

Randolph Family (Musical Groups) Collection

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1968-1975



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2026.003

Unit Date

1968-1975

Language

The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains photographs, papers, and artifacts related to the musical groups of the Randolph family of Roanoke, Virginia. The photographs feature publicity photos of the family bands and an album with private family photos. The papers include business cards, band contracts, programs and promotional posters, a newspaper article, a calendar of show dates, and copyright paperwork for the song "What it is". Also included is Alfred's stage costume with multiple bow tie options.

Creator

Randolph family (Ulysses Randolph, 1920-2011)

Extent

1 Cubic Feet 3 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The Randolph Family (Musical Groups) Collection was purchased by Special Collections and University Archives in August, 2024.

Processing Information

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Preferred Citation

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Historical Note

The Randolph family of Roanoke, Virginia, had three family music groups in the 1960s and 1970s. Their bands operated somewhat interchangeably and they were well-known regionally for blues music. Their most well known songs were "Happy Fool" (as Belva & The Randolph Brothers) and "What It Is Part I / What It Is Part II" as The Randolph Bros. Plus.

The Randolph Brothers was active from 1968 through at least 1972 and included brothers Alfred (Saxophone + Manager), Michael (Guitar), Reginald (Saxophone, Co-Manager, Vocals), Marvin (Bass Guitar), Rodney (Drums). At some point, a sixth brother (either Phillip or Clinton) joined the band on the keyboard. No source confirming which brother has been found.

Belva and The Randolph Brothers was active from around 1971 through at least 1974. This group featured Belva as the lead vocalist with Alfred, Michael, Reginald, Marvin, and Rodney in the band. It also included backup vocals by their sister Valerie and cousin Brenda Bryant.

The Randolph Bros. Plus Lounge Combo was created around 1975 as an additional band focused on the cocktail lounge circuit.

The Randolph Brothers had contracts with Star City Records, HIT Attractions Inc., and an association with WTOY, Roanoke, Virginia's, Soul station. They also applied for a copyright on their song "What It Is" under the name Hot Tomato Publishing Company.

Biographical Note

Ulysses Randolph was born May 19, 1920 in Roanoke, Virginia and died July 24, 2011. He worked on the railroad for Norfolk & Western and as a laborer at Shaffer's Crossing. On November 3, 1944, he married Willie Beatrice Petty, (born November 17, 1925, died May 28, 1998)

Ulysses and Willie had seven sons and five daughters. During the 1960s and 1970s, their children formed family bands managed by their eldest son Alfred, and co-managed by their second son, Michael. Eventually, the bands would include at least six of their sons, two of their daughters, and at least one cousin.

Their children:

Gloria Latrisia Randolph (circa 1941 -), married James L. Jones on June 30, 1972

Eugenia (Genie) M. Randolph (circa 1943 -), married Stan Philpott

Alfred Henry Randolph II (1945-02-18 - 2024-06-28), married Charlene Olivia Miller on April 23, 1962. Alfred played saxophone and managed the Randolph family bands. He also spent time as a member of the Chevys and Premiers band.

Michael Francis Randolph (1946-03-04 -), married Gay Christa Ballou on April 3, 1971. Michael played guitar, and wrote and arranged music the family bands.

Reginald McKinley Randolph, Sr.(1947-08-24 - 2016-03-07), married Rosa Lee Henderson on August 28, 1966. Reginald played saxophone, provided vocals, and co-managed the family bands. He also spent time as a member of the Chevys and Premiers band.

Belva Lorraine Shannon (1949-08-23 - 2023-01-25), married Leon Eldridge Hamlet on October 28, 1967 and they divorced March 2, 1970. She later married Willie Shannon on May 11, 1973. Belva was the lead vocalist for the family bands. She also worked for WTOY, the local Soul radio station.

Valerie Denise Randolph (1951-04-15 -), married Melvin William Garrett on October 28, 1987 and they divorced November 28, 1994. She later married Samuel Franklin, Jr. on July 1, 2006. Valerie provided backup vocals for the family bands.

Marvin Alton Randolph, Sr. (1954-10-26 - 2024-01-02), married Vera Jones on October 16, 1975 and they divorced May 26, 1988. He later married Brenda Catherine Small on July 15, 1995. Marvin played bass guitar in the family bands. Later, from 1985 to 1988, he played in the Greensboro, North Carolina, band Black & Blue.

Rodney Jerome Randolph (1956-04-08 -), married Lolita Morton on August 23, 1981. Rodney played drums in the family bands and later was the drummer for the Greensboro, North Carolina, band Black & Blue.

Stephanie Yvonne Randolph (1960-02-23 -) married Donald Leroy Campbell, Jr. on September 15, 1988.

Phillip Anthony Randolph (1961-03-04 -) married Dianne Elisabeth Worrell on August 15, 1981. Phillip worked as a railroad brakeman and conductor for thirty-three years. It is not clear whether he or his brother Clinton played the keyboard with the family bands.

Clinton David Randolph (1962-12-26 -) married Virginia Louise Jennings on May 16, 1988. It is not clear whether he or his brother Phillip played the keyboard with the family bands.

Scope and Content

This collection contains photographs, papers, and artifacts related to the musical groups of the Randolph family of Roanoke, Virginia. The photographs feature publicity photos of the family bands and an album with private family photos. The papers include business cards, band contracts, programs and promotional posters, a newspaper article, a calendar of show dates, and copyright paperwork for the song "What it is". Also included is Alfred's stage costume with multiple bow tie options.

Keywords

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

African Americans -- History

African Americans -- Music

Soul music

Blues (music)

Roanoke (Va.) -- Music

Randolph Brothers (Musical group)

Belva & The Randolph Brothers (Musical group)

Randolph Brothers Plus (Musical Group)

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Arrangement

Papers are arranged by type. Band contracts are arranged by contracted group and then by show date.

Description of Subordinate Components

Photographs

Unit Date 1960s-1970s

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 1 (folder)

Tickets

Unit Date 1986-05-02, 1995-01-20

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 2 (folder)

Show programs & promotional materials

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 3 (folder)

Newspaper clipping "Singing is a Family Thing" by Sandra Kelly, Roanoke World-News (Roanoke, Va.)

Unit Date 1971-07-03

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 4 (folder)

Business cards

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 5 (folder)

Notes and correspondence

Unit Date 1968-1973, n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 6 (folder)

Contracts: The Randolph Brothers

Unit Date 1968-1970

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 7 (folder)

Contracts: The Randolph Brothers

Unit Date 1971-1972

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 8 (folder)

Contracts: Belva & The Randolph Brothers

Unit Date 1971-1974

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 9 (folder)

The Randolph Bros. Plus Lounge Combo Documents

Unit Date 1975

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 10 (folder)

Blank contracts

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 11 (folder)

Calendar with show dates

Unit Date 1970

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 12 (folder)

"What it Is" sheet music by The Randolph Brothers Plus

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 13 (folder)

Copyright application for "What It Is" and blank copyright forms

Unit Date 1973-1974, n.d.

box-folder [1003374260] Box 1

Container 14 (folder)

Promotional poster for "The Chevies & Premiers Reunion"

Unit Date 1986-02-02

box-folder [1003374261] Box 2

Container 1 (folder)

Photograph album

Unit Date n.d.

box [1003374261] Box 2

Alfred Randolph's stage costume

Unit Date n.d.

box [1003374262] Box 3