

FRANCIS CRAIG COLLECTION

MSS 091

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University
419 21st. Avenue South
Nashville, Tennessee 37240
Telephone: (615) 322-2807

Biographical Note

Francis Jackson Craig was born in Dickson, Tennessee, on September 10, 1900, the ninth of ten children of a Methodist minister. Craig entered Vanderbilt University in January 1919 after a brief stint in the Army between his eighteenth birthday and the signing of the armistice that ended World War I. A talented pianist, he formed a dance band in 1920 to help pay his college expenses. After graduating in 1922, he continued his music career. On October 20, 1924, he married Elizabeth Gewin, whom he met while performing in Birmingham, Alabama.

For the first few years, his band kept busy playing dances, parties, and proms. In 1924, they received a two-week engagement to play at the Hermitage Hotel in downtown Nashville. That “two-week” engagement lasted until 1946. From 1925 to 1947, the band’s performances were broadcast live over WSM radio in Nashville and were carried on national network radio. They also toured extensively during that period and made numerous recordings. Craig and his band recorded at various times on the Columbia, MGM, Bullet, and Decca labels. Nationally recognized entertainers who got their start with Francis Craig included James Melton, Snooky Lanson, Kenny Sargent, Phil Harris, and Dinah Shore.

In 1946, Craig decided to give up performing and took a position as a disc jockey at WSM. His farewell recording, however, became a hit and led to two more years of touring and personal appearances. “Near You” on the Bullet label, became the first recording done in Nashville to sell over a million copies; it eventually sold in excess of two and a half million. In addition, seventeen other companies recorded the song. The next year Craig’s “Beg Your Pardon” also became a hit and went on to sell more than a million copies. Craig is also famous for Vanderbilt’s *Dynamite* song. After touring in 1947 and 1948, Craig returned to Nashville to work for the radio station. He died on November 20, 1966.

Scope and Content Note

The Francis Craig Collection contains material ranging in date from 1919 to 1990 and make up 1.88 linear feet. The papers include personal and biographical information, correspondence, memorabilia, and photographs. The major portion of the collection, however, dates from the 1930’s and 1940’s and consists of clippings, sheet music, and recordings. The papers are arranged in five series:

- I. General File
- II. Newspaper Clippings and Publications
- III. Sheet Music
- IV. Photographs
- V. Recordings

Series I: General file, 1919 – 1994

Biographical and personal information, correspondence, memorabilia, information regarding the donation of memorabilia to the Hermitage

Hotel, publicity flyers, radio scripts, and the appellee's brief filed in response to a copyright lawsuit lodged unsuccessfully against Craig over the tune "Near You."

- Series II Clippings and Publications, 1930 – 1990, nd**
Clippings of articles and advertisements about Craig's tours and performances and about the success of "Near You" and other songs, clippings, of articles and obituaries of people associated with Craig's band, photocopies of scrapbooks, and scattered issues of various publications containing references to Craig.
- Series III Sheet Music, 1924 -1961**
Sheet music and orchestrations of Craig's compositions and works by other composers that Craig recorded.
- Series IV Photographs, c. 1930's and 1940's**
Photographs of Francis Craig and others, as well as pictures of billboards and marquees from his tours.
- Series V Recordings, 1940 – 1962, nd**
Long play and single records, audio cassettes, and 7 ½ ips reel-to-reel tapes. These recordings are primarily music with some interviews.

File Listing

Box 1

Series I. General

1. Correspondence – Outgoing – 2 letters – April 28, 1944; Sept. 19, 1947
2. Correspondence - Incoming – Barton, Margaret – Craig, Robert J. (father) (9 letters)
3. Correspondence – Incoming – Crooker, Herbert – Tanberg, Frances Hill (9 letters)
4. Correspondence – Donia Craig Dickerson, outgoing Sept. 24, 1988; and incoming from Pee Wee Marquette, 1994
5. Personal and Biographical – items from 1919, 1937, 1948, 1951, 1960, n.d.
6. Personal and Biographical – Memorabilia, 1941 – 42, 1948, 1951, n.d.
7. Publicity Flyers, c. 1947 – 48
8. Hermitage Hotel – Donation of Memorabilia, 1981, includes correspondence, invitations, menus, guest lists
9. Lawsuit, 1953, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, Thelma Hester Jones, Appellant vs. Francis Craig, Appellee
10. Radio Scripts, 1947
11. Seventh Infantry Bayonet Division, 1960; History, letter, and words to the song "Arirang"

Series II. Newspaper Clippings and Publications

12. About Francis Craig [1930], 1937, 1945 – 48, 1952, 1955, 1961, 1965, 1977, 1986, 1990, 1991

- [1930] Re: stay in Rockies for health (2 items)
- February 7, 1937 – “Music Master is Maker of Magic,” *Birmingham News-Age-Herald* (2 copies)
- April 20, 1937 – “Nick Kenny Speaking . . .” *Daily Mirror* (place unknown)
- May 23, 1937 – “Francis Craig Piping Majors Up from Dixie,” *New York Enquirer*
- June 7, 1945 – “Nashville Profile” [of Craig] by Mary Jane Brooks, *Nashville Banner*
- March 7, 1946 – “Francis Craig to Play Dance Here April 4,” *Union City Daily* [Advance?]
- June 15, 1946 – “Craig Band Broadcasts From Here,” *The Cherry Point Wind Sock* [NC]
- 1947 – “Near You’s Author Tells How It’s Done,” by Lib Wiley, Lynchburg, Virginia [paper unknown]
- September 11, 1947 – “Newsweek Honors Craig” *Nashville Banner*
- October 17, 1947 – “Screen Reviews” by Prunella Hall, *Boston Post*
- October 19, 1947 – “Corny Arrangement Leads Musician to Jackpot with Top Platter Seller,” *Mobile Press Register*
- October 24, 1947 – “State Presents Francis Craig” *Hartford Times*
- October 29, 1947 – “Top O’ the Morning” *Nashville Tennessean*
- December 20, 1947 – “Vaudeville Reviews – Loew’s State, NY” *Variety*
- March 4, 1948 – “In this Corner,” by Cedric Adams, *Minneapolis Star*
- April 24, 1948 – “Box Office Barometer,” *Billboard Personal Appearances Supplement*
- May 3, 1948 – “In this Corner,” by Cedric Adams, *Minneapolis Star*
- May 26, 1948 – “Francis Craig Impresses Folk Here as Southern Gentleman,” *Paducah Sun Democrat* (2 copies)
- March 23, 1952 – “Francis Craig to be Honored . . .” by Frank Sartwell, Jr. *Washington Sunday Star*
- August 27, 1955 – “ I Remember . . .” *Nashville Banner* (3 copies)
- July 2, 1961 – “Now and Then with Nashville Music Men,” by Pat Anderson, *Nashville Tennessean*

- February 16, 1967 – “Big-Time Composer Visiting in Naples,” [Naples, Florida] *Collier County News*
- March 20, 1977 – “ ‘Near You’ Still on Top After All These Years,” by Laura Eipper, *Nashville Tennessean* (9 copies)
- [1986?] – “ ‘Near You’ was Craig’s Lucky Accident,” *Nashville Banner* (3 originals and 4 photocopies)
- August 20, 1990 – “Tennessee’s Musical Influence Great,” by Belden Menkus, *Nashville Tennessean*

13. About Francis Craig, n.d.

14. Subject Files – Advertisements, n.d.

15. Subject Files – Hermitage Hotel, 1981, 1988

16. Subject Files – People – Bulleit, Jim, 1948, 1971

17. Subject Files – People – DeLuca, Gaetano, 1985

18. Subject Files – People – Hall, Jim, n.d.

19. Subject Files – People – Kerr, Anita, 1979

20. Subject Files – People – Lamm, Robert, 1972

21. Subject Files – People – Lansom, Snooky, 1990

22. Subject Files – People – Lenk, Walter Albert, n.d.

23. Subject Files – People – Marquette, Pee Wee, 1978, n.d.

24. Subject Files – People – McEwen, Red, n.d.

25. Subject Files – People – Melton, James, 1961, n.d.

26. Subject Files – Songs – “Beg Your Pardon” 1948

27. Subject Files – Songs – “Near You” 1947 – 48, 1971

28. Subject Files – Songs – other, 1979, n.d.

29. Subject Files – Vanderbilt University, 1933, 1946, 1948, 1967, other

Box 2

Series II. Newspaper Clippings and Publications

1. Subject Files – *The Billboard*, Jan. 3, 1948
2. Subject Files – *Juke Box Record Review*, September 1948
3. Subject Files – “Opryland: A Modern Musical Adventure,” April 15, 1972 in *Billboard*
4. Subject Files – WSM
5. Subject Files – Photographs and photo spreads (no articles), 1938, n.d.
6. Scrapbooks – photocopies – (1 of 3)
7. Scrapbooks – photocopies – (2 of 3)
8. Scrapbooks – photocopies – (3 of 3)

Series III. Sheet Music

9. “Beg Your Pardon”
10. “A Broken Heart Must Cry” 1953
11. “Do Me a Favor, Will Ya?” 1948
12. “Fly Our Flag Forever” 1961

13. "Fly Our Flag Forever" (addition 3/11/08) with accompanying materials
14. "Foolin'" 1946
15. "I Thought I was Dreaming" 1937
16. "Lost Motion" 1938
17. "Near You" 1947
18. "Near You" foreign and other versions
19. "Put All Your Love in a Cookie Jar," 1949
20. "Red Rose, " 1937
21. "She's a Bad Little Girl," 1950
22. "Sometimes I Wonder," 1945
23. "When Vandy Starts to Fight" 1941
24. "Won't You Buy Some Girl Scout Cookies" 1957 [Manuscript]
25. Orchestrations "Lost Motion"
26. Orchestrations "The Nashville Banner March"

Box 3

Series III. Sheet Music

1. Orchestrations "Red Rose"
2. Orchestrations "When Vandy Starts to Fight" (the Dynamite Song)
[w/manuscript]
3. Other composers (featuring Francis Craig), 1926, 1930, 1936-38, 1940-41
 - "Boo Hoo," 1937
 - "Day Dreaming," 1941
 - "Dear Diary," 1936
 - "Don't Take the Sweet Out of Sweetheart," 1936
 - "Hula Blues," 1939
 - "I Hear Bluebirds," 1940
 - "I Still Get A Thrill," 1930
 - "In the Chapel in the Moonlight," 1936
 - "Let Me Dream of Havana," 1935
 - "The Little Old-Fashioned Music Box," 1924
4. Other composers (featuring Francis Craig), 1926, 1930, 1936 -38, 1940-41
 - "Moon Over Burma" 1940
 - "On a Little Dream Ranch," 1937
 - "Polka Dots and Moonbeams," 1940
 - "Shame on You," 1937
 - "Something Seems to Tell Me," [date ?] – fragment
 - "Sweetheart Let's Grow Old Together"
 - "Taint Good," 1936
 - "Talking to the Moon," 1926
 - "There's a Far-Away Look in Your Eye," 1938

Series IV. Photographs

5. Francis Craig	1	1931
6. Francis Craig	5	n.d.
7. Billboard	1	n.d..
8. Billy Schaeffer and Cecil Bailey,	1	n.d..
9. "Burns Birds" Bill Burns	1	n.d.
10. "Burns Birds" and Irene Burns	1	n.d.
11. FC w/ Cosmopolitan Hotel Personnel	1	1932
12. Dancers –Unidentified	2	n.d.
13. "Flying to Cherry Point, NC"	2	1946
14. Freddy Martin and Francis Craig	1	n.d.
15. FC w/ his mascot "Pee Wee"	2	1932
16. James Barton	[1	n.d.
17. Jerry Murad's Harmonicats	1	1948
18. Jim Lownsbury and Francis Craig	1	n.d.
19. Lander and Holland	1	Dec. 7, 1947
20. Marjorie and James Melton's Wedding	1	n.d.
21. Mrs. Lupton, "This is Your Life" Clarksville, Tennessee	1	Fall, 1953
22. Photograph postcards – FC –blank	6	n.d.
23. Photograph postcards – orchestra	1	1949 (to Mrs. Buford Dickerson)
24. Ray Thortun and Francis Craig	1	n.d.
25. Ray Brown and Francis Craig	1	September, 1955
26. Tex Beneke and Francis Craig	1	1948
27. Tours	4	n.d.
Vaudeville, Loew's State Marquee		
Billboard, location unknown		
Window display, location unknown		
28. Unidentified	2	n.d.
29. Washington, D.C. Tour	7	1948
30. w/Bob and Florence Lamm	1	n.d.
31. w/Group	1	n.d.
Florence and Bob Lamm		
Jean Brown		
Ray Brown		
Pat Tiffault		
Fergee		
Junie Ferguson		
32. w/Olee Elrick and Jack Owens	1	n.d.
33. w/Orchestra	3	n.d.
34. w/Orchestra and Dancers	1	n.d.
35. w/Orin Remsnyder and Marion Woodward	2	n.d.
Christmas Booth		
Gift for disabled veterans		
36. w/Others at the piano	3	n.d.
37. w/Unidentified Group	3	n.d.

38. w/Unidentified Man	2	n.d.
39. w/Unidentified Woman	2	n.d.
40. Negatives	2	n.d.
w/Snooky Lansom on Trumpet in VU Gym		
w/Dinah Shore		

Box 4

Series V. Recordings

Audio Cassettes

1. Cassette 1 side A disc transfers

- “The Sheik of Araby” “Way Down Upon the Swanee River” Donia Craig and Mary Baldwin – acetate disc
- “Ain’t She Sweet/Five Foot Two” “The World is Waiting for a Sunrise” unlabeled acetate disc
- “Frankie and Johnny” “Down Yonder” Baldwin Bom Shells – acetate disc
- “St. Louis Blues” Baldwin Bom Shells – acetate disc
- “Blue Moon Medley” Baldwin Bom Shells – acetate disc
- “One For My Baby” Piano and vocal Donia Craig – acetate disc
- “Ain’t She Sweet” “New Orleans” Baldwin Bom Shells – acetate disc
- “Waiting for the Robert E. Lee” “When The Saints Go Marching In” Baldwin Bom Shells – acetate disc
- Famous Vanderbilt Songs – The Alma Mater, Dynamite, Cheer for the Gold and Black Collegiate Recording Company VU 1001 – vinyl disc

Cassette 1 side B disc transfers

- “O’Alma Mater” sung by the Vanderbilt A Capella Choir Cyrus Daniel – Director Soloists: Jack Irvin a ’50 baritone and Virginia Osborn a ’49 soprano Collegiate Recording Company and VU 1002
- “I Thought I was Dreaming” Francis Craig and his Orchestra MGM 10378 – A
- “Tennessee Tango” Francis Craig and His Orchestra MGM 10378- B
- Red Carino interview by Jack Ridder WENT in Gloversville, New York – Sept. 11, 1947. Red is in Francis Craig’s Orchestra—discusses Bob Lamm, “Near You”
- “The Nashville Banner March” written by Francis Craig to commemorate The Banner’s 75th Anniversary April 190, 1951 – performed by the United States Navy Band conducted by LCdr. Charles Brendler, vinyl disc pressing
- “The Nashville Banner March” performed by Francis Craig and his Orchestra-Don Estes and the Anita Kerr Singers-vocalists vinyl disc pressing

- “The Nashville Banner March” performed by Francis Craig on piano vinyl disc pressing
- “Near You” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Decca 28089

Cassette 2 side A disc transfers

- “Stars and Stripes Medley” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Decca 28089
- “I’m Looking for a Sweetheart” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Bullet 1012A
- “Beg Your Pardon” Francis Craig and His Orchestra Bullet 1012B
- “Foolin” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Bullet 1013A
- “Do Me a Favor (Will Ya?)” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Bullet 1013B
- “I Still Get a Thrill” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Bullet 1040A
- “Disillusioned” Francis Craig and his Orchestra Bullet 1040B
- “Some Hearts Sing” Dick James – vocal, with the George Mitchell Choir and Ronnie Milne and his Orchestra London 544A
- “I Thought I was Dreaming” Dick James – vocal, with the George Mitchell Choir Don Lorusso-Hamond organ and guitar and bass accompaniment, written by (Carlson, Craig, Nolan) London 544B
- “Put All Your Love in a Cookie Jar” George Morgan (written by Morgan-Craig) Columbia 20594
- “Room Full of Roses” George Morgan Columbia 20594

Cassette 2 side B disc transfers

- salute to “Near You” radio broadcast – Hawaiian version – comedy
- orchestral version-comedy intro of Francis Craig- reading of resolution from city of Nashville by Mayor Tom Cummings – incomplete
- short broadcast from Meet Your Music Makers announcing Francis Craig to be on show soon
- Ira Cook and Meet Your Music Makers –interview Francis Craig 1-29-48
- more of interview – discusses “Near You” and “Beg Your Pardon” family life –(some speed problems starting here)

Cassette 3 side A disc transfers

- “Overture/Crazy Mani” Donia Craig VU 100
- “Let’s Have a Love Affair” by Jim Warwick and Becky Howell and Chorus “Unconventional Me” by Sanders Marshall VU 101
- “Fantasie De Parisienne” (Part 1) by Jack Irvin and Chorus VU 102
- “Fantasie De Parisienne” (Part 2) by Jack Irvin and Chorus VU 104
- “My Tomorrow” by Jack Irvin, Betsy Conway and Chorus VU 103
- “Where is My Heart” Jack Irvin “Matador” Walter Courtney VU 105 incomplete

Cassette 3 side B disc transfers

- “Where is My Heart” “Matador” continued from side A
- “My Heart Has Wings” by Jack Irvin and Chorus VU 106
- “Waxing Mellow Tonight” by Becky Howell and Chorus/ “In the Sun Again” by Becky Conway VU 107
- “In the Shade of the Moonlight” Francis Craig – Francis Craig at the Piano Dot 45 – 15400
- “If You Cared at All” Francis Craig – Francis Craig at the Piano Dot 45 – 15400

2. Cassette 4 side A disc transfers

- **1 Matinee Time – Jo Sherman interviews Francis Craig 3-20-62 WSM radio**

Discusses past band members and vocalists, playing ‘bones’ on Red Foley record, “Near You” , sales figures, Vanderbilt fight song (Dynamite), family history, “Beg Your Pardon” career highlights, James Melton, and “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls” “Trip Around the World”

Cassette 4 side B disc transfers

- People in the Headlines – radio interview with Francis Craig, 12-2-40 part 1
- Interview with Francis Craig part 2 (listed as part 3)
- “Dynamite- When Vandy Starts to Fight” radio broadcast
- “The Hills of Tennessee” Roy Acuff from the Prince Albert Grand Ole Opry, 2-26-44
- The Choral Society and Marching Band perform Francis Craig’s “Red Rose” 9-19-47
- “Near You” side 2 of disc above – no label – New York NBC network radio broadcast
- Presentation of scroll to Francis Craig by Nashville Mayor Tom Cummings
- Salute to “Near You” comedy version of song by Wally Fowler and the Oak Ridge Quartet – radio broadcast 10-3-47

Cassette 5 side A tape transfers

- Craig family personal tape beginning August 19, 1954 – Thanksgiving – Sewing Club, birthdays – includes comments from Pee Wee Marquette – famous doorman of Byrdland club in New York City and alumni of the Craig band.

Recordings – Tapes (7 ½ ips, reel to reel)

3.

- Peewee, Bill O and Teck, Francis and Bohham, Blue Heaven, Julie Webber, Gordon, Marion Overby, Birthday Dec. 29, 1956
- Matinee Time, Jo Sherman and Francis Craig, March 20, 1962

4.

- Francis Craig, Studio Salute to “Near You” (October 3, 1947); interview with Francis Craig/Ira Cook (January 29, 1948); Meet Your Music Makers, nd; interview, Part 1, Francis Craig (December 2, 1940)
- Interview Part 3 (December 2, 1940); “When Vandy Starts to Fight,” nd; Roy Acuff/Prince Albert, “Hills of Tennessee” (December 26, 1944); “Red Rose” (September 19, 1947); presentation of scroll to Craig by Mayor Cummings, nd; salute to “Near You,” nd

Box 5

Series V – Recordings- Records

1. “Do Me A Favor (Will Ya?)/ “Foolin” (2 records) Francis Craig and His Orchestra, Francis Craig at the piano
2. “I Still Get a Thrill”/ “Disillusioned” (2 records) Francis Craig and His Orchestra, Francis Craig at the piano
3. “I’m Looking for a Sweetheart”/ “Beg Your Pardon” Francis Craig and His Orchestra, Francis Craig at the Piano
4. “In the Shade of the Moonlight”/ “If You Care at All”45 rpm – Francis Craig
5. “The Nashville Banner March” Francis Craig, piano/ “To Commemorate the Banners’s “The Nashville Banner March” Francis Craig and Orchestra, 75th Anniversary April 10, 1951 w/Don Estes/The Anita Kerr Singersl (3 records)
6. “The Nashville Banner March” Francis Craig, piano/ “To Commemorate the Banners’s “The Nashville Banner March” Francis Craig and Orchestra, 75th Anniversary April 10, 1951 w/Don Estes/The Anita Kerr Singers (2 records)
7. “The Nashville Banner March” words and music by Francis Craig in commemoration of the *Nashville Banner’s* 75 anniversary
8. “The Nashville Banner March” played by the United States Navy Band conducted by LCDR. Charles Brendler
9. “The Nashville Banner March” played by Paul Lavalley and the Cities Service Band of America
10. “Near You”/ “Red Rose” Francis Craig and His Orchestra
11. “Near You”/ “Beg Your Pardon” Francis Craig 45rpm
12. “Near You”/ “Stars and Stripes Medley” Francis Craig and His Orchestra

13. "Tennessee Tango" Craig/Smith / "I Thought I was Dreaming"
Craig/Carlson/Nolan (2 records)
14. "Sheik" vocals by Donia Craig and Mary Baldwin 78rpm
15. "One for My Baby" piano and vocal Donia Craig/ "Blue Moon Medley," Baldwin
Bom Shells
16. "St. Louis Blues"/ "Frankie and Johnny"/ "Down Yonder" played by Baldwin
Bom Shells
17. "Robert E. Lee" and "The Saints"/ "Ain't She Sweet" and "New Orleans" by the
Baldwin Bom Shells
18. Scampers of 1953 Presents "The Fink in Paris" music and lyrics by John Jennings
(4 singles, this is 1 of 4) VU100 Overture "Crazy Man!" Sung by Donia Craig/
VU 101 "Let's Have a Love Affair"/ "Unconventional Me" 45rpm
19. Scampers of 1953 presents "The Fink in Paris" music and lyrics by John Jennings
(4 singles, this is 2 of 4) VU 102 Fantasie de Parisienne (Part 1); VU 104
Fantasie de Parisienne (part 2) 45rpm
20. Scampers of 1953 presents "The Fink in Paris" music and lyrics by John Jennings
(4 singles, this is 3 of 4) VU 103 "My Tomorrow" VU 105 "Where is My Heart"
45rpm
21. Scampers of 1953 presents "The Fink in Paris" music and lyrics by John Jennings
(4 singles, this is 4 of 4) VU 106 "My Heart has Wings" VU 107 "Waxing
Mellow Tonight" 45rpm
22. "O Alma Mater," Vanderbilt Acapella Choir; "Famous Vanderbilt Songs,"
Vanderbilt Men's Glee Club, Cyrus Daniel, Director; Jack Irvin and Virginia
Osborn soloists
23. "I Thought I Was Dreaming"/ "Some Hearts Sing" Dick James vocal, with the
George Mitchell Choir and Don Lorusso
24. "Papa Celestin's "Golden Wedding" LP Album that includes "Down by the
Riverside" and "When the Saints go Marching in"
25. "Put All Your Love in a Cookie Jar"/ "Room Full of Roses" George Morgan,
vocal with String Band Orchestra
26. "The United Press March" by Paul Lavalle. Played by the Band of America
27. "Transfusion, Nervous Norvus"/ "Dig, Nervous Norvus"
28. "Sonata in G" by Robert Schumann, rec'd by Roger Griffith, May 1952, 3rd
movement 2nd piano sonata, Burrill Phillips
29. "Red Carina – Jack Ridder interview " aired on 1340 Club over WENT
Gloversville, NY on September 11, 1947
30. Unidentified recording
31. Unidentified recording

32. Unidentified recording

33. Miscellaneous

Oversize - Cardboard head of Francis Craig, color, approximately 17" x 27"