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Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Lawrence "Larry" Lucie papers**

1927-2004 [bulk 1948-2004]

Sc MG 764

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Summary

**Creator:** Lucie, Lawrence

**Title:** Lawrence "Larry" Lucie papers

**Date:** 1927-2004 [bulk 1948-2004]

**Size:** 15.7 linear feet (54 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Lawrence Lucie, 2006.

**Abstract:** Lawrence "Larry" Lucie (1907-2009) was a jazz guitarist and music educator. His papers, dating from 1927 to 2004 (bulk 1948-2004), primarily document his pedagogy, his recording and publishing companies, and the career of his wife, guitarist, bassist and vocalist Nora Lee King (1909-1995). The collection holds teaching material, business records, biographies, interviews, letters, photographs, and scores.

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**Conditions Governing Use:** Information on copyright available from repository.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Lawrence "Larry" Lucie papers, Sc MG 764, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2015

## Creator History

Lawrence "Larry" Lucie (1907-2009) was a jazz guitarist and music educator. Born in Emporia, Virginia, he learned banjo, mandolin, and violin as a child. When he was a teenager, he moved to New York City, where he finished high school, and studied banjo at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

Lucie also played clarinet, but beginning with his first professional engagement with trumpeter June Clark (1931), he primarily played rhythm guitar. He occasionally performed rhythm solos, but otherwise kept a background role as a performer equally adept in multiple styles of music.

Lucie first gained notice in 1932, when he substituted for Freddie Guy in the Duke Ellington Orchestra during Ellington's Cotton Club residency. This led to work with Benny Carter's band. Other bands and players with whom Lucie performed or recorded during the 1930s and 1940s included the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, Fletcher Henderson, Henry "Red" Allen, Teddy Wilson (backing Billie Holiday), Chu Berry, Pete Johnson and Jelly Roll Morton, Lucky Millinder, Coleman Hawkins, and Louis Armstrong. Lucie spent two years each with Lucky Millinder and Coleman Hawkins, and 4 years each with Louis Armstrong, Teddy Wilson, and Benny Carter.

In the 1950s, Lucie performed and toured with Luis Russell, Cozy Cole, and Louie Bellson. During the 1960s, he worked as a freelance and studio musician, and occasionally led small groups. He was a member of the New York Jazz Repertory Company in the 1970s, and he toured Europe substituting for Al Casey in the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s he worked with Panama Francis's Savoy Sultans, and performed as a soloist or with a duo or trio.

Lucie was active as a teacher in New York City from the 1960s through the early 2000s. He worked with the Jazzmobile, Muse Jazz Workshop, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College. In addition to guitar, he taught basic music classes, African American music, and music theory. He also took private students. Lucie was often called upon to discuss his career and the many important musicians with whom he worked.

In the mid-1940s, Lucie met a guitarist, bassist, vocalist, and composer named Nora Lee King (1909-1995, known professionally as Lenore or Susan King). King was working in a duo with pianist Maurine Smith at the time, and Lucie hired both of them to play with him in a group called The Lucienaires. Lucie and King were married from 1948 until King's death. They performed and recorded together, and founded the Toy Records label and Playnote publishing company for their recordings and compositions. In the 1980s and 1990s, the couple hosted a weekly New York City cable television program.

Lawrence Lucie died in 2009 at the age of 101. At the time of his death, he was the sole surviving musician to have recorded with Jelly Roll Morton and to have performed with Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Lawrence "Larry" Lucie papers, dating from 1927 to 2004 (bulk 1948-2004), primarily document the guitarist's pedagogy, as well as the business of Playnote publishing and Toy Records. They also represent the career of Nora Lee King. The collection holds instructional material, music manuscripts by Lucie and King, music by other composers, short biographies, interview transcripts, an audio recording of an interview with Lucie, business papers, logs of engagements and earnings, datebooks, address books, programs, clippings, promotional photographs, personal letters, and academic papers. The collection holds very little documentation of Lucie's performance career prior to 1948.

Teaching Material comprises the bulk of the papers. Dating from 1969 to 2002, it includes guitar studies, exercises, practice routines, lead sheets, tablature, arrangements for student guitar groups, course descriptions, tests; and memos and letters from the Jazzmobile, Muse Jazz Workshop, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). Many of the studies and exercises are in Lucie's hand. Also present are masters and annotated copies of Lucie's guitar method books. A small portion

of the teaching material is by Nora Lee King. Personal or business letters can be found among the teaching material as well.

Portions of the teaching material are marked as having been used at one venue or another, but there is much overlap between them, and the bulk of the material is not identified by school at all. For this reason, the teaching material is arranged chronologically.

The General Files consist of business papers, publishing papers, scores, Nora Lee King files, biographies, datebooks, address books, fakebooks, personal letters, and files on the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band and the Manhattan Plaza apartment complex. They also hold an audio recording of a 2004 interview with Lucie.

Business Papers document Lucie's engagements, Toy Records, and clients of Lucie's recording and publishing companies. The files contain correspondence, contracts, engagement ledgers, publicity flyers, programs, clippings, album covers, and discographies. Some of the correspondence is personal. Also present are files on particular projects, such as recordings, bands, or recording artists. The file for the singer Arlene Bailey contains a released recording she sent to Lucie in order to promote her work with him.

The contents of the Business Papers files partially overlap with the Publishing Papers, such as letters from writers or recording artists wishing to work with Playnote Publishing. The Publishing Papers consist of Playnote contracts, correspondence, BMI and ASCAP letters and royalty statements, and lead sheets.

The Nora Lee King files contain family correspondence and photographs; legal correspondence regarding real estate and financial matters; papers and a thesis written for King's undergraduate and graduate studies; independent music studies; diplomas; and King's birth and death certificates.

Photographs include publicity prints of Lucie and King; and prints and negatives of Lucie with Louis Armstrong, Lucky Millinder, T-Bone Walker, and the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band.

The biographies include an autobiographical manuscript written by Lucie in 1996, shorter autobiographies for publicity purposes, the transcript of an interview with Lucie in which he discusses Jelly Roll Morton, and clippings.

The fakebooks are bound collections of lead sheets for standard songs used in performance. Many were written and compiled by Lucie and/or King, while others were published illegally. Some of the fakebooks are annotated.

The scores hold lead sheets or arrangements for original music by Lucie and King; lead sheets by composers published by Playnote; and music or arrangements by other composers. Some score files also have correspondence, contracts, and copyright forms. Lucie's scores include arrangements for solo guitar, guitar duo, and small jazz ensembles. King wrote the music for her songs, and worked with various lyricists. Other score files contain arrangements or parts for particular projects (tours, recordings, or concerts). Some collections of lead sheets in the scores may have been assembled for teaching purposes. One set of scores are arrangements Lucie wrote for a songwriter named Harry Dial. The scores are accompanied by recordings of the arrangements.

**Arrangement:** The collection is in two divisions: General Files and Teaching Material. General Files are arranged by subject or format. The Teaching Material is arranged chronologically.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American musicians  
African Americans--Music  
Jazz

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Contracts  
Correspondence  
Photographs  
Scores  
Sound recordings

### **Occupations**

Educators  
Guitarists

### **Names**

King, Nora Lee  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Jazzmobile, Inc.

## Container List

### General Files

b. 1 f. 1-3 Biographies 1979-1996

#### Datebooks and Address Books

b. 1 f. 4 1962-1967

b. 2 f. 1 1971-1972

b. 2 f. 2 1976, 1980, Undated

b. 2 f. 3 1990-1998, Undated

### Business Papers

#### Bailey, Arlene

b. 2 f. 4 Letters 1975

origsr.227389 "Ain't That Something" / "I Had A Love" undated  
sound recording (unavailable)

b. 3 f. 1-2 Engagement Ledgers 1948-1950, 1957, 1966-1967

b. 4 f. 2 Street, Jr., George 1971

b. 13 f. 2 Tompkins Park Recreation and Cultural Center 1973

#### Toy Records

b. 3 f. 3-5 1963-1964, 1973-1998

b. 4 f. 1 1981, undated

b. 4 f. 3-6 1938-1996

b. 5 f. 1-6 1965-1998

b. 6 f. 1-4 Fakebooks undated

b. 7 f. 1-3 Fakebooks undated

b. 8 f. 1 Harlem Blues and Jazz Band 1987

#### Interview 2004

This interview was conducted by Phil Schaap on radio station WKCR in New York City.

origsr.227377 Part I  
sound recording (unavailable)

origsr.227379 Part II  
sound recording (unavailable)

### King, Nora Lee

#### College and Graduate School Work

##### Hunter College

Contains research and papers written for the Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology degree.

b. 7 f. 4 Chinese Music 1976

Unfinished paper.

b. 9 f. 1 *Origins of the Black Spiritual* 1978

b. 9 f. 2 New York University 1975

Contains papers written for the Music Reference and Research Materials course.

### Correspondence and Legal Papers

b. 9 f. 3-5 1927-1989

b. 10 f. 1 1952-1955

General Files (cont.)

King, Nora Lee (cont.)

- b. 8 f. 2 Diplomas 1973, 1978
- b. 10 f. 2-3 Music Studies 1970-1972, undated  
Harmony and analysis exercises.
- b. 10 f. 4 Letters 1983-1991  
From friends of Lucie and King, the letters also include programs.
- b. 10 f. 5 Manhattan Plaza 1977-1981, 1998
- b. 10 f. 6 Photographs 1940s-1987

Publishing Papers

- b. 11 f. 1 Walt Disney Pictures 1986
- b. 11 f. 2-5 1955-2000
- b. 12 f. 1-2 1958-1991
- b. 8 f. 3 1960-1967
- b. 12 f. 3-5 1962-2004
- b. 13 f. 1 1965-1974, 1984

Scores

- b. 8 f. 4 *Cool and Warm Guitar* 1974  
Contains parts for an album by Lucie.
- Dial, Harry 1968-1972  
Lucie's arrangements of Dial's songs, and recordings of the arrangements.

- b. 8 f. 5-6 Lead Sheets and Arrangements

Recordings

- origsr.227382 "No Name Yet"  
sound recording (unavailable)
- origsr.227384 "Laying All Jokes Aside"  
sound recording (unavailable)
- origsr.227386 "There's No Short Cut To Love"  
sound recording (unavailable)
- origsr.227387 "Love You, Love You Baby"  
sound recording (unavailable)

- b. 14 f. 1 Mastren, Carmen undated  
Arrangements for two guitars.
- b. 14 f. 2 Torchia, Lee 1997  
Lead sheets.
- b. 14 f. 3-6 1961-1986
- b. 15 f. 1-6 1966-1975, undated
- b. 16 f. 1-4 1977-1978, 1990, 1996, undated
- b. 17 f. 1-4 Undated
- b. 18 f. 1-3 Undated
- b. 19 f. 1-4 Undated
- b. 20 f. 1-4 Undated

Teaching Material

- b. 13 f. 3-6 1969-1994
- b. 22 f. 1-4 1970-1976, undated
- b. 23 f. 1-4 1976-1988

Teaching Material (cont.)

b. 24 f. 1-5	1980-1986
b. 25 f. 1-4	1986-1988, undated
b. 26 f. 1-3	1986-1989
b. 27 f. 1-4	1987-1990
b. 28 f. 1-4	1989-1990
b. 29 f. 1-4	1990-1992
b. 30 f. 1-5	1991-1993
b. 31 f. 1-3	1992-1995, undated
b. 32 f. 1-4	1993, undated
b. 33 f. 1-4	1993-1994, undated
b. 34 f. 1-4	1993-1998
b. 35 f. 1-4	1995-1998, undated
b. 36 f. 1-3	1995-2000, undated
b. 37 f. 1-4	1996-1997
b. 21 f. 1	1997-1998
b. 38 f. 1-5	1997-2000
b. 39 f. 1-5	1997-2000
b. 40 f. 1-4	1997-2002
b. 41 f. 1-4	1999-2003
b. 42 f. 1-3	2001-2002, undated
b. 43 f. 1-3	2002, undated
b. 21 f. 2-4	Undated
b. 44 f. 1-3	Undated
b. 45 f. 1-4	Undated
b. 46 f. 1-4	Undated
b. 47 f. 1-4	Undated
b. 48 f. 1-3	Undated
b. 49 f. 1-3	Undated
b. 50 f. 1-3	Undated
b. 51 f. 1-4	Undated
b. 52 f. 1-4	Undated
b. 53 f. 1-3	Undated
b. 54 f. 1-4	Undated