

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

95-051

GOLDSTEIN, KENNETH S.

**KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN COLLECTION OF AMERICAN
SONGSTERS**

Creator:

Type of Material:

Physical Description:

Approximately 1400 songsters

Dates:

1799-c.1935

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

This collection was compiled by and purchased from Kenneth S. Goldstein, Professor Emeritus of Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania in November of 1995.

Subject/Index Terms:

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

Kenneth S. Goldstein was a folklorist, professor, scholar, record producer, festival organizer, collector, publisher, author, and editor. Goldstein became interested in folk music and ballad scholarship when he was in the army in the 1940s. He worked as a market analyst and phonograph record and book producer prior to returning to the University of Pennsylvania in 1958 and establishing Folklore Associates, a new, used and rare book company specializing in folksong and folklore. While adding to his own library, as well as purchasing and selling items through Folklore Associates, he built choice collections of ballad broadsides, songsters, and other paper ephemera. In 1963, Mr. Goldstein received the first doctorate in folklore awarded by the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation was published the following year as *A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore* and became a standard text in the field. He was chairman of the department of folklore and folklife at Pennsylvania for more than 25 years. As a scholar of folk ballads, he conducted extensive field research in the United States, Britain, Ireland, Australia, and Canada. In the process, he collected more than 7,000 traditional oral folk songs and ballads. He established another company called Pastime Books later in his life and continued to buy, sell, and collect ballad broadsides, chapbooks, and songsters. Mr. Goldstein died in November 1995.

Scope and Content:

These are bound collections of popular songs spanning the entire 19th century and early twentieth century. Goldstein defined the songsters as “small books of three or more secular song texts intended to be sung (sometimes with tunes), four or more pages in length” Length and size range from a few pages to several hundred and from miniature (under 3 inches) to oversize. The songsters were cheaply printed by a wide variety of publishers, many for advertising purposes, thus a portion of the collection

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pertains to music in advertising. The titles and song texts cover a plethora of topics. Many are of national or patriotic description, including war-related and military. A small portion of the collection contains Civil War songs, both Northern and Confederate. Political and campaign topics, the labor movement, and sea-faring songs are included. Also included are items related to minstrel, vaudeville, and stage performance. Ethnic groups featured include Irish, Scottish, and German. Circus-related songsters date from the 1840s until the end of the 19th century. Gospel, hymns, spirituals, and other religious songsters are scattered. Other topics include children’s songs, special interest groups, ballads, and medicine show songsters.

This collection documents American popular and traditional secular song during the 19th century. The songsters are an important source for genuinely popular or vernacular musical material that also offer contemporary social, political, and cultural information.

Location:

The songsters are housed in the Rarebook (song book) collection. The majority are classified as songsters within the collection. Other items are classified as secular choral/vocal, lyrics only hymnals, gospel song books, school texts. Arrangement is by ID number within each classification.

Related Materials:

Along with the songster collection came 17 notepad sheet lecture notes written by Kenneth Goldstein and several miscellaneous manuscript items found inside the songsters. These are located in the Manuscript collection under accession number 95-051. Also purchased from Kenneth Goldstein was the Kenneth S. Goldstein Collection of American Song Broad­sides, accession number 94-017, and the Kenneth S. Goldstein Collection of Country and Western Song Folios, accession number 95-051. All are searchable by accession number in the Center’s Rarebook database. There are also other songsters within the Center’s collection (not part of the Goldstein Collection).

MARC:**EAD:**

This inventory was written by Lucinda Cockrell, Archivist, January 7, 2002. The collection was accessioned in 1995, but no inventory description was completed.