



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

**SONNY JAMES COLLECTION**

**18-026**

**Creator:**

James, Sonny [James Hugh Loden] (May 1, 1928 – February 22, 2016)  
Loden Family

**Type of Material:**

Manuscript Materials, Scrapbooks, Clippings, Performance Documents, Souvenir Items, Photographs, Manuscript Audio/Visual Materials, Sound Recordings

**Physical Description:**

5 linear feet of manuscript materials, including scrapbooks, clippings, programs, souvenir items, photos, Country Music Hall of Fame induction items, 5 oversized posters.

11 videos

- 1 manuscript VHS
- 2 – 16mm manuscript films
- 8 – ¾" manuscript U-Matics

4 commercial CDs

232 audio discs

- 4 – 7" commercial LPs
- 58 – 12" commercial LPs
- 131 – 7" commercial 45rpms
- 18 – 10" manuscript LPs
- 21 – 10" manuscript 45rpms

260 audio tapes

- 1 – commercial 8-track
- 3 commercial cassette tapes
- 11 – manuscript microcassette tapes
- 134 – manuscript cassette tapes
- 5 – manuscript 2 inch reel-to-reel masters
- 5 – manuscript 1 inch reel-to-reel masters
- 34 – manuscript ¼ inch (10") reel-to-reel masters
- 12 – manuscript ½ inch reel-to-reel masters

- 1 – manuscript 3 inch reel-to-reel
- 44 – manuscript 7 inch reel-to-reels
- 10 – manuscript 5 inch reel-to-reels

**Dates:**

1938-2016, bulk 1950-1984; 2006

**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 Sonny James' niece and nephew Donna Mora and Charles Holcombe. Mr. Holcombe delivered the collection to the Center on March 7, 2019.

**Arrangement:**

The original arrangement scheme for the collection was maintained during processing where there was order implied, including some folder naming; otherwise, the processing archivist organized the collection for ease of use.

**Subject/Index Terms:**

James, Sonny, 1928-2016  
Country music--1951-1960.  
Country music--1961-1970.  
Country music--1971-1980.  
Grand ole opry (Radio program)  
Loden, James  
Loden Family Band  
The Loden Family and Sonny Boy  
Country music fan clubs  
Southern Gentlemen (band)  
Robble, Gary  
Liggett, Milo  
West, Duane  
Bown, Lin

**Agency History/Biographical Sketch:**

"Sonny" James Hugh Loden was born May 1, 1928 in Hackleburg, Alabama, to a musical farming family. His parents, Archie Lee "Pop" Loden and Della Burleson Loden, and sister Thelma Lee Loden (Holcombe), known as The Loden Family, had their own radio show on WMSD-AM in Muscle-Shoals, AL in the early 1930s. The Loden Family unofficially adopted a young Ruby Palmer, who also sang in the family band. While the Loden Family started with a radio show in Muscle Shoals, they moved over the next 15 years to do radio shows in Jackson, MS, Blytheville, AR, Knoxville, TN, Raleigh, NC, Memphis, TN and Birmingham, AL. They did a live show very weekday morning and performed in the listening area on the weekends at auditoriums and tent shows. James also won many fiddle contests throughout the southeast.

James served in the Korean War in the Alabama Army National Guard. After his service in the military, he moved to Nashville, TN. In 1954, James was signed by Ken Nelson to Capitol Records, when it was suggested he change his stage name for simplicity to Sonny James. James became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in October 1962. In the 1970s he signed with Columbia Records. Sonny James produced Marie Osmond's "Paper Roses", on MGM Records in 1973; the song sold over one million records.

From 1953 to 1983, Sonny James charted 72 times, including 23 that reached #1. According to Billboard statistics, between 1960 and 1979 he spent fifty-seven weeks in the #1 chart position—more than any other country artist of the era.

Sonny James was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006.

**Scope and Content:**

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

[Folder titles in brackets given by processing archivist.]

<b><u>Box #</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
<b>Box 1</b>	<b>Manuscript Materials</b>
Folder 1	Loden Family
Folder 2	Correspondence
Folder 3	Alabama Music Hall of Fame
Folder 4	2005 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony
Folder 5	2006 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony
Folder 6	2008 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony
Folder 7	2012 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony
Folder 8	The Southern Gentlemen Letters to Sonny
Folder 9	CMA Membership/Notes
Folder 10	Press Kits
Folder 11	Sonny James Discography
Folder 12	Sheet Music (*search CPM catalog for more sheet music)
<b>Box 2</b>	<b>Manuscript Materials</b>
Folder 1	Fan Club News
Folder 2	Track listings
Folder 3	Lyrics
Folder 4	Stage Show Outline & Programs
Folder 5	Dial 116 Script
Folder 6	Marie Osmond (includes photographs)
<b>Box 3</b>	<b>Photographs</b>
Folder 1	Sonny Loden & His Southerners / Loden Family Band
Folder 2	Sonny James Promotional photos
Folder 3	Sonny James & the Country Gentlemen

- Folder 4 Sonny James House / Tour bus
- Folder 5 Friends of Sonny James – Radio casts
- Folder 6 Friends of Sonny James
- Folder 7 Miscellaneous 1950s
- Folder 8 Southern Gentlemen Store signing [Georgia]
- Folder 9 Korea [military]
- Folder 10 Country Music Hall of Fame Induction photos
- Folder 11 Pop Goes the Country [includes negatives]
- Folder 12 Minneapolis 1975 – slides
- Folder 13 “In Prison” Album photos – park photos

**Box 4 Photographs**

- Folder 1 Miscellaneous photos
- Folder 2 2003 Photos for website [includes negatives]
- Folder 3 Reprints from website
- Folder 4 Choice Photos for copies [includes negatives]
- Folder 5 Sonny James album covers negatives
- Folder 6 Mounted photographs

**Box 5 Clippings** [folder titles given by processing archivist]

- Folder 1 Clippings – “Early Years” – Sonny Loden 1940s
- Folder 2 Clippings – 1965-1966
- Folder 3 Clippings – Sonny James Month Nov 1966
- Folder 4 Clippings – 1967
- Folder 5 Clippings – 1970
- Folder 6 Clippings – 1971
- Folder 7 Clippings – 1972
- Folder 8 Clippings – 1973-1976
- Folder 9 Clippings – 1977-1994
- Folder 10 Clippings – 2000-2006
- Folder 11 Clippings – Neighbor Day
- Folder 12 Clippings – Country Music Hall of Fame Induction
- Folder 13 Clippings – undated

**Box 6 Programs and Periodicals**

- Sonny James Songbook [in Japanese]
- Souvenir Program Picture Album
- The Sonny James Songbook
- Full Sonny James Press Kit
- Amusement Business March 1, 1969
- BMI: The Many Worlds of Music Fall 1987
- CMA Close Up Oct/Nov 2006
- Country Music People Sept 1980
- Country Music People Feb 2001
- Country Scene Sept 1980
- Country Song Roundup Aug 1966
- Country Song Roundup Oct 1967

Country Song Roundup Mar 1972  
Country Weekly June 18, 2007  
Hit Parader Songs & Stories June 1973  
Keynotes [Capitol Records] undated  
Music Capitol News Countrywide  
Shindig Issue May-June 1972 The  
Music Reporter June 29, 1963  
Radio & record Report Feb 14, 1975  
Rustic Rhythm Jul 1957  
TV Radio Mirror Jan 1958  
TV Radio Mirror June 1963

**Box 7 Country Music Hall of Fame Induction Book**

Framed thank you speech  
Leather box containing ephemera relating to induction

**Box 8 Manuscript Scrapbook**

Dorris Loden's cookbook

**Box 9 Fan created scrapbooks**

Fan Photo album [Rehoused for preservation]  
Fan's family Sonny James Scrapbook [Rehoused for preservation]

**Box 10 Manuscript Scrapbook**

1950s black scrapbook [mostly publications/programs]

**Box 11 Manuscript Scrapbook**

1950s woodgrain scrapbook [mostly clippings]  
Pearl Tie tack

**Box 12 Manuscript Scrapbook**

#1 Guitar photo album [rehoused for preservation, original retained for context]

**Box 13 Manuscript Scrapbook**

Oversized mounted family photographs  
Red & Black 150s scrapbook [mostly clippings]  
"My Radio Scrapbook" [early career/Loden Family, mostly photographs]

**Box 14 Manuscript Scrapbook**

"Chuck's Red Scrapbook" [created by Charles Holcombe, Sonny James' nephew documenting the career of Sonny James, including personal letters. This was rehoused for preservation, original scrapbook retained for context.]

**Location:**

All manuscript materials are located in the special collections storage area filed by accession number. Please contact Audio Curator and/or Archivist for audio/visual materials. Oversized posters are located in the map drawers – ask archivist for access.

**Items Cataloged Separately:**

**Rare books:**

Conway Twitty souvenir book  
Super Stars of Country Music picture book  
The Sonny James Songbook  
Souvenir Program Picture Album [Sonny James]  
Songs as Sung by Happy Wilson and his Golden River Boys  
Lew Childre Memory Book: Songs, Poems and Stuff  
Marson Music, Inc. Publisher's binders [sheet music of all James' songs]

**Sheet music:**

Come On In  
Shutters and Boards  
The Minute You're Gone  
Runnings Bear  
Hold What You've Got  
Behind the Tear  
Only the Lonely  
I Love You More and More Every Day  
Here Comes Honey Again  
A Mi Esposa Con Amor (To My Wife with Love)  
I'm So In Love with You  
A Little Bit South of Saskatoon  
Talk of the School

**Related Materials:**

The George Hamilton, IV Collection (17-027), the Charlie Walker Collection (08-020), the Osmond Collection (10-007), other Grand Ole Opry and country music items can be found by searching the CPM catalog.

Processed by Olivia M. Beaudry, July-October 2019.