Cleveland Play House was founded in 1915. Billed as the nation’s first regional theater, it survived two world wars, the rise and fall of the city’s industrial might and the invention of alternate forms of entertainment, including radio, television and the Internet.

The history of the venerable theater, and with it the cultural and economic ups and down of the region and the nation, is chronicled in a trove of archival materials recently granted to Case Western Reserve University.

Archival experts at the university, which has long been a partner of the theater, are daily encountering new gems from the more than 1,000 boxes in the collection, including letters from Tennessee Williams and George Bernard Shaw; original programs and posters; set and costume designs; photographs of famed performances and actors; and much more. Staff members at the Kelvin Smith Library are working tirelessly to uncover, identify, restore and catalogue the treasures in this special collection.

Think was offered a sneak peak at some of what has been found thus far, and more is being uncovered every day. University archivist Jill Tatem is posting images and information about new pieces as they become known. Follow her progress at bit.ly/GRdbJS.

Model and details of the set design for Picasso at the Lapin Agile, a play about an encounter between Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso, performed at the Play House during the 1989–90 season.

A pamphlet describes the cooperation between the theater and the university, announcing courses offered to Case Western Reserve students in 1932; a program credits a cast of Case Western Reserve students in a production of The Importance of Being Earnest.
A model shows stage details from the 1993 production of *The House of Blue Leaves*.

Posters publicize upcoming productions during the 1922–23 season.

Renderings and fabric samples show costume designs for the character Enrico Caruso in *Bravo, Caruso!* from the 1990–91 season.

Sketches and descriptions of costumes show several characters in *Say Zebra*, a play about a woman searching for her missing friend in Johannesburg, South Africa, presented at the Play House in February 1991 as part of its Festival of African Arts and Issues.

A booklet from 1915 announces the founding of the Play House, describing the founders’ goals and plans; an invitation welcomes audiences to attend one of the theater’s earliest performances.

A model shows stage details from the 1993 production of *The House of Blue Leaves*.
A set design model shows a lone actor. A poster for a performance of *Liliom* (1938–39). It was the basis for the musical *Carousel*.

The Play House has played host to some influential performers, including (clockwise from top left) Jose Ferrer, Henry Fonda, Margaret Hamilton and Paul Newman.