

WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER HANDY COLLECTION

PAPERS, 1900 - 1979

Scope Note

W. C. HANDY COLLECTION  
(WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER HANDY)  
PAPERS, 1900 - 1979

The W. C. Handy (William Christopher Handy) Collection was given to Fisk University in 1979 by his brother, Charles Handy. The collection comprises three manuscript boxes of biographical information; correspondence; sheet music; catalogs; miscellaneous items; and memorabilia.

W. C. HANDY

(WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER HANDY)

(1873 - 1958)

William Christopher Handy (W. C. Handy) was born November 16, 1873 in Florence, Alabama, the son of a minister and guitar playing mother. His musical training began at Florence District School for Negroes. When a trumpeter came to Florence to play in a Baptist Choir, he was so impressed that he decided to try the instrument and taught himself.

Handy learned how to write music by arranging choral parts for church choirs while in junior high school. In 1892, he traveled to Chicago, where later he became bandmaster for Mahara'a Minstrels which toured the United States, South America and Cuba.

He settled in Memphis, Tennessee where he organized a band. In 1909, he wrote "Mr. Crump" for the political boss of Memphis who was running for office. After Crump's victory, Handy earned the title "Father of the Blues."

Following his writing of the "Memphis Blues," he organized the Pace and Handy Music Company and published his famous "The St. Louis Blues." The company moved to New York because of the demand for his music. Handy produced more than one hundred and fifty compositions. He died in New York on March 28, 1958.

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REGISTER

Box 1

- f. 1--Biographical Information
- 2--Correspondence
- 3--Recognition
- 4--Clippings
- 5--Photos
- 6--Clippings
- 7--Programs
- 8--Sheet Music-A
- 9--" " -B
- 10--" " -C--F

Box 2

- f. 1--Sheet Music-G--J
- 2--" " -K--M
- 3--" " -N
- 4--" " -Q--R
- 5--" " -S

Box 3

- f. 1--Sheet Music-S (con't)
- 2--" " -T--V
- 3--" " -W--Z
- 4--" " -Misc.
- 5--" " -Misc.