

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

**JOHN S. MITCHELL COLLECTION OF
TENNESSEE MUSIC**

**03-023
04-005**

Sound Recordings, Sheet Music, Books

Creator:

Type of Material:

Physical Description:

1,413 Sound recordings
589 pieces of Sheet music
24 Books, 1 film
22 Performance posters

Dates:

1851- 1992 (bulk 1900-1950)

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

Donated by John S. Mitchell to the Center for Popular Music in April 2004 and July 2004. Over the course of ten years, John S. Mitchell acquired the collection through mail auction listings, Internet auction sites such as Ebay, collecting magazines, and dealers. He began collecting 78 rpm sound recordings in 1992, then moved toward concentrating on Tennessee sound recordings in late 1993, specifically those with Tennessee in theme or song title. He compiled a database of Tennessee 78 rpm sound recordings for reference, which is published as *A song for you in Tennessee* / by John S. Mitchell, 1995, a discography of 468 songs. Mr. Mitchell began collecting sheet music in late 1996 and ceased collecting in 2003.

Subject/Index Terms:

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

John S. Mitchell was born December 1, 1969 in Memphis, Tennessee. He attended Millington Central High School, graduating in 1988, and received a BS from Tennessee Tech University in 1993. His professional work includes Administrator of the Cookeville Depot Museum from 1997-99 and Education Coordinator, Chattanooga Regional History Museum, 2000-2001. Presently he is a teacher with the Hamilton County Department of Education. Mr. Mitchell is a member of the Tennessee Folklore Society, Tennessee Geographic Alliance, Tennessee Council for Social Studies, The Tennessee Tech University History Club, and the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. He currently resides in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee with his wife, Cami, and son, Samuel.

Scope and Content:

The John S. Mitchell Collection of Tennessee Music chronicles the people and events of Tennessee history by focusing on how Tennessee is thematically represented in music. This collection documents artists significant in the development of popular music in Tennessee as well as how Tennessee has shaped popular music.

The John S. Mitchell Collection of Tennessee Music consists of sound recordings, sheet music, song books, and other music-related materials with a Tennessee theme. The majority of the sound recordings and sheet music either have a title that refers to Tennessee or the subject matter of the music pertains to Tennessee. The collection was compiled by concentrating on a systematic overview of Tennessee history. It begins with Tennessee's earliest history and becoming a state, then proceeds to the Civil War. The state's Centennial in 1896 follows through Vaudeville and the turn of the 20th century. The romanticized notion of the South and Tennessee are thematically represented in the music, as well as vernacular or regional genres such as blues and jazz. Other major themes include representatives of people significant in the formation of popular music from Tennessee such as Bessie Smith and Jimmie Rogers. Geographic representations abound, along with other recurrent themes such as campaign songs, rivers, railroads, political figures, and other famous people from Tennessee.

Sound recordings make up the majority of the collection, including 78 rpm, 45 rpm, 33 1/3 rpm, cylinders, a souvenir post card with sound advertisement, and three compact discs. The 78 rpm records include such titles as Tennessee Waltz, Beale Street Blues, Sunny Tennessee, Chattanooga Choo Choo, On Top of Old Smokey, and Memphis Blues. Artists include Gene Autry, DeFord Bailey, Owen Bradley, Fiddlin' John Carson, Delmore Brothers, Tennessee Ernie Ford, and many others. Dates of the 78 rpm sound recordings range from 1905-1959. "Carry Me Back to Tennessee" recorded by Carrol C. Clark, a black minstrel performer from Columbia, Tennessee in 1910 and one of the earliest recorded Tennessee songs, was cited as one of the collector's important pieces. The sheet music for this song is also found in the collection.

The 45 rpm sound recordings (352 total) include recordings by Eddy Arnold, Chuck Berry, Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, Red Foley, and Dolly Parton. Dates range from 1955-1993.

The sheet music portion of the collection corresponds to most of the major music genres, including waltz, blues, ragtime, country, folk, ballads, instrumental, rock and roll. Sheet music titles, lyrics, and imprints represent major Tennessee cities of Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. Dates range from 1851 to 1992. Titles and themes include Davy Crockett, Casey Jones, College alma matters, Civil War, love songs, dances, and rivers. About 18% of the sheet music pieces have a Tennessee imprint.

Advertising posters of movies and performances about Tennessee are included in the collection. Other music-related items within the collection are a film titled "Memphis Blues," a key from the

O.K. Hauck Piano Company in Memphis, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* containing an article about Edison's phonograph machine, and a map of Tennessee musicians.

Subgroup One: Scopes Trial

A noteworthy subgroup of the Mitchell Tennessee music collection consists of songs relating to the famous Scopes trial of 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee. [The teaching of evolution was tested in court, with John Scopes, a high school biology teacher charged with illegally teaching the theory of evolution.] Various songs and recordings were made before, during, and after the trial focusing on the trial and people involved, the theory of evolution, and the controversy surrounding it. Mr. Mitchell collected songs with "evolution" in the title, represented in the lyrics, as well as thematic spin-offs, such as "You Can't Make a Monkey Out of Me."

Formats included in this subgroup are sound recordings (mostly 78rpm), sheet music, and books. Sheet music titles include "Darwin's Monkey Trot," "Evolution," and "Don't Monkey with Evolution," all copyrighted 1925. "Evolution (or the Darwinian theory)," copyrighted 1885, "Evolution March" from 1902, and "Too Thin (or Darwin's little joke)" from 1874 are among the earlier pieces. Sound recording titles relating to the Scopes trial from 1925 include "The Death of William Jennings Bryan," recorded by Charlie Oaks on the Vocalion label, "Evolution Blues," recorded by Doc Dasher on Columbia, and the same title recorded by Hill's Blue Devils on Gennett. "The John T. Scopes Trial" is represented in recordings by both Charlie Oaks and Vernon Dalhart on various separate labels. (See separate list of Scopes materials.)

Series Description:

LPC 11/04

Collection Contents (Folder/Box List):

MANUSCRIPTS:

Box #1	Folder #	Description
[1]	1	Miscellaneous Manuscripts One notebook of receipts compiled by John S. Mitchell

MANUSCRIPTS (Oversize): (located in oversize box opposite Performance section)

Box #	OVERSIZE	Description
		Announcement from <i>Billboard</i> , March 6, 1982 for "Rocky Top" as Official State Song of Tennessee.
		Newspaper - <i>The Cincinnati Enquirer</i> , May 31, 1878 (Edison Phonograph p.4)
		Map of Tennessee musicians (photocopy)

ARTIFACTS**Box #**

[1]

Description

Key: "O. K. Houck Piano Co. Key to Memphis"

Post card with audio: "Souvenir Record of Rock City Gardens"

Film: "Memphis Blues." Jerri Sullavan. Official Films.

(16mm. Sound film with optical sound track)

Book - *Evolution: A Fantasy* by Landon Smith, 1909.**Materials Cataloged Separately:****CYLINDERS**

641 Song. Much Obligated to You. Collins.

5059 The John T. Scopes Trial. V. Dalhart & Co.

2881 The Memphis Blues – Fox Trot. N. P. Band.

8844 Down Tennessee. Orchestra.

695 Tennessee Tessie. Quartette.

450 Casey Jones. (Eddie Neuton) Comic Song. Murray & Chorus.

3423 For You and Tennessee. The Harmony Four.

1026 Overture Zampa, Band.

10467 In Dear Old Tennessee. (Harry L. Newman) Soprano. Elizabeth Spencer.

2314 Celebratin' Day in Tennessee. Collins & Harlan.

Arrangement:**Location:**

Materials of each format have been interfiled in the suitable Center for Popular Music collection category. The sheet music is cataloged in the Center's InMagic database and accessible through the website and in-house systems. The original sheet music pieces are housed with the other sheet music collections on the mezzanine of the collections storage area by catalog number (TENN). The sound recordings have not been cataloged at this time, but lists by artist, then title, and label exist for the 78rpm and 45 rpm. The actual sound recordings (including the cylinders) are filed in the collections storage area according to format. The song books have been cataloged and are searchable through the Rare book category of the InMagic database. They are filed with other rare books on the mezzanine by catalog number. Performance documents are cataloged and searchable in the InMagic catalog and are housed in the Performance section of the storage area and in the extra-large metal cabinet by catalog number. Other materials are stored in the Manuscript and Artifact sections of the mezzanine and in the oversize Manuscript box (see itemized list below).

Related Materials:

The Center for Popular Music holds other Tennessee sheet music, sound recordings, song books,

and performance documents. These include items with a Tennessee theme, title, artist, and/or imprint. The sheet music may be searched through the InMagic database online and in-house. [Note: In order to find Tennessee imprints in the CPM collection, type "TN" in the Publication Place "PL" field. Also try "Tennessee" in the same field, as well as in the Keyword field.] Sound recordings are searchable through the InMagic in-house catalog and Voyager, but not all titles have been cataloged, and will require a record label and issue number. Song books may also be searched in-house and online through the InMagic database. Performance documents are searchable on the InMagic in-house catalog.

MARC:

EAD: