

John William "Blind" Boone Music



**Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2024**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018571975>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu024001>

Prepared by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Jada Twitty, 2024 January

Collection Summary

Title: John William "Blind" Boone Music

Inclusive Dates: circa 1907-1918

Call No.: ML31.B66

Creator: Boone, Blind, 1864-1927

Creator: Humberd, Charles Dean

Extent: 20 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: 1 linear foot

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018571975>

Summary: John William "Blind" Boone was a Black composer, concert pianist, and a significant figure in early ragtime music. The collection contains Boone's published works, Charles Dean Humberd's transcriptions of works by or attributed to Boone, and an unfinished biographical article by Humberd.

Acquisition Information

The John William "Blind" Boone Music was purchased in 1981 from the estate of Charles Dean Humberd.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

Loras Schissel processed the John William "Blind" Boone Music in 2022. Jada Twitty coded the finding aid in 2023.

Titles in brackets were derived by Loras Schissel using lyrics from the chorus of the works. Schissel determined this naming scheme using the titles of other songs by Boone as a reference.

Other Repositories

The Blind Boone Memorial Foundation, Inc. Papers at the State Historical Society of Missouri contain music, correspondence, programs, and posters.

Related Material

Printed scores for Boone's solo piano works are cataloged in M25.B, M31.B, and M32.B. Scores of his songs for voice and piano are cataloged in M1622.B.

Copyright Status

Materials from the John William "Blind" Boone Music 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 John William "Blind" Boone Music is 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 on using or copying materials may apply.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of the collection is available on one reel that is shelved as Music-3554. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are encouraged to consult the microfilm edition.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], John William "Blind" Boone Music, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

John William "Blind" Boone was a Black pianist and composer born on May 17, 1864, in Miami, Missouri, to Rachel Boone, a U.S. Army cook, and an unidentified musician in the U.S. Army. "Blind" Boone was not born blind. At an early age, he contracted an illness that medical professionals of the time determined was only curable by removing his eyes.

By age three, Boone was showing interest and talent in music. In 1872, with the financial support of his local community, Boone was sent to the St. Louis School for the Blind to foster and develop his musical talent and receive a formal education. Although he disliked the academic program, during his first year he succeeded at becoming proficient at playing piano by ear. When the school placed Boone in a broom-making trade class, he began sneaking out of school to listen to music in the "Tenderloin" district of St. Louis. The frequency of these trips led to Boone's expulsion after his second year.

Boone had difficulty getting his music career started. Upon his return from school, he toured with a small band, and then with a gambler who exploited Boone and his talents until he was rescued by his stepfather. Boone began touring again and encountered John Lange Jr., who took an interest in Boone and invested in his career, paying for him to receive formal piano training at Christian College and Iowa State Teachers College. While there, he was exposed to the music of classical composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Franz Liszt.

During this time, Lange and Boone established the Blind Boone Concert Company. They held their first concert in 1880 and went on to tour the United States, Canada, and Mexico for thirty years. Boone performed a wide range of music, including original compositions, plantation songs, spirituals, classical works, and ragtime tunes. The Blind Boone Company traveled under the slogan "We Travel on Merit, Not Sympathy" to keep the focus on Boone's talents rather than his blindness. Boone married Lange's sister Eugenia (1870-1931) in 1889.

Upon Lange's death in 1916, the Blind Boone Concert Company's success rapidly declined. Despite fewer bookings and performance opportunities due to the changing world of entertainment, as well as a resurgence of racism and prejudice, Boone continued to perform until his last concert on May 31, 1927, just months before he died on October 4, 1927.

Bibliography

Sears, Ann. "John William 'Blind' Boone, Pianist-Composer: 'Merit, Not Sympathy, Wins.'" *Black Music Research Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2, Autumn 1989, pp. 225-247.

Scope and Content Note

The John William "Blind" Boone Music spans a period from about 1907 to 1918. It consists of printed music and manuscripts of works by or attributed to Boone that were transcribed by Dr. Charles Dean Humberd (1897-1960), a physician. Also included is an unfinished biographical article on Boone written by Humberd.

Organization of the John William "Blind" Boone Music

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Music, circa 1907-1918](#)
- [Biographical Article about Boone, 1916](#)

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

Boone, Blind, 1864-1927.

Boone, Blind, 1864-1927.

Humberd, Charles Dean, 1897-1960.

Subjects

Composers--United States--Biography.

Pianists--United States--Biography.

Piano music.

Popular music--United States.

Ragtime music.

Songs with piano.

Spirituals (Songs)

Form/Genre

Autographs (Manuscripts)

Biographies.

Dance music.

Musical texts.

Ragtime music.

Scores.

Songs.

Spirituals (Songs)

Description of Series

Container	Series <u>Music, circa 1907-1918</u> Manuscript and printed scores for solo piano and voice and piano by John William "Blind" Boone. Manuscript transcriptions are in the hand of Charles Dean Humberd. This series also includes one piece by John L. Braceland. Arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX-FOLDER 1/21	<u>Biographical Article about Boone, 1916</u> This series consists of an unfinished biographical article about Blind Boone by Charles Dean Humberd.

Container List

Container	Contents
	Music, circa 1907-1918
	Manuscript and printed scores for solo piano and voice and piano by John William "Blind" Boone. Manuscript transcriptions are in the hand of Charles Dean Humberd. This series also includes one piece by John L. Braceland. Arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX-FOLDER 1/1	Blind Boone's Aurora Waltz, circa 1907 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/2	Dance des Negres, Caprice de Concert, no. 3 Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/4	Gavotte Chromatique, 1918 March 29-30 Transcribed by Charles Dean Humberd Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/3	Gavotte Chromatique, undated Transcribed and simplified by Charles Dean Humberd Manuscript score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/5	Geo'Gia Melon, circa 1908 Printed score for voice and piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/6	[He's the Man Up in the Moon], undated Attributed to Boone Manuscript score for voice and piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/7	I Have a Heaven in the Promised Land, undated Attributed to Boone Manuscript score for voice and piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/8	Kansas Song, undated Attributed to Boone Manuscript score for voice and piano <i>Laid in:</i> Lyric sheet
BOX-FOLDER 1/9	Last Dream Waltzes, circa 1909 Attributed to Boone Printed score for piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/11	[As] Long as I Can Feel the Spirit, undated Manuscript score for voice and piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/12	[As] Long as I Can Feel the Spirit, undated Sketch <i>Laid in:</i> Lyric sheet
BOX-FOLDER 1/10	[As] Long as I Can Feel the Spirit, undated Lyric sheet
BOX-FOLDER 1/13	De Melon Season's Over, undated Attributed to Boone Manuscript score for piano <i>Laid in:</i> Lyric sheet
BOX-FOLDER 1/20	"Midnight," a serenade, undated By John L. Braceland

Music, circa 1907-1918

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER 1/14	Manuscript score for piano Open the Window, Noah, undated Attributed to Boone
BOX-FOLDER 1/15	Manuscript score for voice and piano <i>Laid in:</i> Lyric sheet Possum Song, undated Attributed to Boone
BOX-FOLDER 1/16	Manuscript score for voice and piano <i>Laid in:</i> Lyric sheet [Set of waltzes], undated Attributed to Boone
BOX-FOLDER 1/17	Manuscript scores for piano The Sun's Gonna Shine Tomorrow, undated Transcribed by Charles Dean Humberd
BOX-FOLDER 1/18	Manuscript score for voice and piano [Waltz for piano], 1918 July 8 Transcribed by Charles Dean Humberd
BOX-FOLDER 1/19	Manuscript score [You Can't Make It Win at the Gate], undated Attributed to Boone
BOX-FOLDER 1/21	Manuscript score for voice and piano
BOX-FOLDER 1/21	Biographical Article about Boone, 1916 This series consists of an unfinished biographical article about Blind Boone by Charles Dean Humberd.