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

JOHN A. McCLUNG HARTFORD MUSIC COMPANY COLLECTION 04-008

Creator:
Gibson, T. J. (Thelma Jean) McClung
McClung, John A (1891-1942)

Type of Material:
Song Books, Photographs, Manuscripts

Physical Description:
37 Books
26 Photographs
2 pieces of sheet music
.1 linear feet of manuscript materials
2 sound recordings (on deposit)

Languages:
English

Dates:
1920 – 2001

Access/Restrictions:
The collection is open for research use. *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.*

Preferred Citation: (Box Number, Folder Number/Name), John A. McClung Hartford Music Company Collection 04-008, Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Provenance and Acquisition Information:
Compiled and donated by Thelma Jean McClung Gibson, daughter of John McClung, to the Center for Popular Music in October 2004.

Subject/Index Terms:
Music Publishing
Gospel Music

Arkansas
John A. McClung
Hartford Music Company

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:
John Alexander McClung was born January 1, 1891 in Talihina, Oklahoma. He served in France during World War I. During the war, he composed poems and put them to music. He was honorably discharged from service and shortly thereafter moved to Hartford, Arkansas. There he attended the Hartford Music Institute, owned by E. M. Bartlett. John became an instructor and sang with various Hartford Quartets. He later became co-owner of the company and traveled the United States teaching singing schools. He was also a member of the Hartford Quartet that toured the country singing at various radio stations. Throughout these years, John McClung continued to write songs. John married Minnie Cunningham in 1928 and they had six children. The McClungs ran the Hartford Music Company, which published gospel song books, as well as the Hartford Music Institute singing schools, or Normals. For years they boarded students of these schools in their home. John McClung remained the owner and President of the Hartford Music Company and composed over 300 songs until his death on July 23, 1942. McClung has written “Standing Outside”, “Death Will Never Knock On Heaven’s Door” and his last and most famous, “Just A Rose Will Do,” which became a gospel music standard.

Scope and Content:
This collection constitutes aspects of the history of a small gospel publishing company and singing school in Arkansas through one of its owners, John A. McClung. Gospel song books in the collection were published by fifteen different publishers including the Harford Music Company, Stamps-Baxter Music Company, Ruebush-Kieffer Company, Singer Music Company, Hall & McCreary Company, Morris-Henson Company, Presbyterian Book Store, Fort Smith Song Book Company, Methodist Publishing House, and the J. W. Burke Company.

The majority of the papers are photocopies given by T. J. Gibson, the daughter of John A. McClung. Mrs. Gibson retains the originals. Papers consist of photocopies of newspaper articles, serials, and various excerpts pertaining to the Hartford Music Company and the Hartford Music Institute singing school. Photocopies of J. A. McClung’s marriage and death certificates are included.

Collection Contents (Folder/Box List):

MANUSCRIPTS:

Box #1	Folder #	Description
1	1	Papers
	2	Photographs
	3	Sheet music

Oversized map drawer

Certificate from the Hartford Musical Institute: Miss Nora Steele June 28, 1929
Original December 19, 1929 issue of Hartford Harold newspaper
Original large photograph of the Hartford Musical Institute, taken in Arkansas, shows participants in the singing school circa 1930.

Photographs (all copies)
Listed in order

J. A. McClung
Minnie G. Cunningham and J. A. McClung shortly after marriage May 5, 1929.
Clyde Garner, Al Halp, J.A. McClung, Austin Arnold, Doy Ott
T.J. McClung outside The Hartford Music Co.
Hartford Music Institute Instructors: Hartford, Arkansas
William Ramsey, J. H. Ruebush, E. M. Bartlett, J. A. McClung, L. D. Huffstuttler, Robert Vaughan, C. L. Murphree, G. L. Lindsey.
Hartford Music Institute, n.d.
Hartford Music Institute, First Baptist Church, Hartford, Arkansas, early 1920s.
Hartford Music Institute, n.d.
Minnie G. Cunningham and J. A. McClung, 1930s.
Hartford Musical Institute, Fort Smith, Arkansas, 1934.
Hartford Musical Institute Instructors, n.d.
Hartford Musical Institute Instructors, Thomas Benton, Mrs. J. S. Adams, Fern Waits, L. H. Bone, J. A. McClung, W. O. Cooper, R. V. Vaughan, Doy Ott, Austin Arnold, L. D. Huffstuttler, R. V. Condrey.
Hartford Quartet: Oris Baldwin, Ancil Baker, Jack Hendry, Al Mabray, Charles Jeffers, Convention Hall Hartford & Harmony Boy Concert, June 24, 1949; and Hartford Quartet: Oris Baldwin, Troy Lumpkin, Ancil Baker, Charles Jeffers, The Concert at Sandsprings High School, March 7, 1949; and Hartford Quartet: Jack Marshall, Troy Lumpkin, Jack Hendry, Ancil Baker, Charles Jeffers, Singing Convention, November 13, 1948.
Hartford School, Hot Springs, Arkansas, June, 1941.
Hartford Singing School, Hartford, Arkansas, 1939.
Minnie McClung's sister, Nancy Cunningham, setting type at the Hartford Music Company,
Hartford, Arkansas.
Jake Hess and the Imperials
The Statesmen Quartet
The Hartford Institute, n.d.
Hartford Singing School, Hartford, Arkansas, n.d.
Charlie Waller with J. A. McClung's piano at the SGMA Museum
James Blackwood, Brumley Singing, August 2001.
The Statesmen Quartet, Brumley Singing, August 2001.

Location:
The gospel song books and sheet music have been separated, cataloged in the Center's archive database and housed in their respective areas of the stacks. All other manuscript items (including photograph photocopies) are located in miscellaneous manuscripts box by accession number in the Manuscript area. The original large (19 x 9 ¼ inch) Hartford Musical Institute photograph is located in the Oversize Photographs box in the oversize section of the stacks. The original Hartford Herald newspaper is housed in the extra-large metal cabinet in the Manuscript drawer by accession number.

Related Materials:
The Center for Popular Music holds other Hartford Music Company publications in the Rare Books category of its Special Collections, searchable in the archival database. Two instantaneous discs are on deposit from Mrs. Gibson and located in the manuscript holding area on the mezzanine, filed by accession number.

Finding aid updated by Olivia Beaudry, CA, July 2026.
[LPC 2004, updated 6/2007.]