Joseph F. Lamb Papers

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

Contact information: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2014572497

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu021010

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td><strong>Music, 1905-1993</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|           | 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/1</strong></td>
<td>The Alabama Rag, 1960</td>
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<tr>
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<td>By Amelia L. Lamb and Joseph F. Lamb</td>
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<td>Manuscript score for piano</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Note:</em> Inscribed &quot;Dedicated to our son Joseph F Lamb Jr.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/2</strong></td>
<td>The Alaskan Rag, 1959</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Photocopy of score for piano</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Note:</em> Inscribed &quot;Respectfully dedicated to my friend 'Ragtime Bob' Darch&quot;</td>
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<td>American Beauty Rag: A Rag of Class, 1913</td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/4</strong></td>
<td>Arctic Sunset: A Ragtime Serenade, 1960</td>
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<td></td>
<td>By Amelia L. Lamb and Joseph F. Lamb</td>
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<td>Manuscript score for piano</td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/11</strong></td>
<td>Chimes of Dixie: Characteristic Cake-walk, 1960</td>
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<td></td>
<td>By Amelia L. and Joseph F. Lamb</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Note:</em> Inscribed &quot;Dedicated to our son Donald G. Lamb&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOX-FOLDER 1/15</strong></td>
<td>Dear Blue Eyes - True Eyes, 1908</td>
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<td>Words by Llyn Wood</td>
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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  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/21 | Good and Plenty Rag, 1959  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/22 | The Homestead Where the Suwanee River Flows, 1909  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/23 | Hot Cinders: A Novelty, 1959  
Manuscript score for piano  
*Note:* 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  
*Note:* Inscribed "Dedicated to my wife Melie" |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/29 | Let's Do it Again, undated  
Manuscript piano-vocal score (no lyric)  
*Note:* 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 |
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Photocopy of printed score for piano |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/36 | The Old Home Rag: A Syncopated Characteristic, 1959  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/37 | Patricia Rag, 1916  
Photocopy of printed score for piano |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/38 | Playmates, 1910  
Words by Will Wilander  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/39 | Ragtime Bobolink, 1960  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/40 | Ragtime Reverie, 1993  
Alternate title: Untitled Rag no. 2  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/41 | Reindeer: Ragtime Two-step, 1915  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/42 | Sensation: A Rag, 1908  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/43 | Three Leaves of Shamrock on the Watermelon Vine, 1908  
Words by Harry Moore  
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/44 | Thoroughbred Rag, 1960  
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| 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 |