



Southwestern Writers Collection

Special Collections at the Alkek Library
Texas State University-San Marcos

A Guide to the Jerry Jeff Walker Collection

ca. 1970 - 1979

Collection 047

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Walker, Jerry Jeff
Title:	The Jerry Jeff Walker Collection
Dates:	ca. 1970 - 1979
Abstract:	This collection contains song lyrics and a pair of Walker's cowboy boots.
Identification:	Collection 047
Extent:	1 box, 1 framed item, and 2 folders (2 linear feet)
Language:	English
Repository:	Southwestern Writers Collection, Special Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos

Biographical Sketch

Singer-songwriter Jerry Jeff Walker was born Ronald Clyde Crosby on March 16, 1942, in Oneonta, New York. In the early 1960s, he hitchhiked cross-country, singing in bars and on street corners, adopting the name Jerry Jeff Walker in 1966. While performing in Texas, Walker met songwriter Bob Bruno, with whom he formed a band called the Lost Sea Dreamers (and later Circus Maximus), and relocated to New York City.

In 1968, Walker wrote the song he would become famous for, “Mr. Bojangles”, which enabled him to embark on a solo career, this time based in Austin. Although Walker’s recording of the song barely broke the charts, artists such as Tom T. Hall, Sammy Davis, Jr., Harry Belafonte, George Burns, and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band covered it, making Walker and his music known to a national audience.

Walker became a central figure in the burgeoning alternative country scene in Austin beginning in the early 1970s. In 1973, he recorded the album “Viva Terlingua” in Luckenbach, Texas, a ghost town which was memorialized by Waylon Jennings’ 1977 hit song of the same name. Walker began to celebrate his birthday in Luckenbach, an event which has grown to legendary proportions. From the early 1970s to 1978, he played with the Lost Gonzo Band, which was known for its skilled musicians, including singer-songwriter Gary P. Nunn.

In 1986, Walker formed his own production company, Tried and True Music, and began to take more time with each of his recording projects. In 1991, he began hosting the television show “The Texas Connection”, on the Nashville Network (TNN). In that same year, he played at the inauguration of Texas Governor, Ann Richards, and two years later at the inauguration of President Bill Clinton. Walker continues to play in packed halls to audiences ranging in age from teenagers to retirees.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is comprised of the handwritten lyrics and chord notations to the country western song “Charlie Dunn”, written in the 1970s by Jerry Jeff Walker for the Texas boot maker by that name, who worked with Buck Steiner, at the Capital Saddlery, on Lavaca Street in Austin, Texas. Also included is the first pair of custom lizard skin boots made for Walker by Dunn, which bear Walker’s initials on the front shaft of each boot.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for Research.

Preferred Citation

The Jerry Jeff Walker Collection, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

Acquisition Information

Donated by Jerry Jeff Walker, 1991.

Processing Information

Processed by: Amanda Oates, 1999. Finding aid revised by Alan Schaefer, 2010.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Works

Box	Folder	
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1	1	Lyrics to “Charlie Dunn” (handwritten)
1	2	Lyrics to “Night Rider’s Lament”, by Michael Burton, “as sung by Jerry Jeff Walker,” signed by Walker

Framed art Case, row 3 Lyrics to “To the Artist” (handwritten, framed)

Series 2: Artifacts

2	-	Lizard skin boots
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