1-13-2014

Benton Big Sing (FA 648)

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Western Kentucky University, mssfa@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_fin_aid

Part of the Folklore Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_fa_fin_aid/676

This Finding Aid is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in FA Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
FA 648 BENTON Big Sing – Benton, Kentucky

1 box.  7 folders.  20 items.  1977-1996.
Originals, slides, cassette tape, videocassette tape, and book.

SC2012.179.49

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection features video and audio documentation of the Benton Big Sing held in Benton, Kentucky. Originally organized in 1884, the Benton Big Sing is held annually on the fourth Sunday in May. The event is considered to be the oldest indigenous musical tradition in the United States. During the festival, shape-note singers gather to sing from a tune book known as “The Southern Harmony.” “The Southern Harmony” was compiled by William Walker and released in 1835. Included in this collection is a revised version of the shape note hymn and tune book.

The distinguishing feature of shape note singing is the use of four separate shapes that indicate notes according to the rules of solfege, or pitch and sight singing. The shapes include a triangle that indicates fa, a circle for sol, a square for la, and a diamond for mi. In order to avoid the excessive use of shapes, each shape except for mi was assigned to two notes of the musical scale. Therefore a major scale in the system would be noted as Fa-Sol-La-Fa-Sol-La-Mi-Fa and a minor scale would be La-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Fa-Sol-La.

SHELF LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>BENTON Big Sing – Benton, Kentucky</th>
<th>1977-1996</th>
<th>20 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>“The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion” revised version</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>14 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
Folder 5  Recording of 93rd Big Sing  1977  1 item
Folder 6  Recording of 107th Big Sing  1990  1 item
Folder 7  Video of 113th Big Sing  1996  1 item

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

FA  BENTON Big Sing – Benton,  1977-1996
648  Kentucky

This collection features video and audio documentation of the Benton Big Sing held in Benton, Kentucky. Originally organized in 1884, the Benton Big Sing is held annually on the fourth Sunday in May.
1 box. 7 folders. 20 items. Originals, slides, cassette tape, videocassette tape, and book.

SC2012.179.49

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Festivals – Benton
Music – Benton
Shape note singing

Young/Jeffrey  01/13/2014