

# CLARK HYMNAL COLLECTION

BY JIM WEAVER



“Make a Joyful Noise  
Unto the Lord.”

SINGING HAS BEEN an important part of religious practices since early times. Music has been so important, in fact, that it used by every faith in the world. While the psalms date back to the Old Testament, the combination of words and music in book form did not appear until several hundred years ago. Perhaps only the Bible itself has been published more frequently than religious song books. They have been a means to facilitate congrega-



## Christmas in Zoar

Old World Christmas customs, decorated, private homes and museums and holiday crafts for decorating gifts make up 2,000's Christmas in Zoar in Zoar, Ohio. Ribbons, luminaries and greenery will decorate Zoar December 2-3, site of a German communal society founded in 1817. Two private, historic homes, each seasonally decorated by the owners, will be open for touring. Five restored buildings operated by the Ohio Historical Society will include Zoar, Christmas traditions and crafts. Christmas customs of this German village include the Zoar Christmas tree made from pine branches inserted into a drilled broomstick, and "Krist Kind" or Christ Child, a

vision in white, who distributes candy to good girls and boys. A holiday treat, ginger cookies and cider will be served at the bakery. On Saturday evening, the streets will be lit with luminaria, and a tree lighting service will be held at the Zoar meeting house at 5:00 p.m. Hours for the event are Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. Admission for adults is \$5.00; children 6-12 are \$1.00; children under 6 are free. For additional information call 330-874-2646.



## Holiday Celebrations at Bayou Bend

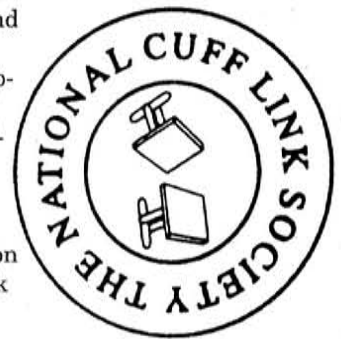
The eagerly anticipated Yuletide observance at Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, the American decorative arts wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas will begin December 8 with a Candlelight Open House. Illuminated by soft lights and enlivened by period music, the Candlelight Open House begins the many holiday celebrations at Bayou Bend. The events will continue through Sunday, December 31, 2000. During the Candlelight and Yuletide Open

house tours, docents in each of the eight rooms provide information about the holiday settings and tell about the customs of the times that inspired "The Festive Tradition." The rooms showcase seasonal traditions re-creating scenes, including a 17th century Christmas in Dutch New York, a 1774 Boston Ball supper, and a Hanukkah observance in 18th century Newport. For additional information, please call 713-639-7750, or visit <http://www.mfah.org>.

## Cuff Link Society Offers Free Booklet

The National Cuff Link Society is offering a free booklet, "The Fun of Cuff Link Collecting," to the general public. According to Society President, Eugene R. Klompus, "Cuff links are the fastest growing collectible in the country." The eight-page booklet explains how to start your own collection and discusses the fun and excitement of the hobby. "The booklet will be helpful to the beginner as well as the longtime cufflink collector or wearer," said Klompus. The National Cuff Link Society is an organization dedicated to the cuff link collector. Dues are \$30

per year and include a subscription to the Society's quarterly magazine, *The Link*. Anyone wishing to receive the free booklet should send their name and address to the Society at P.O. Box 5700, Vernon Hills, IL 60061, or visit <http://www.cufflink.com>.



## Gibbes Museum of Art to Host Tour of Historic Homes

Ten of Charleston, South Carolina's most elegant downtown homes will be part of the Gibbes Museum of Art's Ninth Annual Holiday Tour of Homes Saturday, December 9 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The tour features special, holiday decorations and docent tours of the interiors and gardens of select, historic homes on the Peninsula. The tour begins with a reception at the Gibbes Museum of Art, 135 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC. Russian tea and holiday cookies will be served, and admission to the museum will be free all day.

Tickets for the tour are

\$30 each. "The Holiday Tour of Homes is a wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit, especially if you are interested in historic homes or decorating," stated Melaina Pate, chairperson of the event. For additional information regarding the tours, please call 843-722-2706.





tional singing, which is used to lift emotions and free people to feel the spirit in their midst. While teaching and preaching was the realm of the clergy, singing was something people could bring to worship, and its power has been truly inspirational.

One of the largest and best collections of church hymnals and related materials in the world is located at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Keith C. Clark Collection was acquired by the university in 1982, and is now available for academic research. It consists of more than 9,000 volumes and printed documents, and occupies nearly half the storage space allocated to the library's special collections. The Clark Collection was built over a period of 34 years, and was valued at \$100,000 when it came to the University. It is one of the largest, privately held collections of its kind, and the most complete col-

lection of gospel song books. Only the collections of the Library of Congress and Emory University in Atlanta are bigger.

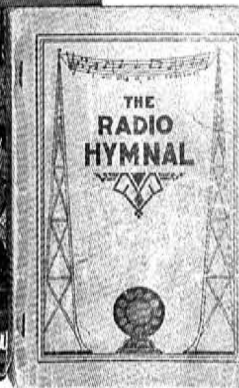
Keith C. Clark was born in 1927 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied the trumpet with his father when he was six, and by age nine, he made several solo appearances on local radio programs. At 14, he was a soloist with the University of Michigan band, and a year later, he played with the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra. Clark's military career began in 1946. During his 20 years with the U.S. Army Band, he participated in all of its major functions, and was chosen to sound the "Taps" at the funeral of President John F. Kennedy. After leaving the Army in 1966, Clark became a music professor at Houghton College, Houghton, New York, a position he held until 1980.

In the early 1980s, Regent (then CBN

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The Clark  
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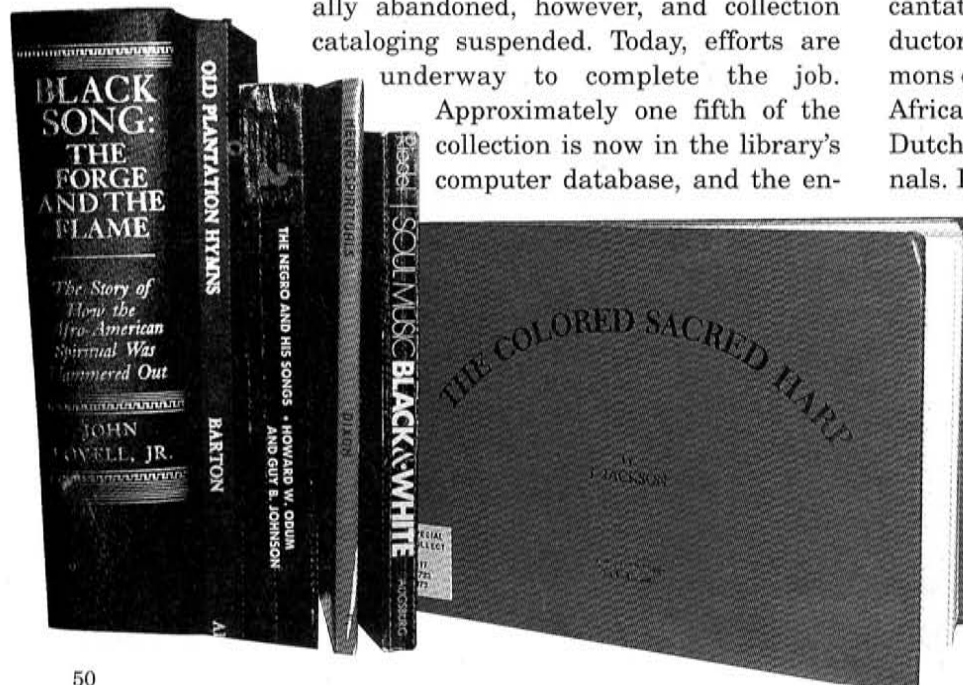
University) was considering establishing a school of music. Jack L. Ralston, a professional music librarian at the University and associate professor of music, knew that an outstanding music library would be an asset for the new school. When he learned the Clark material was available, he arranged to examine the collection. "I was immediately impressed with its size, and soon realized there were a number of volumes that were very old (pre-1800) and of significant value," he explained. "I recommended that the University purchase the collection." Once acquired, Ralston began the arduous task of cataloging and preparing a printed bibliography, culminating in *With a Voice of Singing, A Selected Bibliography of the Master Works of the Clark Hymnology Collection*, 1989. Plans for the school of music were eventually abandoned, however, and collection cataloging suspended. Today, efforts are underway to complete the job.

Approximately one fifth of the collection is now in the library's computer database, and the en-

tire collection is recorded by category in several large ring binders.

The Clark Collection is made up of 21 separate categories. Some of the strongest are gospel song books and oblong tune books, featuring the "shaped note" system of musical notation. According to Ralston, the collection includes more than 1,250 volumes in the area of hymnology (books about hymns and hymn texts), 153 dating before 1800. "While there is an emphasis on English and American hymnody, there are many German, French and other European languages represented. There are some 200 volumes on the subject of metrical psalmody, including many pre-1800 publications. One English work is dated 1602," he stated. Other holdings include church music in history and practice, church music and liturgy, oratorios and cantatas, biographies of composers, conductors texts, scripture and music, sermons on church music, collections of carols, African-American spirituals, and German, Dutch, Scandinavian and Spanish hymnals. In addition, there are volumes of J.S. Bach's church music and related journals and periodicals.

Donald Gantz, special collections assistant at Regent University, explained that many early books of psalms and hymns were bound together with Bibles, possibly for use by the clergy. "The result has been," he explained, "many examples have survived that might otherwise have been lost." The quality of the printing of many 300-year-old books is re-



markable. This is attributed to the high quality, cloth fiber paper used, and the sharp-edged, handset metal type that actually forced the ink into the paper under pressure.

In mid-19th century America, miniature volumes of psalms and hymns were popular. The size of a small cake of soap, the pages are tiny and the printing infinitesimal. Nevertheless, it is sharp and readable. Gantz believes the miniatures were never intended to replace the standard-sized hymn books, but could be easily carried in one's pocket and used for quick reference. "After all," he surmised, "people knew the psalms and hymns by heart from years of singing them, and from the style of singing called 'lining out,' in which the Deacon sings each line of text/music and the choir or congregation repeats it. The miniatures served simply as a reminder."

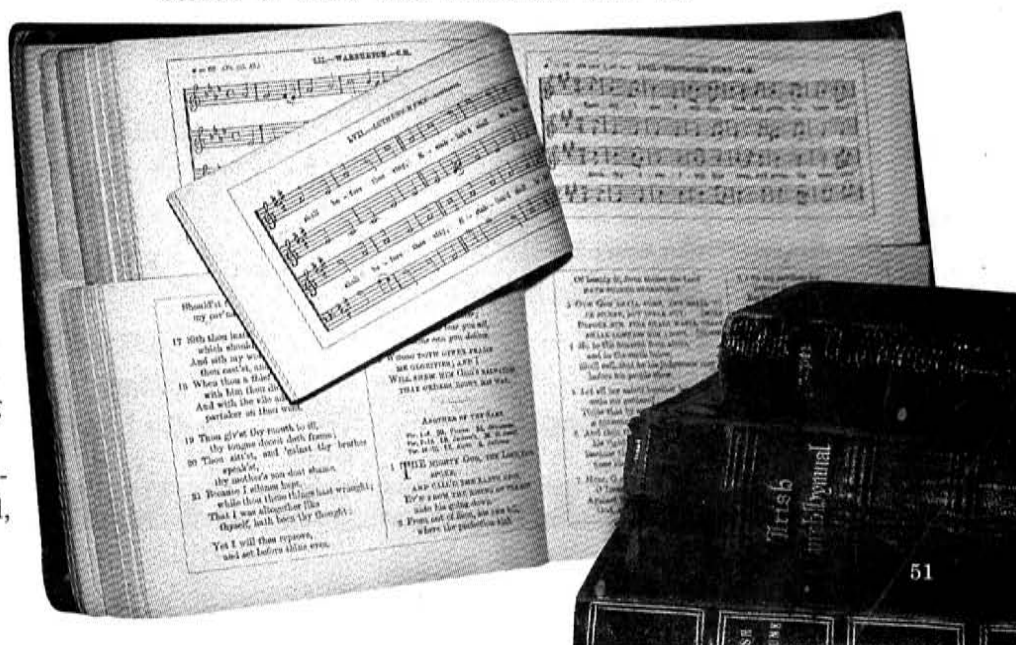
The Clark Collection contains a number of oblong tune books, so named because the width of the page is approximately twice the size of a standard book, while the height remains the same. This format enabled publishers to print a larger and wider music staff on each page. Many publications for organists are also published in an oblong format. Another category of books makes use of the "shaped note" notation to represent the solfège (fa, so, la) for various pitches. This style of musical notation, which has been an important part of the American folk tradition, was designed in New England and spread throughout the Southern Appalachian Mountains. People without formal musical training could easily learn the system and sing the tunes. Interest in shaped note singing continues today.

Clark traveled abroad extensively with the U.S. Army Band,



and while he was in England and Germany, he spent much of his free time searching used bookstore and antique shops to locate rare hymnals and song books. As book dealers began to learn of his interest, they would notify him when something became available. Many of the books and printed materials were inexpensive because the demand was small. This enabled Clark to buy hundreds of volumes at relatively inexpensive prices. He was particularly interested in securing copies of every edition of certain gospel song books. There is a report that Clark once purchased a book for 75¢ and later sold it for \$10,000. Clark is said to have spent much of his free time in Washington combing the stacks at the Library of Congress in search of titles that interested him. He

"The quality of the printing of many 300-year-old books is remarkable."



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would then compile lists of these titles and send them on post cards to used book dealers hoping to purchase copies.

<sup>1953</sup> In 1972, Clark joined the Hymn Society of America (now The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, headquartered at Boston University's School of Theology), and in 1978, he became a life member. Under the auspices of the Hymn Society, Clark published a bibliography of hymnals, much of which was based on his own collection.

After his retirement from Houghton College, Clark

lived in the Washington, D.C. area. The number of books and peripheral materials in his collection had grown so large, however, that it was necessary to rent storage space. When Clark decided to retire to Florida in 1982, he placed a small ad in the *Hymn Society Newsletter*, which prompted its sale to Regent University. His legacy lives on. ■

*For Further information about the Keith C. Clark Hymnology Collection, please contact Donald Gantz, special collections assistant, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA, 23464-9882. Special Collections cannot respond to research requests conducted by mail or email, but does support serious, visiting researchers.*

*The author wishes to express his appreciation for the significant help provided by Donald Gantz, Jack L. Ralston, compiler of the Clark Collection Bibliography, and Carl P. Daw, Jr., executive director of the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada.*

*Photos courtesy the author. Jim Weaver is a public relations consultant and freelance writer based in suburban Philadelphia. [www.dca.net/weaverpr](http://www.dca.net/weaverpr).*



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## RELIGION



Karen Robinson, the special collections librarian at CBN, looks over the hymnology collection.

Staff photo by MARK MITCHELL

## CBN hymnology collection preserves sacred sounds

By Laurie Kirkland Ziegler  
Correspondent

On Easter Sunday, it's easy to spot the two-timers, those who attend church only at Easter and Christmas.

They stand when they're supposed to sit; they sit when they're supposed to stand; they lose their place in the prayer book.

But when the tune of "He is Risen" or "Welcome Happy Morning" peals from the organ, even these "lost souls" are magically found again. All those secular Sundays

couldn't push these old melodies from the subconscious.

"He is risen, He is risen/ Tell it out with joyful voice!/ He has burst his three day's prison/ Let all heaven and earth rejoice!

It's the best of part of the service. And, thanks in part to CBN University, perhaps the best-preserved part.

The great Irish hymn "He is Risen," the haunting Negro spiritual "Were You There," and the gospel classic, "Amazing Grace," are among thousands of hymns preserved among 9,000 special volumes

at CBN.

The Clark Hymnology Collection, acquired in 1982 from an Army musician, is an anthem, of sorts, to the creators of church music throughout history.

Over and over, the central question is posed: "What is fit to be sung in church?" That was the question that struck 16-year-old musical prodigy Keith Clark as he played with the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra.

Clark found the music of his Bap-

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## RELIGION



Staff photo by MARK MITCHELL

This hymnal, titled "The Sabbath Bell," was published in 1858.

## HYMNS

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tist church to be "trite, trite, trite," he recalls now. That dissatisfaction, along with a stint years later teaching a hymnology class at Washington (D.C.) Bible College, prompted Clark to learn more about hymns and to begin collecting books of and about church music.

He found books by making inquiries via post card to used-book stores in the United States and England. He made personal forays to book stores while touring with the Army Band.

In 34 years, his collection swelled to 9,000.

Clark housed this largest U.S. private collection of books about hymns and church music in the attic of one house, and later, the basement of another. The professional musician's hobby proved profitable — Clark bought one book for 75 cents and later sold it for \$10,000.

Clark sold his entire collection to CBN University following a move to Florida, where he felt the volumes would not "keep" well.

The collection consists of old and modern hymnals from every imaginable denomination and several countries. Some, like old people, have grown fragile with age. Their spines have cracked, their pages have yellowed. A few are barely larger than a match box; others could be locked shut like a diary.

There are Catholic books in Latin and Jewish ones in Hebrew. There are hymnals in French, German and Japanese. There are Mennonite hymnals, Christian Science hymnals, conductors' texts, hymn writers' biographies and periodicals like the "American Guild of Organists Quarterly" and the "Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland."

Not surprisingly, many of the hymn authors were clergymen. Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, wrote "Come Ye Thankful People Come;" Phillips Brooks, a graduate of the Virginia Episcopal Theological Seminary and later Bishop of Massachusetts, wrote "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

But the person who wrote "He is Risen," "Once in Royal David's City" and the children's classic, "All Things Bright and Beautiful" was just a writer and a housewife. Cecil Frances Alexander would donate the profits from her work to a school for deaf-mutes.

Isaac Watts, the father of hymn writing, went to jail for his works, because many considered it heresy to sing anything in church other than the psalms from the Bible. Watts won that dispute, but it was the first in a series of controversies large and small.

Woven through the pages of these books are disputes over whether the congregation should be allowed to sing in church, whether people should stand while singing, whether church organists

should be allowed to play or write secular music and whether the organ should be used at all.

The books are valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to Karen Robinson, the special collections librarian at CBN. The titles are being added to the university library's computer card catalog, although the books cannot be taken from the special collections reading room.

All of the books are not old, nor are all of them somber.

In a chapter on Planning and Scheduling, the author of "What to Do in Case of a Choir Rehearsal" observes, "I have long felt that among its other attributes, heaven would be a place of unlimited rehearsal time."

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Virginia Beach, Va  
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Phone call  
Nov 3, 1989  
Sent Who's Who in Va.  
Who's Who SE -  
Personalities of Amer.