



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

ROY HARPER COLLECTION

19-007

Creator:

Harper, Roy (February 25, 1925-October 16, 2021)

Type of Material:

Manuscript Materials, Posters, Programs, Serials, Photographs

Physical Description:

Approximately 15.5 linear feet of manuscript materials in 23 boxes, 3 audio tapes (cassettes), 2 videos (DVDs), and 11 CDs

Dates:

1853-2018

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.

Abstract:

This collection contains a variety of materials that encompass the life and career of traditional country musician, Roy Harper, along with other materials regarding traditional country musicians.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

Roy Harper donated this collection to the Center in February 2019. These materials were received in three installments: February 2019; May 2019; and August 2019.

Arrangement:

The original arrangement scheme for the collection was maintained during processing where possible. Some items were organized and moved for ease of access where no apparent organization was available. Items in poor condition are housed at the end of the corresponding box. Photocopies of these items were placed in lieu of the original. For a detailed, item-level inventory list, please contact the Archivist.

Subject/Index Terms:

Harper, Roy
Traditional Country Music
Roy Harper Fan Club
Bellar, Johnny
The Sand Mountain Boys
Bynum, Blake
Rodgers, Jimmie
Jimmie Rodgers Fan Club
Swatzell, Tom
Montana, Patsy
Yodeling – “Blue Yodel”
Music Education Materials
Manchester (Tenn.)
Folklife Heritage Award

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

Roy Harper was born on 1925 in Coffee County, Tennessee. As a boy, the railroad songs of Jimmie Rodgers, “The Singing Brakeman”, inspired Harper. By the age of twenty, Harper gained similar experiences in railroad jobs and performing across the country. He later performed many of Rodgers’ songs in Jimmie Rodgers-related festivals and in his own performances. While in Manchester, Tennessee in the 1940s and 1950s, he partnered with Blake Bynum in the Sand Mountain Boys, gaining recognition throughout the state. In the 1960s, Harper began recording both “blue yodels” and sentimental songs all while working as a self-taught painter of railroad scenes from his past. Harper represented Tennessee in a 1986 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife program. In 2003, Harper received the Governor’s Arts Folklife Heritage Award. He gained fans both throughout the United States and internationally. Later in life, he continued an active tour schedule at regional festivals and music programs, as well as performed for students to teach about traditional country music. [Paragraph written by Roby Cogswell, taken from Tennessee Arts Commission award]

Scope and Content:

Box 1 (“Newspapers”) contains various full-page and clippings of newspapers about Roy Harper, performances, or other musicians dating from approximately 1973-2013. It also contains photographs, mixed correspondence, and performance materials approximately dating from 1989-2014. This box was organized into 13 folders in original order taken from a 3-ring binder labeled “Newspapers.”

Box 2 (Periodicals and Publications) contains various periodicals and publications dated from 1889-2018. These items are organized into 7 folders first by type, then in chronological order when possible.

Box 3 (“Letters”) contains both business and personal correspondence. While the recipient is predominantly Roy Harper, there are a few exceptions. These materials were originally stored together in a binder labeled “Letters”. The box is organized into 14 folders in original order.

Box 4 ("Letters Vol. 2") contains various personal and business correspondence. While the recipient is predominantly Roy Harper, there are a few exceptions. These materials were originally stored together in a binder labeled, "Letters Vol. 2". This box is organized into 9 folders in original order.

Box 5 (Correspondence, Festival/Performance Materials, and Miscellaneous) contains correspondence, articles, performance materials, and miscellaneous papers placed in chronological order when possible for folders 1-2. Folders 3-9 are organized by original order and the manuscripts were originally stored in a binder. There are 9 total folders in this box.

Box 6 ("Letters / Show Dates / Pass Outs Etc.") contains a mixed collection of correspondence, promotional material, and miscellaneous performance materials. This collection was housed originally in a binder labeled, "Letters/Show Dates/Pass Outs Etc.". The contents are organized into 11 folders and are in original order.

Box 7 (Festival/Performance Materials, Images, and Articles) includes documents relating to performances and festivals, such as promotional materials, correspondence, contracts, articles, and photographs. There are 6 folders in this box. Documents are organized first by type, then chronologically where possible.

Box 8 ("My Stuff", "Letters + Fan Also", and "My Stuff/R.H. Stack") contains 3 sets of folders organized by the creator. The names of the folders are in accordance with the creator's label of it. "My Stuff" has items such as miscellaneous articles, promotional materials, and festival/performance materials. "Letters + Fan Also" primarily contains correspondence and photographs. "My Stuff / R.H. Stack" contains miscellaneous items such as promotional materials, correspondence, photographs, and articles. The folders are organized by original order for each set. There are a total of 11 folders in this box.

Box 9 ("Mixed! Good Stuff") contains article clippings, photographs, programs, and miscellaneous manuscript materials. This collection was originally organized in a binder named, "Mixed! Good Stuff". There are a total of 9 folders organized in original order.

Box 10 (Material About Other Musicians) contains materials such as newspapers and clippings, periodicals, photographs, correspondence, and other documents regarding musicians other than Roy Harper. These materials were originally divided into labeled folders. This separation has continued into the current organization with corresponding labels. Many folders are organized by the type of document with a few folders organized chronologically, by subject, or by original order. There are 19 folders total.

Box 11 (Oversized Loose Newspapers and Articles) contains oversized newspapers and articles dating from 1986-2014. These documents are organized in chronological order where possible.

Box 12 (Scrapbook) contains the contents of a scrapbook, which has been transferred to an acid-free, archival box. There are primarily photographs, newspaper and

periodical clippings, and correspondence. Many of these contents have handwritten notes on them. The contents are organized in original order.

Box 13 (Photo Album #1) contains a green photo album that contains primarily photographs and newspaper clippings. There were loose materials (items not attached to album) throughout and are now located within folders for preservation purposes. All items are in original order, including the loose materials.

Box 14 (Photo Album #2) contains an original photo album with primarily photographs. There are a few documents and newspaper clippings. The original album is intact, and the contents are in original order.

Box 15 (Photographs and Miscellaneous) contains primarily photographs, correspondence, and magazine clippings. Folder 1 through 3 originally were stored in a folder labeled "Photographs". Folders 1 through 3 are organized in original order. Folders 4 through 7 were originally loose items in the boxes the collection arrived in and are currently organized by subject.

Box 16 (Handwritten Song Lists and Set/Song Lyrics) contains documents with handwritten song lyrics and set/song lists. There are 7 folders total in this box plus 1 folder containing items in poor condition. Items are organized by type and content. Folders 1-4 contain documents that only contain song lyrics. Folders 5-7 contain documents that either contain a mixture of song lyrics and set/song lists or solely contain either song lyrics or set/song lists. Some papers contain remnants of glue or tape and were separated when safe and possible.

Box 17 (Set/Song Lists and Handwritten Song Lyrics) contains a mixture of typed or handwritten set/song lists and handwritten song lyrics and are organized by contents. There are 11 folders total in this box plus 1 folder containing items in poor condition.

Box 18 (Sheet Music and Typed Song Lyrics) contains sheet music and typed song lyrics. The documents are divided into 4 folders and are organized by content. There is 1 folder at the end of the box containing items in poor condition.

Box 19 (Festival/Performance Posters (1987-1999 and Undated)) contains oversized festival/performance posters. They are organized chronologically where possible.

Box 20 (Oversized Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper) contains oversized handwritten set/song lists and handwritten lyrics written on paper.

Box 21 (Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard) contains handwritten set/song lists and handwritten song lyrics. Materials in this box include paper, cardboard, and/or a mix thereof. Some materials contained tape or glue and were removed when safe and possible.

Box 22 (Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard) contains handwritten set/song lists and handwritten song lyrics. Materials in this box include paper, cardboard, and/or a mix thereof. Some materials contained tape or glue and were removed when safe and possible

Box 23 (Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard) contains handwritten set/song lists and handwritten song lyrics. Materials in this box include paper, cardboard, and/or a mix thereof. Some materials contained tape or glue and were removed when safe and possible.

Collections Contents (Box/Folder):

Box # Folder # Description:

Box 1 "Newspapers"

[13 folders with contents originally housed in a 3-ring binder labeled "Newspapers" by the creator]

Box 2 Periodicals and Publications

- Folder 1 "The 8th Annual TVOTFA Convention"
- Folder 2 Periodicals 1899-1964
- Folder 3 Periodicals/Publications 1968-1978
- Folder 4 Periodicals 1986-1992
- Folder 5 Periodicals/Publications 1992-1995
- Folder 6 Periodicals/Publications 1996-2018
- Folder 7 Undated Published Documents

Box 3 "Letters"

[14 folders with contents originally housed in a 3-ring binder labeled "Letters" by the creator]

Box 4 "Letters Vol. 2"

[9 folders with contents originally housed in a 3-ring binder labeled "Letters Vol. 2" by the creator]

Box 5 Correspondence, Festival/Performance Materials, and Miscellaneous

- Folder 1 Correspondence 1942-1998
- Folder 2 Correspondence 2001-2016 and Undated
- Folder 3 Correspondence (Original Order 1 of 7)
- Folder 4 Articles and Performance Materials (Original Order 2 of 7)
- Folder 5 Correspondence and Church Program (Original Order 3 of 7)
- Folder 6 Correspondence and Article (Original Order 4 of 7)
- Folder 7 Correspondence and Article (Original Order 5 of 7)
- Folder 8 Article and Correspondence (Original Order 6 of 7)
- Folder 9 Correspondence and Articles (Original Order 7 of 7)

Box 6 **“Letters / Show Dates / Pass Outs Etc.”**

[11 folders with contents originally housed in a 3-ring binder labeled “Letters / Show Dates / Pass Outs Etc.” by the creator]

Box 7 **Festival/Performance Materials, Images, and Articles**

- Folder 1 2011 73rd National Folk Festival (Nashville) Materials
- Folder 2 Festival/Performance Materials 1986-1998
- Folder 3 Festival/Performance Materials 2003-2016
- Folder 4 Festival/Performance Materials, Unknown Year and Undated
- Folder 5 Miscellaneous
- Folder 6 Miscellaneous

Box 8 **“My Stuff”, “Letters + Fan Also”, and “My Stuff / R.H. Stack”**

- Folder 1 “My Stuff” (1 of 5)
- Folder 2 “My Stuff” (2 of 5)
- Folder 3 “My Stuff” (3 of 5)
- Folder 4 “My Stuff” (4 of 5)
- Folder 5 “My Stuff” (5 of 5)
- Folder 6 “Letters + Fan Also” (1 of 4)
- Folder 7 “Letters + Fan Also” (2 of 4)
- Folder 8 “Letters + Fan Also” (3 of 4)
- Folder 9 “Letters + Fan Also” (4 of 4)
- Folder 10 “My Stuff / R.H. Stack” (1 of 2)
- Folder 11 “My Stuff /R.H. Stack” (2 of 2)

Box 9 **“Mixed! Good Stuff”**

[9 folders with contents originally housed in a 3-ring binder labeled “Mixed! Good Stuff” by the creator]

Box 10 **“Material About Other Musicians**

- Folder 1 “Roy Acuff + 1 page on Bill Monroe”
- Folder 2 “Hank: All About Hank’s Last Show”
- Folder 3 “Jimmie Rodgers Stuff”
- Folder 4 “All in this Jimmie Rodgers File” (1 of 4)
- Folder 5 “All in this Jimmie Rodgers File” (2 of 4)
- Folder 6 “All in this Jimmie Rodgers File” (3 of 4)
- Folder 7 “All in this Jimmie Rodgers File” (4 of 4)
- Folder 8 “Jimmie Dale Cor”
- Folder 9 “Slim Rinehart / Gene Austin + More at Border Station”
- Folder 10 “Sonny Rodgers”
- Folder 11 “Goober”
- Folder 12 “Clayton McMichen / Letters from J. Rodgers / Daughter”
- Folder 13 “Slim Bryant – Misc. + Letters To Me”
- Folder 14 “Wade Mainer”
- Folder 15 “Raymond Hall / Millington / ‘Babe’ Howard”
- Folder 16 “Lonnie Glossom”

- Folder 17 "Henry Young" (1 of 3)
- Folder 18 "Henry Young" (2 of 3)
- Folder 19 "Henry Young" (3 of 3)

Box 11 Oversized Loose Newspapers and Articles

Box 12 Scrapbook

Box 13 Photo Album #1

Box 14 Photo Album #2

Box 15 Photographs and Miscellaneous

- Folder 1 "Photographs" (1 of 3)
- Folder 2 "Photographs" (2 of 3)
- Folder 3 "Photographs" (3 of 3)
- Folder 4 Miscellaneous Photographs (1 of 2)
- Folder 5 Miscellaneous Photographs (2 of 2)
- Folder 6 Miscellaneous Photographs and Correspondence
- Folder 7 Miscellaneous Photographs and Magazine Clippings

Box 16 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists

- Folder 1 Handwritten Song Lyrics (1 of 4)
- Folder 2 Handwritten Song Lyrics (2 of 4)
- Folder 3 Handwritten Song Lyrics (3 of 4)
- Folder 4 Handwritten Song Lyrics (4 of 4)
- Folder 5 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (1 of 3)
- Folder 6 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (2 of 3)
- Folder 7 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set Song Lists (3 of 3)

Box 17 Set Song Lists and Handwritten Song Lyrics

- Folder 1 Set Lists/Song Lists
- Folder 2 Handwritten Set/Song Lists with Notes
- Folder 3 Handwritten Song Lyrics
- Folder 4 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (1 of 8)
- Folder 5 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (2 of 8)
- Folder 6 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (3 of 8)
- Folder 7 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (4 of 8)
- Folder 8 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (5 of 8)
- Folder 9 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (6 of 8)
- Folder 10 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (7 of 8)
- Folder 11 Handwritten Song Lyrics and Set/Song Lists (8 of 8)

Box 18 Sheet Music and Typed Song Lyrics

- Folder 1 Sheet Music (1 of 2)
- Folder 2 Sheet Music (2 of 2)

Folder 3 Typed/Photocopied Song Lyrics (1 of 2)
Folder 4 Typed/Photocopied Song Lyrics (2 of 2)

Box 19 Festival/Performance Posters (1987-1999 and Undated)

Box 20 Oversized Set/Song Lyrics: Paper

Box 21 Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard

Box 22 Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard

Folder Stack #1
Folder Stack #2
Bottom Stack Loose Lyric Sheets (Paper)

Box 23 Handwritten Set/Song Lists and Lyrics: Paper and Cardboard

Folder Stack #1
Folder Stack #2
Bottom Stack Loose (Oversized)

Location:

All manuscripts are located in the special collections storage area filed by accession number.

Related Materials:

The Center holds other manuscript, audio, and video collections related to traditional country music, notably the Tom Morgan Collection (09-015), Charles K. Wolfe Audio Collection (05-023), and Henry Young: Jimmie Rodgers Collection (91-076). Special collection sheet music, performance documents, trade catalogs, photographs, sound recordings, rare books, and reading room materials related to the subjects of traditional country music are also held by the Center and searchable through the CPM website database or MTSU Walker Library catalog.

Processed by Sarah F. Robles, January 2021-March 2022.