



William W. James Sheet Music Collection (SP0101)

Collection Number: SP0101

Collection Title: William W. James Sheet Music Collection

Dates: 1927-1981

Creator: James, William W. 1896-1973

Abstract: The William W. James Sheet Music Collection contains sheet music created by Springfield, Missouri, composer William W. James. The collection also contains copyright agreements between James and music publishers.

Collection Size: 0.5 cubic foot
(23 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at springfield@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection may be protected by copyrights and other rights. See [Rights & Reproductions](#) on the Society's website for more information and about reproductions and permission to publish.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *William W. James Sheet Music Collection* (SP0101); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Carol James on May 14, 2024 (Accession No. SPA0139).

Processed by: Processed by Haley Frizzle-Green, June 6, 2024

Historical Note:

William Washington James was born on December 19, 1896, to Dr. Isaac Logan James and Henrietta Christman in Shelbyville, Illinois. The James family moved to Kirksville, Missouri, in 1910 where Dr. Isaac James attended the American School of Osteopathy (now A. T. Still University). Following his graduation, the family settled in Springfield, Missouri. William studied music at Northeast Missouri State College at the age of 13, followed by composition with tutors from Peabody College. After serving in World War I with the 138th Infantry of the American Expeditionary Forces, William returned to Springfield to focus on religious compositions. His first composition, "Hear My Prayer," was published in 1927, followed by over 30 other choral compositions. Three of his hymns were sold over 250,000 times.

William owned and operated Will James Music Service in Springfield for over 36 years, earning him the title of Springfield's "Mr. Music". He was also the director of the Springfield Symphony in 1936 and was a member of Musicians Local No. 150 and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. William married choral director Clyde Luneau Cowdrey on May 17, 1919, and the couple had two children, William W. James, Jr., and Mary Frances James. William W. James, Sr., died on November 24, 1973. He was preceded in death by his wife, who died on May 3, 1969. The couple are buried in Eastlawn Cemetery in Springfield.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains published sheet music, composition drafts, and copyright agreements pertaining to William W. James' music career. There are 25 songs in the collection, including James' first published composition "Hear My Prayer." The majority of compositions include both the published works and James' handwritten drafts, in addition to copyright agreements between James and various publishers. The collection is arranged chronologically by date. Folder 22 has been left in its original order and contains multiple compositions that have been labeled "Unrenewed Copyrights in Public Domain" by James.

Container List:

Box 001	f. 1	"Hear My Prayer," 1927
	f. 2	"Can't Yo' Hear Me Moanin' Lord," 1932
	f. 3	"Death Rides High," 1933
	f. 4	"Dark Water," 1934
	f. 5	"Blow, Trumpets, Blow," 1936
	f. 6	"Come, Ye Disconsolate," 1936
	f. 7	"Who's That Tapping at My Door," 1937
	f. 8	"Out of the Depths, I Cry to Thee," 1938
	f. 9	"Jesus, Our Lord, We Adore Thee," 1939
	f. 10	"An Oriental Night," 1942
	f. 11	"Song of the Buccaneer," 1944
	f. 12	"The Little Jesus Came to Town," 1945
	f. 13	"Roadways," 1947
	f. 14	"Preserve My Soul, Oh God," 1950
	f. 15	"Hymn of Joy," 1951
	f. 16	"Alleluia," 1952

f. 17	“A Song of Praise,” 1954
f. 18	“Prepare Ye The Way of The Lord,” 1954
f. 19	“Hail The Day That Sees Him Rise,” 1959
f. 20	“Holy Lord God,” 1961
f. 21	“Peace I Leave With You,” 1963
f. 22	Unrenewed Copyrights in Public Domain, n.d.
f. 23	Schedule of Copyrights & Renewals, 1981

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