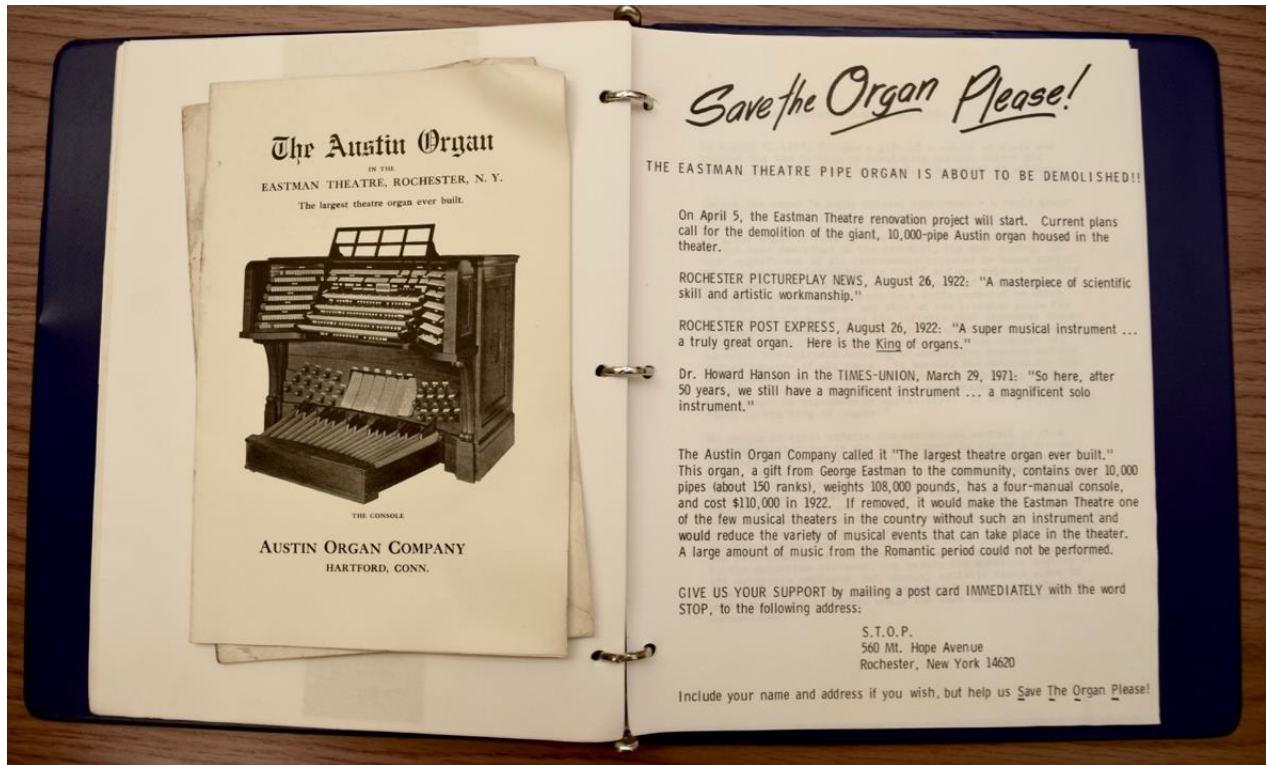
This sub-series includes two copies of a pamphlet issued by the Austin Organ Company regarding the specifications of the Eastman Theatre Organ.

Sub-series C: S.T.O.P. documents

This sub-series consists of all documents related to Richard Reisem's S.T.O.P. (Save the organ, please!) project, including individual letters and postcards in support of S.T.O.P. It also contains a three-ring binder compiled by Richard Reisem which includes correspondence with administration at the University of Rochester and other supporters of S.T.O.P., newspaper clippings, quotes about the organ and other supporting materials.

Series 2: Skinner organ – George Eastman House

This series is comprised of one document of correspondence regarding the preservation of the Skinner organ in the George Eastman House.



Excerpt of S.T.O.P. circulars in binder. From Richard O. Reisem Papers, Box 1.

INVENTORY

Series 1: Eastman Theatre Organ

Sub-series A: Photographs

Box 1 Photo album containing ninety-six 3.5 x 5" color photographs of the Eastman Theatre Organ.

Folder 1 184 kodacolor negatives. Accompanied by original envelope.

Folder 2 38 kodacolor transparencies. Original box containing transparencies present in box 1.

Sub-series B: Organ specifications

Folder 3 *The Austin Organ in the Eastman Theatre Rochester, NY.* Pamphlet. Austin Organ Company Hartford, Conn. Two copies.

Sub-series C: S.T.O.P. documents

Folder 4 S.T.O.P. (Save the organ, please!) support letters.
116 postcards, two letters, 6 empty envelopes, 3 envelopes with S.T.O.P. forms inside, 4 letters w/out envelope, 3 slips cut-out from S.T.O.P. forms, and one petition in ink. All received in April 1971.

Box 1 Three-ring binder of letters and newspaper clippings.

From: Richard Reisem

To: George Angle, vice president for business affairs University of Rochester
Typescript; 2 pages. February 11, 1971.

From: George Angle, vice president for business affairs University of Rochester

To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; 2 pages. February 18, 1971.

From: Richard Reisem

To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; 8 pages. March 19, 1971. 2 copies present.

From: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester

To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; 2 pages. March 23, 1971.

From: Gwen
To: Marge
Typescript; one page. March 22, 1971.

From: Donald S. Hall, director
To: Gale Smith, President of Rochester Theatre Organ Society
Typescript; one page. March 23, 1971.

From: June Foster
To: Ricard Reisem
In ink; one page. March 24, 1971.

From: Paul R. Heaney
To: Thomas W. Cunningham, President of The Organ Historical Society, Inc.
Typescript; 2 pages. March 26, 1971.

From: Thomas Lockwood
To: Richard Reisem
Typescript: 2 pages. [undated]

From: Jim Cromwell
To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; one page. March 29, 1971

From: Richard Reisem
To: Thomas Cunningham, President of The Organ Historical Society, Inc.
Typescript; one page. March 30, 1971.

From: G.B Zornow
To: W. Allen Wallis, Chancellor University of Rochester
Typescript; 2 pages. April 1, 1971.

From: Richard Reisem
To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; 2 pages. April 2, 1971. Enclosure: Petition of signatures to save the organ from Dr. Watanabe's Tuesday morning music class).

From: Alan H Mueller, piano tuning and repairing
To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; one page. April 2, 1971.

From: George W. Stanley Jr.
To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; four pages. April 4, 1971.

From: Arthur W. Earith
To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; one page. April 4, 1971.

From: Paul R. Heaney
To: Dr. Louis K. Eilers, President Eastman Kodak Co.
Typescript; 2 pages. April 5, 1971.

From: Willis T. Jensen, President Advertising Counsel of Rochester.
To: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
Typescript; 2 pages. April 5, 1971.

From: Norman V. Plyter, Director of Computing Services. SUNY Brockport.
To: Richard Reitem
Typescript; one page. April 5, 1971. Enclosure: petition with 30 signatures.

From: Norman V. Plyter, Director of Computing Services. SUNY Brockport.
To: Richard Reitem
In ink; one page. Draft letter with corrections. Enclosure: petitions – 2 pages with 35 signatures.

From: Richard Reitem
To: Richard L. Adams
Typescript; one page. April 6, 1971.

From: Mrs. Florence M. Kesealy
To: Richard Reitem
In ink; 2 pages. April 6, 1971.

From: Stephen May, Mayor for the City of Rochester, New York
To: Richard Reitem
Typescript; one page. April 7, 1971.

From: Mrs. Eleanor Herrick
To: Richard Reitem
In ink; 2 pages. April 7, 1971.

From: Edward J. Sloan, Langie Fuel Service Inc.
To: S.T.O.P.
Typescript; one page. April 12, 1971.

From: Robert E. Bacon
To: Richard Reitem
In ink; 2 pages. April 20, 1971.

From: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester

To: Mr. R. James Cromwell
Typescript; one page. April 21, 1971.

From: Dr. Robert L. Sproull, President of University of Rochester
To: Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Johnson
Typescript; one page. April 21, 1971.
Enclosure; "Background information on the Eastman Theatre Organ." Typescript;
2 pages. Written by George M. Angle, vice president for business affairs. April
20, 1971.

From: Samuel Jones
To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; one page. April 23, 1971.

From: D.A. Gaudion
To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; one page. April 27, 1971.

From: Gladys
To: Dick [Richard Reisem]
Typescript; one page. May 3, 1971.
Enclosure: The University of Rochester Senate Minutes of the Meeting of April 5,
1971. Typescript; 2 pages.

From: Paul [R. Heaney]
To: Dick [Richard Reisem]
In ink; one page. [undated]
Enclosure: Albert F. Robinson "The tragic end of a Standbridge." *The Tracker*.
Number 1, Volume XIV (Fall 1969). Two pages.

From: Richard Reisem
To: D. E. Suter, Eastman Kodak Company
Typescript; one page. June 2, 1971.

From: Doug C. Crocker, Eastman Kodak Company
To: Richard Reisem
Typescript; one page. June 16, 1971.
Enclosures: Chester, Lewis. "Mr. Clarke pulls out all the stops but fails to save
the mighty organ." *Sunday London Times*. March 7, 1971. One page.
Chester, Lewis. "Organ stays at home." *Sunday London Times*. March 14, 1971.
One page.

From: Paul R. Heaney
Letters to the editor, *The Tracker*
Typescript; one page. 1971: page 26.

From: Doug C. Crocker, Eastman Kodak Company
To: Richard Reism
Typescript; one page. November 9, 1971.

The Austin Organ in the Eastman Theatre Rochester, NY. Pamphlet. Austin Organ Company Hartford, Conn. 8 pages.

Diagram of theatre layout with organ. Includes dimensions. In pencil; one page.

Pikrone, Mary Anne. "Way to Save an organ is to organ-ize." *The Times-Union (Rochester, NY)*. 1971.

Hanson, Dr. Howard. "Renovation Problem: Three White Elephants." *The Times-Union (Rochester, NY)*. March 29, 1971.

Price, Theodore. "Eastman Organ to face wreckers." *(Rochester, NY)*. April 6, 1971.

LaChiusa, R.E. "Save the organ at Eastman Theater." *The Times-Union*. April 6, 1971.

Forster, Mr. and Mrs. Robert. "Organ Worth more than cost of repair." *The Times-Union*. April 12, 1971.

On same page:

Welsh, Helen. "Organ Worth more than cost of repair." *The Times-Union*. April 12, 1971.

"Save the Organ, please!" flier. Typescript; one page.

Testimonials in support of organ:

Rochester Post Express – August 26, 1922. Typescript; one page.

Rochester "The Pictureplay News" – August 26, 1922. Typescript; one page.

G.E. to Mr. Robert J. Jessup, Salt Lake City, UT. December 23, 1920. Typescript; one page.

"Our fourth season." From Eastman Theatre program. Reproduction. 1925.

Notes from interview with Dr. Howard Hanson. In ink; one page.

Contact list. Typescript with notes in ink. 2 pages.

List of contacts for meeting on March 29, 1971. In ink; one page.

First Bible Baptist Church pamphlet. Rochester, NY.

Series 2: Skinner organ – George Eastman House

Box 1 [cont.]

Folder 5 Letter.

From: Paul R. Hearney, c.c. Richard Reisem

To: Mr. Van Daren Coke, Deputy Director George Eastman House of
Photography.

April 17, 1971. Typescript; 2 pages. Includes 3 separate plans for sealing off the
air passages of the organ in accordance with fire regulations.