

Do You Want 40,000 Records?

One of the largest private collections of recordings in the U.S. has been given to Mars Hill College by a retired Lincolnton couple. Compiled by Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Bridges, the collection contains over 40,000 items ranging from wax cylinders to shellac 78's, to stereo LP albums. It is one of only two collections known to be of such size in the nation.

Now retired from the Seaboard Railroad, Bridges began collecting in 1946. The earliest recordings in the collection date from around the turn of the century; and all areas of music, including jazz, the blues, country, folk, popular, classical, and rock, are represented in the assemblage. According to Bridges, his offer to donate the collection to several other colleges and universities met with some resistance as the schools only wanted portions of the collection while he preferred to keep the collection intact.

The Bridgeses made contact with Mars Hill through Dr. Harley Jolley, professor of history at the school and well-known regional author. Dr. Jolley is in the process of researching a new book about the mountain region during the 1930's. It was at a dinner reunion of Civilian Conservation Corps workers that Dr. Jolley and Bridges met, discovered they had friends in common, and Bridges mentioned his collection. Dr. Jolley then went to Lewis Miller, the college's librarian, who quickly recognized the value of such a collection.

"The value of this collection is its diversity," noted Miller, "and its sheer size." He estimates that two tractor trailer loads will be required to move the collection from the Bridges' home to the college.

In their retirement the Bridgeses had moved to a farm; but even with the aid provided by a barn on the property, their living space was becoming crowded. "The tail had begun to wag the dog," Bridges commented.

Continued on page 4



The Hilltop

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Mars Hill, N.C. 28754

Special Valentine's Day Issue



Take Time To Be With The One You Love!

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