

SCOTT JOPLIN COLLECTION

PAPERS, 1900 - 1951

SCOPE NOTE

The Scott Joplin Collection was given to Fisk University by Samuel Brunson Campbell, a composer, musician, and white protegee of Scott Joplin.

The collection contains three boxes of newspaper clippings; correspondence; manuscripts of Samuel Brunson Campbell, "A Hop Heads," "From Rags to Ragtime and Riches," and "The Ragtime Kid,"; printed matter; photographs; and Joplin published sheet music.

*Note: Joplin's work is also included in the E. R. Alexander Collection of Sheet Music.

SCOTT JOPLIN

(1868 - 1917)

Scott Joplin was an itinerant pianist and a composer. Born in Texarkana, Texas, which he left in his youth, he wandered to such cities as Sedalia and St. Louis, Missouri, Chicago and New York where he died on April 11, 1917. His parents were Giles and Florence (Givens) Joplin; he had both two brothers and sisters. Like many other musicians he was drawn to Chicago in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition. There, he met Otis Saunders who, while acting as his manager, influenced him to enter the George R. Smith College for Negroes in Sedalia. He studied advanced courses in harmony and composition at this school. When John Stark published MAPLE LEAF RAG in 1899, one of the most important composer-publisher relationships of this period began. Both men considered ragtime music, serious music; they were its foremost developers as long as the public maintained an interest in it. MAPLE LEAF RAG became a hit. It still tops the list of Joplin's fifty odd ragtime compositions and arrangements and is known as the classic compositions of the ragtime genre. In 1900, Joplin married Belle Hayden; she died in 1908. 1903 is the year that Joplin's first opera, A GUEST OF HONOR was copyrighted; it was given a single performance in a St. Louis dance hall but was never published. In 1908 he wrote a small book of instruction for the playing of ragtime; it was called SCHOOL OF RAGTIME -- EXERCISES FOR PIANO. The only present day indications of his playing derive from piano rolls which he made of his own compositions. About 1909, Joplin married Lottie Stokes in New York. In 1911, he copyrighted and published TREEMONISHA; Opera in Three Acts. One performance of this took place in the Lincoln Theater, Harlem in 1915. Joplin had hoped to attract a backer for the opera but, when he learned that the audience was unimpressed by it (totally), he was crushed. An unusual legend has grown

up around his funeral: It is said that when his funeral train passed through Harlem, each of the forty-nine carriages bore the name of one of his hits. MAPLE LEAF RAG, of course, led the **pro**cession.

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Box 1

- f. 1--Biographical Data
2--Correspondence--Letters From Arna Bontemps to Samuel Brunson Campbell
--1947-1948
3--Correspondence--Letter From Arna Bontemps to Mrs. Scott Joplin--1948
4--Correspondence--Letter From Samuel Brunson Campbell to Martha Hursey
--1948
5--Correspondence--Letters From Samuel Brunson Campbell to Arna Bontemps
--1947-1948
6--Correspondence--Letters From ^{Mrs.} Scott Joplin and G. Tom Ireland to Samuel
Brunson Campbell--1947
Sheet Music
7--"Antoinette"
8--"The Chrysanthemum"
9--"Country Club"
10--"The Easy Winners"
11--"Elite Syncopations"
12--"The Entertainer"
13--"Eugenia"
14--"Euphonic Sounds"
15--"The Favorite"
16--"Felicity Rag"
17--"Fig Leaf: A High Class Rag"
18--"Gladiolus Rag"
19--"Kismet Rag"
20--"Magnetic Rag"
21--"Maple Leaf Rag"

Box 2

- Sheet Music
f. 1--"March Majestic"
2--"Nonpareil: (None to Equal)"
3--"Original Rags"
4--"Palm Leaf Rag"
5--"Paragon Rag"
6--"Pine Apple Rag"
7--"Pleasant Moments: Rag Time Waltz"
8--"The Ragtime Dance"
9--"Reflection Rag: Syncopated Musings"
10--"Rose Leaf Rag"
11--"Scott Joplin's New Rag"
12--"Searchlight Rag"
13--"Solace"
14--"Sugar Cane"
15--"Sunflower Slow Drag"
16--"Swipsy"
17--"The Sycamore: A Concert Rag"

Box 3

Sheet Music
1--"Treemonisha" Opera in Three Acts

Box 4

Sheet Music
1--"Wall Street Rag"
2--"Weeping Willow: A Ragtime Two-Step"
3--Scott Joplin's World Famous Jazz Classics for Piano
4--Manuscripts
5--Program
6--Photographs
7--Newspaper Clippings
8--Magazine--The Record Changer--March 1948
9--Miscellaneous Material