

**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN**

HERBERT SMITH MINSTREL COLLECTION

11-028

Creator:

Smith, Herbert S.

Type of Material:

Manuscripts, photographs and programs

Physical Description:

.834 linear feet of manuscripts, including scripts, song lyric sheets, manuscript sheet music, newspaper clippings, correspondence, 22 performance programs, 119 photographs and 34 color photographic slides

Dates:

1952-1962

RESTRICTIONS:

All materials in this collection are subject to standard national and international copyright laws. Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions for this material.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

This collection was donated to the Center by Mrs. Peggy Smith Duke of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the late Herbert Smith's daughter, in December 2011 and June 2012.

Subjects/Index Terms:

Subjects:

Minstrel music

American minstrelsy

Blackface minstrelsy

Ethiopian operas (Minstrel music)

Ethiopian songs (Minstrel music)

Minstrel songs

Minstrelsy, American

Minstrelsy, Blackface

Operas, Ethiopian (Minstrel music)

Songs, Ethiopian (Minstrel music)

Musical revues & comedies--1950-1960.

Popular music—United States—20th Century.

Names:

Smith, Herbert S.

Lions Club (Murfreesboro, Tennessee)

Biographical Sketch:

Herbert S. Smith was a pharmacist and lifelong resident of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was born on March 29, 1908 and died on February 22, 1988. Smith owned and operated the family business, A.L. Smith & Co. Drugs, until 1968. He was also very active in the community, serving on the Middle Tennessee State University Foundation Board of Trustees, the Evergreen Cemetery Board, the Murfreesboro Zoning Appeals Board, and as a 50-year monarch of the Lions Club. As a member of the Lions Club, Smith served as a voluntary writer, director and sometime performer in the Murfreesboro chapter's charity minstrel performances held in Murfreesboro Central High School's Auditorium throughout the 1950s.

Agency History

Chicago businessman Melvin Jones founded the Lions Club, a national and international volunteer organization, in 1917, with the idea that its members would work towards improving their communities. As of 2012, it is the largest service organization of its kind in the world, with 1.35 million members and more than 46,000 chapters. Some of the club's longtime causes and initiatives include eradicating blindness; working towards world peace; organizing youth programs and volunteer opportunities; and humanitarian projects like disaster relief. The Murfreesboro chapter was founded in 1933. Its clubhouse is currently located at 407 Hickerson Drive, adjacent to the historic site Cannonsburgh Village.

Scope and Content:

This collection primarily contains script materials prepared by Herbert Smith for the Murfreesboro Lions Club's charity blackface minstrelsy performances from 1952 to 1962. Although Mr. Smith often wrote the opening and closing songs for the minstrels himself; more often, he borrowed old minstrel and musical standards to use in the show, like Oscar Hammerstein II & Jerome Kern's "Ol' Man River." Scripts include lyric sheets for performers, Smith's handwritten songs, and sketches. Many include his handwritten notes and changes as well. Additionally, Smith exchanged script materials with other minstrel writers from voluntary organizations, especially within Tennessee. A number of their pieces are held in the collection, especially those written and compiled by Harry Bird, who resided in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The collection includes some supporting materials as well, particularly programs, color photographic slides, black and white prints, and a couple of newspaper articles and pieces of correspondence relating to Smith's shows. There are also programs from other Tennessee minstrel shows.

Series Description:

Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions’ Club

Half of the collection is comprised of the scripts and songs Herbert Smith wrote and compiled for the Murfreesboro Lions’ Club’s Minstrel shows.

Scripts – Drafts

These two folders contain handwritten and typed drafts of show sketches and songs. Other authors may have written some of them, as all pieces do not indicate an author.

Scripts – Gallatin Lions Club

Herbert Smith likely was involved in writing this script for the Gallatin, Tennessee branch of the Lions Club.

Scripts – Harry Bird

Harry Bird was a contemporary minstrel writer and director based out of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, who shared a considerable amount of his work with Smith.

Scripts – Other Authors

Mr. Smith also possessed a number of other pieces written by authors in both Tennessee and elsewhere, some of these are unnamed.

Programs – Murfreesboro Lions Club

This folder contains duplicates and photocopies of performance materials for Murfreesboro Lions Club minstrels. Other programs have been separated into the CPM performance collection. See list below.

Correspondence & Clippings

The supporting materials in this folder include two letter responses, one Christmas Party Program, three clippings commenting on the Murfreesboro Lions Club performances, and one clipping on Nancy Smith’s (Herbert Smith’s daughter) birthday gala.

Photographs & Slides

119 black and white photographs, including two of Jeannie Hollowell in Chorus Line costume from the 1953 and 1954 Murfreesboro Lions Club performances, and a series of 34 color slides from Murfreesboro Lions Club minstrel performances.

Collection Contents (Folder/Box List):

Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club: Box 1, Folders 1-8

Scripts – Drafts: Box 1, Folder 9 & Box 2, Folder 1

Scripts – Gallatin Lions Club: Box 2, Folder 2

Scripts – Harry Bird: Box 2, Folder 3

Scripts – Other Authors: Box 2, Folder 4

Programs – Murfreesboro Lions Club: Box 2, Folder 5

Correspondence & Clippings: Box 2, Folder 6

Photographs & Slides: Box 2, Folder 7

Box # Folder # Description

Box 1

Folder 1	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1952-1953
Folder 2	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1954
Folder 3	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1955
Folder 4	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1956
Folder 5	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1958
Folder 6	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1958
Folder 7	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1959
Folder 8	Scripts – Murfreesboro Lions Club, 1962
Folder 9	Scripts – Drafts

Box 2

Folder 1	Scripts – Drafts
Folder 2	Scripts – Gallatin Lions Club, 1962
Folder 3	Scripts – Harry Bird
Folder 4	Scripts – Other Authors
Folder 5	Programs – Murfreesboro Lions Club
Folder 6	Correspondence and Clippings
Folder 7	Photographs & Slides

Materials Cataloged Separately:

Performance Documents (Programs):

- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* June 5 & 6, 1952”
- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* March 26 & 27, 1953”
- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* April 13 & 14, 1956”
- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* April 18-19, 1958”
- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* May 1-2, 1959”
- “The Lions Club of Murfreesboro Presents *Old Time Minstrel* January 26-27, 1962”
- “Murfreesboro Lions Club Presents *Lions Minstrel* Directed by Mrs. Irene Morton” (no date)
- “Murfreesboro Lions Club Presents *Lions Charity Minstrel* Directed by Mrs. Martha Moore Swasey” (no date)
- “Gatlinburg Parent – Teachers Present *A Minstrel and Variety Show* March 14-15, 1952”
- “The Gallatin Lion’s Club Present *Their Seventh Annual Minstrel* Friday & Saturday, June 12th-13th, 1953”
- “8th Annual *Kiwanis Minstrel* Friday, April 24, 1953”
- “Murfreesboro Exchange Club Presents *Drifting Along* April 30 - May 1, 1953”

Location:

Manuscripts are located with other manuscript materials on the ground floor of the stacks filed by accession number. Performance documents have been separated from the manuscripts and catalogued in the appropriate InMagic database. When available, second copies of Murfreesboro Lions Club Minstrel programs have also been filed with the manuscripts.

Related Materials:

The Center for Popular Music has numerous holdings that relate to blackface minstrelsy from the 19th through mid-20th centuries, both primary and secondary. In addition to scholarly books, these items include posters, theatre playbills and programs, songsters and other song books, sheet music and song broadsides, photographs, trade catalogs, sound recordings, and manuscript collections containing minstrel-related items, such as scrapbooks.