

**Jan Shapiro Collection of Boswell Sisters Oral History
Interviews and Transcripts (1958–1989)**

by Steve Beck

2014

Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University Libraries

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Jan Shapiro
Title:	Jan Shapiro Collection of Boswell Sisters Oral History Interviews and Transcripts
Dates:	1958–1989
Quantity:	2 boxes, 1 linear foot
Abstract:	The Jan Shapiro Collection of the Boswell Sisters Oral History Interviews and Transcripts includes documents pertaining to Shapiro's research on the famous singing group. The collection is comprised of audio cassettes and written transcripts of interviews, scholarly essays, discographies, music transcription and analysis, and newspaper clippings.
Collection No:	MC 64
Language:	English
Repository:	Rutgers University Libraries, Institute of Jazz Studies

Biographical Sketch of Jan Shapiro

Jan Shapiro was born May 10, 1949 in St. Louis, Missouri. In the mid-1970s, she received a Bachelor of Music Education from Howard University. After teaching voice at Southern Illinois University and Fontbonne University, Shapiro continued her studies at New England Conservatory before earning a Master's Degree in Music Education from Cambridge College. A multi-instrumentalist, Shapiro has toured and recorded principally as a vocalist. She sang at the 1989 Boston Globe Jazz Festival, and served as chair of the Berklee College of Music Voice department from 1997–2010.

Scope and Content Note

The collection is comprised primarily of oral history interviews conducted and transcribed by Jan Shapiro with funding support from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1987. She interviewed numerous professional and personal associates of Connee Boswell—including her sister Helvetia “Vet” and brother-in-law Ben Leedy—as well as noted singers Bob Crosby and Joe Williams. Shapiro recorded these interviews on ninety-minute normal bias audio cassettes, making written transcriptions of each. She additionally transcribed radio interviews of Connee Boswell from 1958 and 1975.

Shapiro’s collection also includes a discography compiled by fellow Boswell researcher David McCain, clippings dating from as early as 1935, and transcriptions of “Heebie Jeebie Blues” and “Crazy People.” The Jan Shapiro Collection contains twenty audio cassettes and their corresponding written transcripts, scholarly essays, music transcription, and discographies.

Arrangement Note

The Jan Shapiro Collection is arranged in one series and two sub-series.

Series 1. Jan Shapiro Interviews and Research, 1958–1989

Subseries 1.a. Cassette Interviews

Subseries 1.b. Interview Transcripts and Research Papers

Administrative Information

This collection was processed in 2014 by Steve Beck in fulfillment of the course requirements for Manuscripts and Archives as offered at the Rutgers University New Brunswick campus.

Provenance Note

Jan Shapiro donated her research collection to the Institute of Jazz Studies in March 1990. The Institute’s holdings comprise approximately one quarter of her Boswell Sisters

research, with remaining portions stored at Tulane University's Hogan Jazz Archives, Berklee College of Music, and Howard University.

Detailed Description/Container List

Series 1. Jan Shapiro Interviews and Research (1958–1989)

Arrangement:

Series 1 is arranged into two sub-series by type of material. Sub-series 1.a, Cassette Interviews, is arranged chronologically. Sub-series 1.b, Interview Transcripts and Research Materials, is arranged chronologically to correspond to the arrangement of the cassette tape interviews and then chronologically and according to the content of the materials. When multiple interviews with a given interviewee exist, the transcripts are arranged in one folder by the interviewee's name.

Subseries 1.a. Cassette Interviews (1958–1989)

Box	Item
1	1 Side A: Connee Boswell Interviews, 1958, 1975; Side B: Vet Boswell Interview, 1982.
	2 Vet Boswell Interview, 1982.
	3 Helvetia Boswell Interview, tape 1, 1987.
	4 Helvetia Boswell Interview, tape 2, 1987.
	5 Helvetia Boswell Interview, tape 3, 1987.
	6 Dolly Baker Interview, 1989.
	7 Harry Hoffman Interview, 1989.
	8 Harry Hoffman Interview, 1989
	9 Garvin Bushell Interview, 1989.
	10 Garvin Bushell Interview, 1989.
	11 Kay Star Interview, 1989.
	12 Maxine Andrews Interview, 1989.
	13 Mannie Klein Interview, 1989.
	14 Bob Crosby Interview, 1989.

- 15 Marge Ryter Interview, 1989.
- 16 Marge Ryter Interview, 1989.
- 17 Ben Leedy Interview, 1989.
- 18 Danny Barker/David McCain Interview, 1989.
- 19 David McCain Interview, 1989.
- 20 Joe Williams Interview, 1989.

Subseries 1.b Interview Transcripts and Research Papers (1958–1989)

Box	Folder	
2	1	Connee Boswell Interview Transcripts, 1958, 1975
	2	Vet Boswell Interview Transcripts, 1982–1987
	3	Thelma “Dolly” Baker Interview Transcript, 1989 March 11
	4	Harry Hoffman Interview Transcript, 1989 April 16
	5	Garvin Bushell Interview Transcript, 1989 May 21, 24
	6	Kay Star Interview Transcript, 1989 June 16
	7	Maxine Andrews Interview Transcript, 1989 June 20
	8	Mannie Klein Interview Transcript, 1989 June 21
	9	Bob Crosby Interview Transcript, 1989 June 22
	10	Marge Ryter Interview Transcripts, 1989 June 23-24
	11	Ben Leedy Interview Transcript, 1989 July 6
	12	David McCain Interview Transcripts, 1989 July 21-22
	13	Danny Barker Interview Transcript, 1989 July 22
	14	Joe Williams Interview Transcript 1989 October 15
	15	Music Transcription, Essay, Clippings, 1980 – 1990
	16	Essays, Discography, Clippings 1989 – 1990