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

Working File: Finding aid not complete (8/2019)

CHARLIE WALKER COLLECTION 08-020

Creator
Walker, Charlie (November 2, 1926-September 12, 2008)

Type of Material
Manuscripts, audio, video, artifacts, books, serials, photographs

Physical Description:
Approximately 36 linear feet in total; 60 Boxes
1800+ still images (B&W, color, negatives)
348 (approx.) audio disc recordings in multiple formats (vinyl/shellac 33, 45, 78rpm discs, lacquer transcription discs, CDs, open reel, cassette and 8 track tapes).
519 (approx.) audio tapes (acetate/mylar open reel and cassettes)
82 (approx.) video recordings (VHS tape, DVDs)
4 lf books/serials
12 lf manuscripts
1 lf artifacts

Dates:
1926-2008
Bulk 1950-2000

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):
The Charlie Walker Collection (08-020) is a unique and extensive assembly of audio/visual materials, photographs, books serials and manuscripts preserved by Mr. Walker to document many of the facets of his long career as a country music disc jockey, songwriter and musician. The collection includes numerous items that feature many of the most important creative figures of the post WWII country music scene as well as items that relate to Walker’s many interests and hobbies outside of music.
RESTRICTIONS:
All materials in this collection are subject to standard national and international copyright laws. Materials for which we have undeniable rights are those that Charlie Walker created himself. Center staff is able to assist with copyright questions for this material. Manuscript Boxes 30 and 31 are restricted for open use to ensure privacy of personal information. These material may be made available at the archivists’ discretion and with prior arrangements.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:
The materials in this collection represent the life’s work of Charlie Walker. Walker retained large quantities of materials that represent his endeavors as a disc jockey, songwriter and successful country music performer circa 1940s-2000s. The materials in this collection were donated by Walker’s widow, Constance (Connie) Walker, to the Center for Popular Music in May 2009. Mrs. Walker compiled some of the scrap books in the collection and also helped with the initial processing of the collection and identification of subjects in photographs.

Subjects/Index Terms:
Subjects
Country musicians—United States
Disc Jockeys—United States
Grand ole opry (Radio program)
American Federation of Musicians.
United States. Armed Forces Radio and Television Service
World War, 1939-1945--Japan--Tokyo.
World War, 1939-1945--Japan--Music and the war.
World War, 1939-1945 Japan Pictorial works.
Fan mail
Freemasonry

Names
Walker, Charlie, 1926-2008
Rodgers, Jimmie, 1897-1933
Boyd, Bill, 1910-1977
Dickens, Little Jimmy, 1920-
The Charlie Walker collection contains many items that represent some of the most important figures in the country music business. Contact the Center for Popular Music staff for a complete listing of individuals that appear in the collection.

Agency History/biographical sketch:
Born in Copeville, Texas on November 2, 1926, Charles Levi Walker, Jr. grew up working on the family cotton farm in Nevada, Texas where his family had relocated to shortly after his birth. Walker was interested in country music from a young age and he enjoyed artists such as Jimmie Rodgers, Ernest Tubb and Bob Wills. When Walker was ten years old, he taught himself to play
a guitar that had been a gift from a neighbor and later learned how to play the fiddle and mandolin. His first experience with the music business began in 1943 as a member of a Texas dance hall band. Shortly thereafter, he formed his own band, the Texas Ramblers, with his brother Ervin. In 1944, Walker joined Bill Boyd’s Cowboy Ramblers where he performed at their personal appearances and radio shows. In January of 1945, Walker was drafted into U.S. Army. His service eventually took him overseas to be stationed in occupied Japan as a member of the Signal Corps. While in Japan, he formed a band and entertained the troops with country music at camp shows. Walker’s Texas Ramblers soon got a job performing on the Armed Forces Radio Station where he became one of the first American disc jockeys to introduce ‘hillbilly music’ to Japanese listeners in Tokyo.

Walker returned to the states in 1947 where he worked as a broadcaster and singer at KWBU in Corpus Christi and KMAC in San Antonio. He was extremely popular and ranked as one of Billboard’s Top ten Country DJs for a decade. During this period, Charlie also managed a popular nightclub called The Old Barn in San Antonio that highlighted many early country and swing artists.

In addition to broadcasting, Walker enjoyed success as a performer, songwriter and recording artist throughout his long career. He recorded his first songs, “I’m Looking for Another You” and “Stolen Kisses” in 1952 with Imperial Records. In 1954 he signed with Decca, recording the regional hit, “Tell Her Lies and Feed Her Candy”. His first record to hit the Top 10 charts was “Only You, Only You,” co-written with Jack Newman in 1956. On the Mercury label, Walker released “Dancing Mexican Girl” and “I’ll Never Let It Show” before signing with Columbia in 1958. His biggest hit, “Pick Me up on Your Way Down,” was also the first hit for successful song-writer Harlan Howard. Staying on the charts for 22 weeks, the song was actually the “B” side to “Two Empty Arms.” Subsequent recordings included “I’ll Catch You When You Fall,” “When My Conscience Hurts the Most,” “Who Will Buy the Wine,” and “There’s Where Katie Waits.” Recording for the Epic label, his “Wild as a Wildcat” was a minor hit, followed by the parody, “Don’t Squeeze My Sharmon,” which made the Top 10 in 1967.


Aside from his musical career, Charlie actively participated in a variety of sports and hobbies including golf, hunting and sport shooting. Walker was especially interested in golf and he played in about ten pro-celebrity tournaments each year as well as hosting a tournament under his own name. Walker was also a long time member of both the Shriners and Masons, eventually receiving the honor of becoming a Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite Mason.

Walker received many honors and awards over the course of his long career. In 1981 he was inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame and in 2000 he was inducted into the Texas
Country Music Hall of Fame. Walker also received numerous awards for his accomplishments in music, sports (golf, shooting) military and community activities and his long time membership in the Shriners and Masons.

Charlie Walker died at the age of 81 on September 12, 2008.

**Scope and Content:**
This collection is comprised of approximately 48 feet of books, serials, manuscripts, artifacts, photographs and audio and visual recordings that represent the long life and prolific career of country music singer, songwriter and disc jockey, Charlie Walker circa 1940s-2000s. The audio and visual materials, circa 1950s-2000s, are in multiple formats and represent performances, interviews, commercially released recordings, studio demos and song writer demos by Walker himself, other well-known country musicians and songwriters as well as many recordings submitted to Walker by fans and amateur songwriters. The 1800+ still images in this collection, circa 1930s-2000s, represent all aspects of Walker’s career as well as his military service in occupied Japan, hobbies, social connections and family life. Many of the photographs feature historically significant events and persons. The manuscript collection provides an expansive, finely detailed record of Walker’s life, career and interests. This part of the collection is comprised of correspondence, personal and financial records, newspaper/magazine articles and reviews, scrap books, posters, handbills, sheet music, catalogs etc. The Walker collection also includes many books and serials on mostly music related topics as well as sheet music. Much of this material has been integrated into the larger CPM collection. The audio/visual and photographic collections have been inventoried in detail and these records are available to the researcher.

**Series Description:**
**Series 01: Manuscripts**
Manuscript boxes MS01-MS31 Manuscript collection representing all aspects of Walker’s professional and personal life circa 1920s-2000s.  
Subseries 1: Business Correspondence  
Subseries 2: Correspondence – Fan Mail  
Subseries 3: Correspondence – Personal  
Subseries 4: Performance & Career related manuscripts  
Subseries 5: Personal manuscripts

**Series 02: Scrapbooks and Photographs**
Subseries 1: Scrapbooks  
Scrapbooks MS-32 to MS-37 Scrapbooks containing photographs and manuscripts highlighting significant events in Walker’s life and career.  
Subseries 2: Photographs  
Photograph boxes MS-38 to MS-45 Boxes contain 1800+ photographs representing all aspects of Walker’s life and music career circa 1940s-2000s as well as family and hobby related images.

**Series 03: Artifacts**
Series 04: Audio / Visual Materials

Audio Video boxes 1-13 Contains audio and video in multiple formats circa 1950s-2000s. Collection features Walker as well as other prominent country musicians and songwriters in performance, studio demos and commercially released recordings. Collection also includes many song demos sent by fans or amateur songwriters. For a full detailed box list contact the Center for Popular Music Archivist.

Collection Contents: (Folder/box list):
Series 01- Manuscripts

Subseries 1: Business correspondence

Box MS-01 Business correspondence ca. 1953-1989

Box MS-02 Business correspondence ca. 1990-2008
Folder 4: Undated business correspondence. Opry, thank-you notes, broadcasting, Dot Records correspondence.


Box MS-04 Business correspondence-contracts ca. 1960s-1990s.

Box MS-05 Business correspondence-Payments and royalties ca. 1966-2008.

Box MS-06 Business correspondence ca. 1945-2000.
Folder 1: 1945. Song pitches from Lew Mel (Love Will Find a Way) and Chaw Mank.
Folder 7: Undated correspondence. Radio PSA scripts, Nashville Network scripts, song pitches,

Box MS-07: 1960s-2000s. Performance contracts [some items from this box have been moved to Box 30 due to restrictions]
Folder 1: 1960s-1970s. Performance and recording contracts from Columbia, Music Country USA TV show etc.
Folder 5: January-June 1980. Performance contracts from Atlas Artist Bureau Inc. Also includes some airline tickets with contracts.
Folder 12: 1989. Performance contracts from Billy Deaton, CA-Promotion

Box MS-08: Financial manuscripts. Bills, receipts, accounting etc. [some items from this box have been moved to Box 30 due to restrictions]
Folder 3: ca. 1970s-1990s. Insurance, retirement, AFTRA, Opry trust fund etc.
Folder 4: ca. 1977. AFTRA royalty reports.
Folder 5: ca. 1944-2008. Pay stubs for Walkers radio, recording and film work,
Folder 8: Various dates. Unsorted bills, receipts, checks.
Folder 9: Various dates. Unsorted bills, receipts, checks.
Folder 10: Various dates. Unsorted bills, receipts, checks.

Box MS-09: Financial manuscripts. Unopened bank statements and phone bills.

Box MS-10: Airline tickets ca. 1970s-1990s. Tickets issued to Walker for travel to performances.

Subseries 2: Correspondence-Fan Mail
Box MS-11 Postcards with compliments and song requests sent to Walker during his tenure with Bill Boyd and the Cowboy Ramblers. Circa 1944-1947.

Box MS-12 Letters with compliments and song requests sent to Walker during his tenure with Bill Boyd and the Cowboy Ramblers. February 1944 to September 1947

Box MS-13 Fan mail ca. 1950s-1989.

Box MS-14 Fan mail ca. 1990-2008 including undated correspondence.

Subseries 3: Personal correspondence

Box MS-15 Correspondence-Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances ca. 1950s-1983.
Folder 1: 1950s. Letter to Walker from Ernest Tubb. Telegrams from Cindy Walker and Big D Jamboree cast.
Folder 2: 1960s. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances.

Box MS-16 Correspondence-Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances ca. 1984-1989.
Folder 2: 1986. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances. Includes letter from Cowboy singer, Bob Atcher and numerous Christmas cards.

Box MS-17 Correspondence-Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances ca. 1990-1994.
Folder 1: 1990. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances. Includes hunting, thank you notes etc.
Folder 3: 1991. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances. Includes hunting, golf, Masons, newspaper clippings and thank you notes.

Box MS-18: Correspondence-Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances ca. 1995-1999.
Folder 1: 1995. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances.
Folder 2: 1996. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances. Hobbies, thank you notes, military reunions.
Folder 5: 1999. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances. Hobbies, thank you notes etc.

Box MS-19: Correspondence-Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances ca. 2000-2008 & undated correspondence.
Folder 3: Undated. Letters written to Walker by family, friends and acquaintances.
Folder 4: Original news clippings that was included with correspondence.

Box MS-20: Correspondence-Letters to Walker from politicians and celebrities ca. 1950s-1990s and correspondence from Walker’s run for senate.
Folder 1: 1950s-1990s. Correspondence to Walker from noteworthy individuals such as Hank Thompson, Webb Pierce, Ernest Tubb, Buck Owens, and politicians. Also contains contract for performance by Hank Williams (September, 1952)

Subseries 4: Performance & Career related manuscripts
Folder 5: Undated. News clippings relating to Walker’s performances
Folder 7: ca. 1951-1956. News clippings relating to the Jimmie Rodgers memorial events held in Meridian, MS.
Folder 8: ca. 1990s? Walker discography. Some of this material relates to the Bear Family reissue of Walker’s recordings.
Folder 10: 1961-2008. Newspaper obituaries for Walker and other country music figures such as Carrie Rodgers, Bill Boyd etc.

Box MS-22: Performance, career manuscripts ca. 1940s-2000s.
Folder 2: ca. 1940s-2000s. Materials relating to Walker’s career as a DJ.
Folder 3: No date. Materials relating to Walker’s career as a DJ.
Folder 6: copyright dates ca. 1944-1990s. Lyrics for songs performed by or pitched to Walker.
Folder 7: Undated. Lyrics for songs performed by or pitched to Walker. Some items hand written on studio stationery, audio tape labels etc.
Folder 8: Ca. 1940s-1980s. Materials used to promote Walker’s performances and recordings.

Subseries 5: Personal manuscripts
Box MS-23: Personal manuscripts relating to military service (Tennessee Defense Force), awards & certificates, Walker’s political career, his funeral etc.
Folder 7: ca. 1950. Government documents for home buying veterans and program from army discharge ceremony.
Folder 8: No dates. News clippings featuring Walker’s wives.
Folder 10: No date. Walker’s suit measurements.
Folder 12: ca. 1960s-1990s. Walker family weddings and newspaper clipping for anniversary of Walker’s parents.
Folder 13: ca. 1980s-2000s. Awards, honors and certificates for Walker. Some originals and a number of photocopies of originals that have been scanned.
Folder 14: ca. 1964-2009. Photocopies of newspaper accounts of awards, honors received by Walker.
Folder 15: Ca. 1990s. Original newspaper accounts of awards, honors and received by Walker.
Folder 16: ca. 1950s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 17: ca. 1960s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 18: ca. 1970s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 19: ca. 1980s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 20: ca. 1990s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 21: ca. 2000s. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker.
Folder 22: No date. Original awards, honors and certificates received by Walker. Also includes an award for Pee Wee King from the state of Kentucky.
Folder 24: ca. 1960s-2000s. Collection of miscellaneous items (Army parachute team folder etc.). Also includes ca. 1950s-60s order blank from Hatch Showprint in Nashville.

**Box MS-24**: Hobby (golf, hunting, Mason/Shrine) related manuscripts
Folder 1: ca. 1980s. Manuscripts and newprint related to Walker’s Pro Celebrity Golf Tournament.
Folder 3: ca. 1950s-1990s. Golf related brochures, programs and score cards.
Folder 4: ca. 1990s-2000s. Papers relating to Walker sponsored or hosted golf tournaments.
Folder 7: ca. 1990s. News clippings featuring Walker in Masonic or Shrine related activities.
Folder 11: ca. 1940s-1990s. Newspaper clippings relating to miscellaneous friends, family.
Folder 12: ca. 1990s. Scorecards, schedules relating to youth baseball in the Nashville, TN area.

**Box MS-25**: Original newprint. Clipping and entire papers, many include pieces about Walker, others are saved items by Walker.

**Box MS-26**: Serials & publications with reference to Walker. These serials are duplicates of items already held in the Center’s collection but have been retained due to their having been in Walker’s belongings.

**Box MS-27**: Sheet music ca. 1960s-1970s. Contains sheet music examples of many of Walker’s hit songs as well as a folder of songs from Jim Reeves enterprises (Tuckahoe Music, Open Road Music, Acclaim Music Inc.)

**Box MS-28**: Date books, calendars ca. 1970s-1990s. Collection of calendars and datebooks with personal notes inscribed by Walker to mark performance dates etc.
*Box MS-29:* Business cards ca. 1960s-1990s. Large assortment of unsorted business cards. Also includes a number of small, handwritten notes with addresses, phone numbers etc.

*Box MS-30: RESTRICTED:* Personal manuscripts (military, health, genealogical records)
*Please contact archivist for use of these materials.*

*Box MS-31: RESTRICTED:* Personal manuscripts (military, health, genealogical records)
*Please contact archivist for use of these materials.*

*Box MS-32: Oversized materials*
Awards/Certificates (11)
1st Annual Charlie Walker Golf Tournament Poster
1986 & 1987 One Shot Hunt Magazine
Photograph of Arlington baseball field
Laminated page of Billboard with article about Walker
Poster of *Close Down All the Honky Tonks* Album cover
D’Angleico Guitar Poster with cartoon of artists including Walker
Proof of Epic Records Ad for *Record World* 5/12/67
Small Texas state flag with note from fan written on it
Homemade birthday card [from fan]

**Series 02: Scrapbooks and Photographs**

**Subseries 1: Scrapbooks** [for a detailed list of photographs, contact Center staff.]
*Scrapbook MS-33:* Scrapbook relating to the Cowgirl Sweetheart contest ca. late 1940s and Walker’s career as radio DJ. Contains newspaper articles, photographs, advertisements, performance documents etc.

*Scrapbook MS-34:* Scrapbook of 1949 “Cowgirl Sweetheart” contest. (Contestants with Walker in variety of settings) Also contains tourist/street scenes of occupied Japan.

*Scrapbook MS-35 “1944-1946”* Scrapbook of early photographs of Walker. Contains family photos of young Charlie as well as fan mail and photos from his stint with Bill Boyd (1944). Also contains military documents (induction notice, identification cards etc) as well as photos of Walker in occupied Japan with band and other army friends. Also contains images of Japanese civilians, musicians and street scenes.

Scrapbook MS-37 “Charlie and Friends Photos” Scrapbook of Walker throughout (ca. 1940s-1990s) his career contained in a scrapbook compiled by Connie Walker. Contains many glossy promo photos of well-known country music artists with inscriptions to Walker. Box also contains some loose photographs.

Scrapbook MS-038 “Charlie in Print” Scrapbook contains many images of Walker and others at the Jimmie Rodgers memorial event in Meridian, MS. Scrapbook also contains important manuscripts (ca. 1944-1970s) such as a letter to parents after induction into the army, performance/radio contracts, script from Sweet Dreams, newsprint reviews and concert adverts.

Subseries 2: Photographs [for a detailed list of photographs, please contact Center staff.]

Photograph Box MS-39 “Early Years” Images of Walker’s youth, early career (circa 1940s-1950s) in Texas as musician and DJ. Photos of Walker with family, at radio stations, at performances etc.

Photograph Box MS-40 “Military, WWII and Occupation” Images from Walker’s service in occupied Japan circa 1945-46. Images of Walker and his band, street scenes, ships, vehicles, fellow soldiers etc.

Photograph Box MS-41 “Just Charlie” Images of Walker (ca. 1950s-1990s) throughout his career. Promo pictures, at social events, performances etc.

Photographs Box MS-42 “Fans, Friends and Business” Walker (ca. 1950s-1990s) with friends, family, fans and fellow musicians in social settings throughout his career. Also contains some correspondence with photographs. “Ceremonies, awards, honors” Images of Walker at special events and receiving awards from military, radio, Texas Country Music Hall of Fame etc ca. 1950s-1990s.

Photographs Box MS-43 “Celebrities and Charlie” Images of Walker from throughout his career (ca. 1950s-1990s) with well-known musicians, athletes, politicians etc. Also contains original promo photos from stars such as Spade Cooley, Red Sovine, Maddox Bros & Rose, Hank Williams, Webb Pierce etc. many of which are signed to Walker.

Photograph Box MS-44 “Hunting, Golf, Hobbies” Images of Walker (ca. 1960s-1990s) golfing, attending Opry Duck hunts, shooting competitions, various social events etc.

Photograph Box MS-45 “Masons and Shriners” Images of Walker at various Mason/Shriners related events, performances, parades, award ceremonies etc. ca. 1980s-2000s.

Series 03: Artifacts

**Box MS-47**: One large box containing a wide variety of three dimensional artifacts from Charlie Walker. Includes souvenir judge’s gavel, Charlie Walker Celebrity Golf scramble hat, I.D. badges, bumper stickers, patches, “Rock grass seeds” promotional item for Walker record on Plantation label, picks, pens, belt buckles etc.

**Series 04: Audio / Visual Materials** [for a detailed list, contact Center staff.]

- **Box MS-48**: 7 inch audio tapes
- **Box MS-49**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-50**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-51**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-52**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-53**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-54**: audio tapes; mostly pitches/demos
- **Box MS-55**: open reel audio tapes; radio bits, performances and songs
- **Box MS-56**: open reel audio tapes; radio bits, performances and songs
- **Box MS-57**: Acetate demo discs
- **Box MS-58**: Mostly 45rpm demo discs
- **Box MS-59**: VHS tapes
- **Box MS-60**: VHS tapes

**Oversize materials** (map drawer)
- Walker for Senator Poster (2)
- USARHAW Charlie Walker Show Poster
- Who’s Who in country music map of birth places
- “Nashville Here I Am!” Musical Comedy poster (2)
- Park plan with artists names listed in blocks
- Large poster of Lorianne Crook on motorcycle signed to Walker
- RCA Country Stars Cross Stick design poster
- WSM 35th Birthday bandana

**Materials Cataloged Separately:**
Per Center policy, certain formats are cataloged separately for accessibility, including digital materials listed above, video and sound recording materials. [For a complete list of separated materials, please contact the archivist.]

**Arrangement:**
Original order of the materials has been maintained in so far as possible. In the case where there was no obvious order, the processor devised the basic organizational scheme for the collections, reorganizing the materials within component groups where necessary. Manuscripts and correspondence have been filed chronologically at the folder and box level.

**Location:**
All manuscript materials are located in the special collections storage area filed by accession number. Audio/visual materials are located in the audio/visual special collections storage area.

**Related Materials:**
The Center holds other materials related to Charlie Walker, Country music, Western swing, the Grand Ole Opry, songwriters, Country music radio and Country music in Texas. Notably the Doug Seroff Country Music Collection (10-034), The Jesse Austin Morris Collection (13-070), the Evelyn Overstake Collection (02-020) among others. Information concerning country music and biographies of Charlie Walker can be found in the reading room collection and searchable through the MTSU Walker Library. Specific songs, performances and other original music materials may be found in the Center’s rare books, sheet music, performance, and photograph collections searchable through the Center’s website.