

## Special Collections and University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

### Jim Rooney Papers

1941-2013

3 boxes (4 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 1016



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A producer, performer, writer, and pioneer in Americana music, Jim Rooney was born in Boston on January 28, 1938 and raised in Dedham. Inspired by the sounds of Hank Williams and Leadbelly he heard on the radio, he began performing at the Hillbilly Ranch at just 16 years old, taking to music full time after an undergraduate degree in classics at Amherst College and an MA at

Harvard. As manager of Club 47, Rooney was at the epicenter of the folk revival in Boston, becoming director and talent coordinator for the Newport Folk Festival beginning in 1963, a tour manager for jazz musicians in the late 1960s, and by 1970, a producer. After managing Bearsville Sound Studios in Woodstock, NY, for Albert Grossman, he moved to Nashville, where he has produced projects by Hal Ketchum, Townes Van Zandt, Iris DeMent, John Prine and Bonnie Raitt, among others, winning a Grammy award in 1993 for his work with Nanci Griffith.

Documenting a varied career in American music, the Rooney collection contains material from two of Rooney's books on the history of American music, *Bossmen: Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters* (1971) and *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down* (1979), his autobiography *In It For the Long Run* (2014). In addition to correspondence and other content relating to his collaborations with key Americana musicians and his record production career in Nashville, the collection includes valuable interview notes, photographs, recordings, and news clippings.

## Background on Jim Rooney

A producer, performer, writer, and pioneer in Americana music, Jim Rooney was born in Boston on January 28, 1938 and raised in Dedham, MA. Inspired to take up music by the sounds of Hank Williams and Leadbelly he heard on the radio, he began performing at the Hillbilly Ranch at just 16 years old. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in Classics from Amherst College Bill Keith, and a Masters degree in Classics from Harvard University, he formed a band with Amherst College classmate Bill Keith and others to recorded "Living on the Mountain." In 1963, he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Athens, Greece at the The American School of Classical Studies. Ending his studies at Harvard in 1964, he then went on to start his full-time career in music.

Rooney started managing Club 47 in 1965 and was at the epicenter of the folk revival in Boston. That fall, he became part of the Board of Directors on the Newport Music Foundation. After producing the New Orleans Jazz Festival and becoming a tour manager of Jazz shows in 1968, he became director and talent coordinator for the Newport Folk Festival. In 1970 he wrote his first book *Bossmen: Bill Monroe & Muddy Waters*. After managing Bearsville Sound Studios from 1971-1972 in Woodstock, NY, for Albert Grossman, he went on to travel to Europe with Bill Keith to play, moving to Nashville shortly thereafter. In 1975, he relocated to Massachusetts, formed the band "Partners in Crime", and played gigs around New England before returning to Nashville in 1976. Rooney then went on to tour Japan with other musicians, including long-term friend Bill Keith. He continued his writing career in 1978 with the publication of *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down* with Eric von Schmidt. He then went on to tour Europe with the Woodstock Mountains Revue and then The Dead Cowboys, and finally settled back down in Nashville. There, he started his producing both Nanci Griffith and John Prine, and also formed the New Blue Velvet Band with Bill Keith, Eric Weissberg and Kenny Kosek. Becoming a writer for Forerunner Music in the mid-1980s, he went on to write with people such as Pat Alger, Hal Ketchum, Tony Arata, Tim O'Brien, and Pete Wasner for artists that include Garth Brooks, Kathy Mattea, Patty Loveless, Vince Gill, Hal Ketchum, and Trisha Yearwood. In 1989, he helped organize the documentary Bringing it All Back Home in Nashville to highlight how Irish music has reached all over the world. He then went on to work with Iris DeMent and won a Grammy for his work as a producer on Nanci Griffith's "Other Voices, Other Rooms". In 2000, he started playing gigs with "Rooney's Irregulars" at the Station Inn in Nashville. Rooney received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009 from the American Music Association.

In 2014, he wrote a memoir, *In it for the Long Run*. Rooney currently spends 4-5 months each year in Ireland with his wife, Carol Langstaff, and resides in Vermont during the rest of the year.

## Scope of collection

This collection consists mainly of items relating to Jim Rooney's writings and his work as a producer. His writings consists of interviews and chapters for *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*, as well as notes, drafts, and a timeline. There are also book proposals, early drafts, and copy-edited drafts for his memoir, *In it for the Long Run*, along with miscellaneous writings and one of his journals. This collection documents business dealings, correspondence, notes, photographs, news clippings, album notes, and song lyrics. It also includes the ticket for the 1994 Grammy Awards with photographs of the event, along with a certificate of his Grammy nomination and his Lifetime Achievement Award from the Americana Music Association.

## Series descriptions

### Series 1. Writings

1956-2014

This series is designated for Rooney's writings. Included are notes, interviews, and chapters from his book *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down* that were collected with co-writer Eric von Schmidt. It also includes notes, hand-written drafts, and a copy-edited draft of his memoir *In it for the Long Run*. Note that the original name for his memoir was *In My Own Ignorant Way* but was changed to its current title. It also contains one of Rooney's journals from 1980. Items relating to *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down* are organized by the people involved in the creation of the book.

## Series 2. Music

1941-2013

The Music series has all items relating to Rooney's work in the field. This includes contracts, correspondence, business dealings, song lyrics, album information, notes, and photographs. It also contains the 1993 Grammy ticket and photos from his award for Nanci Griffith's *Other Rooms*, *Other Voices* and his Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Music Association in 2009. It is organized by the people he did business with during his time as a producer, writer, and musician.

## Series 3. Audio-Visual

1976-2006

This series consists of audio-visual material from Rooney. It includes CDs, both of radio sets and of interviews, MiniDisks, flashdrives, records, and a reel-to-reel tape recording of his songs.

# Inventory

## Series 1. Writings

1956-2014

Autobiography: book proposal

1976-1999

Box 1: 1

Autobiography: book proposal

2003

Box 1: 2

Autobiography: copy-edited draft (1 of 5)

2010-2011

Box 1: 3

Autobiography: copy-edited draft (2 of 5)

2010-2011

Box 1: 4

Autobiography: copy-edited draft (3 of 5)

2010-2011

Box 1: 5

Autobiography: copy-edited draft (4 of 5)

2010-2011

Box 1: 6

Autobiography: copy-edited draft (5 of 5)

2010-2011

Box 1: 7

Autobiography: editor's notes

2011

Box 1: 8

Autobiography: hand-writte draft

undated

Box 1: 9

Autobiography: overview and interview transcript

undated

Box 1: 10

Autobiography: photos

1956-2006

Box 1: 11

Autobiography: University of Illinios Press

2013-2014

Box 1: 12

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Andersen, Eric

undated

Box 1: 13

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Anderson, Debbie

undated

Box 1: 14

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Arnoldi, Paul

undated

Box 1: 15

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Banana

undated

Box 1: 16

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Barry, David

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Broadside

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Bump, Dan

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Burke, Bill

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Cahn, Rolf

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Chambers, Joe

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Ain't Nobody's Business but Mine"

undated

Box 1: 23

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Baby Let Me Lay it on You"

undated

Box 1: 24

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Black is the Color"

undated

Box 1: 25

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "California to the New York Island"

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Children of Darkness"

undated

Box 1: 27

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Got My Mojo Working"

undated

Box 1: 28

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Hard Time Killin' Floor"

undated

Box 1: 29

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "If I were on Some Foggy Mountain Top"

undated

Box 1: 30

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue"

undated

Box 1: 31

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Leavin' Home"

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Oceans of Diamonds"

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Overseas Stomp"

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Sail Away Ladies"

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Storybook Balls"

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "We Shall Not Be Moved"

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Box 1: 37

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Wet Birds Fly at Night"

undated

Box 1: 38

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: chapter: "Where do You Come From? Where do You Go?"

undated

Box 1: 39

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Chopra, Joyce (Kalina)

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Box 1: 40

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: cover proof

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Cooke, John

1977-1978, undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: dates and timeline

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Doubleday and UMass Press

1978-1993

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: earliest drafts

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Fariña, Mimi

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Fassett, Steve

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Foreman, Gino (Clay)

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Fredericksons

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Greenhill, Manny

1958-1969, undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Greenhill, Mitch

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Guralnick, Peter

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Henderson, Jill

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Huffman, Midge

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Jackson, Clay

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Joiner, Lynn and Sinclair, Brian

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Jones, Robert L.

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Keith, Bill

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Kelly, Paula

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Koerner, "Spider" John

undated

Box 1: 60

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Kornfield, Barry

1978, undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Kweskin, Jim and DeLong, Owen

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Langstaff, Carol

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Lilly, Everett

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Linardos, Byron

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: MacSorley, Don

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Mahal, Taj

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Martin, Buzz and Frizzell, Charlie

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Muldaur, Geoff

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Muldaur, Maria

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Nagy, John

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Neuwirth, Bob

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Raitt, Bonnie

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: reviews

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Richmond, Fritz

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Riuzler, Ralph

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Rooney, Jim

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Rothchild, Paul

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Rowan, Peter

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Rush, Tom

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Saletton, Tony

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Sebastian, John

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Siggins, Betsy

undated

Box 1: 83

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Siggins, Bob and Fields, Jim

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Signer, Ethan

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Smither, Chris and Metzger, Sarah

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Box 1: 86

*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: song lyrics

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Spiro, Phil

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Spoelstra, Mark

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Stafford, Rick

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Sweezey, Martha

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Val, Joe

undated

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: von Schmidt, Eric

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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Washington, Jackie  
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*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Waterman, Dick  
1964, undated  
Box 1: 95  
*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: White, Roland  
undated  
Box 1: 96  
*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Wilson, Dave  
undated  
Box 1: 97  
*Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*: Wolf, Peter  
undated  
Box 1: 98  
*Bossmer*: Monroe, Bill and Waters, Muddy  
undated  
Box 1: 99  
Clippings: press  
1951-2002, undated  
Box 1: 100  
Clippings: press  
1987-1994  
Box 1: 101  
Clippings: press  
2013-2014  
Box 1: 102  
Clippings: press  
2002-2014  
Box 2: 1  
Miscellaneous Writings  
1991-1992, undated  
Box 2: 2  
*Voices of the Folk Revival*: book dummy  
undated  
Box 2: 3  
Series 2. Music  
1941-2013  
Album cover: Sweet Moments with The Blue Velvet Band  
May 1969  
Box :  
Album cover: Livin' on the Mountain  
undated  
Box :  
Alger, Pat  
1990-1994  
Box 2: 4  
American Music Awards  
2009  
Box 2: 5  
Borderline  
1971  
Box 2: 6  
Brashear, Chris  
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"Bringing it All Back Home"



1988-1992  
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Cannon, Hall  
2010, undated  
Box 2: 9  
Clark, Mickey  
2008  
Box 2: 10  
Clement, Jack  
undated  
Box 2: 11  
Club 47  
1962-1985  
Box 2: 12  
DeMent, Iris  
undated  
Box 2: 13  
DeMent, Iris: "Infamous Angel"  
1990-1991  
Box 2: 14  
DeMent, Iris: "Lifeline"  
2001-2004  
Box 2: 15  
DeMent, Iris: "My Life"  
undated  
Box 2: 16  
Dobson, Richard  
1983  
Box 2: 17  
Edwards, Don: "West of Yesterday"  
1995-1997  
Box 2: 18  
Everly, Don and The Dead Cowboys  
1980, undated  
Box 2: 19  
Forerunner  
1987-1999  
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Forerunner: disk collection  
undated  
Box 2: 21  
Gillette, Steve  
1992  
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Grier, David  
undated  
Box 2: 23  
Griffith, Nanci  
1984  
Box 2: 24  
Griffith, Nanci  
1985  
Box 2: 25  
Griffith, Nanci: ephemera  
1994, undated  
Box 2: 26  
Griffith, Nanci: "If These Walls Could Speak"  
1993  
Box 2: 27

Griffith, Nanci: "Other Voices, Other Rooms"

1992-1993

Box 2: 28

Griffith, Nanci: "Other Voices, Too"

1996-1998

Box 2: 29

Hearn, Bill and Bonne: "Diamonds in the Rough"

1997, undated

Box 2: 30

IREC and Appaloosa Records

1979-2013

Box 2: 31

Ireland

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Jando Music

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Box 2: 33

Keane, Sean

1997-1999

Box 2: 34

Keith, Bill and Rooney, Jim: "Livin' on the Mountain": album cover

undated

Box :

Ketchum, Hal

1990-1995

Box 2: 35

Landsborough, Charlie

1999

Box 2: 36

Lee Valley String Band

undated

Box 2: 37

McLaughlin, Pat

1980-1991

Box 2: 38

Meehan, Chris

2007-2008

Box 2: 39

>New Blue Velvet Band

1959-1992

Box 2: 40

>New Blue Velvet Band: album cover

undated

Box :

New Blue Velvet Band: photos

1962-2012

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Notorious

2010

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Partners in Crime

1975

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Paxton, Tom

2007

Box 2: 44

Paxton, Tom: "Live for the Record"

1996

Box 2: 45

Paxton, Tom: "Redemption Road  
2004

Box 2: 46

Paxton, Tom: "Wearing the Time"  
1994

Box 2: 47

Photos

2009

Box 3

2 large photos

Photos: Blue Velvet Band

1969

Box 3

1 large photo

Photos: early years

1941, undated

Box 2: 48

Photos: Keith, Bill

1974

Box 3

2 large photos

Photos: Langstaff, Carol

1991-1996, undated

Box 2: 49

Photos: miscellaneous

1955-1996

Box 2: 50

Photos: Newport Folk Festivals

1969

Box 2: 51

Photos: oversize

1991-2009

Box :

Photos: recovery projects

2000, undated

Box 2: 52

Photos: Station Inn

2001-2005

Box 2: 53

Photos: Woodstock

1974, undated

Box 2: 54

Poster: "Better Days"

undated

Box 2: 55

Poster: "A Conversation with Jim Rooney"

undated

Box :

Poster: Teatrotenda Partenope, Fuorigrotta

undated

Box :

Prine, John

1981-2001

Box 2: 56

Rooney Jim and Rooney's Irregulars: "Farewell to the Tracks"

undated

Box 2: 57

Rooney Jim and Rooney's Irregulars: "My Own Ignorant Way"

undated

Box 2: 58

Rowan, Peter: "Bluegrass Boy"

1996, undated

Box 2: 59

Rush, Tom

2008-2012

Box 2: 60

Rush, Tom at Symphony Hall

2013

Box 2: 61

Sanga Music, Inc.

1962-1963

Box 2: 62

Sanga Music, Inc.: "One Morning in May"

1963-2012

Box 2: 63

Sommers, Naomi

2007

Box 2: 64

Songs and lyrics

undated

Box 2: 65

Sunde, Oystein

1988-2004

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Toontown

1976-1992

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Tyson, Ian

1993

Box 2: 68

Williams, Robin and Linda

2012-2013

Box 2: 69

Woodstock Mountains Revue

1970-2004

Box 2: 70

Zarzyski, Paul

1998-2011

Box 2: 71

von Schmidt, Eric

1984-2002, undated

Box 2: 72

Series 3. Audio-Visual

1976-2006

Compact discs: *In it for the Long Run* radio interviews

2002

Box 3

5 CDs, radio log, and transcript

Compact discs: radio sets, part 1

undated

Box 3

34 CDs

Compact discs: radio sets, part 2

undated

Box 3  
35 CDs

Compact discs: radio sets, 3  
undated  
Box 3  
28 CDs

DVD: *Welcome here again: a recording session with the Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra*  
2016

Box 3  
Flashdrives: *Bossmen* and *In it for the Long Run*

1976  
Box 3  
MiniDisks  
2006  
Box 3  
14 MiniDisks

Photographs: Jim Rooney, Blue Velvet Band  
1991-2009  
Box 3  
5 photographs

Record: Prine, John -- "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" and "Silver Bells"  
1981  
Box 3

Record: Rooney, Jim -- "Alive and Well and Hanging Out in Bangor, Maine" and "Cruisin' Town"  
1976  
Box 3

Record: Rooney, Jim -- "No Expectations" and "South in New Orleans"  
1976  
Box 3

Record: Rooney, Jim and Bill Keith -- "One Morning in May" and "Livin' on the Mountain"  
undated  
Box 3

Reel-to-reel tape recording: Rooney, Jim  
undated  
Box 3

Poster: A conversation with Jim Rooney, Country Music Hall of Fame  
2016 Sept. 24  
Box COS 1: 1

Poster: Hard Rock Cafe (Naples, Italy) presents Peter Rowan, Jim Rooney, and Bill Keith  
20 Apr.  
Box COS 1: 1

Album cover: Blue Velvet Band, *Sweet Moments*  
1969  
Box COS 1: 1

Album cover: Bill Keith and Jim Rooney, *Livin' on the Mountain*  
1969  
Box COS 1: 1

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Jim Rooney, 2018.

### Processing Information

Processed by Candra Pepper, March 2019.

**Language:**

English

**Copyright and Use** (More information )

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**Search terms****Subjects**

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Music publishing -- United States

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**Contributors**

Rooney, Jim, 1938- [main entry]



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