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

SONNY JAMES COLLECTION

Creator:
James, Sonny [James Hugh Loden] (May 1, 1928 – February 22, 2016)
Loden Family

Type of Material:
Manuscript Materials, Scrapbooks, Clippings, Performance Documents, Souvenir Items, Photographs, Manuscript Audio/Visual Materials, Sound Recordings

Physical Description:
5 linear feet of manuscript materials, including scrapbooks, clippings, programs, souvenir items, photos, Country Music Hall of Fame induction items, 5 oversized posters.
11 videos
  o 1 manuscript VHS
  o 2 – 16mm manuscript films
  o 8 – 3/4” manuscript U-Matics

4 commercial CDs
232 audio discs
  o 4 – 7” commercial LPs
  o 58 – 12” commercial LPs
  o 131 – 7” commercial 45r HMS
  o 18 – 10” manuscript LPs
  o 21 – 10” manuscript 45r HMS

260 audio tapes
  o 1 – commercial 8-track
  o 3 commercial cassette tapes
  o 11 – manuscript microcassette tapes
  o 134 – manuscript cassette tapes
  o 5 – manuscript 2 inch reel-to-reel masters
  o 5 – manuscript 1 inch reel-to-reel masters
  o 34 – manuscript 1/4 inch (10”) reel-to-reel masters
  o 12 – manuscript 1/2 inch reel-to-reel masters
Sonny James Collection 18-026

- 1 – manuscript 3 inch reel-to-reel
- 44 – manuscript 7 inch reel-to-reels
- 10 – manuscript 5 inch reel-to-reels

Dates:
1938-2016, bulk 1950-1984; 2006

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.

Provenance and Acquisition Information:
This collection was donated to the Center by Sonny James’ niece and nephew Donna Mora and Charles Holcombe. Mr. Holcombe delivered the collection to the Center on March 7, 2019.

Arrangement:
The original arrangement scheme for the collection was maintained during processing where there was order implied, including some folder naming; otherwise, the processing archivist organized the collection for ease of use.

Subject/Index Terms:
James, Sonny, 1928-2016
Grand ole opry (Radio program)
Loden, James
Loden Family Band
The Loden Family and Sonny Boy
Country music fan clubs

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:
“Sonny” James Hugh Loden was born May 1, 1928 in Hackleburg, Alabama, to a musical farming family. His parents, Archie Lee “Pop” Loden and Della Burleson Loden, and sister Thelma Lee Loden (Holcombe), known as The Loden Family, had their own radio show on WMSD-AM in Muscle-Shoals, AL in the early 1930s. The Loden Family unofficially adopted a young Ruby Palmer, who also sang in the family band. They performed as a family, and James as a solo artist, on shows such as the Louisiana Hayride and the Big D Jamboree in Dallas, TX. James also won many fiddle contests throughout the southeast.

James served in the Korean War in the Alabama Army National Guard. After his service in the military, he moved to Nashville, TN. In 1954, James was signed by Ken Nelson to Capitol Records, when it was suggested he change his stage name for simplicity to Sonny James. James became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in October 1962. In the
1970s he signed with Columbia Records. Sonny James produced Marie Osmond’s “Paper Roses”, on Columbia Records in 1973; the song sold over one million records.

From 1953 to 1983, Sonny James charted 72 times, including 23 that reached #1. According to Billboard statistics, between 1960 and 1979 he spent fifty-seven weeks in the #1 chart position—more than any other country artist of the era.

Sonny James was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006.

Scope and Content:

Collection Contents (Box/Folder List):
[Folder titles in brackets given by processing archivist.]

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<tr>
<th>Box #</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1</td>
<td>Manuscript Materials</td>
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<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Loden Family</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Alabama Music Hall of Fame</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>2005 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>2006 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>2012 Country Music Hall of Fame Medallion Ceremony</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>The Southern Gentlemen Letters to Sonny</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>CMA Membership/Notes</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Press Kits</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Sonny James Discography</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Sheet Music (*search CPM catalog for more sheet music)</td>
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<th>Box 2</th>
<th>Manuscript Materials</th>
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<td>Track listings</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
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<td>Stage Show Outline &amp; Programs</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Dial 116 Script</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Marie Osmond (includes photographs)</td>
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<th>Box 3</th>
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<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Sonny Loden &amp; His Southerners / Loden Family Band</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Sonny James Promotional photos</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Sonny James &amp; the Country Gentlemen</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Sonny James House / Tour bus</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Friends of Sonny James – Radio casts</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Friends of Sonny James</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Miscellaneous 1950s</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Southern Gentlemen Store signing [Georgia]</td>
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Folder 9  Korea [military]
Folder 10 Country Music Hall of Fame Induction photos
Folder 11 Pop Goes the Country [includes negatives]
Folder 12 Minneapolis 1975 – slides
Folder 13 “In Prison” Album photos – park photos

**Box 4  Photographs**
Folder 1 Miscellaneous photos
Folder 2 2003 Photos for website [includes negatives]
Folder 3 Reprints from website
Folder 4 Choice Photos for copies [includes negatives]
Folder 5 Sonny James album covers negatives
Folder 6 Mounted photographs

**Box 5  Clippings** [folder titles given by processing archivist]
Folder 1 Clippings – “Early Years” – Sonny Loden 1940s
Folder 2 Clippings – 1965-1966
Folder 3 Clippings – Sonny James Month Nov 1966
Folder 4 Clippings – 1967
Folder 5 Clippings – 1970
Folder 6 Clippings – 1971
Folder 7 Clippings – 1972
Folder 8 Clippings – 1973-1976
Folder 9 Clippings – 1977-1994
Folder 10 Clippings – 2000-2006
Folder 11 Clippings – Neighbor Day
Folder 12 Clippings – Country Music Hall of Fame Induction
Folder 13 Clippings – undated

**Box 6  Programs and Periodicals**
Sonny James Songbook [in Japanese]
Souvenir Program Picture Album
The Sonny James Songbook
Full Sonny James Press Kit
Amusement Business March 1, 1969
BMI: The Many Worlds of Music Fall 1987
CMA Close Up Oct/Nov 2006
Country Music People Sept 1980
Country Music People Feb 2001
Country Scene Sept 1980
Country Song Roundup Aug 1966
Country Song Roundup Oct 1967
Country Song Roundup Mar 1972
Country Weekly June 18, 2007
Hit Parader Songs & Stories June 1973
Keynotes [Capitol Records] undated
Music Capitol News Countrywide Shindig Issue May-June 1972
The Music Reporter June 29, 1963
Radio & Record Report Feb 14, 1975
Rustic Rhythm Jul 1957
TV Radio Mirror Jan 1958
TV Radio Mirror June 1963

**Box 7**  Country Music Hall of Fame Induction Book
Framed thank you speech
Leather box containing ephemera relating to induction

**Box 8**  Manuscript Scrapbook
Dorris Loden’s cookbook

**Box 9**  Fan created scrapbooks
Fan Photo album [Rehoused for preservation]
Fan’s family Sonny James Scrapbook [Rehoused for preservation]

**Box 10**  Manuscript Scrapbook
1950s black scrapbook [mostly publications/programs]

**Box 11**  Manuscript Scrapbook
1950s woodgrain scrapbook [mostly clippings]
Pearl Tie tack

**Box 12**  Manuscript Scrapbook
#1 Guitar photo album [rehoused for preservation, original retained for context]

**Box 13**  Manuscript Scrapbook
Oversized mounted family photographs
Red & Black 150s scrapbook [mostly clippings]
“My Radio Scrapbook” [early career/Loden Family, mostly photographs]

**Box 14**  Manuscript Scrapbook
“Chuck’s Red Scrapbook” [created by Charles Holcombe, Sonny James’ nephew documenting the career of Sonny James, including personal letters. This was rehoused for preservation, original scrapbook retained for context.]

**Location:**
All manuscript materials are located in the special collections storage area filed by accession number. Please contact Audio Curator and/or Archivist for audio/visual materials. Oversized posters are located in the map drawers – ask archivist for access.
Items Cataloged Separately:
Rare books:
Conway Twitty souvenir book
Super Stars of Country Music picture book
The Sonny James Songbook
Souvenir Program Picture Album [Sonny James]
Songs as Sung by Happy Wilson and his Golden River Boys
Lew Childre Memory Book: Songs, Poems and Stuff
Marson Music, Inc. Publisher’s binders [sheet music of all James’ songs]

Sheet music:
Come On In
Shutters and Boards
The Minute You’re Gone
Runnings Bear
Hold What You’ve Got
Behind the Tear
Only the Lonely
I Love You More and More Every Day
Here Comes Honey Again
A Mi Esposa Con Amor (To My Wife with Love)
I’m So In Love with You
A Little Bit South of Saskatoon
Talk of the School

Related Materials:
The George Hamilton, IV Collection (17-027), the Charlie Walker Collection (08-020),
the Osmond Collection (10-007), other Grand Ole Opry and country music items can be
found by searching the CPM catalog.

Processed by Olivia M. Beaudry, July-October 2019.