

UQFL594

Sydney May Collection

Size	1 box
Contents	Scrapbooks, personal documents
Date range	1882 to 1968

Biography Sydney Lionel May was born on 30 May 1882 at Tent Hill, Rothschild on the Vegetable Creek tin mining area about 60 kilometres west of Glen Innes, the son of Walter James May, Head Teacher of Tent Hill School and his wife Margaret May, nee Dodds.

May was educated at Dunolly Public School and Singleton Superior Public School. He won a bursary to East Maitland Boys' High School in 1896, but transferred to Sydney Boys' High School in 1898. He also undertook piano studies at the Sydney College of Music, obtaining a pass in the intermediate division.

Following his schooling, May went to Sydney Technical College for two years and obtained certificates in Geology and Metallurgy. He also undertook external studies in a Bachelor of Music degree through Adelaide University.

From 1902 May worked as an assistant to the metallurgist at the Sulphide Corporation at Cockle Creek, Newcastle. Because of eye problems he decided to give up work in mining and devote himself to a career in music.

He was organist and choirmaster at St John's Church of England, Newcastle for two years. From 1905 to 1920 he was organist and choirmaster at the Central Congregational Church, Ipswich. He taught privately and also conducted the Esk Musical Union from 1907 to 1910. From 1920 to 1935 he was organist at the Brisbane City Tabernacle Baptist Church.

By 1924 May was a member of the University of Queensland Music Advisory Board. In 1928 the University appointed him organiser of Queensland music examinations for the Australian Music Examinations Board and from 1934 until 1952 he was a music lecturer at the University. This was not without controversy, as he lacked formal training at a tertiary level.

In 1910 he married Ipswich contralto Mary Williams. They had six children. His wife and two of their children predeceased him. Sydney May died at Ipswich on 21 November 1968. [Information taken from ADB and internal evidence].

Notes Unrestricted access

Box 1

Folder 1

Scrapbook, 1904 to 1909

Concert programs, including Ipswich Central Congregational Church; Esk Musical Union (E.M.U.); Brisbane City Tabernacle Baptist Church; Rosewood Farmers' Hall; All Saints' Singleton; Indooroopilly Hall; Blackstone (Ipswich) School of Arts; Ipswich Town Hall (including the *Eric Hayne Concert* – Hayne was the son of Ipswich Town Clerk Albion Hayne, who left Ipswich in 1908 to study music at the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin, Germany); Ipswich Philharmonic Choir; Newcastle Orchestral Society (1904); Also contains many newspaper cuttings.

Folder 2

Scrapbook compiled by Barbara May, Sydney May's youngest daughter, containing newspaper cuttings, 1928 to 1968, relating to her father, herself, and her siblings Neil May, Allan May and Ann May

Folder 3

Birth and Death certificates, 1882 and 1968

Certificate 'of a child being sufficiently educated', 1894 [torn]

Sydney College of Music certificate, Nov 1897

Offer of Bursary to attend East Maitland Boys' High School, 1896

School reports East Maitland Boys' High School and Sydney Boys' High School, 1896 to 1899

Folder 4

Newspaper cuttings, including articles on place names by Sydney May and obituaries, 1957 to 1968

Folder 5

Brief typescript autobiography and biography, 1p each, c1950

Manuscript *Outline of Musical History in Toowoomba*, 1p, 1951

Typescript interpretation of Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme* (popularly known as the *Enigma Variations*), 1p

Negative of a photograph of a 1928 Adelaide Register newspaper article and a photograph of the Music Examinations Board