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Preservation and Special Collections Department

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Lala A. Stephens collection

Title: Lala A. Stephens collection

Collection No: MSS.513

Extent: 0.25 cubic feet

Inclusive Dates: 1922-1978

Abstract: The collection comprises materials related to the life and work of Memphis school music director, Lala A. Stephens (1899-1983), including correspondence and photographs.

Processed by: Gerald Chaudron, April 2015.

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: Lala A. Stephens collection, Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: April 2015

Biographical information

Lala Almira Stephens was born in Homer, Illinois, on March 18, 1899, to Oliver Z. (1869-1951) and Francis J. Stephens (1874-1950), one of five children. She graduated high school in Shelbyville, Illinois, in 1917, attended the Sparks Conservatory of Music in Shelbyville for a year and then the James Millikin Conservatory of Music in Decatur, Illinois, majoring in piano and public school music, with minors in violin and voice. After graduating in 1922, she attended the Northwestern School of Music and American Institute of Normal Methods, Evanston, to further her teaching qualifications. She was supervisor of music for the Powell Public Schools in Wyoming from 1922 to 1926, and then took a similar post in Nampa, Idaho. Later she became music director of Memphis schools and served on the faculty of Rhodes College in the late 1950s. She retired in 1967 but worked with the First Assembly Christian School school of music. Lala Stephens died in 1983.

Scope and contents

The collection comprises materials related to the life and work of Lala A. Stephens, including correspondence and photographs. The correspondence is mainly from the 1920s when Stephens was applying for teaching positions in Wyoming and Idaho. The photographs concern both her private interests and her professional work. There are negatives of images of the casts of two Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which may include Stephens, and were probably taken when she was a student. The other images are of students in music appreciation classes and performing at various Memphis schools in the 1940s and 1950s. There are also some images of Suzuki violin classes which may be from Stephen's work at the First Assembly Christian School school of music.

Subject terms

School music—Instruction and study—Tennessee—Memphis—Photographs.
Stephens, Lala A., 1899-1983.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Correspondence, 1922-1927, 1967. Mostly regarding applications for teaching positions, including references. Includes Certificate of Appreciation issued by the Memphis

Board of Education, 1967.

- 2 Programs: First Assembly Christian School school of music recitals by Suzuki string students, 1977-1978.

Photographs:

- Glass** Negatives: 8 glass negatives of actors in costume for opera "The Mikado",
Negatives undated (c. 1920).
3 Photocopies of "Mikado" glass negatives.
4 Negative: Copy of scrapbook page photographs of cast of opera "Trial by Jury", undated (c.1920).
5 Negatives: Copy of scrapbook page photographs and image of children performing "The Lady of Shalott", undated.
6 Photographic prints, b/w, 8" x 10": School music, Memphis, 1946 and undated. Schools include Cummings, Bellevue, Fairview, Treadwell, Humes, Bruce, Guthrie. Also high school performances at Ellis Auditorium.
7 Photographic prints: School music, Memphis, undated. Images of school plays including Rumpelstiltskin, The Three Pigs, music appreciation classes, and Suzuki violin classes.