

# DeMoss Family Lyric Bards records, 1872-1942

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	DeMoss Family Lyric Bards (Musical group)
<b>Title</b>	DeMoss Family Lyric Bards records
<b>Dates</b>	1872-1942 (inclusive) 1872 1942
<b>Quantity</b>	5.5 linear feet, (13 containers, 1 folder, 1 package) : (8 clamshell boxes, 1 folder; 3 photoboxes, 1 oversize portfolio)-review discrepancy
<b>Collection Number</b>	Coll 070
<b>Summary</b>	The DeMoss Family Lyric Bards was a family of traveling musicians who began performing in 1872. The collection contains journals, engagement books, contracts, correspondence, manuscript music, published works, testimonials, programs, handbills, photographs, clippings, and mementos of travel.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.</a> UO Libraries--SCUA 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 <a href="mailto:spcarref@uoregon.edu">spcarref@uoregon.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	UNARRANGED COLLECTION. UNAVAILABLE FOR USE. For more information, please submit a <a href="#">Notice of Interest in Unprocessed Collections</a> .
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Sponsor</b>	Funding for production of this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

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## Historical Note

The DeMoss Family Lyric Bards began their career of musical touring, which lasted more than 35 years, in 1872. James M. DeMoss, a United Brethren minister, his wife Elizabeth (Bonebrake) DeMoss, and their five children devoted themselves to musical performance.

The DeMoss children - Henry, George, Lizzie, Minnie, and May - were added to the troupe as they became old enough to perform. Lizzie's son Herschel became, at age four, old enough to conduct a few numbers. The children were trained by their parents and were also educated at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The DeMoss family's first tours were confined to Oregon, traveling from town to town by covered wagon; later they toured the United States, Canada, and Europe. All of the family members composed

songs which they performed, and played instruments. Their specialty was playing forty to fifty different instruments in an evening's entertainment.

Popular family entertainers and very well received, the family was commissioned by World's Fair organizers to write state songs for the World Columbian Exposition in 1893. The last original member of the DeMoss Lyric Bards, Lizzie DeMoss Davis, died in 1941.

## Content Description

The correspondence consists of approximately thirty letters and cards, arranged chronologically, dating from 1888 - 1937.

The journals chronicle the family's musical tours (1872 to 1932), and they are generally weak from a narrative point of view. Little is noted other than towns, expenses and the evening grosses. However, the journals dated 1888-1889, 1893, and 1897 are exceptions, describing tours and travels more fully. Account books are included with the journals because they often contain information about performance sites and dates.

Manuscripts are divided into music, drama and poetry. They are generally incomplete and fragmentary.

The testimonials are mostly transcribed into notebooks from letters and newspaper articles, and are dated 1878-1893. The dates written on the covers of the notebooks do not always correspond to the dates written inside. Also included is one file of original and copied letters.

The published material largely consists of music and includes scrapbooks, individual songs, and a newspaper titled, "The Home", from 1906.

The publicity series contains concert programs (1890-1926), concert tickets, contracts, and financial material.

Memorabilia includes books, tickets, programs, maps, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings and other mementos.

There is also an oversize series that contains music manuscripts, a testimonial scrapbook, a DeMoss Family sign, and published music.

Photographs include prints of the family and individual members posed for portraits as well as performing, and printer's cuts.

## Use of the Collection

### Preferred Citation

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## Administrative Information

### Related Materials

A thesis by Gay Grace Blankenship, "The DeMoss Family Musicians: Lyric Bards of Oregon" (M.A., School of Music, University of Oregon, 1966) is based on these records.

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## Names and Subjects

#### **Subject Terms :**

Concert tours  
Musical groups--Oregon  
Musicians--Oregon  
Music--Manuscripts--United States  
Singers--Oregon

#### **Family Names :**

DeMoss family

#### **Form or Genre Terms :**

Correspondence  
Diaries  
Journals (accounts)  
Notebooks  
Programs  
Scrapbooks

Finding aid prepared by University of Oregon Libraries, Archivists' Toolkit Project Team and Tanya Parlet.  
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