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## INTRODUCTION

Nine original photos of John William "Blind" Boone and members of his touring company, including John Lange, Jr.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The collection was donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by the estate of Louise B. Trigg via Vernon A. Jones, executor, on June 28, 1979.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

John William "Blind" Boone was born on May 17, 1864 in Miami, Missouri. At around six months of age, he developed cerebral meningitis, the treatment for which made Boone permanently blind. With an interest and talent for music from an early age, Boone's first piano lessons began during his time at the Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis. After his dismissal from the school, due to absences to play music with fellow African-Americans as increased racial discrimination prevented him from playing at school, Boone tried to make a living as a musician. His attempt failed and he returned to his family in Warrensburg.

In 1879, Boone met John Lange, Jr., who became Boone's manager and business partner. The Blind Boone Company toured regionally but faced a number of hardships in its early years. Circa 1883, Boone studied piano with Mary R. Sampson in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he learned better piano technique. Since Boone's blindness prevented him from reading sheet music, he learned new pieces by ear or composed them.

Renamed the Blind Boone Touring Company, Boone's shows included a variety of musical styles: classical, popular, folk tunes, and spirituals. He adopted syncopated rhythms, characteristic of African American music, which many believe inspired the development of ragtime. The Company's new approach found great success, although racial segregation continued to segregate audiences and prevent the Company from finding lodging. Boone also found success as a composer. Many of his compositions were published, and he was also one of the first black artists recorded by the QRS piano roll company in 1912.

Boone married Eugenia Lange, John Lange's youngest sister, in 1889. When not touring, the couple resided in Columbia, Missouri. Both Boone and Lange were generous to the community and supported a number of organizations through donations and loans. John Lange died in 1916. Boone continued touring with a succession of new managers and retired in 1927 after forty-seven touring seasons. He died on October 4, 1927.

IMAGE LIST

f. 1 Trigg, Louise B., Photograph Collection 163-01 – 163-09

Identifier	Title	Description	Creation Location	Creation Date
163-01	Blind Boone	John William "Blind" Boone seated with an unidentified man		
163-02	J.W. "Blind" and Eugenia Boone	John William "Blind" Boone seated with his wife Eugenia Lange Boone standing behind him		
163-03	Blind Boone and Family	John William "Blind" Boone with his wife, Eugenia Lange Boone, to his left, and manager John Lange Jr. with his wife Ruth Lange		
163-04	Blind Boone Concert Company	ad for Blind Boone Concert Company showing Boone with manager John Lange and company secretary Ruth Lange, in a touring car driven by chauffeur Welvon Everett outside Lange's home at 912 Park Avenue, Kansas City, MO	Kansas City	
163-05	John Lange and Blind Boone	John William "Blind" Boone with manager John Lange, Jr.; full length view in long outdoor coats and hats; caption reads: "The most astute, dignified and successful manager of the race, and the greatest living musical prodigy . . . " quoted from Kansas City Sun, Press Associated News, December 5, 1914		1914 ca.
163-06	Blind Boone	portrait of John William "Blind" Boone seated facing camera with eyes downcast and hand on cheek.	Kansas City	
163-07	Blind Boone	portrait of John William "Blind" Boone, seated 3/4 view	Stewartsville	
163-08	Blind Boone at Home	John William "Blind" Boone seated at piano in his Columbia home	Columbia	
163-09	Boone, John William "Blind"	John William "Blind" Boone, seated 3/4 view with cane at age 44; advertising card for touring company, gives brief bio of Boone on back with list of members in his company		1908