

August 13, 1943, letter from Willis Laurence James to B.A. Botkin

The Fort Valley State College Fort Valley, Georgia August 13, 1943

Dr. B.A. Botkin Music Division, Archive of American Folk Song Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Botkin:

I wish to thank you belatedly for the very interesting copy of "75 Years of Progress." I have enjoyed reading it very much and I assure you I treasure it very highly.

I am sending you the records which I have made this summer. I hope you will find them interesting. I am sorry that I did not have the equipment which would have aided me in getting a larger amount of material. Dr. Bond and I made efforts to get the Fisk University recording machine but it was reported, out of order, by Dr. Bond.

You will note that I have sent all of the discs which I telegraphed for. Since I was not able to get the Fisk machine I could not use them. I noted too that you asked about some records that were left here by Lewis Jones. I found none of these records when I returned here in June. These records were never in my charge. You might write to Dr. Bond about them. However, may I say we have purchased records and used several of same in making recordings for you this summer. I am returning also the two needles which you sent to me directly.

I expect to leave tomorrow for Atlanta. Please address me at 39 Chestnut Street, S.W., Atlanta, Georgia.

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It occurs to me that it would be a good thing to have some music transcribed from some of the recording material so that it could be used for singers, choirs, etc. Also may I say I have some very remarkable songs from the water fronts of the country which I gathered twenty years ago. These are all in manuscript. Anyway I should like to know your reaction to such a proposal. I would like to be entrusted with such a project. Finally, I say again I hope you will like the records. I did the best I could with practically no equipment. The part of the Festival which you will find was made by the broadcasting company which was kind enough to record for us the part of the Festival which was broadcast; otherwise, I would not have been able to provide you with anything from the Festival.

Very sincerely yours, W. L. James Willis Laurence James Visiting Professor of Music

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