Descriptive Summary
Title: North American Indian Concert Band archive
Dates: 1882-1938
Collection Number: mssIndianconcert
Extent: Approximately 202 items in 2 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens Manuscripts Department
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2203
Fax: (626) 449-5720
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: This collection consists of business cards, correspondence, documents, financial records, photographs, printed
matter, and photographs related to the North American Indian Concert Band, Onondago Tribe from Syracuse, New York.
Language of Material: The records are in English and German.
Access
Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more
information, please go to following web site .
Publication Rights
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and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
North American Indian Concert Band archive, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Acquisition Information
Biography
Carl (Karl) Wahler was a German-American who emigrated from Augsburg, Germany to the United States in 1882. When he
was 50, he returned to Germany to tour with the Onondaga people. David Russell Hill was a Native American man who was
reportedly Chief of the Onondaga Indians. The Onondaga people are part of the Iroquois, "People of the Longhouse." During
the 1910s, they lived on a reservation near Syracuse, New York, where the people reside today.
Around the same time Buffalo Bill closed his Wild West Show, David R. Hill and Karl Wahler tried to capitalize on the
remaining Europeans and Americans who were still fascinated by the American West and American Indians. The men
planned a grand tour through Europe with the American Indian Concert Band, "the only concert band in the world of its kind
[with] unlimited repertoire, picturesque costumes, [and] a host of novelties and effects." The show sensationalized the
American Indians, but on the other hand, offered work and the opportunity to travel.
Scope and Content
This collection of items relates to the North American Indian Concert Band and performances from the 1910s as well as
attempts to reassemble the band in 1926. The bulk of the letters are from David Russell Hill (director) and Carl Wahler
(manager). As a Native American businessman, Hill demanded fair wages for himself and his men. In the middle of
negotiating their European tour, Hill wrote to Wahler: "I know the people in Germany think that I am charging an
unreasonable high price but Mr. Wahler you realize fully what this means to me, toyou [sic], and to this country..." (May 7,
1910). There are also several letters from Wahler's sons Arthur and Eddie. In one letter, Arthur asks for money to assemble
a "coon band" because "it cost running around after these coon" [undated]. The majority of the men in the band came from
American Indian Schools. They were trained to play classical and marching band music, not traditional Native American
songs. There is a hand-written list of band members that shows many of the men were from Southwestern tribes and a few
from the Onondaga. The postcards (mostly duplicates) illustrate the band's elaborate costumes while holding Western
instruments. The program from the Red Star Line shows that the band played American and European concert pieces. As a
novelty, the band occasionally played stereotypical songs that did not necessarily properly represent the heritage and
diversity of the Native American members' tribe.
There are two volumes in Box 2. The first volume is a diary of sorts with names of Native American band members, notes pertaining to venues, and financial records from the tour in 1910. There is an index for the second volume and it lists names of band, accounts, postal card account, contracts, transportation, and Hill's pay.

Cataloger's note: Some of the material in German.

Separated Material
Carl Wahler's wicker traveling trunk came with the collection but was discarded per the Curator. The trunk was photographed and can be seen on the Huntington Digital Library.

Personal Names
Hill, David Russell
Wahler, Carl

Subjects
Indian musicians
Indians of North America--New York (State)
Musical groups
Onondaga Indians
Performances

Geographic Areas
Germany
Syracuse (N.Y.)

Genre
Business cards
Business records
Financial records
Letters (correspondence)
Photographs
Postcards
Printed ephemera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>Business cards-Ships' passenger list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Business cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Folder 2

Contract and agreement (1910, May 2)
Between Carl Wahler and David Russell Hill. Included: Undated purchase agreement concerning Michael Eberhart's sale of his store in Leborn. 2 item

Folder 3

Contracts returned (1910, Apr. 21)
List of engagements in various cities on various dates and accompanying earnings. Also, handwritten copy of a contract for concerts at Mannheimer Rosengarten

Folder 4

Correspondence--Bureau fuer Buehnenangelegenheiten [Office for Theater Affairs] (1910)
2 items

Folder 5

Correspondence--Garte, Carl (1910)
3 items

Folder 6

Correspondence--Greene, Romeo J. (1910-1913)
3 items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Correspondence--Grazer Herbtsmeese [Graz Fall Fair] (1910, Aug. 4) 1 item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Correspondence--Hill, David Russell (1910-1938) 12 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Correspondence--Konzert - Bureau Emil Gutmann (1909-1910) 20 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Correspondence--Mayor's office, Darmstadt (1910, [Aug.?]) 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Correspondence--Osterwind’s International Artist and Concert Agency (1910, Aug. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In this letter, writer requests that, when Wahler returns to the U.S., to find two small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ensembles of “4-5 blacks, perhaps including a woman,” who played folk and string music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a la Kentucky - who are humoristic while also making halfway decent music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Correspondence--Passenger Department (1910, July 8) 1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Correspondence--Sculmann, Netty (1921, Nov. 8) 1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Correspondence--Wahler, Arthur (1910-1912) 8 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Correspondence--Wahler, Eddie (1910-1911) 4 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 16</td>
<td>Correspondence--Wieneke Brothers (1910, June 22) Letter of recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 17</td>
<td>Correspondence--Williams, Levi G. (1912, Apr. 10) 1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 18</td>
<td>Correspondence--[Sara?] (1910) 1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 19</td>
<td>Empty envelopes 9 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 20</td>
<td>Financial records (1910-1913) 20 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 21</td>
<td>[List of band members] [1910] 1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 22</td>
<td>Memorandum--E. Tausinger (1910, Aug. 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 23</td>
<td>Miscellaneous printed matter 6 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 24</td>
<td>Passport--Carl Wahler (1915) 1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Folder 25  Photograph--Band members [1910]
            Included: Newspaper clippings. 3 items

Folder 26  Photographs--Carl Wahler (1882-1895)

Folder 27  Photograph--Carl Wahler and David Russell Hill (1910)
            1 item

Folder 28  Postcards (1910)
            One postcard from Ludwig Freitag, an artist and concert agent for the province of Saxony.
            The other postcard is from Rudolf Dosz, a theater agent of R. Dosz & Company

Folder 29  Postcards (blank) [undated]
            60 items

Folder 30  Program (document)--Red Star Line (1910, June 10)
            1 item

Folder 31  Ships' passenger list--Red Star Line (1910)
            1 item

Box 2     Volumes--Cultural artifacts
          Folder 1
          Volume 1 (1910)

Folder 2
          Volume 2 [1910]
            Fragile

Folder 3
          Cultural artifacts
            Beaded bracelet and necklace