



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Edmund Thornton Jenkins collection

1898 - 1980

Sc MG 333

Summary

Creator: Green, Jeffrey P.

Title: Edmund Thornton Jenkins collection

Date: 1898 - 1980

Size: .33 linear feet (One archival box)

Source: Gift, Jeffrey P. Green, August and November 1987.

Abstract: This collection consists of personal and professional papers reflecting Jenkins's career as a musician and composer, and encompasses four series: personal and professional papers; family papers; Jenkins Orphanage documents; and research material. The personal and professional papers contain letters from Jenkins to his father and stepmother, Eloise C. Harleston Jenkins and letters to Jenkins from friends and professional associates, including a letter from composer Will Marion Cook. The family papers consist of letters written to the family following Jenkins's death in 1926 and documents related to his death and the disposition of his estate. The Jenkins Orphanage documents include letters, programs and playbills, and financial papers. The research material was gathered by Jeffrey P. Green, the donor and author of *Edmund Thornton Jenkins: The Life and Times of an American Black Composer, 1894-1926* (1982). This material includes Green's correspondence and interviews with people who knew Jenkins; a listing from SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music) of the songs composed by Jenkins; and photocopies of articles regarding Jenkins, the Orphanage, Jenkins family members, and prominent musicians who had some sort of affiliation with the Jenkins Orphanage and the Band.

Preferred citation: [Item], Edmund Thornton Jenkins collection, Sc MG 333, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, September 12, 1987.

Creator History

Edmund Thornton Jenkins, born in Charleston, South Carolina, was a composer and musician. He began his musical career during his childhood with the Jenkins Orphanage Band, which was organized and led by his father, the Reverend Daniel Jenkins, to raise money for the orphanage he had established in Charleston in 1871. The band was composed of boys in the orphanage. They performed jazz and ragtime in numerous cities in the United States and England, and they were the largest single source of revenue for the orphanage.

Jenkins received his musical training from the musical directors of the Jenkins Orphanage Band, Morehouse College, and London's Royal Academy of Music (1914 - 1921). He remained in Europe following the completion of his studies at the Academy, performing with dance bands, making jazz recordings, and eventually leading the Ermitage Orchestra.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of personal and professional papers reflecting Jenkins's career as a musician and composer, and encompasses four series: personal and professional papers; family papers; Jenkins Orphanage documents; and research material. The personal and professional papers contain letters from Jenkins to his father and stepmother, Eloise C. Harleston Jenkins and letters to Jenkins from friends and professional associates, including a letter from composer Will Marion Cook. The family papers consist of letters written to the family following Jenkins's death in 1926 and documents related to his death and the disposition of his estate. The Jenkins Orphanage documents include letters, programs and playbills, and financial papers. The research material was gathered by Jeffrey P. Green, the donor and author of *Edmund Thornton Jenkins: The Life and Times of an American Black Composer, 1894-1926* (1982). This material includes Green's correspondence and interviews with people who knew Jenkins; a listing from SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music) of the songs composed by Jenkins; and photocopies of articles regarding Jenkins, the Orphanage, Jenkins family members, and prominent musicians who had some sort of affiliation with the Jenkins Orphanage and the Band.

Arrangement: Collection organized into four series: I. Personal and professional papers; II. Family papers; III. Jenkins Orphanage documents; and IV. Research material.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American composers
African American musicians
African Americans -- Music
Composers -- United States
Musicians -- United States
Orphanages -- South Carolina -- Charleston

Names

Cook, Will Marion
Green, Jeffrey P.
Jenkins, Daniel J., d. 1937
Jenkins, Edmund Thornton, 1894-1926
Jenkins Orphanage (Charleston, S.C.)
Jenkins' Orphanage Band

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Itemized list of documents
 - Personal and professional papers
 - Professional correspondence
- b. 1 f. 2 1923 - 1926
- b. 1 f. 3 1917 - 1923
 - Includes letter from Will Marion Cook on Clef Club letterhead.
- b. 1 f. 4 General correspondence 1913 - 1928
- b. 1 f. 5 Financial records 1919 - 1923
- b. 1 f. 6 Printed material 1915 - 1923
 - Family papers
- b. 1 f. 7 Letters re death of Jenkins 1926 - 1928
- b. 1 f. 8 Documents re death of Jenkins 1926 - 1928
- b. 1 f. 9 Documents on Daniel and Eloise Jenkins
 - Jenkins Orphanage
- b. 1 f. 10 Letters 1914 - 1960
- b. 1 f. 11 Programs 1914 - 1960
- b. 1 f. 12 Financial statements 1922 - 1924
 - Research material
- b. 1 f. 13 Edmund T. Jenkins 1912 - 1979
- b. 1 f. 14 Musical compositions 1979
- b. 1 f. 15 Programs (photocopies) 1914 - 1918
- b. 1 f. 16 Jenkins family 1935 - 1979
- b. 1 f. 17 Jenkins Orphanage Band 1898 - 1980
- b. 1 f. 18-19 General 1979 - 1980