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Summary Information

Repository: M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Title: Albany County Civic Center Collection
ID: apap004
Date [inclusive]: 1984-1988
Physical Description: 0.75 cubic ft.
Physical Location: The materials are located on site in the department.
Language of the Material: English
Abstract: The Albany County Civic Center Collection documents the policy decisions that went into planning an arena in downtown Albany. Originally named the Knickerbocker Arena, it was later known as the Pepsi Arena and the Times Union Center.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Albany County Civic Center Collection, 1984-1988. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as Albany County Civic Center Collection).

Organizational Sketch

The Albany County Civic Center planning began in the mid-1980s. The building was designed by Crozier Associates, the structural engineering was done by Clough Harbour and Associates and was built by Beltrone/MLB. It cost $69.4 million to construct. The building began on February 5, 1987 and took three years to complete. It was named the Knickerbocker Arena and opened on January 30, 1990, with a performance by Frank Sinatra. The arena can hold from 6,000 to 17,500. It also has 25 luxury suites with television access, refrigerator, private bathrooms, and 16 private seats. The arena is considered one of the largest in the United States regarding the size of the city that it is located inside.
The Albany County Civic Center has changed names from its original opening in 1990. It was the Knickerbocker Arena from 1990 to 1997. The naming rights were then sold and changed to the Pepsi Arena from 1997 to 2006. The name changed again in 2006 to the Times Union Center, which it remains today. The name Times Union is also the name of a regional newspaper based in Albany.

In 2010 the New Jersey Devils' franchised location changed to the Times Union Center (it later relocated). The franchise gifted the arena a new scoreboard, LED ribbons, and new outside lighting. It also upgraded the home team locker room. The arena was also renovated in 2010, at a total cost of $1.6 million.

The Times Union Center has had a plethora of artists play in the arena over the years. These artists include the Grateful Dead, Metallica, Aerosmith, Billy Joel, Elton John, Bruce Springsteen, Rolling Stones, Justin Timberlake, John Mayer, Demi Lovato, and Celine Dion. The arena also holds many sporting games and competitions, such as basketball and hockey. It also holds sporting events for colleges and high schools. WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) has also had many events held at the arena. In August 2019, the Times Union Center held a women's sports competition called the Aurora Games. The games were held from August 20-25 and showcased events like basketball, hockey, volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, and figure skating.

Scope and Contents

The Albany County Civic Center Collection is an artificial collection assembled by the Department of Special Collections and Archives to document the policy decisions that went into planning what became the Knickerbocker Arena (later known as the Pepsi Arena and the Times Union Center). Most of the material in this collection was acquired from the Albany County Planning Department. A few items were acquired from other sources: The "Draft Environmental Impact Statement" of January 1985 was already in the possession of the archives; and the "Report from the County Improvements Committee," "Athletic Facilities Improvement Plan" and "Albany Civic Center" were duplicates retrieved from the records of the Office of University Advancement, the University at Albany, SUNY. The items in this collection are organized chronologically to facilitate a reading of the development of the civic center project.

The earliest item in this collection is a "financial and economic analysis for a multiuse civic center in Albany County, New York" prepared by Albany County's Improvements Committee. This report is followed by early proposals for a civic center, including those from the University at Albany, which wanted to cooperate with the county government to plan a civic center that could be used by the university and the community as a whole.

Included in this collection is a report from 1984 commissioned by the New York State Urban Development Corporation and entitled "Capital District Civic Center--Sports Arena Study--Final Report." This report was finished the year after Albany County Executive James J. Coyne appointed the
Albany County Civic Center Commission to study proposals for a civic center. The report examined the feasibility of having a civic center in the Capital Region and evaluated a number of possible sites.

The collection also includes a number of environmental reports (interim, draft and final, 1984-1985) submitted to Albany County. These reports studied the previously recommended site, east of the Empire State Plaza, and reported on the environmental impact the civic center would have on the region. Different site layouts were examined as well as related problems, such as increased traffic and noise.

At the end of the collection are a few smaller items, including a 1985 market analysis for a proposed 400-room hotel to be located in the southwest quadrant of the civic center site. This proposed hotel would accommodate government and commercial clientele, as well as people attending conventions and other events at the civic center. There are individual Historic American Buildings Surveys, from 1985, for each building that would be demolished to clear way for the construction of the civic center. These surveys, which included photocopied photographs and descriptions of the buildings, were carried out to ensure that none of the buildings were of sufficient historical or architectural value to warrant their rescue. The final item in the collection is a 1988 flyer put out by Albany County announcing the ongoing construction of the civic center, its attributes and its planned developments (including a convention hotel, an additional exhibition hall, and retail and commercial office space). The Knickerbocker Arena was completed in late 1989.

There are no problems of conservation in this collection besides the acidity of the paper. The material in the folders entitled "The Capital District Civic Center--Sports Arena Study--Final Report" and "Interim Environmental Report" have already been photocopied onto acid-free paper.

Parts of this collection are officially stored by three agencies. The Albany County Hall of Records holds the environmental impact statements, the New York State Archives holds the Historical American Buildings Surveys, and the University at Albany holds copies of its own proposals for the civic center.

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**Arrangement of the Collection**

The collection is organized chronologically. There are no series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement
M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description
Encoded in EAD by Eric R. Buist 2014

Processing Information
Processed in 1990 August 3 by Geoffrey A. Huth.

Access
Access to these records is unrestricted.

Copyright
The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

Acquisition Information
All items in this manuscript group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by the Albany County Planning Department on 24 February 1989. The items that were transferred were duplicates from the planning department; otherwise, photocopies were made by the archives.

Controlled Access Headings
- Albany, New York
- Social Activists and Public Advocates
- Conservation and the Environment
- Athletics and Sports
- Architecture
- Civic Centers
- New York (State)
- Reports
- Proposals
- Summaries
- Environmental Impact Statements
- Analysis
- Surveys
- Fliers
- ALBANY COUNTY CIVIC CENTER

## Collection Inventory

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Interim Environmental Report, October 1984
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<td>Final Environmental Impact Statement, May 1985</td>
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<td>Market Analysis and Financial Projections for a Proposed 400-Room Hotel, Albany, New York, May 1985</td>
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<td>Historic American Buildings Surveys, 1986</td>
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