

2-2016

## McCray, Walter (1877-1959) Papers, 1899-1983

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### Recommended Citation

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#10 McCray, Walter (1877-1959) Papers, 1899-1983  
1.4 linear feet

## **INTRODUCTION**

Papers of Walter McCray, a well-known musician, who served as the second director of the Department of Music at Pittsburg State University from 1914 to 1946. The papers include personal and professional correspondence, photographs, programs, clippings, publications, musical scores, and miscellaneous items.

## **DONOR INFORMATION**

Most of the materials in the Walter McCray Papers were donated to Pittsburg State University in June 1961 by the McCray family. Donors of other materials in the McCray Papers are unknown.

## **BIOLOGICAL SKETCH**

Dr. Walter McCray was the second director of the Department of Music at Pittsburg State University and served in that capacity from September 1914 to August 1946. He died on December 5, 1959.

McCray was a native of Kansas and a 1924 graduate of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, and a 1931 graduate of the Columbia School of Music, also in Chicago. He was a student of Herman Belstedt, a premier cornet soloist, bandmaster, and composer. McCray also studied with Carl Busch, J. F. King, and Lenore Scott in Chicago, and with Harbard Basse at the Conservatory of Music in Stockholm, Sweden.

McCray's teaching experience included one year, 1899-1900, as director of Music in the Reno County Community Normal and High School in Nickerson, Kansas, and two years, 1901-1903, as head of the band department and teacher at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. From 1904-1920 he was conductor of McCray's Concert Band and gained wide experience as conductor of choral societies, operas, and orchestras, and as supervisor of school music.

In 1914 McCray came to Pittsburg State University, known then as the State Manual Training Normal School, as professor and director of the Department of Music. In the spring of 1915 he inaugurated an annual music festival for students in secondary education, the first undertaking of its type in the institutions of higher learning in Kansas.

Under McCray's direction, each year from 1915 to 1946 the Music Department of Pittsburg State University produced Handel's oratorio, "The Messiah", with assistance from guest performers and community members. More than twenty other major musical works were produced under McCray's direction during those years. McCray retired from the University in September 1947. For further information see also John K. Sehnert, "Walter McCray and the Music Department at Pittsburg State University", (Unpublished master's thesis, 1991).

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The materials in the Walter McCray Papers are incomplete, but provide a good overview of his musical career. The Papers are arranged into ten series: **Biographical, Correspondence, Photographs, Programs and Performances, Clippings, Awards and Certificates, Publications, Sheet Music and Scores, Talks and Lectures, and Miscellaneous.**

The **Biographical** series consists of one biographical sketch of Walter McCray and a University vita sheet.

The **Correspondence** series contains personal and professional correspondence from 1901 to 1959. This series is arranged chronologically with undated letters at the end. Many of the letters congratulate McCray for successful performances. Others concern performance arrangements, negotiations with musicians, the establishment of the Phi Mu Alpha, Sinfonia, and Mu Phi Epsilon fraternities at Pittsburg State University, the history of the Kansas High School Music contests, various performances, and McCray's activities at the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg. Noted correspondents include Carl Busch, Henry P. Eames, Charles Wakefield Cadman, Payne Ratner, and Clyde Neibarger.

The **Photographs** series includes portrait and performance views of Walter McCray, McCray in professional and family group photographs, travel photographs, the Pittsburg State University glee club, the dedication of McCray Hall in 1961, and photographs of Carl Busch, John Philip Sousa, Leopold Auer, and Jascha Heifetz.

The **Programs and Performances** series contains printed programs and advertisements relating to McCray's musical performances and to the dedication of McCray Hall. This series also includes performances at Nickerson and Bethany, Kansas, performances of McCray's Concert Band, the Independence Music Club, and the Southeast Kansas Symphony Orchestra, and performances of the "Messiah". Also included are church bulletins from occasions when McCray's sacred music was performed. This series is arranged chronologically with undated materials at the end. See also four volumes of [Programs of Symphony Concerts Attended by Dr. Walter McCray,] Kansas Collection 780.7802 P943.

The **Clippings** series consists of newspaper and magazine articles containing biographical information about McCray, information about his performances, and information about the construction of the Music Hall on the campus of Pittsburg State University. About one half of the clippings are dated and are arranged in chronological order. The undated clippings are organized by subject.

The **Awards and Certificates** series consists of documents endorsing McCray's nomination for an honorary doctorate from the Columbia School of Music; certificates of merit; certificates of election; and related materials.

The **Publications** series contains an advertising brochure, a royalty contract, and a typescript copy of Principles of Conducting, co-authored by McCray and Carl Busch. Also included is McCray's article, "Music in Our Educational Curricula", published in November 1938.

The **Sheet Music and Scores** series includes published and manuscript music authored by McCray and copies of published music inscribed to McCray by various composers and lyricists. This series is arranged alphabetically by title.

The **Talks and Lectures** series consists of copies of class lectures, speeches, and talks delivered by McCray. Includes two notebooks used in classes on the history of music.

The **Miscellaneous** series includes McCray's memoir of leaving Bethany College; a brief sketch of the McCray family; notes about the Spring Music Festival at Pittsburg; typescript copies of poetry and verse; a student's research paper on McCray's career from 1914 to 1922; blueprints for the construction of a chorus loft in 1935; financial records; and a program from the dedication of the Walter McCray Collection at Leonard H. Axe Library in 1983.

FOLDER LIST

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f. 1 undated sketches

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- f. 65 "Autumn Twilight" McCray and Stork
- f. 66 "A Ballad of Trees and the Master" McCray and Lanier
- f. 67 "Blue Eyes" McCray and Haughawout
- f. 68 "Come Unto Me" McCray
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