

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

**WORK, JOHN WESLEY III (d. 1967)  
COLLECTION (Copies)**

**88-064  
89-096**

**Creator:**

**Type of Material:**

**Physical Description:**

1.25 linear feet including  
1 digital audio cassette (TCD-0061)  
15 10" analog reel to reel tapes (TTA-0060A/H. TTA-0061A/G)  
53 black and white photographs

**Dates:**

**Abstract (Descriptive Summary):**

**RESTRICTIONS:**

This collection may be used only with the permission of the Center director or audio specialist.

**Provenance and Acquisition Information:**

Copies made from instantaneous discs and photographs from the estate of John Wesley Work III and from field recordings housed in the Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Subject/Index Terms:**

**Agency History/Biographical Sketch:**

John Wesley Work III (d. 1967), son of John Work II, a professor of music at Fisk University and leader of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, received his musical training at Fisk, Columbia and Yale universities. From 1935 to 1942 Work, by then a professor of music at Fisk himself, collected black American secular and sacred folk music in a variety of styles in Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi. In his collecting work he emphasized performance styles and musicianship.

-- Bruce Nemerov "John Wesley Work III: Field Recordings of Southern Black Folk Music, 1935-1942" in *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*, LIII:3 (Fall, 1987).

**Scope and Content:**

These copies of audio tapes of black music and related photographs gathered by Work from 1935 to 1942 were assembled for use in a Center-produced radio program "Roots of American Popular Music" which aired over National Public Radio in February 1989. The collection is organized by source into two series: Work Family Collection and Library of Congress. A description of each series follows.

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**Series Description:**

Series I. Work Family Collection

1 digital audio cassette tape (TCD-0061) of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, a Pulaski (TN?) church service including sermon, the Golden Gate and Fairfield Four gospel quartets, and several blues singers. 7 10" analog reel to reel tapes (TTA-0061A/G) of all of the sound recordings in Professor Work's personal collection. An explanation of the origins of and relationship between these sets of tapes, written by audio specialist Bruce Nemerov, and a list of song titles and performers on each tape follow.

(N.B. John Wesley Work IV deposited the original discs and audio tapes from which the recordings in this series were made in the Center in August 1993; they are filed as **WORK, JOHN WESLEY, SOUND RECORDINGS AND PAPERS.**)

38 black and white contact prints and inter-negatives of black sacred harp singing, Ozark, Alabama, 24-25 September 1938. 10 5x7 black and white prints and 2 8x10 prints of some of the contact prints. Muddy Waters and "Son" Sims, Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1943. 2 prints of Waters/Sims photograph.

Series II. Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress.

8 10" analog reel to reel audio tape copies (TTA-0060A/H) of material deposited by Work in the Archive of Folk Culture [Archive of Folk Song], Library of Congress, Washington DC. A list of the sacred harp, gospel, instrumental and blues music performed on the tapes follows.

**Collection Contents (Folder/Box List):**

**Materials Cataloged Separately:**

**Arrangement:**

**Location:**

Audio tapes are filed by tape number in the audio visual archive. Photographs are filed under "Black

Music" in the subject photograph file.

**Related Materials:**

John Wesley Work IV deposited the original materials from which the copies in Series I were made in the Center in August 1993; they are filed as **WORK, JOHN WESLEY SOUND RECORDINGS AND PAPERS**. Interviews with Work's fellow collectors and informants are included in "**ROOTS OF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC" RECORDS**".

**MARC:**

**EAD:**

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