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## **Finding Aid to the Dodge City Cowboy Band and Jack Sinclair Collection MSA.Dodge**

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson  
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**Title:** Dodge City Cowboy Band and Jack Sinclair Collection

**Identifier/Call Number:** MSA.Dodge

**Contributing Institution:** Autry National Center, Autry Library

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 25.2 Linear feet(24 boxes, 2 flatfile drawers)

**Date (bulk):** Bulk, 1891-1916

**Date (inclusive):** 1866-1929, undated

**Abstract:** The Dodge City Cowboy Band existed from 1879-1916 and performed in cowboy garb, promoting Dodge City and the idea of the Wild West all over the United States. The conductor used a decorated gun as a baton, and the musicians all dressed as cowboys. The band was founded and first directed in Dodge City, Kansas by Chalk Beeson. Jack Sinclair took over as director from 1890-1916 and moved the band to Pueblo, Colorado, where Sinclair was a police officer. This collection includes advertising and promotional materials, photographs, and sheet music for the Dodge City Cowboy Band, much of which refers to the band's final performance, the opera "The Cowboy's Dream." This collection also includes personal papers of Jack Sinclair and his daughter Edith Frances Sinclair, who also performed with the band.

**creator:** Beeson, Chalkley McArtor

**creator:** Dodge City Cowboy Band

**creator:** Sinclair, Jack

#### **Access**

Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit <http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application> or contact library staff at [rroom@theautry.org](mailto:rroom@theautry.org). An item-level inventory is available from library staff.

#### **Use**

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#### **Preferred citation**

*Dodge City Cowboy Band and Jack Sinclair Collection*, 1866-1929, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MSA.Dodge; [folder number] [folder title][date].

#### **Biographical/Historical note**

The Dodge City Cowboy Band formed in Dodge City, Kansas between 1879 and 1880 and served as a booster for the town of Dodge City and its citizens. The band was formed and organized by Chalkley McArtor "Chalk" Beeson (April 24, 1848-August 8, 1912), the owner of the Long Branch Saloon. Beeson conducted the band with a revolver, and the musicians dressed as cowboys. Although the band was started in and promoted Dodge City and idea of the Wild West, the band was comprised of professional musicians from Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Pueblo, Colorado Police Officer Jack Sinclair became the director in 1890 and moved the band's base to Pueblo, but they continued to tour all over the United States. Benjamin M. Wilson was the band's general manager in both Dodge City and Pueblo. The band enjoyed much popular success and also enjoyed notable appointments such as being one of the bands invited to play at the inaugural celebration for President Benjamin Harrison in 1889 and an appointment as regimental band for the 2nd U.S. Cavalry in Cuba during the Spanish American War. In 1916, Sinclair composed their final performance, an opera titled "The Cowboy's Dream." The opera's main character is Prairie Flower, portrayed by director Jack Sinclair's daughter, Edith Frances Sinclair.

Information taken from The Autry website and from Steve Beeson's book on the Beeson/Beason family - Family History Center microfilm #1035659, Item #9 via <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~beeson/chalkley.html>.

#### **Acquisition**

The collection consists of four acquisitions:

86.23: Purchase from R. L. Wilson, 1986 July 22;

88.101: donation from Bill Bowman, 1988 July 22;

94.155: Donation from Professor Ralph Levy, 1986 August 26;

2001.35: Purchase from High Noon Western Collectibles, 2001 September 4.

#### **Scope and contents**

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This collection contains promotional materials and memorabilia for the Dodge City Cowboy Band, sheet music used by the Dodge City Cowboy Band, and personal papers of band director Jack Sinclair, his wife, and their daughter Edith.

The collection of Dodge City Cowboy Band promotional materials and memorabilia date from 1880 to 1916. Many items refer to the band's final opera "The Cowboy's Dream." Items in this series include a business card, display labels, newspaper clippings, notes, paste-up sheets, framed and unframed photographs, a postcard, posters, programs for "The Cowboy's Dream," a scrapbook, and stationery for the Dodge City Cowboy Band, some of which features Edith Frances Sinclair as Prairie Flower.

The Dodge City Cowboy Band Sheet Music series includes hand-written and printed sheet music by Jack Sinclair and by others.

The papers of Jack Sinclair and his family date from 1866-1929 and include correspondence, a 1921 newspaper clipping about Sinclair's efforts as a police officer, a receipt, and photographs. Some of the photographs are of Native Americans with hand-written labels by Major Ted Powell, sent to Mrs. Jack Sinclair in 1929.

#### **Processing history**

Initial inventory, physical processing, and cataloging by Autry National Center staff. Additional processing and finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Project Archivist, June 14, 2012, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Processing of collection and publication of finding aid made possible by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Series 1: Dodge City Cowboy Band Papers

Series 2: Sheet Music

Series 3: Sinclair Family Papers

#### **Related archival materials**

Dodge City Cowboy Band papers, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

#### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Sinclair, Edith

Wilson, Benjamin M.

Advertisements

Brass band music

Clippings

County music

*Cowboy's Dream Cowboy's lullaby*

Dodge City (Kan.)

Drawings

Manuscripts

Music

Music -- United States

Operas -- Scores and parts

Photographs

Police -- Colorado

Posters

Scores

Scrapbooks

Sheet music

Western music

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**Dodge City Cowboy Band papers, circa 1880-1916, undated**

**Scope and contents**

The collection of Dodge City Cowboy Band promotional materials and memorabilia date from 1880 to 1916. Many items refer to the band's final opera "The Cowboy's Dream." Items in this series include a business card for the Original Dodge City Cow-Boy Band, display labels to accompany gifts to Jack Sinclair from the citizens of Colorado, newspaper clippings about the band and individual band members, notes, paste-up sheets, framed and unframed photographs of Dodge City Cowboy Band members and processions, a postcard, posters, programs for "The Cowboy's Dream," and stationery for the Dodge City Cowboy Band, some of which features Edith Frances Sinclair as Prairie Flower. This series also includes a scrapbook containing clippings, letterhead, printed matter, and drawings relating to Jack Sinclair, the Dodge City Cowboy Band, and Sinclair's opera, "The Cowboy's Dream." Some of the clippings in the scrapbook document Sinclair's career as a police officer in Pueblo, Colorado.

**Sheet music, 1883-1916, undated**

**Scope and contents**

The Dodge City Cowboy Band Sheet Music series includes hand-written and printed sheet music by Jack Sinclair and by others. Some of the hand-written sheet music is stamped: Property of Sinclair Cowboy Band.

**Sinclair family papers, 1866-1929, undated**

**Scope and contents**

The papers of Jack Sinclair and his family date from 1866-1929 and include correspondence, a 1921 newspaper clipping about Sinclair's efforts as a police officer, a receipt, and photographs. Some of the photographs are of Native Americans with hand-written labels by Major Ted Powell, sent to Mrs. Jack Sinclair in 1929.