

1121-105-GSM-gau (USMARC)  
City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia [GSG (OCLC/LYRASIS)]

**Record Series #: 1121-105**

**Name: W. W. Law Music collection**

**Dates: circa 1918-2002, no date**

**Extent/Size: 253 boxes (154.49 cubic feet)**

**Language: predominately English, other languages include Hebrew, Italian, German, and Russian**

**Name of Creator(s):**

Westley Wallace Law (W. W. Law)

**Biographical History:**

W. W. Law (1923-2002) was a prominent Civil Rights leader, local historian, historic preservationist and community leader in Savannah, Georgia.

Westley Wallace Law was born on January 1, 1923 in Savannah, Georgia, the oldest of three children of Geneva Wallace and Westley Law. He was greatly influenced by his mother, Geneva W. Law, grandmother, Lillie Belle Wallace, mentor, Reverend Ralph Mark Gilbert, and scoutmaster, John S. Delaware. Both Reverend Gilbert and John Delaware were officials in the Savannah chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Law joined the NAACP Youth Council in high school and later served as its president. He attended Georgia State Industrial College (now Savannah State University) before being drafted into the U. S. Army during World War II. After he completed his military service, he finished his bachelor's degree in biology. Law was a long-time boy scoutmaster for Troop 49 which was made up of boys from First Bryan Baptist Church, of which he was a member and Sunday school teacher. He was a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service for over forty years.

From 1950-1976 Law served as President of the Savannah chapter of the NAACP. During the 1960s, he led weekly mass meetings at Bolton Street Baptist Church and St. Philip A.M.E. Church during which he urged "passive resistance to segregation" and nonviolent protests. He was involved in efforts to desegregate Grayson Municipal Stadium, department store lunch counters on Broughton Street, and the beaches at Tybee Island. He led an eighteen-month boycott of Broughton Street merchants. Law is largely credited for helping to keep Savannah's Civil Rights movement more peaceful than those in other southern cities. In 1961, he was fired from his postal job because of his Civil Rights activities, but reinstated after national NAACP leaders and President John F. Kennedy came to his defense.

After finishing his run as NAACP president, he focused his efforts on preserving Savannah African American History. He established the Savannah-Yamacraw Branch of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH), the King-Tisdell Cottage Museum, Beach Institute African American Cultural Center, the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, and the Negro Heritage Trail Tour. He also helped bring attention to and preserve Laurel Grove South Cemetery, the City's historically African American municipal cemetery.

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Law received honorary doctorates from the Savannah College of Art & Design and Savannah State University. He was honored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation for his preservation efforts in the community. W. W. Law died on July 28, 2002 at his home in Savannah. He willed his home and belongings to Remer K. Pendergraph who formed the W. W. Law Foundation to celebrate and continue the work of W. W. Law. The Foundation in turn donated his collections, documenting Savannah's civil rights movement, historic preservation, and African American history, to the City of Savannah for preservation and access to the public.

*For more information on W. W. Law see:*

Elmore, Charles J. "W. W. Law (1923-2002)." New Georgia Encyclopedia, last edited by NGE Staff, 12 February 2016 (available on the web at <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/w-w-law-1923-2002> ).

*Scope and Content:*

The W. W. Law Music collection (circa 1918-2002, no date) contains a variety of audio formats and musical genres, arranged into the following sub-series:

- Sub-series 1121-105.1 Shellac records
- Sub-series 1121-105.2 Vinyl records
- Sub-series 1121-105.3 Audiocassette tapes
- Sub-series 1121-105.4 Compact Discs

See each sub-series scope and content note for more information on the materials.

*Conditions Governing Access:*

Physical access to the collection is available with a scheduled research appointment. Researchers are asked to make an appointment 24 to 48 hours before their anticipated visit time. Full access to the album enclosures/artwork is available. Playback services are only available for the audiocassette tapes and compact discs. Researchers are asked to bring their own headphones to listen to playback. At this time, the Municipal Archives does not maintain special equipment for playback of the shellac or vinyl records (e.g. phonograph, turntables). Several recordings were found with significant damage to the discs due to the manner in which the collection was housed prior to donation to the City of Savannah. Access to recordings exhibiting severe preservation issues will be at the discretion of Municipal Archives staff.

*Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:*

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This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve a violation of copyright law.

***Digital Access:***

Certain digital surrogates can be found online. Various portals, such as the Library of Congress' National Jukebox (<http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/>) and the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>), provide access to some of the content contained in this collection.

***Access Points:***

78rpm recording discs  
Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993  
Armstrong, Louis, 1901-1971  
Audiocassette recordings  
Blues (music)  
Brahms, Johannes, 1833-1897  
Chopin, Frédéric, 1810-1849  
Classical music  
Classical music--Cantatas  
Classical music--Lieder  
Classical music--Mazurkas (music)  
Classical music--Oratorios  
Classical music--Overtures  
Classical music--Sonatas  
Classical music--Song cycles  
Classical music--Songs  
Classical music--Symphonic poems  
Classical music--Symphonies  
Classical music--Trios  
Classical music--Variations (Music)  
Compact discs  
Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974  
Folk music  
Folk music--Spirituals (songs)  
Functional music  
Functional music--Military music  
Functional music--Patriotic music  
Hayes, Roland, 1887-1977  
Horowitz, Vladimir, 1903-1989

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Jackson, Mahalia, 1911-1972  
Jazz  
Jazz--Big band music  
Jazz--Jump blues  
Jazz--Trumpet music  
Jubilee Singers  
Law, W. W. (Westley Wallace), 1923-2002  
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 1756-1791  
Music for the stage  
Music for the stage--Monologues  
Music for the stage--Musicals  
Music for the stage--Motion picture music  
Music for the stage--Operas  
Music for the stage--Operas (excerpts)  
Narrative recordings  
Narrative recordings--Addresses (speeches)  
Narrative recordings--Sermons  
Norman, Jessye  
Odetta, 1930-2008  
Oral histories  
Phonograph records  
Popular music  
Popular music--Big band music  
Popular music--Rhythm and blues music  
Popular music--Rock music  
Popular music--Soul music  
Robeson, Paul, 1898-1976  
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
Sacred music--Christmas music  
Sacred music--Gospel music  
Sacred music--Spirituals (songs)  
Shellac discs  
Sound recordings  
Sound recordings--Audiobooks  
Sound recordings--Interviews  
Sound recordings--Radio programs  
Toscanini, Arturo, 1867-1957  
Verdi, Giuseppe, 1813-1901  
Vinyl discs  
Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883

***Sponsors/Funding:***

Chatham County, Georgia, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funding.

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***Preferred Citation:***

1121-105, W. W. Law Music collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives,  
Savannah, Georgia.

***Processed by:***

L. Sisco, E. Rountree and M. Kerkhoff, March 2017. Updated M. Kerkhoff, November  
2018.

Record Series 1121-105, W. W. Law Music Collection, circa 1918-2002, no date

*Sub-series #:* **1121-105.1**  
*Name:* **W. W. Law Music collection—Shellac records**  
*Dates:* **circa 1918-1953, no date**  
*Extent/Size:* **43 boxes (22.23 cubic feet)**  
*Language:* **predominantly English, other languages include Hebrew, Italian, German, and Russian**

*Scope and Content:*

Sub-series 1121-105.1, W. W. Law Music collection—Shellac records (circa 1918-1953, no date) contains 527 78rpm commercially pressed shellac records. Eight overarching genres are represented in this collection and include jazz, classical, sacred, popular, music for the stage, blues, folk and narrative recordings. Although the collection is predominantly in English, W. W. Law also collected albums with songs in Hebrew, German, Italian and Russian. The recordings differ in size (10 inch or 12 inch discs) as well as condition.

The 78rpm recordings feature well-known local, national and international artists, including Marian Anderson, Johnny Mercer, Paul Robeson, and the King Cole Trio. The series also features prominent symphonies, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Although the collection is strong in classical and jazz, it also contains distinct, standalone selections such as a rendition of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* produced by Orson Welles and a compilation disc set documenting the United Nations partition decision of 1947 creating an independent "Jewish State."

*System of Arrangement & Ordering:*

Sub-series 1121-105.1, W. W. Law Music collection—Shellac records (circa 1918-1953, no date) is arranged by genres and size:

- Jazz** - Box 1 thru box 6
- Classical music** - Box 7 thru box 21
- Sacred music** - Box 22 thru box 24
- Popular music** - Box 25 thru box 27
- Music for the stage** - Box 28 thru box 30
- Narrative recordings** - Box 31 and 32
- Blues (music)** - Box 32 (1 record) and box 33
- Folk music** - Box 34
- Album art** - Box 35 thru box 43

The first thirty-four boxes are sound recordings while the remaining nine boxes are original album enclosures that accompanied the discs. These enclosures/artwork were physically separated for optimal preservation but they remain intellectually linked with their associated recordings. The inventories are searchable by genre, subgenre, title of work, date, and associated contributors (composers, directors, and/or artists).

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Record Series 1121-105, W. W. Law Music Collection, circa 1918-2002, no date

*See attached inventories:*

[Shellac Inventory by Item Number](#)

[Shellac Inventory Alphabetical by Song Title](#)

[Shellac Inventory Alphabetical by Genre](#)

[Shellac Album Artwork Alphabetical by Title](#)

[Shellac Album Artwork Alphabetical by Genre](#)

Record Series 1121-105, W. W. Law Music Collection, circa 1918-2002, no date

*Sub-series #:* **1121-105.2**  
*Name:* **W. W. Law Music collection—Vinyl records**  
*Dates:* **1947-1991, no date**  
*Extent/Size:* **182 boxes (121.21 cubic feet)**  
*Language:* **predominantly English, other languages include Hebrew, Italian, German, and Russian**

*Scope and Content:*

Sub-series 1121-105.2, W. W. Law Music collection—Vinyl records (1947-1991, no date) contains 5,174 albums in a range of sizes including 12 inch, 10 inch and 7 inch (or 45 rpm) discs. There are nine over-arching genres that represent the content found in the collection including: blues; classical; folk; functional music; jazz; music for the stage; narrative recordings; and sacred. The three most catalogued genres in this sub-series are classical music, music for the stage, and sacred. Although the collection is predominantly in English, W. W. Law also collected albums with songs in Hebrew, German, Italian and Russian.

There are several album compilations with multiple discs, others with booklets and movie film rolls. Several special edition discs were encased in a colored tint, usually red. However, the soundtrack for the movie *The Color Purple* (1985) is tinted purple. Leaflets and personal notes were found with some of the albums, and are noted in the inventory. Several albums were written on the front or back by friends of W. W. Law with personal notes, these are also noted in the inventory. There are a few albums autographed by musicians, such as Grace Bumbry, Jessye Norman, and music producer John Hammond. Some of the albums were purchased from local Savannah music stores as indicated by stickers found on the albums, including: Norwood's Vinyl Store; the Olympic Sports Shop; and Victor Music store.

*System of Arrangement & Ordering:*

Sub-series 1121-105.2, W. W. Law Music collection—Vinyl records (1947-1991, no date) is arranged by disc size then by genre:

- 12 inch albums-** Box 44 thru 196
- 12 inch box sets-** Box 197 thru 206
- 12 inch oversized albums-** Box 207 thru 215
- 10 inch albums-** Box 216 thru 217
- 7 inch (45 rpm) albums-** Box 218 thru 223

Oversized albums and box sets are separated for preservation storage. Not every vinyl disc was found with an album cover, and not every album cover was found with a disc. See the inventories for more information.

*See attached inventories:*

[Vinyl Inventory by Box Contents](#)  
[Vinyl Inventory by Album Title](#)  
[Vinyl Inventory by Genre](#)



Record Series 1121-105, W. W. Law Music Collection, circa 1918-2002, no date

**Sub-series #:** 1121-105.3  
**Name:** W. W. Law Music collection—Audiocassette tapes  
**Dates:** 1968-2000, no date  
**Extent/Size:** 12 boxes (3.05 cubic feet)  
**Language:** English

*Scope and Content:*

Sub-series 1121-105.3, W. W. Law Music collection—Audiocassette tapes (1968-2000, no date) contains 340 audiocassette tapes, many of which are undescribed, missing their original labels, cases, and/or inserts. This collection has been minimally processed based on existing labeling. Tapes with unidentified content have been noted as part of the Unknown genre. The identified content falls into eleven over-arching genres: blues; classical; folk; functional music; jazz; music for the stage; narrative recordings; oral histories; popular; sacred; and sound recordings. The most important aspect of this series is the original content on 198 audiocassette tapes featuring recordings of local events, oral history interviews, lectures, and radio programs.

*System of Arrangement & Ordering:*

Sub-series 1121-105.3, W. W. Law Music collection—Audiocassette tapes (1968-2000, no date) is arranged by genre and size:

**Described audiocassette tapes-** Box 225 thru 231

**Undescribed audiocassette tapes-** Box 232 thru 233

**Audiocassette cases and labels-** Box 234

**Oversized audiocassette cases-** Box 224 and 235

Audiocassette cases were found with no tapes inside and labels were found with no corresponding tapes or cases. These were retained as documentation of W. W. Law's complete collection for research purposes. See the audiocassette inventory for more information. The inventory also indicates if an audiocassette was commercially published or not (indicated as original).

*See attached inventories:*

[Audiocassette Inventory by Box Contents](#)

[Audiocassette Inventory by Cassette Title](#)

[Audiocassette Inventory by Genre](#)

**Record Series 1121-105, W. W. Law Music Collection, circa 1918-2002, no date**

**Sub-series #:** 1121-105.4  
**Name:** W. W. Law Music collection—Compact Discs  
**Dates:** 1971-2002, no date  
**Extent/Size:** 16 boxes (8 cubic feet)  
**Language:** English

**Scope and Content:**

Sub-series 1121-105.4, W. W. Law Music collection—Compact Discs (1971-2002, no date) contains 688 CDs of various genres. The content falls into eight over-arching genres: blues; classical; folk; jazz; music for the stage; narrative recordings; popular; and sacred. The collection contains 62 original recordings of musical performances and 626 commercially published CDs. Oversized albums have been separated for their preservation. A highlight of this collection is the autographed album, *Odetta Lookin' for a Home: Thanks to Leadbelly* (2001), with a personal note written by Odetta, an influential African American folk artist. Another highlight of this sub-series are the local album artists represented, including: The Savannah Community Choir; Teddy Adams; and Terry L. Grant.

**System of Arrangement & Ordering:**

Sub-series 1121-105.4, W. W. Law Music collection—Compact Discs (1971-2002, no date) is arranged by genre and size:

- Oversized CDs:** Boxes 249-251
- Blues (music):** Box 242
- Classical music:** Boxes 236, 245, and 247
- Folk music:** Box 240 and 242
- Jazz:** Boxes 241 and 243
- Music for the Stage:** Boxes 238, 248, and 246
- Narrative recordings:** Box 241
- Popular music:** Box 237 and 241
- Sacred:** Box 239, 242 and 244

**See attached inventories:**

- [Compact Discs Inventory by Box Contents](#)
- [Compact Discs Inventory by Album Title](#)
- [Compact Discs Inventory by Genre](#)

The attached inventories indicate if a compact disc was commercially published or not (indicated as original).