

Joseph F. Lamb Papers



**Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021**

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Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Thomas Barrick, 2021

Collection Summary

Title: Joseph F. Lamb Papers

Span Dates: 1899-2001

Bulk Dates: 1959-1960

Call No.: ML31.L34

Creator: Lamb, Joseph F.

Extent: 150 items

Extent: 2 containers

Extent: 2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2014572497>

Summary: Joseph Francis Lamb was an American composer and pianist of ragtime music. Together with Scott Joplin and James Scott, Lamb was one of the "Big Three" ragtime composers. The collection consists of music manuscripts, printed music, and supporting biographical papers that help document Lamb's life and contributions to the genre.

Acquisition Information

Gift, Patricia Lamb Conn, 2006.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

Thomas Barrick processed the Joseph F. Lamb Papers and coded a draft finding aid in 2012. Pamela Murrell updated the biographical information in 2021.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Joseph F. Lamb Papers are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Joseph F. Lamb Papers are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Joseph F. Lamb Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Joseph Francis Lamb was born December 6, 1887, into a musical family in the Montclair township of New Jersey. He was the youngest of four children and learned composition and piano from his two sisters who had formal training. In 1905, two years after he completed preparatory school and seminary in Canada, he became a published musician. That year, the Toronto publishing house H. H. Sparks Music Company issued his "Celestine Waltzes." They published twenty of Lamb's works during the subsequent five years.

From 1906 to 1911, Lamb directed his own ragtime ensemble, The Clover Imperial Orchestra. During this same period, two other pivotal events occurred in his life. The first transpired in 1907 while he was purchasing sheet music in the office of New York publisher John Stark. It was then that he encountered Scott Joplin. As an avid admirer of the King of Ragtime, Lamb was happy to discover that Joplin was so impressed with his music that he was willing to persuade John Stark to publish it. The Stark Music Company issued twelve of Lamb's compositions in twelve years, including "Sensation," which listed Scott Joplin as the arranger. The second momentous event of this period was Lamb's marriage to Henrietta Schultz in 1908.

For about ten months in 1910, Lamb worked as a Tin Pan Alley arranger and song plugger before returning to the textile industry. In 1914, he was hired as an accountant for L. F. Dommerich & Co. Inc., where he continued to work until he retired in 1957. His son Joseph Lamb Jr. was born in 1915. On February 20, 1920, his wife Henrietta passed away during the influenza epidemic. Nearly three years later, on November 12, 1922, Lamb remarried. Amelia Collins was the sister of a longtime friend and, after the couple moved into a large home in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, they had four children: Patricia (1924), Richard (1926), Robert (1927), and Donald (1930).

After the emergence of jazz in the early 1920s, the popularity of ragtime dwindled and Lamb faded into anonymity. It was not until nearly thirty years later during a national "ragtime revival" that his music was discovered by a new generation. Lamb subsequently submitted many of his unpublished pieces for copyright and was soon lionized for his compositional achievements. He passed away in Brooklyn on September 3, 1960, at the height of his musical rebirth. Posthumously, he received New York's distinguished citizen award from Mayor Mario Cuomo and, in 1974, Public School No. 206 in Brooklyn was named The Joseph F. Lamb School in honor of his contribution to American music.

Scope and Content Note

The Joseph F. Lamb Papers span from 1899 to 2001, with the bulk of the material dating from 1959 to 1960. Holograph piano and piano-vocal scores, as well as printed scores, comprise the forty-six titles in the [Music](#) series. The [Biographical Materials](#) consist of photocopied clippings, correspondence, articles and writings about Lamb, several photographs, and other miscellaneous items.

Organization of the Joseph F. Lamb Papers

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Music, 1905-1993](#)
- [Biographical Materials, 1899-2001](#)

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Lamb, Joseph F. (Joseph Francis), 1887-1960--Archives.

Lamb, Joseph F. (Joseph Francis), 1887-1960--Correspondence.

Lamb, Joseph F. (Joseph Francis), 1887-1960.

Subjects

Composers--United States--Biography.
Composers--United States--Correspondence.
Piano music (Ragtime)

Titles

Joseph Lamb collection, circa 1908-1959

Form/Genre

Articles.
Autographs (Manuscripts)
Biographies.
Business correspondence.
Clippings (Information artifacts)
Personal correspondence.
Photographs.
Ragtime music.
Scores.

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1

Series

Music, 1905-1993

The music materials consist of holograph and printed scores for solo piano or piano-vocal works by Lamb. Includes some sheet music.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

BOX 2

Biographical Materials, 1899-2001

This series includes articles, clippings, correspondence, personal documents, photographs, and realia that help document the life of Joseph Lamb.

Arranged alphabetically by format.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Music, 1905-1993 The music materials consist of holograph and printed scores for solo piano or piano-vocal works by Lamb. Includes some sheet music. Arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX-FOLDER 1/1	The Alabama Rag, 1960 By Amelia L. Lamb and Joseph F. Lamb Manuscript score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Dedicated to our son Joseph F Lamb Jr."
BOX-FOLDER 1/2	The Alaskan Rag, 1959 Photocopy of score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Respectfully dedicated to my friend 'Ragtime Bob' Darch"
BOX-FOLDER 1/3	American Beauty Rag: A Rag of Class, 1913 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/4	Arctic Sunset: A Ragtime Serenade, 1960 By Amelia L. Lamb and Joseph F. Lamb Manuscript score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Dedicated to the first settlers of Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada"
BOX-FOLDER 1/5	Bird-brain Rag, 1959 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/6	Blue Grass Rag, 1960 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/7	Bohemia: Rag, 1919 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/8	Brown Derby no. 2, 1993 Alternate title: Untitled Rag Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/9	Celestine Waltzes, 1905 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/10	Champagne Rag, 1910 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/11	Chimes of Dixie: Chartacteristic Cake-walk, 1960 By Amelia L. and Joseph F. Lamb Manuscript score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Dedicated to our son Donald G. Lamb"
BOX-FOLDER 1/12	Cleopatra Rag, 1915 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/13	The Contentment Rag, 1915 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/14	Cottontail Rag, 1959 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/15	Dear Blue Eyes - True Eyes, 1908 Words by Llyn Wood Printed piano-vocal score

Music, 1905-1993

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 1/16	Ethiopia: A Rag, 1909 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/17	Excelsior: A Rag, 1909 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/18	Firefly Rag, 1960 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/19	Florentine, 1906 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/20	Gee, Kid! But I Like You, 1909 Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/21	Good and Plenty Rag, 1959 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/22	The Homestead Where the Suwanee River Flows, 1909 Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/23	Hot Cinders: A Novelty, 1959 Manuscript score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Dedicated to my granddaughter, Cindy"
BOX-FOLDER 1/24	I Love You Just the Same, 1910 Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/25	I Want to Be a Bird-man, 1913 Words by G. Saterlee Photocopy of printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/26	If Love Is a Dream Let Me Never Awake, 1908 Words by Llyn Wood Photocopy of printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/27	I'll Follow the Crowd to Coney, 1913 Words by G. Saterlee Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/28	Joe Lamb's Old Rag, 1959 Manuscript score for piano <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "Dedicated to my wife Melie"
BOX-FOLDER 1/29	Let's Do it Again, undated Manuscript piano-vocal score (no lyric) <i>Note:</i> Inscribed "To Mrs. Lamb"
BOX-FOLDER 1/30	The Liliputian's Bazaar, 1905 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/31	The Lost Letter, 1908 Words by Margret Anger Cawthorpe Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/32	Love in Absence, 1909 Words by Mary A O'Reilly Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/33	Love's Ebb Tide, 1908 Words by Samuel A. White Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/34	My Fairy Iceberg Queen, 1910 Printed piano-vocal score

Music, 1905-1993

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 1/35	Nightingale Rag, 1915 Alternate title: Ragtime Nightingale Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/36	The Old Home Rag: A Syncopated Characteristic, 1959 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/37	Patricia Rag, 1916 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/38	Playmates, 1910 Words by Will Wilander Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/39	Ragtime Bobolink, 1960 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/40	Ragtime Reverie, 1993 Alternate title: Untitled Rag no. 2 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/41	Reindeer: Ragtime Two-step, 1915 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/42	Sensation: A Rag, 1908 Arranged by Scott Joplin Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/43	Three Leaves of Shamrock on the Watermelon Vine, 1908 Words by Harry Moore Printed piano-vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 1/44	Thoroughbred Rag, 1960 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/45	Toad Stool Rag, 1959 Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/46	The Topliner Rag, 1916 Photocopy of printed score for piano
BOX 2	Biographical Materials, 1899-2001 This series includes articles, clippings, correspondence, personal documents, photographs, and realia that help document the life of Joseph Lamb. Arranged alphabetically by format.
BOX-FOLDER 2/1	Articles, 1916-1989 and undated Photocopied articles and writings about Joseph F. Lamb
BOX-FOLDER 2/2	Clippings, 1899-2001
BOX-FOLDER 2/3	Correspondence, 1959-1960 and undated Photocopied and typescript letters
BOX-FOLDER 2/4	Miscellany 1960-1974 and undated Awards, birth certificate, marriage certificate, Social Security card
BOX-FOLDER 2/5	Photographs, 1901-1958 Images of Lamb's family, school, minstrel group, and portrait; image of journalist Russell Cassidy with Lamb
BOX-FOLDER 2/6	Realia, 1911, 1959 Pressing plate for wedding announcement; plaque from The Ragtime Music Lovers of Toronto, Canada