In its 23rd year of existence, the Center for Popular Music continues to have strong impact on both the MTSU community and the world beyond the university’s boundaries. The Center’s library and archive grows every year and serves as a valued research resource for scholars at MTSU and across the country. Members of the Center’s staff are increasingly called upon to work with MTSU’s teaching faculty to lend their expertise in order to enhance regular classroom teaching in several departments and schools. Public programs, including concerts, lectures, exhibits, and scholarly conferences, carry the Center’s work to the general public. Center staff members maintain an active schedule of publications and presentations that contribute to scholarship and enrich the public. Field recording projects document important regional musical traditions and generate key new materials for the Center’s archive. Center staff members are frequently called upon to provide expert opinion and commentary for the news media and for professional colleagues.

More than 150 people from fifteen states gathered on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro on the first weekend in April for the first-ever academic conference devoted to the southern gospel convention-singing tradition. Convention singing has been an important aspect of southern musical culture for well over a century, but remains little studied and understood by the scholarly community.

In the convention-singing tradition, people throughout the South gather at monthly or annual conventions to sing...
The Brock McGuire Band
“Irish Traditional Music in America – The Golden Era”

On February 25, as part of its mission to promote knowledge of the diversity of American musical culture, the Center, in collaboration with the Distinguished Lecture Committee at MTSU, presented a lecture and concert devoted to Irish and Irish-American music. The Brock McGuire Band from Ireland played to a nearly full house in the State Farm Lecture Hall of MTSU’s Business and Aerospace Building. Leaders of the band, button accordionist Paul Brock and fiddler Manus McGuire, are two of Ireland’s most celebrated traditional musicians. The band has been recognized as “Instrumental Group of the Year” by the Irish American News and LiveIreland.com.

In addition to being one of Ireland’s leading accordion players Paul Brock is also a scholar of the early history of recorded Irish-American music. As a second component to the program, Brock shared his research with an audience of MTSU students and faculty members in a lecture, “Irish Traditional Music in America: The Golden Era.” Brock and his band mates illustrated the lecture with live performances of musical examples.

Members of the Brock McGuire Band had the rare opportunity to record their music on wax cylinder—the same medium in which many of their musical heroes committed their music to posterity.

“It was an amazing experience to have had the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the early cylinder recording artists,” said accordionist and scholar Paul Brock.

American Music Month Exhibit

In order to jointly mark Archives Month (October) and American Music Month (November), Lucinda Cockrell mounted a small exhibit of CPM materials for display in the ground floor lobby of MTSU’s Walker Library. The exhibit provided an opportunity to showcase the diversity of materials in the Center’s collection for the MTSU community.
‘Farther Along’ continued from page 1

gospel songs from small books printed in seven-shape musical notation. The conventions and the singing schools where people go to learn to sight-read the notation and acquire basic repertoire are the modern manifestation of practices that have their roots in 18th century New England, and that underwent a process of evolution in the South in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This amateur tradition is the fertile ground from which has come many well-known songs, and from which has emerged the world of professional southern gospel. Many convention songs have been absorbed into other genres, such as country, bluegrass, and African-American gospel.

Planning for the “Farther Along” conference began in the fall of 2006. Songbooks and other materials relating to the convention-singing tradition have always been a key part of the Center’s collections. Musicologist Stephen Shearon of the MTSU School of Music has been engaged actively in fieldwork with the tradition in the past several years, and hosting a conference emerged as a natural way to build on both his field research and the Center’s focus on the genre. Prof. Shearon, together with Center director Paul F. Wells, and CPM Librarian Grover Baker formed the program committee for the conference. Kym Stricklin, Executive Aide at the Center, served as Conference Coordinator. Christi Underdown and Lucinda Cockrell of the CPM staff prepared a small exhibit of materials from the Center’s collection for display during the conference. Items that related to the topics of conference presentations were featured. Audio specialist Martin Fisher recorded the proceedings for the Center’s archive and also ran sound.

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Civil War Music Exhibits at Stones River National Battlefield

In 2005 the Center entered into a partnership with the National Park Service and Stones River National Battlefield to mount a series of exhibits of items from the Center’s collections that illustrate different aspects of music of the Civil War. The original agreement was for a series of four exhibits: “The Local Connection”; “Songs for the Crisis”; “Reunions and Remembrance” and “Harmony and Discord.” The last of these was on display at the Visitors Center at Stones River National Battlefield from autumn 2007 until the summer of 2008. Lucinda Cockrell, the Center’s Coordinator of Research Collections, curated the exhibits, with assistance from Graduate Assistant Betsy Snowden and Director Paul F. Wells, as well as SRNB personnel.

With annual visitation at the Battlefield on the order of 200,000 people, the exhibits have been a wonderful means of sharing the Center’s archival resources with members of the general public.

The series has been so popular with visitors that Park Service personnel have asked the Center to continue the exhibits on an ongoing basis, mounting one or two a year.
Papers and presentations were given on a wide range of topics. There were sessions devoted to publishing, song histories, research resources, and community and family traditions, among others. Middle Tennessee has figured strongly in the history of convention singing and papers devoted to gospel music in Overton County on the Cumberland Plateau, and on the R.E. Winsett family publishing company of Dayton, Tennessee, brought a regional focus to the conference.

One notable aspect of the audience at the “Farther Along” conference is that practitioners from within the tradition outnumbered the academics more than two to one. There were numerous people who had a foot in both camps, further blurring the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Attendees came from all states in the southeast, as well as from Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, and New Jersey. Nine singing schools were represented, as were all five of the publishers who are currently issuing new convention books.

Response to the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Many attendees wrote to express their delight with the event [See sidebar for a selection of comments]. A conference summary posted on the ‘Very Fine Line’ blog maintained by presenter Douglas Harrison of Florida Gulf Coast University attracted an extensive round of comments. Follow-up articles appeared in the Bulletin of the Society for American Music and in Breve Notes, the newsletter of the Southeastern Music Library Association.

The conference integrated all aspects of the Center’s work. It provided an opportunity to stimulate and present the results of scholarship in a key area of regional music, it generated and attracted new materials for the CPM archives, it served as a showcase for the Center’s collections, and brought new researchers to the Center.

It is hoped that the momentum generated by the “Farther Along” conference will result in additional scholarly attention being given to this important genre of southern music. More importantly, it is hoped that the conference will stimulate interest from within the convention singing world in maintaining the health of the tradition.

The key item on display in the exhibit of CPM materials was the large (3’ x 8’), hand-drawn pedagogical chart created in 1937 by R. W. Ledbetter of Livingston, Tennessee.
Volunteer Voices—Providing online access to Tennessee’s rich culture and history

The Center participates actively in Volunteer Voices, the statewide digitization program to create a publicly accessible online database of primary source items that document the rich history and culture of Tennessee. Our collections of music from and about Tennessee, in combination with the expertise of our staff, allow the Center to uniquely support MTSU’s role as a partner institution in the project.

Grover Baker, CPM Librarian, is spearheading the Center’s involvement. He is a member of the Volunteer Voices Advisory Board, and participates in the quarterly general meetings. As the unofficial sheet music expert for Volunteer Voices, he helped the project director, Tiffani Conner, establish policies for creating and processing the digital images for sheet music and other musical scores.

In his role as a content creator for Volunteer Voices, Baker created a collection of digitized images of sheet music inspired by the John T. Scopes “monkey” trial. This material was included in the initial release of the Volunteer Voices database in June 2007. Baker presented a paper on his work with this project, “Money Bizness (Down in Tennessee),” at the 2006 annual meeting of the Southeast Music Library Association. Baker’s paper subsequently was a winner in the “Best of Chapter” competition of the national Music Library Association, and he presented it at the MLA meeting in February 2008, and has been published in the Music Reference Services Quarterly. Baker also presented a lecture on the topic at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The Center’s second major contribution to Volunteer Voices was the delivery of several hundred digital images of Tennessee-related sheet music from its collections. These were scanned by project staff under Baker’s direction. To date the Center has contributed approximately 750 images to Volunteer Voices.

Baker remains on the project’s advisory board where he participates in discussions about the sustainability of the project beyond its initial grant period. The Center and its staff are poised to take a leading role by contributing content, providing advice, and participating in discussions of associated issues.

"Money Bizness (Down in Tennessee)" was selected "Best of Chapter" by SEMLA and presented at the MLA national meeting in February 2008.

The Volunteer Voices materials may be seen on the Internet at www.volunteervoices.org.
One visiting scholar, Kevin Kehrberg, wrote of his positive experience conducting research:

"The CPM is one of the few institutions realizing the importance of this greatly understudied area of American music... and they are doing an exemplary job."

Library and Archive

The core of the Center’s operation is its outstanding library and archive of research materials that document music as an aspect of American culture and commerce. These materials encompass a broad range of media including sound recordings, printed music, photographs, trade catalogs, posters, concert programs, song broadsides, and a comprehensive library of books & periodicals about popular music. The strength and accessibility of this library and archive is the Center’s primary contribution to research and scholarship.

Apart from the Director and Executive Aide, the Center’s staff consists of librarians and archivists whose energies are devoted to managing all aspects of the Center’s collections. Current staff members include Lucinda Cockrell (Coordinator of Research Collections and Archivist), Grover Baker (Librarian), Martin Fisher (Manager of Recorded Media Collections), Christi Underdown (Cataloging Assistant, part-time), and Amy Hunsberger (Serials Manager, part-time). They procure and process new materials, provide reference service, and curate the physical care of the collections, which presently consist of approximately 300,000 catalogable items.

Since its inception the Center has served over 40,000 researchers. MTSU students and faculty form the largest group of patrons, but in keeping with the Center’s mission to support research and scholarship, its collections are open to all researchers. Within the campus community, use is heaviest by the colleges of Mass Communications (62%) and Liberal Arts (25%).

The Center also serves researchers from across the nation and from foreign countries. During the past year Center staff responded to requests from thirty states and the District of Columbia, and from countries as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Service is provided to many off-campus researchers via telephone, mail, or the Internet, but scholars doing in-depth research come to MTSU to do hands-on work in the Center’s Reading Room. In the past year the Center has worked with scholars from the University of Kentucky, the University of Limerick in Ireland, the University of Alaska, Florida State University, and the German Historical Institute, to name just a few. Several of these scholars were conducting research for doctoral dissertations, while others were writing conference papers, preparing public lectures, or seeking information to annotate sound recordings.

continued on page 8
## CPM Use Statistics 2007-2008

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### TOTAL # OF PATRONS 1179

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<td>Trade Catalogs</td>
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### RESEARCH REQUESTS FROM 6 FOREIGN COUNTRIES:

- Australia
- Netherlands
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Ireland
- United Kingdom

### RESEARCH REQUESTS FROM 30 STATES:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin
CPM Impact on MTSU continued from page 6

Teaching

The Center’s impact on MTSU’s teaching programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels continues to grow. Members of the Music faculty have developed new courses and seminars that specifically make use of Center resources. These include American Music; Music and Music Cultures in American Protestantism; Women in Music; and History of Gospel Music.

Center staff members are heavily involved with the Public History graduate program. Director Paul F. Wells serves on the admissions committee for the Ph.D. program in Public History, while Coordinator/Archivist Lucinda Cockrell serves as a mentor for graduate assistants drawn from the M.A. program. Graduate assistant Betsy Snowden worked closely with Ms. Cockrell for two years, gaining extensive training and experience in all aspects of archival work, including collection description, cataloging, and reference work. She also had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience preparing the exhibits of Civil War music for the Stones River National Battlefield. Ms. Snowden wrote her M.A. thesis on the Center, and a paper drawn from this thesis was awarded a prize for the best student paper by the Society of American Archivists. She presented her work at the SAA national conference.

Ms. Cockrell also invested more than thirty hours working with students in the Introduction to Public History class. Eleven students each spent a three-hour session at the Center learning the basic principles of the archival profession through practical hands-on projects, including collection processing, preservation of materials, research, and basic cataloging.

University Service

Members of the Center staff participate actively in university affairs and programs. The staff assembled a display about the Center for MTSU’s Scholars’ Week in 2007, and for the past two years Grover Baker has mounted a CPM display at the university’s Department Fair that serves as part of the activities at the start of the new academic year. Paul Wells served on the search committee to hire a new director of the Albert Gore Sr. Research Center, and Wells and Baker provided input in the School of Music’s search for a new music librarian. In early 2008 Wells was one of the presenters on a workshop hosted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs regarding grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Audio specialist Martin Fisher provided consulting services to the staff of the Gore Center.
Collection Growth

The Center’s holdings are constantly expanding. New books and recordings are normally added as they are published, while out-of-print and antiquarian books, sheet music, playbills, photographs, and other items are obtained through a variety of dealers and individuals. Donations of valuable resources continue apace. The collections of the late Charles K. Wolfe, Emeritus Professor of English at MTSU and a prolific scholar of American music, continue to flow to the Center as the Wolfe family sorts and releases materials. The Center has also received a donation of over 1,000 LPs from Mr. Gene Jones of New York City. Mr. Jones is an actor who has had, and continues to have, an active career in musical theater. He previously donated personal papers and memorabilia from his career.

One of the most extraordinary recent additions to the Center’s collections is a large, hand-drawn chart used as a teaching tool in gospel singing schools by Mr. R. W. Ledbetter of Livingston, Tennessee in the 1930s.

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<td>57,795</td>
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</table>
CPM Impact Beyond MTSU

Expert Opinion/Consulting

Members of the Center’s staff are often called upon to lend their expertise to various projects undertaken by people outside MTSU.

CPM Director Paul F. Wells was interviewed at length by freelance writer Rick Petrycik, and subsequently quoted extensively, in an article on African-American string bands that appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of American Legacy: The Magazine of African-American History and Culture. He was also interviewed on-camera and makes an appearance in Uncle Dave Macon Days: A Tribute to Old-Time Music and Dance, a documentary DVD produced by Patriot Films of Murfreesboro.

In January 2008 Wells was invited to represent the Center at a meeting of the Sheet Music Consortium in Bloomington, Indiana. This consortium is a national initiative to provide online access to digital images of sheet music held in repositories throughout the country. Indiana, UCLA, Duke, and Johns Hopkins form the current membership of the consortium, and one purpose of the meeting was to explore the possibility of expanding the group to include other institutions.

In June, 2008, Wells traveled to Boston to serve as a consultant for a group developing plans for the establishment of a research center devoted to Irish-American music. He also acted as a pre-publication reviewer for book and article manuscripts for the University Press of Mississippi, the University of Tennessee Press, and the University of Illinois Press. In a similar vein, he provided input and advice for another documentary DVD, The Westphalia Waltz Story, being produced by Highland Studios of Los Gatos, California. He continues as a member of the editorial advisory board for the Journal of the Society for American Music.

Grover Baker and Lucinda Cockrell of the CPM library and archive staff hosted several groups of visitors who traveled to the Center for advice on various professional matters. These included Holling Smith-Bourne and other members of the staff of the music library at Vanderbilt University, as well as a group of people from the library at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, who sought advice regarding CPM’s gospel music holdings. Prof. Michael Birdwell of Tennessee Technological University brought a group of high school teachers involved in the Teaching American History project to the Center to give them the opportunity to see a functioning archive and introduce them to the protocols of doing research in an archive.

Cockrell and Baker also worked extensively with a group of people from local historical sites around the state who will be hosting “New Harmonies,” a traveling exhibit that is part of the Smithsonian Institution’s “Museum on Main Street” program. The exhibit focuses on Southern music and will travel to five locations in Tennessee in 2008, under the sponsorship of Humanities Tennessee. Local host institutions are responsible for supplementing the core content with material that pertains to local activities. Center staff has continued to provide material and assistance to local hosts throughout the course of the year. More information about the exhibit can be found at:

http://tn-humanities.org/community/exhibits/new_harmonies.php
Services to Others

Another important way in which the Center has impact on the world outside MTSU is through the reproduction of Center materials in exhibits, scholarly journals, books, and popular magazines. Some recent examples include:

- Grammy Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Campbell County (TN) Historical Society Museum/Library
- Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County
- *American Music* [journal]
- *American Legacy* [popular magazine]
- *Ethnic and Border Traditions*, Greenwood Press
- Time-Life Music CD sets

Credits to the Center when these materials are used help spread the reputation of both CPM and MTSU.

The Center’s audio lab continues to be in demand by outside clients for the specialized services that we can provide. Martin Fisher, Manager of Recorded Media, has extensive expertise in transferring and re-mastering all formats of audio materials. Under Fisher’s direction, the Center is presently involved in a partnership with the Center for Southern Folklore in Memphis to digitize large portions of their extensive audio archive, and is doing much transfer work for Cumberland Trails State Park.

Staff Research and Other Projects

Although most of the energies of the Center’s staff members are directed towards managing the library and archive, they are able to devote some time to original research. Director Paul F. Wells authored the chapter “Irish Music in America” in *Ethnic and Border Music*, published by Greenwood Press in late 2007. His work on an anthology of American fiddle tunes for the series “Music of the United States of America” continues. He also presented papers at several regional and national conferences.

Lucinda Cockrell collaborated with Wells on a presentation at the Tennessee Association of Museums. She was also an invited speaker in the James K. Polk Lecture Series at the Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee.

Grover Baker presented his work on sheet music relating to the Scopes “Monkey Trial” at the southeast regional chapter of the Music Library Association (SEMLA). It was chosen as one of the “Best of Chapter” papers and he was invited to present it again at the national meeting of the MLA. His paper was solicited for publication and subsequently appeared in *Music Reference Services Quarterly*.

Martin Fisher has pursued numerous field recording projects to document regional musical traditions. He collaborated with Prof. Stephen Shearon of the MTSU School of Music in recording people and events in the convention-singing tradition. These include recording “singings” in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, and New England, Georgia, as well as pianists Sue Gray (Rising Fawn, Georgia), Ruth Taylor Stewart (Clarkesville, Georgia) and Faye Jennings Thompson (Nashville, Tennessee). On his own, Fisher recorded music at the Reelfoot Lake Arts & Crafts Festival and a church singing at the Crossroad Baptist Church in Parsons, Tennessee.
Staff Professional Activities

Paul F. Wells, Director

Publications


Conference Papers/Invited Lectures


Lucinda P. Cockrell, Coordinator of Research Collections

Exhibits/Invited Lectures


Teaching American History Symposium. Developed middle school and high school history lesson plans based on song broadsides from the Kenneth S. Goldstein Collection at CPM. Stones River National Battlefield. Murfreesboro, TN. March 2007.


Professional Societies / Service

Society of American Archivists
Key contact representative for Tennessee Society of Tennessee Archivists
Secretary and Membership Chairman
Tennessee Regional History Day Judge, student competitions

Grover C. Baker, Librarian

Publications


Conference Papers/Invited Lectures


W. Martin Fisher, Manager of Recorded Media Collections

Professional Societies / Service

Association for Recorded Sound Collections
Advertising Manager
Canadian Antique Phonograph Society
Nashville Old Time String Band Association
Tennessee Folklife Society
Member, Board of Directors

Professional Societies / Service

Music Library Association
Member, Best of Chapters Committee
Member Reference Subcommittee of the Educational Outreach Program
Trainer, Educational Outreach Program
Southeast Chapter of the Music Library Association
Member, Executive Board (Member-at-Large, 2007-2009)
Chair, Program Committee, 2008 Annual Meeting
Organizer, “Music in Libraries: Just the Basics” preconference workshop
Trainer, Educational Outreach Program
American Library Association
Volunteer Voices
Member, Advisory Board
Institution Contact
Content Creator
Student Worker Supervisor