

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Kenmore Hotel Entertainment Records, 1922-1932

Summary Information

Repository

Albany Institute of History & Art Library

Title

Kenmore Hotel Entertainment Records, 1922-1932

Identifier

HQ 81-12

Date

1922-1932

Physical Description

1 ½ Hollinger box

Physical Location

The materials are located onsite in the Museum.

Language of the Material

English

Abstract

The Kenmore Hotel was built in 1878 by Adam Blake, Jr. (born 1830). Blake was the son of Adam Blake, Sr., a gentleman enslaved by Stephen Van Rensselaer III until 1811. Blake's hotel was a success, and he managed it until his death in 1881. His widow, Catherine, then managed the hotel until selling the business in 1887.

In the 1940s, the Kenmore Hotel became famous for its nightclub, the Rain-bo Room, where jazz greats such as Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway once played, and gangster "Legs" Diamond was a frequent visitor.

The Kenmore Hotel building was renovated into an office building in 1986; its primary tenant being the Healthcare Association of New York State. In 2019, the building was renovated into elegant apartments.

This collection contains correspondence, clippings, and advertisements related to the entertainment provided by the Kenmore Hotel.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession: #HQ81-12

Accession Source/Date: Gift of Richard M. Cohen, May 1981

Processing Information

Processed by R. Luedtke, April 2011. Finding aid updated by H. Cox, September 2020.

Biographical/Historical

The Kenmore Hotel was built at 74 North Pearl Street, in Albany, New York, in 1878. It was the culmination of a lifelong dream for Adam Blake, Jr., (1830-1881) whose father, Adam Blake, Sr. (1773-1864), had been enslaved by Stephen Van Rensselaer III until 1811.

Following Blake's death in 1881, his widow, Catherine Benjamin Blake (1841-1931) managed the hotel until she sold it in 1887.

The Kenmore Hotel became famous for its Rain-Bo Room, a nightclub in the hotel. Jazz singers such as Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway performed there. Gangster Jack "Legs" Diamond (1897-1931) was a frequent visitor as well.

The building was turned into office spaces in 1986, with the Healthcare Association of New York State as its major tenant until 1999. After changing hands a few more times, in 2019 the Kenmore Hotel was converted into luxury apartments.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists primarily of correspondence relating to the entertainment provided by the Kenmore Hotel, with some clippings, advertisements, and telegrams included as well.

Contents List

The following section contains a listing of the materials in the collection.

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