Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: California State University Dominguez Hills Archives and Special Collections
Title: Albert J. McNeil Collection
creator: McNeil, Albert
Identifier/Call Number: SPC.2018.002
Physical Description: 87 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1920-2012

Abstract: Albert John Joseph McNeil is an American choral conductor, ethnomusicologist, author, and founder of the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers. His career has been dedicated to upholding choral music traditions with the presentation of Negro spirituals and concert music by African American composers. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of California, Davis, where he was director of choral activities for 22 years and headed the Music Education Program.

Scope and Contents
The materials in the Albert J. McNeil Collection consist of records, photographs, programs, clippings, press releases, publications, sheet music, and audio and video recordings that document McNeil's work as the director of the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers, his teaching career, work as choral director for various churches, and his personal life.

Biographical Note
Albert John Joseph McNeil is an American choral conductor, ethnomusicologist, author, and founder of the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers. His career has been dedicated to upholding choral music traditions with the presentation of Negro spirituals and concert music by African American composers. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of California, Davis, where he was director of choral activities for 22 years and headed the Music Education Program.

McNeil was born Alfredo Morales Sanchez on February 14, 1920 in Los Angeles, California. He was adopted by John and Rodia McNeil, former vaudeville and minstrel show performers. He grew up in Watts, California with his two sisters, Dorothea and Rena. He learned to play the piano and organ and played for numerous weddings, receptions, luncheons, etc. His original ambition was to be a medical doctor, but his love of music led him to study in that field. At 17, was hired as the minister of music for the People's Independent Church of Christ.

McNeil's adopted parents maintained friendships with a variety of musical and theatrical artists in Los Angeles, including Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Lionel Hampton, as well as distinguished names in choral music such as Hall Johnson and Jester Hairston.

He earned his undergraduate University of California, Los Angeles in 1942 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education and teaching credentials in elementary and secondary education. Soon after, he was awarded his master's degree in choral conducting from UCLA. While McNeil was a student at UCLA he directed the church choirs at the First Baptist Church and the People's Independent Church of Christ.

He began his teaching career as a teacher of music in the elementary, junior and senior high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. During his early years of teaching elementary school he was accepted into the Doctor of Musical Arts choral conducting degree program at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He continued his doctoral studies at the Westminster Choir College and with a fellowship at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

McNeil was frequently called upon by Central Casting of Hollywood to be the on-set choral assistant whenever they needed black singers or background actors, including Porgy and Bess, Carmen Jones, and The Land of the Pharaohs. It was from this group of performers that the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers would first be formed.

In 1953, McNeil married Helen Rambo. Their son, Richard “Ricky” John McNeil, was born 1959.

McNeil founded the Georgia Laster chapter of the National Association of Negro Musicians in 1961. Also served as NANM's Western Regional Director for a time.

In 1968, McNeil was invited to teach courses in music education and direct the choral ensembles at the University of California at Davis. He was the head of the music education program and director of choral activities for 21 years, took the UC Davis chorus to England France Russia, china Tahiti and Australia. While at Davis, spent 10 years as the director for the Sacramento Chorale and co-founded the Sacramento symphony chorus.

In addition to his teaching and work with the Jubilee Singers, McNeil was active in the church choir community. He was Minister of Music at the Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship in Los Angeles for over 30 years, as well as the Director of Music at the Founder's Church of Religious Science.

Throughout McNeil's career he was in high demand as an adjudicator and clinician. He was often invited to conduct children, youth, and adult honor choirs and present interest sessions on the spirituals. He also co-authored and edited music education textbooks for the Silver-Burdett-Ginn Publishing Company. He has served as a valued member on the
The Albert J. McNeil Collection

SPC.2018.002

board of directors for Chorus America, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and National Endowment for the Arts.

McNeil retired from UC Davis in 1990. In retirement, he devoted much of his time to the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers and their tours. In 2003, McNeil was inducted as a “Living Legend” into the California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) Georgia and Nolan Payton Archive of African Diaspora Sacred Music and Musicians (ADSMM). Later that same year, he was given honorary Doctor of Music degrees from California State University at Northridge and in 2010 he was awarded the prestigious Westminster Choir College of Rider University, New Jersey.

Historical Note

The Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers (AMJS), known as “America’s foremost Negro choir,” have played a significant role in the development of African American sacred music traditions in the United States and are among the most honored singing ensembles in the world. The AMJS was founded by choral director Albert McNeil. McNeil was inspired by the story of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, an all black college choir founded in 1871, made up of four black men and seven black women who gained international fame traveling throughout the United States and Europe giving concerts singing four-part a cappella arrangements of sacred songs called spirituals.

In 1968, the AMJS went on their first European tour. Since then, they have traveled the globe on 18 sold-out European tours, 12 tours of the United States and Canada, and tours of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America. They were selected three times to serve the U.S. State Department and USIS Cultural Exchange Program, traveling to East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Iran, India, North and West Africa, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

Arrangement

The collection has been arranged into the following series: 1. Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers, 2. Professional Career, 3. Personal papers, 4. Music

Conditions Governing Access

There are no access restrictions on this collection

Conditions Governing Use

All requests for permission to publish or quote from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Director of Archives and Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical materials and not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

Preferred Citation

[Title of item], Albert J. McNeil Collection, Courtesy of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. University Library, California State University, Dominguez Hills

Subjects and Indexing Terms

African American churches
African Americans--California
African Americans--Music.
Church music
Gospel Music
Popular music
Sacred music
Spirituals (Songs)
Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers

Series 1: Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers 1968-2012

Physical Description: 26 boxes
Scope and Contents

This series contains programs, documents, correspondence, photographs and other material relating to McNeil’s work with the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers. It covers the group’s tours both in the United States and internationally, as well as auditions, contracts, travel details, and administrative documents.

box 1, Folder 1 20th Anniversary Concert 1985
box 1, folder 2 Allied Concert Tours 2002
box 1, Folder 3 Ambassador Auditorium 1993

The Albert J. McNeil Collection

SPC.2018.002

SPC.2018.002
Anne Dunn Ad 2001
Ascension Lutheran Church 2008
Auditions 1993-1994
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<td>Tour: Mexico 2012</td>
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</table>
Series 1: Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers 1968-2012

Physical Description:
2 boxes

Scope and Contents
The series contains records, correspondence, awards, photographs, programs and other ephemera, and audiovisual material relating to McNeil’s professional career as an educator, choral director, and minister.

Arrangement
The series is arranged into four subseries: 1. Professional activities, 2. Church choirs, 3. Teaching career, 4. Educational materials.

Subseries 2.1: Professional activities 1970-2006
Physical Description: 3 boxes
### Subseries 2.1: Professional activities 1970-2006

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<tr>
<th>Box and Folder</th>
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<td>box 79</td>
<td>Sacramento Chorale Tour Scrapbook 1974-1975</td>
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<td>box 80-81</td>
<td>Plaques and Awards 1994-2006</td>
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**Physical Description:** 5 items
- Plaque - American Choir Directors Association Plaque
- Chorus America Plaque - La Asociacion de Cantores del Coro Nacional Plaque - La Sociedad Puertorriquena de Directores de Coros "A Man and His Music" Episcopal Chorale Society Award

### Subseries 2.2: Church choirs circa 1965-2004

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<td>Episcopal Choral Association 15th Annual Scholarship Luncheon 1998</td>
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**Physical Description:** 4 boxes

### Subseries 2.3: Teaching career 1976-1998

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**Physical Description:** 3 boxes
Series 2: Professional Career 1950-2008
Subseries 2.3: Teaching career 1976-1998

box 80

Ajuntament de Castelldefels Medallions presented to UC Davis Choir, Barcelona, Spain 1983

Subseries 2.4: Educational materials 1950-1982

Physical Description: 6 boxes

box 13, folder 9
Birchard Music Series, Book 7, California State Series textbook 1960
box 13, folder 10-11
Birchard Music Series, Book 8, California State Series textbooks 1960
box 14, folder 3
Hebrew Song Books 1965-1974
box 14, folder 4
Let Music Ring! California State Series textbook 1950
box 14, folder 5
Silver Burdett Music, Book 7 1978
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Silver Burdett Music, Book 7 1982
box 15, folder 2
Silver Burdett Music, Book 8 1976
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box 16, folder 3
box 16, folder 4
box 16, folder 5
Silver Burdett Music, Teacher's Edition 1979
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box 78

Photographs circa 1960s-1999

Physical Description: 1 box

box 84-85

Choir performance and teaching media 1974-2001

Physical Description: 17 Reels 7 inch
Physical Description: 6 Reels 5 inch
Physical Description: 8 Video Tapes
Physical Description: 15 Cassettes

Scope and Contents
Comprised of audio and video recordings documenting performances conducted by McNeil as part of his teaching career, work with church choirs, or other professional events. Also includes audio recordings used by McNeil as teaching materials.

Series 3: Personal papers 1970-2009

Physical Description: 4 boxes

Scope and Contents
The series is comprised of records, correspondence, and photographs from McNeil’s personal life, including letters to his wife Helen and son Richard

box 16, folder 7

Appraisal Certificate 1979
Series 3: Personal papers 1970-2009

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<td>Richard's Graduation from UC Berkeley School of Law 1984</td>
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<td>Christmas and Kwanzaa Celebrations 1994</td>
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Physical Description: 1 box

Series 4: Music 1943-2006

Physical Description: 49 boxes

Scope and Contents

The series is comprised of McNeil's music collection, which contained sheet music, manuscript music, music anthologies and collections, and musical selections pulled together for performances.

Subseries 4.1: Sheet Music

Physical Description: 40 boxes

Arrangement

The music in this subseries is arranged alphabetically by title, then by composer where multiple pieces of music have the same title.

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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sheet Music Be-Bo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sheet Music Br-Ca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sheet Music Ce-Co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sheet Music Co-Da</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical Description: 60 folders

Physical Description: 47 folders

Physical Description: 61 folders

Physical Description: 53 folders

Physical Description: 57 folders

Physical Description: 59 folders

Physical Description: 56 folders
box 25  Sheet Music Da-Do
       Physical Description: 50 folders

box 26  Sheet Music Do-Ep
       Physical Description: 56 folders

box 27  Sheet Music Er-Fi
       Physical Description: 60 folders

box 28  Sheet Music Fl-Gl
       Physical Description: 48 folders

box 29  Sheet Music Gi-Go
       Physical Description: 47 folders

box 30  Sheet Music Go-Ha
       Physical Description: 52 folders

box 31  Sheet Music Ha-He
       Physical Description: 51 folders

box 32  Sheet Music He-Hy
       Physical Description: 50 folders

box 33  Sheet Music I
       Physical Description: 44 folders

box 34  Sheet Music I-Im
       Physical Description: 57 folders

box 35  Sheet Music Im-Is
       Physical Description: 46 folders

box 36  Sheet Music Is-Jo
       Physical Description: 54 folders

box 37  Sheet Music Jo-Ky
       Physical Description: 55 folders

box 38  Sheet Music La-Le
       Physical Description: 52 folders

box 39  Sheet Music Le-Li
       Physical Description: 48 folders

box 40  Sheet Music Li-Lu
       Physical Description: 55 folders

box 41  Sheet Music Ma-Me
       Physical Description: 43 folders

box 42  Sheet Music Mi-My
       Physical Description: 45 folders
Subseries 4.1: Sheet Music

Sheet Music My-No
Physical Description: 58 folders

Sheet Music No-O
Physical Description: 58 folders

Sheet Music O-Ou
Physical Description: 60 folders

Sheet Music Ou-Po
Physical Description: 51 folders

Sheet Music Po-Ra
Physical Description: 60 folders

Sheet Music Ra-Ro
Physical Description: 38 folders

Sheet Music Ro-Se
Physical Description: 49 folders

Sheet Music Sh-Si
Physical Description: 57 folders

Sheet Music Si-So
Physical Description: 55 folders

Sheet Music So-Sp
Physical Description: 41 folders

Sheet Music Sp-Ta
Physical Description: 48 folders

Sheet Music Ta-Th
Physical Description: 59 folders

Sheet Music Th-Tr
Physical Description: 60 folders

Sheet Music Tu-Ve
Physical Description: 49 folders

Sheet Music Vi-We
Physical Description: 52 folders

Sheet Music We-Wi
Physical Description: 47 folders

Sheet Music Wi-Y
Physical Description: 45 folders

Sheet Music Z
Physical Description: 9 folders
Subseries 4.2: Music Collections and Compilations 1943-2006

Physical Description: 3 boxes

box 60, folder 10  20 Cancions Corales 1976
box 60, folder 11  Aida 1998
box 60, folder 12  Because He Lives 2001
box 60, folder 13  Calvary's Love 1988
box 60, folder 14  Carmina Burana 1996
box 60, folder 15  Chopin Mazurkas for the Piano 1943
box 60, folder 16  Choral Songs 1992
box 60, folder 17  The Complete Ave Maria 1992
box 60, folder 18  Congregational Worship Songs 1998
box 61, folder 1  The Deep River Collection 2000
box 61, folder 2  The Discipleship Songbook 1983
box 61, folder 3  The Gene Puerling Sound 1975
box 61, folder 4  Golden Years of Choral Music 1966
box 61, folder 5  Howard Roberts 1993
box 61, folder 6  Jesus Be Praised 1991
box 61, folder 7  The Joy of Chopin 1983
box 61, folder 8  Joyful Music 1994
box 61, folder 9  Kirk Franklin and the Family 1998
box 61, folder 10  Making Music on Your Own 1968
box 62, folder 1  Mass 1971
box 62, folder 2  A Merry Little Christmas 2006
box 62, folder 3  Musico Coral, Tomo 1 1992
box 62, folder 4  Musica Coral Colombiana 1981
box 62, folder 5  Musica Portuguesa undated
box 62, folder 6  New Century Hymnal 1993
box 62, folder 7  Only to Him 1992
box 62, folder 8  Seasons of Praise 2004
box 62, folder 9  Shout for Joy 1979
box 62, folder 10  Show Boat 1995
box 62, folder 11  Songfest 1956
box 62, folder 12  Songs of my Country 1992
box 63, folder 1  A Star in the East 1997
box 63, folder 2  A Stephen Paulus Christmas 1988
box 63, folder 3  Tehillah Service Music Collection 2004
box 63, folder 4  This is Your House 2003
box 63, folder 5  The Wiz 1978

Subseries 4.3: Choral Music Catalogs

Physical Description: 2 folders

box 63, folder 6-7

Subseries 4.4: Performance booklets 1983-2006

Physical Description: 2 boxes

box 63, folder 8  35th Choral Clinic 1983
box 63, folder 9  Act I undated
box 63, folder 10  Act II undated
box 63, folder 11  "Canite Tuba" undated
box 64, folder 1  "De Mornin' Come" undated
box 64, folder 2  "He Never Failed Me Yet" undated
box 64, folder 3  "Hear My Prayer" undated
box 64, folder 4  HOP (Hour of Power) Opening 2006
box 64, folder 5  Lincoln Center Concert 1984
box 64, folder 6  Porgy and Bess undated
box 64, folder 7  "Seasons" undated
box 64, folder 8  "Wait on the Lord" undated

box 86-87

Sacred and Secular Music Recordings undated

Physical Description: 48 items 48 compact discs

Physical Description: 12 Cassettes