Overview of the Collection

Title: Clarence Dickinson Research Collection

Collection Number: RG7.1

Dates: 1957-2009

Creator: Gene Winters

Abstract: The collection consists of materials gathered by William Carey University School of Music faculty member Gene Winters as well as correspondence about the development of the Clarence Dickinson Collection in addition to Dickinson himself.

Descriptive Summary

Biographical/Historical Note

Dr. Donald E. (Gene) Winters retired from the Winters School of Music at William Carey University in 2011, following 32 years on the faculty. He holds the B.M., BA., and M.M. in church music and music education from William Carey, and the Ph.D. in music education from Florida State University. The son of Dr. Donald and Mrs. Frances Winters, Dr. Gene Winters assembled this collection of papers relating to the acquisition, arrangement, and preservation of the Clarence Dickson Collection by William Carey University.

The Clarence Dickinson Collection was acquired by William Carey University (then William Carey College) in 1969, through the efforts of Dr. Donald and Mrs. Frances Winters. The Winters came to William Carey College in 1956 after having previously founded the School of Church Music at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. During the following 25 years, they developed a strong and distinctive program of church music at William Carey, which produced scores of church musicians who served in places of leadership throughout the United States. The Winters were responsible for seeking and obtaining, with the help of George Licht Knight, the Clarence Dickinson Collection for William Carey College.
Dr. George Licht Knight, a long-time friend and associate of Clarence Dickinson, wrote memorial articles about Dickinson after his death in September, 1969. He had worked with Dickinson in the Hymn Society of America (which Dr. Knight helped to found), and his influence was important in securing the donation of the Dickinson papers for William Carey.

Clarence Dickinson (1873-1969) was known as the “Dean of American Church Musicians.” He was founder and Dean of the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York City from 1928 to 1945, and served as organist/choirmaster at the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York from 1909-1969. At age 15, he was appointed University Organist at Miami University in Ohio; at 17, he was invited to be a founding member of the American Guild of Organists; at 20, he played a series of 40 concerts at the Chicago World’s Fair; and he played at every subsequent world’s fair held in the United States until he was 94 years old. He was a composer, author, arranger, educator, historian, and concert organist. He personally trained and mentored hundreds of church musicians during the 20th century, at a time when many churches were just beginning to hire professionally trained musicians. Along with his first wife, Helen, he amassed a significant collection of books, music, correspondence, art, and personal items, which comprise the Clarence Dickinson Collection.


Arrangement: The collection is arranged into four series and multiple sub-series, as follows:

Series I: Multimedia
Series II: Clarence Dickinson Biographical Materials
Series III: Clarence Dickinson Collection Development
Series IV: Clarence Dickinson Festivals

Series I contains compact discs, diskettes, and photographs related to Clarence Dickinson, the collection itself, and various Clarence Dickinson Festivals. Media stored on the compact discs include visual images and audio recordings.

Series II holds items related to Clarence Dickinson, including various publications on his life as well as church bulletins and sheet music from his own career.

Series III contains materials related to William Carey University’s acquisition of the Clarence Dickinson collection and the collection’s development over time. The series includes items on the history of the collection, its cataloging, publicity, and fundraising.

Series IV includes items related to the Clarence Dickinson Organ Festival, including correspondence, programs, applications, and advertisements.
Scope and Content

The collection contains various documents related to the acquisition and development of the Clarence Dickinson Collection at William Carey University, including audiovisual materials on compact discs, diskettes, and in photographic prints.

Some materials focus directly on Clarence Dickinson himself, but the majority of the collection is composed of items of correspondence to/from Dr. Gene Winters involving the cataloging and conservation of and fundraising for the collection.

Related Collections:

RG 1.1 - Eugene Winters Papers

The Clarence Dickinson Collection

Topics Covered: [Subject headings that describe the collection; subject headings will be used in the libraries’ online catalog]

Preferred Citation: Item, Date (if known), Title of Collection, Collection Number, Box and Folder number, University Archives, William Carey University Library.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Arrangements for viewing the collection must be made in advance by contacting the office of the Director of Libraries at William Carey University.

Some items in this collection have been restricted and may not be accessed until July 1, 2026.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright

Materials in this collection may be protected from unauthorized copying by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code). Researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright. Photocopying may be limited if William Carey University does not own the original item.

Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Director of the Libraries at William Carey University. Ownership of a photocopy does not imply permission to publish.

Provenance: Collection donated by Dr. Gene Winters in June of 2011.