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**ACADEMY OF MUSIC COLLECTION**

The collection includes a copy of the book, *Academy of Music, Lynchburg, Virginia: The Golden Age of Live Performance*, by James M. Elson. The collection also includes a final draft-mockup of the proposed book, articles, photographs and photographic slides of the proposed renovation of the Academy and of various actors and musicians who performed there. Also included is information from the Academy of Music, Inc., and information on the Liberty University Academy of Music. Log books listing events at the Academy from 1905 until 1958, as well as other local and national events that had some bearing on what was happening at the Academy are included.

- BOX 1**
- 1-1 *Academy of Music, Lynchburg, Virginia: The Golden Age of Live Performance* (published by Lynchburg Historical Foundation, 1993)
  - 1-2 Academy of Music, Inc. – Articles of Incorporation
  - 1-3 Academy of Music, Inc. – Minutes (1984-1985)
  - 1-4 Academy of Music – Proposals & Feasibility Study (1984-1985)
  - 1-5 Liberty University Academy of Music
  - 1-6 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Contents, Dedication
  - 1-7 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter one
  - 1-8 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter two
  - 1-9 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter three
  - 1-10 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter four
  - 1-11 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter five
  - 1-12 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter six
  - 1-13 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter seven
  - 1-14 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Chapter eight
  - 1-15 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Miss Emma Adams, Impresario
  - 1-16 Draft Mock-up (1988) – Notes, Chronology, Bibliography, Programs
  - 1-17 Photographs (p. 1-19)
  - 1-18 Photographs (p. 20-50)
  - 1-19 Photographs Unused and Photo Negatives
  - 1-20 Article – Emma Adams “She brought music’s immortals to Lynchburg”  
*Lynch’s Ferry*, Fall-Winter 1990-91 (p. 4-7, cover)
  - 1-21 Academy of Music “The Grand Preview” 2001-2002 season.
  - 1-22 Article – “The Academy of Music Theatre on the Eve of its Centennial” –  
*Lynch’s Ferry*, Fall-Winter 2004-05 (p. 4-12)
  - 1-23 Miscellaneous correspondence and speeches
- BOX 2**      Photographic slides (approximately 125 slides)
- BOX 3**      Log books (six original log books and two copies of log books 1905-1958)

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**ACADEMY OF MUSIC, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA**

The Academy of Music in Lynchburg, Virginia, opened on 1 February 1905. The earlier Opera House, "Lynchburg's principal venue for entertainment since 1879," had been changed into commercial space and there was no suitable place to have concerts and theater performances. The new theater was built "in less than six months," and was designed by architects Edward G. Frye and Aubrey Chesterman of Lynchburg.

The Academy of Music suffered a disastrous fire on 20 April 1911. The building was rebuilt and performances continued until 1928 when the building was converted to the showing of sound movies.

When it reopened in 1929, the Academy was noted for its array of sound motion pictures. When the Paramount Theater opened nearby in 1930, the Academy "at once became a second-class theatrical citizen." Live performances were still held in the Academy, but these were primarily dance revues and minstrel shows. The Academy was closed in 1958.

An organization of concerned citizens, interested in preserving the building for its architectural value, was formed as Academy, Inc., and purchased the building. Although full renovation was not achieved, the group did make a number of improvements.

In 1985, the Academy of Music was deeded to Liberty University for use as a musical and theater center for the university. In 1993, a storm destroyed a portion of the stage area and the building renovation was halted. Due to debt restructuring at the university, money for the renovation was halted. The University announced that it would return the building to Academy, Inc. A new renovation plan was instituted with an estimated cost of about \$15 million. In 2003, Academy, Inc., was merged with the Lynchburg Fine Arts Center to become the Academy of Fine Arts, Inc. The goal of the renovation was to have the Academy opened by its centennial, 2005. With the inevitable delays, renovation was completed in December 2018.

["About the Author," James M. Elson, *Academy of Music, Lynchburg, Virginia: The Golden Age of Live Performance* (Lynchburg: Lynchburg Historical Foundation, 1993), p. 52.; James M. Elson, *The Academy of Music Theatre on the Eve of its Centennial* (Lynchburg: Lynch's Ferry, Fall-Winter 2004-2005, p. 4-12)]

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**JAMES M. ELSON**

Born in New York City, James M. Elson grew up in Tennessee. He was graduated from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and also holds a Master's Degree in Music from the Julliard School in New York and a doctorate in vocal and choral music from West Virginia University. In 1984, he became the executive director for the Academy of Music renovation project. In 1988, he became executive vice president of the Red Hill Patrick Henry National Memorial in Charlotte County, Virginia. The Lynchburg Historical Foundation published his book, *Academy of Music, Lynchburg, Virginia: The Golden Age of Live Performance*, in 1993.

Dr. Elson retired as executive vice-president emeritus from Red Hill in 2000 and became editor of *Lynch's Ferry*, a magazine of local history, published in Lynchburg. He has written numerous articles for the publication. In 2004, he completed and published a volume of Lynchburg history, *Lynchburg, Virginia, the First Two Hundred Years 1786-1986*.

["About the Author," James M. Elson, *Academy of Music, Lynchburg, Virginia: The Golden Age of Live Performance* (Lynchburg: Lynchburg Historical Foundation, 1993), p. 52]

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**[Detailed finding guide available with the collection.]**