Ray M. Lawless Collection AFC 1970/003

Guides to the Collections in the Archive of Folk Culture



American Folklife Center, Library of Congress Washington, D.C. April 1996

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2004695188

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af007005

Encoded by Judy Ng, June 2007 Revised January 2010

Collection Summary

Collection Number: AFC 1970/003 Title: Ray M. Lawless Collection Inclusive Dates: 1952-1965

Location: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Extent: 6 boxes Extent: 2.5 linear feet Extent: 224 folders

Creator: Lawless, Ray McKinley, 1896-

Language: English

LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2004695188

Summary: Research materials including questionnaires, some correspondence, and photographs of approximately 200 folksingers and singers of folksong (a few of them are performers of art songs and classical music) collected by Ray M. Lawless to illustrate his book, *Folksingers and Folksongs in America* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1960; second edition, 1965).

Scope and Content

Between 1952 and 1959, Lawless wrote to approximately two hundred "folksingers" and "singers of folksongs," requesting information about their lives and careers in preparation for his book Folksingers and Folksongs in America. Lawless contacted both professional and non-professional singers and also wrote to several collectors of folksongs and collectors of folk instruments. The bulk of the collection consists of Lawless's correspondence with the singers, completed questionnaires, and information sent by the singers to Lawless. Most singers also sent one or more photographs.

The collection includes responses to the prepared questionnaire, carbon copies of Lawless's correspondence, the original letters from his correspondents, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, concert programs, publicity materials, and other ephemera. It also includes some correspondence with folksingers not strictly related to the preparation of Lawless's book. For example, there is correspondence concerning the arrangement of a concert at the college where Lawless taught.

The second edition of Folksingers and Folksongs in America (1965) included a "Special Supplement" with biographical information on the generation of folksingers who became prominent around 1960-64 (e.g. Joan Baez and Odetta). To research this updated edition, Lawless drew on previously published sources and did not contact the singers directly as he had in the 1950s. Few of the 1960s folksingers listed in the "Special Supplement" are represented in this collection, and those represented are documented with black-and-white photographs and clippings, not with correspondence.

The folders contain many more black-and-white photographs than appear in Folksingers and Folksongs in America. The book included two kinds of illustrations: black-and-white photographs of artworks depicting folklife, and black-and-white photographs of musicians. The black-and-white photographs of artwork are in folder 2, "Artwork illustrations." The photograph(s) of each musician are under the name of each musician or musician group.

Biographical History

Ray McKinley Lawless was born in Wellington, Kansas in 1896 and died March 11, 1968. A veteran of World War I, Lawless received his master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1924 and completed his doctorial studies with the same institution in 1940. For over 35 years, Lawless taught as a professor of English at Hendrix College (1924-1928), Dakota Wesleyan University (1928-1931), and Junior College of Kansas City (1932-1962), later known as Metropolitan Junior College. A lifelong scholar of American literature and folksongs, he published many articles in addition to the influential and authoritative Folksingers and Folksongs in America.

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

Lawless, Ray McKinley, 1896-

Subjects

Folk music--United States.

Folk singers--Ireland.

Folk singers--Scotland.

Folk singers--United States--Correspondence.

Folk singers--United States--Photographs.

Folk songs, English--United States.

Popular music--1951-1960.

Popular music--1961-1970.

Form/Genre

Clippings.

Correspondence.

Manuscripts.

Photographic prints.

Programs.

Arrangement

Biographical materials of performing artists in the collection are organized alphabetically by the correspondent's last name.

Access

Viewing access to the collection is unrestricted. Duplication of collection materials may be governed by copyright and other restrictions. For specific questions, researchers should consult with the American Folklife Center reference staff.

Acquisition

The collection was donated to the Folklife Center Archive by Mrs. Hazel K. Lawless in 1970. Photographic negatives created from prints for reference purposes have been added to the collection. The number of negatives may increase over time as photoprints from this collection are requested.

Preferred Citation

Ray M. Lawless Collection (AFC 1970/003), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Extent (original)	Location	Item Numbers
Manuscript Materials			
224	folders	AFC	Box 1-6
Graphic Images			
142	black-and-white photographs	AFC	n/a

Description of Series

Container Series

Series I: Correspondence

Includes carbon copies of Lawless's correspondence, the original letters from his correspondents, responses to the prepared questionnaire, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, concert programs, publicity materials, and other ephemera.

Container List

Container	Contents

Container	Contents
	Series I: Correspondence
	Includes carbon copies of Lawless's correspondence, the original letters from his correspondents, responses to the prepared questionnaire, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, concert programs, publicity materials, and other ephemera.
BOX 1 FOLDER 1	Administrative materials regarding the collection
	Collection guide and correspondence. Correspondence arranged chronologically (1956-70) between the Archive of Folk Song, Exchange and Gift Division, and Mrs. Lawless.
BOX 1 FOLDER 2	ArtworkIllustrations
	18 photoprints including 17 illustrations and 1 of unknown musicians. One negative of the illustration "WRECK OF THE '97." Each illustration is identified by title, artist, donor, and photographer, but undated.
BOX 1 FOLDER 3	Adams, Derrols S.
BOX 1 FOLDER 4	Correspondence and questionnaire; portrait (negative and print) Allison, John
BUX 1 FULDER 4	
BOX 1 FOLDER 5	Correspondence and questionnaire; news clippings. Archer, Frances, and Beverly Gile
BUX I FULDER 3	
nov 1 corpen 6	Correspondence and questionnaire; programs; press release. Arkin, Alan
BOX 1 FOLDER 6	·
BOX 1 FOLDER 7	Questionnaire.
BUX I FULDER /	Baez, Joan
BOX 1 FOLDER 8	News clippings; portrait (negative and print); magazine write-ups. Bailey, Jay
BUX I FULDER O	
BOX 1 FOLDER 9	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait, 1 large and 1 small prints. Baillargeon-Cote, Helene
BUX 1 FULDER 9	
BOX 1 FOLDER 10	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print). Bair, Fred
BOX 1 FOLDER 10	
BOX 1 FOLDER 11	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint. Balfour, Nemonie
BOX 1 FOLDER 11	
BOX 1 FOLDER 12	Portrait, photoprint. Ball, E. C.
BOX 1 FOLDER 12	
BOX 1 FOLDER 13	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print). Barker, Horton
	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 14	Barnes, Bobby and Wilmer
	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; news clippings; portrait (prints).
BOX 1 FOLDER 15	Barry, Margaret
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BOX 1 FOLDER 16	Beers, Robert ("Fiddler"), and Evelyne Beers (Mrs. Fiddler)
	Correspondence; questionnaires; press releases; programs; reviews; portrait (prints).
BOX 1 FOLDER 17	Belafonte, Harry
	Correspondence; biography; questionnaire; portrait (print); news clippings; magazine write-
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BOX 1 FOLDER 18	Bender, Bill
110	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 1 FOLDER 19	Benton, Jessie
nov 1 nov non 20	Biography; questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 20	Bikel, Theodore
nov 1 pov prp 21	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 21	Black, Nettie
pov 1 por pep 22	Correspondence; questionnaire. Boette, Marie
BOX 1 FOLDER 22	
BOX 1 FOLDER 23	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint. Bonyun, Bill
BUX 1 FULDER 23	• •
BOX 1 FOLDER 24	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; news clippings. Boswell, George
BUX 1 FULDER 24	
BOX 1 FOLDER 25	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print). Boyle, Mary Ella
BUX 1 FULDER 23	
BOX 1 FOLDER 26	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print). Brand, Oscar
BOX 1 FOLDER 20	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (prints); programs; song texts; New York Folklore
	Quarterly, vol. 8, no. 4.
BOX 1 FOLDER 27	Broonzy, "Big Bill"
bon i robben z	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (negative and prints).
BOX 1 FOLDER 28	Bryan, Charles Faulkner
	Correspondence; questionnaire; biography; picture of instruments from his collection; draft
	of article to Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin March 1952 issue; portrait (print)
BOX 1 FOLDER 29	Buckley, Bruce
	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 30	Burnett, W. H.
	Questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 31	Byrne, Jerry
	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint.
BOX 1 FOLDER 32	Cahn, Rolf
	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 33	Missing
BOX 1 FOLDER 34	Cameron, Isla
	Questionnaire.
BOX 1 FOLDER 35	Campbell, Booth
	Questionnaire; photoprints.
BOX 2 FOLDER 36	Cansler, Loman
	Correspondence; news clippings; news write-up; phonograph recording release (Folkways
2 27	FH 5324); portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 37	Chalmers, Keith
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 38	Chase, Dorothy
nov 2 por per 20	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 2 FOLDER 39	Churchill, Stuart
BOX 2 FOLDER 40	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; biography; photoprint. Clark, Keith
DUA 4 FULDER 40	
	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; song score; stories; crafts.

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BOX 2 FOLDER 42	Clauson, William
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	Questionnaire.
BOX 2 FOLDER 44	Clayton, Paul
	Correspondence; questionnaire; news write-up; programs; the University of Virginia Magazine, Spring 1956, vol. 1, no. 1.
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	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 2 FOLDER 48	Copeland, Dave
	Correspondence; questionnaire.
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	Correspondence; questionnaire; news clipping; photoprint.
BOX 2 FOLDER 50	Creswell, Grace
	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait, photograph and painting, (print); programs; news clipping; biography.
BOX 2 FOLDER 51	Crisp, Rufus
	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 2 FOLDER 52	Cronin, Elizabeth
	Correspondence; questionnaire; program; biography; review.
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BOX 2 FOLDER 54	Missing
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	Correspondence; questionnaire; biography.
BOX 2 FOLDER 56	Danufsky, Philip
	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 57	Darling, Erik
	Correspondence; questionnaire; sketch of instruments; list of phonograph recordings.
BOX 2 FOLDER 58	Davis, Rev. Gary
• 50	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print and negative); news write-up.
BOX 2 FOLDER 59	Davis, Mary Jo
- a 2 - a (0	Correspondence; questionnaire; news clipping; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 60	Davis, Mr. and Mrs. T.M.
- a 2 - a (1	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint.
BOX 2 FOLDER 61	Dehr, Rich
nov 2 por per (2	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 62	Deller, Alfred
nov 2 nov nen (2	Correspondence; questionnaire.
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	Correspondence; questionnaire.

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BOX 2 FOLDER 64	Diard, Marion
	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 65	Dobson, Bonnie
	Program; portrait (print).
BOX 2 FOLDER 66	Duncan, Bob
	Correspondence; questionnaire; news clippings; program; portrait (print); biography; brochures.
BOX 2 FOLDER 67	Dyer-Bennet, Richard
	Correspondence; portrait (print); program; biography.
BOX 2 FOLDER 68	Elliott, Bill
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BOX 2 FOLDER 69	Elliot, Jack and June
Bon 2 roll blirto	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait and photograph, (prints and negative).
BOX 2 FOLDER 70	Eskin, Sam
BON 2 TOLDER TO	Correspondence; questionnaire; news write-up; program; photoprint; record notes: song texts.
BOX 2 FOLDER 71	Faier, Billy
BOX 2 POEDER / 1	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint.
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BOX 2 FOLDER /2	Portrait; news clippings.
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BOX 3 FOLDER 80	Glazer, Joe
BOX 3 FOLDER 60	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 3 FOLDER 81	Glazer, Tom
BOX 3 FOLDER 61	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print); programs; sketch.
BOX 3 FOLDER 82	Golden, Terry
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BOX 3 FOLDER 83	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print); photoprints; biography. Gooding, Cynthia
DUA J FULDER 03	Correspondence; questionnaire; news write-up, portrait (print).
BOX 3 FOLDER 84	Gordon, Hally Wood
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BOX 3 FOLDER 85	Correspondence; questionnaire; photoprint. Greer, Dr. and Mrs. I.G.
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BOX 3 FOLDER 96	Hays, Lee
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BOX 3 FOLDER 97	Hellerman, Fred
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BOX 3 FOLDER 98	Hickerson, Joe
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BOA 5 FOLDER 100	Correspondence; questionnaire.
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2011 1 1 0 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 2	Correspondence; questionnaire; programs; portrait printed on programs; news clipping; magazine write-ups.
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OX 4 FOLDER 135	McCurdy, Ed
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ov 4 por prp 120	Correspondence; questionnaire.
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BON OF OLDER 210	Correspondence; portrait (print); program.
BOX 6 FOLDER 216	White, Josh
BOX O FOLDER 210	Biography.
BOX 6 FOLDER 217	Whitmire, Ross C.
BOX OT OLDER 217	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 6 FOLDER 218	Wilder, Dick
BOX 01 OLDER 210	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 6 FOLDER 219	Williams, Betty V.
BOX O FOLDER 21)	Questionnaire; news clipping; program.
BOX 6 FOLDER 220	Williams, Cratis
BOX 0 FOLDER 220	Correspondence; questionnaire; portrait (print).
BOX 6 FOLDER 221	Wilson, Stan
BOX O FOLDER 221	Correspondence; questionnaire; program; portrait (print).
BOX 6 FOLDER 222	Wood, Theodore
BOX O FOLDER 222	Correspondence; questionnaire.
BOX 6 FOLDER 223	Yarbrough, Glen
DOA U FULDER 223	Questionnaire.
BOX 6 FOLDER 224	Zeitlin, David
DUA U FULDEK 224	
	Correspondence; questionnaire.