

RUEBUSH-KIEFFER COMPANY CORPORATE COLLECTION
(Copies of digital scans)

07-010

Physical Description:

One CD-ROM

.21 Linear feet of copies printed from digital scans

Dates

1870 – 1989 (bulk 1881-1937)

RESTRICTIONS:

Reference copies only permitted. Credit: Jenny Lind Shirley, Ann Vernon Connor, Martha Connor Alger, and Margaret Connor Fong.

Provenance:

This collection was given to the Center in June 2007 by Douglas L. Bartley, MD of White Post, Virginia, in the form of a CD-ROM. Mr. Bartley scanned the original materials from the collection of Jenny Lind Ruebush Shirley. Ms. Shirley inherited the papers from her father, James Hott Ruebush. She left them to her daughters, Martha Ellen Connor Alger and Margaret Ann Connor Fong, upon her death in 1986. The originals are in the possession of Mrs. Alger and Mrs. Fong.

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

Ruebush-Kieffer Company

Aldine Silliman Kieffer (1840-1904) was a music teacher, publisher, and leading proponent of shape note musical notation. He was the grandson of Joseph Funk, a Mennonite music teacher and publisher in Singers Glen, Virginia. Ephraim Ruebush (1883-1924) was an influential singing teacher, music publisher, and businessman. He married Funk's granddaughter and Kieffer's sister, Lucilla Virginia in 1861.

Around 1866, Kieffer and Ruebush took over Funk's publishing and printing business and began publishing numerous popular gospel songbooks. In 1873 John W. Howe, a minister, joined the two and formed the Ruebush, Kieffer & Company. Kieffer was the music editor, writer, and composer of gospel songs, Ruebush was the financial administrator, and Howe the publicist. In 1874 they established a highly influential music school for teachers. Ruebush and Kieffer moved their publishing business to Dayton, Virginia in 1878. From 1870-1914 the company published *The Musical Million*, a periodical focusing on shape notes and Southern music. Around 1890, the company changed its name to Ruebush-Kieffer Company and became one of the earliest and most successful publishers of gospel songs in America.

[source: *Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music*; W. K. Mc Neil, editor; 2005]

Jenny Lind Ruebush

Jenny Lind Ruebush Shirley was born June 4, 1890 in Dayton, Virginia, the eldest child of Professor James H. Ruebush and Ella Vernon Funkhouser Ruebush. She attended Shenandoah

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Collegiate Institute in Dayton, Virginia, graduating in 1909. She completed her education at Ward Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee and returned to Dayton to join the faculty of SCI as an instructor in piano.

In 1915 she married Professor Garland Latimer Shirley (1882-1935), also on the faculty of SCI and an occasional editor and composer for the Ruebush-Kieffer Company in Dayton. She and Garland had one child, Ann Vernon Shirley Conner (1918-2008). In 1928 Jenny Lind began teaching music in the Rockingham County, Virginia public school system. Following her retirement in 1955, she continued to play organ and piano for her church and for a variety of civic occasions. She died at her home in Dayton, Virginia on November 20, 1986.

Arrangement:

Dr. Douglas L. Bartley digitally scanned the documents and created the CD-ROM from which the copies were made. The series titles follow from Dr. Bartley's initial organization based on his original findings of the papers. The archivist then arranged the materials chronologically according to function. Page numbers penciled on the bottom right corners of each physical copy indicate the order in which they were received from Dr. Bartley.

Scope and Content:

The Ruebush-Kieffer Company Corporate Collection documents the origins and business operations of an early and successful gospel music publishing company. The collection consists of printed digital scans of deeds, articles of agreements, correspondence, certificates, receipts, balance sheets and inventories, deeds, charter, contracts, and legal claims. The collection materials describe the history of the company and detail the publishing of specific songs and books. It also includes documents that follow the emergence of Aikin's seven-character note system as the industry standard. The collection is useful for researchers interested in the development of the Southern gospel music industry and the shape-note reform movement.

Location:

The materials are located with other Manuscript Collections on the mezzanine of the special collection stacks filed by accession number.

Related Materials:

The Center has secondary sources related to gospel music and the Ruebush-Kieffer Company available in the Reading Room and searchable in Voyager. Ruebush-Kieffer Company song books may be found in the rare book collection searchable through the InMagic database. Additional manuscript materials related to Ruebush and gospel music may be found in the Archives database.

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Series Description: [For a more detailed list of Series contents please refer to the printed finding aid in the Reading Room.]

Series A: Jesse Aikin Material

July 18, 1876 - March 12, 1881

This series consists of articles of agreements and correspondence from or to Jesse B. Aiken. Aiken was a shape note singing master and compiler of the first song book (*The Christian Minstrel*) using the seven-character note system. Beginning in 1876, Ruebush-Kieffer's publications used "Aikin's Character Notes," which became the standard of the shape note music industry. The materials in this series relate to the seven-note system, typography of the music, music engraving, selected book and song titles, and other printing logistics. The music typographer involved was J. M. Armstrong & Co. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Series B: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Balance Sheets and Inventories

1889-1937

This series consists of balance sheets and inventories for the Ruebush-Kieffer Company from 1889-1911; 1922-1923; and 1928-1937. This includes itemized lists and registers of materials, goods, machinery, and book accounts with titles all written on ledger sheets. Balance sheets are broken down into "assets and liabilities" and "books finished and unfinished."

Series C: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Contracts – General Business

April 10, 1884 – April 1, 1921

This series consists of articles of agreements and a deed pertaining to Ruebush-Kieffer Company business operations. One agreement outlines character note publications by J. B. Gudgar and A. J. Showalter. Anthony Johnson Showalter (1888 – 1924) worked as a teacher, composer and agent for the Ruebush-Kieffer Co. and later began his own successful music publishing company in Dalton, Georgia. Other agreements involve company stock and royalties. The 1905 deed is for a parcel of land and a dwelling purchased from J. D. Staffer.

Series D: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Contracts – Music Publishing

Feb. 24, 1881 - August 12, 1927

This series includes multiple articles of agreements, correspondence, contracts, and receipts regarding the publishing of specific music books using Aikin's seven-character notes. Music typographers involved in the publishing were Theodore A. Bacher of Philadelphia, the Philip P. Armstrong & Co., Philadelphia, and F. H. Gilson of Boston. Song composers, copyright holders, book titles and fees are indicated on each agreement.

Series E: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Copyright Documents

1870 - 1937

This series concerns the copyright of songs or books published by the Ruebush-Kieffer Company. Correspondence between the company and the Library of Congress, legal claims, and instructions for registering copyright make up the initial group. Also in this series are forty-six copyright receipts for itemized books and sixteen book and song deposits to the Library of Congress.

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Series F: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Corporate Papers

September 30, 1878 - November 3, 1947

This series illustrates the formation of the Ruebush-Kieffer Company including documents of corporation such as an 1878 land deed, charter and articles of agreement and lot map. Later land purchases are also documented. In addition, this series contains redeemed capital stock certificates from 1895 – 1937 and various correspondence concerning the capital stock, as well as employment, insurance, and the operations of a job printing office.

Series G: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Miscellaneous Materials and Articles from Jenny Lind Shirley Collection

September 6, 1881 - July 27, 1989

A variety of documents make up this series, which were collected by Jenny Lind Ruebush Shirley. It includes articles of agreement, receipts, certificates, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and magazine articles about the Ruebush-Kieffer Company. Of note is a music catalog from the music publisher, T. A. Bacher of Philadelphia and articles pertaining to Joseph Funk. Many of the newspaper clippings and articles are from or about Grace Showalter, Librarian of Menno Simon Historical Library and Archives and author of a Ruebush-Kieffer bibliography in 1975.

Series H: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – New Building

127 pages scanned

This series has not been printed. The contents pertain to building a new facility for the Ruebush Keiffer Company in Dayton, Virginia 1905-1907. See detailed list

Folder/box list:

Box #	Folder #	Description
Box 1	Folder 1	Series A: Jesse Aikin Material Articles of Agreement between J. B. Aikin, J. M. Armstrong & Co., and Ruebush, Kieffer & Co.; July 18, 1876 and September 1, 1880. Correspondence from/to J.B.Aiken September 13, 1880 - March 12, 1881.
	Folder 2	Series B: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Balance Sheets and Inventories Balance sheets and inventories for 1889-1911; 1922-1923; and 1928-1937.
	Folder 3	Series C: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Contracts – General Business Articles of Agreements and a deed. April 10, 1884 – April 1, 1921
	Folder 4	Series D: Ruebush-Kieffer Company Contracts – Music Publishing “Papers and Correspondence of Aiken, Gilson, Armstrong and others in reference to Character Notes.” Feb. 24, 1881 - August 12, 1927.

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Box # Folder # Description

- Folder 5** **Series E: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Copyright Documents**
Copyright Correspondence:
Copyright receipts from the Library of Congress 1892 – 1937
Book and song title deposits to the Library of Congress 1870-1894
- Folder 6** **Series F: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Corporate Papers**
Corporation Documents: September 30, 1878 - April 1905
Company Share Certificates, April 5, 1895 – March 1, 1937
Correspondence: March 1920 - November 3, 1947
- Folder 7** **Series G: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – Miscellaneous Materials and
Articles from Jenny Lind Shirley Collection**
Ruebush-Kieffer Company Documents: September 6, 1881 - January 15,
1907
Articles and newspaper clippings: 1947 - 1989
- Folder 8** **Series H: Ruebush-Kieffer Company – New Building**
The contents of this series have not been printed. A detailed list of the
contents is available. Please see the archivist for help.