

**"ROOTS OF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC"      88-065**  
**RECORDS.**

**Physical description:**

.75 l.f. including 13 audio tapes and 5 photographs.

**Dates:**

1988-1989.

**Provenance:**

Materials collected/generated by the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN.

**Agency History:**

In the spring of 1988 Paul Wells, director, and Bruce Nemerov, sound archivist, of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN began work on a radio program entitled "Roots of American Popular Music." The program drew on the research of musicologist John Wesley Work III

(d. 1968), professor at Fisk University, Nashville, TN who collected black American sacred and secular music in the south the 1930's and 1940's.

"Roots of American Popular Music" used Professor Work's field recordings and writings to illustrate the changes in Afro-American vernacular music from emancipation to World War II and included musical selections from Ned Frazier, Frank Patterson, the Alabama Colored Sacred Harp, the Heavenly Gate Quartet, Muddy Waters and others. The 59 minute program aired over National Public Radio stations in February and March 1989.

**Scope and Content:**

This group is organized into three series by source/type of material:

Series I consists of materials collected/generated by project staff for use in preparation of the program including audio tapes and transcripts of interviews with Work's colleagues and informants, copies of articles by/about Work and black vernacular music and an audio tape and sheet music of a composition by Work.

Series II consists of materials generated by Bruce Nemerov while researching for and producing the program.

Series III includes materials generated by the distribution of the program including working and final audio tapes, scripts and publicity materials.

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**Series Description:**

Series I: Collected materials.

7 audio tapes. 3 folders. 5 photographs.

5 analog audio cassette tapes and transcripts of interviews with William Allen (TCA-0066), William Copeland (TCA-0063 A-B), Alan Lomax (TCA-0062), William Leftwich (TCA-0065) and Paul Oliver (TCA-0064). 5 photographs of William Copeland. Copies of articles about Afro-American folk songs and spirituals and blues singer "Son" Thomas and of an article about black sacred harp singing by John Work. 1 digital audio cassette tape and 1 analog reel to reel audio tape (TCD-0070, TTA-0070) of a performance of John Work's "Appalachia: Three Fiddle and Game Tunes" by pianist Jerry Perkins, Music Department, Middle Tennessee State University. Also copy of sheet music of the piece.

Series II: Nemerov production materials.

3 audio tapes. 2 folders.

Research materials including dated note cards reconstructing Work's 1941 and 1942 collecting trips. Annotated production scripts and audio sequencing notes. Scattered correspondence with individuals who were interviewed for or narrated the program and from Center director Paul Wells. 2 analog audio cassette tapes (TCA-0067 A-B) of program narrative by Ruth Smith. 1 analog reel to reel audio tape (TTA-0083) ) of readings from Work's writings by Paul Wells.

Series III: Distribution materials.

3 audio tapes. 2 folders.

Publicity materials including announcements sent to NPR stations, poster/flyer and an interview with Bruce Nemerov by Thomas Goldsmith published in the Nashville Tennessean. Final program script. 1 digital reel to reel audio tape (TCD-0085) and 2 analog reel to reel audio tapes (TTA-0085 A-B) of the master and master edit of "Roots of American Popular Music".

Note: There is some apparent overlap in type of material in Series I and Series II. However, these two series were received at different times from different individuals and have therefore been maintained separately.

**Location:**

Transcripts, articles, sheet music, script and publicity materials are filed first by accession number, then in the order listed with other manuscripts. Audio tapes are filed by tape number in the audio visual archives. Photographs of Wesley Copeland are filed alphabetically by last name in the biographical photograph file.

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**Related Materials:**

Copies of Work's own field recordings and photographs assembled for use in the program are filed as JOHN C. WORK COLLECTION (88-064).

Administrative correspondence related to program production and distribution is maintained in the Center for Popular Music office files.

Reference-use analog audio cassette copies of Perkins' performance of "Appalachia" and of the radio program are filed with commercial audio cassettes.