

C Kearns, Bill, (1923-2010), Collection, 1886-2009
4140 4 DVDs, 4 compact video cassettes, 20 audio discs, 1 oversize item

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

INTRODUCTION

The collection of a fiddle player and musician from Saline County, Missouri.

DONOR INFORMATION

The collection was donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Bill Kearns on 22 Sep 2009 (Accession No. 6214).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bill Kearns was born in 1923 on a farm east of Slater, Saline County, Missouri. Bill began playing the violin as a child and while still very young he played guitar accompaniment at old-time dances for fiddlers. As a young teenager, Bill played violin in a dance band in Marshall during the Depression. In the late 1930s, Bill worked as a truck driver, delivering live hogs and cattle to the Kansas City Stockyards.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army during World War II, and was a survivor of the Normandy Invasion in France and served with distinction throughout the war. After the war, he returned to Slater, and worked as a conductor and brakeman on the Gulf Mobile & Ohio Railroad, settled down and raised a family.

Bill was an excellent old-time fiddler in the Little Dixie style, having begun playing at a very young age. He was an avid historian of the history of fiddling and loved telling stories about the many musicians he had known. He was an active supporter of fiddler's contests and organizations. He was also a skilled electric rhythm guitarist and played countless dances in the Slater area in the 1950s and 1960s. His musical expertise and interests included "country and western" music as well as "old-time fiddling," typical of musicians of his generation. In the 1960s and 1970s, he began to concentrate on playing fiddle music and playing backup guitar for other fiddlers. He competed in numerous contests and became a respected fiddle contest judge. He also did his own repair and setup of violins, and owned hundreds throughout the years.

Bill Kearns died on February 14, 2010, in Slater, Missouri.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of a Marriage Certificate of Albert F. Meyers and Martha J. Way, Valley Falls, Kansas, 25 December 1886; a list of over 245 Best Known Songs, copyright, 1943; four video cassettes consisting of material showing Bill Kearns performing, and fiddle contests; and audio discs of Missouri fiddle tunes.

f. 1 Marriage certificate (oversize location B-5)

Compact Video Cassette series

- v.c. 1 Dance at Marshall, Missouri, fairground with Travis Inman and others, April 2009 [use DVD copy]
- v.c. 2 Anchor Festival, 1992? [use DVD copy]
- v.c. 3 Leroy, Bill Kearns, and Pete [McMahan] with Truman Sorenson from North Dakota, Bill Eddy and Catherine Martin [use DVD copy]
- v.c. 4 Boonville Fiddle Contest, March 21, 1991 [use DVD copy]

Audio Disc series

- a.d. 1 *Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory* by R. P. Christeson
- a.d. 2 *Carroll County Fiddler*, Johnny Bruce
- a.d. 3 *Ole Tyme Fiddlin'*, Frank Reed
- a.d. 4 *Missouri Fiddlin'* by Pete McMahan
- a.d. 5 *Missouri Fiddlin' no. 2* by Pete McMahan, second by Joe Stevens
- a.d. 6 *Missouri Fiddlin' no. 2* by Pete McMahan, second Joe Stevens
- a.d. 7 *Missouri Fiddlin no. 3* by Pete McMahan
- a.d. 8 *Missouri Old Time Fiddlin'*, Lee R. Stoneking & Sons
- a.d. 9 *Missouri Fiddlin' no. 4*, by Pete McMahan
- a.d. 10 *Wes and Ricky In The Mood*, Wes Westmoreland & Ricky Boen
- a.d. 11 *Grandpa and Me*, Wes Westmoreland
- a.d. 12 *Bill Monroe Master of Bluegrass*
- a.d. 13 *Mel Bedard; 14 Favorite Fiddle Tunes*
- a.d. 14 *Rainbow of Fiddle Tunes*, by Lee R. Stoneking & Sons
- a.d. 15 *Mr. Cotton Eyed Joe Al Dean: Plays for Urban Cowboys*
- a.d. 16 *Randy Elmore: Here Comes That Boy Again*
- a.d. 17 *Fiddle Tunes/Step Dance Tunes*, Gerry Smith with Wayne and Linda
- a.d. 18 *A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World; or, My Salute to Bob Wills*, by Merle Haggard and the Strangers
- a.d. 19 *Heather Kolbrek: Brilliancy*
- a.d. 20 *Fiddle Fun with Crystal Plohman*

INDEX TERMS

subject	folders	other
Boonville Fiddle Contest, 1991		v.c. 4, DVD 4
Eddy, Bill		v.c. 3, DVD 3
Inman, Travis		v.c. 1, DVD 1
Kearns, Bill (1923-2010)	1	
Kearns, Bill (1923-2010)		v.c. 1-4, DVD 1-4
Martin, Catherine		v.c. 3, DVD 3

subject	folders	other
McMahan, Pete		v.c. 1, DVD 3
Music--Fiddling		v.c. 1-4, DVD 1-4
Songs	1	
Sorenson, Truman		v.c. 3, DVD 3