

ArMs 1977.245  
5 manuscript boxes (2 cubic feet)  
A0188-A0192  
Location: 4C-6.4.E

Papers of  
Herbert Stavely Sammond, 1871-1964  
Inclusive Dates: 1889-1964  
Bulk Dates: 1891-1958

Brooklyn Historical Society  
Othmer Library  
128 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel. 718.222.4111 FAX 718.222.3794

[reference@brooklynhistory.org](mailto:reference@brooklynhistory.org)  
[www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)

Cesar Garza  
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Supervisor: Leilani Dawson  
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## Introduction

The papers of Hebert Stavely Sammond (1871-1964) constitute a personal record of musical activity by a man who spent seventy years as an organist, choral leader and music teacher in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Brooklyn.

## Biographical Note

In 1958, near the end of his long life, Herbert Stavely Sammond authored a brief recollection of his musical career entitled *Seventy Years at the Console* (Box 2:4). In it he credits his friends with the suggestion to write his life story, yet nonetheless finds purpose in the enterprise: "I am carrying out the suggestion, hoping that those who read it may find courage and inspiration to keep a'going, despite any handicap one may encounter along the way."

Sammond's life was a success story in spite of inauspicious early years. He was born December 4, 1871, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The youngest of four children, he migrated to Brooklyn with his mother, brother and two sisters after the death of their father around 1875. Two years later his mother followed his father to the grave, and Sammond and his siblings were compelled to part ways. Ultimately he was adopted by an aunt and uncle in Brooklyn, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Sammond developed an aptitude for music early on, taking piano lessons and becoming organist and choirmaster of the Greenwood Heights Reformed Church (42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Brooklyn) while still an adolescent. Greenwood Heights was the first in a long succession of Brooklyn- and Manhattan-based churches that Sammond served as organist and choirmaster. An abbreviated list of these churches includes: Park Congregational Church (7<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Brooklyn, 1893-1900), Our Lady of Victory Church (Throop Avenue and McDonough Street, Brooklyn, 1900-1904), Classon Avenue Presbyterian Church (Classon Avenue and Monroe Street, Brooklyn, 1904-1907), Clinton Avenue Congregational Church (Clinton and Lafayette Avenues, Brooklyn, 1907-1921), and the Middle Collegiate Church (Second Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, 1921-1956) from which he retired with the honorific Minister of Music Emeritus.

Sammond did not limit his activities solely to the console. During World War I he acquired a military job as the Song Leader of forts in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Rockaway County. He granted private music lessons and served as conductor of several choral organizations, including the Flushing Oratorio, the Elizabeth (New Jersey) Oratorio Society, the Apollo Men's Club of Asbury Park (New Jersey), and most famously of all, the Morning Choral Society of Brooklyn. The Morning Choral Society was founded in 1919 by Sammond as a women's amateur vocal group. Over the years it gained an esteemed reputation among the churchgoing citizens of Brooklyn, and his retirement from the group in 1949 met with fanfare and local media attention. The Morning Choral Society eventually disbanded in 1962, two years before Sammond's death.

## Scope and Content

The collection contains letters, scrapbooks, clippings, writings, scores, sheet music and an abundance of souvenir programs. It is arranged functionally into four series: 1) Professional Activities & Affiliations, 1895-1962; 2) Memorabilia, 1891-1964; 3) Music Compilations, 1889-1953; 4) Music Compositions, 1915-1958.

Series 1 (Professional Activities & Affiliations, 1895-1962) brings together miscellaneous papers documenting Sammond's activities as an organist, conductor, teacher and occasional journalist. They vary in nature from souvenir programs marking recitals and church services (Box 1, Folders 1-2; Box 2, Folders 1-2) to wallet-size notepads inscribed with copious preparatory notes and private lesson plans (Box 1, Folder 6). Of particular interest are items found among Sammond's writings (Box 2, Folder 4). These include a typescript of his autobiographical sketch *Seventy Years at the Console*, a printed version of the sketch, and also typescripts of articles he placed in music periodicals such as *The American Organist* and which he may have used to give lectures.

The materials in Series 2 (Memorabilia, 1891-1964) function together as memorabilia, compiled presumably by Sammond himself. They consist of two scrapbooks and a folder of newspaper and magazine clippings – all of which are in fragile condition. The clippings, in particular, are brittle and should be handled with care, but they offer a wide-ranging view of the local media attention garnered by Sammond and his musical activities over the decades. Clippings are also present in the two scrapbooks. Scrapbook 1 is a bound volume with recital and church programs, as well as a pictorial list of churches at which Sammond served as organist and choirmaster. Scrapbook 2 is unbound and primarily commemorates Sammond's 1949 retirement from the Morning Choral Society. To that effect, it contains appreciative telegrams and letters.

Series 3 (Music Compilations, 1889-1953) and 4 (Music Compositions, 1915-1958) both contain musical documents. Series 3 contains sheet music of composers such as Bach, Mozart, and Chopin, and is arranged in no particular order. Series 4 contains music by Sammond himself. In this series a distinction is made between original, handwritten scores and printed sheet music; it is arranged according to these two formats and sub-arranged alphabetically by the titles of Sammond's individual compositions. The compositions themselves are original works in certain ways: in some instances Sammond appropriates a poem or a set of lyrics authored by someone else and scores his own music to the words. In other instances he composes a unique arrangement of the work of another composer. All the scores are undated, but when both a score(s) and sheet music exist for a single composition, the corresponding date is provided on account of the copyright on the sheet music.

The collection was donated to the Brooklyn Historical Society by Mrs. Herbert S. Sammond in 1964. For related collections see: ArMs 1977.201/1977.221, Morning Choral Society (Brooklyn); and ArMs 1990.005, Wednesday Music Club. Miscellaneous photographs capturing Sammond in the context of musical performances have been removed to the BHS image collection; see: V1997.23.

#### Container List

##### **Series 1: Professional Activities & Affiliations, 1895-1962**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
1	1	Church Activities (Clinton Avenue Congregational)	1907-1920
	2	Church Activities (Middle Collegiate)	1924-1954
	3	Correspondence	1895-1955
	4	Morning Choral Club	1919-1962
	5	Music Associations & Groups	1914-1953

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
1	6 Preparatory Notes & Documents	1901 & undated
	7 Recitals (Brooklyn)	1895-1958
	8 Recitals (Non-Brooklyn)	1909-1958
2	9 Singing Instruction Pamphlets	1908, 1923 & undated
	10 Writings	1919, 1958 & undated

**Series 2: Memorabilia, 1891-1964**

1	Newspaper & Magazine Clippings	1909-1964
2	Scrapbook 1	1891-1941
3	Scrapbook 2	1918-1957

**Series 3: Music Compilations, 1889-1953**

3	1 <i>J.S. Bach: Complete Organ Works</i>	1913
	2 <i>The Modern Organist: A Collection of Organ Music...</i>	1889
	3 Various Composers 1	1895-1953
	4 Various Composers 2	1908 & undated

**Series 4: Music Compositions, 1915-1958**

	1 Scores: "Alleluia! Shout For Joy"	undated
	2 Scores: "Barcarolle & Pastorale"	undated
	3 Scores: "The Birdling"	undated
	4 Scores: "The Drums of the Lord"	undated
4	5 Scores: "Extase d'Amour"	undated
	6 Scores: "Festival Amen"	undated
	7 Scores: "The Heart of Me"	undated
	8 Scores: "If I Could Do..."	undated
	9 Scores: "In Retrospect"	undated
	10 Scores: "A Joyful Song"	undated

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>
	11	Scores: "A Little Nocturne"	undated
4	12	Scores: "The Lord is My Shepherd"	undated
	13	Scores: "Lullaby"	undated
	14	Scores: "Morning Noon and Night (Love Unexpressed)"	undated
	15	Scores: "My Garden"	undated
	16	Scores: "Rain Drops"	undated
	17	Scores: "Solemn Procession"	undated
	18	Scores: "A Song of Nature"	undated
	19	Scores: "Thanksgiving Ode"	undated
	20	Scores: Unidentified	undated
	21	Scores: "Winter"	undated
	22	Scores & Sheet Music: "Christmas Bells"	1948
	23	Scores & Sheet Music: "An Irish Idyl"	1958
	24	Scores & Sheet Music: "Longing"	1926
	25	Scores & Sheet Music: "Lord, We Pray"	1915
	26	Scores & Sheet Music: "Sing Noel"	1951
5	27	Scores & Sheet Music: "Song"	1937
	28	Sheet Music: "Choral Grace"	1951
	29	Sheet Music: "Christus Natus Est"	1927
	30	Sheet Music: "Night is Like a Gipsy Maiden"	1933
	31	Sheet Music: "Overture to Spring"	1951
	32	Sheet Music: "Short Responses"	1925
	33	Sheet Music: "Supplication"	1924