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Richards, J.J., Collection, 1982-2007

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Richards, J. J., Collection, MS 279

J. J. Richards Collection

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Robert E. Morris
Title	The J. J. Richards Collection
Dates	1982 - 2007
Quantity	1 linear foot
Collection Number	MS 279
Summary	Letters, photographs, papers, research, music, and music lists relating to the career and life of John Joseph Richards and other musicians such as Merle Evans, Karl King, and John Phillip Sousa.
Repository	Pittsburg State University, Leonard H. Axe Library, Special Collections & University Archives 1701 S. Broadway Pittsburg, Kansas 66762 (620) 235-4883 speccoll@pittstate.edu
Access Restrictions	There are no restrictions and collection is open for research. Researchers must use the collection in accordance with the policies of the Special Collections & University Archives, Leonard H. Axe Library, Pittsburg State University
Languages	English
Biographical Note	From 1982 – 1990, Robert E. Morris of Sterling, Illinois conducted research on the local conductor/ director of the Sterling Municipal Band, John Joseph Richards. J.J. Richards (1878 – 1956) was born in Cwmafon, Wales, on August 27 th , 1878. In 1882, his family immigrated to the United States, living in Scranton, Pennsylvania and Attica, Indiana, working in tin mills until finally settling in the small mining camp of Peterson, Kansas (Osage City). At ages 8-10, “Johnny” began playing alto horn and cornet in the local boy’s band. In 1890, Richards’ father died of pneumonia, forcing his family to move to Litchfield, Kansas, a small community in Crawford County. To provide for the family, Richards worked in the mines driving mules, until one kicked him in the face. Surprisingly, this did not hamper young Richards. as he joined a

local band in nearby Pittsburg playing trombone and cornet. In 1898 he married his next-door neighbor, Annie Davis. From 1902-1912, Richards played cornet in several bands, including the Josh Spruceby Circus Band, Barnum and Baily Circus Band, Dickson Humpty Dumpty, Si Plunkard, and Forpaugh Sells. From 1912 – 1918, Richards served as band leader of the Ringling Brothers Circus. During his off-seasons from 1913 – 1917, Richards finally received his Bachelors in Music Theory from the American Conservatory of Music. At the tail end of World War I, Richards became a civilian employee (director of the band) at Camp Grant, Illinois. In 1919, the newly combined Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Band declined to appoint him director. In 1919, he returned to Pittsburg. From 1920-1927, Richards taught the Junior and Senior High School Bands, and also directed the Pittsburg Municipal Shrine Band while taking summer courses at the Kansas State Teachers College of Pittsburg (now Pittsburg State University). From 1927 – 1933, Richards directed the Florida Concert Bands in Bradenton and Daytona, Florida during the winter, directed the Pittsburg Municipal Band during the summer, and took this band to the Kansas State Fair Circuit during the fall. In 1933, Richards created the Sousa Tribute Band, eventually ending their tour due to the Great Depression. From 1937-1944, Richards directed the Sterling Municipal Band, Kable Concert Band, and taught the St. Mary's and the Rock Falls School Bands, all in Illinois. In 1945, with the passing of their director the Long Beach Municipal Band in California recruited Richards as their director. In 1950, with his health declining, Richards led the Mt. Morris Community Band in Mount Morris, Illinois. Over his lifetime, he published over 300 pieces of music. On March 13th, 1956, J. J. Richards suffered a fatal stroke. J. J. Richards is remembered in Pittsburg, Kansas by the bandshell in the city park which is named in honor of him.

Content Description

This collection is primary resources and is divided into the following series and sub-series:

1. Letters and Correspondence
 - a. 1982 - 1996
2. Research
 - a. J.J. Richards
 - b. Other Directors
3. Music
 - a. Compositions by J.J. Richards
4. Music Lists

Richards, J. J., Collection, MS 279

- a. Compositions by J.J. Richards
- 5. Media concerning Circus and J.J. Richards Tribute
 - a. Kansas, Illinois, and California area bands
- 6. Misc.

Processing Note

Collection formally processed in March 2020

Detailed Description of Collection

Series 1: Letters and Correspondences

- F. 1 Letters and Correspondence: March 5, 1982 – November 29, 1986
- F. 2 Letters and Correspondence: January 11, 1987 – December 26, 1987
- F. 3 Letters and Correspondence: January 1, 1988 - June 17, 1988
- F. 4 Letters and Correspondence: July 12, 1988 – December 20, 1988
- F. 5 Letters and Correspondence: January 15, 1989 – December 28, 1989
- F. 6 Letters and Correspondence: January 2, 1990 - December 29, 1990
- F. 7 Letters and Correspondence: February 6, 1991 - December 14, 1996
- F. 8 Letters and Correspondence: Date Unknown

Series 2: Research

- F. 9 J.J. Richards Writings and Letters
- F. 10 Photos
- F. 11 J.J. Richards News Articles
- F.12 J.J. Richards News Articles (Oversize)
- F. 13 J.J. Richards Biographies
- F. 14 J.J. Richards Circus
- F. 15 J.J. Richards Barber – Coleman Band J.J. Richards U.S. Army
- F. 16 J.J. Richards Barber – Coleman Band

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F. 17 J.J. Richards Pittsburg, Kansas

F. 18 J.J. Richards, Grandon Civic Center, and Sterling Municipal Band

F. 19 J.J. Richards, Long Beach Municipal Band

F. 20 J.J. Richards, Kable Brothers Company Band

F. 21 J.J. Richards, Mt. Morris Community Band

F. 22 Miscellaneous Directors, Players, and Players

F. 23 Maps (Oversize)

Series 3: Music

F. 24 J.J. Richards Band Book Covers

F. 25 J.J. Richards Soloist and 1st B flat Cornet Music

F. 26 J.J. Richards Condensed Score and Concert Band Music

F. 27 J.J. Richards Concert Band Music and Nadia

F. 28 J.J. Richards Conductor and Piano Music (Oversize)

Series 4: Music Lists

F. 29 J.J. Richards Music List 1982 – 1990

F. 30 J.J. Richards Music Lists Date Unknown

F. 31 J.J. Richards Bibliography Cards (Oversize)

Series 5: Media Concerning Circus and J.J. Richards Tribute

F. 32 Windjammers Circus

F. 33 University Programs

F. 34 Sound Spectrum of J.J. Richards

F. 35 St. Charles, Naperville, and Long Beach Municipal Bands

F. 36 Pittsburg J.J. Richards Tribute Concert

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F. 37 Media Concerning Circus and J.J. Richards Tribute (Oversize)

Series 6: Misc.

F. 38 Miscellaneous