

Introduction

The Mother Singers collection contains the correspondence, roll books, and club books for the group from 1927 to 1939. The collection takes up two boxes and consists of five roll books, three club books, and six file folders of letters and similar documents. Consequently, it is most easily categorized as follows:

Box 1:

Series 1: Roll Books

Series 2: Club Books

Box 2:

Series 3: Miscellaneous Correspondence and Business Affairs

Items are arranged chronologically within these series.

Historical Note

The Mother Singers was a national organization founded in Cincinnati, Ohio by suggestion of Stanley L. Clark, State Chairman of Music. By 1930, there were Mother Singers groups in 13 states and Washington, D.C. Ohio had the largest number of Mother Singers, however, with groups in Dayton, Cincinnati, Youngstown, Lakewood, Cleveland Heights, Marietta, Akron, and Springfield. All the groups met for a national conference. There was also an Ohio State Mother Singers Chorus held annually.

The Mother Singers was a group of mother representatives from area P.T.A.s. The organization's purpose, as stated in the Constitution, was to "promote and foster an interest in choral singing." When the Springfield Mother Singers was founded on March 29, 1927, the charter members chose to limit total membership in the club to 75 women, although the group had membership of 25 to 30 most years and never reached 75 women during the span years of these records. In 1931, the Springfield Mother Singers joined the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs.

The Mother Singers group was selective, and auditions were by invitation only. The criterion of being a mother was adhered to strictly. The group averaged 30 rehearsals per year (held weekly), 10 business meetings (held monthly), and about 10 concerts per year. The group almost always asked a fee for their performances and seem to have been much sought after. Rehearsals were held on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m., most frequently at the Y.W.C.A.

The Mother Singers sang a variety of songs, often with religious, folk, or traditional themes. The women performed in costume of colonial style blue silk dresses. They performed mostly at churches, but also at schools, festivals, and by invitation in

many other venues. Notable performances of the Mother Singers include: a music festival in Jackson, Ohio, on Nov. 6, 1931, where the ladies won a prize of \$150; the League of Women Voters; a radio broadcast on WSMK Dayton, on Fri., Aug. 5, 1932 at 3:00 p.m.; another radio broadcast on WHIO Dayton Sunday, April 28, 1935 at 7:30 p.m.; and the Chicago "Century of Progress" Exposition on July 15, 1933.

The Mother Singers also had a strong social and charity component. Each member hosted dinners or potlucks to entertain the other members, and exchanges of small gifts were frequent. The ladies annually sent out Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to needy families and often performed free for the benefit of area nursing home residents.

There is no indication in the collection of the status of the Mother Singers following the year 1939.

Scope and Content Note

This collection of roll and club books, correspondence, and stationery covers the activities of the group in depth from its inception in 1927 until 1939. The books do not indicate what happened to the Mother Singers after 1939.

Series 1: Roll Books

The Mother Singers roll books contain all the administrative information in the span 1927-1939. The roll books contain the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the members, as well as the attendance records for all rehearsals. The roll books also contain the group's financial records: the payments and fines of individuals as well as total income and disbursements of the club. There are comprehensive notes on budgets for music, parties, and banquets held by the group.

The Roll Book for the years 1931-32 has some interesting features. It contains notes on the programs the Mother Singers performed, the location, music performed, and any soloists. It also contains notes on several amendments to the Mother Singers Constitution.

The Roll Book for 1936-38 contains looseleaf copies of the annual reports of the secretary and the board for the year 1936-37.

Series 2: Club Books

The Club Books contain the minutes for each business meeting as well as brief notes on the selections sung at many rehearsals and concerts. The club books also contain details of dinners, assorted other social events, and trips and special performances. The club book for the year 1927 to 1931 also contains the Mother Singers Constitution.

Series 3: Miscellaneous Correspondence and Business Affairs

These papers contain further information on both the business and performance sides of the organization. The business documents include reports and receipts for disbursements, annual reports from club officers, dues payment records, deposit receipts, tax documents, officers' letters of resignation, members' petitions for leave of absence, and the group's stationery. Social correspondence from members is also included. This series also contains the Mother Singers' membership card for the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs, as well as the 1938 newsletter of that organization. File 1 contains a copy of the Ohio tax regulations.

The series features programs from the annual Eisteddfod competition, held in Jackson, Ohio. (The Mother Singers performed yearly and won in their category.) These programs contain selections performed, words and music (words often in Welsh) for the selections, and advertisements for local merchants (Jackson and Chillicothe, Ohio). File 1, interestingly, contains an advertisement for a performance by George Gershwin at Memorial Hall.

Box Contents

Series 1: Roll Books

- Box 1
- Item 1: Roll Book – 1927-28, 1928-29, 1929-30, 1930-31
 - Item 2: Roll Book – 1931-32
 - Item 3: Roll Book – 1932, 1933, 1934
 - Item 4: Roll Book – 1935-36
 - Item 5: Roll Book – 1936-37, 1937-38

Series 2: Club Books

- Item 1: Club Book – 1927-31
- Item 2: Club Book – 1931-32
- Item 3: Club Book – 1935-39

Series 3: Miscellaneous Correspondence and Business Affairs

- Box 2
- Item 1: Annual Reports, Business Correspondence and Receipts, Etc.
 - Item 2: Member Resignations, Social Correspondence
 - Item 3: Correspondence with Ohio Federation of Music Clubs, P.T.A., etc.
 - Item 4: Correspondence Concerning Musical Participation in Various
Programs
 - Item 5: Southern Ohio Eisteddfod Competitions
 - Item 6: Stationery