

Guide to the Clinton House Collection

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

During the nineteenth century, the Clinton House was described as one of the finest hotels west of the Hudson River. Beginning in 1828, the historic building was constructed at the corner of Cayuga and Seneca streets, in the then-modern Greek Revival style. Its five stories, including basement and attics, cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000 to build, and its grandeur attracted all manner of travelers and guests, from presidents, senators, and movie stars to professors and students. As Ithaca's grand hotel, the Clinton House hosted balls, weddings, luncheons, and a variety of parties and events over the years, functioning as a hub for society and business.

The Clinton House weathered partial destruction and underwent restoration several times during its lifetime. An update in 1872 by William H. Miller, one of Cornell University's finest architectural minds, resulted in the addition of a French mansard roof, a 20-ft observation cupola, and a new Palladian window, as well as two more floors. Advances in technology towards the end of the nineteenth century brought steam heating and an elevator to the Clinton House in 1890. When a disastrous fire broke out in 1901, destroying the hotel's third and fourth floors, it was restored by Clinton L. Vivian to its original 1828 style.

By the late twentieth century, the Clinton House faced being torn down to make way for new construction. However, the building was so loved by Ithacans, that the community came together to preserve the hotel and find a modern use for the space. As a result of historical preservation and fundraising campaigns, the Clinton House was updated and repainted in the 1970s, and has been used as a space for offices and schools. It even housed the Dewitt Historical Society for a period of time. Today, the Clinton House is regarded as Ithaca's most important landmark of historic and architectural significance.

The first box in this collection contains materials including historical notes and timelines, a manuscript for a published historical account of the Clinton House, property deeds from 1827 - circa 1911, memorabilia, a register page from 1855, restoration information, publications, and news clippings. The second box contains a historical rehabilitation analysis from 1964, a report from 1948, and an account book from 1897-1898.

CONTAINER LIST

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