



OBJECT ID	F2014.29
OBJECT NAME	Photograph
MEDIUM	Ink
MATERIAL	Metal; Wood
OBJECT ENTITIES	Phillips, David (collected by) Phillips, David (is related to)
RELATED ITEMS	Photograph, F2014.28 Photograph, F2014.30 Photograph, F2022.2 Photograph, F2022.3
ACCESS POINTS	architecture ballroom historical photograph photography theater Wood

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

Mounted photograph of the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago, IL. Image is screened onto a black wooden box frame with a metal wire on the back for hanging. The image depicts the street corner where the theater sits, showcasing the grand architecture of the building. The large vertical sign reading "Aragon" is also visible on the left side of the image

ORIGIN

The David R Phillips Collection is one of the world's largest private archives of historically important photographs. This collection of historical Chicago photographs contains more than 2,000 unique Chicago images from the 1860s to the 1970s. Unlike other collections, each of these photos are taken from the original glass or film negatives. Each of these unique and artistic views were taken by the period's finest photographers. The collection consists of old and rare black and white Chicago images illustrating the city's street scenes and marvelous architecture.

The Aragon Ballroom is located on West Lawrence Avenue, approximately 5 miles north of downtown, in the Uptown neighborhood. Construction was completed in 1926. The Aragon was designed in the Moorish architectural style, with the interior resembling a Spanish village. Named for an autonomous community of Spain, the Aragon was an immediate success and remained a popular Chicago attraction throughout the 1940s. The Aragon's proximity to the Chicago 'L' train provided patrons with easy access, and often crowds in excess of 18,000 would attend during each six-day business week.

A fire at an adjacent cocktail lounge in 1958 forced the Aragon to close for several months. After the reopening, crowds declined significantly, to the point that regular dancing ended in 1964. A succession of new owners used the Aragon as a roller skating rink, a boxing venue, and a discothèque, (the Cheetah, a spin-off of the New York disco) among other uses. There were also occasional efforts to revive it as a traditional ballroom.



The Aragon hosted nearly all of the top names of the big band era. During the 1970s, the Aragon was home to so-called "monster rock" shows; which were marathons of rock and roll acts often lasting six hours or more. The shows gained a reputation for attracting a tough crowd, leading to the nickname, "the Aragon Brawlroom."

Currently, the building operates under the name Aragon Entertainment Center, and continues to host events and concerts.

CITATION

Photograph, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://hellenic.whirlihost.com/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/10/24.
