

La Patrie Disc Français Record Label Collection, ca. 1919–1925

Repository: Lawrence History Center

Accession Number: 2019.077

Creator: La Patrie Disc Français

Quantity: 1 phonograph record box

Processed by: Sibelle Grisé

Access: Open for research. Materials are held on site, but phonograph records cannot be played due to equipment constraint. Links are provided for several digitized recordings of La Patrie records held at other institutions.

Provenance

The majority of the phonograph records in this collection were created by the La Patrie Disc Français record label of Lawrence, Mass. This collection was donated by Mr. Edward Connors, who acquired the records at flea markets, used record stores, and online auctions between roughly 1995 and 2015.

Related Materials

The Lawrence History Center also holds an archive of Franco-American history in Lawrence, in addition to papers from St. Anne's Church (Église Sainte Anne) where Herman Tremblay sang.

Historical Note

The record label La Patrie Disc Français, also known as La Patrie Disque Français, was founded in Lawrence, Mass. circa 1921 by Joseph D. Noël. The record label was founded sometime between 1919, when the lateral recording patent expired, and 1921. The earliest dateable La Patrie record is disk 121, which is a reissue of a 1921 Starr recording. The label was located at 233 Broadway in Lawrence, which was the address of Noël's music store. Aside from the fact that the records were sold locally, a stamp on the record jacket (see Binder 2) points to distribution to at least one other Franco-American community in Rhode Island. The records themselves might have been pressed in Boston on the Grey Gull label sometime between 1919–1921, and definitely in Québec by Starr (Compo) by 1921. La Patrie was in existence until circa 1925, as evidenced by an advertisement in the *Guide Officiel des Francos-Américains*, page 619. That advertisement touts their records as “*Les seuls Disques ‘Records’ Canadiens français, manufacturés dans la Nouvelle-Angleterre*” (“the only French-Canadian ‘Record’ disks manufactured in New England”). The ad identifies Noël as manufacturer and F.C. Gibeau as the company treasurer.

Biographical Notes

Joseph D. Noël was the founder of the La Patrie record label. He was born in St-Louis-de-Lotbinière, Québec, Canada in 1876 and died in Methuen, Mass. in 1960. In 1904 he married Bertha Labelle in Lawrence, and was employed as a belt maker, according to the marriage record. Based on an article in *Talking Machine World*, Noël was in the music business by 1909. A 1919 article from *the Music Trades* states he was employed as a piano dealer at 233 Broadway. He was employed at La Patrie until at least 1925, when an advertisement in the *Guide Officiel des Francos-Américains* identifies him as Manufacturer. By 1927, Noël was the manager

of the Modern Music Salon at 494 Essex Street in Lawrence, selling phonographs, radios, and records.

F.C. “Fred” Gibeau was the treasurer of the La Patrie record label. The 1919 Lawrence directory lists his occupation as musician, residing with his wife and other Gibeau family members at 326 Broadway. (Gibeau is a musician on Disk 131.)

Herménégilde “Herman” T. Tremblay was born in Cap Chat, Québec, Canada in 1873; his date of death is not yet known. He immigrated to the United States around 1880 and lived in the North Shore area from around 1895 through 1916. He was employed as a weigher of coal in Beverly, Mass. in 1906 according to city documents. He sang publicly (at a funeral) as early as 1907, according to a March 5th obituary in the *Boston Globe*. By 1912, Tremblay was employed as a baker and served as a fire department ladderman for Truck Co. No. 3 in Salem, Mass., where he became a city councilor in 1914. Per a 1915 Lowell newspaper article, he was member of the Club des Citoyens Américains naturalization club. The 1917 Lawrence directory lists Tremblay as an undertaker, married to Rose-Alda Pariseau, with his residence at 89 Warwick and the funeral home located at 192 Broadway. Research indicates that he had sung at funerals at Sacred Heart Church in Lawrence (Église Sacre Cœur).

Alfred Lavallé (Lavallée) was employed as a roofer in the 1917 Lawrence directory, and lived with his wife Mary at 13 Wendell. The 1919 directory shows him living at 326 Broadway at the Gibeau residence. In 1920 he was employed as a carpenter.

Scope and Content

This collection is composed of one box containing twenty-three 78 RPM 10” phonograph records and one record jacket, all dating from circa 1919–1925. With a few exceptions, this collection focuses on the La Patrie Disc Français record label of Lawrence, Mass. All the phonograph records contain French-language music or comedic dialogue, and all but two were produced for an American market. As such, this collection was intended for a predominantly Franco-American listening audience.

This collection of eighteen La Patrie titles (of which there are twenty disks) represents a very rare collection of records produced by a single, small ethnic record label during the interwar period. The records produced by La Patrie featured performances from Lawrence vocalists, who sang compositions published in Lowell as well as in Canada and France, in addition to reissues of Starr records from Canada under the La Patrie label. Lawrence musicians and vocalists involved were Herman Tremblay (possibly identical to T.V. Herman?), Alfred Lavallé, F.C. Gibeau, and W. Garceau. Herman Tremblay’s wife, Rose-Alda Pariseau, is reported to have accompanied him on the piano.

In addition to the records, there is a single record jacket with the La Patrie label printed on it. Rare in and of itself, the jacket also is stamped “P. Clement — Woonsocket, R.I.”. This stamp, consistent in age with the jacket itself, serves as an indication that the records may have been distributed to at least one other Franco-American community in New England.

The content of the La Patrie records is a reflection of the Franco-American soundscape in the 1920s. The music performed by local musicians was largely an indication of what sheet music would have been available at that time, with many of the titles listed in contemporary music catalogues from both Edmour L. Turcot and Octave Champagne of Lowell (cf. Center for Lowell History collections). The records produced under the La Patrie label range from Québécois folk music to parlor music, as well as standards of classical music, patriotic music, and religious music, in addition to spoken humorous monologues or storytelling. Story topics include an

encounter with the census-taker (“Le recensement”), a local folk dance (“La danse du village”) and an encounter with a Jewish man in New York (“La Barouche à New York”). The spoken content of the records by Herman Tremblay are an early representation of French as spoken by a Franco-American, possibly at the beginning of the divergence of a regional New England French dialect. These same records, in addition to the musical ones performed by Lawrence musicians, are some of the earliest audio recordings of Lawrence residents.

Of the three disks in this collection that were not produced by La Patrie, two were produced by Columbia Records and one by Grey Gull. The two Columbia disks were produced for a Canadian market, and feature classical music and a comedy skit. The Grey Gull disk represents what are likely the only recordings by the composer Francis C. Chantreau, of Boston, singing two of his compositions in French. Chantreau was a French emigrant to Maine who later settled in Boston, and whose music was accepted by Franco-Americans throughout New England. This record would have been produced for a Franco-American audience in New England; side A features a patriotic song, while side B is laments a broken relationship.

Arrangement

Binder 1 — 2019.077.001

Organized by La Patrie disk number

- Disk 101 “Le Laurier”, Herman Tremblay, Bariton
“Adieu! Noble Coursier”¹, Herman Tremblay, Bariton.
- Disk 102 “La Charité”, Herman Tremblay, Bariton
“Cantique de Noel”, Herman Tremblay, Bariton
- Disk 103 “Mon Soldat”², Herman Tremblay, Bariton
“La Marseillaise”³, Herman Tremblay, Bariton
- Disk 104 “Quand Madelon”⁴, Herman Tremblay, Bariton. matrix number L-P 50-4-1.
“Il est revenu mon soldat”⁵, Herman Tremblay, Bariton. matrix number L-P 50-8-1.

¹ Music by Paul Henrion, pub. in *Nouvelle Lyre Canadienne: Recueil de chansons...*, 1896.

² Link to recording of “Mon Soldat” on Disk 103: https://archive.org/details/78_mon-soldat_herman-tremblay_gbia0112588b (First recorded on Columbia label, 1916, by Gustave Chirou/L. Payette.)

³ Link to recording of “La Marseillaise” on Disk 103: https://archive.org/details/78_la-marseillaise_herman-tremblay_gbia0112588a

⁴ Music by Camille Robert; French military march, popular during WWI.

⁵ Music by Loïc LeGouriadec, published in 1916 in Lowell, MA by E.L. Turcot; sheet music copy in Champagne Brothers Collection, Center for Lowell History, Lowell, MA.

- Disk 105⁶ “Ma Césarine”⁷, T. V. Herman, Comédien.
 “La Barouche à New York”⁸, T. V. Herman, Comédien.
- Disk 110 “Le Recenseur”⁹, Herman Tremblay, Comédien. matrix number N-413.
 “La Danse Du Village: Quadrille”¹⁰. matrix number N-419.
*Three copies held.*¹¹
- Disk 111 “Le Mousse Noir: Duo”, H. Tremblay and A. Lavallé. matrix number N-402.
 “L’Innocence”, Herman Tremblay, Bariton. matrix number N-403.
- Disk 112 “Jean Noël”, Herman Tremblay, Bariton. matrix number N-404.
 “Ô Cœur de notre aimable Mère: Duo”, H. Tremblay and A. Lavallé. matrix number N-412.
- Disk 114 “‘La Berceuse’ de Jocelyn”, A. Lavallé, Tenor. matrix number N-407.
 “Evangéline: Duo”, H. Tremblay and A. Lavallé. matrix number N-410.
- Disk 118 “Gigues Populaires”¹², Baptiste Frappier, violon. matrix number L-P-12039-A.
 “Gigues Populaires”¹³, Baptiste Frappier, violon. matrix number L-P-12039-B.
- Disk 119 “Les Rameux”, Mons. Paul Mireault, bass. matrix number L-P 12040A.
 “Le Crucifix: Duo” (Faure), Placide Morency and Paul Mireault. matrix number L-P 12040B.

⁶ Copy also held by American-French Genealogical Society.

⁷ Link to recording of “Ma Césarine” on Disk 105: https://archive.org/details/78_ma-cesarine-t-v-herman_gbia0080802a

⁸ Link to recording of “La Barouche à New York” on Disk 105: https://archive.org/details/78_la-barouche-a-new-york-t-v-herman_gbia0080802b

⁹ Link to recording of “Le Recenseur” on Disk 110: https://archive.org/details/78_le-recenseur-herman-tremblay_gbia0288646a

¹⁰ Link to recording of “La Danse du Village” on Disk 110: https://archive.org/details/78_la-danse-du-village-quadrille_gbia0288646b

¹¹ Copy also held by American-French Genealogical Society.

¹² Link to recording of “Gigues Populaires”, Side A of Disk 118: https://archive.org/details/78_gigues-populaires-baptiste-frappier_gbia0291040a

¹³ Link to recording of “Gigues Populaires”, Side B of Disk 118: https://archive.org/details/78_gigues-populaires-baptiste-frappier_gbia0291040b

Binder 2 — 2019.077.002

One 10" record jacket printed with the name La Patrie Disque Française.

Columbia disks

- E2689 "La Canadienne" (De La Sabtonnière), Dr. A.J. Harpin, basso, orch. accomp., matrix number 43589.
"Ninon" (Tosti), Dr. A.J. Harpin, basso, orch. accomp., matrix number 43589.
- E4934 "Ladebauche en visite du Jour de l'An" (Bourgeois), Elzéar Hamel, A. Desmarteau, M^{lle}. Juliette Belleveau, matrix number 86591.
"Ladebauche en char Pullman" (Bourgeois), Elzéar Hamel and Alexandre Desmarteau, matrix number 86591.

La Patrie disks

- Disk 121 "Minuit Chrétiens" (Adam), Gaston Nolin, tenor. matrix number L-P-12031A.
"Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes" (Chant de Noël), Gaston Nolin, tenor. matrix number L-P-12031B.
- Disk 122 "Le Déménageur: Chanson Comique", G. St. Jacques¹⁴, matrix number 12066-A.
"Guidoune: Chanson Comique", G. St. Jacques, matrix number 12066-B.
- Disk 124¹⁵ "En Cour Des Sessions: Monologue Comique" (Germain), M^{de}. Tremblay and Mons. Germain, matrix number 12056-A.
"Au Théâtre: Monologue Comique" (Gury), M^{de}. J.R. Tremblay, matrix number 12056-B
- Disk 125 "Eugénie Veut Se Marier: Monologue Comique", Mde. Tremblay et Mons. Germain, matrix number 12055-A.
"Madame Papin: Monologue Comique", Mde. J.R. Tremblay, matrix number 12055-B.
- Disk 127 "Une Paire De Culottes: Scène Comique", Mons. et Mde. J.R. Tremblay, matrix number 12042-A.
"Fantaisie Sur Des Noms: Monologue Comique", Mde. J.R. Tremblay, matrix number 12942-B¹⁶
- Disk 131 "Dance Canadienne", W. Garceau (violin), F. C. Gibeau (piano), Side A.
"Le Virginia Reel", W. Garceau (violin), F. C. Gibeau (piano), Side B.

¹⁴ Gaston St. Jacques ca. 1897-1940.

¹⁵ AFGS has copy.

¹⁶ Note: B-side matrix number is typographic error on label—should be 12042-B.

Unnumbered¹⁷“Paillasse: Air des Sanglots” (Leoncavalo), Mons. Placide Morency, avec orchestre, matrix number 12091-A.
“Carmen: Romance de la Fleur” (Bizet), Mons. Placide Morency, avec orchestre matrix number 12091-B.

Grey Gull disk

Disk L-8001 “Francos-Américains” (Chantereau), Francis C. Chantereau, Side A, matrix number 1270-D.
“Pourquoi dis-tu ‘Je t’aime’ quand tu sais que tu mens?” (Chantereau), Francis C. Chantereau, Side B, matrix number 1233-B-3-2.

Folder 1 — 2019.077.003

Approx. 100 pages of research compiled by Michael Hébert and Edward Connors.

¹⁷ This recording is identical to a recording released in Canada under the Starr-Gennett label, mfg. by Compo Co. and recorded May 11, 1923 in Montréal and released ca. August 1923.