

WORK, JOHN WESLEY, 1873-1925.

John Wesley Work papers

Emory University
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Work, John Wesley, 1873-1925.
Title: John Wesley Work papers
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 722
Extent: .25 linear feet (1 box) and 1 oversized papers box (OP)
Abstract: Papers of African American composer and university professor John Wesley Work, including a speech, photographs, holograph manuscript, and memorabilia.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

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Source

Purchase, 1991.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], John Wesley Work papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Barbara J. Mann, October 1991.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

John Wesley Work, African American composer and university professor, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, August 6, 1873, the son of John Wesley and Samuella Boyd Work. He graduated from Fisk University (1895), completed his graduate work there (1898) and went on to do post-graduate work at Harvard University (1896-1897) and University of Chicago (1908).

During his career, Work taught at a public school in Tullahoma, Tennessee (circa 1900); was an instructor (1898), professor of Latin (1903), professor of history and Latin at Fisk University (1904-1923?); and served as president of Roger Williams College in Nashville (1923-1925). As a musician, Work led tours of both the Fisk Jubilee Singers, a separate quartet of singers from circa 1899-1916 and wrote songs including "Song of the Warrior", "If Only You Were Here", "Negro Lullaby", and "Negro Love Song". Along with his brother, Frederick, Work compiled *New Jubilee Songs and Folk Songs of the American Negro* (1907). He was also president of Work Brothers and Hart, a music publishing company.

John Wesley Work married Agnes Morris Haynes of Staunton, Virginia, 26 April 1899. The Works had six children, of which one, John Wesley Work (1901-1967) followed in his father's footsteps as the director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers (1948-1957) and as a composer. Work died in 1925.

Scope and Content Note

The John Wesley Work papers consist of a speech, photographs, holograph manuscript, and memorabilia. The undated speech, in both holograph and typescript carbon form, is addressed to "Mrs. Bradford, Ladies and gentlemen..." and pays tribute to Joel Chandler Harris, Howard Weeden, and discusses the characteristics of "Negro" folk songs and spirituals. The photographs are of a woman and child and a woman and three children (folders 3-5). They were made from made from glass-plate negatives. There is no identification, but the woman may be Samuella Boyd Work and the child John Wesley Work. "Comrades, or Friends at Fisk" is a holograph manuscript, apparently unpublished and authored by Work, set in the 1890's and tells the story of Julius Harlow, a Tennessee country boy, who goes to Fisk University in Nashville and succeeds despite adversity. It, too, is not dated and pages 2-7 are missing. Memorabilia is a calendar page from Fisk University for the year 1906 which features a photograph of Jubilee Hall on one side and the words to "The Gold and Blue" by J. W. Work and F. J. Work on the verso.

Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

Container List

Speech, no date

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Holograph
1	2	Typescript carbon

Photographs

1	3	Woman and three children: [Samuella Boyd Work and children?], no date (2)
1	4	Woman and child: [Samuella Boyd Work and John Wesley Work?], no date (2)
1	5	Woman and child: [Samuella Boyd Work and John Wesley Work?], no date (3)
1	9	Glass-plate negative: Woman and three children: [Samuella Boyd Work and children?], n.d.
1	7	Woman and child: [Samuella Boyd Work and John Wesley Work?], no date
1	8	Woman and child: [Samuella Boyd Work and John Wesley Work?], no date

"Comrades, or Friends at Fisk"

OP1	1	Chapter 1, p. 1, 8-15; Chapter 2, p. 15
OP1	2	Chapter 2, p. 16-22; Chapter 3, p. 22
OP1	3	Chapter 3, p. 23-29
OP1	4	Chapter 4, p. 30-37; Chapter 5, p. 37
OP1	5	Chapter 5, p. 38-49; Chapter 6, p. 49
OP1	6	Chapter 6, p. 50-54; Chapter 7, p. 54-62; Chapter 8, p. 62
OP1	7	Chapter 8, p. 63-68; Chapter 9, p. 68
OP1	8	Chapter 9, p. 69-83
OP1	9	Chapter 10, p. 84-89; Chapter 11, p. 89-97
OP1	10	Chapter 12, p. 98-109
OP1	11	Chapter 12, p. 110-119
OP1	12	Chapter 12, p. 120-128; Chapter 13, p. 128
OP1	13	Chapter 13, p. 129-139
OP1	14	Chapter 13, p. 140-149
OP1	15	Chapter 13, p. 150-165
OP1	16	Chapter 14, p. 166-178
OP1	17	Chapter 14, p. 179-183
OP1	18	Chapter 14, p. 184-190
OP1	19	Chapter 15, p. 191-195

Memorabilia

1	6	Fisk University Calendar, 1906/"The Gold and Blue" by J. W. Work and F. J. Work
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