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MUSIC AND MUSIC EDUCATION  
IN ABILENE, TEXAS  
1881-1911

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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By

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The purpose of this study is to trace the role of music and music education in Abilene, Texas, from 1881 to 1911. The research presents historical data relative to five categories: Educational music, cultural music, religious music, music of the vernacular, and music merchandising.

The study utilizes personal interviews, newspaper files, city directories, local histories, photographs, city and county documents, school documents, minutes of public school board meetings, minutes of meetings of churches, school catalogues, articles in journals, unpublished works, and published books.

The dissertation is divided into eight chapters: Introduction to the study, background for the study, educational music, cultural music, religious music, vernacular music, music merchandising, and summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Following the final chapter are four appendices.

The first two chapters indicate the need and purpose of the study, terms are defined, delimitations set, and methodology is revealed. Eighteen dissertations on local



histories of music are listed, and each one is analyzed. A brief history of Abilene is also included in chapter two.

Chapters three through seven discuss each of the five categories of music studied. Educational music discusses public and private schools and colleges. Cultural music deals with entertainment halls, music ensembles, and private teachers. Religious music treats instrumental and vocal church music. Vernacular music discusses local and traveling musicians, vaudeville, and dance music. Music merchandising deals with music dealers in the city of Abilene. The first seven chapters are summarized at the conclusion of each chapter. Chapter eight summarizes the study and gives findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

There was considerable music activity in Abilene from 1881 to 1911, but most of it was entertainment music. The performance of this music was by traveling professional troupes or by local citizens in benefit or promotional programs. Private teachers and a few traveling musicians performed serious music for the few lovers of cultural music. Several musicians brought out in the investigation deserve further study.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY . . . . .	1
The Need for the Study	
Purpose of the Study	
Definition of Terms	
Delimitations of the Study	
Methodology	
Summary	
II. BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY . . . . .	13
Related Literature	
Brief History of Abilene	
Brief Cultural History of Abilene	
Summary	
III. EDUCATIONAL MUSIC . . . . .	38
Brief History of Abilene Public Schools	
Music in the Abilene Public Schools	
Music in Colleges and Universities	
Music in Private Schools	
Music and Teacher Training	
Summary	
IV. CULTURAL MUSIC . . . . .	117
Entertainment Halls and Opera Houses	
Bands and Orchestras	
Private Teachers	
Summary	
V. RELIGIOUS MUSIC . . . . .	218
Singing Schools and Singing Conventions	
Music in Church Societies	
Music of the Churches	
Summary	

VI.	VERNACULAR MUSIC . . . . .	263
	Household Music	
	Local Entertainment	
	Traveling Shows	
	Tented Shows	
	Vaudeville and Movie Houses	
	Music for Dancing	
	Summary	
VII.	MUSIC MERCHANDISING . . . . .	327
	Mail Order Buying	
	Local Music Dealers	
	The Phonograph	
	Piano Tuners	
	Miscellaneous Promotional Activities	
	Summary	
VIII.	SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	361
	Summary	
	Findings	
	Conclusions	
	Recommendations	
APPENDIX A:	REPRESENTATIVE ABILENE PUBLIC SCHOOL OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES, 1887-1910 . . . . .	372
APPENDIX B:	REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES IN THE MALTBIE OPERA HOUSE, AUGUST, 1885 - NOVEMBER, 1888 . . . . .	378
APPENDIX C:	REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES IN THE CHESTNUT STREET OPERA HOUSE, 1892-1911 . . . . .	380
APPENDIX D:	CHRONOLOGY OF ABILENE TOWN BAND ACTIVITIES, 1883-1911 . . . . .	384
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .		388

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Constructed in 1889, Abilene's first brick school building . . . . .	45
2. Frontispiece of first Simmons College Catalogue, 1892 . . . . .	69
3. Original Simmons College building, 1892 . . . . .	70
4. Simmons College music class, 1897 . . . . .	75
5. C. H. Lewis at the Simmons College Chapel Organ . . . . .	79
6. Simmons College Band, 1903 . . . . .	82
7. Edward H. Fletcher, Simmons College music teacher, 1909 . . . . .	84
8. Jane Wood, Simmons College instructor of voice, 1892 . . . . .	85
9. Frontispiece of first Childers Classical Institute catalogue, 1906 . . . . .	92
10. W. H. Free, sightsinging teacher in first session of Childers Classical Institute . . . . .	95
11. Faculty for second session of Childers Classical Institute, 1907-1908 . . . . .	98
12. First building on Childers Classical Institute campus . . . . .	104
13. On the left, Maltbie Opera House, Pine Street . . . . .	122
14. Another view of Maltbie Opera House, center . . . . .	126
15. On the left, Lapowski Hall, 1895 . . . . .	127
16. Club Rooms opening bill, 1890 . . . . .	129
17. B & W Opera House opening bill, 1892 . . . . .	134
18. On the left, B & W Opera House . . . . .	135

19.	Lyceum Opera House, fly loft visible in center . . . . .	143
20.	Newspaper advertisement for Black Patti, 1909 .	145
21.	Lyceum appearance of Ellen Beach Yaw, 1910 . . .	147
22.	Abilene town band, 1883 . . . . .	152
23.	Abilene band in front of Palace Hotel, late 1880's . . . . .	163
24.	Abilene band visiting area community, 1890's . .	173
25.	Abilene 25,000 Club Band, 1907 . . . . .	185
26.	E. H. Boone, 1907 . . . . .	188
27.	Luther L. Lane, 1910 . . . . .	192
28.	Western School of Music announcement, 1907 . . .	200
29.	Ione Kinsolving Bass, early 1900's . . . . .	203
30.	Lou Hart music class announcement . . . . .	208
31.	Josef Rosenfeld, 1909 . . . . .	211
32.	W. H. Free and singing school, 1904 . . . . .	225
33.	An act advertised for the Majestic, typical of the vaudeville shows which appeared at Abilene theatres in the early 1900's . . . . .	299
34.	Empire Theatre advertisement, showing the musical aspects of the early vaudeville theatres in Abilene . . . . .	305
35.	Another vaudeville theatre in Abilene, this one advertising the performance of a comedy . . .	311
36.	An early example of music merchandising in the Buffalo Gap Weekly News . . . . .	329
37.	E. L. Ritch advertisement for jewelry, spectacles, and musical instruments . . . . .	336
38.	J. C. Harnden advertisement, 1892 . . . . .	341

39.	Hall Music Company advertisement in 1907, when the store was on Chestnut Street . . . .	346
40.	Interior of Pine Street location of Hall Music Company, early 1900's . . . . .	348

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The morning of March 15, 1881, dawned cold and windy on the pathetic looking tents and covered wagons huddled near the tracks of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Anxious men, some with families, stoked camp fires and pondered the possibilities of getting the choice lots that were to go on sale later that morning.

Some cursed the weather of this new land and some were glad, thinking that the late norther might keep some of the buyers away, enhancing their own chances for a good location near the depot. For most, the time passed too slowly, for they were eager to start the bidding.

These few hundred souls were from a variety of backgrounds. Some spoke broken English and had been in Texas but a few months, and others had been reared in Texas, moving West as the railway expanded.

Just twenty years before, Texas had agonized over the decision to secede from the Union. The state did withdraw later, and Governor Sam Houston was put out of office for refusing to take an oath supporting the constitution of the Confederate States.



This collection of individuals in Abilene still had bitter memories of that war. Many had fought for one side or the other or had lost relatives in the conflict. The playing of "Dixie" by a brass band stirred many a heart to patriotic fervor. Eileen Southern, author of The Music of Black Americans, states that it was the "favorite tune of Southern audiences" (3, p. 264).

As this new town of Abilene began to take shape in the North Central Plains, Texas was twenty years away from the discovery of Spindletop, the first big oil field. Temple Houston, the famous trial lawyer and youngest son of Sam Houston, was twenty years old, and Oran Roberts was Governor of Texas.

Nationally, James Garfield had just been elected President of the United States. He would be dead in a few months, the victim of an assassination. Within the next ten years, six new states would be added to the Union. The frontier was vanishing with each new wave of settlers, and people were beginning to migrate to the cities as they sprang up in the wilderness.

Great herds of buffalo had roamed the Abilene area only a few years before, but had been slaughtered by hide hunters. Many of the area's first settlers made extra money by gathering up the bones of these animals and selling them to fertilizer companies in the East.

The literature of Americans was broadening the scope of culture. Mark Twain, George Cable, Bret Harte, Henry James, and William Dean Howells were favorite writers of American Readers.

Musically, Americans were still steeped in the European traditions. John Philip Sousa was twenty-seven years old and leading the United States Marine Band. The few American "composers" who were popular were writing tunes for minstrel shows and for publishers of household music. In American entertainment, musical tastes were beginning to swing away from minstrelsy to vaudeville, which had more variety and was a faster paced show.

On the international scene, Joseph Stalin was not quite two years old, and Winston Churchill was a young boy of seven. Europe was in the middle of a second industrial revolution, and Japan was making rapid strides toward becoming a world power. Iron had recently given way to steel.

In the arts, European composers dominated the world in popularity and productivity. Modest Moussorgsky died in 1881, and Bela Bartok was born that year. Within ten years Brahms, Tchaikowsky, Borodin, Wagner, Delibes, Smetana, and Liszt would be dead, and within that same period Stravinsky, Varese, Webern, Berg, Villa-Lobos, and Prokofiev would be born.

Abilene, Texas, was a mixture of the new and the old, a melting pot of different cultures, religions, and lifestyles. There were those from the urban East or Europe who had never seen an Indian, a buffalo, or a gunfight. There were also those grizzled veterans of range wars, Indian fights, and outlaw bands. This diverse group of individuals had but one thing in common: the desire for a new life on the plains of West Central Texas.

These few hundred pioneers had seen the heart taken from their country by the ravages of a Civil War, and were eager for better years ahead. Most of them would live to see the telephone, electric lights, the phonograph, the automobile, the airplane, and "moving picture machines."

Most would enjoy the musical life in early Abilene. This dissertation examines the different types of music that the people of Abilene played, sang, or sold in the young community.

#### The Need for the Study

Although the history of the community of Abilene has been studied and compiled, its rich heritage of music history has yet to be investigated. Facts about the city's musical past have never been gathered and put into a form which can be examined by interested persons. This study will contribute to the sparse literature concerning local histories of music. Little is recorded about the cultural

and entertainment tastes of any West Texas city. This effort should give fresh insight into the development of music and music education in one pioneer West Texas town.

An abundance of information about a community can be gained through a study of its musical life. Earle Johnson believes that by answering questions about first performances and first music teachers, we answer "far reaching questions," such as whether the community has a balanced musical life, how it compares with other cities, and whether the interest in music stems from civic and cultural pride or from commercial interests (1, p. 61).

Johnson feels that history texts used by our secondary school and college American History classes do not mention the arts because they do not have enough information from music historians on which to base their generalizations. He further states that no historian

mentions that the first book printed in that which is now the United States was the Bay Psalm Book, a book of song texts presupposing a knowledge of music on the part of worshippers, or that the man who has a valid claim to have been the first American to compose a piece of music was also a signer of the Declaration of Independence (1, p. 44).

Oscar Sonneck cites the limitations of original research by general historians (2, p. 131). He states that they must rely on specialists to provide information in areas they cannot investigate. He believes one of the ways to aid the general historian and add to the general

historical knowledge of this country is to gather "correct and abundant literature of city and state musical histories, or a critical digest on which the general historian may safely base his survey" (2, p. 132).

In a lecture delivered in 1913, Sonneck declared the literature on music in America was "woefully inadequate," and he further stated that there was no city in America that could "point to a comprehensive, authoritative, scientific study of its music life" (2, p. 129). Research in recent years has supplied a great deal of information to the area of American music history, but few studies on local histories of music exist.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to trace the role of music and music education in Abilene, Texas, from 1881 to 1911. The research will present historical data relative to five categories: (1) educational music, (2) cultural music, (3) religious music, (4) music of the vernacular, and (5) music merchandising. The data will be used to explain and clarify the musical heritage of the city.

#### Definition of Terms

Key terms are defined as follows.

1. Educational Music refers to music taught or performed in a school or college setting. The two institutions

of higher learning which were established before 1911, Hardin-Simmons University and Abilene Christian University, as well as public and private schools, are included in this category.

2. Cultural Music refers to music of a more serious nature than that which is meant merely for entertainment. Music performed by large ensembles (band, orchestra, chorus) and music for small ensembles will be treated in this category. Private music teachers are also included under this heading, as well as entertainment halls and opera houses.

3. Religious Music refers to music related to church activities, including singing schools, church choirs, church organs and pianos, community "singings" of a religious nature, religious concerts, and gospel revivals.

4. Vernacular Music refers to music that is not meant for a serious or cultural purpose. Music in this category includes entertaining music, household and dance music, traveling and tent show music, and vaudeville and movie house music.

5. Music Merchandising refers to the sale of music and music products. This includes sheet music, instruments, music supplies, phonographs and records, and piano tuners.

#### Delimitations of the Study

1. The study will be restricted to the years 1881 to 1911, and will include references to Buffalo Gap, Texas,

since that community was closely related to the beginning of the city of Abilene.

2. Data for this project will not be compiled past the year 1911. The year 1911 is chosen as the halting point because it marks the thirtieth year of the life of the city, and it was the beginning of a completely different era in the history of the city. City officials and citizens of Abilene had been unhappy about the 1900 census. During the next ten years there was an intensive effort to increase the population of the city to 25,000. The city's population increased to 10,000 by the end of 1910, but 1911 marks the end of this period of rapid growth.

#### Methodology

Interviews with alert old-timers afforded a major source of information for this study, because the oldsters remembered many of the original settlers. Miss Tommie Clack, one of the oldest living citizens of Abilene, supported this study and was very helpful, providing many names for interview possibilities. A former English teacher in the public schools of Abilene, Miss Clack was born in 1882 and graduated from Abilene High School in 1900. She is active in several historical societies and has an extremely alert mind, being able to recall vividly many events in the early days of the community.

Dr. Rupert N. Richardson (1891- ), President Emeritus of Hardin-Simmons University and eminent historian of the Southwest, is a resident of Abilene. He was also a willing source of information.

Herman McDaniel (1892-1982), long-time music dealer and a member of the city bands of the early 1900's, was likewise interviewed for the study. He provided a great deal of information on educational music, band music, and music merchandising.

Thurmon Morrison (1917- ), former music faculty member of Hardin-Simmons University, and an avid student of the history of Abilene, assisted in the study. He was a great deal of help personally, and his book entitled Music At Simmons: The First Fifty Years helped the study.

Others were interviewed in order to get a broad picture of music in the community, but many others expressed interest in the study of music in Abilene.

Local newspapers proved to be another valuable source of information. In the early days of Abilene, the Taylor County News and the Abilene Reporter were located in the city. The Taylor County News was published for ten years and went out of business. The Abilene Reporter became the Daily Reporter in 1900. Later, a morning edition was published and called the Abilene Morning News. These newspapers were later consolidated under the title of Abilene Reporter-News. These



newspapers are on microfilm in the public library and also in university libraries. Thousands of newspaper issues were examined to complete the study. Examination of these old newspapers gave valuable insight into the cultural pulse of the community.

The Abilene City Directory was also examined. These annual publications have a great deal of information about the business aspects of music. The directories listed music stores, instrument dealers and suppliers, piano tuners, and music teachers in the city. Also, city hall, county courthouse, and school records were searched for information related to the study.

The records of the institutions of higher learning were main sources of information about college music departments. Histories of Simmons College (later called Hardin-Simmons University) and Childers Classical Institute (later called Abilene Christian University) have been completed. Both contain a wealth of information about their respective departments of music.

The local historical societies, as well as those of the state and adjoining counties, were rich sources of information for the study. Records of local churches were examined, providing information about music in the early worship services of the churches.

### Summary

Abilene, Texas, a community which sprang up as a result of the coming of the Texas and Pacific Railroad, has a rich history. Several works have been published which narrate this history, but none deal with the topic of music in the history of the city.

Earle Johnson and Oscar Sonneck feel that general historians do not devote space to the arts because they are not informed about such specialized topics and, furthermore, do not have time to research such areas. The task of the music historian is to provide the general historian with facts about the arts on which he can safely base surveys on general history.

Information relative to five categories is presented in this study: educational music, cultural music, religious music, vernacular music, and music merchandising. The study is limited to the thirty years between 1881 and 1911. Personal interviews, newspaper files, school documents, city directories, and historical writings are the main sources of information.

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## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

An investigation of the history of music and music education in Abilene is original. No literature, published or unpublished, is related directly to this topic. An examination of research on local histories of music in our nation has been done to give a background for this research. Several works were consulted which deal directly with the history or development of music in certain locales.

The dissertations are grouped according to the university or college they represent. Florida State University, the leader in this type of research, has produced six dissertations on local histories of music. Next are the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan, and the University of Texas at Austin with two each. The University of Arizona, Boston University, Colorado State College, Indiana University, the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill each provided one local history of music.

Before one can fully understand the music history of a community, the general history of that place must be reviewed. This chapter includes a brief survey of the general and cultural history of Abilene.

### Related Literature

In her history of music in Knoxville, Tennessee, Crews (11) proposed: (a) to gather a body of information concerning the history of music in Knoxville from its earliest days; (b) to present this material in an organized manner; (c) to show any causes or effects where such were possible or practicable; (d) to treat with special consideration any issue, performance, or person appearing to be of particular importance; and (e) to conduct a very brief but adequate survey of current music activities within the city.

Crews' procedure included an examination of newspapers, books, pamphlets, diaries, journals, scrapbooks, programs, and photographs. She also examined records of historical societies, music organizations, churches, schools, and theatres. Interviews were conducted with persons in Knoxville. Crews researched church music, dance music, music for celebrations, military music, music merchandising, concerts, and art music. She also examined theatre music, music organizations, music education, and miscellaneous music. She divided the study into four large areas: (a) 1791-1840; (b) 1841-1865; (c) 1866-1890; (d) 1891-1910. The summary is quite detailed and is a general chronicle of musical events of the community of Knoxville from 1791 to 1910.

Mahan (22), in her study on music in Columbus, Georgia, divided the work into five broad areas, coinciding with the dates of national historic periods: (a) music in the first thirty years (1828-1858); (b) music in a culturally maturing city (1859-1875); (c) music in the late nineteenth century (1875-1900); (d) music in the new century (1900-1915); and (e) music of a new generation (1916-1928).

Mahan researched five areas: music of the theatre and other entertainment, music for social occasions and public celebrations, music of the schools and private teachers, music of the churches, and music of merchants and publishers. She suggests further study in the city in the area of music education, history of theatre music, and a continuation of the present study. She also suggests that the study serve as a basis for a socio-cultural history of the city or a history of music in the South.

Steinhaus (27) states that his work on music in Macon, Georgia, emphasizes concert life, while consideration was given to economic, social, and cultural activities. Daily and weekly newspapers published between 1823 and 1900 were the primary sources of information. Another abundant source of data was the interview, conducted with descendants of early residents of the city. The study is divided into five periods, with local musicians and traveling professional artists being treated in each period. The conclusions

Steinhaus reached are based on a comparison with earlier musical development studies of Columbus, Georgia, done by Katherine Mahan, and Savannah, Georgia, done by Jack Broucek.

Stoutamire (28) suggests the need for information about music events and musicians before 1865, since standard historical literature on Richmond offers little on the subject. This need is the basic purpose for his dissertation on music in Richmond, Virginia.

The sources of information used by Stoutamire are newspapers, magazines, programs, music scores, histories, biographies, and other writings about music in Richmond. The work is divided into five periods: (a) colonial Virginia; (b) the close of the American Revolution to the end of the Eighteenth Century; (c) 1825-1845; and (d) 1845-1865. A final chapter summarizes and offers conclusions. The researcher considers music on public and social occasions, merchantry and instruction, theatre music, concerts, and music of the church.

Williams' dissertation (32) about music in Jacksonville, Florida, proposes to present a comprehensive study of music in Jacksonville during the first century of the existence of the city, and to show the evolution of musical tastes during this period. He divides the work into three periods: (a) 1822-1870; (b) 1870-1910; and

(c) 1910-1922. He includes music teachers, music merchants, musical organizations, entertainment, and music education.

Broucek (4) traces the music history of Savannah, Georgia, by relating the music and cultural conditions during the early days of the city's existence. He used newspapers, record books, city and state documents, personal journals and diaries, and historical society holdings. He divides the work into five chapters: (a) European conditions of colonization; (b) John Wesley Mission; (c) Contributions of various ethnic groups; (d) dancing and theatre; and (e) summary and conclusions.

Betterton (3) states that surveys and records of musical activities in the United States during the past few decades are fairly accurate, but records of earlier accounts are vague and incomplete. He then cites the need for research into local community histories of music. He gives a short background of the musical life of Davenport, Iowa, mentioning the various nationalities which came to the city of Davenport to live. The Germans made up the largest group. The next five chapters deal with instrumental organizations, choral organizations, the Sangerfest, music education and amateur music, prominent Davenport musicians, and visiting artists. An appendix gives a detailed list of events and activities pertaining to musical life in Davenport.



Bruner (5), in his study of music in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, cites the need for research into local histories of music. He divides the work into three broad categories: (a) the frontier era (1837-1859); (b) cultural development (1860-1889); and (c) a mature musical decade (1890-1899). In the summary he discusses local talent, traveling troupes, concert halls and opera houses, music education, repertory, and commerce in music. He then lists several conclusions about musical life in the city and presents two massive appendices containing a chronological list of musical events from 1860 to 1899 and a chronological collection of musical programs and advertisements.

Ferguson (13) acquired the major portion of his information about music in Vicksburg, Mississippi, from the twenty newspapers which existed in Vicksburg from 1820 to 1900. He was also able to find information in a number of books about the history of the city of Vicksburg and the Mississippi River. He examined diaries, programs, photographs, sheet music, city directories, and museum collections.

Ferguson divided the work into six chapters: (a) the early years; (b) vocal performance by Vicksburg musicians (1868-1900); (c) music instruction and music merchandising (1868-1900); (d) traveling professional musicians (1868-1900); (e) instrumental performance by Vicksburg musicians

(1868-1900); and (f) summary and conclusions. An appendix listed various programs of musical organizations which appeared in the different newspapers.

In her dissertation on music in Detroit, Teal (31) cites the limited scope of information available for the early part of the Eighteenth Century. She blames the "haphazard" newspaper reporting for this problem. The first section of the work gives detailed information on music dealers because, according to Teal, the advertisers were engaged in a "war" with rival music firms. The work centers primarily on the years 1850 to 1870, and contains a survey of musical life in the city prior to 1850.

The purpose of Linscome's dissertation (21) on musical development in Denver, Colorado is to: (a) present a detailed picture of musical life in Denver between 1858 and 1908; (b) to identify the significant areas of musical growth during this period; (c) to point out personalities, societies, movements, and conditions--social, economic, and cultural--which contributed to the city's unique musical experience; and (d) to make some tentative interpretations of this growth in light of the contemporary musical culture in other cities.

Linscome's dissertation on music in Denver, Colorado is divided into three periods: (a) pioneer period (1858-1881); (b) developmental period (1881-1900); and (c)

musical maturity. He uses as his main sources newspapers, programs, diaries, photographs, archives of churches, and tape recorded interviews.

Pugh (24), in his work on music in frontier Houston, presents a detailed picture of the musical life of Houston from its beginning in late 1836 to the end of Reconstruction. Another purpose is to relate the musical occasion to the cultural and social life of the citizens of Houston. Also, he proposed to document the performance practices of the musical organizations of the city, and whenever possible, to relate these practices to the musical culture found elsewhere in the United States.

Pugh divides the study into chapters organized chronologically, using dates that had been established by writers in the area of Texas political history. Each chapter is introduced with a brief discussion of the principal political, social and economic issues that were treated by the contemporary newswriters.

Pugh gathered the bulk of information from Houston newspapers, even though letters, diaries, personal interviews, legal records, and other records were consulted. Pugh points out that both Sonneck and Johnson credit the use of newspapers for the main portion of information contained in their respective studies of music in American life. An effort is made to point out the reliability of

daily newspapers, especially when more than one newspaper is consulted about the same event.

Pugh divides his study into four major areas: (a) the republic period (1836-1865); (b) the antebellum period and the Civil War (1846-1865); (c) the period of Reconstruction (1865-1870); and (d) the end of Reconstruction. He divides each period into small classifications such as theatre music, entertainment, balls, public concerts, instruments, church music, and music instruction.

In his work on music in Tucson, Arizona (8), Cordeiro states that his emphasis is placed on establishing an historical framework in which to relate the music in Tucson during the one hundred years covered by the project. Music is referred to in context with life on the frontier. He cites the interest of the citizens in good music and their concern for a lasting musical education for their children.

Hehr (14) comments on the dearth of information on musical life in America during the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century through the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. The purpose of his work is: (a) to present a detailed picture of the musical life of citizens in Salem, Massachusetts (1783-1823); (b) to identify the significant musical events, personalities, and musical organizations existing during this period; and (c) to emphasize a facet of musical performance during this period of American history.

Hehr depended upon contemporary sources such as newspapers, personal diaries, almanacs, journals, periodicals, church records, records of musical organizations, and broadsides. The information was divided into three categories: (a) theatrical life; (b) concert life; and (c) the identity and significance of music and dancing teachers and music dealers during the time period covered. Hehr suggests that before an accurate and comprehensive history of music in America can be written, an investigation of the musical activities of many other significant towns must be completed.

James' dissertation (16) on music in Greeley, Colorado, is rather brief compared to similar studies. He discusses the programs performed in Greeley, the Greeley Silver Cornet Band, music clubs, institutions of higher learning, academies, singing schools, literary societies and visiting musicians. The study proposes (a) to gather a body of information relative to the history of music in Greeley from its founding in 1870 to 1920; and (b) to collate this material and present it in an organized manner.

James' main sources of data were newspapers, brochures, books on the history of Greeley, and records of music clubs and organizations. No mention is made of city directories, interviews, or other sources. He summarizes the work with great detail, citing community participation in musical activities, willingness on the part of Greeley musicians to

perform without pay, music being included in many activities of the community, the support of the press, the formation of music clubs, etc. He suggests a need for further study in the area of churches, educational music, college music, professional organizations, music in Greeley from 1920 to 1970, sociological influences in Greeley, local musicians, and other influences on music in the city.

In his study on music in Portland, Maine, Cole (7) offers no introductory remarks, such as purpose or need for the study. The chapter divisions are: (a) historical sketch of Portland; (b) sacred music; (c) concert music; (d) music societies; (e) Portland composers; (f) music education; and (g) music and the business community.

Cole uses an extensive appendix section to present biographical sketches of prominent Portland musicians, tune-books with dates of advertisements in the newspapers of Portland, concerts and recitals presented in Portland, music societies and clubs, music teachers, and music and musical instrument dealers and manufacturers. There are many musical examples.

Crabb's (10) purpose was to investigate the historical development of music in the metropolitan area of Kansas City, Missouri. Three aims of the study are (a) to identify the persons and events associated with the development; (b) explore the aspects of music related to the

community educational system; and (c) to show how the search for improvement of musical life becomes more complex and challenging.

Crabb's study is based on information from newspaper files, periodicals, programs, records, textbooks, dissertations, and interviews. The study covers: (a) early Kansas City; (b) immigrant and native leadership; and (c) period of organization. No common points under each category were used because the researcher thought that each chapter offered its own problems of organization.

Crabb summarizes the study by listing several points about music in Kansas City before 1900. He then lists the more important points in the history of music in Kansas City from 1850 to 1965. This is followed by a few points about music from 1900 to 1965, and several recommendations for further study.

Hines' dissertation (15) on music in Norfolk, Virginia, deals primarily with music after the American Revolution, since material covering the colonial period was found to be lacking. Hines does, however, manage to write nineteen chapters about this period. The remainder of the work is divided into three sections, separated by the Civil War and World War I. Each of these sections begins with a chapter on historical background, followed by chapters on

concert life, theatre, opera, private musical activity, and music in the churches.

Hines closes each section with a chapter of conclusions. His sources were newspapers, histories of Norfolk, diaries, church records, scrapbooks, collections, and interviews. Only "genteel," or "cultivated" music was researched. The work concludes with twenty appendices.

Johnson's (18) call for more research on local histories of music was heeded. Of the eighteen studies cited above, twelve were completed only ten years after Johnson had pointed out the need for such studies. The others were completed before 1975.

Most of these works covered one hundred years or more of the music history of the respective cities. Hines' (15) study covered almost 300 years of music in Norfolk, Virginia. Most helpful in the preparation of the study of music and music education in Abilene were those works which were limited to fifty years or less.

Pugh's (24) study was helpful because of his efforts to point out the reliability of local newspapers as a major source of information, citing both Sonneck (26) and Johnson (18) as crediting the use of newspapers for their studies of music in American life. Pugh limited his study to forty years of musical life in Houston, Texas, from 1836 to 1876.



### Brief History of Abilene

Unlike communities that sprang up in the wilderness and then began to search for a railroad that would help the economy of their town, Abilene's existence was a direct result of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Land developers and railroad officials had decided on the site for the future railhead, and people began to arrive at the location.

The name "Abilene" was chosen for the new town, after Abilene, Kansas, a city already famous as a railhead for shipping cattle. The town was also called the "Future Great" city of West Texas. Both railroad men and developers envisioned greatness for the young community (12, p. 57).

Abilene had the advantage of a promotional campaign supported by the railroad. The T & P advertised in newspapers not only in Central and East Texas, but also in the larger cities of the country (6). Town lots were to go on sale and railroad officials were anxious for a good crowd of bidders at the auction.

When the lots were sold on March 15, 1881, Abilene already had a tent-city population of over three hundred (25, p. 4). These people continued to live in their canvas homes until enough lumber to build houses could be shipped in by rail (30, p. 31).

As the T & P construction crews built on westward, people began to arrive in the new town. They came from

every location, speaking many languages and bringing a variety of vocations. Some had no education, and many had higher degrees from great seats of learning. There were farmers who read Greek, and successful merchants who read little or no English.

Many of the new citizens of Abilene had been accustomed to the better things in life, and they started to work trying to improve their way of life in this new hamlet near Elm Creek in Northeast Taylor County. They expressed immediate concern about churches in which to worship (29, March 6, 1891, p. 1) and schools that would educate their children (12, p. 75).

In spite of the level of education of many of the inhabitants of Abilene, there was still lawlessness and gunplay on the streets. Along with the families, professional men, and merchants came an assortment of thugs and ruffians. Most of these men were looking for an easy dollar, hard whiskey, and a good fight.

Most of the shootings or fights in early Abilene were connected with one of the saloons, and there was one within easy walking distance from practically any part of town. There were large saloons, small saloons, saloons that advertised the finest whiskey, and saloons that did not advertise at all and still did a good business.

Popular saloons in Abilene in the early 1880's were the White Elephant, the Maverick, Delmonico's, the O.K., Horn's, the Guilt Edge, and Harrington's. A man named Gilstrap was shot to death during a poker game at Harrington's saloon in April of 1885. The shooting followed an argument over the card game (29, April 10, 1885, p. 5).

Another typical example of the kind of violence which took place in Abilene saloons was in January of 1883. A man named Zeno Hemphill, a local Abilene gambling house owner, killed Ross Breeding at the Redlight Dance Hall. The first trial resulted in a hung jury and while he was waiting for another trial, Hemphill was killed in a shootout at the White Elephant by saloon operator Frank Collins and deputy marshall Walter Collins (9, p. 4).

In the late 1870's buffalo hunters and farmers organized a small community near a gap in the Calahan Divide. Only a few years before, herds of buffalo had used the gap as a passage to and from the area. When Taylor County was created out of parts of Bexar and Travis Counties in 1878, Buffalo Gap was the only town in the county, so it was chosen as the county seat.

When the T & P Railroad came through Abilene instead of Buffalo Gap, there was talk of moving the seat of government to Abilene, twelve miles north. In late summer of

1883, a petition was circulated for an election concerning the location of the seat of government for the county. The election was held in October and was replete with accusations of illegal activities. Buffalo Gap lost the election and the county seat was moved to Abilene a few days later (9, p. 21).

The town of Abilene was incorporated on January 2, 1882. Three years later the word "town" no longer applied; the board of aldermen of the new community had voted to adopt a municipal form of government, and Abilene was then called a "city" (29, April 24, 1885, p. 5).

The only practical means of transportation to and from the new city was the railroad. A rough wagon road passed north of the present town of Clyde, but it was rarely used for anything but short trips. By 1885 a wagon road was opened to Haskell and in 1886 a road was opened to Baird (9, p. 11). The area around the young town was generally flat, with a noticeable absence of trees. The Greek name "Abilene" means "grassy plain," a name well chosen for the area.

A severe drouth in 1886 and 1887 almost spelled an early doom for Abilene. Some left to live with friends or family, or to return to old jobs (29, July 30, 1886, p. 4). Throughout the county committees were selected to distribute donated goods and cash received from other areas

(29, September 3, 1886, p. 1); 750 individuals in the county received a total of \$2,437 (33, p. 120).

With the exception of the two drouth years, Abilene's population grew rapidly in the first nine years of the city's existence. By 1890 the population numbered 3,194 (17, p. 926). Growth almost came to a standstill during the next ten years (17, p. 927). By 1910, however, the population of the city had almost tripled to 9,204 (17). One of the reasons for the rapid growth during this time was the efforts of "The 25,000 Club," a forerunner of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce. The club had set a goal of 25,000 for the 1910 population (1, April 24, 1910, p. 15). The goal was far from realized, but the efforts of the club helped the city grow.

With the advent of electricity in 1891, a telephone system in 1895, the automobile in 1903, and a street car system in 1908, Abilene was ready for the twentieth century. Growth between 1910 and 1920 slowed again almost to a stop, with the city gaining only slightly more than a thousand inhabitants (12, p. 219).

#### Brief Cultural History of Abilene

Even before Abilene was founded, the desire for a more cultivated existence was prevalent among the pioneer families. Because of the harsh conditions of the first few years of life in early Abilene, however, it was difficult

to study music, art, or drama. Teachers of these subjects were scarce and free time was at a premium. At first, some mothers taught their own children and the few musicians in the city had little opportunity to teach those who were interested. After the city built permanent homes and churches, music teachers began to advertise their studies.

When the city of Abilene was only four years old, there was talk of building an opera house (29, May 1, 1885, p. 5), even though various halls in the city had already been fitted with a stage, crude lights, and a curtain. The new hall, called the Maltbie Opera House, was completed in just a few months and was privately owned. It was built on the west side of the second block of Pine Street and formally opened on August 19, 1885, with a performance by a local amateur theatrical group (29, July 31, 1885, p. 5).

The second floor hall was the scene of social gatherings, dances, traveling musical and theatrical productions, lectures, town meetings, and entertainments produced by local citizens. The house closed in 1888 to make room for a wholesale grocery company (29, October 4, 1888, p. 8).

A second opera house opened in the early 1890's on the Southeast corner of South First and Chestnut Streets. It was larger and more opulent than the first and was the scene of some of early Abilene's finest cultural events (29, August 21, 1891, p. 5).

Abilene, like many communities in the 1890's, had a town band very soon after the city's founding. This first band was formed in 1883 to support the community and to attract people to the city. The band became a permanent part of the cultural and social life of early Abilene. In February of 1889, a full-time director of the band, Professor J.H. Lucas from Itasca, Texas, was chosen by city officials and band members (29, February 22, 1889, p. 5). Under Lucas' direction, the band became a first rate musical group. The group remained semi-active throughout the 1890's, contending with high turnover in its ranks, and intermittent apathy on the part of the citizens.

In the early 1900's the band continued to struggle with high turnover and low citizen support. They aligned themselves briefly with the 25,000 Club, but still had to support themselves. Several part-time conductors led the band during the early 1900's.

Even though music was not offered in the public schools until 1920, Abilene has a rich heritage of educational music. From the very beginning of the public schools' existence, almost every school function was highlighted with some type of musical activity. Music was present on opening day exercises, holidays, school closing exercises, teachers' meetings, and summer normals. School officials stressed that even though courses in music and painting were not

connected in any way with the schools, these subjects were taught in the city, and the students could "avail themselves" of these departments of education (29, August 12, 1887, p. 1).

After two abortive attempts at establishing a college in Abilene, the city got an institution of higher learning in the Fall of 1891 (2, January 21, 1891, p. 1). Simmons College (later called Hardin-Simmons University) held its first session in the Fall of 1892, followed by Childers Classical Institute (later called Abilene Christian University) in the Fall of 1906 (12, p. 159). Both of these institutions have contributed much to the cultural life of the city.

#### Summary

In preparation for this study of music in Abilene from 1881 to 1911, a survey was made of existing doctoral dissertations which chronicle the history or development of music in certain locales. Of the eighteen works found, six are from Florida State University, clearly the leader in this type of research. Most helpful was a study of music in the frontier city of Houston, Texas, written by Robert Pugh, and sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin.

The city of Abilene enjoyed a promotional campaign several weeks before the tracks of the Texas and Pacific Railroad arrived at the site chosen for the new town. A



town lot sale was held on March 15, 1881, a date which marks the official beginning of the town. The site had a population of several hundred many days before the sale.

In its early days, the town was rough and rowdy, with several saloons and dance halls dotting the small hamlet. These places enjoyed a steady business from the cowhands and fortune seekers who arrived daily by covered wagon and train.

Only two years passed before citizens organized to wrest the County Seat away from a smaller neighbor to the south, Buffalo Gap. After a vigorous and sometimes bitter campaign, Abilene won, much to the chagrin of the Buffalo Gap citizens, who almost resorted to gunplay before finally handing over the county records to the newer but larger city. From that time on Abilene grew and prospered, showing a fiercely competitive spirit.

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## CHAPTER III

### EDUCATIONAL MUSIC

Although it took a great many years to have music included in the Abilene school curriculum at school expense, music was from the beginning a viable part of school life and was included in practically every school activity. There were no official school bands, choruses, or orchestras until several years after World War I, but students participated in music activities and were given opportunities to perform. What they had learned in private musical activities, they demonstrated in a public way at school functions.

The first known instance in America where a music teacher was hired at public expense was in Boston in 1838. Lowell Mason had donated his services the previous year at Hawes School to show that music should be a part of the curriculum (7, p. 55). At the end of the term a concert was presented to which Mason invited the music committee of the school board. The committee was duly impressed and recommended to the board that the school hire Mason as supervisor and that he be empowered to hire the music teachers for the different schools in the city.

In Texas, the first record of music taught as a regular branch of the curriculum was at Galveston in 1847, followed

by San Antonio in 1853 (24, p. 180). Both of these cities had large German populations, which carried on music education as a matter of tradition. An article in the Handbook of Texas contends that, with the exception of these German communities, no particular progress was made in teaching music in Texas schools until the introduction of the phonograph in the first decade of the 1900's and the radio in the early 1920's (27, Vol. 1, p. 252).

In 1886, the Texas Music Teachers' Association was organized in Austin with seventy-six members. It was made up mostly of piano teachers and a few teachers allied with private schools. There is no indication that the group served the needs of public school music teachers, whose number was quite small at the time. Abilene fell in line with national and state trends in that there was little or no music taught at public expense before 1900, and the isolated cases dealt with vocal music in the lower grades of school (24, p. 84).

#### Brief History of Abilene Public Schools

The first school session in Abilene was probably held in a tent many weeks before the canvas community officially became a town in March, 1881 (11, p. 40). These informal tent schools most likely did not meet for a full day, but rather touched lightly on the "three R's" as time permitted

and as teachers were available. There were probably several of these impromptu academic sessions scattered over Abilene.

A small frame school house was constructed in May or June, 1881, at North Third and Cedar Streets (5, September 3, 1883, p. 1). J. Stoddard Johnson, one of the founders and promoters of early Abilene, printed a broadside in August, 1881, which told, among other things, of concerned Abilenians subscribing \$600 for the school building. The first teacher, Miss Bell Clark, had twelve prospective scholars in the first school session (11, p. 42). The school building also served as a meeting house and housed worship services for several congregations until they could build their own structures (26, January 7, 1882, p. 1).

Later in the 1881-1882 school year another school building was constructed on the south side of the T & P Railroad. This building stood at 541 Chestnut, where the Salvation Army building now stands (11, p. 42).

D. B. Corley, an early day Taylor County Judge and first Mayor of Abilene, shed some light on the operation of the schools of Abilene before 1885 when he reminisced in 1891 about the schools ten years before (25, August 7, 1891, p. 8). Because the town was short on money, the town council asked Mayor Corley to serve as Superintendent of Schools along with his other duties. He would visit each of the schools daily and assist in "organizing and

establishing order," and stay until he felt things were going smoothly.

The conditions were extremely harsh in those days, and space was at a premium. Naomi Kincaid, quoting from a September, 1883, Abilene Reporter (now lost), stated that the enrollment for the 1883 school year was over three hundred students (13, p. 107), with more arriving daily with immigrant families.

In Judge Corley's article, he remembered the two Southside teachers, Mrs. McCavett and Miss Meta Young, stating that it was impossible to teach 185 students in two rooms. Judge Corley stated that the two ladies would be regarded highly and paid promptly just to "herd" the students until the problem could be remedied (25, August 7, 1891, p. 8).

In 1885 J. H. Cole was selected by the city council to serve as superintendent of schools (25, July 3, 1885, p. 5), and according to the News of August 28, 1885, Cole then hired Walter H. Savage as principal of the North School and George W. Roach as principal of the South School (25, August 28, 1885, p. 1).

The early schools of Abilene were without a high school section. Until 1886 grades one through eight made up the entire school system. The minimum age was eight and the maximum age sixteen (25, March 4, 1887, p. 4). If the



child lived in the city of Abilene, tuition was free, but others had to pay tuition. By 1888 this tuition was \$1.50 per month for first grade, \$2.00 for second and third grades, \$2.50 for fourth and fifth grades, \$3.00 for sixth and seventh grades, and \$4.00 for eighth, ninth and tenth grades (25, August 3, 1888, p. 1).

In 1886 a high school department was created with the addition of a ninth grade class (25, March 4, 1887, p. 4). This extra grade, coupled with increased enrollment, began to tax severely the limited space available in the two small buildings. In 1887 another grade was added to "meet the standards of the University High Schools of the state" (25, August 12, 1887, p. 1).

With enrollment too much for the two locations, the city council rented a warehouse from B. J. Riney on South First and Sycamore and authorized the necessary repairs to the building (25, August 26, 1887, p. 5). Abilene's first separate high school building was born out of what had been a storage building. Students nicknamed the school the "beer and ice seminary" because of the goods that had been formerly stored there (11, p. 42). This building housed grades seven through ten, while the two other buildings contained students from grades one through six, with three teachers in each building (25, December 16, 1887, p. 1).

The closing exercises of the school years of 1886, 1887, and 1888, were held at the Maltbie Opera House on Pine Street. In 1888, Abilene's first high school graduates received their diplomas for completing ten grades of school and satisfactorily writing their examinations (25, May 4, 1888, p. 4). These graduates read original essays on the program, which was liberally sprinkled with musical selections and recitations by the other students (25, May 11, 1888, p. 1).

The following September, 1888, found the high school department once again housed in the "south room" of the Northside building. Miss Quay Minter, the young lady who had graduated from the tenth grade only four months earlier, was announced as a teacher for the first, second, and third grades in the building (25, August 31, 1888, p. 1).

The Taylor County News listed only the last names of several other young school teachers for the 1888-1889 school year. A Miss Cole taught fourth and fifth grades at the Northside School, and Misses Briscoe and Anderson taught the same grades at the Southside School. Principal of Northside was G. W. Roach, who also taught the high school grades. Roach's wife taught sixth and seventh grades at the Southside location. The graduation exercises were held in the high school room because the opera house on Pine Street had been closed a few months earlier (25, May 24, 1889, p. 4).

In the Winter of 1888-1889 plans were laid and money pledged for a new brick school building (25, November 30, 1888, p. 4). On May 2, 1889, a contract was let to P. A. Williams to erect a two and one-half story building on the corner of South First and Peach at a cost of \$8,800 (12, p. 136).

In late January of 1890, most of the students moved to the new building after having spent another four months in extremely crowded conditions, with well over four hundred students in two small buildings (5, December 13, 1889, p. 8). Abilene citizens were proud of the ten room, white brick building, and they crowded into the building on the evening of January 31, 1890, to witness the official opening of the school (5, February 7, 1890, p. 4). (See Figure 1, p. 45.)

The city school board adopted a list of books to be used in the classroom, but the students had to buy the books from one of the local merchants who supplied them at retail prices (25, August 12, 1887, p. 1).

Cole resigned as superintendent in 1889 and principal Roach was selected to succeed him for the 1889-1890 school year. Enrollment for 1889 stood at 537 and by 1891 the enrollment was 730 (11, p. 137). The 1890 graduation exercises were held in the Club Rooms, which were sometimes referred to as the "opera house" (5, June 6, 1890, p. 5).

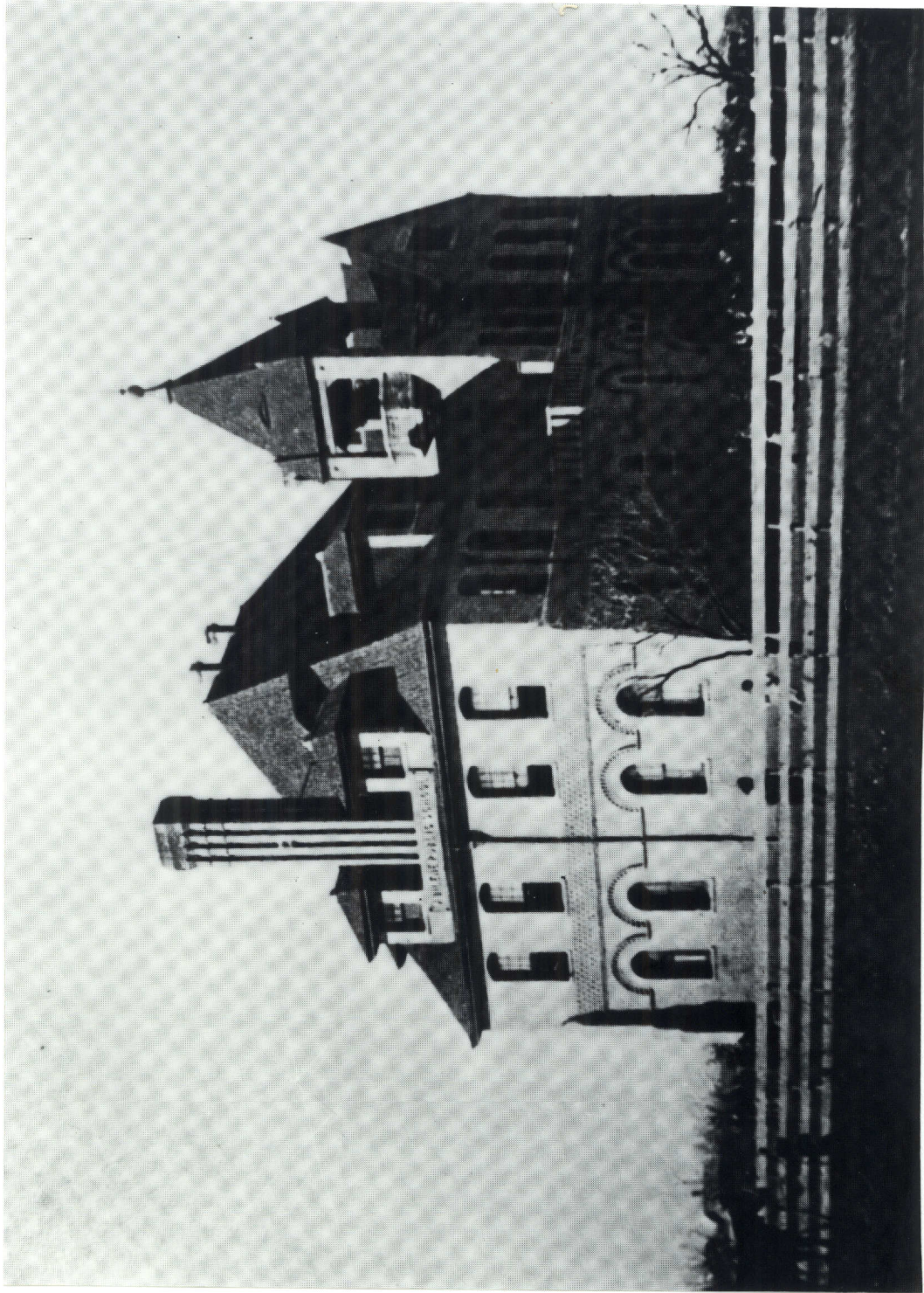


Fig. 1--Constructed in 1889, Abilene's first brick school building

The 1891 end of school ceremonies took place in still another room called "Armory Hall," a meeting place for the Abilene Light Infantry (5, May 15, 1891, p. 4). No class graduated in 1891 because another grade was added to the course of study that year. All students finishing the tenth grade were given certificates of proficiency and some returned to graduate the following year (5, May 22, 1891, p. 1).

Various fund-raising entertainments were held to raise funds for the school library, founded when the students moved into the new building. Citizens were also urged to donate books to the collection (5, December 28, 1889, p. 8).

In 1892 a new and more nearly permanent opera house was constructed in Abilene. In May of that year, graduation ceremonies took place in this new building on the corner of South First and Chestnut Streets. Only five students graduated in the first class with the eleven grade course of study, and it was a grand affair. The Reporter of June 17, 1892 carried a full description of the graduation ceremonies as well as the afternoon exhibitions in the various school rooms (5, June 17, 1892, p. 1).

There were no significant changes in the school system until 1897, when Roach resigned as superintendent and was succeeded by F. W. Chatfield (25, May 14, 1897, p. 4). The schools continued to use the Chestnut opera house or Armory Hall for graduation exercises and entertainments. Various

literary and social clubs were organized in the school before 1900.

Until 1900 nine teachers were used in the high school building (this included some grammar school teachers), and five teachers were used in the primary schools. At the close of the 1890's four buildings were being used: the one central brick for high school and grammar schools, two wooden buildings for primary students, and one wooden building for black students.

In the early years of Abilene the city did not furnish black children any facilities for education. There were eleven blacks of school age in Abilene in 1885 (25, June 12, 1885, p. 5). This number had increased to fifteen by May of 1887 (25, May 27, 1887, p. 7).

It was rare that the activities of the black schools were reported. In the December 12, 1890, issue of the News, a report was found regarding the "closing of the colored school," which was held at the Baptist Church. The article gives a full list of the songs, recitations, and addresses. At that time there was only one teacher in the black school, teaching all grades (5, September 18, 1896, p. 3).

The only other reference to black education in Abilene before the turn of the century was in 1894, when it was announced, "The pupils of the colored school will give an

exhibition and concert in Armory Hall on May 25," 1894 (5, May 25, 1894, p. 5).

In 1903, a contract was let for the construction of two brick elementary schools (12, p. 137). In 1904 physical culture was added to the high school courses for those who were interested. The class met for one hour beginning at 3:30 each afternoon (3, September 7, 1904, p. 3).

In the Fall of 1907, German was added to the curriculum. It was to serve as alternative to Latin (3, September 2, 1907, p. 1). Another new policy that was put into effect in 1907 was one which dictated that promotion to another level was done by subjects and not by grades as had been the policy in the past (3, October 15, 1907, p. 1). The projected enrollment for the 1907-1908 school year for the city schools was 1500, with twenty-eight teachers (1, p. 185).

Just before the 1908 fall term began, Superintendent C. E. Evans resigned to take a position in Austin as General Agent of the Conference on Education (3, August 7, 1908, p. 8). A few days later the school board met and elected W. J. Clay as superintendent. Clay was a school official in Dublin, Texas, before coming to Abilene. He was a brother-in-law of a former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Abilene (3, August 20, 1908, p. 5).

As early as 1907, the need was felt for additional space. The high school building was only seventeen years



old, not in poor enough condition to be condemned, but also not large enough for the rapidly increasing enrollment. The average attendance in each room was fifty, a situation that was creating low teacher morale and discipline problems (3, April 5, 1907, p. 3).

In 1908 there were three brick school buildings in Abilene: North Ward, South Ward, and Central Ward. The 1907 city directory listed a fourth building, "one neat comfortable, wooden building for colored pupils" (1, p. 185). The need for an additional building for the upper grades caused school officials to order a bond election. In early 1909 the \$40,000 bond issue passed and contracts were let to build the second permanent high school structure in the city's history (3, April 27, 1909, p. 1).

J. H. Burnett was elected to the office of superintendent in September of 1909 (3, September 14, 1909, p. 1). Construction began on the new high school on August 6, and officials predicted the school would be ready for occupancy on January 15, 1910 (3, October 11, 1909, p. 5). Students used the building for the first time in early March. The building had a spacious auditorium which measured sixty-two feet square. Sixth graders, seventh graders, and high school students used the new building, and elementary students used most of the old high school building. The



top floor of the old building was fitted up for use as a girls' gymnasium (3, March 4, 1910, p. 7).

Sports became increasingly popular in the school in the early 1900's. The school fielded baseball, football, and basketball teams before 1911. Like music classes, the teams met after school and received no funds from the school to finance their trips to other cities (3, November 8, 1910, p. 2). R. B. Curry, science teacher for the high school was the coach of all athletic teams. He also directed plays performed at the school. In October of 1911 he directed "College Chums," and turned the proceeds of the play over to the school athletic fund (3, October 22, 1911, p. 19).

#### Music in the Abilene Public Schools

Like other schools in the United States, Abilene schools included music in the regular activities of the school day years before it was officially adopted into the curriculum of the schools. The early teachers relied on their own creativity and made musical training available to the students in their care, often at their own expense.

To these early teachers, one of the biggest problems was trying to cope with the age differences in the classroom, since many children were held back because of failure to pass the yearly examinations. This problem was compounded by the fact that a single teacher generally had two or three grades in the same room.

One of the first teachers to be recognized as using music on a regular basis was W. H. Savage. He was very distinctive in appearance, with a long gray beard, and often directed the children in the Northside School in early day school concerts (12, p. 133). He later served as principal of the school under superintendent J. H. Cole (25, August 28, 1885, p. 5).

School closing exercises were held in the school rooms in the early years, and as usual, these functions included several musical selections, recitations, and other presentations. After the opera house on Pine Street was built in 1885, the exercises were held there. The school closing took up most of the first week of May, 1886. The final "grand exhibition" was held at the new opera house on Friday, May 6 (25, May 7, 1886, p. 5).

On May 5, 1887, the closing exercises for the school lasted all day in the opera house. This program was typical for the exercises that ended the school year. Containing a large amount of material, it must have lasted until a very late hour. The May 13, 1887, issue of the Taylor County News listed the entire program as it was rendered in the Maltbie Opera House. (See Appendix A)

In spite of the overcrowded facilities, and the fact that the high school was now meeting in a renovated warehouse that had been a storage place for ice and beer,

1887-1888 was to be a banner year for the high school. Having just added the ninth and tenth year, Abilene had its first high school graduation, with six graduates. The graduates played an important part in the lengthy graduation ceremony. (See Appendix A)

The 1888-1889 school year found the high school department back in the Northside building in what must have been unbearable conditions. The graduation ceremonies took place in the Northside building in May of 1889. The Maltbie Opera House had closed several month earlier as a public meeting center, and the lack of a piano and adequate space must have been a factor in the lack of musical selections for the exercises (25, May 24, 1889, p. 4).

On January 31, 1890, a new brick school building, often referred to as the "college" was formally opened with a full evening of songs, recitations, and original compositions in all the rooms. Most of the 450 plus students moved into the new white brick structure, leaving only two sections of first and second graders in the old frame buildings.

In February of 1890 a new organ was purchased from Alcott and Maynor of Dallas (5, February 14, 1890, p. 5). The company gave the school a twenty-five dollar discount off the ninety-five dollar list price. In May of 1890 music education in Abilene received a tremendous boost when a rented machine was placed in the small library of the new building.

There is now in the public school library room one of the greatest wonders of the nineteenth century. It is one of Edison's phonographs, and is a source of great interest and profit. It reproduces anything talked, sung or whistled into it with perfect distinctness. It also reproduces a tune from any musical instrument. The phonograph is a pretty demonstration of the wave theory of sound. The school is indebted to Mr. Marx for the use of this instrument . . . . (5, May 9, 1890, p. 8).

Music was dominant at practically every ceremony, exercise, celebration, or fund raising endeavor for the schools. The 1890 graduation ceremony was held at the Club Rooms in May of that year (5, June 3, 1890, p. 5), and the program was liberally sprinkled with musical selections. An 1891 San Jacinto Day program at the high school building included several musical selections.

Chorus-Hail Columbia  
 Recitation-Seventh Grade  
 Oration-Milo Shackelford  
 Recitation-Miss Flora Banks  
 Concert Recital-Junior Class  
 Song-Our Beautiful Country  
 Address-General Sayles (25, April 10, 1891, p. 5)

The Reporter of May 15, 1891, listed the program of the 1891 school closing ceremonies. No class graduated that year because of the addition of the eleventh grade to the course of study. The program included many instrumental and vocal selections interspersed with recitations and speeches. (See Appendix A) A notable feature of this program is the fact that not all the performers were students of the school. Many of the names listed were adults,

businessmen, or housewives. This graduation, like others, also served as a community entertainment.

An excellent example of the music used in the classroom during the terms of school is found in a report in the Spring of 1892. The writer stated that the first grade teacher, Miss Bettie McConochie, "makes things humm [sic] literally. She is training her pupils in vocal music and voice culture - Jews-harps and hand organs later" (5, April 29, 1892, p. 5).

In June of 1892 the first graduation of the eleven grade system took place, and the fact that it was in the new opera house on Chestnut Street made it an even more auspicious occasion. This was the tenth full year of existence of the public schools. The examinations were held at the school buildings beginning on Monday, June 6, 1892, and continued all week (5, June 17, 1892, p. 1).

On Friday afternoon, June 10, an exhibition was given in all the classrooms and that night an entertainment was given at the opera house. Songs had been prepared and were sung for the visitors at the afternoon exhibition. Many musical selections were performed by both students and adults at the entertainment that evening.

Many benefit performances for the public schools were staged by students and adults. Typical of these performances are the school library concert in December of 1889

by the Abilene band and other musicians in the community (25, December 20, 1889, p. 5). Other benefit activities were held for the school, and music was always used.

Some of the other more notable performances for the benefit of the school were the opera house performance in October of 1893 (25, October 13, 1893, p. 6), and a benefit performance by the Lyceum Society of the school (25, December 15, 1893, p. 8). The Lyceum Society charged twenty-five cents to see the performance, which included a great amount of music interspersed with essays, orations, readings, debates and a closing tableau.

In October of 1896, Mrs. Norris' sixth and seventh grade classes announced a benefit concert to be held in the class room during the school day. The proceeds were used to buy books for the room (5, October 13, 1896, p. 3).

Even alumni meetings turned out to be musical entertainments. Possibly the first ever alumni meeting for Abilene High School graduates took place at the home of Miss Mary Bass in December of 1893 (25, December 22, 1893, p. 4). The program consisted of solos, duets, and recitations. This meeting must have generated alumni interest, because an even bigger alumni concert was held the following year at Armory Hall (5, May 11, 1894, p. 5).

The graduation exercises continued to be an important vehicle for music and entertainments. No information is

available on the subject, but the practices for these and other ceremonies probably took place during the school day while the students and teachers were together.

Toward the end of the 1890's musical activities were expanded in the school, as indicated by the increase in musical selections performed during the various ceremonies and functions of the school. In May of 1897 the Abilene Public Schools hired a new school superintendent, F. W. Chatfield. He and Mrs. Chatfield were fond of music and directed the student body in concerts at the school (25, May 14, 1897, p. 4).

The 1898 graduation ceremonies were expanded to three days, and included eighth and ninth grade exercises the first night, a "beautiful contata" and calisthenics drill the second evening, and graduation exercises the final evening. The final night's ceremonies included many musical selections by both adults and students. Mrs. Cora Young, a local private music teacher, helped in preparing performances for the program (5, May 27, 1898, p. 8). This marks the first known instance in which an outsider assisted in the preparation of a musical performance at the school.

The Chatfield's interest in music manifested itself at the opening of the school year in the Fall of 1898. The opening exercises of the school included a concert arranged by Superintendent Chatfield (25, August 26, 1898, p. 3).

The first twenty years of the public schools of Abilene showed tremendous growth and demonstrated a quickness to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Music was an important part of the life of a student in the Abilene schools, possibly even more so than in modern times. Even though the music courses were not offered as a part of the official course of study, many of the teachers tried to include as much musical instruction as they could with their limited resources and training.

In the early 1900's two new brick school buildings were constructed in Abilene on North Eighth and South Ninth. They were opened in time for the 1903-1904 school term (12, p. 137). The 1904 graduation exercises included several musical selections as part of the commencement program (3, May 28, 1904, p. 4).

The turn of the century brought no new policies regarding music in the schools. Private teachers still kept small music studios near the school building, and students of all ages scattered to their music lessons when the schools dismissed. A few fortunate teachers had students in the school rooms, provided a piano was available (3, September 1, 1910, p. 2).

These private teachers had a great deal of influence on the musical selections performed at the various school functions. Most of the performances by the students at



school gatherings were solo piano and vocal selections. These numbers were no doubt assigned and coached by the private teachers of the city.

In October of 1903 one of the first clubs in the history of the high school was organized. It was called the Abilene High School Literary Society. The group met on a regular basis and listened to readings, studied famous people and enjoyed quite a number of musical selections (3, December 9, 1904, p. 4). The organization had an open meeting on April 21, 1905, at the Lyceum Theatre. The program consisted of several musical selections, two readings, and a debate between two teams of the Society. The musical numbers were performed by a few members of the Society assisted by many adult musicians of the community (3, April 19, 1905, p. 5).

The 1905 commencement of the schools featured a community concert, with solos, duets, quartets, and a "large chorus" of six sopranos, two altos, three tenors, and three basses. The chorus consisted of a mixture of students and adults (3, May 22, 1905, p. 4).

The fact that music was not offered as part of the school activities was challenged by some members of the community. Pressure was applied in various ways to encourage school officials to hire a music specialist. One

of the less subtle was an editorial which probably expressed the thoughts of many in the community.

The problem at present confronting music teachers, pupils, and patrons is the one of music in the public schools. Pupils are going away to college every year so far behind in their music often through no fault of the teacher or pupil, but for lack of time to prepare themselves to enter advanced grades in conservatory departments. Why not elect a music teacher for the high school who has been required to go before a board of examiners and prove herself efficient? This would give pupils time after school hours to practice, and it would also prevent the necessity of being on the street so often going to and coming from music lessons (3, October 12, 1907, p. 6).

At last it was stated publicly. Three months later another article appeared as a news item. It stated that music was being given "much prominent recognition" in the public schools in the North and the East. The story went on to report that "periodical conferences of the musical [sic] supervisors are held for the purpose of making the course given as thorough as possible" (3, January 18, 1908, p. 8). This article appeared in the local Abilene paper nine months after the first Music Supervisors National Conference was held in Keokuk, Iowa, in April of 1907 (7, p. 245).

Soon after this article appeared, another stated,

There is still much talk about the value of music in the public schools by school journals and music educators. Germany owes her musical superiority to the fact of musical training for children given with the public education (3, April 25, 1908, p. 4).

The sudden interest in offering music in the public schools did not have an immediate effect on the school officials of Abilene. As late as 1915, the school board announced that the school system offered credit toward graduation for work done outside of school. The announcement quoted P. P. Claxon, then United States Commissioner of Education. Claxon stated that good music was "necessary, not only for enjoyment and recreation, but also for inspiration and salvation from death in the din and dust of trade." He suggested that music become an "integral part of the education given in the schools of all grades." He also stated that after the basic subjects have been introduced in education, "music has greater value than any other subject taught in the schools" (4, unpagged).

The fact that credit was now being offered was a small victory for the music education activists in Abilene, but the battle had not yet been won. It was not until 1918 that a group of citizens, headed by Mrs. J. B. Heitchew and Mrs. George Minter of the City Federation of Women's Clubs, went before the city school board and requested that a music instructor be employed by the schools. The plan was approved by the board, "provided financial assistance sufficient to justify the expense could be procured by the city" (6, September 5, 1918, book no. 1, p. 89).

Long before a music specialist was hired to teach in the Abilene schools, teachers and administrators found ways to include music activities in the regular class schedule. Herman McDaniel, a young clerk at Hall Music Company, often brought a phonograph to the school to give concerts. McDaniel stated that the principal of the high school was in the music store on a regular basis to listen to the new recordings the store had received. He asked McDaniel one day to bring the machine to the school and give a concert for a high school assembly. Not long after this first presentation, the teachers in the lower grades began to request musical programs. McDaniel said that before too much time had passed almost every room in the school had one of the machines and a few records. He stated that the classes which had the machines had regular listening periods (15).

The music performed at the school functions was generally solo piano or vocal music, with very few performances on other instruments. In the first decade of the 1900's this began to change, with other instruments and larger choruses being used. In December of 1910, a debate was held at the high school between two newly formed clubs, the Athenian Club and the Ciceronian Club. A Review of the event listed the program, which included a prelude by the "orchestra," a violin and cornet duet, a violin duet,

and a performance by the "Glee Club." No instrumentation or size of the groups is indicated (3, December 25, 1910, p. 8).

### Music in Colleges and Universities

As the last decade of the Nineteenth Century began, the city of Abilene was enjoying an economic, educational, and social boom. The effects of the severe drouth of 1886 and 1887 had been overcome and the city was rapidly growing into a thriving community. There was talk of a streetcar system, a new opera house, additional railroads, a man-made lake on Lytle Creek, and among other things, a college.

The little town of Buffalo Gap, just a few miles south (and from whom Abilene had wrested the county seat of government seven years earlier) had a thriving little college, as did Merkel to the west, and Belle Plaine to the east. The citizens of Abilene were fiercely competitive and were eager to catch up with and surpass these smaller communities.

In the latter part of 1889 the Abilene Progressive Committee, an early day version of the Chamber of Commerce, appointed several committees to look into the prospects for future growth of the city in several areas, such as railroads, industry, and higher education. On December 5, 1889 the college committee met at the Abilene National Bank to discuss the building of a college in Abilene. This

committee was made up of some of Abilene's leading citizens who were responsible for promoting the city of Abilene as an ideal location for the establishment of a college (25, December 7, 1889, p. 1).

After much talk about different types of schools being built in Abilene, it was announced on May 10, 1890 that West Texas College would open its doors to students the following September. The announcement listed the faculty and gave credentials for each of them. Professor George M. Collins was to be the vocal and instrumental music teacher. W. E. Dortch was to preside over the college, assisted by two other faculty members (25, May 10, 1890, p. 3). On May 9, a Board of Trustees was selected (25, May 16, 1890, p. 1).

The college was to have separate buildings for male and female students. The building for the males was located on Chestnut Street over a business house, and the department for females was to occupy an old building on the north side of town "once used by the public schools" (25, July 4, 1890, p. 1). This was probably the original public school building on Cedar Street. Since the public schools were now housed in a new brick building on South First Street, rooms in the older building were available for other purposes. Special permission to use the building was given by public school officials.

An advertisement in the July 4, 1890 issue of the Taylor County News stated that the "very best and most perfect instruction in vocal and instrumental music" would be available, and that "three of the very best make of pianos direct from the factory in New York" would be used by the students for "continued practice at no extra charge." Tuition for courses was listed at ten to fifty dollars per term, with vocal music costing twenty-five dollars per term, and instrumental music twenty dollars per term (25, August 15, 1890, p. 3).

The college evidently failed to attain a high enough enrollment to sustain its existence, because the school was not heard from after the advertised opening date of September 2, 1890.

Another college featuring music courses was opening its doors in Abilene in the Fall of 1890, this time a school for girls. In August of 1890, Professor D. C. Limbaugh moved from Weatherford, Texas, to Abilene. He had been teaching in Sims Female Seminary there and had come to Abilene with plans for beginning his own school (5, August 2, 1890, p. 5).

Limbaugh had difficulty finding space for his school before the opening date, so he used his home for the first session on September 15, 1890, with two faculty members and twenty students (25, September 5, 1890, p. 5). He

reported that music and art would soon be added to the curriculum if all went "according to plan" (5, October 3, 1890, p. 5).

A lot was purchased at North Fourth and Grape (12, p. 58), and a frame building thirty-six by thirty-eight feet was constructed. The school opened in the new structure in late August of 1891 (25, August 7, 1891, p. 4).

Miss Kathryn Yeiser was appointed to head the music department of Limbaugh's school. She was a former student of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, had recently taught in a female seminary in Kentucky, and had opened a private studio in Abilene in 1890 (25, August 15, 1890, p. 5).

Enrollment increased slightly the following session and the musical entertainments continued throughout the year. The Limbaugh school presented its closing exercises for the 1891-1892 school year on May 14, 1892. Featured were several original readings and a few musical selections.

1. Piano Duett-Misses Parramore
2. A Scene Near My Native Home-Miss Cora Warren
3. An Imaginary Scene-Miss Elva Easley
4. Life's Work Doing-Miss P. Daugherty
5. An Evening Walk-Miss Susie Parramore
6. L.T.S. Scenes
7. The Adventures of-Miss Lillian Ferguson
8. Duet (Swan)-Misses Yeiser and Swan
9. Comparative Advantages of City and Country  
Life-Miss Lizzie Durant
10. What I Used to Think When a Boy-Nat Boatman
11. Trip to Cataqua [sic] New York-Allen Swan
12. Piano Solo
13. An Imaginary Trip to the Alps Mountains-  
Miss Grace Irvine
14. Piano Solo-Miss Lapowski



15. A Scene Near Cleburne-Miss Janie Chilton
16. Brook Solo
17. Piano Duett [sic]-(Words of Kindness)  
(25, September 1, 1893, p.5)

In addition to the young ladies enrolled in the school, the program listed some young men. The following year the school opened its doors to male students. Enrollment suffered drastically and the school ceased operations during this year. Limbaugh moved to Denton, Texas, and became superintendent of the public schools there (25, June 15, 1893, p. 3).

Both Limbaugh School and West Texas College had opened their schools with a minimum of planning and financial security; thus neither was successful in retaining students. In the Fall of 1890, the same year both of these schools opened, planning was well underway to build a Baptist college in the area.

Other nearby communities, Sweetwater, Colorado City, and Anson, were trying to lure the Sweetwater Baptist Association to their areas to build the college (5, August 8, 19, p. 5). Abilene citizens were also trying to encourage the Association to build in Abilene.

A few citizens backed up their requests with sizeable amounts of cash in their efforts to get the college - later called Simmons College - in Abilene. Along with several others, Henry Sayles and Otto Steffens offered the Association five acres of land and \$10,000 to entice them

to Abilene (25, August 8, 1890, p. 5). The offer was rejected, but the Association did choose Abilene after all. They later accepted property in a new addition called Northpark, two miles due north of the rail station. The Association then advertised for bids to "construct a brick college on Block No. 3 of Northpark Addition" (5, January 21, 1891, p. 1).

College officials combined the 1891 Fourth of July celebration with the laying of the cornerstone for the new college, and in doing so accomplished the most successful public relations effort in the eleven-year history of the city. A grand parade was organized which included the Fourth Regiment Band of Abilene, the Abilene Light Infantry Military Company, Masonic dignitaries on horseback, and hundreds of Abilene citizens on horseback, in carriages, or on foot.

Special trains were run from the East and the West, "swelling the crowd to five or six thousand." The parade formed at 8:30 a.m. on South Third and Chestnut and marched the two miles to the school grounds. The crowd witnessed the cornerstone ceremony which was accompanied by speeches, a noon barbecue, military drills and band music (25, July 10, 1892, p. 1).

Officials of the school promised a fine music department. The first school catalogue announced that the course

of study in music was "designed for beginners as well as for the most advanced students, and is thorough and comprehensive." (See Figure 2, p. 69.) The catalogue described departments in piano, organ, violin, guitar, voice culture and elocution, theory, harmony, composition, and lectures on the history of music. Prospective students were told they would be taught not only to "execute with taste and judgement, but to play at sight the most difficult selections" (19, p. 13).

Tuition for a ten month session of piano or voice instruction was \$50. If both were taken at the same time, the cost was \$35 for each area. Tuition for voice culture was \$10 per ten month session if the singer was in a class with ten or more students (19, p. 17).

The first president of the school, W. C. Friley, demonstrated in the opening ceremonies that he considered music to be an important part of life and education at the college. Aided by two members of his family, he took part in a vocal quintet which was the first number in the exercises. The ceremonies were held in the "main hall" of the new building on September 13, 1892. (See Figure 3, p. 70.)

1. Opening song by Misses Gussie and Willie Friley, Annie Hubbard, Bell O'Neal, and Prof. Friley
2. Hymn, "Jesus Lover of My Soul"
3. Prayer
4. Address by R. T. Hanks (Resident Pastor of Simmons)

First Annual Catalogue

... OF ...

Simmons College,

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ABILENE, TEXAS.

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1892-93.

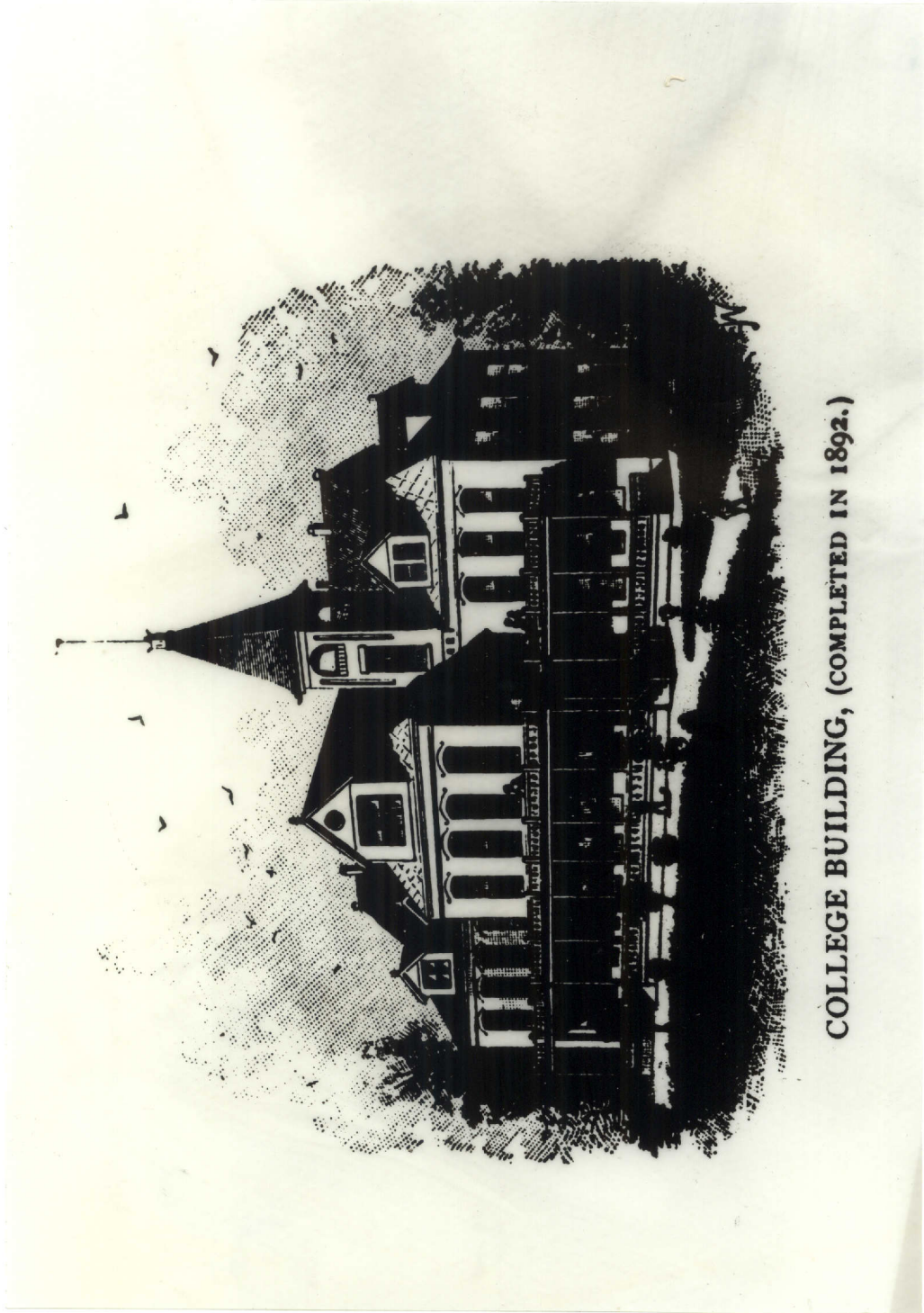
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CHARTERED 1891.

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ABILENE, TEXAS:  
SIDNEY A. SMITH, JOB PRINTER,  
1893.

Fig. 2--Frontispiece of first Simmons College Catalogue, 1892.



COLLEGE BUILDING, (COMPLETED IN 1892.)

Fig. 3--Original Simmons College Building, 1892

5. Music
6. Brief talks by Drs. Smith and Blair
7. Remarks by President of the College, Rev. W. C. Friley
8. "Nearer My God to Thee," sung by the audience (5, September 16, 1892, p. 1)

The catalogue of the first session of Simmons College listed Miss Annie Hubbard as teacher of music and Miss Willie Friley, daughter of the school president, as assistant music teacher (19, p. 4). Miss Hubbard was a relative of a former governor of Texas, Richard B. Hubbard. Officials advertised tuition rates of two to five dollars for primary, junior preparatory, senior preparatory, and collegiate (25, August 26, 1892, p. 5).

For several weeks before the opening of school, the Taylor County News sponsored a promotional scholarship contest. At the close of the contest, won by three young ladies and two young men, a concert was held in the Boatman and Wooldridge Opera House on Chestnut Street for the purpose of awarding the scholarships. The music faculty of Simmons and the Friley family dominated the program.

Miss Hubbard kept her music students busy the first school year with entertainments of various types, especially assisting in benefit performances for the school. Abilene enjoyed the additional cultural and entertainment offerings of the Simmons Music Department. The college became a center for performance of a more refined nature, striving to present more music by European composers. Abilene was

accustomed to listening to music a little more rough hewn than these Simmons students performed.

Over the next few months Abilene was treated with many musical performances by the music classes of Simmons College. Most of these performances were designed as a fund raising effort for the school. These benefits were well attended and supported by the people of Abilene. They gladly paid the fifty cents admission price to help the college and at the same time listen to well rehearsed and carefully rendered selections of piano, vocal, and instrumental music.

On Thursday and Friday, June 15-16, 1893, the first commencement exercises of the school were held in the college hall. The program showcased the music department of the school. Miss Hubbard and the Friley family were involved in most of the musical numbers. The two evenings were occupied with piano solos and duets, vocal solos and ensembles, and even a harp duet (25, June 9, 1893, p. 4).

The entertainments, benefits, and recitals continued throughout the second session of the college. In May of 1894, it was announced that Friley had accepted a pastorate in Bryan, Texas. Annie Hubbard also left the school in the summer of 1893 and was replaced by Miss Ida St. John Lee (5, May 11, 1894, p. 4).

Miss Lee continued with a heavy schedule of performances by the Simmons music classes, but in a different manner. First, she never appeared as a performer on any of the printed recitals or programs, and the number of European composers increased even more under her direction. Piano numbers by Chopin, Beethoven, and Haydn, and vocal selections by Schubert and Verdi were common fare on the programs that she prepared. This caused some spelling problems at times, for example, when the Reporter listed "Tann Houser March" by "Wagoner" (5, December 14, 1894, p. 5).

The 1895 commencement was expanded to four days, with exhibitions by the art and music departments scheduled for Tuesday, June 4. A full recital in the college hall featured Miss Lee in her final performance with the college. She completed one year at the college and left Abilene after the commencement (5, May 24, 1895, p. 4).

The first two "graduates" of the music department of Simmons College were two sisters, Susie and Mary Parramore, youngest daughters of J. H. Parramore, who was a prominent rancher in Texas and Arizona and benefactor of the school. The two girls presented a recital in the college chapel on Friday, May 15, 1896. The report stated that "these two young ladies have completed the course in Piano Technics



that is required to obtain a certificate of proficiency" (5, May 22, 1896, p. 5).

Miss Elizabeth Jones, the third music teacher at the school in four years, was introduced to Abilene in August of 1895. She came from McKinzie, Tennessee, and remained for one and one-half years, leaving in December of 1896. She was replaced quickly by Miss Rosa Baker, who came to Abilene from Carrolton, Kentucky, on December 17, 1896, with her only possession being a handbag. Her luggage had burned when the baggage car of her train went up in smoke (5, December 18, 1896, p. 6).

Miss Baker set immediately to work with her students and began preparing recitals and entertainments. On February 26, 1897, just two months after Miss Baker took over the music department, the music classes gave a recital. (See Figure 4, p. 75.) The program included two chorus numbers, solos, duets, and a vocal sextet (5, February 19, 1897, p. 3).

In early 1897, a newspaper reporter mentioned a rumor about an orchestra that the college music department had begun (5, January 22, 1897, p. 3). The only other reference to this group that can be found is in the December, 1898, issue of the Simmons College Monthly, a folksy little newspaper produced by the college. In an account of one of these entertainments, the Monthly stated that the "orchestra



Fig. 4--Simmons College music class, 1897

furnished excellent music" (23, December, 1898, p. 49). A similar group had performed a few months before and the Monthly had referred to the ensemble as a "group of mandolins and guitars" (23, January, 1898, p. 77).

One of the most significant musical events in early Abilene also benefited Simmons College. Neally Stevens, a pianist of international acclaim, gave a concert at the B & W Opera House on April 1, 1897 (5, March 30, 1897, p. 4). She was no doubt the first major musical performer to appear in Abilene, and some found her program a bit too stiff.

Miss Stevens' concert was fairly well attended and greatly enjoyed by all who had studied music sufficiently to enable them to understand the high grade of music rendered. For the average audience, Miss Stevens would find it much more popular to vary the program so as to take in a few simple numbers (5, April 6, 1897, p. 1).

Miss Stevens had studied in Europe with Liszt, Von Bulow, Moszkowski, Scharwenka, and Kullak. She had concertized in Europe, and upon her return to America had promoted works by American composers (14, p. 153).

After the April 1 concert, Miss Stevens spent almost four weeks in Abilene as a guest of Simmons College, and on April 26 gave a recital in the college chapel. Curiously, she was assisted on the program by several local musicians, one only eight years old, and several others more mature. The program was the social event of the year in Abilene and the college chapel was filled. The report of the concert

stated that Miss Stevens was "greeted with a storm of applause." She performed a Beethoven sonata, a section of compositions by American composers, and a composition "dedicated to her and written especially for her" by Moszkowsky (5, April 30, 1897, p. 3).

Miss Baker left the college in June of 1898, and left the music department with an enviable reputation. During her tenure the music department had grown in numbers and in the quality of performance. She was succeeded by Miss Sallie Hardwicke, who stayed until October, 1899 (5, October 6, 1899, p. 3).

The latter part of the decade saw a slight decline in the enrollment of the school and music department. The college monthly discontinued publication during this time and historians of the school lost a valuable source of information about the cultural activities of the college.

The first eight years of the college's existence showed a high turnover of music teachers. This was probably due to a combination of salary, conditions, and the teacher's schedule. The college was still the only one in Abilene, and it entered the twentieth century with the vigor of youth and the confidence of a school that was making a contribution to the field of music education in West Texas.

The music program at Simmons began to thrive after the turn of the century. The 1902-1903 school catalogue

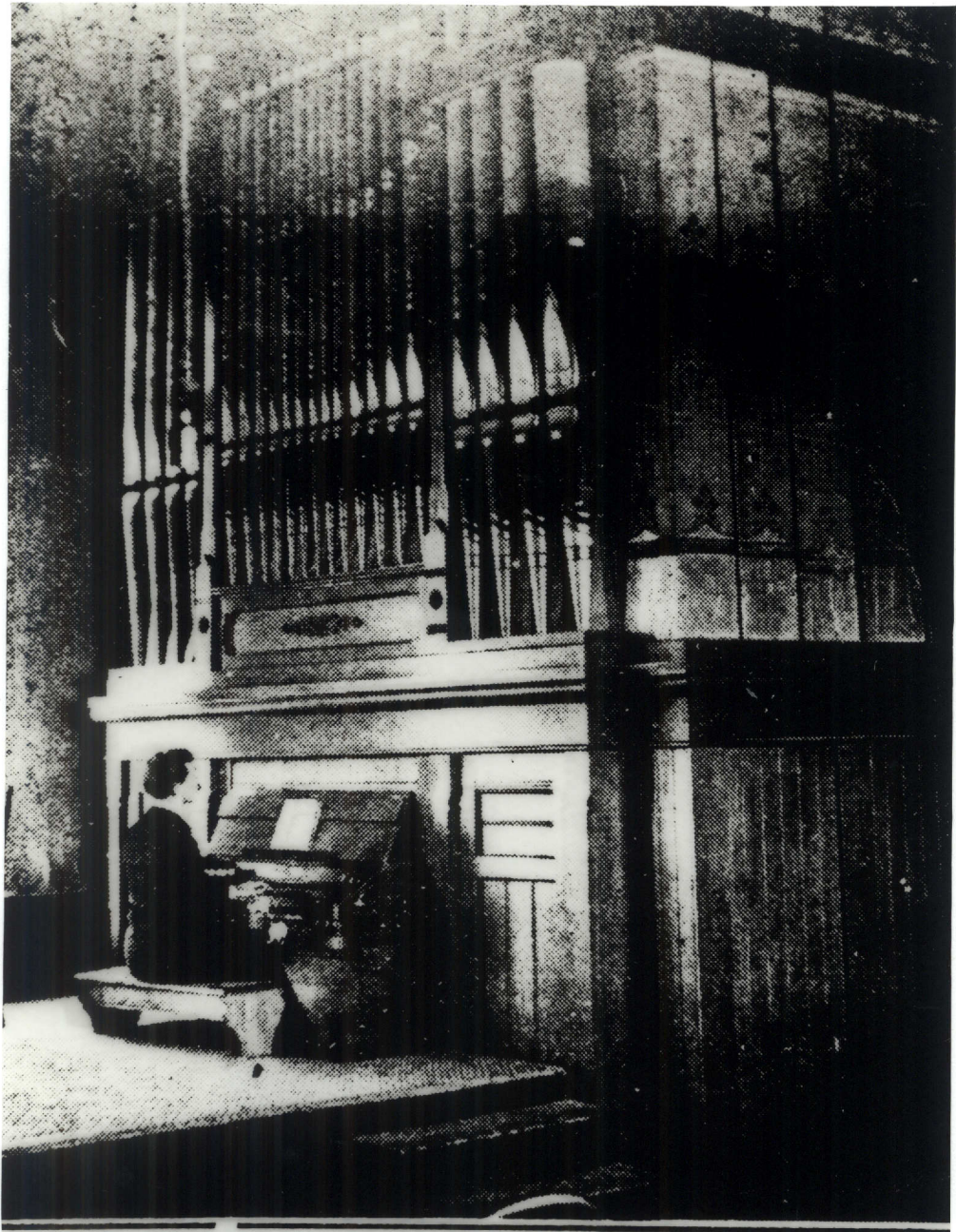
announced several new attitudes about music courses and college credit. Students signing up for music courses could receive credit for the first time in the history of the school. Participation in an ensemble for one year was worth one hour of credit, as was the music theory class and certain applied music courses (20, p. 32).

Professor Charles H. Lewis was responsible for these changes. He joined the Simmons faculty in 1902 after serving as a music teacher for several schools. Before becoming a music teacher, he studied medicine and practiced as a physician for a short while. He "agonized over the tragic gap between existing medical knowledge and the knowledge needed to combat all diseases," and made the decision to give up medical practice and go back into the study of music (16, p. 23).

Lewis built a pipe organ in the Summer of 1903 and performed recitals for the public in the college chapel. (See Figure 5, p. 79.) It was eighteen feet high and had two manuals (16, p. 26). No record is available of the first performance on the instrument, but Lewis gave a series of recitals on the organ, the third of which was the last week of May, 1904 (3, May 26, 1904, p. 3).

The enrollment in the string program in 1904 was quite large, with enough students to have an orchestra. Peter Schwatlo was in charge of the group, scheduling regular





ORGAN IN CHAPEL.

Fig. 5--C. H. Lewis at the Simmons College Chapel Organ.

concerts, either at the college or in the opera house on Chestnut Street. Schwatlo was both a violinist and cellist (3, September 21, 1904, p. 4). In September of 1904, he presented a violin recital at the opera house. He was assisted by soprano Lillian Eubank and pianist Annie Heyck (3, September 20, 1904, p. 2).

The elocution and art teachers often shared recitals and concerts with the music faculty. On one occasion the art teacher, a Mrs. Shaw, made a sketch during one of the selections in a faculty concert. The newspaper review called the innovation "an interesting feature" of the program (3, September 10, 1904, p. 3). The college furnished free transportation to all entertainments at the school. A "hack" bound for Simmons left the fire station on North First Street thirty minutes before every program, carrying anyone who wanted to attend the presentation (3, November 17, 1904, p. 3).

The commencement exercises for 1905 were held in the Lyceum Opera House. Such functions had always been held in the chapel of the college. No reason for the change was given, but it was probably to accommodate the unusually large musical ensembles (3, May 26, 1905, supplement).

During the Fall of 1904, the wife of Peter Schwatlo died, leaving him with a small daughter (3, November 28, 1904, p. 2). A new violin teacher, J. B. Ely, was appointed

to the position of string teacher beginning in September of 1905. An article in an August, 1905, issue of the Abilene Daily Reporter stated that he had come from "Lipesic," [sic] Germany (3, August 26, 1905, p. 1).

At the conclusion of the 1905-1906 school session, C. H. Lewis announced his resignation. He returned to his home because of the health of his parents (16, p. 34). He was to come back to Simmons in 1909, but a replacement was needed for the popular keyboard teacher; thus James W. Taylor was hired in 1906 to teach piano for the school. Miss Sazie Fields was appointed to head up the vocal department (16, p. 34).

In August of 1907, John H. Crabb accepted a position in the music department of the school. He was to teach strings, organ, piano, and direct the orchestra and "brass band." He "took special interest in the organization of his pupils into orchestra and ensemble organizations, meeting them as often as once a week for rehearsals" (3, August 8, 1907, p. 7).

The mention of a band at the college is the first in the newspaper, but as early as 1903 the school catalogue showed a picture of C. H. Lewis standing with a group of students holding band instruments. (See Figure 6, p. 82.) There is no accompanying explanation of the picture (21, p. 25).



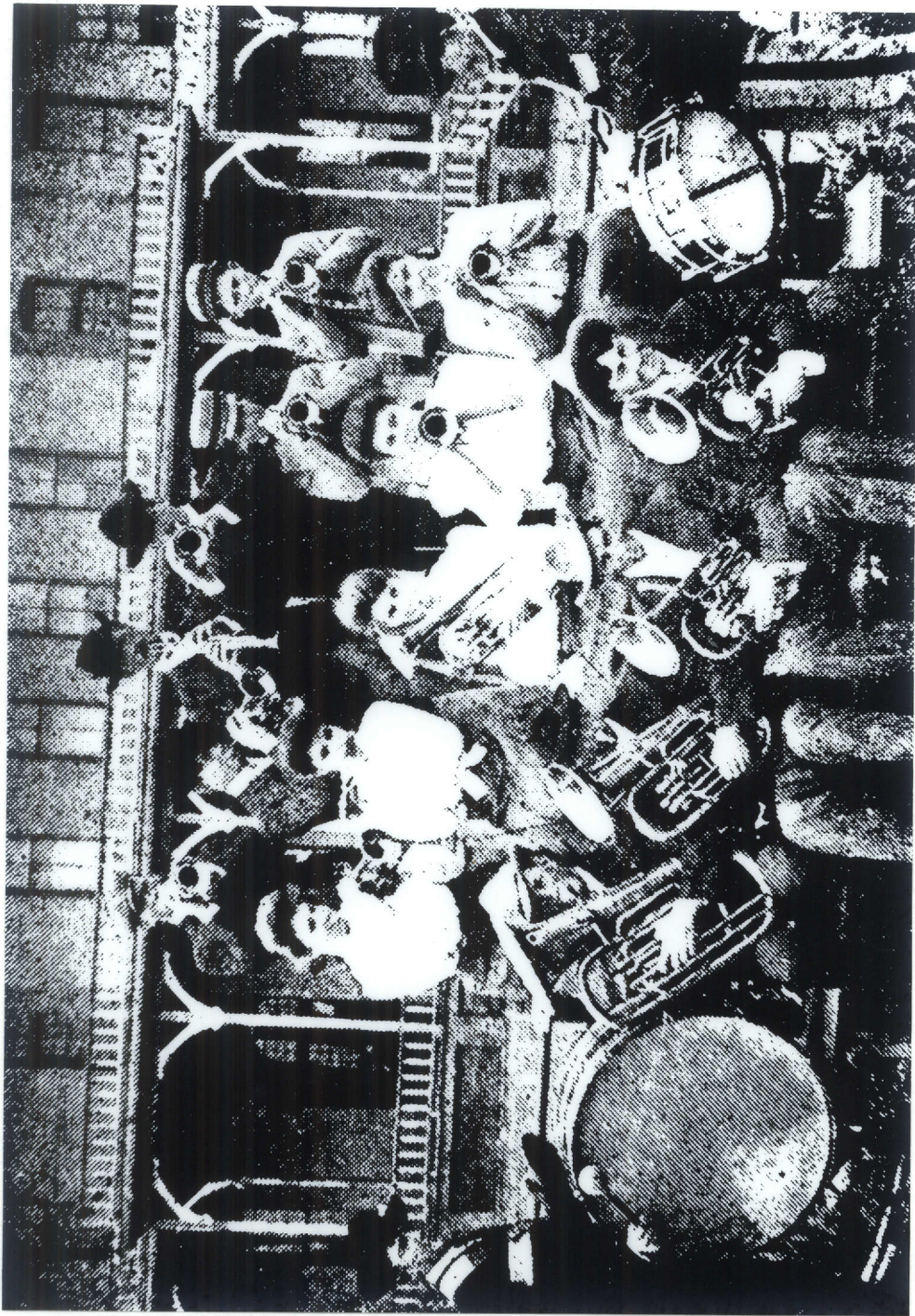


Fig. 6--Simmons College Band, 1903

In October of 1907, Simmons College announced that the Fine Arts Department of the school would present a series of concerts featuring faculty members of the department. The six concerts featured piano selections, concert music, dramatic recitations, and song recitals. The small admission charge for the concerts benefited the music and expression departments (3, October 9, 1907, p. 1).

In the Fall of 1908, more turnover occurred in the department. Edward Fletcher was introduced as piano and organ teacher, Miss Jane Wood as the voice teacher, and Miss Lillian Bell as teacher of strings (3, August 19, 1908, p. 1). (See Figure 7, 8, pp. 84, 85.) The group of music teachers were referred to as the "conservatory faculty" of Simmons College (3, September 11, 1908, p. 7).

For reasons not known, Miss Bell left the school at some point during the 1908-1909 session. Josef Rosenfeld had charge of the string students in the Spring of 1909 (3, April 29, 1909, p. 1). He had come to Abilene from Europe, speaking very little English, but performing quite well on the violin (3, August 15, 1911, p. 8). He worked for the school only one semester, then spent the next two years teaching privately in the city (16, p. 40).

The music faculty and students performed regularly during the school year, but school opening and closing exercises offered special opportunities for musical





Fig. 7--Edward H. Fletcher, Simmons College music teacher, 1909.





Fig. 8--Jane Wood, Simmons College instructor of voice, 1909.

performance. The commencement exercises usually took three or four days, and featured dramatic presentations, vocal and instrumental presentations, and lectures. The commencement exercises of 1911 included a concert by the band and glee club and the performance of an original play entitled "Under Freedom's Flag." One of the performers in the play was a young sophomore thespian named Rupert N. Richardson, who was to become an eminent historian of the Southwest (3, May 17, 1911, p. 5).

The Simmons College Band was mentioned only briefly on two occasions before the group was actually reported to have given a performance. One of the instances was in the Fall of 1907, previously noted, when J. H. Crabb was hired to take charge of the brass band at the school, in addition to his other duties. The other instance was in the Fall of 1905, when it was announced that the Citizens Band of Abilene and the Simmons College Band were to have joint meetings on a weekly basis (3, November 21, 1905, p. 2). Evidently the college musicians performed with the city band at their appearances.

Herman McDaniel, who came to Abilene as a young man in 1910, also stated that the two bands met together fairly regularly and performed together on occasion in 1910 and 1911. He said that the bands would help at each other's performances. According to McDaniel, the number in the band would just about double when they performed together (15).

In the Fall of 1909, when C. H. Lewis returned to Simmons after a three year absence, he took over the band again. After a few months, the local newspaper began to report performances of the group. The first reported performance by the group was a concert on Washington's birthday in February of 1910 (3, February 23, 1910, p. 3). Three months later they were reported to have led the parade of the First Baptist Church's annual Sunday school picnic. The band was small enough to fit in a "wagonette" (3, May 8, 1910, p. 1).

They also performed for the opening day ceremonies of the school in September. The report stated that the band performed "very acceptably and showed that they will be a credit to the school." Miss Carolyn Williams, a new teacher of strings, and Miss Una Peyton Colquitt, voice teacher, also performed solos (3, September 7, 1910).

The band performed for several events during the school year, usually for some benefit concert or fund raising endeavor. The membership was reported as ten musicians in February of 1911 (3, February 19, 1911, p. 7). The next month the band performed at the First Baptist Church to raise money for new hymnals. J. D. Davis, the "leader" of the group (3, March 26, 1911, p. 9), was listed in the 1911-1912 Simmons catalogue as instructor of band. This is the first such listing of a band director on the music faculty

(22, p. 12). Davis probably took over toward the end of the spring semester of 1911, because C. H. Lewis was still in charge of the band as late as March 7, of that year (3, March 7, 1911, p. 3).

On March 14, 1911, the band membership was reportedly up to fourteen. They performed for former President Theodore Roosevelt at the train station as he came through the city. Roosevelt did not leave the train, but did appear at the rear of the car to make a short speech (3, March 14, 1911, p. 1).

One month later the band was reported to have twenty-nine members as they marched in a parade for the Praetorian Convention held in the city in April of 1911 (3, April 18, 1911, p. 1). The same number also met a large group of men of the Knights of Pythias at the depot a few days later. A report stated, "As the train pulled up the Simmons Band struck up 'Dixie' and the people went wild" (3, April 24, 1911, p. 3).

Also in April of 1911, an article appeared that was similar to articles that had been written about the city band for over twenty years. The main topic of the article was a plea for support.

There is nothing that stimulates college life more than a good band, and a good band is one of the best advertisers for a college or a town. The students of Simmons organized a band and after furnishing their own instruments at much expense, they must also furnish their own uniforms or do without, and if they give an

entertainment to try and get some help to pay all this expense very few except the students of the college attend (3, April 20, 1911, p. 3).

For many years, Simmons College was the only successful college in Abilene, and the largest college in the "Abilene Country," as the area was called at the time. Simmons was the leader in cultural and educational affairs, and was regarded in educational circles as one of the leading institutions in the state. Abilene also had a business college and a high school which was affiliated with the Texas University School system.

Most Abilenians evidently thought that these educational institutions were enough for the present, because when A. B. Barret came to Abilene with the intention of establishing another college, he met with little interest at first, with the exception of a small congregation of the Church of Christ. These few members, known as "non progressive christians" because of their stand on the use of instrumental music in worship, pledged their support for the endeavor (18, p. 19).

Barret and Charles Roberson had discussed building a school in West Texas as early as 1902 (18, p. 4). They later decided that the Fall of 1906 would be a good time to begin the school. Church of Christ schools were already in existence at Lockney, Thorp Springs, Denton, and Lingleville, and both Barret and Roberson had received their education



at Georgia-Robertson Christian College at Henderson, Tennessee (18, p. 1).

A split in Churches of Christ over the instrumental music question had weakened these other colleges, presenting an opportunity for a strong school in West Texas. After deciding on Abilene as the site for the school, Barret visited Abilene in December of 1905. He was greeted at the depot by two church members, W. H. Free and A. F. McDonald. He spoke to the congregation of supporters who had agreed to help him, and the group of church members selected a committee of men to work on the project (18, p. 4).

The committee set to work on getting ready for the 1906 opening. A charter was written using the existing charter of Gunter Bible College as a guide. Funds were raised by Barret, Roberson, and members of the committee. More than sixty towns and communities were visited in the Summer of 1906 to raise money to help pay for the single brick building constructed on North First Street (18, p. 10).

Colonel J. W. Childers sold the committee his residence and lot at a price considerably below market value. In consideration of the donation, the committee elected to name the new school Childers Classical Institute (18, p. 8).

The charter was filed with the county clerk and notarized by J. M. Wagstaff on September 10, 1906. The Texas Secretary of State, O. K. Shannon, signed it two days later. The first

board of trustees were A. F. McDonald, W. H. Free, J. H. Denvers, J. P. Sharp, and T. G. Moore (17, Vol. 136, p. 12).

The opening of Childers Classical Institute was inauspicious, especially when compared to the opening of Simmons College fourteen years before. For the laying of the cornerstone of the first building on the Simmons campus, they had enjoyed a huge parade, which included most of the citizens of Abilene and the town band. Thousands had been fed at a barbecue, and politicians had come from all over the state.

Barret was appointed president of the school. His first faculty consisted of James F. Cox, Charles Roberson, Edwin Hoover, Mamie Rattan, Miss Evelyn Carrol, Miss Lucretia Creath, and music teacher Miss Aileen Cotten. Guy Scruggs, in his "History of Abilene Christian College," quotes the first school catalogue as he gives this listing of faculty members for that first year. The catalogue was published during the school year, and it also lists the faculty for the 1907-1908 school year (18, p. 11). (See Figure 9, p. 92.)

Part of that first catalogue has been lost since Scruggs wrote his history. All that remains is the frontispiece and the announcement of the next school year. The catalogue stated that one of the objectives of the new school was to "give boys and girls the mental and moral training as will fit them for duties in life" (8, unpagged).

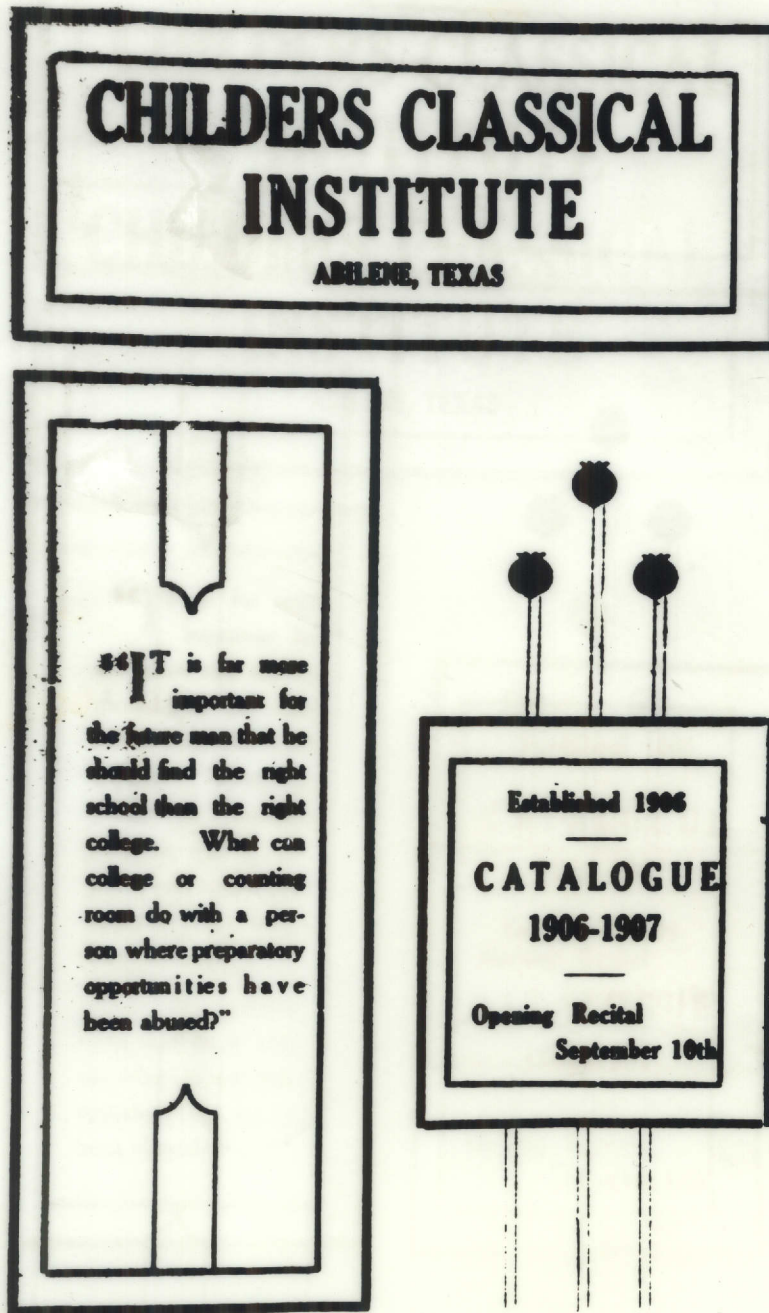


Fig. 9--Frontispiece of first Childers Classical Institute catalogue, 1906.

Spartan conditions existed at the school for the first few years. Water had to be hauled from the property of Ed Hughes, a local hardware dealer, almost a half mile away. During the first two years of the school, the girls wore uniforms which consisted of a full pleated skirt and close fitting jacket made of grey twill, topped off with a small hat of matching color (3, September 1, 1929, p. 2).

The opening assembly of the new school took place on September 11, 1906. About 250 were present, with twenty-five of them being elementary and high school enrollees. No college courses were offered at the school for several years. W. H. Free led the opening song, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," a song which became a traditional opening hymn for the college (18, p. 12). Singing was a daily part of life at the school. O. M. Reynolds, school financial agent, generally led singing in the daily chapel services that first year (18, p. 16).

Aileen Cotten, the first music teacher of the school, came to Abilene from Covington, Tennessee, where she had studied voice at a music conservatory. She also had credentials from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the Memphis Conservatory of Music. A testimonial of her work appeared in the first catalogue.

To Those Interested:

It affords me genuine pleasure to testify to the superior work of Miss Aileen Cotten of Covington, Tennessee, both as a lady and a teacher. She received

her literary training in the best schools in the state and after studying for six years in the conservatory of Mrs. N. C. Brown of Covington, Tennessee, she took a course in the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music at Cincinnati, Ohio, and later in Burritt College at Spencer, Tennessee. She has received much special training in music in the Conservatory at Memphis, Tennessee, under Mrs. E. T. Toby and has made a special study of voice under the instruction of Professor Edward McKenzie at Memphis, Tennessee, one of the finest voice teachers in the South.

Miss Cotten has already made an excellent record as a music teacher and is designed soon to occupy a very high position in her chosen profession. She belongs to one of the best families in this state, and her literary and musical attainments will make her a valuable addition to the faculty of any school. Her womanly graces and social standing will cause her to be highly respected in the religious and social circles of any town or city.

Very sincerely,

Claude J. Bell  
Memphis, Tennessee  
April 19, 1906 (18, p. 165)

W. H. Free was listed as "teacher of sightsinging," even though he was not included in the list of faculty members. (See Figure 10, p. 95.) Evidently he came to the school intermittently to teach the sightsinging lessons. The school catalogue stated that he was a capable teacher, and that those "desiring to study sightsinging will find a rare opportunity under Mr. Free" (18, p. 167).

The number of students had increased to over eighty by the end of the first session. The first commencement was held in late May of 1907. Several musical selections were performed at the exercise, including a vocal solo, "Sing Me to Sleep," by Miss Cotten. After the musical program





Fig. 10--W. H. Free, sightsinging teacher in first session of Childers Classical Institute.

a three act play, "A Case of Suspension," was presented by students and faculty (3, May 20, 1907, p. 1).

The announcement of the opening of the second session stated, "Music and art were not added to the work of the college this year." President Barret stated that the school had affiliated itself instead with the Western School of Music, a private music school located on the second floor of a confectionery store on Pine Street. Barret explained that credit for music courses would be given to students who chose to study at this school. The music school was directed by Ione Kinsolving Bass, a local music teacher who had four music teachers assisting her in the studio, offering instruction in piano, voice, and stringed instruments (3, September 10, 1907, p. 1).

Mrs. Bass and her faculty of four assisted in the opening of the school in early September of 1907. After two hymns by the audience, "Antioch" and "Olivet," the faculty of the music school performed two violin solos, a vocal solo and a piano solo. Barret announced that the students of Childers Classical Institute could receive instruction from the music teachers "if they desired" (3, September 10, 1907, p. 1).

The catalogue of the second session listed sightsinging in the curriculum, even though it was announced that music courses were no longer offered. William Klingman, librarian and keeper of the study hall, was in charge of the

sightsinging classes. (See Figure 11, p. 98.) He was a younger brother of the Dean of the school, George Klingman (8, unpagged).

"Chorus drill" was offered to all students at no charge, but there was a \$9 per session charge for the sightsinging classes, which met thirty minutes daily and were available only to the third and fourth year students of the "high education" (8, unpagged).

The school's second session was much like the first, with the exception of the new football team and a series of entertainments called a "Lyceum Course." The football team did not do well this first season. They played older, more experienced teams, and were usually soundly defeated. Two typical games were played against Simmons College in late October and early November of 1907, both games ending with the same score, 12-0 (3, November 5, 1907, p. 1).

The Lyceum Course featured lectures, concerts, light comedy, and other entertainments. Tommie Clack remembered a boys chorus which performed in the college auditorium. The group did a few numbers, she said, and then performed a spiritual, "Walk All Over God's Heaven." The president of the school stopped the performance, stating that songs like that could not be sung at a Christian school. "The embarrassed boys sang another song, did 'Good Night Ladies,' and left" (10).



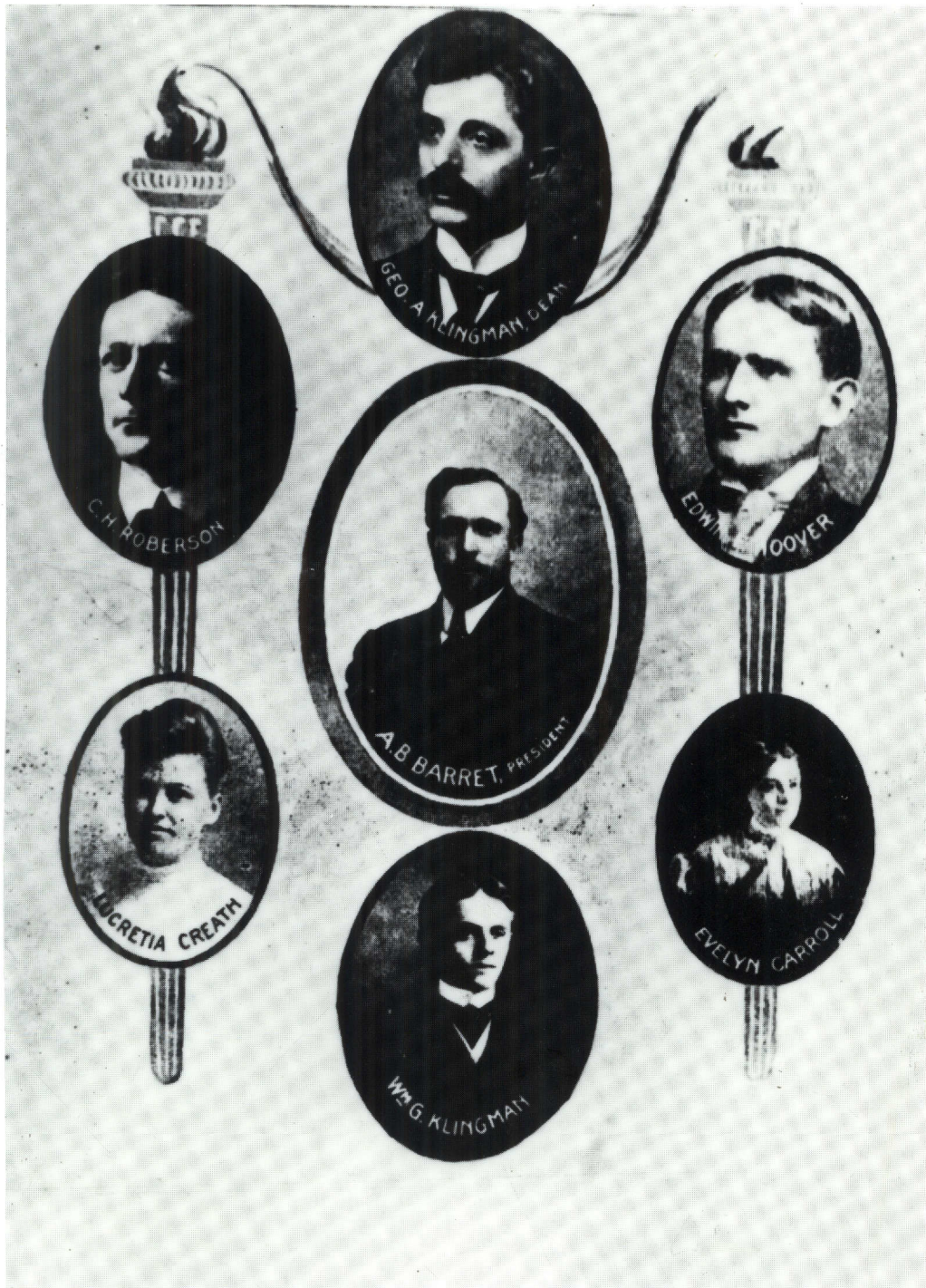


Fig. 11--Faculty for second session of Childers Classical Institute, 1907-1908.

In early 1908, Barret resigned his position of president of the college and accepted a position as president of Southland Christian College, formerly Southwestern Christian College, of Denton, Texas. Barret agreed to finish the term and H. C. Darden, superintendent of schools in Clyde, Texas was hired to head the school (3, March 18, 1908, p. 1). In his capacity as president of the new school, Barret hired three of the strongest faculty members at Childers to go to Denton with him, George Klingman, Edwin Hoover, and Charles Roberson (18, p. 18).

The commencement exercises of the second session consisted of a lecture on Sunday evening, May 10, a debate on Monday evening, a declamation contest on Tuesday evening, and a program by the expression class on Wednesday evening. There were only a few musical selections performed at these functions (3, May 14, 1908, p. 1).

The Fall term of 1908 began with Mrs. Bass and her music faculty again in charge of that branch of instruction at the school. The opening exercises of the third session featured faculty members of the music school, as well as congregational singing. The opening song was "There is Sunshine in My Soul Today," led by Reverend Randall (3, September 9, 1908, p. 1).

The term of Darden as president of the school was not a successful one. He had become a member of the Church of Christ only the previous year, and had little influence on

Church of Christ people in Abilene and the surrounding area (18, p. 23). In February of 1909, a brief article appeared in the local newspaper stating that the trustees of the school were "embarrassed for the want of funds" and that it appeared that there was a "strong chance" that the buildings would be sold "under the hammer." The \$25,000 Club appointed a committee to solicit funds for the school, and in a few days enough was raised to cover the debt (3, February 25, 1909, p. 4).

In May of 1909, Darden resigned as president of the school and was replaced by R. L. Whiteside (18, p. 24). Miss Lucretia Creath, one of the original faculty members, was listed as teacher of music, shorthand, and typewriting. (See Figure 11, p. 98.) The school catalogue stated that she was "taking special training this summer to better equip her for her work." The catalogue further stated that every student should "learn to sing," and that each student would have, "free of charge, sufficient training and instruction to enable him to sing." A charge of one dollar per month was charged for use of a piano (9, unpagged).

Miss Creath was a native of San Angelo, Texas, and had attended the Metropolitan Business College of Dallas. No music credentials were listed in the school catalogue (8, p. 14, 9, unpagged). Her family moved to Abilene soon after

she did, and she was married in the family home on June 30, 1910, to Jennings Blackwell (3, July 3, 1910, p. 2).

The official name of the school was Childers Classical Institute, but as early as 1909, the school was "better known as the Christian College" (3, September 10, 1909, p. 1). The community connected the school with the Christian Church because of the confusion about the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. As late as 1914, the Abilene City Directory listed the church which met in the Childers auditorium under "Christian Churches" (2, p. 56). The term "Christian College" described Childers Classical Institute as being affiliated with the Christian Church just as the term "Baptist College" described Simmons as being connected with the Baptist Church.

The fifth session of 1910-1911 opened September 6, 1910. Three new teachers were introduced, one of whom was Miss Frankie Haynes, music teacher (3, September 6, 1910, p. 1). The music students in her charge performed at various functions throughout the year and were featured in the commencement exercises of 1911 (3, May 18, 1911, p. 1).

Also performing on that commencement program was Miss Lois Rogers, who may have finished the school term for Miss Frankie Haynes. Nothing is known of Miss Haynes after she was announced as music teacher for the 1910-1911 session. Miss Rogers, a local music teacher who was active in music

functions in the city, was elected as music teacher for the 1911-1912 session. An article in September of 1911, introduced her to the community as the new music teacher for Childers Classical Institute. The report stated that she was "well known to the music profession in Abilene," and that she was "well thought of by her former patrons." She had just arrived from her second summer of study in Chicago (3, September 3, 1911, p. 1).

The college trustees elected James F. Cox, one of the first faculty members of the school in 1906, as president of the school for the 1911-1912 term. Miss Rogers and the expression teacher performed several selections at the opening exercises on September 5 (3, September 5, 1911, p. 1). The name of the school had been changed to Abilene Christian Training School, and Cox was listed in the announcement as principal of the school (3, August 13, 1911, p. 13).

The community was no doubt confused about what to call the school. It was founded as Childers Classical Institute, but soon was called Christian College, then Abilene Christian College. Now the newspaper was calling it Abilene Christian Training School (3, August 13, 1911, p. 13). The name of the school was changed in 1920 by school officials to Abilene Christian College. The Charter was officially amended on June 5, 1923 (17, Vol. 136, p. 326).

In the early years of the school's existence it was plagued with financial problems, a situation which was detrimental to the establishment of a sound music department. After almost six years of operation, the school was heavily in debt, had basically the same school plant as it had the first year, and had an enrollment of only thirty-six students (18, p. 26). (See Figure 12, p. 104.) It was many years before the school was on good financial footing. However, of the half dozen christian schools in existence when Childers Classical Institute was founded, it is the only one still in operation today.

#### Music in Private Schools

Many private schools existed in Abilene during the city's first thirty years. Some of these schools dealt exclusively with a particular branch or subject matter, such as writing, bookkeeping, English grammar, or related skills. Many of these private schools were organized with the expressed purpose of providing the students an opportunity to make up some work that they might have missed or failed during the regular school term.

Private schools in Abilene may have been popular for several reasons. Among these reasons were the crowded conditions of the schools, the relatively late starting age of the public schools (many parents wanted their children to have acquired certain skills before they entered public





Fig. 12--First building on Childers Classical Institute campus, 1906



schools at age eight), and the diversity of financial means of the citizens of Abilene. Many were independently wealthy, and many were destitute, coming to the new city in West Texas looking for a "grub stake."

W. W. James, an early private tutor, taught a summer term of "English, classical, and mathematics" at the close of the 1884-1885 school year. The term lasted from May 4 to June 25, and included primary, intermediate, and higher studies. The tuition was \$2, \$3, and \$4 per month, respectively (25, May 1, 1885, p. 5).

Other such schools included Miss Jhule Anderson's "select school" on the south side (25, May 11, 1888, p. 5), and Professor Paul McFadden's summer term for students who had become ill or could not complete the work during the regular term (5, May 3, 1895, p. 5). Both of these teachers had taught in the public school during the previous regular term.

The private schools offering make-up work from the public school terms, naturally did not include the study of music. Many of the other teachers of private schools did have music as a regular part of the course of study. Mrs. M. L. Woodbridge opened a private school on Oak Street for "young ladies and small children" on August 31, 1891 (25, September 11, 1891, p. 5). Also in 1891, Miss Sue Greenleaf announced the opening of a "permanent kindergarten



and primary school" two blocks south of the Palace Hotel (25, August 21, 1891, p. 6).

When the public schools moved into their new brick building in January of 1890, extra rooms were available in the older frame buildings on the North and Southside. Mrs. E. V. Martin opened a primary school in one of the rooms of the Southside school on September 1, 1890 (25, July 25, 1890, p. 3). In September of 1892, Mrs. Henry Montgomery had a school for "the little people" in her home (5, September 9, 1892, p. 5).

These private schools usually included music in the curriculum. They had more freedom to offer courses that would appeal to the parents of the children, and music was one of the most popular courses in the private schools. The parents were also attracted to art, voice culture, and elocution.

The parents and friends of private school students supported the various entertainments and musical productions which naturally came as a result of the many hours of musical practice during school hours. On May 3, 1886, a full house greeted the performance of Miss Whitmore's kindergarten class in the opera house on Pine Street (25, May 7, 1886, p. 5).

One of the most popular private schools in the history of Abilene was a school organized by Mrs. Rosa Strother

Dellis at North Fifth and Grape Streets. The school opened in September, 1890, and continued into the second decade of the 1900's (3, January 20, 1933, p. 1). The Dellis Home School, held in her home, began inauspiciously, but by the third term forty-four students were enrolled (5, September 9, 1892, p. 5). Tuition ranged from \$2 to \$5 per month according to grade. The school accepted all grades and taught "all branches of education" (5, August 28, 1891, p. 5).

Kathryn Yeiser, who also taught at the short-lived Limbaugh Female Seminary, was later in charge of music for the school. The school gave an entertainment which included musical and literary selections on December 23, 1892, featuring Miss Yeiser's pupils in performance (25, December 16, 1892, p. 5).

The Dellis Home School was a strong private institution in Abilene for twenty-five years. The course of study was not expansive, but rather specialized, concentrating on English grammar, practical arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. Music and art were also important to Mrs. Dellis. The school advertised that all subjects received "careful attention" (5, August 28, 1891, p. 5). In 1899, Fannie Strother, a younger sister of Mrs. Dellis, came to the school to teach voice culture and music. Miss Strother assisted Mrs. Dellis for several years (5, August 4, 1899, p. 1).

Rosa Strother Dellis was the daughter of Joseph Strother, a former Baylor University faculty member. She assisted him in teaching when he opened a private school in Waco. She married Dennis Dellis and moved with him to Abilene in 1889 (3, January 20, 1933, p. 5). She taught many of the early families in Abilene, and always tried to include music in the curriculum of the school. Tommie Clack stated that the school was one of the cultural centers of Abilene, and that Mrs. Dellis considered music one of the most important subjects at the school (10).

In September of 1909, Dr. O. H. Cooper, former president of Simmons College, opened a private school for young men. The school met each afternoon except Wednesday and Saturday, and offered accelerated courses in the sciences, math, history, and classic and modern languages. The first school met in a building at North Fourth and Orange Streets with twenty-five pupils in attendance (3, September 1, 1909, p. 1).

The school offered no music courses, but there was always music at opening and closing exercises and special celebrations. The closing exercises in early June of 1910 were held in the Carnegie Library auditorium, assisted by some of the best musicians in Abilene. The musical selections were sprinkled liberally throughout the program. Vocal and instrumental solos, duets, and trios were performed at the event (3, June 4, 1910, p. 1).

The school continued for many years in the city, training young men for adult life. Many of Dr. Cooper's students became leaders in the community in the 1920's. The school also had a baseball team which competed against Simmons College, Childers Classical Institute, and the local high school team (3, October 13, 1910, p. 1). In May of 1911, it was announced that Abilene businessmen had raised \$10,000 for a new building for the school, to be completed at the end of 1911 (3, May 31, 1911, p. 5).

#### Music and Teacher Training

One of the earliest teacher organizations in the Abilene area was the Taylor County Teachers Institute. Organized in the middle 1880's, it consisted of teachers in the Taylor County area, and was also called by other names, including the West Texas Teachers Association, Texas and Pacific Teachers Association, and Taylor County Teacher Association (25, August 7, 1891, p. 5; 5, January 13, 1893, p. 5; 5, December 23, 1898, p. 1). Music was discussed under such topics as "Music in the Schools - To what Extent?" (25, November 20, 1896, p. 4), and "The Advantages of Music in the Public Schools" (5, March 28, 1890, p. 4).

Music was common at the meetings of the institute. The sessions always opened with one or two musical numbers, and then vocal and instrumental selections were interspersed throughout the day. Many times the evening sessions were

devoted wholly to music, making it a concert featuring members of the institute and local musical talents. The group generally met at the high school building, but also used the opera house and other entertainment halls for the evening concerts. Typical of these was the convention of October 26 and 27, 1894. After two days of lectures and light entertainment, a concert was given on Saturday evening at the B & W Opera House.

#### Part I

Instrumental Solo-Miss Dunlap  
 Quartette-Misses Cook, Hyder, Messrs. Graves and  
 Bledsoe  
 Vocal Solo-Miss Lucy Witt  
 Recitation-Miss Laura Cook  
 Violin Solo-Miss Myrta Cook  
 Vocal Solo-Miss Parker

#### Part II

Instrumental Solo-Mrs. Van Ness Lewis  
 Recitation-W.F.D. Batjer  
 Male Quartett-Messrs. Kauffman, Rollins, Boone  
 and Donnell  
 Vocal Solo-Miss Mina Steffins  
 Recitation-Miss Butler  
 Vocal Solo-Miss Lee  
 Scarf Dance Tableau (23, November 9, 1894, p. 1)

Having regular meetings at one of the Taylor County school sites, the institute nearly always featured music. Teachers continued to give reports on various school subjects and to discuss problems and new innovations of teaching. A report given in a 1909 meeting of the group was "The Effects of Good Marching upon Discipline in the Room" (3, December 17, 1907, p. 4).

Another opportunity for teacher training in early Abilene was the Summer Normal. These sessions, usually held in July and August, began in Abilene in July, 1889. This was before the new high school was built, and Abilene was not happy about the "meager facilities" they had to offer the teachers, and were "desirous of establishing a permanent Summer Normal in Abilene (25, May 10, 1890, p. 8).

The first normals, an early version of a teacher's college, concentrated on secondary courses to help teachers review common school subjects and the theory and practice of teaching. They were generally three to four weeks in length, and were conducted throughout the state under the auspices of the State School Superintendent. Visiting teachers boarded with fellow teachers or in rooming houses during their stay in the city.

As in the case of the Taylor County Teachers Institute conventions, music was an important part of the daily routine of the normals. The main difference between the two meetings was the length of stay and depth of treatment of the various topics for discussion. The added length of time spent in the normal allowed for more socializing.

The daily opening exercises included one or two songs, usually performed by the normal students. The lectures and exercises throughout the day were interspersed with an occasional musical number. There were also lectures about some aspect of teaching music in the schools.

Most normal schools in Abilene presented at least one evening concert by students of the school. These concerts were generally free to the public, but occasionally a small charge of fifteen to twenty-five cents was made to help defray expenses for the program.

The Summer Normals continued in Abilene for many years. There were efforts to get a permanent normal located in the city, but state officials located the West Texas Normal in Canyon instead. It later became West Texas State College (3, March 29, 1909, p. 1). In the early 1900's, musical activities in the summer normals decreased. Dr. O. H. Cooper referred to the summer normals as "courting schools," and stated that he had met his wife in one in 1886 (3, June 24, 1907, p. 1).

#### Summary

From the beginning of the city, Abilene citizens were concerned about the education of their children. Before long, two school buildings were used for school classes, town meetings, entertainments and church services. The town mayor also served as superintendent from 1882 to 1885, when a professional educator was hired to run the schools.

The school system included only eight grades until 1886 when a high school department was added. In 1887, a tenth grade was added and in 1891, the eleventh grade was

included. The first high school graduation was in 1888, and 1892 marks the first graduation under the eleven grade system.

In 1890, a new brick high school building was constructed, and in 1903 two brick elementary schools were built. Further crowding resulted in the construction of another high school building, opened in January of 1910.

Even though music was not an official part of the curriculum, practically every school activity included music. Music was also used in the classroom on a regular basis, the amount depending on the teacher's skill in that area. The 1887 closing exercises lasted all day at the Maltbie Opera House on Pine Street, and included solos, duets, quartets, class choruses, and instrumental selections. Every class was featured several times in several musical numbers. After 1890, the high school building had either a piano or an organ, and sometimes both.

After the turn of the century, pressure was exerted on school officials to hire a music specialist. The newspaper editors were active in publishing the letters, articles, and editorials which promulgated music in the schools. School officials agreed, but did not hire a music teacher until 1918.

An institution of higher learning was a long-time dream of many Abilenians, finally culminating with the opening of



a permanent college in September of 1892. Simmons College was treated royally by the townspeople, who solidly supported the fine arts department of the college. The school was responsible for bringing more serious music to the stages and concert halls of the city.

In the early 1900's, a band and orchestra became a regular part of the Simmons Music Department. These were directed by a succession of directors, as there was a high degree of turnover in the music department of the school. The college was later named Hardin-Simmons University.

In September of 1906, another college was founded on the western edge of the city. Childers Classical Institute opened its doors with a small enrollment and one music teacher. Because of the older, more established Simmons College, the city did not seem to take the new school seriously. The music department, like the school, went through many years of struggle before it was firmly established in the city. The school's name was changed to Abilene Christian University and the campus was later moved to the northeast part of the community.

The early private schools of Abilene, like the public schools, featured music regularly in various school functions. The private schools did, however, have a music specialist on the faculty, if only part-time. Music was also a regular part of teachers institutes and Summer Normals.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CULTURAL MUSIC

In 1881, the year Abilene was born, the words "cultural music" probably had several meanings. To many it might have meant a piano rendition of a Steven Foster song, and to a few it might have meant a performance of music by a European composer. In the early 1880's the American public was largely untutored in music appreciation. Concerts by serious soloists and ensembles were generally unattended. Audiences were preoccupied with the personality of the performer, and listeners were more impressed with the size of the group or the trappings of the display rather than the quality of the performance (8, p. 5).

In the early years of Abilene, little time was spent on things of a cultural nature. People were too busy turning the "tent city" into a stable part of the topography of West Texas. Soon after permanent homes were built and meeting places for churches and schools were erected, the citizens had time to deal with the problems of culture-- opera houses, music and music teachers.

Gradually, the cultural level of programs and entertainments in the community were raised, mostly by women. Pianos and organs were brought in and traveling musicians

began to "feel out" the musical tastes of the community. The citizens of Abilene soon grew tired of the vernacular tastes in humor, drama, and music, and began to demand entertainment of a "higher tone."

Literary and amusement groups sprang up over the city, and dramatic groups performed plays with local talent. The establishment of Simmons College produced several literary and music clubs, and helped Abilene lose her "country ways."

#### Entertainment Halls and Opera Houses

As the West Texas frontier gradually dissolved under the footsteps of westward bound immigrants and civilization gained footholds in the sometimes beautiful, sometimes stark land, one of the first issues to be raised was that of culture for these new communities that suddenly dotted the prairie. The question that had to be answered first concerned the type of structure that would showcase the talents of not only the local entertainers and performers, but the performances of the traveling opera companies, minstrel troupes, and other itinerant musicians and performers.

The influence of European theatrical productions, and especially opera, was felt keenly in every new American hamlet that sprang into existence. Oscar Sonneck (13, p. 74) claims the term "opera house" was coined in America and was used in the late 1780's. The term was not unknown in West Texas in the 1800's and was, in fact, used quite frequently.

Colorado City, a small community seventy miles west of Abilene, had a building that was used for traveling shows, and El Paso had five opera houses. Almost every village that sprang up in the area had a similar entertainment hall, including Stephenville, Brownwood, San Angelo, Thurber, and Wichita Falls (11, p. 97). It would be only a matter of time before this bustling, competitive little railroad town would have a hall that would be the cultural, social and political center of the town. Meanwhile, vacant buildings were "fitted up" with makeshift stages, footlights, and a piano. This, combined with a good performance and seasoned with a little imagination by an eager audience, guaranteed transportation to another world.

The first mention of an opera house in Abilene is in an 1884 business directory of the city. The directory, compiled in late September of 1883, mentions in an opening statement that the city "now contains six churches representing as many denominations, three good schools, a steam flouring mill, an opera house capable of seating 600," a fire department, and three banks. The directory then lists the businesses of the city, and includes the "Abilene Opera House" (17, p. 106). The location of the building is not given, and only one other reference to an opera house in Abilene before 1885 can be found. In an August, 1885, issue of a local newspaper, a report stated that a man named James Curtis, a railroad

section hand, raped a small girl. The article said, "He decoyed her into the old opera house and accomplished his hellish purpose" (16, August 28, 1885, p. 5).

Another building that can be documented as having been used for public entertainment in Abilene is referred to as Montgomery Hall, so called because it was "adjoining the Montgomery and Red building" (16, April 3, 1885, p. 5). The building was used for a variety of purposes and was mentioned as late as March, 1889 (16, March 15, 1889, p. 4). Also parlors of Abilene's hotels and the courthouse were frequent gathering places of those citizens who sought amusement. Rooms known as "the Terry building" (4, September 13, 1889, p. 5) and "the Reeves building" (16, March 15, 1889, p. 4) were used occasionally for dances, informal concerts and other entertainments.

Late in 1884, Judge Richard Maltbie (1837-1888) of McKinney, Texas, bought lot 244 on the west side of Pine Street and in a few months began construction on a two story brick building (16, March 20, 1885, p. 5). Maltbie served as District Judge in Collin County, Texas, from 1883 to 1886, and amassed land holdings in North and Central Texas before his death.

The Maltbie Opera House was probably the first brick opera house to be constructed in Abilene. In the May 1, 1885 issue of the Taylor County News an article reported

that the question of the opera house was "taking definite shape," and confidence was expressed in the men who were in charge of the project (16, May 1, 1885, p. 5). Construction was delayed a few days later because of a strike on the part of the construction crew for higher wages (16, May 14, 1885, p. 1).

Edwin Cosby stated the building proper was fifty by one hundred and forty feet and the cost of the structure was \$16,000 (7, p. 56). Another source put the building cost at \$30,000 (16, September 11, 1885, p. 5).

J. W. Archer was hired to build the stage (16, May 29, 1885, p. 5), which was to be twenty-five by fifty feet in dimensions. The main hall was to seat about 300 persons (16, June 19, 1885, p. 5), and the scenery for the stage was "Made in Chicago" (16, July 31, 1885, p. 5). Naomi Kincaid (10, p. 150), quoting the editor of the Illustrated Home, a short-lived newspaper of early Abilene, states that the auditorium would seat 600 persons. The small estimate of 300 is probably true, however, because it does not seem likely that an audience of 600 could be seated in an area that size.

The formal opening of the second-floor theatre was held on Wednesday evening, August 19, 1885. (See Figure 13, p. 122.) The first performance in the hall was "given by the amateurs [sic] group" of Abilene (16, August 21, 1885, p. 5). The newspaper account of the event was of relatively





Fig. 13--On the left, Maltbie Opera House, Pine Street

small size considering the earlier promotion and encouragement by the editor. The first performance on record after the opening was almost six weeks later. The Ladies Aid Society of the Presbyterian Church gave an "entertainment" for the benefit of the church fund assisted by Miss Dixie Crooks of Denison (16, October 2, 1885, p. 5).

Traveling shows began arriving in Abilene to perform at the new hall. An article in the September 25, 1885, issue of the News reported that the entire membership of the Kersands Minstrel Troupe was arrested in Abilene by the sheriff of Colorado City, Texas, in September of 1885. Their performance in Abilene was cancelled and they spent the night in the Abilene jail. They were escorted back to Colorado City the next day and jailed for malicious mischief. Sheriff J. V. Cunningham of Abilene said that there were seventeen of them, and that "it was the largest delegation that had patronized his 'retreat' since he had been in office" (16, September 25, 1885, p. 5). Nothing else was heard of the troupe in the area, but Kersands went on to become a famous minstrel performer (see Chapter VI).

The amateur group of Abilene "held the boards" again on the night of October 2, 1885, in a benefit performance for the Christian Church. The News story stated that the play, "My Brother's Keeper," was "well rendered and well received" (16, October 9, 1885, p. 5). The first traveling

performance in the Maltbie Opera House that can be documented was the "well known and favorite actor, Mr. R. L. Downing, with his company." Downing gave two performances in the hall in early November of 1885. No details were listed in the article (16, November 6, 1885, p. 5).

For the next three years the Maltbie Opera House was the entertainment center of the city. It was the scene of concerts, dances, public gatherings, minstrel shows, and socials. (See Appendix B) The last known performance there was by the Lillian Lewis Troupe in November, 1888 (16, October 19, 1888, p. 5).

In April of 1886, George Walshe moved to Abilene from Galveston and opened a wholesale grocery house in the lower floor of the Maltbie building (16, April 16, 1886, p. 5). He evidently bought or rented the second floor of the building, because he later installed an elevator to "enable him to use the second story to better advantage" (16, January, 1889, p. 5).

A "closing out sale of opera house property" took place in October of 1888. Included in the sale was a concert grand Boardman and Gray piano, a "first class assortment of stage scenery," and many other items "used about an opera house" (16, October 4, 1888, p. 8).

As late as 1891, the Texas State Gazetteer and Business Directory listed the Maltbie Opera House as an active Abilene

business, misspelling the name as "Maltby" (1, p. 9). Other references to the building were in 1895 when J. M. Radford moved his grocery business to the Maltbie structure (16, January 4, 1895, p. 3), and in 1897 when Rollins and Young, dry goods dealers, moved their business to the building (16, May 7, 1897, p. 3). In 1896, the Reporter advertised a dance to be held at the Maltbie Opera House (4, January 3, 1896, p. 5). (See Figure 14, p. 126.)

Even before the closing out sale was announced for the Maltbie building equipment, a new hall was in operation in Abilene. It was located over Sam Lapowski's store on Pine Street (4, August 10, 1888, p. 6). In the first printed reference to the new hall it was called Lapowski Hall, but it was also called "Wylie Hall, over Lapowski's store" (16, April 2, 1889, p. 5).

The hall was used exclusively by local entertainers for over a year after the first mention of its existence. (See Figure 15, p. 127.) In late November, 1889, the Abilene Progressive Committee deemed it necessary that meeting rooms should be provided for the public (4, November 22, 1889, p. 5). This was evidently the result of facility problems which arose during a recent Abilene District Fair.

The space over Lapowski's store was chosen for these rooms, and work was begun. Just three weeks after the committee had made their announcement, a firemen's ball was





Fig. 14--Another view of Maltbie Opera House, center





Fig. 15--On the left, Lapowski Hall, 1895

advertised for the "Club Rooms" (4, December 13, 1889, p. 4). In January of 1890, it was reported that the city band had moved their headquarters to the new Club Rooms (4, January 24, 1890, p. 5).

The hall was used for Abilene's entertainment for the next few months. (See Figure 16, p. 129.) An indication of the permanence of the auditorium was given in an article in the January 2, 1891 edition of the Reporter. It stated that the "old Club Rooms, or Lapowski Hall," would close on January 15, to be used in connection with the rest of the Lapowski business house. In February, it was made known that there would be one more opportunity for the "young folks to have another ball there" (16, February 4, 1891, p. 5). After this last dance in the hall (see Chapter VI for more information about these early dances), and for the second time in three years, an entertainment center of Abilene gave way to commercial enterprise.

Several weeks before the Club Rooms closed their doors to the public, another meeting room was in the planning stages. The Abilene Light Infantry Company, a group of men associated with the state militia, opened their new room "over China Hall on Pine Street" on January 29, 1891. The occasion was the performance of a locally produced operetta (4, January 30, 1891, p. 1). This hall, known as Armory Hall, was not only an armory and meeting place for the



# NEW CLUB ROOMS.

## GRAND OPENING.

Special Engagement of the Celebrated  
**Stuttz New York Theatre Company.**

**20—MEMBERS—20**

Supporting the Texas Favorites,

**Mr. J. STUTTZ,  
E. ALMA STUTTZ,  
LITTLE IVY STUTTZ.**

Three nights and Saturday Matinee  
—Commencing—

**Thursday, Feb. 13,**

On which occasion will be presented the  
grandest of all historical plays

**A CELEBRATED CASE**

—OR THE—

**SOLDIER OF FONTENOY.**

Special Scenery for all plays,

Our own Band and Orchestra.

New, Elegant, Elaborate and Magnificent  
Wardrobe.

Tickets are now on sale at T. R. Polk  
News Stand where seats may be reserved  
without extra charge.

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Fig. 16--Club Rooms opening bill, 1890



military company, but it helped serve Abilene's entertainment needs during the year 1891, when it was the only hall in Abilene suited for this purpose.

Like Lapowski Hall and other small meeting rooms that sprang up around Abilene from time to time, Armory Hall was occasionally referred to as "the opera house." A variety of entertainers, both local and itinerant, used the hall. The first known traveling troupe to entertain in the building was "Professor Anderson and a troupe of specialty artists" on January 26, 1891 (16, January 23, 1891, p. 1). After its opening, Armory Hall kept a busy schedule. This flurry of activity continued until the early months of 1892 when another opera house was opened in Abilene.

Armory Hall did not close after the opening of the new opera house. It remained open and was used primarily for local entertainments and dances. Traveling companies continued to use the hall sporadically. The building was used for three years and was closed when another hall was opened as Armory Hall on January 17, 1894 (16, January 19, 1894, p. 4). This new hall was fitted with a stage and scenery. Reports on the use of the new Armory Hall continued, although not as many as before. As late as January, 1899, a dance was advertised to be held in Armory Hall (16, January 20, 1899, p. 3).

Even though Lapowski Hall and Armory Hall were sometimes called opera houses, Abilene still had been without an opera house since the Maltbie Opera House closed its doors in the final months of 1888. A newspaper comment in early 1890 indicated that interest in building another opera house was high again (4, February 21, 1890, p. 5). In October of that same year, reports stated that "certain people" had taken the question of a new opera house and were seriously considering the prospect (4, October 17, 1890, p. 5).

In January of 1891, a comment was made which stated that Abilene had "sidewalks and electric lights, now for an opera house." It was envisioned that the new building would be a "\$15,000 structure without any fancy inside finish and with plain opera chairs. The finish and other fine appointments could be added from time to time as the company are [sic] able" (4, January 2, 1891, p. 5).

Stock was sold in the opera house during the first few months of 1891, and in June it was announced that Columbus A. Boatman had completed his arrangements to erect five two-story buildings on the corner of South First and Chestnut, "in the place of the frame now standing there" (4, June 19, 1891, p. 1).

In July the contracts were let and, according to architect John M. Archer, quoted from the Journal of Commerce and Building Record, the main building was seventy-five by

one hundred feet, and consisted of six stores and an opera house. Archer stated that the contractor was P.A. Williams (4, March 18, 1892, p. 8).

During the last five months of 1891, the local citizens were kept informed of the progress of the building, referred to as the Boatman building, or the Boatman and Woldridge building. In August the managers, Charles A. Woldridge and O. P. Spaulding, began corresponding with "some of the best traveling companies in order to open their new opera house in grand style" (16, August 21, 1891, p. 5). In October, notice was given that Spaulding and M. P. Kavanaugh would manage the house (4, October 2, 1891, p. 5).

Two original tenants of the business rooms under the opera house were Abilene Candy Works (16, December 4, 1891, p. 5) and Gauorke Grocery (16, January 29, 1892, p. 5). Later, Ike Brown opened a saloon in the building. This would become a problem because the original entrance to the opera house was on Chestnut Street, the same as the saloon, and the ladies who attended events at the opera house were offended when they had to pass directly in front of the saloon. Late in 1894, the problem was remedied by adding another entrance on South First Street (16, November 9, 1894, p. 5).

The stage was finished in late November (4, December 4, 1891, p. 5) and electric lights were installed and turned

on for the first time in December, 1891 (4, December 22, 1891, p. 5). The first event in the building was a firemen's ball and oyster supper on December 22 (4, December 18, 1891, p. 5). This was not the formal opening of the hall because the folding chairs had not been placed in the building yet (4, January 1, 1892, p. 5). Two other events, both dances, were held in the building before the formal opening.

In early February, the building was pronounced "complete and ready for some good theatrical company" (4, February 5, 1892, p. 5). "Griswold's Mammoth Company, consisting of twenty-six persons and traveling in their own Pullman car, officially opened the new building on February 13, 1892, with a performance of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'" (See Figure 17, p. 134.) The troupe carried their own band and orchestra and treated the citizens of Abilene to a street parade the afternoon of the first performance (4, February 14, 1892, p. 5).

The B & W Opera House became the cultural and entertainment center of Abilene and it remained that for many years. (See Figure 18, p. 135.) The room featured such activities as dances, lectures, local dramatic and musical productions, town meetings, political rallies, traveling dramatic and musical shows, school exercises, religious benefits, stereopticon exhibits, and prize fights. (See Appendix C) The first major traveling company to visit the



ANDREWS, Proprietor.

# B AND W OPERA HOUSE

KANANAUGH & WOOLDRIDGE, Managers.

Saturday Evening, Feb. 13  
ONE NIGHT ONLY!

GRISWOLD'S

Mammoth

Company in a Grand and realistic production of the most successful drama ever written

# UNCLE TOMS CABIN!

A Faultless Entertainment by Artists of Ability.

Grand Street Parade—Watch for it.

Reserved Seats on Sale at Tom Polka.

Clean up the sidewalks.

Talk the town cow ordinance over with your neighbor.

The Abilene Dry Goods Company will open a handsome new stock this Spring.

THEY TRAVEL THE ROAD OF NEGOTIATION.

The Signs Projecting Into the Streets and Swinging Across the Sidewalks in the City of Abilene Must Come "Down."

Fig. 17--B & W Opera House opening bill, 1892

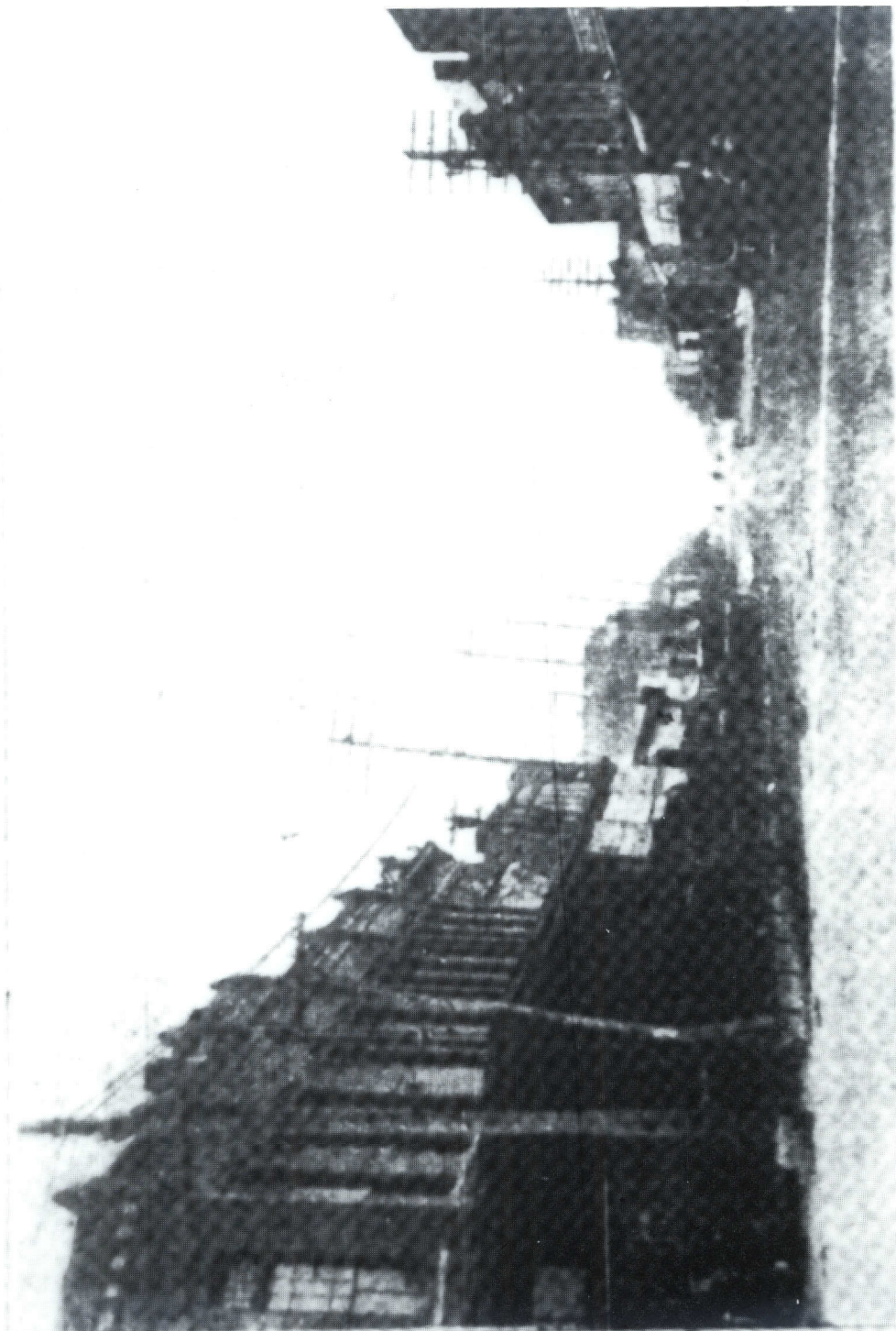


Fig. 18--On the left, B & W Opera House

hall after the grand opening was "the celebrated Stuttz Theatre Company," headed by the well-known actor, J. G. Stuttz. Alma Stuttz, wife of J. G. Stuttz, was one of the headliners of the show, which consisted of twenty performers, including a "superb uniformed band and orchestra and \$5000 worth of wardrobe and scenery" (16, May 27, 1892, p. 5).

For the first season, the majority of events in the new opera house were produced by local talents. Many of these were benefits of some type. One of the more notable of these was a July concert to benefit the military company of Abilene. The program had vocal solos, instrumental solos, recitations and duets. The grand finale was a "sham battle" staged by the men of the company. The Reporter editor stated that the firing of guns during the battle scene "caused a dog to jump out of the window and strike the pavement twenty feet below, without injuring himself, but to the great amusement of those watching him" (4, July 8, 1892, p. 5).

In August, 1892, the management of the opera house promised that the coming season would be "much more active than the previous one" (4, August 10, 1892, p. 5). The statement included a barbed comment to the effect that the citizens of Abilene had not given the traveling shows a very "liberal patronage," and that the companies reported better support in towns one-third the size of Abilene. The scolding was not heeded, because the second season was even more

disappointing than the first. In December of the second season, it was reported that the opera house had been leased (16, December 2, 1892, p. 5), but the terse statement did not reveal to whom or by whom it was rented.

In September of 1893, just as the coming season was approaching, W.F.D. Batjer, a former Shakespearean actor and Mississippi riverboat performer, was introduced as the new manager of the hall, with Eugene Harris assisting (16, September 22, 1893, p. 3). The first season under Batjer's management was extremely busy compared to the first two seasons of the house. There was a marked increase in the number of traveling companies booked into the hall and an increase in local entertainments in the building. Batjer's experience as a traveling showman and his acquaintance with many companies no doubt served him well in carrying out his managerial responsibilities.

In spite of the apparent success of the opera house under Batjer's management, there was still the problem of the people of Abilene not attending the performances of the traveling companies. The companies complained that they did not do well financially when they played Abilene, and the number in attendance did not "do justice to the efforts of those who took part in the program" (4, March 16, 1894, p. 5).

The 1894-1895 season was announced in October of 1894. The season opener got a terrible review after the first



performance (4, October 26, 1894, p. 5). This must have had a negative effect on the attendance for the remaining shows, because the next troupe was cancelled before it arrived in Abilene.

The next group to play Abilene reported that they had enjoyed a better reception in Midland. In true competitive style, the editor of the Reporter suggested to his readers that Abilene must not allow Midland to surpass them in the support of traveling companies.

While Abilene has never been a brag "show" town, she has always managed to hold her own as the best town between Fort Worth and El Paso. Two enterprising gentlemen have fitted up a hall for entertainment purposes in Midland and so far have met with a great deal of encouragement. The Payton Stock Company just closed a week's engagement there and had a larger business there than they did in Abilene. Theatrical companies always go where they can make the most money and we certainly must not allow Midland to get ahead of us (4, November 30, 1894, p. 5).

Once again, the scolding did no good, because the next show to venture into Abilene drew a "miserably small" audience (4, December 21, 1894, p. 5).

The 1894-1896 season of the opera house began November 4, 1895, after the cancellation of a group scheduled for October 24 (4, September 27, 1895, p. 5). The season produced even fewer traveling shows than in previous years. It was made known in the October 9, 1896, issue of the News that the opera house was to be rented, and in that same issue an announcement stated that all dances and entertainments were to be held at the "old Armory Hall." The next

season (the sixth, 1896-1897) saw only one traveling troupe, and the reviewer called it "faulty" (16, February 9, 1897, p. 3).

L. P. Ligon, a confectioner, became manager of the opera house before the 1897-1898 season (16, November 19, 1897, p. 3). A year earlier he had established a business in the first floor of the opera house building (16, October 30, 1896, p. 3). This seventh season was much like the rest, with some of the traveling companies complaining of small crowds and even cancelling after the first show and moving on (4, January 21, 1898, p. 5).

The next season progressed in much the same fashion. In December of 1898, a reviewer complained that "hundreds of people paid seventy-five cents to hear as poor a lot of singers as we have heard" (4, December 9, 1898, p. 3). More complaints were voiced about the poor quality of shows and they were answered with comments that Abilene did not support the traveling companies.

Manager L. P. Ligon's stock of goods was advertised for sale in the February 3, 1899 issue of the Reporter. He moved away from Abilene and W.F.D. Batjer was again announced as the manager of the opera house (4, February 17, 1899, p. 7). Under Batjer's management the number of traveling shows was on the increase. In November, the opera house was called the Lyceum Theatre for the first time (4, November 10,

1899, p. 4). The choice of this more erudite sounding name was no doubt influenced by Batjer, who through his theatrical contacts had again improved the quality of shows and the attendance at the opera house.

In spite of the new name for the entertainment hall, it was still referred to regularly as the opera house, and the shows booked into the hall were basically the same type as had been booked before the turn of the century. The traveling troupes continued to carry musical ensembles even though they were advertised as theatrical troupes.

The Marie Fountain Theatre Company brought with them a band and "operatic orchestra" in early 1904, performing a different play each night of their week-long stay in Abilene. They also presented a vaudeville type show during the first half of each performance, featuring acts like "Al Beasley and Oretto Otto, acrobatic singers and dancers," and "Clyde and his unicycle" (3, April 26, 1904, p. 6). A reviewer stated that the "orchestra was a dream taking into consideration there were only six members" (3, May 5, 1904, p. 2).

After the turn of the century, the Lyceum seasons were seemingly better advertised and were patronized much better than those before 1900. Tickets were sold at the theatre as well as Judson Sides Confectionery on Pine Street. The management booked a regular run of traveling shows which

were interspersed with various local entertainments, lectures, college debates, and secret society meetings.

William Saunderson managed the Lyceum after 1900. He was originally from New York City, having come to Texas twenty years before coming to Abilene as the day operator for the Texas and Pacific Station. He was a good friend of W.F.D. Batjer, former opera house manager. Both Saunderson and Batjer, members of the Elks Club, regularly traveled to Elks conventions together. During these excursions Saunderson often arranged a season of Lyceum bookings (3, July 2, 1911, p. 9).

Willis Norwood owned the opera house building in the early 1900's, along with the dozen store rooms connected with the complex. He had been in the saloon business in Abilene and Baird for a number of years, and sold his last saloon in late 1905, and assured his friends that he would "not likely ever engage in the saloon business again" (3, August 15, 1905, p. 3).

Several acts made regular visits to the city and the members of these troupes were favorites of Abilene entertainment lovers. Among the troupes which made regular stops in the city were the Spooner Dramatic Company, the Stutz Theatre Company, the Columbia Comic Opera Company, and the McDonald Stock Company.

In May of 1907, Saunderson announced that the theatre would be completely refurbished and that major structural changes would be effected in the seating area and the stage. The announcement stated that 338 new theatre seats would be installed for the reserved section and the general section would be enlarged. The main entrance was changed to go "through Miller and Hall's Butcher Shop," and four exits were arranged. A major change was the addition of a "bonnet," a large fly loft over the stage area to increase the height over the stage from fourteen feet to forty feet, to give "all companies room to place all their scenery" (3, May 16, 1907, p. 1). (See Figure 19, p. 143.)

The remodeled theatre opened again September 4, 1907, with the "handsomest red carpet that ever adorned a theatre." Several theatres wanted the honor of opening the 1907-1908 season, but Saunderson chose the Columbia Comic Opera Company, "an old favorite of Abilene." "La Mascotte" was the opening show, which featured a "strong chorus of pretty girls, elegantly costumed." The new seating arrangement was entitled the "dress circle, parquet and balcony" (3, August 28, 1907, p. 1).

The theatre enjoyed several successful seasons after the remodeling. The variety continued in the groups, and Abilene was apparently getting the type of entertainment it wanted. The plays usually featured vaudeville, either between acts or in the first half of the performance.

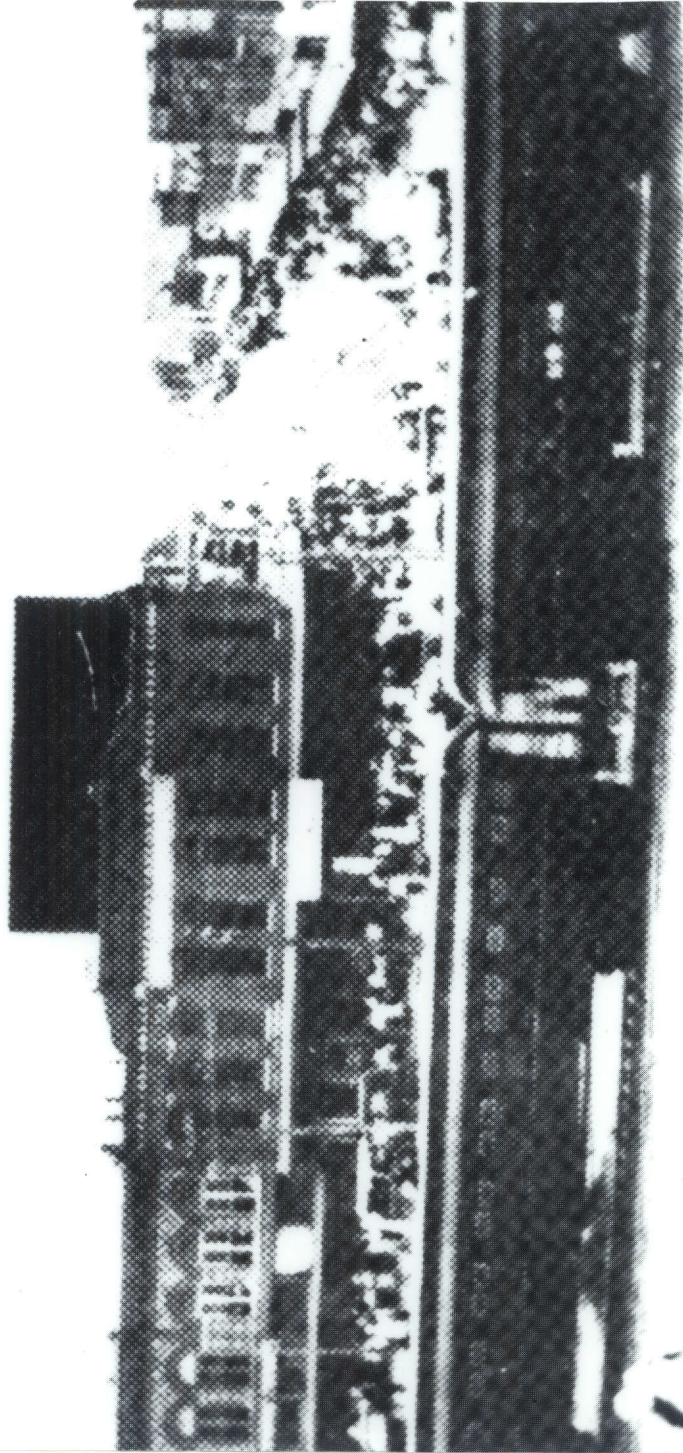


Fig. 19--Lyceum Opera House, fly loft visible in center

"Serious" music was usually not the fare of the traveling troupes. Abilene audiences were provided this type of music by local music teachers, visiting performers, or by Simmons College.

One of the musical highlights of the last few seasons before 1912 included two appearances by Sissiretta Jones (1868-1933), a black operatic singer. (See Figure 20, p. 145.) She appeared with her musical company at the Abilene Lyceum in 1909 and 1910. She was called the "Black Patti," after the famous Italian prima donna Adelina Patti. Miss Jones toured in Europe in 1893, and appeared at the White House by invitation of President Harrison. The Metropolitan Opera Company reportedly approached her about certain roles, but, according to Eileen Southern, "the musical world was not ready to accept black prima donnas." Her company, "Black Patti's Troubadors," were active for seventeen years (14, p. 305).

In February of 1909, Miss Jones' company appeared at the Lyceum in a two-act musical comedy. She was assisted by several "colored comedians and a superb singing company," featuring "plenty of music and lots of girls." She was praised as a singer, but the review of the show stated that there were only two or three in her company who "possessed either the voice or the ability to please anything but the roost [balcony], occupied exclusively by those of the same

# Lyceum Theatre

Matinee and Night, Saturday, Oct. 22nd

## The Black Patti

**Musical Comedy Company**

Presents the Tropical Musical Success

## A Trip to Africa

Headed by Sissieretta Jones, the original Black Patti, and "Jolly" John Larkins, with a great supporting company.

Matinee Prices, 50c and 25c. Night Prices, Dress Circle 75c, Parquet 50c, Balcony 50c and 25c

**STUMBLED OVER OLD FRIEND** what most people will consider a very good 15 cents' worth, indeed.

Fig. 20--Newspaper advertisement for Black Patti, 1909



color" (3, February 9, 1909, p. 8). Her company fared better in the reviews in the October, 1910 appearance (3, October 17, 1910, p. 7).

Another outstanding performer to appear at the Lyceum during this period was Allesandro Liberati and "the world's greatest band." They appeared in Abilene on November 8, 1909, with a fifty piece band and twenty vocalists. One of the soloists was Chavalier Guille, a tenor who had been with Sissieretta Jones for seven years before he joined the Liberati organization. It was a rare treat for Abilene to hear a large band of this quality (3, November 3, 1909, p. 2).

The band had appeared at the State Fair in Dallas the month before and were on a tour of cities in the Southwest. Some of the selections performed by the band were a "duet for grand and petit clarinet" entitled "Grimeo," "William Tell Overture," and the "Star Spangled Banner." The band also played "Dixie," and a report stated that the "applause grew deafening, men shouted, women clapped, and boys whistled." The audience required several encores, and they were "still cheering when the players were gathering up their instruments to depart" (3, November 9, 1909, p. 1).

Still another outstanding performer to appear at the Lyceum was Ellen Beach Yaw. (See Figure 21, p. 147.) She performed a recital in the hall on May 2, 1910, under the

**Monday** 8:30 P. M. **May 2**

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*At Lyceum Theater*

**Ellen Beach Yaw**

**World's Highest Prima Donna Soprano**

ASSISTED BY

**Mr. Jay Plowe, Flutist**

(Late Flutist with the Royal Opera, Berlin)

A N D

**Miss Marguerite De Armond**

**Pianist**

---

---

**In Grand Concert**

---

---

**Auspices Carnegie Library**

**Piano Furnished by May Piano Co.**

Fig. 21--Lyceum appearance of Ellen Beach Yaw, 1910

auspices of Carnegie Library. The appearance was a fund raising project for the library, selling seats for as much as two dollars each, a high admission price in 1910. Miss Yaw reputedly had a four octave range, and was accompanied by two musicians (3, April 24, 1910, p. 6).

Miss Tommie Clack recalled hearing Miss Yaw at the opera house. At this time Miss Clack was a twenty-eight year old school teacher, serving the public schools of Abilene. She stated that the performer was introduced that evening as "Madame Yaw, one of the outstanding sopranos in America." She remembered that the audience was enthralled with "the most beautiful voice I had ever heard, especially when one of the performers played the flute with her, and she harmonized with the instrument" (6).

The opera house was used until 1915 as an entertainment hall, and then was converted into a movie theatre. During the twenty-three years it served as an opera house, the hall showcased a vast array of different types of entertainments and functions. Local performers and traveling troupes trod the boards of the stage during a time when live entertainment was enjoying a peak of popularity.

During the last two years of the nineteenth century, another hall was "fitted up" and used quite frequently for entertainments. It served as a musical entertainment hall as well as a cultural center. As early as 1898, an

organization called the Literary and Library Society was active in the city. Its goal was to provide Abilene with a reading room and a place from which to check out books. A hall was chosen on Pine Street because it had a "good stage with a suitable dressing room" (4, February 10, 1898, p. 4).

An entertainment was given in February of 1898 to benefit the library financially and to gather donated books to start the collection. The program was financially successful and 150 volumes were presented to the society (4, February 18, 1898, p. 4). The society later met with failure and the library holdings passed into the hands of the city Federation of Women's Clubs (4, February 17, 1899, p. 4).

The hall that was used for the library was known as Library Hall and was the scene of dances and various types of entertainment. The hall was used until December of 1899, when it was reported that the owner "went up on the rent," and the library was moved to the Reporter office (4, December 15, 1899, p. 4).

Another entertainment hall opened in Abilene in the early 1900's. It was built by the Elk's Club of Abilene and was used by townspeople for dances and informal entertainments. There is no record of any theatrical performances in the building, and no traveling troupes are known to have used the hall. The local music teachers used Elk's Hall

quite often for presenting their students in recitals. Other small rooms were used from time to time for entertainments, but Elk's Hall was the most popular room of this type (3, June 5, 1905, p. 1).

#### Bands and Orchestras

During the first twenty years of Abilene's existence, one of the most important organizations in the young community was the town band. It was also practically the only contact many of the citizens had with anything of a cultural nature. The existence of the band was not consistent over the years, but it provided music for many functions in the community. (See Appendix D)

Abilene was not alone in this desire for a town band to represent the community in a musical way. In the late 1800's and the early 1900's, band concerts were the country's most popular musical attraction. Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa were household names, touring the country with their bands and leaving behind them a wake of efforts to organize village bands wherever they went. Lesser lights of the band world--Liberati, Innes, Creatore, Brooke, Pryor, and Conway--also helped fan the flames of the town band craze. A band was essential to community pride, usually being supported by merchants and private donations. Other funds came from benefit performances by the band and professional engagements such as fairs and political rallies (8, pp. 17-18).

Abilene's first town band was organized in 1883, and toured the county trying to spark interest in the county seat election. (See Figure 22, p. 152.) A barrel of whiskey was taken along in the wagon to add a little "spice" to the political speeches. "Folks listened to the speeches, and they drank the whiskey, but they still voted for Buffalo Gap," said Will Young, a pioneer Abilenian (10, p. 4). The election was won by Abilene, and it was followed by the expected accusations of vote-buying and ballot-stuffing.

After the election, the band kept an extremely low profile. Nothing was heard of them until March, 1886, when a short sentence in the local column of one of Abilene's weekly newspapers stated that a band had "again been organized, with twelve members" (16, March 5, 1886, p. 5). Four months later the band appeared at a "grand ball" at the opera house along with a "string band" from Dallas and the Buffalo Gap band (16, July 2, 1886, p. 2).

After this appearance by the band, nothing was heard from them again until June of the following year. A notice appeared in the News that a benefit concert for the Christian Ladies Aid Society would be held at the courthouse on the evening of June 21, 1887. The article closed by reporting that "music will be furnished by the Abilene orchestra" (16, June 17, 1887, p. 4). This is the only allusion to an "orchestra" this early in the town's history. It could



Fig. 22--Abilene town band, 1883

possibly have meant the town band, or maybe strings were added to the membership of the band.

Another year passed before the band was mentioned again, and it was another rumor that the band was again reorganizing (16, May 18, 1888, p. 5), no doubt for the district fair that was planned for Abilene in October of 1888. The article stated that if the band failed to "get on its feet," the few musicians might consolidate with the Buffalo Gap band. The paper stated that the "services of Prof. J.S. Million can be had for reasonable terms, and he is perhaps one of the finest and most experienced musicians in this section of the country" (16, May 18, 1888, p. 5).

Whether the consolidation of the two bands took place was never stated, but there was a brass band "in attendance at all times" at the fair (4, October 4, 1888, p. 4). The editor of the paper would no doubt have given more space to the report if the band had been made up of local musicians. The News reported that the Buffalo Gap organization had "closed a contract with the fair committee to play the three days of the fair" (16, September 1888, p. 5).

After several more months of no mention of a band in Abilene, a man named J. H. Lucas came to Abilene in February of 1889 for the purpose of instructing a band (16, February 22, 1889, p. 5). He brought with him on this first visit his young daughter Maude, a fine young cornet player who was destined to help make Abilene's band an award winning group.



Lucas met with the "band boys" on February 21, for the purpose of reorganization (16, February 22, 1889, p. 5). They began a regular practice schedule and laid plans to make the band a financial and musical success. The members placed a rather delicate message in the local page of the News. "We are required to ask the old band members what became of the money they had in the bank, and to inquire still further why it cannot be applied to the purchase of a new set of instruments" (16, April 5, 1889, p. 5). No response is recorded in following issues of the newspaper.

The band continued their practice for a number of weeks with the newspapers reporting good improvement. In the June 28 issue of the News, the band is referred to for the first time as the Abilene Light Infantry Band (16, June 28, 1889, p. 5). The group had aligned themselves with a military company which had been formed in Abilene.

On several occasions during the next few weeks, the band was out on the streets of Abilene showing off their new found skill. They performed at parties, town gatherings, the 1889 Fourth of July celebration; also they gave concerts for their own financial benefit. The newspaper editors, always searching for something to help promote the city, were generous with praise for the band. The Reporter predicted that the city would now have a band composed of her own citizens at the next district fair and it would be "one of which she may well be proud" (4, July 12, 1889, p. 4).

Enjoying a time of high praise and acceptance by the people of Abilene, the band was the center of attention in a city starved for such groups. On Thursday evening, July 11, 1889, at a Grand Trades Display in Lapowski Hall, young ladies dressed themselves up to represent the major businesses in town. In this show, the Abilene Light Infantry Band was honored by Miss Fannie Torrey, who represented the band by dressing in "blue cashmere draped with miniature musical instruments and a treble cleff [sic] of gold braid" (4, July 19, 1889, p. 6).

The band continued practicing regularly. They planned to order new uniforms and looked into the possibility of acquiring new instruments. The first week in August, they traveled the streets of Abilene "discoursing excellent music" in their new band wagon (16, August 9, 1889, p. 5).

Concerts were given throughout the month of August. A short sentence in the August 30 issue of the Reporter stated that the "band boys need new uniforms." The same issue reported that the group planned to give balcony concerts twice a week. The editor suggested that the merchants give fifty cents per week and get "four times the worth of their contribution by hearing a real good concert." The editor went on to say:

The Abilene Light Infantry Band Concert, at Lapowski Hall Wednesday night, was greeted with good attendance. . . .The boys are endeavoring to raise money for their new uniforms and a new set of instruments which they will use here during our next fair. .

instruments which they will use here during our next fair. . . . These will cost between \$900 and \$1000 . . . . The new band is not only a credit to Abilene, but to all West Texas. All who have heard them play are delighted with the progress they have made. . . . Prof. Lucas has made his home here and has identified himself with this section by purchasing land near this city. . . . The Reporter thinks Abilene quite fortunate in securing such a man to direct and manage the band. . . . Delays at this time could cause a failure of either the uniforms or instruments to reach us in time for the fair, so make one more effort today and let the order for both go in by wire today (4, August 30, 1889, p. 5).

The August 30, 1889, issue was full of news of the band. In still another section of the paper was a notice that the band wanted to sell their old uniforms at bargain prices. The order went in for sixteen new uniforms to cost \$300 (16, September 6, 1889, p. 5). New instruments were also ordered at the figure of \$600 (16, September 13, 1889, p. 5).

New music arrived very quickly and the band was hard at work for the upcoming fair. Lucas predicted that he was going to have one of the best bands in the state (16, September 13, 1889, p. 5). A bandstand was erected in the city and ads began appearing in the papers stating that music would be provided for the fair by the "finest cornet band in Texas" (16, September 20, 1889, p. 5).

The new instruments and uniforms arrived shortly. The instruments came in Saturday, September 21, and the band gave a "grand serenading tour Saturday evening and night" (16, September 27, 1889, p. 5). Soon after, the uniforms

arrived and were deemed by the Reporter as being "very becoming and of the latest style" (4, September 27, 1889, p. 4).

They led the parade "playing a lively air" on the first day of the Abilene District Fair in October, 1889. They also sponsored a "Grand Ball" at the courthouse on the last evening of the fair (16, October 4, 1889, p. 4).

The band received a surprise donation from the Abilene Progressive Committee on Wednesday evening, October 9. They were "called out in full force" by the committee and marched to Pine Street. When they arrived, the committee greeted them with a speech by Henry Sayles. The Reporter reproduced the speech in its entirety.

We are glad to have an opportunity to give public expression to our appreciation of you as men and as a band. It has been but a short time since our city was without a band, and it fell upon you gentlemen to unite yourselves that our city might have all the benefits and reap all the prestige that comes from being the home of a good band.

Right well have you performed the self-imposed task, and although your ranks are filled with businessmen, yet in a short period you have found the time out of business hours to become very proficient and now the city can boast of as good a band as can be found anywhere in the state. Good music is absolutely essential both in times of war and in times of peace. Nothing inspires a man on to the accomplishment of deeds of valor so much as music. The commander might as well take away from his regiment of soldiers in a fierce combat of battle their guns as to take away their music. It thrills the soldier to the very heart, and following its inspiration, he goes on to victory or on to honorable death.

Not only has music proven to be powerful in war, but also in peace. Many of you can no doubt recall instances where fair ladies have been won by the music

of their lovers, and those of us who are not capable of making music ourselves can remember well enough how we, in our courting days, envied those who could.

I am directed by the Abilene Progressive Committee to say that your services and sweet music were highly appreciated during the fair just past, and as a slight token of our esteem I am charged with presenting this slight present to you, with the wishes of the Abilene Progressive Committee that the Abilene Light Infantry Band may continue always, and never cease to charm our people with its excellent music (4, October 11, 1889, p. 4).

The president of the band, A. H. Darnell, accepted the \$100 check on behalf of the band and led the band in three cheers for the committee. The band then performed several more numbers for the citizens who had gathered to honor them.

The band had impressed the citizens of Abilene with their rapid improvement and proficiency on their instruments. They promised a series of entertainments over the winter season, the first of which was to be at Blank's Hall Tuesday, November 26. The band was to sponsor the "best local talent in the city" (4, November 22, 1889, p. 5). In spite of the success and the popularity of the band, they still owed quite a sum on their instruments and the entertainments were planned to help get them out of debt.

The band's headquarters and rehearsal room was in a place called the Terry Building on Chestnut Street (16, December 7, 1889, p. 4), sometimes referred to as the band hall. Most of the performances of the band in this period of its history were held in Armory Hall, home of the Abilene Light Infantry.

The entertainments the band sponsored were usually performed with the help of several different styles of musical presentations. Typical of these entertainments was one that was performed in the Terry Building on December 6, 1889. The admission fee for the concert was sixty cents.

Mountain Stream - Overture by Full Band  
 Instrumental Duet - Misses Darnell  
 Vocal Quartette - Messrs. Railey, Posey and Leavell  
 Instrumental Duet - Prof. Lucas and Daughter  
 Instrumental - Miss Torrey  
 Vocal Duet - Mr. and Mrs. Leavell  
 Instrumental Duet - Miss Lucas and Mr. C. A. Heyck Vocal Solo - Mrs. Cockrell  
 Instrumental Solo - Miss Walshe  
 Vocal Solo - Miss Ingram  
 Instrumental Trio - Prof. Lucas and Daughter and Miss Chalkwiler  
 Vocal Solo - Miss Spivey  
 Song and Chorus - "Good Night but not Goodbye"  
 Home Again - by the Band (4, December 7, 1889, p. 4)

The entertainments continued, as well as parades, dances and other benefits. On December 12, a ball was held that netted the band about \$150 (4, December 13, 1889, p. 1). Evidently these performances helped make the band a solvent organization again, because they began to play benefits for other groups, such as the concert in December for the school library fund (4, December 20, 1889, p. 8).

In the first weeks of 1890, the band moved their headquarters to a place on Pine Street known as "the Club Rooms" (4, January 24, 1890, p. 5). Over the next few months the band gave several entertainments, including a minstrel show, at the Club Rooms.

A highlight of the year 1890 was experienced by the band in late May. Taylor County had entered an exhibit of "products of orchard and garden" in the Fort Worth Spring Palace, an exhibit somewhat like a state fair. The entry won first place and the county received a gold medal and a huge banner. Traveling by train, the band accompanied Abilene and Taylor County officials to Fort Worth to accept the prize.

The Fort Worth papers were very complimentary of the band. The Abilene Reporter quoted the Fort Worth Journal in an article stating that the band had arrived with eighteen pieces, one of whom "was a sweet little miss of nine years old, who plays the cornet" (4, May 30, 1890, p. 5). The Gazette reported that the band had arrived in Fort Worth at five in the morning, and "made their appearance at ten o'clock with their full band, handsomely uniformed and sounding the notes of a triumphant march" (9, May 28, 1890, p. 2 ).

Evening "serenades" by the band continued through June of 1890. A big Fourth of July celebration was planned by the townspeople, and these plans included the band. Unfortunately, a July rainstorm did away with most of the festivities, but the band concert and baseball game were played as scheduled. The concert was performed from the balcony in front of Lapowski's store. It was "listened to

attentively by several hundred people who applauded frequently" (4, July 11, 1890, p. 4). The program given by the Taylor County News is the first in which the band is featured exclusively.

#### PART I

1. Grand National Melody - E. C. Ramsdell
2. Impromptu Overture - Dalby
3. Autumn Fantasia - Jas. H. Feeker
4. Fascination - Barnhouse, Trombone solo -  
W. Kavanaugh
5. Little Gem, song and dance - Dalby

Intermission - 10 minutes

#### PART II

1. Mountain Stream Overture - C. H. Six
2. Sobre las Olas Waltz - J. Giovanius
3. Nearer My God to Thee, with variations -  
Barnhouse
4. Moonlight Serenade - Professor Lucas and  
Miss mAude Lucas
5. Dixie Land (16, June 27, 1898, p. 4)

The editor of the News made a special plea for assistance in the August 1, 1890 issue, which must have fallen on deaf ears, because he wrote a long article in a later September issue which not only chronicled the fiscal woes of the band, but revealed quite a bit about the general operation of the group.

This organization has now been in existence for more than a year and has certainly made an effort to exist, but, like all other organizations, must have the good will and support of the people. It has certainly done us no harm but has done good, and has rendered their assistance at all public meetings, church entertainments, gatherings, without charge. Their outfit, consisting of uniforms, instruments,



etc., has cost over \$1100, besides the teacher at \$50 per month since the organization started.

They are still owing about \$300 for instruments and the question is, whether the band is worth supporting to the extent of \$300 by the citizens of Abilene? To get a band from the East to come and play on one occasion would cost this amount, to say nothing of having one at home we can be proud of.

It is certainly a strain on these young men who are working on a small salary, getting barely enough to pay their living expenses, to endeavor to keep up such an organization where there is no direct benefit. It is a great benefit to our city generally, besides there are several musicians in our city who would assist the band in playing but for the expense of keeping up such an organization, consequently they decline to take membership. Now let everyone help the boys a little to pay this balance due for investments and encourage the boys to continue the good work (16, September 26, 1890, p. 1).

There is no record of the band getting any more financial help from the citizens of Abilene, but a full slate of activities kept the band busy for the next few months. They performed for the Baird fair (16, September 26, 1890, p. 4), the Dallas fair (16, October 3, 1890, p. 1), a funeral procession for an officer of the local military company (4, November 7, 1898, p. 1), and many other local events. (See Figure 23, p. 163.)

On New Year's day, 1891, the band performed for the opening of an opulent new hotel on North Second and Cypress Streets. That evening, J. H. Lucas fronted a "quadrille band" to play for the dance at the hotel (4, January 2, 1891, p. 5). In February, the band accompanied a performance of Audran's operetta, "La Mascotte" in Abilene, Baird, and Colorado City, Texas (4, February 20, 1891, p. 2). Later

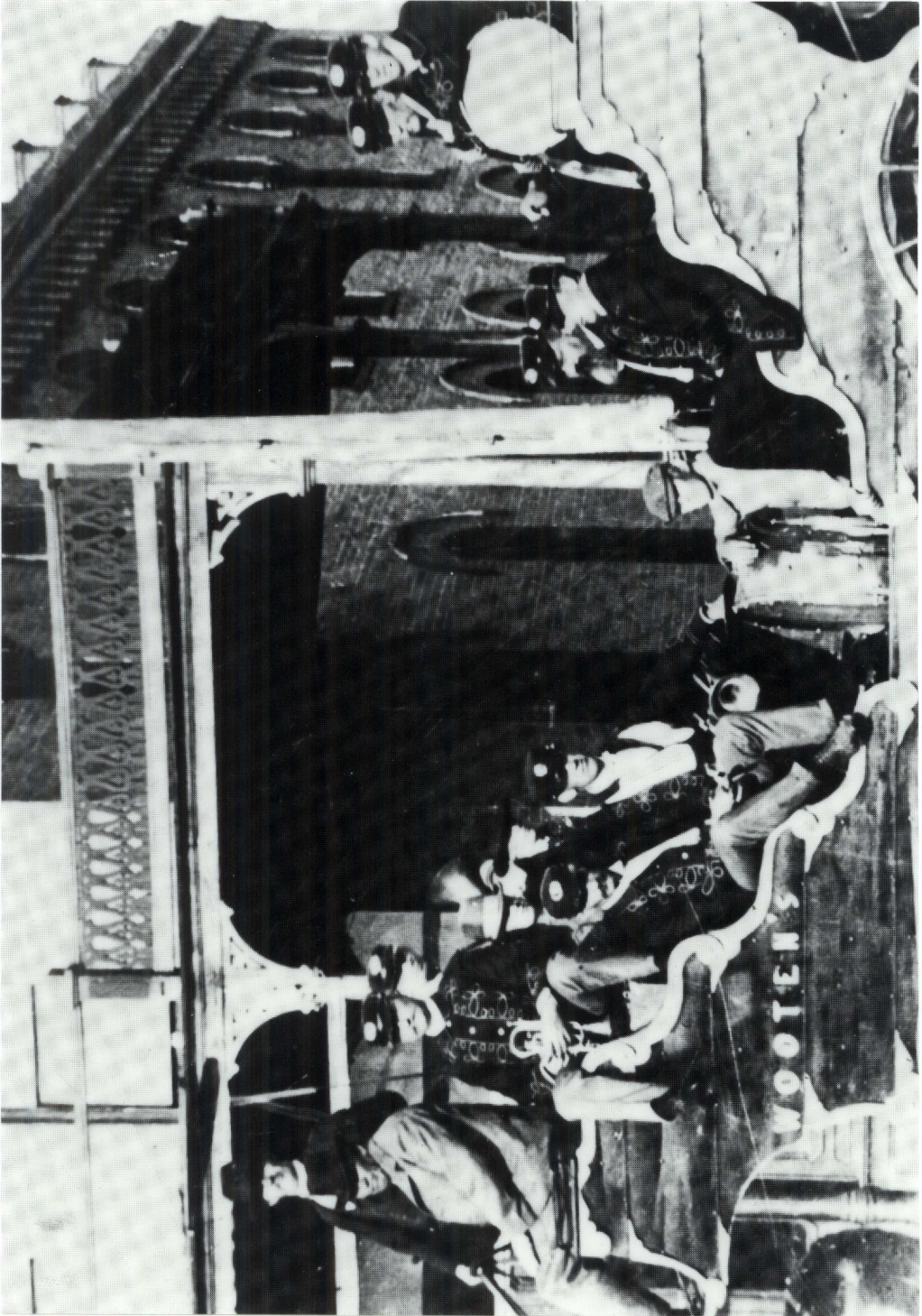


Fig. 23--Abilene band in front of Palace Hotel, late 1880's

that same month the band marched in the Arbor Day parade (4, February 20, 1891, p. 5).

In a newspaper report in March, an announcement stated that M. P. Kavenaugh was the "instructor and musical director" of the band and was "drilling the boys on a lot of select music just received and the band is making rapid progress under his charge" (4, March 12, 1891, p. 5). The same article announced a series of musical concerts to be given in the Spring. No mention is made of the reason for the change of director, and no other information could be found about the change. One of the first programs in this particular series is typical of the concerts by the band during this period. Among several renditions by the "best local talents" were the following band numbers:

Pauline Overture - Jas. T. Bartle  
 Clara Polka - D. H. Stubblebine, cornet solo  
 Mr. Kavenaugh  
 La Poloma Air - Jean Missud  
 Home of Love - Balfe, clarinet solo Ed Harris  
 Tiega - Pettee, bombardan solo Mr. Nicholas  
 Darkie's Dream - Lansing (4, March 27, 1891, p. 1)

The Reporter printed an editorial in late March which pleaded once again for financial support for the band. The editor pointed out that "the expense for instructor, band room, music, oil, fuel, and many incidentals since organizing have come to over \$1000, which the boys have paid themselves" (4, March 27, 1891, p. 5). The bills kept coming in and the city kept asking the band to perform at local events.

The Board of Trade (formerly called the Abilene Progressive Committee) ordered the band out in January of 1891 because it was thought that water had been struck in one of the artesian wells that was being drilled at the edge of town. All the town dignitaries and visiting editors (there was a press association meeting in progress in the city) were carried out in buggies to sample the water. It turned out to be a false alarm (4, June 23, 1891, p. 1).

Another big event involving the band in this decade was the installation of electric lights in Abilene. There was a great deal of pomp and ceremony on the evening that the current was first turned on, and the band played "for quite a while at the principal corner of the city" (16, April 24, 1891, p. 5).

The band performed at other city functions and gave many concerts and benefit entertainments for themselves as well as other organizations. In May, the band received the honor of being named the official band of the Fourth Regiment of Texas Volunteer Guards. An announcement appeared in the Reporter that the band would "hereafter be known as the Fourth Regiment Band, having received the appointment as such from the state" (4, June 5, 1891, p. 5).

On July 4, 1891, the band performed for the cornerstone ceremony for a new Baptist College which was being built two miles north of the railroad. The band led the parade

of citizens from the city to the college site that morning (16, July 10, 1891, p. 1), performed during the barbecue and ceremony, and played that evening at North Third and Cypress to assist the Christian Ladies Aid Society (4, July 10, 1891, p. 5).

It was a busy month for the band. They left on July 16 for a Fourth Regiment military encampment at Austin, Texas. They stayed several days there and had an opportunity to hear other bands from different parts of the state. Also, in the daily dress parade, the bands combined to form a group of 150 musicians. The newspaper reported that the band did well "considering the difficulties under which they were placed by the desertion of their director to another band, but our old friend J. H. Lucas assumed the leadership and all went well again" (4, July 31, 1891, p. 1).

The mention of Lucas is the first since January, and the report fails to give the name of the leader who deserted, probably M. P. Kavanaugh. Also, we can assume that Lucas was a member of the band because of the distance from Abilene to Austin. He must have been in a position to step in and take over the leadership of the group.

After two reports of band activities in the month of September, the papers were silent for three months about the band. In late January, 1892, the Reporter asked the question, "What has happened to the Abilene Light Infantry

Band?" (4, January 22, 1892, p. 5). In February the same paper, as if asking again, wrote, "Abilene has a fine silver cornet band" (4, February 5, 1892, p. 5). In late February, the band led the Arbor Day parade (4, February 26, 1892, p. 5).

In March, an editorial reported, "The bandsmen are somewhat demoralized for want of finances to continue the organization." The editor went on to plead with the businessmen and citizens of Abilene to support the band. He estimated the cost for one year for instructor, hall rental, lights and other "little expenses" would be about \$800 (16, March 4, 1892, p. 5).

The Reporter stated that the band was practicing "almost nightly" (4, April 1, 1892, p. 5), and in April asked the band to resume the balcony serenades (4, April 29, 1892, p. 8). No more was heard of the band until July, when it was reported that the group had performed for a banquet and reception at Armory Hall (4, July 29, 1892, p. 8).

In January of 1893, an article appeared in the Reporter which listed all the active businesses in Abilene. Immediately following was a list of businesses and activities under the heading "Abilene Wants." Included in this list was found, "The Band Reorganized" (4, January 20, 1893, p. 8). The next month there was a short article about some of the townspeople yoking a pair of steers to the "old

bandwagon" and having a "merry ride in the streets" (16, February, 17, 1893, p. 5).

In April, 1893, a parade was held to demonstrate and inspect the companies of the fire department. Included in the parade list was the "Fire Department Band" (4, April 7, 1893, p. 5). In July of the same year it was reported that the band had been reorganized again. It was suggested that the group give the townspeople some occasional street music in the evenings (16, July 14, 1893, p. 5).

Nothing was heard of the band for many months. In May, 1894, the group was called the "firemen's band" for a San Jacinto Day parade (4, May 4, 1894, p. 5). The paper stated that the band was having difficulty staying together without any assistance or encouragement, but that the group was planning a series of programs "as soon as the present course is completed." Meanwhile a band from Baird came to Abilene in May of 1895 to play for a firemen's parade (16, May 30, 1894, p. 5).

After almost four years of the band's relative inactivity it was announced in December, 1895 that the band was being reorganized, and that it was "under the care of Prof. Lucas" (16, December 5, 1895, p. 3).

The group marched in the Christmas parade that year (16, December 13, 1895, p. 1) and performed a "Grand Concert" in the opera house on Chestnut Street on December 20, to



benefit themselves (4, December 27, 1895, p. 5). In the concert the group presented only two band numbers. The other presentations consisted of a violin solo, a male quartette, a piano solo, a cornet solo (featuring Miss Maude Lucas), and some "selected magic lantern views, a stereopticon presentation by a man named J. C. Oliver (4, December 13, 1895, p. 1).

Under Lucas' direction the band regained some of the attention and popularity that had been lost over the previous few years. The band once again enjoyed a busy schedule for the first half of 1896. In February the editor of the News encouraged them to get out for a parade and "blow the cobwebs out of their horns" (16, February 14, 1896, p. 3). Even the well-known city marshall, J. J. Clinton, encouraged the band's participation in some of the local celebrations, (4, April 24, 1896, p. 5).

In preparation for the Fourth of July picnic of 1896, everyone assumed that the band would furnish the music, but no one thought to ask the band. A short message appeared in the Reporter which let the citizens know the band would like to play for the affair, but that someone should go through the formality of offering the invitation.

The band has been reported that it will furnish music for the July 4th picnic at Johnson's Ranch. There have been no arrangements with the band to that effect, and we are still open for an engagement. P.S. Kauffman, Leader (4, July 3, 1896, p. 3).



The band did play for the affair. There were the usual "short patriotic speeches interspersed with music by the Abilene band" (4, July 10, 1896, p. 4). The Reporter editor stated that the band's new uniforms were "real pretty" and he was confident that their music would be "better than ever now" (4, July 10, 1896, p. 2).

The night before, near the T & P express office, the band gave a concert which indicated that they were once again capable of sustaining a full program of selections without help from other forms of music.

High School Cadets - Sousa  
 First Prize - Ripley  
 Cake Walk March - Daughtry  
 Hazel Waltz - Seem  
 Serenade, "Echoes from the Dell" - Daughtry  
 Impromptu Overture - Dalby  
 Waltz, "Silver Bells" - Bahr  
 Caledonian Beauties - Daughtry  
 Quickstep, "Mockingbirds" - Daughtry  
 Doxology - Pettee (4, July 3, 1896, p. 3)

A new bandstand was built by the band members in August of 1896. It was to be used not only for open air concerts, but also by speakers during the upcoming election campaign. The stand was located on Pine Street across from Lapowski's store (4, August 14, 1896, p. 3).

The first concert in the stand was performed September 5, 1896, at six in the afternoon. The editor reported that a great part of Pine and North First Streets were packed with people and vehicles. The article included a rare list of band members who performed and what instrument they played.

C.W. Harkrider, drum major  
 J.H. Lucas (leader), E-flat cornet  
 W.G. Schiell, solo B-flat cornet  
 W.H. Johnson, first B-flat cornet  
 Gus Ackerman, piccalo [sic]  
 L. Page, clarinet  
 Alston Taylor, solo alto  
 M. Scott, first alto  
 Max Gabauer, second alto  
 W.O. Shackelford, first tenor  
 J.A. Brown, second tenor  
 W.S. Daniels, slide trombone  
 P.S. Kauffman, baritone  
 M.A. Hart, B-flat bass  
 J.C. O'brien, E-flat bass  
 Ed King, snare drum  
 J.T. Tarpley, bass drum  
 Executive Committee: P.S. Kauffman, President;  
     W.G. Schiell, Vice President; E.H. Boone,  
     Secretary and Treasurer (4, September 11,  
     1896, p. 5)

The band once again kept a regular practice schedule for the next few months, and they usually practiced in the bandstand in an open rehearsal style. The editors kept up a steady report of these practices and were always favorable in their accounts. The band performed quite a few programs during these months. In the annual report of the fire chief, J. J. Clinton once again encouraged support of the band, calling it "an honor to the department" (4, November 21, 1896, p. 1).

Lean times again fell on the band during the winter and spring of 1896-1897. In an April issue of the Reporter, a newcomer to Abilene stated that he had been looking for some occasion that would "call out the band," and that he had been in Abilene several months and had not heard it yet"

(4, April 9, 1897, p. 2). The next month an editorial appeared that attempted to explain the lack of band music and, as always, promoting the activity and pleading for support.

The Abilene Band, on account of some desertions and several men leaving town, almost ceased to exist. A few of the first and most enthusiastic members have again commenced to practice and hope to attain proficiency as before and give Abilene a good band. There must necessarily be some help and encouragement from the city generally if they wish to enjoy the labor of the band boys. Nothing adds more to the general good reputation of a town than a creditable band of musicians. We hope the boys will make their needs known and that they will be met at once (4, May 11, 1897, p. 4).

Later that same month it was reported that the band was to furnish music for a picnic at Buffalo Gap. The Abilene band often performed for area towns at various special activities or celebrations. (See Figure 24, p. 173.) The editor of the Reporter asked why the band could not have an "open air concert once a week at home" (4, May 25, 1897, p. 3). In September the band furnished music for a Buffalo Gap College presentation at the Abilene Opera House (16, September 17, 1897, p. 3).

In October of 1897, it was announced that the "Abilene Firemen's Silver Cornet Band" would furnish open air concerts twice a day for the four days of the Abilene Fair and Roundup to be held in November (4, October 8, 1897, p. 5). Prior to the fair, the group gave concerts locally and practiced for the fair. During the fair parade the band "opened up



Fig. 24--Abilene band visiting area community, 1890's

on 'Dixie' and the crowd shouted and the veterans yelled and tipped their hats" (16, November 12, 1897, p. 3).

Reports of the band's activities again dwindled. Then in April of 1898, it was reported that the band and several hundred Abilene citizens met four companies of the Eighteenth Regiment on their way from El Paso, Texas to the "seat of war" (16, April 22, 1898, p. 3). Among other selections, the band played "Dixie," "Bonny Blue Flag," "Rally 'Round the Flag," and "The Girl I Left Behind."

In September of 1898, the Reporter stated that the band had once again been engaged to play at the fair in November. In October, the band produced a benefit historical entertainment entitled "Texas Under Six Flags," featuring "fifty-two of Abilene's most talented young ladies" (4, October 7, 1898, p. 5). The program netted the band \$160 (16, October 7, 1898, p. 4). Also in preparation for the fair, the band gave an open air concert at their bandstand in front of Lapowski's store (16, October 21, 1898, p. 3). In the fair parade that year, the band was referred to as "Abilene's pride, the Firemen's band" (4, October 28, 1898, p. 4).

Few activities were reported regarding the band for the next few months, but the group serenaded one of their members on his wedding night (Max Gebauer, who was listed earlier as an alto horn player) (4, January 27, 1899, p. 3).

The editor of the Reporter, in telling of the band playing a street serenade in February, 1899, said that "every horse took advantage of it to try to get away in a race," and even the bicycles "threatened to kick out of harness" (4, February 17, 1899, p. 7). The band members chose to play the Fourth of July celebration in Merkel in 1899 (4, June 30, 1899, p. 8).

In the July 14 issue of the Reporter, the West Texas Fair Committee issued an invitation to all area bands to participate in a band contest for the fair. A "handsome premium" of \$200 was offered to the "best band from Thurber west" (4, July 14, 1899, p. 7). The West Texas Fair Association envisioned that the "carnival of music would be remembered as an event in the history of the art divine in West Texas."

The band got to work and began "putting in good time practicing" for the contest (4, July 25, 1899, p. 5). They performed for various functions in and around Abilene to try to sharpen up their playing skills. In the latter part of July, the group played for a celebration in Anson, just a few miles north of Abilene, and found themselves without transportation back to the city. They got a ride from Anson to Truby and, because of rain, had to walk from Truby to Abilene in "mud half knee deep." They reported that many



people in wagons and carriages "passed them up as highwaymen" (4, July 28, 1899, p. 2). They got home well after midnight.

It was announced that the Abilene band would be employed for the first day of the fair, and a band from Colorado City would be used for the second day (4, July 28, 1899, p. 5). In August, the band performed a concert in their bandstand. The editor of the Reporter considered the time of five o'clock too early because of the hot afternoons (4, August 18, 1899, p. 2).

A few weeks later the band played another concert at the opera house. It was predicted that the band would have success at the band contest and that the next time the band presented a concert the "opera house would be packed" (4, October 6, 1899, p. 2).

As the fair date grew closer, reports came from the Colorado Stockman, a Colorado City newspaper, that the Abilene band planned to use players from out of town to reinforce their membership. A representative of the Abilene group placed this item in the Reporter:

It was noised abroad that the Firemen's band of Abilene was going to run in a lot of players from other towns, but such is far from their intentions, as they expect to make an open and honorable fight for the prize. To hire a lot of outside players for a few days only would be disastrous, as it requires weeks of practice together to enable members of a band to play together (4, September 22, 1899, p. 4).

The band contest did not attract the number of bands hoped for by the fair association. Only two bands were to

compete for the \$200 prize: The Colorado Stockman Band, which represented their local newspaper (and included two members of the newspaper staff), and the Abilene Firemen's Silver Cornet Band (4, October 27, 1899, p. 8).

The Colorado City band arrived fourteen strong at the T & P depot on the morning of October 26. In spite of a driving rainstorm, their spirits were high and they had brought more than a score of loyal supporters. The Abilene band met them at the station and the two bands performed for each other and for the crowd of over one hundred which had gathered in the large waiting rooms of the depot (4, October 27, 1899, p. 8).

The rains caused a cancellation of some of the fair activities, so the fair association voted to extend the festivities to Sunday and Monday. The fair officials were now faced with two delicate situations, accusations of "desecrating the sabbath" (4, November 3, 1899, p. 4), and having two fine bands entered in the contest. They weathered the desecration charges and fortunately the fair officials had taken the wise precaution of hiring an objective judge, a Professor Carrico, who was the director of the "celebrated Carrico Band of Fort Worth and Dallas" (4, November 3, 1899, p. 7).

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the contest, a large crowd gathered to hear each band perform three selections.



After this first performance, the contest was adjourned until two o'clock that afternoon, when the bands returned and played five more selections each. Professor Carrico "made frequent notes," and after deliberating for quite a few minutes, declared the Abilene band as the winner of the event (4, November 3, 1899, p. 7).

The Reporter, in quoting an article in the Roby Banner, stated that 1500 people had heard the contest that day and that each band had fifteen men, "but to be exact, one of the Abilene band was a lady" (4, November 10, 1899, p. 4). This was no doubt a reference to Miss Maude Lucas, daughter of Professor Lucas, the director of the Abilene group. She had created quite a sensation when she first arrived in Abilene in 1889 with her father, and people had referred to her as "little Maude." She was now a young woman of about eighteen. J. H. Lucas and his family remained in Abilene until after the turn of the century when he moved to Fort Worth (3, August 3, 1910, p. 1).

An editorial in the Colorado City newspaper, reprinted by the Reporter, caused some strained relations between the two newspapers and the two towns. The article accused the fair association of making the decision to save the \$200 prize by giving it to a local group (4, November 3, 1899, p. 4).

Later the Stockman wrote a letter of apology to the Abilene newspaper stating that the Stockman Band got what

it deserved and that there was no reason for any further "ill will or unpleasantness" between the two cities. The Reporter stated that the letter from Colorado City "closed the band contest question, unless further incidents open it, so far as the Reporter is concerned" (4, November 10, 1899, p. 7).

An earlier accusation of running a "ringer" or two in with the Abilene band performance proved to be a half-truth. A snare drummer named A. D. Palmer of Fort Worth, who had previously lived in Abilene and had been a long-time member of the band, turned up at the band contest. The opposing band lodged a protest and Professor Carrico "refused a rating" to the musician, but he was still "allowed to play" with the Abilene group (4, November 1, 1899, p. 4).

The Reporter of November 10, 1899, printed a copy of the program the Abilene band presented at the contest. Included is a number signifying the difficulty rating of each selection, evidently supplied by the publisher.

1. A Tripple Tongueing [sic] Cornet Solo - "Sea Flower Polka" (6).....T.H. Rallison
2. Solitude - "An Original Caprice" (5).....  
Mercandante
3. "Zacatecas March" (4) - (Mexican).....arr. by  
C.W. Niles
4. "Old Kentucky Home" (6) I.J. Mastan, air and  
variation - cornet solo
5. Overture - "Living Pictures" (4).....Dalby
6. "Garnet Waltz" [no rating].....Ripley
7. Serenade "Stars are Twinkling" (3)
8. "Sparkling Gem Waltz" [no rating] (4, November  
10, 1899, p. 4)

The two decades of the 1880's and 1890's had been twenty years of highs and lows for the Abilene band. They had seen times of strong, loyal support and times of total apathy on the part of the townspeople. The band was highly acclaimed during the times the city needed a band to furnish music for different activities, and almost ignored during the times when there was no need for band music.

The last known performance of the Abilene band in the 1800's was a parade in December of 1899. The occasion was a firemen's day inspection and parade (4, December 8, 1899, p. 2).

A gap in newspaper files from 1901 to early 1904 prevents knowledge about the band during this period. Personal interviews and other sources also failed to reveal any information about the organization. One can conjecture that the band had the same type of existence during this time that they experienced before and after this period.

In early 1904, the band mounted a fund raising effort to make the group active again. H. N. Holderness, a local music teacher who played cornet and violin, was to direct the band after its organization. A group from out of town, the Philharmonic Lady Quartet, was hired to give a benefit concert for the band at Elks Hall. A review of the concert called the program "the best musical entertainment ever given" in Abilene, and expressed regret that more people

did not attend (3, May 5, 1904, p. 2). After a few week's practice, the band was proficient enough to play one selection at a recital on the Simmons College lawn (3, May 28, 1904, p. 4).

In late June of 1904, the reports were optimistic about the band. The "Citizen's Band," as it was now called, had "improved wonderfully" after six weeks of practice. A concert was presented which featured the band as the main attraction. A reporter stated that the band "stays full, thanks to Professor Holderness' wise policy of training juveniles to fill in as needed." A trombone solo by Clyde Payne was pronounced the best feature of the concert (3, June 18, 1904, p. 2).

The band took part in many activities within the next few months. The Fourth of July celebration in 1904 was held at Lytle Lake, and the band was the main feature of the day. At this celebration they performed aboard an excursion boat called the "steamship Helen" (3, July 5, 1904, p. 1).

After the July performance the band began a series of weekly concerts at the passenger depot of the railway station. These concerts were free to the public, and refreshments were served for a small fee to those who attended the concerts. The band also continued to sign contracts for private parties and to give benefit concerts for other worthy causes (3, July 12, 1904, p. 1).

In the middle of July, 1904, the band contracted to play for the Confederate reunion at Dublin, Texas. The announcement stated that the band had made a "big hit" at the same place the previous year (July, 1903). This is an indication that the band was active that summer (3, July 15, 1904, p. 1). The band concerts continued at the passenger depot, with as many as 1,000 in attendance at times. Judson Sides, owner of a confection store on Pine Street, served the refreshments and the profits went to Holderness as part of his salary (3, July 18, 1904, p. 3).

The Dublin Progress was very complimentary of the band and their director, who also played as he led the band. The newspaper report stated that he was a "good director," and that he had a "fine set of band boys" under his direction. The report further stated, "When you see him get out to the center and start that horn a'waving, something musical is going to happen" (3, August 6, 1904, p. 1).

The band performed for the West Texas Fair and for the community at the regular Friday depot concerts until the weather was too bad to play outside (3, October 12, 1904, p. 3). The band then went into a period of inactivity.

In April of 1905 it was reported that a "new band" was to be organized with "excellent prospects for enrolling the best musicians in Abilene." The report optimistically stated that the band would have a large number of players, "so that

every necessary instrument will be in service." All persons who owned instruments or music were urged to attend (3, April 4, 1905, p. 4).

The band sought donations from the businessmen of the city and got enough to start rehearsals and begin preparations for another summer of concerts and entertainments (3, May 6, 1905, p. 5). Soon after this there was a mass meeting at the depot to lay plans for the 1905 Fourth of July celebration. Assisted by a male quartet, the band performed a concert at this meeting (3, May 19, 1905, p. 2).

In early June, one of the most dependable band members in the band's history, alto hornist Max Gebauer, moved to Peru, Illinois (3, June 12, 1905, p. 1). The band had serenaded Gebauer and his new bride on their wedding night six years before. The band experienced another bad stroke of luck in trying to get their 1905 weekly concerts started. Heavy rains forced cancellation of their first three efforts. On the fourth attempt, they moved under the awning of the Boone-Mueller Hardware store and performed during the rainstorm (3, June 21, 1905, p. 4).

Rain forced the cancellation of the next two concerts. This inspired a newspaper editor to write jokingly that the band was getting ready for a future concert, and after having posted the first notice of the program, a large cloud appeared in the north within three minutes (3, July 14, 1905, p. 3).

The band's calendar was continually filled with engagements for picnics, benefits, and their regular concerts. One of the highlights of the 1905 season was the performance for the Texas Convention of Woodmen of the World, called a Woodmen "logrolling." This early August convention attracted some 10,000 Woodmen and their wives to Abilene, who consumed some sixty beeves while they were here (3, August 4, 1905, p. 1).

Another unique event which took place in late November was the joint meeting of the Citizen's Band of the city and the members of the Simmons College Band (3, November 21, 1905, p. 2). The meeting of the two groups was not initially successful, but later proved to be an advantage for both groups, since the college group was rather small and the city band needed extra players.

With the coming of the winter months, the band once again went into a period of inactivity. As far as can be determined, the group was not reorganized for the 1906 season. It was not until early 1907 that the band emerged under a new name, the "25,000 Club Band." (See Figure 25, p. 185.) This club, a booster organization for the city, had as its goal a population of 25,000 by 1910. The band's first performance under this name was in April of 1907 when they met a group of businessmen from Fort Worth who were visiting Abilene on a trade excursion (3, April 13, 1907, p. 1).





Fig. 25--Abilene 25,000 Club Band, 1907



The 1907 season was a busy one for the band, and the last successful season for the organization for many years. In April, soon after their first performance of the season, an editorial was written which put the "band boys" in a position that was all too familiar to them. The editor was trying to sell the band to the townspeople of Abilene: the main topic was financial support for the group. The editorial read like others in the past history of the band. It was entitled, "Let Us Have a Great Band."

We do not know what the progress is but it seems that our band should be getting ready for such calls as are likely to be made upon it. The town is larger than ever before, and the town band ought to be larger and better than in the past. We have some few faithful members who have done a great deal to keep the organization together during the past ten years, and have done so at considerable sacrifice to themselves and their pocketbooks, and while we could not well spare them now we do think that the town might at least take off their shoulders all financial burdens in connection with the work of keeping that organization together. We vote for a bigger band and a better band and we hope that steps will be taken at once toward reviving the necessary interest to insure the carrying out of the above suggestion (3, April 18, 1907, p. 4).

The 25,000 Club was organized in late March of 1906. No evidence exists which would indicate that the band was an official representative of that business organization. The band is never mentioned in any of the financial reports from club officials, which suggests that the club did not have any contractual agreement with the band. The editorial would seem further to support the idea that the band was an

independent group of musicians who adopted the name of the booster club to lend their organization more credibility, much like the 25,000 Club Baseball Team, a short-lived organization competing with the high school team, Simmons College, and teams from the surrounding area (3, August 3, 1907, p. 1).

E. H. Boone, a musician who had played in the band for many years, was selected to lead the band. H. N. Holderness, the former director, had since moved to Chicago. Boone scheduled parades, picnics, reunions, and concerts throughout the summer. (See Figure 26, p. 188.) The band was featured in the Abilene Mid-Summer Carnival the first week of July (3, June 29, 1907, p. 3).

The organization was featured at the 1907 West Texas Fair. They arrived for the opening day in new blue uniforms and with several new pieces of music. It was reported that they had fifty numbers in their repertoire, a few of which were "Peace and Prosperity March," "Napanee," "Under Arms," "Moultonion," "Pastime," "General Lyon March," and "Jolification" (3, October 23, 1907, p. 1). The band made \$358 for entertaining at the fair and a band wagon was furnished by fair officials (3, December 12, 1907, p. 1).

After the fair, the band entered another period of inactivity. It was not until the next April that another plea was made in behalf of the band for financial assistance.



Fig. 26--E. H. Boone, 1907

The editorial was asking for at least \$125 per month to keep the band active for the season. Just to show the citizens how far they were behind area towns, the editor pointed out that Weatherford, Texas had a band that was "known all over the United States," and they were spending even more money than the editorial was asking (3, April 30, 1908, p. 1).

The plea evidently went unheeded, because there are no records of the group performing until late summer of 1908. This performance was probably brought on by the fact that the Weatherford Band was asked to perform at the 1908 West Texas Fair (3, August 29, 1908, p. 1). A few days after this announcement it was reported that members of the Abilene Band were planning a minstrel performance to help raise money for the band. The report stated that when the band got another start, they would be able to "hold their own with Weatherford or any of the principal bands in the country" (3, September 1, 1908, p. 7).

The benefit netted \$135 for the band. Still another editorial stated that the town was "anxious to see the time come when the band can have the support of our town that it must have to have a paid leader and which any band must have to be thoroughly active." The article mentioned that the band had performed three numbers at the minstrel, "Americal Soldiers March," "Inspiration Overture," and "Repaz Band March" (3, September 8, 1908, p. 4).

Only one performance of the band is recorded for the rest of the season, the opening of a vaudeville theatre on Chestnut Street (3, November 10, 1908, p. 1). In February of 1909 another report of a band meeting to reorganize the group was published. The article stated that H. N. Holderness had promised to move back to Abilene to take over the band once again. The report asked for "any man or boy in the city who can toot a horn or beat a toy drum" to come to the meeting, stating that any town the size of Abilene should have "one of the best bands in the state, and especially Abilene, who is so far ahead in other matters" (3, February 25, 1909, p. 7).

Unfortunately for the band members, there were two other meetings the same night of the band meeting. A new athletic association met with thirty-six charter members, and the West Texas Fair Association met with a large group in attendance. Each of these meetings got good newspaper coverage the following day, but the band meeting was not mentioned (3, February 27, 1909, p. 1).

The athletic group met again in March, and because the City Hall rooms were in use, met at the "old band stand, long since fallen into disuse, near the Texas and Pacific passenger station." It was referred to as a "dilapidated structure," further evidence that the band had not performed at that place for quite a while (3, March 5, 1909, p. 1).

Another call for a meeting of interested band members was issued on March 19. The report stated that the new director was to be in Abilene soon, and that everything should be "gotten in readiness for his arrival" (3, March 19, 1909, p. 6). In September of 1909 it was announced that the city band of Odessa, Texas, had been contracted to perform at the West Texas Fair (3, September 14, 1909, p. 1).

In March of 1910, the band sputtered into life again; Luther Lane, a local garage owner and inventor, became the leader. (See Figure 27, p. 192.) He was a partner in a garage with A. C. Metzger. Metzger's son, Martin P. Metzger, was a young musician in the earlier 25,000 Club Band. A meeting was held at the Metzger and Lane Garage on North Fifth Street. All who could "perform in any way on any instrument" were invited to attend. Lane was referred to as a "musician and orchestra leader of some note" (3, March 22, 1910, p. 1).

In this period in the city's history, several baseball teams of varying ages and proficiency were competing in the sport. In April of 1910, the newly organized band played for a game between the Bankers and the Drummers of the city. This is probably the first athletic event in the history of Abilene that had a performing musical organization in attendance. The band played for other games within the next few weeks, one report indicating that there were fifteen





Fig. 27--Luther L. Lane, 1910

members in the band. On one occasion, the band was called the Abilene Cornet Band, and in another article the group was called Metzger and Lane's Cornet Band (3, April 14, 1910, p. 3).

In 1910, Herman McDaniel moved to Abilene to work at Hall Music Company. After he became established in the community and had some spare time, he bought a clarinet and taught himself how to play. In a few weeks he joined the town band and began performing with them. He was a valuable source of information about the operation of the band in 1910.

McDaniel stated that the band members took up collections regularly to buy their own music. He said that on occasion, the band members would get a donation or a meager "salary" for the performances, but it was generally a voluntary effort. According to him, there were never any regular donations from the 25,000 Club or any of the Abilene businessmen (12).

He stated that the band tried to rehearse once a week, but had to contend with a number of conflicts. Finding a place to rehearse was one of the biggest problems for the group, he said. The group rehearsed over Judson Sides' confectionery on the east side of Pine Street until the place was needed for storage and they had to find another rehearsal area. One of the young men in the group talked his father into letting the band use some space over his planing mill at Third and Walnut (12).



McDaniel did not recall the name of the director of the band, but did state that he had an auto repair shop, probably L. L. Lane. McDaniel also stated that on many occasions in rehearsals and performances there was no director or instructor to help with the music. The members helped each other and kept the music together as best they could (12).

In late 1911, plans were laid by city officials to improve an area behind the post office, north of the building between Pine and Walnut Streets on North Fourth. Water, lights, seating, and a bandstand were planned for the area. The bandstand was to be of tremendous help in the establishment of a more permanent band organization a few years later (3, September 3, 1911, p. 1).

#### Private Teachers

In the early years of Abilene very few private music teachers lived in the city. After the town became more permanent than a few tents and a railway depot, the citizens had more time to devote to more genteel pursuits.

Many of the new residents of the young community were accomplished musicians themselves, and they were anxious to provide their children with a well-rounded education, which would include art, elocution, and some sort of training in music.

Mollie Clack, wife of J. B. Clack and aunt of Tommie Clack, loved music, loved to sing and loved to play the organ. She had come to Taylor County in a covered wagon, and having no room to bring an organ, had no instrument to play. She also wanted her children to have the advantage of musical training. Finding a wood plank of appropriate size, she painted on it the facsimile of a keyboard and started her children on "piano lessons." After the first crops were brought in and arrangements were made with an organ dealer, an instrument was delivered and the children had little difficulty playing for Sunday School (6).

In 1885, when the town was four years old and seemingly on good footing, a number of private music teachers began to make known their intentions to organize music classes and convert rooms in their homes to music studios. One of the best sources of students for these teachers of music was the public school enrollment.

The teachers had private students for piano, guitar, mandolin, and voice, but the most popular method was to have a music class of fifteen to thirty students in the room so they could learn the rudiments of music together. Many of the teachers used this method and also taught the more advanced students on a private basis. The class method was not only more efficient for the teacher, and created a better social and competitive atmosphere for the students, but it

was far more convenient when it came time to present the programs, entertainments, and recitals in a public way.

In these early days of the city, the people were eager for musical entertainments of all kinds. Sometimes the private teachers presented programs to a full house of both parents and townspeople. Occasionally the programs were presented in the music rooms on an informal basis, but more often than not the musical presentations took the form of a full-blown concert, staged at one of the entertainment halls or at the opera house.

The local newspapers were filled with reports of the activities of these teachers, and the editors seemed to welcome the opportunity to print the names of the performers, teachers, and the titles of the selections they were performing. Most of the teachers took out small ads on the local pages of the newspapers to let the public know when and where the classes were to begin. The classes usually coincided roughly with the terms of the local schools.

Before the population of Abilene was very large, and even after the county seat was moved from Buffalo Gap to Abilene, Buffalo Gap was sometimes regarded as the "Mecca of Music" in the area, and Buffalo Gap College and its teachers received a great deal of coverage in Abilene's local newspapers. J. S. Million, music teacher at the college, and director of the Buffalo Gap Silver Cornet Band, taught

music classes in Abilene from time to time. The classes would last several weeks and would close with a program of music open to the public.

Million completed a class for juvenile singers in September of 1885, pointing out that he would begin another class about the first of October. The report stated that the "skillful manner in which the little girls and boys read music since the close of the term proves that he has a superior tact for teaching music" (16, September 11, 1885, p. 4).

When Abilene began to prosper and Buffalo Gap gradually began to lose its citizens to Abilene, there was an influx in the number of private teachers in the city. In August of 1886, a teacher known only as Mrs. Dow began a music class in the city. According to the report, the class was "well filled" (16, August 20, 1886, p. 5).

In early 1889, Mrs. Ida Holman advertised that she had just returned from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and was teaching piano at the residence of Col. T. L. Odum (16, February 8, 1889, p. 5). In December of that year, Mrs. Nattie Shelton, recently widowed, let it be known that she was teaching both instrumental and vocal music on a private basis in "rooms near the college building" (16, December 13, 1889, p. 4). The reference to the "college" meant the new high school building which opened in January of 1890.

In 1891, Miss Emma Froese announced that she was prepared to give instruction on piano, guitar, mandolin, and violin. She also advertised that she would transpose music to suit the pitch of any voice, and harmonize and arrange music for different instruments. Miss Froese taught in "rooms at Mrs. Barry's residence" (4, November 13, 1891, p. 5).

Mrs. J. H. Bass taught a number of piano students in early Abilene. One of her clients was K. K. Legett, a prominent attorney in West Texas and one of the leading citizens of Abilene. His two small daughters, Ruth and Julie, had studied with Mrs. Bass for some months, and it was apparent to her that the two girls had no ear for music.

While seated near the Legetts at a public function, she tried to direct the conversation away from the inevitable question: "How were the girls doing in their music lessons?" When the question finally came, Mrs. Bass answered diplomatically, and perhaps a bit too quickly, "Ruth no longer straddles the stool like a pony, she has learned to sit sidesaddle" (15, p. 10).

Mrs. Henry Bass, daughter-in-law of Mrs. J. H. Bass, was a popular teacher in Abilene for many years. She came to the city with her husband in 1903 at age twenty-nine. She was born Ione Kinsolving in Council Grove, Kansas in 1874, and died in Abilene in 1951 (4, December 4, 1951, p. 1).

She began teaching music in the city a few months after she arrived, announcing that she was opening a summer school of music for those whose schedules were too crowded during the school term (3, May 31, 1904, p. 3). In August of 1904, she announced that she was opening a piano, voice, and music school with limited enrollment (3, August 30, 1904, p. 4).

In 1905, she began a music study club called the "Crescendo Club," made up of her students and other interested students or teachers. She hired an assistant for the 1905-1906 school term, Isla Kinsolving, who taught voice. Miss Kinsolving was Mrs. Bass' sister. The two music teachers were quite active in the musical happenings of the city and presented their pupils quite often in recitals (3, November 4, 1904, p. 4).

In 1907, Mrs. Bass named her music classes the "Western School of Music," and met after the public school sessions each day. (See Figure 28, p. 200.) The faculty numbered four teachers for the Fall term of 1907, and were advertised as "expert graduate teachers in their respective fields" (2, p. 25). Mrs. Bass was the school director and piano teacher, Miss Isla Kinsolving was assistant director and also taught piano, Miss Mable Palmer (recently from Chicago) taught voice, and Miss Annie Heyck taught violin (3, September 4, 1907, p. 5). The faculty members of the school remained active in the musical affairs of the city. Miss



Fig. 28--Western School of Music announcement, 1907

Palmer produced "The Rose Maiden," an operetta, in October of 1907. She was assisted by other adults in the production and cast herself in the lead soprano role (3, October 2, 1907, p. 4).

Mrs. Bass was innovative in her recital programming and promoted the school at every opportunity. In October of 1907 the school presented a Halloween recital in the school's studio. Selections like "Danse Macabre," "La Fantastique," "Tarantella," and "Witch's Dance" were performed (3, October 30, 1907, p. 5). The school's faculty usually performed selections at the students' recitals, and faculty members often performed solo recitals (3, December 14, 1907, p. 7).

Mrs. Bass in addition sponsored guest artists quite often at the studio. In early November of 1907 a tenor, violinist and pianist performed a trio recital (3, November 4, 1907, p. 7). The following month a tenor soloist from New York, a Mr. Hemphill, sang a recital. He sang a few operatic arias and closed the program with "Shooyo Shoo," "The Auld Plaid Shawl," and "The Chase" (3, December 28, 1907, p. 5).

The 1908-1909 session of the Western School of Music opened with two new faculty members, voice teacher Miss Una Frank Honeycutt, and Miss Olive Buchanan, piano instructor. The curriculum was also expanded to add harmony, theory, music history, and kindergarten training. Choral training



was also offered for those students who did not wish to study voice (3, August 29, 1908, p. 8). The school opened that year with fifty piano pupils, twenty string students, and fifteen voice students. More were expected to enroll within the next few weeks (3, September 3, 1908, p. 1).

The classes of the Western School of Music continued on a regular basis throughout the next few years. Recitals were presented at the studio by students and faculty, and Mrs. Bass came to be regarded as one of the best music teachers in the city. (See Figure 29, p. 203.) Her students won honors across the state for performance and composition. All the while the enrollment at the school grew to such a point that the closing recital had to be expanded to six evenings of performances in 1909 (3, May 19, 1909, p. 1).

For the 1910-1911 session, Mrs. Bass' school was no longer called the Western School of Music. Also, there were no more references to the downtown studio. The recitals of Mrs. Bass' students were given either in private homes or in the recital hall of the recently opened Hall Music Company. Several adults, many of them younger piano teachers in the city, studied piano with Mrs. Bass (3, May 29, 1910, p. 2).

Most of the teachers were housewives or young women who took in students to supplement their income. There were only a few teachers who tried to make their living as music teachers. They not only took in private students, but they



Fig. 29--Ione Kinsolving Bass, early 1900's

followed other music education pursuits. One of these teachers was J. H. Lucas, director of the town band. Lucas performed on several instruments and had quite a reputation for the quality of his playing and also for his ability to mold players, young and old, into good musicians. He was listed in the business directories as a teacher of music (1, p. 9).

Another of these "full time" music teachers was Miss Natalie Taylor. She advertised that she taught music in "rooms next to the new college" (16, September 13, 1889, p. 8). Miss Taylor was also a composer and in 1892 took a year from teaching to write and promote an opera entitled "Mirth Immortal." The opera was produced in several communities before she brought it to Abilene and produced it with local talent in August of 1892 (16, August 12, 1892, p. 5).

Miss Kathryn Yeiser was another teacher who was occupied in teaching music full time. She not only took pupils into her home on Poplar Street, but also taught music in some of the private day schools in the city. She was the music teacher at the short-lived Limbaugh Female Seminary (open from September, 1889 to May, 1893), and for the Dellis Home School, a private school for all grades.

Miss Yeiser was a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and was the daughter of a local police officer. After finishing the conservatory and before returning to

Abilene, she taught at Garrard Female College. In February of 1893 her students were featured in a piano recital at Armory Hall. This program is representative of the literature she used in her teaching.

#### PROGRAMME

Piano-Concert Polonaise by Bohm, MISS GERTIE BELL  
 Duets, (a) Schottische by Kroemer, (b) Beauties of  
 Paradise by Straebbog, MISSES LENA MEDARIS AND  
 JEANIE LAPOWSKI  
 Piano Solos, (a) Morning Prayer by Straebbog,  
 Spinning Song by Ellmenreich, MISS LILY DAUGHERTY  
 Duet-Gavotte by Fr. Behr, MISS ERIE CUNNINGHAM,  
 MISS YEISER  
 Recitation-MISS LAURA COOK  
 Piano Solos, (a) Gipsy Rondo by Haydn,  
 (b) Poruponneth by Durand, MISS MARY PARRAMORE  
 Duet-Martha by Floton Beyond, MISSES NORA AND  
 MABEL DAUGHERTY  
 Piano Solo-Bubbling Spring by Rive King, MISS  
 SUSIE PARRAMORE

#### INTERMISSION

Duet-Adagio Allegro from Symphonie in D major by  
 Haydn, MRS. LOWDEN AND MISS YEISER  
 Piano Solo-Rondo by Incho, MISS JEANIE LAPOWSKI  
 Duets, (a) Galop by Straebbog, Waltz by Rosewig,  
 Recitation, MISS SUSIE MCLAMORE  
 Piano Solo-Charge of the Huzzars by Spindler,  
 MISS ERIE CUNNINGHAM  
 Duet-Hungarian Band by Klein, MISSES SUSIE AND  
 MARY PARRAMORE  
 Recitation, MISS NELLIE PARKER  
 Trio-Alpengluhen by Osten, MISSES SUSIE AND MARY  
 PARRAMORE (16, February 17, 1893, p. 5)

Another popular private teacher in Abilene before the turn of the century was Mrs. Cora Young, a young widow who was the daughter of a former postmaster of Abilene, H. H. Harden. After the death of her husband in 1888, she moved back to Abilene to live with her parents.

Mrs. Young taught voice, organ, piano, theory, and harmony. She had a studio at the residence of a Mrs. Christian "one door south of the high school building" (4, August 28, 1896, p. 8). She also assisted the public school students in the preparation of musical programs for special occasions (4, May 27, 1898, p. 8).

She organized a "musical society" in the late 1890's for the purpose of rehearsing and performing various works of music. She also used local talent to assist her by performing on the same program with her young students (4, June 1, 1897, p. 3). Whenever possible, she traveled to the East to study the latest techniques of music instruction, and she brought guest lecturers in to discuss different systems of music education (4, June 16, 1899, p. 5).

Probably the most popular private teacher in the history of early Abilene was Miss Lou Hart, who came to Abilene in 1884 at the age of forty-five. A native of Kentucky, she had taught in Illinois and Missouri and brought with her fine recommendations from twenty-five years of teaching music.

She came to Abilene because of a sister, Mrs. C. O. Morris, wife of a pioneer rancher, and an aunt of Mrs. Abdon Holt (5, March 26, 1935, p. 11). She attracted a great number of students and was very active in the presentation of programs and recitals.

She generally used the opera house or another large entertainment hall for her programs and generated a great deal of publicity when her students performed. She taught piano, guitar, and voice in her studio at the residence of C. W. Roberts (16, August 21, 1891, p. 5). (See Figure 30, p. 208.)

Her musical programs were varied and displayed a good bit of showmanship in displaying all types and styles of music. In a typical program of her students, one could find selections such as a Rossini Overture, a character duet entitled "Chicky My Crainy Crow," a Victor Herbert trio, and "The Little Turkee Turks," done by four young ladies in costume (16, May 25, 1894, p. 5).

At one of her piano recitals one would hear music by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Gottschalk, Holst, and others (4, June 1, 1894, p. 4). A small admission price was usually charged, but the program was usually for the benefit of the fire department, the Ladies Benevolent Association, or some other volunteer service organization.

Miss Hart often produced musical plays and operettas and utilized the talents of her own students as well as that of local citizens. "Jack and the Beanstalk" was produced in June of 1897 (4, June 1, 1897, p. 2), and "The Snow Cap Sisters" was given under her auspices in January of 1898 (16, January 21, 1898, p. 3). In both cases, the regular



# **Miss Hart's Piano School of Music**

**Studio:** North Fourth and  
Cedar, residence  
of C. W. Roberts.

**Opening Day:  
Monday, September 9**

presentation of vocal and instrumental solos and duets was given in a recital format followed by the operetta, featuring her students and local talent. In June of 1898 the operetta "Golden Hair" was presented to benefit the Abilene Cemetery Association (4, June 3, 1898, p. 7).

On Monday, December 11, 1893, a program was given by the students of Miss Hart to benefit the Ladies Benevolent Association. It is typical of the presentations given by her students.

#### ARMORY HALL

Overture to "William Tell," Rossini-Misses Heyck  
and Condon  
"White Caps," Pelham-Nine Young Girls  
"Dutch Courtship," Raney-Marjorie Evans and  
Robert Young  
"Ivanhoe Grand March," Wenger-Blanche Roberts and  
Martin Hoeny  
Vocal Duet, "Zerita," White-Miss Rollins and White Duet,  
"Redovo," Streeburg-Bennett and Robert Young "No Man  
Shall Ever Break My Heart,"-Little Ruth  
and May Border  
Trio, "Alpine Glen," Oestin-Misses Herr, Evans,  
and Steffens  
"Waltz Sing," Balize-Miss Zetta Gatlin  
"Stradella," Flotou-Miss Heyck and Red

#### Part II

Trio, "Caliph of Bagdad," Sofje-Misses Roberts,  
Archer, and Hart  
Vocal Solo, "Marguerite," Denza-Miss Jessie Gordon  
Piano, "L'Ellair," Paul-Miss Minnie Evans  
Vocal Solo, "Evangeline," White-Miss Carrie Rollins  
Piano, (a) "Regret," Balentine, (b) "Il Trovatore,"  
Melnotte-Miss Annie Heyck  
Vocal Solo, "Home Dearie Home," Malloy-Mrs. C. Evans  
Piano, "The Brook," Pope-Miss Annie Archer  
"Grandma's Birthday," White-Solo - Katie Border,  
Chorus - Bernice Roberts, Bennett Young, Marjorie  
Evans, Eva Pratt, Jessie Harrington, Hunter Boyd,  
Mary Border, Ruth Border, and Little Morris Rollins.



## Admission Twenty-Five Cents

For Ladies Benevolent Association (16, December 8,  
1893, p. 1)

Miss Hart died in Dallas, Texas, in 1935 at the age of ninety-six. Even in her late sixties and early seventies she was still preparing musical recitals with the young people of Abilene, and was still producing musical plays and operettas (5, March 26, 1935, p. 11).

One of the most popular music teachers in the history of Abilene probably stayed the shortest time in the city. Josef Rosenfeld arrived in Abilene in early 1909 and taught violin for one semester at Simmons College, and spent another two years teaching privately and concertizing in the area (3, August 15, 1911, p. 8).

Coming to Abilene directly from Vienna, Austria (3, August 15, 1911, p. 8), he spoke very little English and had a great deal of difficulty communicating with his students and fellow musicians. (See Figure 31, p. 211.) He was fascinated with the customs and trappings of West Texas, expressing the desire to take his first ride on a horse. Friends arranged a ride, and not knowing what to do or say when he got astride the animal, he used one of the few words of English he knew by saying, "Begin" (6).

Rosenfeld took in private students in the community even when he was a faculty member at Simmons College. After he resigned at Simmons, he greatly increased his private



Fig. 31--Josef Rosenfeld, 1909

student load, and spent two days a week at Stamford Collegiate Institute, about forty miles north of Abilene (3, September 4, 1909, p. 1).

During his first few months in Abilene, Rosenfeld practiced a great deal, adding to his repertoire and refining his technique. Through the assistance of friends he met Wilber McDonald, a pianist on the faculty of Fort Worth Polytechnic College. The two presented concerts and recitals together, usually assisted by a female singer. One of the first recitals took place at the Fort Worth Opera House on November 29, 1909. The program consisted of works by Mendelssohn, Bach, Vieuxtemps, Paganini, and D'rdla (3, November 28, 1909, p. 1).

He was engaged by Jesse French of Fort Worth to do a recital tour of cities between Dallas and El Paso. This tour was very successful, and his reputation grew with each performance. An audience of 500 heard him in Dallas during the late December tour. In January of 1910, he began the second half of his 1909-1910 private lesson schedule (3, January 5, 1910, p. 6).

In March of 1910, Rosenfeld performed at the "Sanger home" in Dallas, and was heard by a Mrs. Menger, who invited him to play for a reception in her home in the near future. He did basically the same program as he had done the past few months, and added compositions by Schubert and Tchaikowsky (3, March 27, 1910, p. 1).

Rosenfeld also performed locally as his schedule would permit. It was reported in April of 1910 that he had accepted a position at Fort Worth Polytechnic College as violin instructor. He assured Abilenians that he would honor his contract for the following year in the city (3, April 24, 1910, p. 1). His students performed the closing recital for the term on April 24, at the home of Mrs. Henry James (3, April 24, 1910, p. 3).

Rosenfeld went to Fort Worth to take up his duties there as violin teacher in the Fall of 1910. He came to Abilene on a regular basis to teach violin, keeping two places of residence, one in Abilene and one in Fort Worth. He performed several programs in Abilene during the season, usually in private homes. He left Abilene in August of 1911 for a short vacation before going to Fort Worth to take up permanent residence in that city (3, August 15, 1911, p. 8).

During his stay in Abilene, Rosenfeld made many friends of Abilene musicians. He made a strong enough impression on them to cause them to form a music club and name the club in his honor. The Rosenfeld Music Club was organized in October of 1909 at the Carnegie Library. The purpose of the club was to "build up in Abilene an appreciation of good music and to bring artists of renown" to the city. Mrs. Fred Cockrell, wife of a local attorney, first made the suggestion to name the club after Rosenfeld. Mrs. Morgan

Jones served as the first president of the organization, which met every other Wednesday at the library. Rosenfeld was made an honorary member, since "no male could have full and active membership" in the club (3, October 23, 1909, p. 1).

#### Summary

During the first few years of Abilene's existence, little time and effort was spent on things of a cultural nature. Small rooms were supplied with stages and chairs to provide facilities for local informal entertainments. In early 1885, four years after the birth of the city, Richard Maltbie, a District Judge from McKinney, Texas, constructed a two-story brick building on the west side of Pine Street. The upper floor housed Abilene's first opera house.

The Maltbie Opera House was converted into a grocery warehouse in late 1888, but Abilene was not without an entertainment hall. Lapowski Hall, over Sam Lapowski's store, served the city's entertainment needs until January of 1890. The hall, opened a few weeks before the Maltbie closed, was renovated by the Abilene Progressive Committee in late 1889, and renamed the Club Rooms. The hall closed in early 1891. About this same time a local military company opened a meeting place they called Armory Hall. In 1894, it was moved to a larger building, serving as an entertainment hall as late as 1899.

In February of 1892, a large opera house was opened at South First and Chestnut. The second-floor hall was part of a new complex of five brick buildings covering the entire block from Chestnut to Sycamore on South First Street. The building housed most of Abilene's entertainment activities until the second decade of the twentieth century.

The Abilene town band was first organized in 1883 to help promote the town during a county seat election. The band members made sporadic efforts to remain active during the town's early history, but usually met with apathy on the part of the townspeople.

The band was active for brief periods, then inactive for a few months. The members generally bought their own music, instruments, and uniforms. The group was instructed occasionally by a full-time director, but usually was only assisted by a local musician who was more experienced than the other members.

A number of private music teachers taught in Abilene after the city became firmly established in the middle 1880's. They taught vocal and instrumental students in their homes or in studios across the city. The teachers gave regular recitals featuring their students on a variety of piano, guitar, mandolin, violin, and vocal music.

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## CHAPTER V

### RELIGIOUS MUSIC

As the taste for music of a more cultivated nature grew more dominant in the North and the East in the middle and late 1800's, the shape-note tunebooks flourished in the South and the Southwest. The pioneers who moved West to settle the frontier brought with them the simple tastes of music of a rural people. This music was joined with other types of religious song to form the basis of a unique style of music, that of the revivals and camp meetings of the Southwestern United States (13, p. 97). Abilene's religious music was much like that of neighboring towns and states, having been fostered by the same elements.

Early Abilene's religious views were as varied as its inhabitants. There were citizens who promulgated puritanical concepts living near those who professed no religious belief whatsoever. Pistol toting cowboys and tightly corsetted "school marms" adopted a "live and let live" attitude.

Most of the citizens of this newly formed community, however, were not hesitant to let their views about religion be known. It was not long after the community was established that several churches were organized and thriving.

Religious meeting places were erected even before the entertainment needs of the general populace were discussed.

The Presbyterians were the first group to organize their church and meet regularly. Other congregations soon followed, having small memberships at first, but enjoying enthusiastic services. All of the religious groups did not meet on a regular basis in the early years of the city, since preachers were not readily available and meeting places were not plentiful.

The Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Christians, Presbyterians, and Catholics met in homes or at school buildings on an irregular basis until buildings could be constructed to house worshippers. The Catholics had Mass when a priest could come to Abilene. The congregations who were able to build shared their facilities with those who were unable to erect a building.

In spite of the efforts of a few faithful religious groups, Abilene was still a young, boisterous, prairie town with a generous measure of lawlessness, gunfights, and fun-loving ranch hands. One of the citizens of Buffalo Gap wrote a letter in November of 1881 to the Texas Baptist Herald, stating:

I was never in a country where Gospel preaching was needed as bad as it is in this part of Texas. There is no regular preaching there, and I think there have been few, if any, sermons preached by Baptist ministers in the town of Abilene up to the present time (21, December 8, 1881, p. 3).

By early 1884, three churches had buildings in Abilene, one stone and two frame. Besides the Methodist Church, the Baptists and the Episcopalians had built sanctuaries (2, October 26, 1913, p. 9). In spite of the new meeting places, some of the groups still did not meet on a regular basis.

The cooperation of the different denominations extended at times beyond the sharing of buildings, as it was also common to share members and instruments. In spite of the cooperation between the different religious factions, however, there was still a competitive spirit over matters of doctrine.

As Abilene's population swelled, the scourge of the religious community continued to be the saloons, but the two factions coexisted. Most of the church groups were active in revival meetings and camp meetings to try to bring in the wayward cowboys and saloon visitors.

At times one could see a strange mixture of the life of a ranch hand and religious music. In the June 26, 1891 issue of the Taylor County News, the cowboy was given a simple solution to the problem of stampedes: "Singing hymns will prevent cattle stampedes. Even the most 'lawless and rough' cowboy knows a variety of hymns" (20, June 26, 1891, p. 8).

#### Singing Schools and Singing Conventions

Singing schools were popular throughout the Southwest until they were gradually replaced by more organized systems

of music education such as public school music and private teachers. This change took place about the middle of the 1800's, but in many areas of the country the singing schools continued well into the twentieth century. The singing schools were as important socially as they were musically.

L. B. Shook, president of the Texas Normal Music School and later editor of the Abilene Daily Reporter, was a frequent visitor to Abilene in the 1880's and 1890's. He held classes for singers of all ages during his visits, and also led singing at Baptist revivals. In a rare copy of an 1884 edition of the Abilene Daily Quill, one of Shook's early day singing schools was advertised. The class was held at the local Baptist Church. The short article stated that the class would "not only help the young people in an instructive way, but gives them a profitable way to spend their evenings" (1, October 4, 1884, p. 8).

Sometimes the singing school teachers traveled in pairs, as in the case of the Webb Brothers, popular singing school teachers of the 1890's (6), and "Professors Thompson and Lawson," who held an all-day singing class in Abilene on Sunday, December 1, 1892 (20, November 25, 1892, p. 5). Also popular in the Abilene area as singing instructors were Professor J. S. Million, music teacher at Buffalo Gap College, and J. H. Lucas, director of the Abilene town band.

The early singing schools were generally not devoted entirely to religious matters. They were as much secular as they were sacred in their pursuits. Tommie Clack stated that the singing school was the only place in town where one could sing with a group and get a good foundation in music education at the same time (6).

Miss Clack recalled that the singing school teachers were usually itinerant musicians who would stay about two weeks in the city and teach the schools for a given amount for each student, usually a few dollars for the entire course. Sometimes at the end of the lessons, the teacher would take up an offering which would be his pay for the classes. When the school closed, the teacher would depart the city and begin another school in the next town (6).

The singing schools were held in church buildings, school rooms, a convenient vacant building, or even outside. In 1897 a singing class was conducted in the Southside School house during the summer vacation. The teacher, Professor Turner, invited the citizens of Abilene to be present at the closing exercises of the school at four o'clock on the afternoon of July 23 (3, July 30, 1897, p. 4).

Emmett Rippetoe (1894- ) recalled the singing schools he attended as a small boy in the Abilene area, having grown up in one of the many small communities that dot the countryside. He remembered the circuit riders who taught singing

schools. These men would ride from community to community on horseback and recruit a class of students and stay two or three weeks, teaching lessons each evening and helping out around the farms during the day. The families in the community would take turns housing and feeding the singing teacher, the room and board being part of his pay. Rippetoe stated that the same teacher would come about the same time each year, and that students of all ages looked forward to the social aspects of the classes as well as the instructive part of the event (17).

Some of the better known singing teachers had rather auspicious sounding titles for their singing schools. A. J. Showalter, a well known hymn writer and singing teacher, called his classes the "Southern Normal Musical Institute" when he visited Abilene early in 1904. His approach was to feature not only the "simple tuneful songs for those who do not appreciate the severely classical style," but also "higher grade numbers for those whose taste is in keeping with such music." The review of the closing exercises of his school stated, "The singing in the closing concerts of Professor Showalter's normals always comes as a revelation to many as to what can be done in a few weeks" (2, May 30, 1904, p. 2).

W. H. Free, who later taught the first sightsinging classes at Childers Classical Institute (See Chapter III),

was active in teaching singing schools in the area. He and an associate taught the shape-note method, as did most of the other singing school teachers. Like many other singing schools, Free's classes were called the "Normal Music School." (See Figure 32, p. 225.)

Another such school was the "H. N. Lincoln West Texas Branch Session of the Western Normal College of Music," offering "a rare opportunity to learn how to sing well." The school began June 5, 1905, in the Lyceum Opera House and closed June 27 with a "grand vocal concert." Lincoln himself was from Dallas, but the ad listed a local piano salesman and amateur musician, Z. D. Hailey, as secretary of the organization (2, May 24, 1905, p. 3).

In May of 1907, S. D. Jobe, local amateur musician, and several others organized a singing school at the new Baptist Church at Oak and South Eighth Streets. The school was to convene "immediately after the public schools close." R. H. Wood was brought in from out of town to teach the classes which were held daily at two and eight o'clock. It was reported that forty-eight pupils signed up for the lessons and more were expected (2, May 28, 1907, p. 2).

Emmett Rippetoe remembered that the singing school teachers usually brought their own materials when they visited a community. The course of study could generally be a hymn book, possibly one of the teacher's own





Fig. 32--W. H. Free and singing school, 1904



publications or a book he would sell to the students in the class. At times a familiar book was used in the class and the title was indicated in the newspaper advertisement. If the students already owned the book, they could bring it to class with them (17).

One of the most popular books of the time was the Sacred Harp. Singers would meet on weekends for Sacred Harp conventions, singing exclusively out of that book for one or two days. One such convention was held in Abilene in May of 1908 (2, May 15, 1908, p. 8).

As Abilene grew larger and the musical tastes of the city grew more urbane, fewer singing schools were held in the city. The small communities surrounding the city, however, were quite active in continuing the singing school and singing convention tradition. In the early 1900's an organization called the Taylor County Singing Convention met regularly in these small hamlets a few miles from the city. Abilene citizens who enjoyed good singing were regular visitors at these singings. The convention met on a regular basis at Moro, Elmdale, Tuscola, Iberis, Nugent, Pleasant Hill, Stith, Guion, or Potosi, to name a few.

On one such occasion at the Presbyterian Church in the community of Iberis in April of 1910, A. D. Stevens of Abilene served as president of the convention. He also represented Abilene as the leader of that city's "class,"

or group of singers. The convention lasted two days, beginning at noon on Saturday, and concluding late the following day. The Abilene Daily Reporter sent Samuel L. Neeley, a solicitor and part-time writer, to cover the event. The article written by Neeley offers a brief glimpse at some of the activities which took place at these singing conventions.

The article stated that the conventioners sang from noon Saturday to late in the evening, and met again after "dinner on the grounds" the next afternoon. According to Neeley the house was packed again for the Sunday afternoon singing. The entire group sang "Amazing Grace," after which

. . . .the old people spent one hour singing from the four-note books they used a half century ago, and while it was very amusing to the younger people, it carried the grandfathers and grandmothers back to their younger days when they gathered at the little log church on the banks of the creek in some of the old states, or around the hearthstone of some neighbor and there sang do, re, me [sic], fa, so, la, ce [sic], do, and tears of joy not sadness, could be seen trecking [sic] down their furrowed cheeks (2, April 18, 1910, p. 3).

One of the most bizarre impromptu community singings in the history of Abilene took place in November of 1891. A man named W. H. Frizzell had been tried and convicted for murdering his wife in Comanche County, Texas. The trial, on a change of venue to Abilene, resulted in a sentence of hanging.

A crowd of about 2,000 came to witness the event, which took place near the Taylor County Courthouse. After being

led in "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" by the Baptist preacher, the group of spectators heard Frizzell's "last words," a half-hour rambling speech. At the conclusion of his talk, he requested that someone in the crowd sing "There's Never a Day So Sunny." The entire group sang the song for him after which he said, "That's good," and was promptly hanged (20, November 27, 1891, p. 6).

#### Music in Church Societies

Church related "societies," made up of young people of the different churches, were extremely popular in the early years of Abilene. These groups were organized primarily to meet the social, literary and cultural needs of the younger church members.

Generally female, the groups would meet in various homes and study, have discussions, or as in the case of most of the meetings, have a musical program. More often than not the meetings would take the form of "entertainments" to which young men would be invited to hear the young ladies render vocal and instrumental solos and duets, recitations, and chorus numbers.

At times the groups would give the entertainments at the church building and a small admission fee would be charged, usually to benefit the church or the society.

The Rosebud Society, affiliated with the Methodist Church, was a popular group of young ladies of the 1880's

in Abilene. They met in homes or at the church, depending on the function and the crowd expected. Typical of the entertainments offered by this group was the one in the home of Mrs. Sam Lapowski on March 30, 1888. They performed musical numbers to a sizable crowd in the home, and served "chocolate, cake, ambrosia, and tea" after the performance, netting twenty-three dollars for the church fund (20, March 23, 1888, p. 4).

Another society made up of young people from the Baptist Church was a group that called themselves the Daughters of the King. The Reapers represented the Christian Church, and the Epworth League (admitting both sexes) was sponsored by the Methodist Church.

The groups rarely performed religious music at the programs, but probably because they were designed as socials and entertainments for the purpose of fund raising. The Gleaners, representing the Presbyterians, presented a program in early 1888 at the home of Henry Sayles. It shows a typical sampling of the type of entertainment offered by these religious societies.

Charade-"The Only Young Man in Town," by the Society and Mr. Brady Huston.

Piano Solo-Miss Emma Sayles, "Over There."

Recitation-Miss Bessie McAlpine.

Vocal Solo-Mr. C. Donnell.

Tableau-The Forward and the Backward Girl of the Season.

Piano Solo-Miss Roberta Parker.

Recitation-Mr. Lawrence Selfridge.

Song-Mrs. Van Ness Lewis.

Tableau-The Ladies' Terror (20, January 6, 1888, p. 4).

A distinctive feature of this entertainment was the fact that there were several adults and young men involved in the program who were assisting the society. These non-members were apparently enlisted to give the program the variety it would lack if only the young ladies of the society performed.

The Epworth League, a literary, musical, and social society sponsored by the Methodist Church, was the only society which used music of a more serious nature in their meetings. The league used quite a bit of religious music, as well as recitations that were not as frivolous as those done by the other societies.

On November 6, 1892, the Epworth League gave an entertainment at the Methodist Church. The program was entirely religious and the public was invited to attend the free concert.

Doxology-By the League  
 Prayer-Rev. S. R. Ray  
 "Flee as a Bird" Quartette [sic], Miss Young and  
 Taylor and Messrs. Boone and Rollins  
 "The Lord is My Shepherd"-Bahnn-Miss Ida Lee  
 Recitation-"Asleep at the Switch" Miss Clara Harle  
 "Calvary"-Rodney-Mr. Boone  
 Trio-"Forsake Me Not"-Mrs. C. Evans, Miss Taylor,  
 Mr. Rollins  
 Solo-Mrs. Cockrell  
 Address-Mr. J. E. Cockrell  
 Quartette [sic]-Mrs. C. Evans, Miss Hart, Messrs.  
 Boone and Mackechney  
 "Nearer My God to Thee," Benediction, By All (3,  
 November 6, 1892, p. 5).

In August of 1897, a convention of these societies was held at the Abilene Baptist Church. A music committee was appointed to bring the best "entertainment" to the convention. The Union Convention of Young People met for three days and featured solos, duets, trios, quartets, congregational singing and songs by a choir. These were sprinkled liberally throughout the services (3, August 13, 1897, p. 5).

#### Music of the Churches

Many of the churches in the early history of Abilene kept no written records of their activities. Very few first hand accounts exist regarding music in these churches during the first thirty years of the city's existence. Scattered newspaper accounts of church activities, secondary sources, and a few personal reminiscences constitute most of the information available regarding religious music in Abilene from 1881 to 1911.

Most of this information concerns the entertainments that the various churches sponsored for fund raising purposes. Not only were the young people of the church societies regularly involved with presenting fund raising entertainments, but the general membership of the churches seemed to be preoccupied with raising money for buildings or other special activities.

These were advertised as entertainments, concerts, or musicales. The organization and implementation of these

programs was usually undertaken by a group of females in the church. These groups were commonly called Ladies Aid Societies and almost every religious organization had such a group. These ladies aid groups sponsored many musical programs over the years and raised large amounts of money for their congregations. The societies produced performances of secular and religious cantatas, done in costume and staged in one of the entertainment halls of the city.

Six major religious bodies met regularly in the city during the first thirty years of the city's history. These groups - Baptist, Catholic, Christian or Church of Christ, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Presbyterian - built places of worship relatively early in the history of Abilene and were a viable part of the town's social, cultural, and economic growth.

#### Baptist Church

In December of 1881, O. C. Pope, Superintendent of Missions for the Southern Baptist Association, traveled through West Texas. His task was to encourage those of the Baptist faith and to establish congregations where there were none. Baptists in Abilene were notified of a meeting to be held in the school building. It was at this meeting, which Pope chaired, that the First Baptist Church of Abilene was established (21, January 19, 1882, p. 1).

The Baptists completed their church building in late 1883, the second house of worship to be constructed in the city. A report from the deacons of the church dated December, 1884, stated that the congregation still owed \$800 on the \$3,500 structure (10, bk. 1, p. 18). This frame building stood at North Fourth and Cedar until late 1911, when it was torn down and replaced by an apartment house (2, October 22, 1911, p. 3).

Music is seldom mentioned in the Baptist Church minutes, but it played an important role in the development and growth of the church. An active Ladies Aid Society was organized early in the history of the church, and these ladies saw to the various needs of the church through fund-raising entertainments. Even before the building had been completed, the men of the church left the purchase of a bell, an organ, and a set of hymn books "entirely with the sisters of the church" (10, bk. 1, p. 8). In 1885, these ladies gave the "first entertainment of the season" as they presented a benefit concert at Montgomery Hall (20, April 3, 1885, p. 5).

In 1889, the hymnal question was brought up again by the business meeting of the church and a committee was appointed to look into the matter. J. G. Hill and "Sisters Peques and Radford" made up the committee, which was later expanded to include "Brethren Smith and Adair" (10, bk. 1, p. 89). The committee later reported that the Baptist Hymnal



was "most suitable," and the congregation adopted that book (10, bk. 1, p. 90). Two months later the committee reported that \$3.75 had been raised for the hymnal fund (10, bk. 1, p. 90).

Another fund-raising entertainment took place in April of 1890 when the Baptist ladies presented a performance at their building. The Sunday School of the church furnished the performers for the event (20, April 25, 1890, p. 5).

Before 1890, a church choir was organized at the Baptist Church. In November of 1890, some of the young men in the congregation suggested that they assist the choir by playing cornets in the worship. The issue caused some disagreement in the church, bringing about a trial period of three months for the instruments. This gave the members of the church an opportunity to "judge the merits and demerits of the cornets as an instrument of sacred music" (10, bk. 1, p. 117). In late January, the church voted to continue the use of the instruments (10, bk. 1, p. 120).

In the Summer of 1891, the Baptist Ladies Aid Society presented a musicale at the home of E. M. Boyd. It was referred to as "one of the most elegant entertainments of the season," and the report stated, "There were gathered together the beauty and talent of Abilene, filling the hour with music and song" (3, September 18, 1891, p. 4).

In early 1892, the church bought a new organ, the second in the history of the group (20, January 15, 1892, p. 4). At this time, G. A. Pearce was organist for the services (10, bk. 1, p. 119). Little can be found about the music activities of the church from the early 1890's until the early 1900's. In 1902, the church minutes began listing the organists who were to serve for the following year. Mrs. George S. Anderson was the church organist for 1902 and 1903, assisted by Miss Minnie Lindsey. Miss Lena Spaulding served as organist in 1904, and Miss Alice Cope was organist for 1905. For 1906, Mrs. George Anderson was named as organist.

In late 1905, the church minutes listed for the first time a music director for the church. Will Lackey was listed as leader of the church "quire" [sic]. Miss Lena Spaulding was listed as Sunday School organist and George A. Pearce's name was given as leader of the Sunday School "quire" [sic] (10, bk. 4, unpagged). In a treasurer's report in the Fall of 1906, Oscar Goodrich and Clay Lock were paid from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per month for "organ pumping" (10, bk. 4). For 1908, John Spaulding and Mrs. George Anderson were listed as "choir managers" (10, bk. 4). For 1909, J. Manley Morgan and A. Z. Morgan managed the choir (10, bk. 4). In late 1909, C. H. Lewis was elected as organist and choir manager (10, bk. 4). Lewis was in charge of music at Simmons College and was a popular Abilene musician. He remained as music director of the church for several years.

While Lewis was at the Baptist Church as music director, he designed an organ and supervised its installation. It arrived in October of 1910, and the process of installation took almost a month. The \$4,000 instrument was the "largest organ west of Fort Worth," and was seven feet deep, thirty feet wide, and eighteen feet high (2, October 15, 1910, p. 1). Lewis gave regular concerts on the 1,500 pipe instrument. After the organ was installed, a twelve-day "protracted meeting" began at the church (2, November 14, 1910).

Revival meetings were held annually at the Baptist Church. One of the largest was the one held in March of 1910. The music of the meeting was supervised by a Mr. and Mrs. Scholfield of Dallas. They presented solos and duets throughout each of the lessons presented at the meeting. C. C. Coleman, pastor of the church, wrote, "It will pay any singer in Abilene to attend the church and sing in the choir under the leadership of Mr. Scholfield" (2, March 3, 1910, p. 1).

#### Catholic Church

Catholic Church officials state that no Abilene church records exist for the Sacred Heart Catholic Church of the city. A few scattered newspaper articles reveal the only information about the music of the church in its early history. Edward Schroeder's thesis, "Sacred Heart and the Catholic Church in Abilene," concentrates only on the history

of the church from the standpoint of leadership of the parish. He relied heavily on national and state Catholic publications which list the priests that served in the various roles of leadership in the parish or diocese (19).

According to Edwin Cosby, there were a few Catholic families in the city of Abilene in the early 1880's, with visiting priests from the Dallas Diocese serving these Catholics from time to time. Mass was said in the courthouse, the school house, in city buildings, and in private business houses (7, p. 245). The first known priest to say Mass in Abilene was the Reverend Father Crowley (20, May 15, 1885, p. 5). According to Edward Schroeder, Crowley was the first priest to visit West Texas after the arrival of the railroad (19, p. 6).

In late 1887, members of the Catholic faith in Abilene "resolved a series of entertainments" to help them build a church building. The series began that evening, November 4, at the home of Theodore Heyck (20, November 4, 1887, p. 5). The Heyck family was one of the few Catholic families in the city. Among other families of the Catholic faith in the early years of the city were the James Condons, the John Hoenys, the Celeste Villaneuves, the S. L. Ralphs, the Gus Ackermans, the Clem Boultes, and John Clinton, the city marshall. Clinton's wife was a member of the First Christian Church.

These entertainments evidently helped toward the construction of the building, because on June 13, 1893, a "new" Sacred Heart structure was officially consecrated. A newspaper article stated, "Father Weeg celebrated High Mass with all the stately ceremonies of the mother church, and with accompanying song service which has been built up from the work of the greatest musicians who ever lived" (3, June 16, 1893, p. 8).

The report further stated that the building had been finished for about one year and that it would be under the pastorate of Father Coyne, who had already served in that capacity for about six months. Another account of the consecration said, "The services were quite impressive and the attendance large and appreciative" (20, June 16, 1893, p. 5).

It is not known when the building was first used, but the first record of its use was a "sacred concert" to benefit the church in October of 1892. The concert featured members of the Protestant groups throughout the city in a mixture of religious music and selections of European composers (3, October 21, 1892, p. 5).

Schroeder states that the original building had an organ (19, p. 13). We can assume this to be true, since small organs were easily bought. Annie Heyck was the first organist for the church, assisted by Mrs. C. Villeneuve. The church choir consisted of the soprano, alto, and tenor voices

of Miss May Moughn, Miss Hortense Boulte, and Mr. Gus Ackermans, respectively (3, June 16, 1893, p. 8). Miss Rose Hoeny also served as organist for the church on occasion (3, September 3, 1895, p. 5).

After 1895 no further mention is made about the Catholic Church in the pages of Abilene's newspapers until the early part of the 1900's. The church served the members of the Catholic faith quietly and without publicity.

#### Christian Church and Church of Christ

Members of the Christian Church were meeting in the city as early as 1885. They had no building or were not fully organized yet, but the Amateur Theatre Club performed the play, "My Brother's Keeper," for the benefit of the Christian Church in the Fall of 1885 (20, September 25, 1885, p. 5).

Another indication of their activity was an issue of a challenge for a debate on September 21, of the same year. Major W. E. Penn was in the city holding a revival for the Baptist Church and made some statements "concerning the faith claims and practice of the order known as the Christian Church or Church of Christ" (20, September 25, 1885, p. 4). William L. Gibbs and Henry A. Porter signed the debate challenge as Elders of the group.

Penn refused to debate, which may have spurred the Christian group into action. They mounted a "protracted" revival which began about two weeks later, held at the

courthouse for part of the meeting and also at the Methodist Church building. The meeting closed Wednesday, October 28, and prior to J. A. Lord's closing sermon a business meeting was held to "reorganize" the church and elect church officials. Mrs. Cora Young, organist for the Episcopal Church, played the organ for the revival (20, October 20, 1885, p. 4).

The group met in the school house at North Third and Cedar until 1886, when A. J. Bush held another Christian Church revival in a building borrowed from the Presbyterians. The Christians later bought the building and used it as a house of worship until 1902. The building was purchased with funds raised by the Christian Church Ladies Aid Society (4).

All records of the church's early history were destroyed by a fire in 1922. A few reminiscences of older members constitute practically all that remains of these records in the church files. The only information in these sparse records that pertains to music is the statement that the Ladies Aid Society was primarily responsible for keeping the church active after the group bought the property from the Presbyterians (4).

An entertainment in early 1886 at Montgomery Hall brought in \$14 for the ladies group (20, April 30, 1886, p. 5). Another entertainment was given in the hall in October of 1887 (20, October 14, 1887, p. 4). The group presented "Catching Kris Kringle," a Christmas cantata, at

the small frame building on December 24 of the same year, with an admission fee of ten cents (20, December 23, 1887, p. 4).

In 1888, several entertainments were given for the benefit of the church. These programs, usually held at the home of a church member, generally netted the church fund from \$10 to \$20. A typical performance was in July of 1888, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Newton Porter.

Overture (Instrumental) - Misses Nellie Morris and Lou Hart  
 Song and Chorus - Mr. Donnell and Chorus  
 Duet (Piano) - Misses Donnell  
 Solo (Vocal) - Mr. Ed Hughes  
 Solo (Piano) - Mrs. Villaneuve  
 Quartette [sic] - Misses Porter and Messrs. Stiles and Donnell  
 Solo (Vocal) - Mrs. Lewis  
 Duet (Piano) - Misses Nellie Morris and Hattie McElroy  
 Solo (Vocal) - Mr. Forbes  
 Solo (Piano) - Miss Eunice Parramore  
 Trio (Vocal) - Misses McConochie and Zena and Lillie Porter (3, July 16, 1888, p. 5)

A choir is seldom mentioned in the pages of the early newspapers, and when it is, it may have consisted of only three or four voices. The first mention of a choir at a Christian Church service was a special Christmas program on December 24, 1889. After several solos and ensemble numbers, the choir sang "Christ Arose" (3, December 26, 1890, p. 3).

Like other congregations in Abilene, the Christian Church had regular revivals to bring in new members and to motivate the old ones. In 1898, a large tent was erected on the church lot and the "best singers in the city" were



recruited. Those in charge promised "good music to those who attend" (20, September 16, 1898, p. 3).

In 1904, two years after the old building had been greatly enlarged, another revival was held, for which the church brought in a special music director. The report stated, "Brother Fitz is rapidly getting his singers together," and that the group was showing "rapid improvement." The article also reported, "Brother Fitz needs singers; whomsoever will may come and help" (2, May 12, 1904, p. 2).

These yearly revivals grew in size and scope. Singers performed with orchestras and with band instruments. In May of 1910, a Prof. Daugherty sang illustrated songs at every service. At one of the sermons he sang, "Throw out the Life Line" and illustrated it with a stereoptican (2, May 6, 1910, p. 1).

No records could be found of church organists, music directors, or choir members of the Christian Church. The fact that music was important to them is made clear by the inclusion of music, both sacred and secular, in their activities in and out of the church building.

By the early 1900's there were several in the city who did not believe in using instrumental music in their worship services. In October of 1903, this group bought a six-room house at South Sixth and Chestnut and removed the interior walls, fashioning a small church auditorium. On the second

Sunday in November, the group formally organized as the Church of Christ of Abilene (15, p. 10). The group was still confused with the Christian Church and was referred to as the "Christian Chapel" (2, January 7, 1905, p. 3).

After Childers Classical Institute opened in 1906, the group sold the house for \$1,000 and met each Sunday in the auditorium of the college through a special arrangement with college officials. The president of the college served as the preacher for the congregation, which was known as the "College Church of Christ" (7, p. 242).

The congregation had no organist or pianist, and did not have a choir or soloists who performed at worship services. Congregational singing was the only type of music performed at the services, and the skill of the song leader was important for a successful song service.

W. H. Free, who later became a trustee and a part-time teacher of sight singing at Childers Institute, became a member of the College Church in 1905. (See Figure 10, p. 95.) Widely known as a song leader, Free led singing for the group for forty-two years (15, p. 11). He was also active as a soloist and leader in community musical activities.

#### Episcopal Church

In 1876, John Trent built a log cabin in Callahan County at a site which later became the Dudley Community, seventeen miles southeast of Abilene. Other English families soon

moved to the area and established homes. In February of 1878, Rev. Alexander C. Garrett began holding religious services in the cabin, and later under a brush arbor built near the cabin (7, p. 224).

When Abilene was established in 1881, the place of worship was moved to the new town, specifically to the school house. Episcopal church records relate a baptism in August of 1883 at the "school house on Pine Street" (8). This is evidently an error, since there was only one school building on the north side of town, at Third and Cedar.

In 1882, a woman from Massachusetts offered \$1500 to the first Episcopal congregation to build a stone church between Fort Worth and El Paso. The Abilene contingent of Episcopalians met the challenge and built the first church in Abilene constructed of permanent materials (7, p. 224).

The history of the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, as it was called, has been researched and the findings reveal much about the church. However, knowledge of musical events in the church's history is woefully inadequate. The early Episcopalians were not as active in producing benefit entertainments as were the other religious bodies of Abilene.

Mrs. Cora Young was the first known organist of the church. In October of 1885, she played the organ for a group of worshippers who later called themselves the First Christian Church (20, October 30, 1885, p. 4). At that time, Miss

Bettie McConochie, who was also a teacher of third graders at the public school, was the music director for the church, assisted by a local hardware dealer, E. S. Hughes (7, p. 227).

Miss McConochie was among a trio of young Episcopalian musicians who married Englishmen. She married John Eaton, and the couple moved back to England. Two other young ladies were Elsie Buell, who married G. O. Cresswell, and Fannie Torrey, who married F. C. Digby-Roberts. Both of these couples eventually settled in Abilene. Mr. Digby-Roberts occasionally played violin with the church choir (7, p. 227).

Two of these weddings are recorded in the Abilene Reporter, and the accounts tell us something about the musicians who performed for the church. The McConochie-Eaton wedding took place in 1894 at the church building. The wedding march was played on the organ by Mrs. O. P. Spaulding, assistant organist for the church (3, February 16, 1894, p. 1).

The Buell-Cresswell wedding was one of Abilene's grandest social events of the year 1898. Mrs. E. G. Batjer played the organ and Mary Motz performed on the violin. A choir sang "To Thee Our Father Throned on High," "O Perfect Love," and "Lord and Life" during the ceremony. Miss Motz played Bragas' "Angelo Serenade" for the bridal party, accompanied by Mrs. Batjer (3, September 9, 1898, p. 4).

Mrs. Batjer, nee Lillian Young, was a former member of the Methodist Church. She joined the Episcopalians after she married Ernest Batjer in 1892, and served for many years as organist for the church and spiritual leader of the female contingent of that religious group. Miss Motz was a popular musician in Abilene who later married Col. W. D. Willis.

In June of 1910, another wedding took place at the Episcopal building. Miss Helen Lipscomb married Mr. Cecil Williams. A sixteen member choir, accompanied by Mrs. Batjer on the organ, sang for the nuptials. The choir, ten females and six males, included Mrs. Cresswell, MacAlexander, Franks, Wilcox, Bentley, and Scott; Misses Batjer, Hardwicke, and Colquitt; and Mr. Franks, Simmons, Donnell, Isaacs, Motz, and Scott (2, June 12, 1910, p. 2).

Other organists who served the church during the early years were Thomas Hood Simpson, Kjalmar Berg, Hugh Wadill, and Mrs. Carson (18, p. 64). Mr. C. H. Balmen served as organist for the church for a short time, but moved from the city in late 1887 (20, November 11, 1887, p. 4).

The Episcopal group was not as large as some of the other faiths in Abilene. The ladies were not as active in producing entertainments, but they still occasionally presented musical concerts to raise money for a special need. On May 10, 1889, thirty-five young ladies, pupils of Miss Zona Crawford, presented a secular cantata to benefit the

rectory fund of the church. The name of the cantata is not known, but a review of the performance said, "At Lapowski Hall last week, the pretty butterflies crowned the rose, and the rose was chosen queen of flowers." The entertainment netted the church fund \$97 (20, May 17, 1889, p. 4).

The church choir was active almost from the beginning, even though their numbers were small. The group was reported to be practicing regularly to prepare a Christmas concert to be given at the church in 1890 (3, October 31, 1890, p. 5).

In late February of 1908, a report stated that the choir had been rehearsing for a special choral service to take place at the church the following Sunday. The report said, "The choir has recently been strengthened by the addition of some splendid voices." The program was as follows:

Processional, "Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart"...Messiter  
 The Lord's Prayer.....Stainer  
 Gloria Patri.....Danks  
 Gloria in Excelsis.....Ellmanger  
 Bonum Est.....Danks  
 Benedol.....Danks  
 Creed.....Stainer  
 "He That Hath Pity on the Poor".....Danks  
 Hymn, "Rise Crowned with Light".....Lwoff  
 Offertory - Trio from Elijah  
 Hymn, "Now the Day is Over"  
 Postlude, "The Choir Invisible".....Gray  
 (2, February 29, 1908)

In June of 1908, Ernest Rudd Allman came to Abilene to serve as rector of the church. He was interested in church music and, with the assistance of Mrs. E. G. Batjer, formed the first vested choir at the Church of the Heavenly Rest.

Potter quotes the Journal of the Fourteenth Annual Council of the Dallas Diocese when he states, "The choir has been drilled to a high degree of efficiency and the services are conducted in a reverent and dignified manner" (16, p. 58). On Easter Sunday, 1911, the vested choir was featured in a variety of hymns and anthems (2, April 17, 1911, p. 1).

#### Methodist Church

In November of 1881, Rev. George W. Riley was assigned to the Belle Plaine District of the Northwest Texas area of Methodist Churches, which included Abilene (7, p. 192). The Methodists were organized prior to December of 1881, because O. C. Pope mentioned the hospitality of the Methodists during his trip to Abilene to organize the Baptists during that month (21, January 19, 1882, p. 1).

The Methodists were granted the status of a "station," that is, having a full-time pastor, in the Fall of 1883. A new church building had just been completed, the first house of worship in Abilene. The small frame structure was located in the second block of Butternut Street, a few hundred feet from the Texas and Pacific tracks (7, p. 192).

The women of the church soon organized a Ladies Aid Society and began giving musical programs to raise money for church purposes. One of the first such programs was presented at the courthouse Wednesday, July 1, 1885. The Maltbie Opera House on Pine Street was still under

construction, so a stage was built in the courthouse to elevate the performers (20, June 25, 1885, p. 5).

The ladies of the Methodist Church held many entertainments during the early years of the city, as did the ladies of the other churches in the city. One of the largest entertainments was the performance of a secular cantata entitled "The Cadets' Picnic." The performance took place at Lapowski Hall in August of 1889, and was assisted by the Abilene Light Infantry and the town band. The program netted the church \$70 (20, August 16, 1889, p. 1).

The ladies of the church, young and old, raised money for the church by producing operettas, musicales, sacred and secular concerts, and plays. In September of 1890 the ladies gave a musicale and fruit supper at the home of Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Bass (3, September 5, 1890, p. 1). In April of 1891, the Busy Bees, a society of young Methodist women, entertained at the Swenson home on Cypress Street. An admission fee of fifteen cents was charged (20, April 3, 1891, p. 4).

The members of the Methodist Church loved to sing and loved to hear good singing. When the church was only a few years old, regular Sunday afternoon singings were held at the little frame building (20, March 27, 1885, p. 5).

The Methodist Church, like most churches in the late 1890's, did not provide hymn books for the convenience of the worshippers. Instead, each member owned his own copy of



the Methodist Hymnal. These books were carried back and forth like personal bibles, and were also used in the homes for occasional parlor singing. In 1889, the Taylor County News carried an advertisement stating that the new Methodist hymn books were on sale at Bass Brothers' Drug Store (20, August 23, 1889, p. 5).

The Methodists had yearly revivals during the city's early history, which seemed to increase in size each year. The meetings were generally held outside in the summer months, and usually took place under a large tent, or "tabernacle." A summer revival of 1896 was held in August and lasted two weeks. For the opening service on Sunday, August 16, nearly 400 people jammed the tabernacle and were treated with an opening choir number, "Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide." A report stated, "Mrs. Boone's cornet led the choir in the opening song." A portable organ had been placed on the platform (3, August 21, 1896, p. 7).

After a few years in the original building, a new building was erected close by and a parsonage was built at the site of the first building. In the early 1900's, several thousand dollars were expended on renovations and additions to the church complex. The Methodists were not only the first to construct a church building in the city's history, but also the first to construct a new building at the site of the first building.

In early 1910 an effort was begun to raise money for a pipe organ for the church, to cost \$3000. The ladies of the church started the fund drive with a performance of a musical play, "Uncle Barnaby's Nephew," which netted the fund \$175. For several years the organ was called the "Watson Memorial Pipe Organ" (2, April 5, 1910, p. 1), reportedly because Mrs. M. A. Watson sold her personally owned horse and carriage to help make a down payment on the instrument. According to Edwin Cosby, the organ was not ordered until October of 1912 (7, p. 197).

Entertainments for the organ fund continued. In June of 1910, a tea was held in the home of Mrs. W. H. Barnett. Six musical selections were rendered by young ladies of Abilene.

Vocal Solo.....	Miss Mamie Tillett
Piano Solo.....	Miss Aleta Garrison
Vocal Solo.....	Miss Ara Barnett
Piano Solo.....	Miss Nettie Tillett
Vocal Solo.....	Miss Hardwicke
Piano Solo.....	Miss Emma Simpkins (2, June 12, 1910, p. 2)

One of the performers at this musicale, Miss Aleta Garrison, now Mrs. Morris Jessup of Little Rock, Arkansas (1892- ), said that these entertainments were quite common, not only in private homes but in the entertainment halls and in the church building. She stated that as soon as she was old enough to play in public, she was busy with performances of this nature (14).

Mrs. Jessup also played the organ for the worship services of the church, beginning about 1905. She and a close friend, Nettie Tillett, shared the duties of organist. Henry Tillett, younger brother of Nettie and Mamie Tillett, also helped with the worship services when he was young. According to Tillett, he would usually help pump the organ used before the acquisition of the pipe organ (22).

Both Tillett and Mrs. Jessup remembered the musical portion of the worship services of the Methodist Church in the early 1900's. Mr. Tillett recalled the favorite soloist of the congregation, Mrs. Henry Bass. (See Figure 29, p. 203.) Mrs. Bass, a private music teacher in Abilene for many years, had a "lovely soprano voice," according to Tillett, and was a regular member of the choir (22).

Mrs. Jessup also remembered Mrs. Bass as being asked to sing a solo with the choir "almost every Sunday." She recalled the choir as being "very small by today's standards." She stated that the choir was usually made up of eight or ten members, but "never more than a dozen" (14).

Mrs. Jessup said that the choir director of the church did not direct the choir, but helped the members learn the music at choir practice. She stated that the director did not stand in front of the group at the worship service, but usually stood with the group and sang one of the parts and occasionally sang a solo (14).

She stated that the choir did very few anthems or difficult selections, and usually sang the choir specials from the same hymn book as the congregation used. She said the organ used for the worship was a small parlor organ until the church bought the large pipe organ (14).

In late 1908, the first Methodist Church had plans for a new church building. Bishop S. Key was invited to Abilene to confer about the matter, suggesting that a new congregation be established on the north side of town. Some opposition was raised, since pledges had already been received for the new building to house the First Methodist group. Some withdrew their pledges, but enough had been raised to let a contract in October of 1909 for St. Paul Methodist Church, to be located at North Fifth and Beech (7, p. 202).

In April of 1910, it was reported that regular Saturday evening choir practice was being held in the basement of the unfinished structure (2, April 26, 1910, p. 2). In May of the same year, a second performance of "Uncle Barnaby's Nephew," with the same cast as had performed to raise money for the First Methodist Church, was given to raise funds for an organ for the new Methodist congregation (2, May 3, 1910, p. 12).

E. H. Boone, a long-time Abilene musician, was placed in charge of the music at the new church. (See Figure 26, p. 188.) He had organized the choir earlier and it was

reported that he was making an effort to create a permanent double male quartet to perform for the worship services (2, February 5, 1911, p. 10).

The choir practiced regularly for the Easter Sunday, 1911, opening of the new building. Under Boone's direction, the choir and male singers were an important part of the service.

"Joy to the World" - Choir  
 "The Old Easter Anthem" - Choir  
 "Oh, Glorious Morn" - Messers. Cullom, Miller,  
 McDaniel, Arnold, Russell, Davidson, Boone  
 Scripture Lesson  
 Instrumental Offertory - Mrs. A. B. Waldron  
 Sermon  
 Prayer  
 Hymn - "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" -  
 Congregation (2, April 17, 1911, p. 4)

#### Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian group was the fourth religious body in Abilene to build a house of worship. Ground was broken on Saturday, August 1, 1885, for their building. It was located on Cedar Street, near the Baptist Church (20, August 7, 1885, p. 7).

The Presbyterians have kept accurate records of their activities since their first meeting in a tent early in 1881. Books of weekly Presbyterian Session Minutes have been preserved and reveal much about musicians in the church's history.

W. A. Minter, who was present at the first service in February of 1881, is the first known music director for the

church. He was also serving as a Ruling Elder of the church when he was appointed as music director in early 1887 (11, bk. 1, p. 59). Miss Roberta Parker is the first known organist for the group (20, January 6, 1888, p. 4).

In June of 1888, P. S. Kauffman was received into the church. Kauffman had been in Abilene since 1884 and was a member of the town band. Four days after he had joined the Presbyterians, he was appointed as music director of the church (11, bk. 1, p. 76). He and his brother Dave owned a saddle and harness shop in the city.

Soon after Kauffman began serving as music director of the church a series of "sacred concerts" began, sponsored as fund raising activities by the church. These concerts took place on a regular basis, either at the small frame church building or at one of the existing entertainment halls. Typical of their concerts was the one in April, 1889, given at the church building on Sunday evening.

Recitation-Helen Kerr  
 Quartette [sic]-Misses Mazie Sacree and Neva Parker,  
 and Mr. P. S. Kauffman and Dr. Stiles  
 Reading-Mrs. Cyrus Odom  
 Solo-Miss Bettie McConochie  
 Recitation-Miss Bessie Gatlin  
 Chorus  
 Recitation-Miss Mollie Butler (20, April 29, 1889, p. 5)

These early concerts were presented primarily for the purpose of raising money for the Ladies' Missionary Society of the church. In July, 1889, the ladies presented a cantata entitled "The Building of a Missionary Ship." The performance

was given at Lapowski Hall and admission was twenty-five and fifty cents. Ice cream and cake were served to the audience after the performance (3, July 26, 1889, p. 6).

The first organist to be mentioned in the Session Minutes was Alice Crawford (11, bk. 1, p. 99). She had taken part in earlier entertainments for the church. She was elected to the position of organist in June of 1889, and moved to Gatesville in October of that same year (11, bk. 1, p. 103).

In January of 1890, it was reported that several church members and even some church officers had joined a recently formed dance club. The practice of dancing was looked upon with disfavor by the Ruling Elders, and in session adopted a resolution which let the erring members know how the church elders felt about dancing (11, bk. 1, p. 113).

In July of 1890, an effort was made to build up the membership of the church choir. Church officers made a list of musicians in the church and instructed the clerk of the business meeting to contact them.

The Clerk of the Session was instructed to invite in the name of the Session the following named persons to join the choir and assist in developing that part of the worship and Sunday School: Misses Roberta Parker, Nellie Parker, Hattie Sayles, Emma Sayles, Sallie Heitt, Maggie Heitt, [blank] Yeiser, [blank] Yeiser, [blank] Spivey, Carrie Page, Lois Minter, Madge Quales and Minnie Steffens, Mrs. [blank] Scheltman and Messrs. R. E. Edmison, C. Donnell, J.R. Railey, Ed Hines, [blank] Kavanaugh, and [blank] Yeiser.  
[signed] P. H. Carter, Clerk (11, bk. 1, p. 130).

The two Yeiser girls were Kathryn and Affie, who had recently moved to Abilene from Lancaster, Kentucky. Kathryn was to become a music teacher in the city and Affie a teacher of art. M. P. Kavanaugh was a member of the town band and local photographer. The Mr. Yeiser mentioned later became a city policeman and was probably the father of the two Yeiser girls.

In August of 1890, Kathryn Yeiser became the regular organist for the Presbyterian Church (11, bk. 1, p. 132). Four months later, Misses Roberta Parker and Alice Crawford were announced as organists for the church (3, December 26, 1890, p. 11). A few months later, P. S. Kauffman resigned as music director for the church after serving almost three years in that position (11, bk. 1, p. 144). No mention is made of his successor.

Miss Yeiser served intermittently as organist from late 1890 to 1897. Miss Carrie Page served as assistant organist for most of those years and in early 1897 was appointed as primary organist for the church (11, bk. 1, p. 210). She served one year without an assistant. In late 1897, Mrs. J. G. Lowden was appointed as organist, assisted by Miss Blanch Roberts (11, bk. 1, p. 215). Their roles were reversed for the year 1899 (11, bk. 1, p. 222). Miss Roberts served until 1905, when Miss Kate Burchard was appointed, assisted by Miss Bertie Blaine (11, bk. 2, p. 15, 20).



Hannie Hardie was appointed in 1909 (11, bk. 2, p. 63), and Bessie Ramsey served as organist beginning in 1911 (11, bk. 2, p. 70).

The choir of the Presbyterian Church, like other churches in the city, consisted of only a few singers. In 1895, a quartet of voices, made up of Roberta Parker, a Mrs. Massie, P. S. Kauffman and C. Donnell, sponsored a concert to raise money for church activities. The price of admission was "two tickets for a quarter." A reviewer of the program stated that the quartet made up the "nucleus of the choir." The newspaper reviews of these early concerts were usually very complimentary toward this type of program, but this review contained some rather pointed comments. After stating that the quartet of singers were "excellent timeists," [sic] the reviewer further stated, "Miss Parker disappoints in the solos. . . .Mrs. Massie needs to modulate in certain places her strong alto. . . .Messrs. Kauffman and Donnell need to have care lest they become mechanical" (3, April 5, 1895, p. 5).

In the early months of 1910, the first Presbyterian Church began a fund raising drive to erect a new building. Many entertainments were given throughout the year to help with construction costs. On Saturday, January 7, 1911, the cornerstone for the new building was laid at the northeast corner of North Second and Beech. P. S. Kauffman, who had

been reappointed to the position of music director of the church in 1897, was choir director of the church when construction began on the new building (11, bk. 1, p. 215).

In early 1885, a group calling themselves the Cumberland Presbyterian Church organized in the Baptist Church building and later held a meeting in the Methodist Church structure (20, March 27, 1885, p. 7). They later bought the Methodist building and worshiped in it until May of 1889, when they built a new building at South Third and Elm. The small choir of the church met on Saturday evening to practice for the service the following day (3, December 11, 1896, p. 6). In 1906, the congregation united with the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and became known as the Elm Street Presbyterian Church.

B. E. Looney, former Abilene High School principal, was the choir director of the church, assisted by the organist, Miss Emma Simpkins, a local private music teacher (8, p. 5). Looney was a popular musician in Abilene, once directing a large chorus made up of all the church choirs in the city. The occasion was a joint Thanksgiving religious service in 1909 (2, November 21, 1909, p. 11).

#### Summary

Even before Abilene officially became a city, religious groups were organizing in preparation for regular meetings.

By early 1884 three faiths had buildings, and two more were added by 1886. By 1892 the Catholics had finished their building.

Singing schools and singing conventions were popular in the early years of the city, but by the turn of the century these activities took place more and more in the rural areas and especially in the churches of the small communities that surround Abilene.

All churches except the Catholics had young people's societies which provided chaperoned parties and entertainments for the young population of each church. These societies, made up mostly of females, gave fund raising entertainments to help their churches.

All of the churches had a Ladies Aid Society or similar group to help with the different activities of the church. In some cases, these ladies kept the church alive not only by providing spiritual leadership, but by raising funds to help the churches meet their financial obligations.

Church records generally do not show details such as names of early music directors, organists, or choir members. The Presbyterian Church has the best preserved records in the city, and these minutes give a great many names of Presbyterian Church musicians. These records, combined with existing newspaper files, reveal much about music in the churches of early Abilene.

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## CHAPTER VI

### VERNACULAR MUSIC

The entertainment tastes of a small West Texas community in the early 1880's no doubt tended toward the simplistic. The population of Abilene was under 1000, and simple pleasures were treasured. Participants of entertainment activities usually involved fairly large groups. Travel was mostly by train, as the alternative involved long, rugged wagon rides over dusty, rutted lanes, and usually several days of travel were involved if the destination was more than forty or fifty miles away.

The closest large city was Dallas, and the annual Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition offered plenty of entertainment of all kinds. Large groups of people rode the train to Dallas each October to see the exhibits, take in the rides at the carnival, and hear groups like the "famous Cappa's Seventh Regiment Band," or "the renowned cornettist [sic] Professor A. Liberatti" (3, June 22, 1888, p. 4). Great singers also entertained at the fair, like "Madame Decca, the American Jenny Lind" (3, October 21, 1892, p. 3).

Those who stayed at home found other diversions, such as moonlight wagon rides to Lytle Lake, Abilene's first lake, or calling on favorite friends on New Year's day, a custom

in the 1880's and 1890's (3, June 23, 1899, p. 5). Will Young, a pioneer Abilenian, recalled on January 1, 1885, that he and some of his friends decided to "go calling." Instead of an expensive wagon, they hired a large freight wagon pulled by four gray mules, put on their "Sunday best," and visited all day, returning about midnight (2, February 12, 1909, p. 9).

Bicycling became quite a fad in the city in the 1890's. By the middle of 1896, there were fifty bicycles reported in Abilene. Ponies were frightened by the "new contraption," and a bicycle race was standard fare for a town gathering. One such race was held on the Fourth of July, 1898. The race began at North Fourth and Grape, then to North Second, left to Pine, North to Carrollton Street, west to Grape, and back to the starting point. Three times around this route made up over nine and one-half miles (3, July 1, 1898, p. 3).

A favorite musical pastime in early Abilene was that of "serenading." There were several groups of men, usually quartets, that would rove around the city and entertain in various ways. Tommie Clack recalls many such groups. She stated that they would sing at parties, on election days, at town celebrations, after church, and at other town gatherings (4).

The main purpose of the serenaders was to entertain a particular lady, or group of ladies. In October, 1888, such

a group of musicians serenaded several "fair ladies" of Abilene with vocal and instrumental music. Theodore Heyck, L. Mosenbacher, Will Douglas, Will Flournoy, Frank Harden, George McCabe, Abdon Holt, and T. Lee Odom made up the party (3, October 11, 1888, p. 8).

On one occasion, a group serenaded a "fair charmer" and discovered later that they had serenaded an empty house. The family had moved to another part of the city (10, December 1, 1893, p. 3). On another occasion two young ladies, not being presentable, sent out lemonade and cake to the group of serenaders at their window and discovered, much to their chagrin, that the group was serenading the black servant girl living in the home (3, August 7, 1896, p.

Not everyone, however, appreciated the efforts of these groups of singers. An article appeared in the July 24, 1896 issue of the Abilene Reporter which presented another side of the question.

While most people think there is nothing sweeter than music when wafted to them by the gentle zephyrs on a summer night, there are others in our city who consider serenaders intruders and last evening a party of serenaders were kindly invited not to return unless notified (3, July 24, 1896, p. 4).

All over America music of a vernacular nature was being passed off as "cultural" music. Child prodigies were very popular with audiences, and serious artists performed in front of sparse crowds if they did not have a "gimmick." In small towns like Abilene, serious music and vernacular



music were barely distinguishable until about the turn of the century. Touring artists were generally misunderstood as they presented music of the European masters. Pianist Anton Rubenstein toured America in the late 1800's, and in one of the smaller hamlets a well-meaning stagehand advised him to hurry and blacken his face or he would be late for the "show." During this same period a well-known concert pianist explained to a midwesterner that he had played a particular piano sonata, Opus 2, and the yokel exclaimed, "Oh, how wonderful! I just love opuses!" (5, p. 5). The musical tastes of early Abilene fit well into the mold of the general tastes of America in the 1880's.

In early 1881, Abilene consisted of a few tents and makeshift homes. There were tented saloons and bawdy houses, and these were practically the only places in town where entertainment music was performed. Mostly single men made up the audience in these houses. These places generally had a piano player or fiddler who would keep the constant sound of music over the noises of rowdyism and revelry. The music had a piquant effect on the overall demeanor of a cowboy or ruffian who had not heard the strains of music for months, or even years.

D. B. Corley, a former mayor of Abilene and later a Taylor County Judge, recalled in 1891, the town of Abilene ten years before. He stated that some of these men

had not seen the inside of a saloon for many years. Such a character, when he entered town, the first thing he would do would be to tank up on mean whiskey and when he heard music of any sort he felt that he was disgraced if he did not celebrate by shooting off his six-shooter, and in doing so to put out all the unnecessary lights in town. . . . (10, August 7, 1891, p. 8).

By 1883 there were twelve or fifteen of these houses of entertainment in the main section of town, many of them offering music and women to dance with, and some offering even more. They were called "red-light houses," or "disorderly houses," and were sources of constant trouble to officers of the law (10, August 14, 1891, p. 1).

As Abilene grew in population and the churches and other groups wielded more influence on the entertainment habits of the fledgling community, the saloons gradually lost their reputations as "entertainment centers" of Abilene. The construction of Abilene's first opera house in 1885 did a great deal to provide a place where all elements of the city could be entertained.

In the earlier years of the city, it was difficult to distinguish between music of a cultural nature and music that was merely meant to entertain. The Maltbie Opera House, and other music halls to follow, treated all "entertainments" as cultural events. It was not until the late 1890's that Simmons College began to feature true artists in recitals that appealed to the tastes of "classical" music lovers.

### Household Music

In the early days of the town's existence, home entertainments were quite popular. These were usually held in the large parlors of the more spacious homes. These homes had an organ or piano, and sometimes both. These home performances were usually held to benefit a church group or ladies club.

One such entertainment was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sayles in January of 1888. The "Gleaners," a church affiliated group, celebrated their second anniversary with a program of vocal solos, piano selections, recitations, tableaux, and charades. The admission fee was fifteen cents and the proceeds went to "church purposes." The local newspapers reported an almost constant schedule of this type of home entertainment, and usually included the fact that refreshments were to be served in conjunction with the program (10, January 6, 1888, p. 4).

After the turn of the century, one of the most beautiful and popular homes on the entertainment circuit was the home of John Guitar, located a few blocks from the downtown area on North First Street. It was known locally as the "Guitar Mansion." One such entertainment in the Guitar home was a "parlor play and entertainment" given in September of 1910. The first part of the program consisted of mandolin, piano, and vocal solos. The second part was the presentation of a parlor play (2, September 22, 1910, p. 4).

After the community became better established and quite a number of homes had been built, the social exchange of parties, club meetings, card games, informal dances, and other entertainment became a regular part of life in Abilene. As the young people of the city grew up in this atmosphere of informal entertainments, their desire to be a part of it filled the classes of music teachers all over Abilene, and as pianos became more readily available, the instruments began to appear in the smaller homes of the city.

Tommie Clack remembered that pianos were more difficult to acquire than organs in early Abilene. Not only were the organs lighter and more portable, she said, but they were less expensive to buy and keep up (4). An advertisement in a local Abilene newspaper in 1886 showed small parlor organs for as little as \$22, while pianos were selling for four or five times that amount (10, March 26, 1886, p. 3).

The music performed in the parlors of Abilene in those early years was whatever "hit songs" were popular in the nation, such as Civil War songs, the latest minstrel songs, and songs the popular singers of the day were performing. Lyon and Healy of Chicago advertised regularly in the Abilene newspapers, selling books of "college songs - seventy-four pieces of American, French, German, and songs of African origin."

The company also touted "modern singing methods, Easter music, and public school hymnals," as well as books entitled

"Merry Making Melodies," "Fresh Flowers," "Gems for Little Singers," and "Cantatas for Choral Societies" (10, April 13, 1885, p. 7). The parlor musician could also buy the latest sheet music at drug stores, jewelry stores, and book stores in Abilene. He could even buy sheet music at the office of the local newspaper (10, June 2, 1889, p. 1).

#### Local Entertainment

Besides the large number of entertainments in the homes of Abilene citizens, there was a great number of local musical productions in the various houses of entertainment in the city. These productions could be mounted on a much larger scale than the parlor presentations. The addition of scenery, lighting effects, a stage, and a large seating capacity was much more like real "show business" than the limited area of even the largest home.

One of the most popular entertainment genres of the day was the minstrel show. These shows, performed by both black and white entertainers, played to packed houses all over the United States. It was rare for a community to be without minstrel performances in the local entertainment halls. These shows were done by both local and traveling minstrel groups.

According to Eileen Southern, the black minstrel show became quite popular after the Civil War, even though white groups performed minstrels long before that time

(standardizing the exaggerated comic characters of Zip Coon and Jim Crow). She states that during the last part of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, both black and white groups enjoyed an "international vogue." The white groups were sometimes called "burnt cork troupes," alluding to the material used to blacken their faces (9, p. 259).

The format of the minstrel show was standardized. The band, usually ten to fourteen members, was elevated behind the performers, who sat in two long semicircular rows. The four men at the ends of the rows were called "end men" and were the star performers of the show. The "middle man," also called the "interlocutor," acted as the master of ceremonies, and exchanged jokes with the end men and introduced the various acts. The show opened with a group number and each half closed with a large production number using the entire group. The interlocutor would open the show with a statement like:

Ladies and Gentlemen! We have come out tonight to give you a pleasing entertainment. With bones on the right and tambourines on the left, we shall now proceed with the overture. Gentlemen, be seated! (9, p. 263).

The entertainment-minded people of Abilene enjoyed minstrel shows. If there were none booked at the opera house, some of the citizens would get together and produce their own show. As in the case of most of the local musical productions in Abilene, a small admission fee was charged,

and the proceeds went to benefit some local organization. A good example is the minstrel produced in 1896 at the Maltbie Opera House to benefit one of the fire companies (10, July 23, 1886, p. 4).

In 1892, a minstrel troupe was organized in Abilene. M. P. Kavanaugh was right end man, O. P. Spaulding was left end man, and Eugene Harris was the middle man. All three men were members of the town band. Kavanaugh was also manager of the B & W Opera House, a photographer, and a former leader of the band (10, April 8, 1892, p. 5).

Also in 1892, the Abilene Light Infantry, a local military company affiliated with the Fourth Regiment of Texas, started putting together a minstrel company. After their rehearsals began, a newspaper reporter suggested that if their performances were as "noisy as their rehearsals, there will be no need to go to the opera house to hear them. In fact, a seat on the stand pipe [water tower] will be preferable to one in the opera house" (3, August 19, 1892, p. 5).

Just after the turn of the century, secret societies and fraternal organizations enjoyed a healthy boom in Abilene. These groups often gave dances, musicales, or minstrel shows to raise money for their organizations. In 1905, the Elks, one of the largest men's organizations in Abilene, produced a minstrel. It was entitled "Minstrel and Jubilee Vaudeville," and advertised "new specialties and warm local gags" (2, April 25, 1905, p. 3).

The Elks show ran two nights at the Lyceum Theatre on South First and Chestnut Streets. They hired a "noted producer of American plays," Mr. George Best. He came in about three weeks before the show, bringing his own set of costumes, scenery, and electrical effects. He rehearsed the men and served as master of ceremonies for the show (2, March 20, 1905, p. 2).

In July of 1905, the Library Association sponsored a children's minstrel to benefit the drive to raise money for a new library building. Mattie Hadley of Fort Worth was hired to train the children, about 100 of them from ages three to sixteen. The program featured "Little Miss Greta Warren Love, remarkable child elocutionist" (2, July 25, 1905, p. 1). In September of 1908, the Women's Clubs of Abilene produced a ladies blackface minstrel. They were assisted by members of the Fourth Regiment Band of Weatherford, Texas, since a local band had not been active for several years (2, September 23, 1908, p. 8).

Another example of these locally produced minstrels was the performance of February, 1911. It was sponsored by and benefited an organization of traveling salesmen. These men were affiliated with an organization called the United Commercial Travelers. The Abilene group, Council 472, produced their minstrel in the Chestnut Street opera house (2, January 22, 1911, p. 9).



The salesmen were assisted by Henry Roquemore from Palestine, Texas, who carried "his own drop scenery, costumes, and scenic devices." He arrived in early February, rehearsed the group two weeks and directed the performance on February 18. Public demand caused the men of the U.C.T. group to repeat the show with some minor changes on March 11 (2, March 5, 1905, p. 6).

During Abilene's infancy, local musicians and other entertainers stayed rather busy producing one form of entertainment or another. Other than the home entertainment and the standardized minstrel show, the entertainments were quite varied in scope and style of performance. As in the case of other types of local entertainments, these performances generally benefited a special group.

Practically every gathering was made into an opportunity to showcase the different talents of local Abilene entertainers. The school opening and closing exercises, political gatherings, temperance meetings, town holidays, and other large group activities included a few renditions of vocal or instrumental solo or group songs, usually accompanied by tableaux, recitations, or readings.

Besides the Maltbie Opera House and other less spacious buildings, the Taylor County Courthouse and Abilene hotel parlors were regularly used as performance halls (10, September 27, 1889, p. 4). The school buildings also were

sites of many community entertainments (10, December 21, 1888, p. 5). The town band gave many open air concerts, and usually played only two or three numbers. The programs were liberally sprinkled with vocal and instrumental music featuring other members of the community (3, July 18, 1890, p. 5).

Even performances of amateur theatrical productions used music to open the show, and performers usually rendered a few selections between the acts. This was also a common practice of the road show theatrical productions (10, September 21, 1885, p. 5). The first several productions in the opera house on Pine Street in 1885 were given by local theatre groups. An "amateur" [sic] theatrical organization opened the theatre on August 19, 1885, followed by some church benefits within the next few weeks (10, September 25, 1885, p. 5).

Several local people, including two bankers and a saloon owner, performed a play for the benefit of the Christian Church on October 6, 1885 (10, September 4, 1885, p. 4). The four-page program printed for the performance contained sixteen ads on its margins, one of which suggested that the theatre patrons "go to the Mitchel Saloon and get a cool drink" after the show (2, June 13, 1908, p. 7).

The typical fare of local entertainment at the Maltbie Opera House was either benefit concerts (consisting of vocal

or instrumental solos, group numbers, or readings) or the production of plays assisted by musical talent. When the opera house closed its doors in late 1888, Abilene was left without an adequate performance building. Two buildings were fitted with stages and lights to fill the void. Lapowski Hall (sometimes called the Wylie Building) and Armory Hall, a meeting place for a newly formed military company, were new sites for performances of local entertainment.

In the late 1880's and early 1890's, there was an influx of musical play performances. The ladies' church groups also performed cantatas which carried a religious message. A cantata was performed in August of 1888 in Lapowski Hall by the Ladies Aid Society of the Presbyterian Church (3, August 10, 1888, p. 6).

In May of the following year another cantata was presented by the ladies of the Episcopal Church (10, May 17, 1889, p. 4). Secular cantatas were also popular during this time. "The Cadets Picnic" was performed to benefit the Methodist Church in August of 1889. The Abilene Light Infantry assisted in this production by drilling on the stage at intermission (10, August 19, 1889, p. 1).

The military company, formed in 1888, was quite active in presenting musical plays to raise money for their company. The proceeds were used to buy uniforms and equipment, pay

rent on their armory, and to help defray expenses when they attended military encampments.

One of the entertainments given by the military company was a presentation of "The Milk Maid's Opera," featuring several young ladies of Abilene in major roles. The "military boys" also presented some drill work of their own. Highlights of the program were "Farmers Call," the "Churn Medley," and a "Milk Stool Drill." The program was presented in The Club Rooms (formerly Lapowski Hall) on May 12, 1890 (3, May 9, 1890, p. 5).

In January of 1891, the military company joined forces with the Abilene Amateur Dramatic Company to present the operetta "La Mascot," written by the French composer, Audran. The company of performers also did the operetta in Baird and Colorado City a month later. Reviews of the performances were heavy with praise regarding the production. The Colorado Clipper stated that the applause was "unstinted" and the actors and singers "executed some meritorious work" (10, February 13, 1891, p. 4).

Captain Alan Buell, a local weather man and leader of the military company, performed the lead male role in "La Mascot," and also directed some musical plays for other causes. In May of 1890, he directed a performance of the operetta "Princess Snowflake." The performance was presented by "the juveniles" of Abilene (3, May 16, 1890, p. 5). He

also assisted in the production of the operetta "Tyrolean Queen" in June of 1890 (3, June 20, 1890, p. 8).

In 1892, the "sponsor" of the fire department, Miss Bettie McConochie, put together an entertainment to benefit the department (3, December 2, 1892, p. 5). In October of 1898, a grand production of "Texas Under Six Flags," was presented, directed by "Professor and Mrs. Hall." The production was sponsored by local private school teachers (3, October 28, 1898, p. 2). In June of 1910, a musical play called "Queen Karnival" was presented in the Lyceum Opera House. It featured "sixty of the best home talents" in Abilene. A Mrs. Raymond of Houston was hired to rehearse and direct the show. Some of the most influential citizens in Abilene appeared on this program (2, June 26, 1910, p. 2).

Many citizens in Abilene wanted to copy the successful activities of larger cities in the state. Abilenians could look eastward and see the great Texas State Fair. They could also see the Fort Worth Spring Palace (an annual exhibition of farm and garden products). Abilene had been dubbed a "future great" city even before the first town lot was sold in early 1881. Fierce pride dictated that Abilene should have a fair also, even though many Abilenians did not fully support the town's project.

As early as 1884, a "County Fair" was held in Abilene, sponsored by a local newspaper, and had as one of its prime

exhibitors Captain W. J. Maltby, Civil War hero and former Texas Ranger. Maltby was then owner of a large piece of property near Abilene on which he specialized in the production of various kinds of fruit. The "fair" was held in a large single room above a house of business on North First Street. From this unpretentious beginning the fair grew into one of the largest exhibitions in West Texas. Four years later it was called the "Abilene District Fair," and was the site of many local entertainments throughout the years (2, October 13, 1905, p. 1).

The 1889 fair was the first successful one in utilizing the talent of local entertainers. In a listing of events to take place at this upcoming fair, a newspaper article told of a dramatic production on October 1, an "opera" on October 2, and an entertainment "in the nature of a trades display" on October 3. The drama was presented, but for some reason the opera was not presented, and the trades entertainment was performed both nights (3, October 11, 1889, p. 4).

The drama was entitled "March of Progress," listing Mrs. Cora Young as pianist and Mrs. Kerr as stage manager and prompter. The two evenings of vocal and instrumental music chronicling the progress of Abilene were quite successful. Almost \$300 was netted for the entertainment, quite a sum of money in 1889. To complete the week, the town band

gave a "grand ball" on the evening of October 4. All four evenings of entertainment were in the courthouse.

Abilene did not mount another fair project until 1897, when it became more or less an annual presentation each October or November. After the 1897 fair, which was entitled the "Abilene Country Roundup and Fair," a mass meeting was held in the opera house. The citizens voted in favor of making the fair an annual event (10, December 17, 1897, p. 4). The 1897 fair was much like the 1889 version, except a parade had been added each day and band music was heard twice a day on the fairgrounds (3, November 5, 1897, p. 1).

The 1898 fair was called the "West Texas Fair," a name it still holds today. The fair was a good showcase for displaying the vocal and instrumental talent of Abilene. Not only did musicians perform for fellow citizens, but also for visitors that made the annual trips to Abilene from surrounding areas.

#### Traveling Shows

Like any other West Texas town, Abilene's entertainment lovers enjoyed seeing a "famous" personality or a "world renowned" entertainer. Some of the greats, the near-greats, and the not-so-greats in show business visited Abilene. These purveyors of vernacular music were treated with a hospitality which usually matched the quality of their shows. The theatre goers of Abilene were not afraid to show the

box office of the theatre that they liked, or disliked, the show the evening before. News traveled fast in the small town, and some groups left town without completing their full schedule of performances, victims of the Abilene "grapevine."

The entertainment halls in Abilene were, on the whole, fairly well patronized, but attendance was always good when a traveling minstrel group "held forth" on a stage in the city. There was usually good support for the blackface troupes as well as the true black artists that visited the town.

Generally a parade occurred in the downtown area the afternoon of the show, followed by a short "teaser" outside the theatre. The band would ride in a wagon and play some "hot" music during the parade. They would also give a concert outside the theatre about thirty minutes before the show started. Some of the band members usually doubled on banjo, mandolin, guitar, or violin, and also played in the "orchestra" that accompanied the performances. Most of the shows advertised that the troupe carried both a band and an orchestra.

The great minstrel performer Billy Kersands was one of the first to bring a traveling minstrel show to Abilene. Kersands had performed with the original "Georgia Minstrels" beginning in 1865, and had also been with other top minstrel



shows. He had his own touring group briefly in the 1880's, and spent the rest of his life as a solo performer with some of the big troupes. His specialties were the buck and wing and soft shoe dances (9, p. 267).

Another famous black-owned minstrel troupe which visited Abilene was the "Richard and Pringles Famous Georgia Minstrels." They were counted in the top three Negro-managed groups in the country during the peak minstrel years of 1880-1910 (9, p. 259). In 1904, this troupe was advertised as the "largest minstrel show in the world." The admission to that October, 1904 show was thirty-five, fifty, and seventy-five cents. The show featured "glorious-voiced singers, diverting song and dance men, clever colored comedians, and twenty vaudeville and minstrel entertainments" (2, October 4, 1904, p. 2). In 1908, they advertised "forty people, twelve comedians of national reputation, twenty trained singers, six dancers, eight vaudeville actors, and a twenty piece band of solo musicians" (2, December 13, 1908, p. 8).

In October of 1909, this group opened the 1909-1910 season of the Lyceum Opera House. They had a "challenge" band of twenty-five members and an "operatic" orchestra of twelve members. They presented a street parade at noon on the day of the performance, and featured such acts as "Moor the Hendoo [sic] Magician, the Dancing Sextet, Wilson and

Knott, The Filipino [sic] Novelty, and the Phantom House" (2, October 8, 1909, p. 7).

Their next show was in Big Spring, Texas a few days later. What happened to them in Big Spring exemplified the racial discrimination that followed black troupes wherever they went in the South and Southwest. A large crowd saw the performance at the Big Spring Opera House, and the audience "applauded and whooped throughout the show." When the show was over and the group appeared in their street clothes downtown, "the crowd went for them, and chased them in all directions." One of the performers "stepped into a pile of ties on the railroad bed and broke his leg." The show owner finally gathered the "scattered troubadors together and made haste in getting them out of such a dangerous locality where the presence of a black face is not welcomed." The town of Big Spring had gone through some severe racial violence a few weeks before the black minstrel performers had arrived, and all blacks had been summarily evicted from the city (2, November 1, 1909, p. 1).

Southern states that many of the lesser known Negro troupes would have to clean the hall where the show was to be presented, and even make their own scenery and footlights. It was often difficult, she says, for the performers to find lodging, especially in the smaller towns where there were few blacks. They sometimes slept in the halls where they

had performed. The larger, better known troupes usually traveled in their own Pullman cars. These groups never knew what sort of reception awaited them in the next town (9, p. 261).

"Mahara's Mammoth Minstrels" were among the leaders of the white-managed Negro minstrel groups on tour in the United States. There were two shows, owned by two brothers, F. L. and W. A. Mahara (9, p. 259). They were well known by Abilene audiences and their shows were well received. In a January, 1898 performance they did one show in the opera house. Among the features of the show were buck and wing expert Rube Brown, male soprano LeRoy Bland, and the "Dark-town Band Parade." They also appeared in Abilene the following year (3, January 7, 1898, p. 5).

The black-faced white performers seemingly were not as well received as the Negro groups, especially when they followed closely behind the black groups. In December, 1898 the all white "Beach and Bowers Famous Minstrels" did a show in the Abilene opera house. A review of the performance pointed out that the show enjoyed the "largest audience given a traveling show in two years." It further stated, "Hundreds of people paid seventy-five cents to hear as poor a lot of singers as we have ever heard." The reviewer further stated that this show could not compare with Mahara's show of a year ago, and the show was not even a "good two-bit show" (3,

December 3, 1898, p. 3). The manager of the opera house, L. P. Ligon, stated that the "roast" given the show by the Reporter met with his approval (3, December 16, 1898, p. 3).

The minstrel was quite popular with Abilene audiences, but it certainly was not the only type of entertainment booked by the managements of the various entertainment halls. Before the movie houses began to draw audiences away from the performance houses in the early 1900's, the opera house was the place to go for entertainment of all kinds.

The musical comedy companies and the stock companies were gradually replaced in the opera houses by a fast-paced, diversified format later called "vaudeville" shows. This type of show required fewer people, less equipment, and was more portable than the standard road companies. With as few as two people and a good "gimmick," combined with a gift of gab and an arsenal of jokes, one could put together a show and travel the country doing three to six nights per town.

Before vaudeville replaced the larger road shows, Abilene enjoyed many years of entertainment shows. The exact date for the first traveling show in Abilene cannot be ascertained because of gaps in existing newspaper files and other records. The first record of a traveling show in Abilene shows that the "Boulton Troupe" appeared in either Terry Hall or Montgomery Hall on June 4 and 5, 1885 (10, June 7, 1885, p. 5).

It was not until November of 1885 that another traveling show was recorded as being in the city. "The well-known and favorite actor, Mr. R. L. Downing" appeared at the new Maltbie Opera House. This was the first known traveling show to play at the Maltbie (10, November 6, 1885, p. 5). As far as can be determined, the opera house had no regular manager, or anyone who could actively pursue the engagement of traveling shows.

In the three years of the existence of the Maltbie Opera House, only six road shows are recorded as having performed there. Two notable groups were the R. L. Smith "Swiss Bell Ringers" and the "Irene Worrell Musical Comedy Troupe." The bell ringers arrived the morning of February 13, 1888, and performed on the streets to advertise the concert that evening. They traveled with "an elegant silver band," and played to a full house at the 8:30 p.m. show. A brief review of the show stated that the "bell ringing was good and the music on the tumblers could not have been better." The report went on to say that the "pantomime was good, but one or two numbers could have been appropriately omitted" (10, February 17, 1888, p. 5).

Irene Worrell, the "queen of comedy," did six performances at the opera house in the week of September 10, 1888. Her "carefully selected company" assisted her in the performance of six different musical comedies, "Patty,"

"Little Ferret," "M'Liss," "Stricken Blind," "Fanchon the Cricket," and "Lucky Ranch" (3, September 6, 1888, p. 5). The "Lillian Lewis Troupe" performed at the opera house in October of 1888 and was the last traveling show to appear there (10, October 19, 1888, p. 5).

When the Abilene Light Infantry Company opened their new hall in late 1890, Abilene was provided with another location for entertainment. It evidently was a rather small room because the hall was used mostly for local entertainments and graduation exercises. Two of the larger shows that did play at Armory Hall were "Gorton's Gold Band Minstrels" in February of 1891 (3, February 5, 1891, p. 1), and the "Hewett Musetts" in September of that same year (10, September 11, 1891, p. 7).

Most of the shows were small traveling shows, like "Professor George Gilbert, the Colorado Phrenologist," with a series of "musicales and lectures" (3, January 30, 1891, p. 5); "Professor Zan Zagolaski, the greatest of all musical prodigies" (3, August 26, 1892, p. 5); or "Professor Ike Bell and his numerous musical instruments" (3, March 16, 1894, p. 5). Lapowski Hall (also known as Wylie Hall and The Club Rooms) also catered mostly to local productions. The few traveling shows that played there were theatrical troupes, not musical groups.

In early 1892, the large B & W Opera House opened on Chestnut Street. "Griswold's Uncle Tom's Cabin Company" opened the building. They boasted "twenty-six people with a band and orchestra" and carried their own Pullman car. With the addition of this large entertainment hall and two managers to oversee the building and book shows, Abilene looked forward to seeing many great traveling shows (10, February 5, 1892, p. 5).

The shows booked at the new opera house the first few months were large theatrical companies. They carried large bands and orchestras and performed great plays and musical productions, but Abilene's tastes ran toward the more vernacular shows. In March of 1894, Ovide Musin, "the great violinist," gave a concert of selections by Haydn, Kowalski, Paganini, Gounod, and others. The reviewer pronounced the concert a success, and went on to say that it was "a great pity that the concert could not have been made a financial success as well" (3, March 9, 1894, p. 5). A few days later the "Pretzel Musical Comedy Company" played to a "large and appreciative audience" (3, March 9, 1894, p. 3). Abilene was telling the managers of the new opera house that they wanted entertainment and not culture.

The opera house was not as successful as the owners had hoped because the ownership changed quite often and the management could not seem to find a good balance of

entertainment to attract a consistent audience to the hall. Probably because of the instability of ownership and management, there were not very many traveling shows booked into the room between 1892 and the early 1900's. Some fifty traveling shows are known to have played the theatre between 1892 and 1900. The biggest year was 1894 with eleven shows playing the hall. The year with the smallest number of shows was 1897, with only two shows booked into the theatre.

There was a large influx of traveling shows from 1900 to 1911, and in spite of the competition offered later because of the opening of the vaudeville and movie theatres, the opera house was still the entertainment center of town, and remained so until well into the twentieth century. It was not until the movie houses built larger, more permanent buildings and sound movies were produced that the opera house lost its place in the city.

In his article on opera houses of West Texas, Richard King states that between 1911 and 1921 there was actually an increase in the number of opera houses in the area, "despite the fact that legitimate theatre was beginning to yield its appeal to the flickering screen, and that Theda Bara and Mary Pickford were crowding out Lilli Langtry and Sarah Bernhardt as the world's sweethearts" (6, p. 109).

#### Tented Shows

The tented show was a special kind of traveling show



that combined bands, vaudeville, dancers, singers, and various other kinds of entertainment. These shows carried one or several large musical ensembles that were highly touted and were an integral part of the show. Tented shows came to Abilene on a fairly regular basis, advertising "the best," "the largest," or the "most exciting" show ever seen. Wherever they went, they carried their own canvas auditorium or "opera house," which could be erected in a short while in an open field or on a vacant lot.

The famous Ringling Brothers Circus and the Barnum and Bailey Circus, "The Greatest Show on Earth," visited the city on a regular basis after the turn of the century. They seemed to try to outdo each other with promises of hundreds of musicians performing at every show. In October of 1904, Ringling advertised "fifty musicians, 200 chorus singers, 300 dancing girls, and a grand sixty-eight stop pipe organ" (2, October 3, 1904, p. 1).

The tented circuses usually gave two performances at each stop, and presented a large parade in the morning in the downtown area on the day of the performances. The tents for the larger shows were generally placed in a large vacant lot in the northeastern part of the city, but because of the growth of that part of the city, it was changed in 1909 to vacant lots just north of North Seventh Street at the end of Cypress Street (2, October 9, 1909, p. 1). In 1910, the

crowd for the afternoon performance of the Barnum and Bailey show was estimated to be between 10,000 and 12,000 (2, October 2, 1910, p. 1).

In August of 1907, Mollie Bailey, who had been traveling with her circus in Texas since 1872, was interviewed by a news reporter. She recalled bringing her show to Abilene in the early 1880's, when Abilene was "a city of tents." She remembered that the show was viewed mostly by "bucks-kinned cowboys who demonstrated their approval of the many acts on the program by joyously emptying their six-shooters through the top of the tent" (2, August 15, 1907, p. 2).

Barrett's Shows performed in the infant city in September of 1885 (10, September 11, 1885, p. 4). Other circuses that visited early Abilene were the Adam Forepaugh Circus (3, May 30, 1890, p. 5), the Reynolds United Tent Show and Circus (3, October 16, 1891, p. 5), and the Great Wallace Circus promising six bands (3, September 28, 1894, p. 5). These shows usually presented a concert of band music somewhere in the city in the morning after the parade, and generally played about thirty minutes near the tent just before the show started (3, October 4, 1895, p. 4).

1907 was quite a busy year for tented shows in Abilene. On May 18 of that year, there were two tented shows performing in town at the same time: Swain's Jesse James Wild West Show and Charles Geyer's Big Railroad Tented Theatre. Both shows

featured band concerts before the eight o'clock shows. Swain's show pointed out that their "original cowboy band and orchestra" was available for parties, serenades, or dances after the show (2, May 13, 1907, p. 6).

Among the many other shows which performed in Abilene in 1907 was the Cole Younger and Nichols Theatre and Amusement Company, which showed in a tent erected on the railroad right of way west of the fire station. The six evenings of vaudeville style entertainment featured two bands and an informal "chat" with the famous outlaw, Cole Younger (2, November 4, 1907, p. 1).

The practice of using the band concert to attract a crowd seemed to be successful, because the tented shows had good audiences. However, this did not prevent an occasional stinging editorial directed not only at faulty shows, but also at the gullibility of Abilenians.

The population of every town is inclined to be weak when it comes to the temptation of paying the price to witness the performance of a stage tented aggregation carrying a brass band, but our observation is that Abilene is some weaker than the weakest, and nothing short of a cyclone keeps us from filling every seat when they hoist their canvas in our midst. Music hath charm to soothe and a brass band on our streets will hypnotize a few more suckers than any place you can cite to us.

While the show last night, advertising themselves as the All American Minstrels, may not have been the worst that has visited our city, it was a close competitor for the bottom round. Barring two specialties which were splendid, the trick bicycle work and the acrobatic stunt, to say that the exhibition was awful is using a mild term. It is always expected of shows in the line of minstrelssy

[sic] to at least carry a few good voices, but those who attended with that expectation were sorely disappointed. The noise made in the attempt at song reminded one of the melody of a pair of rusty hinges attached to a wind rocked gate. But what's the use of offering further comment? We are one day older, but no better prepared to resist the temptation to witness the next canvas show than we were yesterday (2, June 7, 1907, p. 1).

The editor did not explain what he was doing at the performance. At any rate, his rebuke fell on deaf ears, because the tented shows continued to visit Abilene and the brass bands continued to draw large crowds to the tents. Probably none of these shows had a more exciting climax than the April, 1909, performance by the Nye Amusement Company. The report of the performance stated that the star of the show, "Texas Jack," was arrested by local officers who "clumbered over the footlights" to nab their prey just as the show ended. He was wanted for the theft of a gun (2, April 20, 1909, p. 6).

#### Vaudeville and Movie Houses

Even though the opera house format for entertainment seekers continued well into the twentieth century, a new form of entertainment had made its appearance in the early part of the first decade. In 1905, a theatre opened in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, with a new form of entertainment that would have a far-reaching effect on the habits of theatregoers across the entire nation. The theatre was called the "Nickelodeon," a hall that featured motion pictures of

performers rather than live performers. It featured the first "story-movie," "The Great Train Robbery," which started a flood of other movies with stories (8, p. 70).

The Texas Comptrollers Department reported in March of 1907 that there were 1000 movie houses in Texas, with Dallas having eighteen, Fort Worth ten, and Austin six. There had been a tremendous increase of the theatres in previous months. The article stated that skating rinks had "held sway" in the entertainment business in Texas during 1905 and 1906 (2, April 3, 1907, p. 8). Between 1905 and 1908 about 10,000 five-cent theatres opened in the United States (7, p. 19).

In the three years between 1907 and 1910, eleven movie houses are mentioned in the pages of Abilene's newspapers or city directories. There were never more than three open at any one time, and occasionally only one was operating in the city. One reason for the short life of the theatres was probably the fact that the early ones were in older buildings that were supplied only with a few chairs and a piece of canvas for the screen.

The public grew tired of these movie houses rather quickly, and soon the houses were featuring live entertainment, either a single singer or pianist, or a vaudeville troupe with singing, dancing, jokes, dog acts, juggling, gymnastics, or other such entertainment. The movies came to be used as "chasers," being shown before, between, and after the live groups.

By the late 1880's vaudeville halls had begun appearing across the country. The managers of these makeshift theatres used abandoned buildings of various types and sizes to display the variety of talents of the vaudeville groups. The orchestras for these shows varied in size from one musician-- usually a piano or a banjo--to seven or eight pieces. Bawdiness was a characteristic of these early vaudeville shows in America as well as Abilene. The material in the shows came from variety halls, minstrel shows, and circus performances. Much of the humor was ethnic, using Irish, Jewish, Dutch (German), and black jokes, songs, and skits. The medium of vaudeville was a major force in the diffusion of commercial music (5, p. 144).

The early theatres generally used a phonograph in front of the establishment to call attention to the fact that there were movies to be seen inside. In May of 1907, an editorial appeared in the Daily Reporter suggesting a change of records more often to avoid a "nervous collapse" on the part of those in the area. The writer referred to the phonograph as a "spieling machine," and said it was too much to ask the public to "listen to the same old spiels for weeks at a time," calling attention to the "constant shriek" of the machine (2, May 18, 1907, p. 4). A few days later the same writer stated that the new "phonopgrayphic [sic] records placed in use by the Majestic Theatre yesterday are a big improvement

over the old ones" (2, May 25, 1907, p. 8). The theatres also used a man in front of the buildings to advertise the current attraction. In the style of a carnival barker, he would try to convince passersby that his theatre was the best entertainment bargain in town (2, May 25, 1909, p. 1).

In April of 1907, the first mention is found of a movie theatre in Abilene. It was called the "Theatorium," and was located on Pine Street. It advertised a "high class moral and entertaining exhibition of the latest feature films." The admission was five cents "for everyone," and it was open every day except Sunday from 10:30 in the morning to 10:30 in the evening (2, April 5, 1907, p. 5).

Also in 1907, the Majestic Theatre showed films in Abilene. It was originally owned by two men from Brownwood, Texas, "Mr. Speed and Mr. McGhee" (2, September 2, 1907, p. 1). In September of 1907, Raymond Stinnett of Abilene bought the theatre and continued to operate it. He hired an "orchestra" made up of musicians playing piano, violin, cornet, and "clarionet" [sic] (2, October 2, 1909, p. 2). This orchestra performed on a regular basis at the theatre. It was led by the violinist, a man named William W. Winniford, who operated a barber shop on Pine Street. He also performed at other musical functions in the city (2, December 13, 1908, p. 8).

Stinnett also owned theatres in Sherman and Paris, Texas, as well as the Smoke Room Billiard Parlor in Abilene. In addition to his managerial duties of the semiprofessional baseball team of the 25,000 Club of Abilene (2, April 23, 1908, p. 1), he served as manager of the Majestic until the middle of 1909.

Stinnett moved the Majestic from North Second Street to a small room on the east side of Pine Street in December of 1907. In addition to the regular pictures and the illustrated songs at each showing, Stinnett added another feature to the entertainment site, a penny arcade. It included a "penny moving picture machine, illustrated songs, punchbag, shocking apparatus, weight and strength apparatus, blowing machine, and many other penny attractions, costing Mr. Stinnett \$3000" (2, December 11, 1907, p. 8).

The term "illustrated song" referred to the practice of showing colored "slides" while a singer or singers rendered a musical number. Like an early version of "background music," it was possible to evoke emotions on the part of the audience with the skillful selection of various scenes which changed as the song progressed. The scenes were shown on the movie screen with a stereoptican projector. The songs were usually sung between films and upon occasions when the projector or film broke. In December of 1907, Otto H. Meyer sang "Bright Eyes, Good Bye," and Miss Fred Lindsey sang



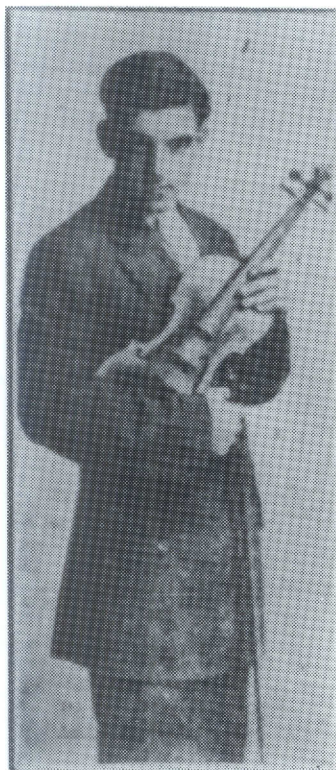
"The Girl You Love." The three films shown were "Baffled Burglar," Roumania," and "The Night Watchman" (2, December 22, 1907, p. 8).

In early 1908, the Majestic began to present vaudeville acts with the movies at each performance. When live performers appeared on the same program as films, the performers always got top billing. In order to present these live performances in a better way, Stinnett effected improvements on the theatre, including a new stage, an orchestra pit and a new slanted floor, improving vision in the rear of the theatre (2, March 14, 1908, p. 1).

A great variety of vaudeville acts shared billings with the latest feature films at the Majestic. (See Figure 33, p. 299.) Jugglers, contortion acrobats, comedy groups, yodlers, impersonators, singers, and dancers came to Abilene by train and performed at the Majestic two or three times a day during their brief stay in the city. Between the acts and films Winniford's orchestra played a "number of late selections," and vocalists sang illustrated songs (2, February 23, 1909, p. 5).

In early 1909, the Majestic began an innovative exchange with a theatre in Sweetwater, Texas. It was called a "split week" plan. Rather than having the same vaudeville troupe for six days, the usual stay, a group would entertain at the Majestic Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, then go to Sweetwater

# MAJESTIC



**Thursday  
Friday and  
Saturday**

## DEBOUT DUO

**Cleverest Musical and Dancing Artists**

The strongest Musical Act Playing Southern Time. A  
treat for lovers of good music

**Complete Change Dally Music by Orchestra**

Fig. 33--An act advertised for the Majestic, typical of the vaudeville shows which appeared at Abilene theatres in the early 1900's.

and perform Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The group which had performed in Sweetwater the first three days of the week would finish the week at the Majestic in Abilene. In February of 1909, "The Carters" and "The Singing Carrolls" split the week between Sweetwater and Abilene (2, February 28, 1909, p. 7).

In late 1909 when the theatre was remodeled again, 300 opera chairs were installed, a balcony was constructed, the stage altered, and new scenery put in. A few days after the remodeling had taken place, a fire in the projection and film room did damage amounting to \$400 and the theatre was closed for ten days for repairs (2, November 7, 1909, p. 1).

The Majestic continued to present vaudeville and movies until July, 1910, when the owner bought a theatre in Wichita Falls, Texas, and the equipment was moved to that city (2, July 15, 1910, p. 1). The Majestic was in business at the Pine Street location longer than any other early theatre.

Another theatre in town opened in a skating rink in May, 1907. The "Favorite Skating Rink" was also called the "Favorite Theatre." The rink was located at South Third and Chestnut. The theatre showed on alternate evenings and the skating took place on the other evenings. The rink was also open on Saturday morning. The rink advertised "good music at every session by a six piece orchestra" (2, June 21, 1907, p. 6).

The Favorite Theatre also featured guest appearances by professional skaters, such as Miss Mary DeMancourt, "skatorial dancing queen of the South," and Louis Watsel and Louise White, featuring "all kinds of fancy and trick skating" (2, April 2, 1907, p. 6). In September of 1907, the "Favorite Orchestra" consisted of two instruments, Miss Bertie Ayers on piano and Barney Morris on cornet (2, September 2, 1907, p. 1).

Extensive work began on a building located at North Second and Cedar in May of 1907, and by June 1, the Favorite Theatre boasted of "the most expensive and beautiful decorations in town" (2, June 1, 1907, p. 8). The managers arranged for the "very latest and up to date song illustrations" with "several New York publishers" (2, May 17, 1907, p. 7).

There were now two Favorite Theatres in town, one a skating rink and the other a vaudeville and movie theatre. The theatre was in operation until early October of 1907. "Professor Zephula, a mind reading and psychic" performer, "held the boards" at the theatre for ten days in October (2, October 3, 1907, p. 1).

Nothing else was heard of the theatre for over a year, when it was reported that the old Favorite Skating Rink had been remodeled. The new managers, Carl Church and Claude Saunderson, promised "up to date movies and vaudeville," with

new scenery and new stage equipment. The grand opening was held November 16, 1908. The opening featured moving pictures, vaudeville acts, and the Abilene town band. A special feature was "talking pictures," a movie shown while a "carefully selected cast of players," hidden from the audience's view, did the dialogue and sound effects of the characters in the picture (2, November 18, 1908, p. 8).

The Favorite was regularly advertised until early 1909, when it was sold to W. A. Rosamond and E. E. Duke of Stamford. The announcement was made that the theatre would show straight moving pictures for a time, "after which vaudeville will be added" (2, February 8, 1909, p. 4). The name of the theatre was changed to "Lyric" a few days after the sale took place (2, February 12, 1909, p. 4). This theatre was active only a few weeks when Duke bought out Rosamond. Duke then had to close down the theatre because of heavy debt, and suggestions were made that he was trying to leave town without paying his creditors (2, March 14, 1909, p. 1).

Two months later, the Lyric reopened as the "Princess Theatre." It was purchased by a man named Hill, who also was the present owner of the Majestic. These two vaudeville and movie houses were referred to as "twin playlet houses" because they cooperated on the split week format. The grand opening of the Princess was May 24, 1909, and it featured the Kingsley's vaudeville act, motion pictures, and

illustrated songs. A short paragraph about the opening of the theatre gives a brief look into the daily operation of the vaudeville houses in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The ever smiling Frank Watson has been on the Majestic door. The old spieler of "this eve-eye-ning" fame has gone over to the Princess to grind out the films, and a new and as yet a little bashful noise-maker stands before the Majestic to tell the passerby that the show, though it be one half over, is "just S-T-A-R-R-R-T-I-N-G" (2, May 25, 1909, p. 1).

The Princess was not heard from after May 30, 1909, only a few days after it opened for business. Another short-lived theatre was called the "Picture Palace," opening the first week of June, 1909, and closing five months later. It was the "first continuous movie theatre" in Abilene (2, June 9, 1909, p. 8). It featured four pictures and two illustrated songs at each performance. G. W. Wallace of Colorado City owned the theatre and it was managed by Hill, who had managed the Majestic for a short time (2, November 24, 1909, p. 5).

Still another theatre, the "Alamo," opened on South Second and Oak on December 13, 1909. It advertised movies and vaudeville (2, December 12, 1909, p. 6). "Copeland and Davis" did their act the first week, and "Carroll and Henderson" played the week of December 20 (2, December 17, 1909, p. 1). As far as can be determined, the theatre was open only these two weeks. Another Alamo Theatre opened in 1910 at the northeast corner of Ash and North Third, for blacks only (1, p. 273).

In February of 1908, the "latest enterprise in the moving picture business of Abilene" opened to the public. The "Empire Theatre" was located in the same building on North Second (also called the Wooten Building) that had housed the original Majestic. The manager, E. J. Heaslit, advertised the usual run of motion pictures and illustrated songs by Otto Meyer of Abilene and "two gentlemen from Chicago." These men sang under the name "The Arlington Trio." At times they had an additional singer and sang under the name "The Arlington Quartette" [sic]. Later, Charles Figg and A. J. Kisselburg sang the illustrated songs. (See Figure 34, p. 305.) Meyer had performed solos for the Majestic three months before (2, February 15, 1908, p. 7).

The Empire showed the usual forty minutes of films three times a day (4:00, 7:30, and 8:30 p.m.), six days a week. The Arlington Trio kept the patrons of the Empire "up to date with the latest songs" (2, March 9, 1909, p. 5). Admission was ten cents, with children paying five cents for the afternoon showing. A steady stream of vaudeville performers entertained the Empire audiences.

An innovation at the theatre in April of 1908 was successful and boosted attendance a great deal, at least for a few days. The manager sponsored an amateur night Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Harry Carter won the first talent contest with a buck and wing dance (2, May 1, 1908, p. 1).

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# Empire Theatre

Across from Windsor Hotel

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**Vaudeville & Moving Pictures**

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Daily At 4, 7:45 and 9:45  
Saturday At 3-4-7-8-9

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## Big Musical Week

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### *The Arling- ton Quartette*

Singing Catchy Songs

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**CHAS. A. FIGG**  
The Great Tenor

---

**HORAC N. HILL**  
Violin Soloist

---

**A. J. KISSELBURG**  
Baritone Singer

---

### Illustrated Songs

Sung by the Quartette and Our Soloists Figg, Wood and Kisselburg

---

## MOVING PICTURES

40 Minutes of Them at Each Show  
The Greatest Pictures Ever

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This is the greatest show of its kind

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Fig. 34--Empire Theatre advertisement, showing the musical aspects of the early vaudeville theatres in Abilene.



The theatre played its final week beginning Monday, May 4, and closed its doors as an entertainment hall. In September of 1908, the room was remodeled and "fitted up" as a retail grocery store (2, September 11, 1908, p. 6).

In the Spring of 1910, still another vaudeville theatre opened in Abilene. It was named the "Vendome," and was the first known "open-air" theatre in the city (2, May 3, 1910, p. 12). The films could only be shown after dark, and the weather was always a factor in the performance of the vaudeville and movies. W. W. Winniford and his orchestra performed at each showing, just as he had done three years before at the Majestic. The theatre was located "on the corner lot east of the post office." There were "two or more" performances each evening beginning at 8:15 (2, April 3, 1910, p. 8). The number of performances evidently depended on the size of the audience at the second show.

In June of 1910, Vendome manager J. F. Lewis announced the permanent engagement of Professor J. A. Kennedy, "celebrated violinist and musical director," and his wife (2, June 9, 1910, p. 8). She was called the "sweet voiced singer," and was hired to sing the illustrated songs. Winniford and his group left the Vendome to perform at another theatre. A few days later, manager Lewis and his co-owner, M. W. Heflin, sold the theatre for \$650 to T. T. Spann and T. J. Humphries (2, June 12, 1910, p. 8). Their other theatre,

the Majestic, closed the following month. They called their business the Majestic Amusement Company.

Following this transaction, Spann and Humphries advertised quite heavily in the newspapers. They also moved the theatre to the "old light and water company office" on North Second Street. The vaudeville bill changed every Monday and Thursday and the motion picture changed daily. The owners sold the theatre back to Lewis in July, after which it closed briefly (2, July 17, 1910, p. 6).

In August W. E. Scoby, owner of the Stardome Theatre in Stamford, bought an interest in the Vendome. Scoby and Lewis announced that they would reopen the theatre on August 8, 1910, under "entirely new policies" (2, August 8, 1910, p. 1). They also announced plans to open a permanent theatre for the winter season. "The Wards," a vaudeville act, opened the theatre. The opening billing also contained three "feature films." A few days later the theatre featured a large company of fourteen persons, "The Tillson Comedy Company." The Tillsons boasted of "ten chorus girls" (2, August 14, 1910, p. 1).

On September 10, 1910, the indoor Vendome opened for business in the "Western Grocery building on the east side of Pine Street, formerly occupied by Logan's Garage" (2, September 18, 1910, p. 1). The first matinee performance was on October 6, featuring "Jack Mullane and Miss Montgomery,

vaudeville" (2, October 6, 1910, p. 1). Henry Stubberfield was hired to sing illustrated songs. He was a former professional baseball player and had sung with the "celebrated Lone Star Quartet" (2, October 10, 1910, p. 1).

The Vendome closed again in late October, 1910, and opened under new management Friday, February 10, 1911. Frank Lacy was the manager this time, showing only movies (2, February 9, 1911, p. 5). A pianist from New York, Charles Lee, was hired in late March to play for the theatre (2, March 28, 1910, p. 1). In April, Lacy featured a vaudeville team of blackfaced comedians (2, April 10, 1910, p. 6). A few days later the theatre dropped all advertising. In late 1911, P. H. Carter while reminiscing about Abilene thirty years before, mentioned in passing that he had built a two story brick building which was a drug firm, and was "recently the location of the Vendome Theatre" (2, September 22, 1910, p. 5).

Another outdoor theatre, the "Airdome," opened briefly in June of 1909. No mention is made of the location of the theatre, and only three ads appeared regarding performances. It opened June 16, 1909 (2, June 15, 1910, p. 5), and the third and final ad appeared June 29. W. W. Winniford's orchestra, which had also appeared at the Majestic and the Vendome, was hired to play at the Airdome (2, June 29, 1909, p. 4).

Almost a year after the last mention of the Airdome, T. T. Spann and T. J. Humphries announced the opening of another Airdome theatre at the corner of Pine and North Fifth. Spann and Humphries also owned the Majestic and the Vendome, which they sold soon after the opening of Airdome. They also owned theatres in other cities. They "upgraded" the entertainment at the theatre and began booking vaudeville acts and movies into the hall. Winniford's orchestra was hired again, and illustrated songs were featured at each performance (2, May 20, 1910, p. 1).

A few weeks later the theatre sold to E. L. Green of Brownwood, who owned theatres there and in Coleman. The "grand opening" of the "new" Airdome took place on July 4, featuring the "Melba Palmer Company of fourteen people." This company was booked for two weeks at the Airdome, having just left the McAdams Tent Show which had recently played Abilene. The Airdome closed for the winter in September, 1910 (2, July 1, 1910, p. 1).

The following May, 1911, a theatre opened as the "Dixie Airdome," under the management of Frank Lacy, who had just sold the Vendome a few weeks before. The opening performance featured the "Lemley Gibson Musical Comedy Company," boasting of "high class performers, dancers and comedians." The seating capacity was listed as 1200 for the Dixie (2, May 5, 1911, p. 6). Lacy brought larger shows to the theatre than

had generally been seen at the other vaudeville theatres. The "King Dramatic Company," the "Curtis Comedy Company," and the "Kellar Stock Company" were typical examples of the type of show Lacy booked. (See Figure 35, p. 311.)

Most of the companies had large casts and a band and orchestra. In one of the ads, the statement was made that "Professor D'Nardo will direct the band in a selection from Verdi's grand opera, 'Il Trovatore.'" The Dixie Airdome played until the winter season began in October of 1911 (2, June 1, 1911, p. 6).

In October of 1910, it was announced that still another vaudeville theatre was opening in Abilene. It was in the building "just opposite the Reporter office, formerly occupied by the Abilene Light and Water Company and The Abilene Trading Company" (2, October 16, 1910, p. 8). The 1911 Abilene City Directory lists the address of the "Jewel theatre" as 1034-36 North Second (1, p. 273). The Vendome had used this location temporarily in June of 1910.

E. L. Green, who had owned the Airdome briefly in July of 1910, opened the Jewel with a "large stage, raised floor, electric chandeliers, comfortable chairs, and one of the new convenient additions is a ladies rest room that will be in charge [sic] of a Negro woman to care for the children that get restless during the performance" (2, October 16, 1910, p. 8).

**Dixie Airdome**  
**TONIGHT**  
LAUGHING NIGHT                      LAUGHING NIGHT  
**The Curtis Comedy Co.**  
In the Dainty English Comedy  
**“Charley’s Aunt”**  
Its Just One Long Laugh. Its the Big  
Show at the Dixie.  
**Note the Prices: 10 and 20c**  
**A Few Seats at 30**  
**Bring Your Folks TONIGHT**  
**Our Big Production of ‘St. Elmo’ Friday**  
**Night**

Fig. 35--Another vaudeville theatre in Abilene, this one advertising the performance of a comedy.

Green allowed the citizens of Abilene free admission to the first performance, featuring "Le Croix and Le Croix." He advertised that "Mr. Le Croix is one of the best buck and wing dancers that has been seen in Abilene" (2, October 18, 1910, p. 1). The vaudeville acts at the Jewel changed twice a week and the pictures changed every day. The Jewel orchestra played at each performance, and the theatre promised "the latest, the best, the most popular" songs between acts (2, May 14, 1911, p. 8). In May of 1911, Green closed the theatre for almost two weeks for remodeling and improvements. On May 29, the vaudeville acts began again and continued through the end of the year

In a very brief time, the entertainment habits of Abilene had been totally changed. In the early 1900's, the Lyceum had been the only house of amusement in the city. When the movie houses began to open in 1907 and 1908, they brought with them another type of entertainment, introducing the new sounds of vaudeville and ragtime. In June of 1911, an editorial appeared in the Daily Reporter expressing what many must have thought, that this new form of entertainment was diverting and at times pleasing, but was also at times on the outer limits of decency.

There had evidently been some "smutty" performances by some of the vaudeville teams visiting Abilene in recent months. The editor congratulated the managers of the various

amusement houses on the general "high standards of pictures they show on their canvas," and went on to say that they had been "instructive and amusing." The editorial stated that the vaudeville acts, "with some exceptions, had been kept on a clean plane." The editor believed that every manager in Abilene catered to the "high class patron," and that they should protect their reputations by cautioning "every man and woman who appears on their stage that nothing but clean amusement will be tolerated" (2, June 11, 1911, p. 2).

#### Music for Dancing

The rigorous life of early Abilene no doubt precluded any type of social activity except going to church, where there were revival meetings, singing schools, or other gatherings. The word "dance" at that time conjured up a vision of colorfully dressed "women of ill fame" prancing in the confines of one of the many saloons in town, and by various estimates there were ten to fifteen of them by 1883.

Several dance halls thrived in early Abilene, and dancing was probably common in early Abilene saloons. These houses of entertainment usually had a pianist or a fiddler. Eileen Southern states that many blacks performed in these saloons, dance halls and beer parlors (9, p. 275). Probably because of the status of the citizenship of the blacks and the notoriety of these places as "dens of iniquity," there is no mention of them in the local newspapers of the city.



Later black (2, January 29, 1911, p. 8) and Mexican (3, August 15, 1890, p. 4) orchestras were mentioned as playing for some of the social dances.

Early social dances in Abilene, referred to euphemistically as "balls," were reported regularly in the newspapers of Abilene. In April of 1885, several Abilenians attended a ball in Buffalo Gap, and a few days later a ball was reported at the home of Mrs. Annie Harle (10, April 24, 1885, p. 5). In August of the same year, a ball was given at the Palace Hotel by Mr. and Mrs. Cowan (10, August 14, 1885, p. 5).

A few months after the first opera house was built, there was a "grand ball" given by the "dancing set of Abilene" (10, April 30, 1886, p. 5). No doubt there were dances held before this time, but no record can be found of them. After this initial mention of social dancing in the city, a steady occurrence of balls is reported in the pages of the local newspapers.

In July of 1886, a grand ball was held and three bands were used: a string band from Dallas, one from Buffalo Gap, and one from Abilene (10, July 2, 1886, p. 5). Many times these musical groups used for dancing had only two or three musicians, so the three bands combined probably did not number more than eight or ten musicians, a large group for those days. In January of 1888, the "city string band"

performed for a dance given in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Lapowski (10, January 13, 1888, p. 4).

In early Abilene the "firemen's ball" was an activity that usually garnered a great deal of support from the citizens, because the volunteer fire department was involved in regular fund raising activities. Their regular dances were a source of much needed income, and it gave the lovers of dancing an opportunity to participate in this activity. In February of 1888, a ball was given at the opera house to benefit the firemen of Abilene. An orchestra from Fort Worth was hired, and they stayed on to perform two more programs in the city: a concert in the opera house the following evening, and another dance for the Knights of Pythias three days later. A reviewer stated that their "selections were appropriate, their taste in style and their renditions were exquisite" (10, February 17, 1888, p. 4).

On one such occasion, the fire department hired the Abilene Cornet Band, directed by J. H. Lucas. A newspaper article stated, "Abilene's superb cornet band was out in splendor, furnishing sweet music for the occasion." By examining the program of dances for this ball we can gain valuable insight into the dancers of Abilene in the 1880's.

1. Grand March-Quadrille-Everyone Dance
2. Waltz-Our Chief
3. Quadrille-Foreman No. 1
4. Polka-City of Abilene
5. Lanciers-Foreman No. 2
6. Waltz-Our Major

7. Schottische-Foreman No. 3
8. Newport-District Fair
9. Quadrille-Progressive Committee
10. Waltz-The Banner
11. Schottische-Artisan Wells
12. Saratoga Lanciers-The Press
13. Waltz-Abilene Light Infantry Band
14. Firemen's Reel-Our Firemen
15. Quadrille-Abilene Light Infantry
16. Waltz-our Visitors
17. Polka-Professor Lucas
18. Quadrille-Our Ladies
19. Schottische-Board of Trade
20. All Waltz-Our Homes (3, December 13, 1889, p. 1)

Programs were prepared for most dance occasions, sometimes hand lettered and usually in some unique shape. These programs were distributed to the females in attendance. The gentlemen would then ask a lady to dance a particular "number" with him. Naturally, the more popular and attractive the lady, the more quickly her program would fill up with names of admirers opposite the number of the dance. The "accustomed number" of dances on each dance program were eighteen or twenty, with "extras" or "encores" being added at the discretion of the orchestra leader. Some numbers were repeated immediately after the initial performance because of the popularity of the selection (3, January 20, 1893, p. 5).

The dances usually began with a reception, which generally started an hour or so before the dance was to begin. At the appropriate time the "grand march" was played, led by an important dignitary of the occasion and his wife. The entire group was involved in the grand march, parading around the hall to the music. When the march was completed, toasts

or introductions were made, and the dance began, the guests usually giving the leaders of the grand march the courtesy of dancing the first phrases alone, then joining in.

In late 1889, a "social dancing club" was organized in Abilene. Several men met in the parlor of the First National Bank in December and elected officers. Elected president was E. H. Sintenis; vice-president, John Hoeny Jr.; and secretary-treasurer, F. H. Harden. It was decided that the club would hold regular dances on the first and third Friday of each month (10, December 20, 1889, p. 5). In August of 1890, the club met to elect new officers, reporting that the club would give many "brilliant parties" during the upcoming season, and stating that the club was in "exceedingly vigorous condition" (3, August 15, 1890, p. 5). The club was reorganized several times throughout the early years of Abilene.

When the Maltbie Opera House closed its doors in late 1888, other entertainment halls served the needs of Abilene's dancers until 1892, when a more permanent opera house was opened on Chestnut and South First Streets. The large social dancing events were held at that place, on the second floor in the main auditorium. The opera houses and entertainment halls used portable chairs which could be folded and moved aside to make an area spacious enough for dancing.

Masquerade balls were popular with the dancing set in early Abilene. In February of 1892, the Knights of Pythias

gave one such dance at the new opera house. According to the review of the dance, the "merry makers" began arriving at 8:30 and by 9:30 the floor was "completely filled." The grand march began at 10:00, after which the "elaborate program" of dances began. At midnight all the dancers unmasked, and danced "far into the morning." A report of the dance gave a detailed list of each person in attendance and what each wore (3, March 4, 1892, p. 5).

Not every citizen of Abilene enjoyed dancing. There was, in fact, a large number of people in the city who were steadfastly against the practice. This group of people objected on religious grounds. They formed an "anti-dancing club" a few days after the Abilene Dancing Club held their first dance in January of 1890 (10, February 4, 1890, p. 5).

The regular dances of the various dancing clubs in Abilene continued throughout the years, but the anti-dancing groups also continued to speak out against the dancers. In July of 1895, a short article appeared in the local newspaper which asked the question, "Can Christians Dance?" The writer said, "Yes, if you can't live without it. Join hands with Salome, Herodias and Herod, and circle to the left. But don't be surprised if you are mistaken for a goat, for that is the side they are on" (3, July 26, 1895, p. 5).

An article in the October 28, 1898 issue of the Abilene Reporter told of a Jersey City, New Jersey minister

establishing a dancing class to keep the young people of the area out of the dance halls. The editor called it a "devil's mission," and compared it to establishing a "church saloon" to keep the young people away from the public saloon (3, October 28, 1898, p. 3).

The question of dancing was a favorite topic of revival preachers who came to the city often, representing various religious beliefs. One such minister, Rev. Lockett Adair of Dallas stated in one sermon, "They tell me you hop here too, that you have some ragers from ragersville." He went on to say that the dancers had "Abilene selling out to the devil," and that they had "all their brains in their feet." He admitted that he once had engaged in "ragging" until he learned that it was the "best amusement for weak minded people in our state institutions" (2, April 23, 1907, p. 2).

Dances usually were given when there were special events or celebrations in Abilene. In the early 1880's a "monster dance" was held in the city to celebrate the opening of Abilene's new \$65,000 courthouse. Fiddlers were imported from Valley Creek and Fort Worth to play for dancing and the "spacious auditorium was aglow with the lights from forty kerosene lamps." The article stated that every man present had "changed his shirt, blacked his boots, and shaved his face for the dedication ceremonies." It went on to state that John Bryan, later state senator from Abilene, walked

into the room with a "b'iled" shirt, reportedly the first in Abilene, which "stood out in the gathering mass" (2, January 26, 1911, p. 5).

One of the unique of the many dance clubs in Abilene from 1889 to 1911 was the German Dancing Club. It was organized two times in 1898 (3, October 7, 1898, p. 3), and was not heard from again until 1910, when it was called the Girl's German Club. In 1910 the club gave regular dances every other Wednesday which began at six o'clock in the morning. Their first dance was held in Elk's Hall on June 1, 1910. After three hours of dancing they "all repaired to the Metropolitan Cafe where a sumptuous breakfast was served" (2, June 5, 1910, p. 2).

The German Club dances used a string orchestra for music and the regular program format was used. These dances were referred to as the "Girl's Morning German." They continued until early October, when the time was changed to six in the evening. After the change to the new time it was reported that the attendance showed a "decided increase" (2, October 9, 1910, p. 2).

The "orchestras" which provided music for dances in early Abilene ranged from a single fiddler or pianist to a large brass band. J. H. Lucas, director of the town band intermittently from 1888 to 1900, was a popular musician for dances. His "quadrille band" played for many dances in the

city, one of the most auspicious being the occasion of the opening of the Windsor Hotel in January, 1891 (3, January 2, 1891, p. 1).

Lucas also performed singly or in a duet with other musicians. M. P. Kavanaugh, a local photographer and amateur musician, performed with Lucas, as did G. W. Sherbino, a local physician who played mandolin (3, January 19, 1891, p. 4). These early musicians usually played more than one instrument.

Many of the reports on the dances simply stated a "Mexican orchestra provided music" (2, September 24, 1911, p. 2), "a string orchestra furnished music" (2, May 25, 1911, p. 4), or "the music was provided by one of the best bands in the country" (3, December 31, 1897, p. 6). In the vast majority of the reports there are no musician's names given. Many times the number of pieces is given but not the instrumentation. Occasionally the style of music was indicated by the name of the group, such as the "Genuine Cowboy Quadrille Band in full costume" (10, October 15, 1897, p. 1).

Another orchestra which frequently performed in Abilene was the "Logan Orchestra." The group was made up of Palmer Leavell and three men named Logan, Ball, and Johnson. This group performed at dances in Abilene and neighboring communities, as well as at the Favorite Skating Rink (2, January 8, 1908, p. 1).



At a New Year's ball on December 31, 1898. a four piece group played for dancing. They were Gus Ackermans, J. H. Lucas, and a Mr. and Mrs. Winnifred. The group played the traditional twenty selections on piccolo, cornet, violin, and piano. Ackermans, proprietor of the Delmonico saloon, played the piccolo, Lucas the cornet, and Mr. and Mrs. Winnifred played the violin and piano, respectively. This was probably a misspelling of the name "Winniford" (3, January 6, 1899, p. 2).

W. W. Winniford was a local barber who had his own orchestra. This group played for many dances, parties, and also at various vaudeville and movie houses in Abilene. For years his was the most active dance orchestra in the city. He always got good reviews in the newspaper accounts of the dances, such as the December 27, 1907 dance for the Junior Elks. The reporter stated that "frequent calls for encores testified" that the Elks enjoyed Winniford's music (2, December 28, 1907, p. 5).

A unique orchestra performed for the convention of the Texas Knights of Pythias in April of 1911. The reception started at 7:30 the evening of April 24, and the grand march began at 9:30. The music was furnished by a "double orchestra from Simmons College and the high school." Professor C. H. Lewis, head of the music department of Simmons College, directed the group (2, April 30, 1911, p. 2).

Some of the citizens of Abilene took advantage of dancing teachers who would visit the city for several weeks at a time, teaching dancing to those interested. In March of 1888, "Professor Mooney" of Dallas stayed almost two months in Abilene, teaching a dancing school (10, March 9, 1888, p. 5). Professor W. R. Whitehead opened a "dance and deportment school" in Terry Hall in October of 1889. Whitehead was advertised as "one of the most thorough and accomplished teachers of dancing in the South." He taught "all the standard round and square dances adopted by the National Association of Teachers of Dancing." Ladies and children met at different times from the gentlemen. Tuition was \$4 per month, and the school lasted four weeks (3, September 13, 1889, p. 5).

Professor Sam Flint from Fort Worth held a four-week dancing school at Armory Hall in January and February of 1892. He was referred to as a "dancing master," and opened the school with forty people in attendance, or twenty couples (3, January 22, 1892, p. 5). He also had a juvenile class in the afternoon. The custom of holding a grand ball at the conclusion of the school, "which has prevailed for years with teachers," was carried out on February 15, 1892 at the new B & W Opera House (3, February 5, 1892, p. 5).

Many other dancing schools were held in Abilene, but none taught ballet or "serious" dancing. "Ballroom" dancing

was the course of study for these schools, and they always closed with a dance, inviting the whole community. The only known mention of solo dancing in Abilene before 1911 was when the newly formed Lyceum Stock Company (formerly known as the Abilene Dramatic Company) performed the play "A Night Off," in Cisco, Texas. Miss Nell Red danced for the audience between acts (3, December 15, 1899, p. 5).

Abilene's dancers used the dances that were popular in other parts of the country. The waltz, the quadrille, the lancers, the polka, the schottische, and the reel were popular in early Abilene. In the middle 1890's the two-step became popular, and those "who could not dance it yet enjoyed trying" (3, November 5, 1896, p. 3). After the turn of the century the waltz, the quadrille, and the two-step were the most popular, even though the others were still used (2, January 1, 1908, p. 1).

#### Summary

The citizens of early Abilene enjoyed a variety of styles of entertaining music. The students of private teachers played and sang popular music in their homes and at social gatherings.

Minstrel shows were popular in the city, and were performed by men, women, and children. Traveling minstrel shows, both black and white, were well patronized when they visited the entertainment halls of Abilene.

Musical productions of many varieties were performed by church groups, the military companies, the band, and educational institutions for the purpose of raising money for their respective organizations. These groups performed at the churches, at the school building, and in the entertainment halls of the city.

Traveling musical shows of every variety played at the opera house or in one of the smaller halls. Circuses and other tented shows carried large musical ensembles and soloists to give the show enough variety to draw in spectators.

The advent of the movie projector in the early 1900's brought about the opening of several houses in the city that showed movies and featured a new style of entertainment called vaudeville. These places opened and failed on a regular basis, advertising entertainment of every possible variety, mostly musical.

Dancing in Abilene was thoroughly enjoyed by some and offensive to others. In spite of the active opposition from their neighbors, the dancers enjoyed regular "hops" across the city. Dance clubs were popular and provided local musicians with fairly steady work.

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## CHAPTER VII

### MUSIC MERCHANDISING

When Abilene was in its infancy, the musically talented faction showed signs of their interest in performance and study. Those who could play band instruments made efforts to form a band as early as 1883. Music teachers began recruiting students in the middle 1880's. The citizens who were interested in performing musical plays and operettas were beginning to stage productions early in the history of the city. Church groups who were desirous of raising money for their respective faiths were performing published cantatas, and the church choirs were becoming interested in performing works other than those found in the hymn books. Hundreds of amateur musicians were practicing and performing and encouraging hundreds of younger musicians to do the same.

This sudden influx of performance and study caused a need for published sheet music, operettas, cantatas, and method books. There was also a need for pianos, organs, guitars, violins, and mandolins, as well as the need for repair and tuning of these instruments. Basic music supplies were also needed, like strings, picks, resin for bows, and many other pieces of musical paraphernalia. Living in a small

West Texas city in the middle 1880's presented one difficult problem for these musicians: they needed a place to buy music, instruments and supplies.

During the first few years of Abilene's existence, the community of Buffalo Gap competed for the trade of its younger rival to the north. Buffalo Gap merchants aimed their advertising toward the bustling new city on the T & P tracks, hoping that at least part of the citizens of Abilene would take the twelve-mile wagon ride and shop in Buffalo Gap.

Even before Abilene was a year old various Buffalo Gap merchants were stocking music and musical instruments for those who had an interest in such things. The store owner usually specialized in goods that had nothing to do with music, but wanted to cater to those who might purchase a violin, guitar, or banjo. The Buffalo Gap firm of Cheatham and Cunningham dealt in groceries and furniture, but also carried musical instruments. (See Figure 36, p. 329.) An advertisement for this firm was found in a rare copy of the Buffalo Gap Weekly News (5, January 28, 1882, p. 4).

James Lowry, the editor of the Taylor County News, was quick to see the demand for music and instruments and pointed out to Abilene the need for the supply. In early 1886 he placed a one-sentence "editorial" in his newspaper which read: "Abilene needs a music store, and the trade of this and tributary places would handsomely support one" (12, March 12,

**POLITE BARKEEPERS IN ATTENDANCE.**

**Cheatham & Cunningham,**

—DEALERS IN—

**Family Groceries, Furniture and  
Musical Instruments.**

A FULL STOCK ALWAYS ON HAND.

Our Motto is Quality, Not Quantity.

**D. E. WHITE & CO.**

Fig. 36--An early example of music merchandising in the Buffalo Gap Weekly News, 1882.



1886, p. 5). As far as can be determined, the business never began, and Abilene remained without a music store for a few more years.

#### Mail Order Buying

When citizens of early Abilene wanted musical merchandise, they could wait for "musical notion peddlers" who "did the town" on a fairly regular basis, or they could order by mail or by wire. Many large musical merchandise houses advertised often in the Abilene newspapers. They promoted sheet music, books of songs, and instruments (12, August 16, 1889, p. 5).

The Oliver Ditson Company was a regular advertiser in the local newspapers. They specialized in music and did not sell instruments. They offered household music, "classics," method books, religious music and other selections. All of their advertising was done before 1890. They sold books like "Barnabee's Songs, one of the best comic collections extant," which had twenty-one songs in 150 pages and was sheet music size. The price for the collection was one dollar (12, April 3, 1885, p. 7). They also featured "Four Hand Classics," with selections by Godard, Bohm, Brahms, Beethoven, Delibes, Moskowski, and others (12, May 10, 1890, p. 8).

One of the most regular advertisers in the Abilene newspapers was the Thomas Goggan Company of Galveston. The first ad for this company appeared in the July 9, 1886, issue of

the Taylor County News. This initial ad ran every week for several months (12, July 9, 1886, p. 8). This firm was one of the first in Texas to publish music, having been organized in 1866.

The Goggan Company began by specializing in music publications and later became involved in the sale of instruments (14, p. 253). In 1911, a branch office in Dallas advertised Chickering pianos in the Abilene Daily Reporter (1, October 18, 1911, p. 4). In a listing of "businesses of Abilene" in 1887, Goggan was listed under "musical instruments, etc." (12, May 27, 1887, p. 6).

Other large firms advertising locally were C. H. Edwards Music House and Will A. Watkins Music Company, both of Dallas. These firms offered music and instruments, featuring Chickering, Mason and Hamlin, Kimball, Steinway, and Wheelock pianos (12, January 6, 1888, p. 7). Hirschfield's Music House in Forth Worth offered Cable and Schiller pianos on the installment plan (12, October 10, 1889, p. 7). The Ivers and Pond Piano Company offered to pay railway expenses from Boston and accepted trade-in pianos (3, February 11, 1897, p. 4).

The music publishers made it a practice to send new pieces of music to news publishers, hoping for a mention in the weekly newspaper. In February of 1888, C. H. Edwards sent copies of two new dances, "Clotilde Schottische" and

"Grove Mazurka" (3, February 24, 1888, p. 4). Two months later they sent "El Paso Waltz," pointing out that the readers could get copies for forty cents each (3, April 20, 1888, p. 4). The White-Smith Music Company of Chicago sent "My Queen Inez" and "Six Modern Beau Brummells" in 1893. The Abilene Reporter responded with "The publishers will please accept thanks" (3, August 21, 1896, p. 3).

Probably one of the most popular mail order outlets of the time was Sears, Roebuck and Company, which was known as the "cheapest supply house on earth." Their music section in the 1897 catalogue included a large selection of instruments, and the company agreed to ship anywhere in the United States. Their piano prices ranged for \$125 to \$189, and were advertised as being "instruments of great solidity, every part being thoroughly and honestly made." Their least expensive parlor organ, seventy-seven inches high, was listed at \$41.50 (8, unpagged).

In the violin pages of the catalogue, the "cheapest instrument" was two dollars, made of "selected maple, imitation snakewood with black frog, bone button and inlaid dot." Their best violin was a "genuine Gaspar Da Salo model violin and complete outfit" which sold for \$16.50. Flute prices ranged from \$1.60 to \$15.10, with the best flute being made of the "finest grenadilla wood," having ten keys with "tuning slide and cork joints." All flutes were pitched in the key

of D. The "clarionets" were made of grenadilla wood having from six to fifteen keys, and pitched in C, D, and E<sup>b</sup>. The clarinet prices ranged from \$4.35 to \$14.85, with the best one having "fifteen German silver keys" (8, unpagged).

#### Local Music Dealers

According to Tommie Clack, owning a piano in early Abilene was not common. She stated that the home with the piano was usually the home in which people gathered for parties and socials (6). The purchase of a piano usually warranted a mention in the newspaper, especially if the buyer was well known in the community, or the seller regularly placed ads in the newspaper.

In early 1891 it was reported that L. W. Norcross had sold to O. W. Steffens, a prominent Abilene banker, a "handsome" Boardman and Gray piano (3, January 30, 1891, p. 4). In 1897, Theodore Heyck Jr. made the news when he presented his sister a "holiday present," also a Boardman and Gray piano. Annie Heyck was a well known violin and piano teacher in Abilene, and played organ for the Catholic Church (12, January 1, 1897, p. 3).

The first known music merchandiser in Abilene was John R. Minter, who in late 1886 ran a news and stationery store in the post office building. He advertised sheet music and "song and instrument folios," and would order music as it was requested, even on "short notice" (12, December 3, 1886,

p. 5). After Minter's death, T. R. Polk took over the store in 1889 (12, June 21, 1889, p. 1).

Polk was succeeded by E. E. Radford at the same location. Radford advertised "1000 pieces of sheet music in stock at less prices than ever before in Abilene" (12, July 12, 1889, p. 5). A diversified approach to music merchandising became quite common in the early years of the city. Stores specializing in other, more marketable goods were successful in selling music and music goods.

The most common businesses to house music goods were the jewelry store and sewing machine shop. E. L. Ritch and James F. Clark were partners in the jewelry business when the community was five years old. They advertised instruments in late 1887, and later claimed to have a "complete assortment, from a small French harp to a \$75 music box." They also advertised watches, clocks, diamonds, silverware, and fine jewelry" (12, January 13, 1888, p. 5).

In May of 1888, Ritch left the establishment and William F. Adair was Clark's partner until 1892, when Adair went into business for himself at Abilene Jewelry Company (13, p. 141). Clark sold "accordeons [sic], violins, guitars, banjos, and fine music boxes playing from six to twelve tunes." His violins sold from \$2.50 to \$25.00, guitars from \$7.00 to \$35.00, and "accordeons" [sic] from \$1.50 to \$15.00 (12, November 29, 1889, p. 5).

Clark ran the Pine Street establishment until 1905, when he sold the business. The new owners called the jewelry store "West Texas Jewelry" (1, October 12, 1907, p. 3). A few months before he sold out, Clark had arranged with Ross and Heyer Piano Company of Fort Worth to show Hoffman pianos in an empty room in the rear of the jewelry store. Clark fitted up the room into a "piano parlor" and, with the assistance of piano salesman L. W. Norcross, sold pianos from the store (1, August 5, 1905, p. 6).

E. L. Ritch, who had come to Abilene in 1886 from Gainesville, Georgia, established himself in a building "one door east of the post office" in May of 1888 (12, May 4, 1888, p. 5). He advertised in June that he would soon receive a "lot of musical instruments of every description" (3, June 27, 1888, p. 2). By the following year he claimed to have the largest line of musical instruments in Abilene. He sold violins, guitars, banjos, harmonicas, and strings (12, June 1, 1889, p. 5). He later finished a course in optics so he could fit glasses as a part of his jewelry business. (See Figure 37, p. 336.) When he died in late 1890, he was buried with full military honors as a member of the Abilene Light Infantry Company. The Abilene band led the processional (12, November 7, 1890, p. 4).

In September of 1889, Frank Foster was reported to have taken the agency for Everett pianos. Foster placed one of

ABILENE, TEXAS.

**E. L. RITCH,**

**The Big Watch Jeweler,**

Makes a Specialty of carrying the newest and  
most novel styles in

**Fine Diamonds, Jewelry, Clocks, Silverware,**

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, ETC.**

He is prepared to fit Spectacles to all kinds of compli-  
cated, weak and afflicted eyes.

**Fine watch repairing and engraving a specialty.**

Fig. 37--E. L. Ritch advertisement for jewelry, spectacles, and musical instruments, 1889.

the pianos on exhibition at his sewing machine establishment (12, September 13, 1889, p. 5). He was also listed in the 1892-93 business directory as the representative for Singer sewing machines. He advertised that he repaired sewing machines, pianos, and organs (13, p. 148). These are the only mentions of Foster in Abilene.

L. W. Norcross had the longest record of music dealership in early Abilene. He had lived in Abilene prior to 1890 as a sewing machine salesman, and returned to the city early in 1890 (12, January 30, 1890, p. 5). He went into partnership with J. F. Clark after Adair left Clark. In April of 1890, he went over to E. L. Ritch, Clark's competitor and former partner.

Norcross advertised that he was not connected with any one music house and had no "enormous expenses that demand big profits" (12, April 25, 1890, p. 3). He stated that he would keep at least one of each of the brands of piano he recommended on exhibition. He encouraged prospective buyers to examine the instruments and place orders with the jewelry store.

In May, he moved his business to South Second Street where his sales of pianos, organs and sewing machines would be "continued as usual" (12, May 23, 1890, supplement). Two months later he was back with Ritch on Pine Street. The store offered pianos, organs, violins, guitars, banjos,



accordions, harmonicas, and strings. Orders were taken for sheet music, song collections, and method books (12, July 25, 1890, p. 5).

After Ritch's death in November of 1890, Norcross went back into partnership with J. F. Clark, and was headquartered in the jewelry store on Pine Street. The first advertisement in Abilene newspapers to show only music products appeared in the February 6, 1891, issue of the Taylor County News. No mention was made of jewelry or sewing machines. The store sold Shoemaker, Boardman and Gray, and William Bourne Pianos, as well as Crown organs (12, February 6, 1891, p. 3).

Norcross was in the news quite often with reports of sales of pianos to buyers in Albany, Fort Worth, and many other cities. He did a great deal of traveling over the next few years, representing the J. F. Clark jewelry and music business. When Clark installed his "piano parlor" in the rear of his store in 1905, Norcross was chief salesman for the store. In late 1905, when Clark closed out his business, Norcross stayed on with the West Texas Jewelry Company representing the Ross and Heyer Piano Company of Fort Worth as late as 1907 (1, October 12, 1907, p. 3). Norcross was not heard of after 1907.

In 1890, Harris Brothers, who operated a drug store, advertised pianos and organs for sale, but like many other dealers during this time, only one mention is found of them

handling musical instruments (3, July 25, 1890, p. 8). G. T. Davis and Frank Connor are also mentioned briefly. Their place of business was on Chestnut Street between South Fourth and South Fifth Streets (12, May 10, 1890, p. 8). Representing the Story and Clark Piano Company, they often traveled to Fort Worth to replenish their stock of pianos and organs (12, September 4, 1891, p. 5).

J. W. Carter was in the piano and organ business in Abilene for several years beginning in 1894. He owned a stock of pianos in Abilene and Cisco, Texas (12, June 8, 1894, p. 3). Having to go out of business in November of 1897, he advertised that there had never been "such a slaughter of prices" (3, November 12, 1897, p. 5). He stated that he planned to close both houses and sell direct from the factory. He even talked of marketing his own organ, but nothing else was heard of this plan.

Carter was still "closing out" in April of 1898, finally announcing that the stock was to be moved to "Johnson Brothers' on the south side of town" (12, April 15, 1898, p. 4). The following month an ad appeared telling of Johnson Brothers' "fine line of piano and organs and other musical instruments" (12, May 6, 1898, p. 3). He later went to work for the C. H. Edwards Music House of Dallas selling Ivers and Pond pianos.

In June of 1892, J. C. Harnden and his wife moved from Gonzales, Texas, to open a book and music store in Abilene. It was located on the east side of Pine Street in a new brick building built by J. H. Doman. The store was to open on August 1, but construction delays caused the postponement of the opening (12, July 8, 1892, p. 5).

A few weeks later, the first advertisement for Harnden's store appeared in the newspaper. It was the first time the phrase "music store" had appeared in advertising in Abilene. The ad was large and comprehensive, featuring pianos and organs, as well as a "fine selection of guitars, banjos, harmonicas, violins, mandolins, flutes, accordions, concertinas, zithers, autoharps, roller organs, symphonions, music boxes, music cases, and finest gut and steel strings" (3, July 29, 1892, p. 5).

The store advertised a wind instrument for the first time by naming the flute. Harnden also carried books, stationery, slates, crayons, tablets, ink, and pens. They also carried a line of lawn tennis goods, baseball goods, and games of different kinds (3, August 19, 1892, p. 1).

The store, located near the First National Bank, did good business immediately, with ads about the store appearing regularly in the newspapers. (See Figure 38, p. 341.) He used innovative advertising ideas to promote the store and keep it in the public eye. One was a voting contest which

Christmas Presents. ✨

IN ENDLESS VARIETY

At HARNDEN'S

Book and Music Store.

Next Side Line Street.

Fig. 38--J. C. Harnden advertisement, 1892

gave the young lady with the most votes a twenty dollar doll; a purchase of five cents was worth one vote. The next year, Harnden put a sealed jar of marbles in the store window and allowed customers one guess for each five cent purchase. The winner received a twenty dollar gold piece (12, September 7, 1894, supplement).

In late 1896, after four years in business at the Pine Street location, Harnden announced that he was going to "wind up" his business in Abilene and sell all the merchandise at cost (12, November 20, 1896, p. 3). For some reason the store did not cease business, but did curtail advertising quite a bit. In July of 1897, it was reported that a new clerk at the store, "a beautiful Negro girl," was "now the attraction" (3, July 23, 1897, p. 6), and in December of that year the store began advertising regularly again. Again in 1905, the store experienced financial difficulties. This time bankruptcy was declared and the stock of goods was sold to the highest bidder in a private sale after which Harnden moved to Chicago (1, December 31, 1908, p. 6).

In 1896, J. L. Dowdy and C. B. Patton, representing the Jesse French Piano and Organ Company of Dallas, put in a "wareroom" in Abilene and sold instruments in the city for over a year. They specialized in the Starr piano, and sold one of their pianos to the music department of Simmons College (12, January 13, 1896, p. 3). Both men lived in Brownwood,

Texas, and stayed at the Windsor Hotel when they were in the city (3, May 14, 1897, p. 3). John R. Mackechney, who owned a "notion" store in Abilene, added a line of musical goods to his store in May of 1897 (3, May 7, 1897, p. 6). After about eighteen months he closed out this stock by selling the goods at cost (12, December 23, 1891, p. 8).

In early 1896, George D. Williams operated a sewing machine shop in Abilene, the address of which is unknown. He also sold music and instruments, representing the Kingsbury Piano Company (12, January 17, 1896, p. 3). He advertised sheet music, "both Mexican and American," for half the list price, and agreed to order any piece for that price (3, July 3, 1896, p. 8). Williams was active in his sales, as news reports pointed out from time to time. In August of 1896, he rented the Fowler Building on Chestnut Street and moved his stock of goods to that place. He added bicycles to his already diversified business. He promised bargains in "everything from pianos to a paper of pins" (3, August 7, 1896, p. 3).

A writer on the Abilene Reporter staff referred to Williams as the "good-natured sorrel complexioned Chestnut Street music, sewing machine, and notion man" (3, October 3, 1896, p. 5). In July of 1897, Williams had financial reverses and had to turn his stock over to someone who had paid a security debt for him. Williams then "packed up and

moved to Denton" (12, July 2, 1897, p. 3). During this particular time in the history of the city, the expression "the music man" was popular when referring to one of these men who peddled pianos and organs. One of these "music men" owned a shoe store and also sold pianos. His name was O. N. Hill, and he was in the music business only a few months. He sold his shoe store in late 1904 and began selling eggs (1, December 6, 1904, p. 3).

Another part-time music dealer in Abilene was Richard H. Woods, who owned the Abilene Department Store at 239 Chestnut. He was listed as a "music and book dealer" in the 1907 city directory (2, p. 155).

In late 1906, a young man moved to Abilene with the intention of establishing a music store in the city. Emmett Elbert Hall was born in the Abilene area in 1877 and went to school in Dublin, Texas. He married Ozella Sublett of Dublin before coming to Abilene, and opened a music store at 233 Chestnut (1, June 27, 1924, p. 1). Hall Music Company was the first business establishment in Abilene to deal exclusively with music goods.

After about two years at the Chestnut location, Hall moved the store to 219 Pine, where he ran the business until his death in 1924. Hall stressed quality, volume business, and diversification. He added a "talking machine" department and sold records and phonographs. In 1910 he hired his

cousin, Herman McDaniel (1892-1982), to oversee this new department. McDaniel stated that Hall was called "Double E" by his friends and employees. His wife, known as "Ozie," assisted in the early years of the store by serving as part-time bookkeeper (10).

After opening his music store, Hall began making aggressive promotional moves to sell his goods and keep the store on firm financial footing. No doubt he was aware of the failure of several other music houses before his store opened in the city.

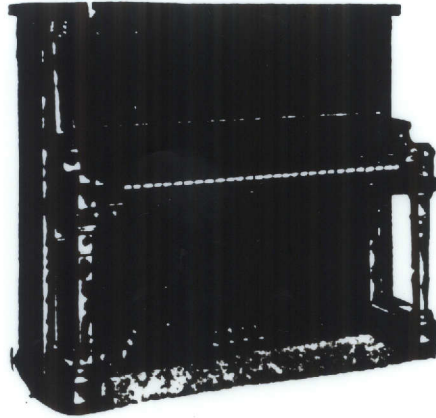
Early in 1907 he became involved with a voting contest sponsored by the Abilene Daily Reporter and fifteen merchants to select the "most popular young lady in Taylor County" (1, April 20, 1907, p. 8). Twenty-five cents' worth of merchandise purchased from any of the fifteen merchants was worth one vote. One of the prizes was a new piano. Hall also furnished pianos for music teachers' special recitals and even opened his store for recitals (1, June 5, 1910, p. 2).

Hall sold several makes of pianos at his stores, but mainly advertised the one made by the Crown Piano Company. (See Figure 39, p. 346.) Soon after he opened his store in Abilene, he established music businesses in Dublin, Stamford, and San Angelo. He reported that he sold 400 pianos in Abilene in 1907 (1, December 20, 1907, p. 4). When he moved from the south side of the city to Pine Street he closed down



# CROWN

Perfect  
in  
Tone  
Perfect  
in Con-



struction  
and  
Perfect  
in  
Finish

**Few, if Any, So Good and None Better**

If you want a Piano you want a Crown. Whether you want or not call and see what we have to offer you. See what we have in quality, price and terms. We make it easy for you to own the best Piano.

## HALL MUSIC COMP'Y

Chestnut Street, South Side, Abilene, Texas

Fig. 39--Hall Music Company advertisement in 1907, when the store was on Chestnut Street.

the Stamford outlet. He also had a "removal sale" when he changed locations (1, January 13, 1909, p. 6).

In 1910, Hall boasted of seven men traveling for the Abilene store. That same year he closed the outlets in Dublin and San Angelo to "concentrate the sales force and capital in Abilene" (1, May 12, 1910, p. 1).

Edwin Cosby, pioneer Abilenian and author of the first history of Abilene, states that Hall was one of the city's foremost businessmen during this period of the city's rapid growth. (See Figure 40, p. 348.) Hall and his wife reared five children: Vivian, Vera, Emmett, Elmon, and Elbert (7, p. 364). Elbert Hall, the youngest, is currently serving as Mayor of Abilene.

Another short-lived music store in the early 1900's was C. H. Mahan at 255 Chestnut Street. Nothing is known of the owner, but the manager of the store, Z. D. Hailey, was quite active in Abilene in the piano business (1, June 1, 1911, p. 4).

Hailey was active in the Democratic party, and was an amateur musician. He led singing at community sings, and once directed a choir of Woodmen of the World at a special ceremony marking the graves of former Woodmen (1, June 1, 1911, p. 4). Herman McDaniel remembered Hailey as being "about fifty" when McDaniel came to Abilene in 1910, and stated that "Zack" Hailey was "not much of a musician but





Fig. 40--Interior of Pine Street location of Hall Music Company, early 1900's

was a good country piano peddler." When the Mahan music house went out of business later, Hailey went to work for E. E. Hall as a traveling salesman (10).

### The Phonograph

After the development of the phonograph and the cylinder record in the late 1800's, it was many years before the full financial implications of the machine would be realized. Many of the great musical performers in the late 1800's and early 1900's found that working with the recording machine was tedious and the process was said to emphasize the worst part of their voices. Even John Philip Sousa refused to get involved with the machine. He predicted that no one would like "canned music" (4, p. 19).

Only a year after the first lateral cut system was developed in 1887, an article appeared in the August 9, 1888, issue of the Abilene Reporter, explaining the phonograph's use and usefulness. The editor had taken the article from the Scientific American.

The Handel choruses, as sung by four thousand voices, with the orchestral and organ accompaniments, will be heard in New York and other American cities. They can be repeated to a hundred different audiences for years to come (11, July 14, 1888, p. 1).

In May of 1890, another article about the phonograph appeared in the newspaper. One of the new machines had been loaned to the school library, causing a great deal of wonder. The writer was amazed that the machine could copy "anything

talked, sung or whistled into it with perfect distinctness." Edison's phonograph was called "one of the greatest wonders of the nineteenth century" (12, May 9, 1890, p. 8).

The new machine was regarded with awe and amazement, but was still treated as a diversion and a tool of entertainment and nothing more. On November 19, 1896, an entertainment was held which featured the machine and a few recordings. Quite a few lovers of entertainment were in attendance, reporting that they had a "pleasant time" (3, November 20, 1896, p. 3).

Two years later, in April of 1898, a full program of phonograph music was "broadcast" over the Roberts Telephone Exchange by the owner, Sydney Roberts. The program lasted about an hour, featuring instrumental music, speeches, and recitations. These "followed each other with rapid succession greatly to the delight of those who were fortunate enough to be at their phones." The comment was made that the phonograph "did its work well while the wires and phones faithfully transmitted it to auditors all over town and perhaps to adjoining ones" (3, April 22, 1898, p. 3).

Another promotional use of the phonograph was in the Fall of 1904. On the evening of national, state, and local elections, Clem Boulte, manager of another telephone exchange in Abilene, Southwestern Telephone and Telegraph, stretched a canvas across the alley between Mueller Hardware and Evans

Grocery on Pine Street and showed the election returns. Between returns he showed stereoptican views "from all over the world" and played phonograph music for the crowd (1, November 8, 1904, p. 2).

Even as late as 1905, the phonograph was still something of a novelty. At a meeting of the United Confederate Veterans of Abilene, held in April of 1905, the "talking machine" was used as entertainment. John S. Brown brought his phonograph from Hamby and "rendered some interesting selections which were greatly and highly appreciated." A "Victor Concert" was held at the home of Mrs. Will Stith in June of 1907. The lawn party of young people listened to a "galaxy of divine voices" such as Eames, Melba and Caruso. The party especially enjoyed "Al Wilson and his delightful Dutch yodel" (1, June 5, 1907, p. 1).

In May of 1907, Hall Music Company advertised the "latest recordings" for sale. The "new Columbia X P" cylindrical records were selling for twenty-five cents, and ten-inch discs were selling for sixty cents. The "popular tenor" Will Denney sang "Ask Me Not," and "My Word! What a Lot of It," on a disc, and vaudeville specialists Ada Jones and Len Spencer sang "Meet Me Down at the Corner" on a cylinder (1, May 31, 1907, p. 32).

The phonograph was used in early movie theatres in Abilene, both inside the theatre and outside the entrance.

The one at the entrance was used to attract attention to the theatre as potential customers passed by. The one on the inside was used to play music between films, as well as to play recordings with illustrated songs (1, May 18, 1907, p. 4). The phonograph was an important part of early motion picture history, not only in Abilene, but other places with film theatres (9, p. 19).

In late 1909, Hall Music Company promoted its phonographs by sponsoring a "special grand opera concert" at the store. The "Victrola 12" was used, called the "hornless wonder of the talking machine world." B. Frank Reeves, the representative of the Victor Talking Machine Company, promised "operatic arias, musical comedy gems, band concerts," and other musical selections (1, October 3, 1909, p. 4).

In 1910, Herman McDaniel was hired to supervise the record department of Hall Music Company, and he began a program of free concerts for the public schools. He states that he would carry one of the machines to the school in a wagon, play a few records for the different classrooms, and talk for a few minutes about how the machine worked. McDaniel said that after every presentation in the school, he got a few calls from parents wanting to know how they could purchase a small phonograph for their homes (10).



### Piano Tuners

Piano tuning in early Abilene was done by part-time and amateur tuners. The full-time tuner was not a part of the Abilene music scene until late in the first decade of the twentieth century. Frank Foster, a local sewing machine salesman and piano and organ salesman, is the first tuner mentioned in the city. He was reported in 1889 as being available to tune and repair pianos and organs (12, September 13, 1889, p. 5).

Frank Connor was also mentioned as a tuner for pianos and organs about the same time. Connor was a traveling salesman for the Story and Clark Piano Company (12, May 10, 1890, p. 8).

Tuning for Harris Brothers Drug Store was R. E. Hawkins, who made occasional trips to Abilene. Hawkins, like most other Abilene tuners at this time, lived in another city and would tune and repair those pianos his company sold, and would also tune for others as time permitted. Persons needing the services of piano technicians would leave orders at the place of business the tuner represented, and when he was in Abilene he would fill the orders (3, July 25, 1890, p. 8).

There was also the occasional free lance tuner who would buy an ad (usually taking the form of local news) stating his arrival date in Abilene and where he could be reached. The headquarters for these itinerant tuners was generally



in a hotel. Louis Range, a German piano tuner and builder from New Orleans, came to Abilene in September of 1891. He stated that he would remain in Abilene for a short while and that "persons wishing pianos repaired or tuned should leave orders at the Commercial Hotel." He promised "satisfaction or no charge" (12, September 11, 1891, p. 7).

Another tuner in Abilene in late 1891 was J. H. Lucas, who was at that time the town band director and local music teacher. He stated that he was "prepared to tune pianos on short notice." He suggested that all orders for his tuning be left at his residence on Chestnut Street and they would receive "prompt attention" (3, November 13, 1891, p. 5).

Most dealers of musical instruments in the early years of Abilene's history also advertised the fact that they were piano tuners. J. C. Harnden, who owned a book and music store on Pine Street, stated that he tuned and repaired pianos and organs as well as "all other musical instruments," and guaranteed that his work would be "efficiently carried out" (3, September 23, 1892, p. 1).

L. W. Norcross, a salesman who sold sewing machines and pianos in partnership with several merchandisers in Abilene, also tuned pianos. He would come to Abilene on business and fill orders for tuning and repair that had been left for him at his hotel or business house. He tuned on a regular basis in Abilene from about 1889 to 1907. He was reported to

"understand this branch of the music business thoroughly" (12, April 26, 1895, p. 3).

Another long-time piano tuner in Abilene was J. T. Cullins. He was first mentioned in 1893, being referred to as the "well known piano tuner" (3, March 24, 1893, p. 5). From this statement we can assume that he visited Abilene frequently before this date. Orders at this time were left for him at the Palace Hotel. He represented piano firms from other cities until 1908, when he was hired by Hall Music Company as a full time tuner and repairman. Hall had advertised earlier that all pianos purchased from his store would receive two years of free tuning (1, May 18, 1907, p. 2).

Cullins was referred to as "Professor" Cullins and was advertised as doing an "artistic" job of tuning. In early 1911, he accepted a position at the Jesse French Piano Company in Fort Worth. He stated that he would visit Abilene twice a year, and orders for tuning could be left with C. H. Lewis, Miss Nettie Tillett, Mrs. Van Ness Lewis, Mrs. Henry Bass, or Miss Lou Hart. All of these people were prominent musicians and teachers in Abilene (1, January 18, 1911, p. 1).

Other tuners mentioned were C. B. Patton of the Jesse French Piano Company (12, August 7, 1896, p. 3), J. W. Carter of C. H. Edwards Music House (2, p. 61), and O. N. Hill, who sold pianos from his shoe store briefly before going into the egg business (1, December 3, 1904, p. 1). The only

mention of cost for piano tuning was in 1898. The ad stated that autoharps would be tuned for twenty-five cents, and pianos for \$3.50 (12, February 11, 1898, p. 3).

#### Miscellaneous Promotional Activities

Music became a part of every special occasion in early Abilene. The town band played for singular events such as elections, temperance meetings, the turning on of the first electric street lamps, the Fourth of July cornerstone ceremonies for the new Simmons College, and even the occasion when the whole town turned out to witness the first artesia well produce water (this turned out to be a false alarm). The band, with volunteer members and a director who was paid occasionally, was used to promote the town and its every stride toward future greatness.

Local entertainers promoted Abilene at each graduation ceremony as they sang and played for parents and friends. They promoted the city when, attired in comic costumes and faces blackened with burnt cork, they entertained large audiences with minstrel shows and then turned over the receipts to the fire department or church group. They promoted the city when they presented musical productions and gave dances for visiting teachers, Elks, Knights of Pythias, press conventions, or other guests of the city.

During the period before the turn of the century, these promotional activities were on a volunteer basis. As the

town grew larger and professional entertainers were paid more for performances in opera houses and vaudeville theatres, there was also an influx of local musical groups performing at special events of merchandise houses.

In September of 1908, two dry goods houses sponsored opening day ceremonies by using string groups to promote the event. On September 18, the Baldinger Millinery Parlor had a string group at their opening (1, September 18, 1908, p. 1), and three days later, Moore Dry Goods Company opened with the assistance of a four-piece string group, possibly the same one that had played for the millinery opening (1, September 22, 1908, p. 1). A year later a group consisting of two guitars and a mandolin opened a grocery store in the city. The group was called the "Humphreys-Stevens-Kelly Orchestra" (1, October 8, 1909, p. 7).

The local newspapers regularly carried ads of individual buyers and sellers of musical instruments. Some of these ads requested unique items to trade for a musical instrument. In 1896, an individual wanted to trade his organ for a buggy (12, July 24, 1896, p. 3). In 1904, S. D. Jobe, a local amateur musician and community singer, wanted to trade an organ for a "good horse" (1, November 25, 1904, p. 1). One seller in 1886 advertised a violin "for sale for a song" (12, January 29, 1886, p. 4).

In 1910, a disagreement over the ownership of a piano resulted in a law suit. Mrs. Annie Daugherty sued Mrs. Minerva Gibbs for the possession of the instrument. Mrs. Gibbs was the widow of the late William L. Gibbs, former editor of the Magnetic Quill and Word and Work. It was Gibbs who had a pistol duel with the editor of the Abilene Reporter in 1885. Mrs. Gibbs lost the suit; the jury ruled in favor of Mrs. Daugherty (1, January 1, 1910, p. 1).

#### Summary

Musicians who lived in Abilene before the turn of the century were not able to purchase music supplies from a house specializing in music products. They either ordered what they needed from a mail order house or patronized drug stores, jewelry stores, or stationery stores who handled music goods or sheet music. None of these establishments dealt in musical goods in a permanent way, but more or less experimented with musical merchandise, often closing out their stocks only a few months after introducing the goods.

In the Fall of 1906, E. E. Hall opened a music store on Chestnut Street, the first store in Abilene to deal exclusively in music merchandise. He later moved his store to Pine Street and was in business there until his death in 1924. He sold sheet music, pianos and organs, band and orchestra instruments, and phonographs and records. Piano tuners and technicians worked out of Hall Music Company as well as the

other stores in the city. Tuners from other cities also visited Abilene from time to time.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Prior to the investigation of music in Abilene, the history of the city had been studied and compiled, but no detailed study had been completed about its cultural and entertainment tastes. The purpose of this study was to trace the role of music and music education in Abilene, Texas, from 1881 to 1911. The research presents historical data relative to five categories: (1) educational music, (2) cultural music, (3) religious music, (4) music of the vernacular, and (5) music merchandising.

Abilene was founded in March, 1881, as a result of the Texas and Pacific Railroad and its construction through the northern part of Taylor County. Before three years had passed, the county seat was moved from Buffalo Gap, a small community twelve miles south of Abilene. After the seat of government had been moved to the city, Abilene enjoyed a period of rapid growth which lasted almost thirty years.

Educational music refers to music taught or performed in a school or college setting, cultural music refers to music of a more serious nature, religious music refers to music related to church activities, vernacular music refers to music



meant only for entertainment, and music merchandising refers to the commercial aspects of music.

The main sources of material for the study were personal interviews, newspaper files, city directories, city and county documents, school documents, journal articles, photographs, and local histories. These sources were investigated, and the information was organized according to the five major topics of music in Abilene.

### Findings

Music played a major role in the life of students enrolled in the Abilene Public Schools from 1881 to 1911. Even though music specialists were not hired before 1918, students were exposed to instrumental and vocal performances not only by fellow students, but also by Abilene's adult musicians. Every special occasion in the school system was marked with the performance of several types of musical selections. Students studying privately had no difficulty finding occasions to display their proficiency for their peers either vocally or instrumentally.

In spite of earlier harsh conditions in the school rooms, music was heard quite regularly during the school year. When adequate halls with stages were constructed in the city, simple school closing exercises became full blown concerts, some lasting an entire day. Many of the early teachers and administrators in the school system were fond of music. They

not only encouraged the young musicians in the school, but they also provided opportunities for performance, sometimes even taking part in the program.

The adult community took much interest in the public schools of Abilene. Many benefit concerts were performed for the schools, and fund raising activities were a regular part of the school year. These concerts featured both adults and students and were usually well attended.

The colleges that were established in Abilene before 1911 deemed it important to advertise that a strong music department would be a significant part of the course of study at the schools. Even though West Texas College failed in the city in 1890, its music department was highly touted. Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University) and Childers Classical Institute (now Abilene Christian University) also made known to the public their intention to have a fine music department. Both of these schools contributed no small amount to the educational and cultural climate of Abilene.

It was also important for the citizens of Abilene to have an entertainment hall to showcase the talents of local entertainers and traveling troupes. There were many of these halls in the first thirty years of the city's history. The men who owned the halls went through alternating times of success and failure, enjoying success generally when the vernacular groups were booked into the entertainment houses.

Occasionally an Abilene merchant would construct a small stage in the upper floor of his business house and rent the hall to various groups, sometimes booking an occasional traveling show. These halls generally did not remain open for more than a few months, usually because of the opening of another such hall.

The town band of Abilene was first organized because of a promotional campaign for the city. The group generally was most successful when it was working toward a particular concert or activity, such as a fair or Fourth of July celebration. Most of the activities of the band took place during the warmer months, usually reorganizing every March or April. Newspaper articles and editorials referred to the men in the band as the "band boys," and when mention was made in the newspapers about the band, editors were usually scolding the community for not supporting the existing band, or urging bandsmen to reorganize the group.

The band members were not paid, but occasionally a director was hired to instruct the group. His salary was small, and it usually came either from private donations from citizens and businessmen or from money the band earned at paid performances. When a paid director was not in charge of the band, it was "directed" by one of the more experienced members who always played as he led. The businessman type of leader was nothing more than a president of the

organization, taking care of administrative details and booking the group for various performances.

It was found that between the years of 1881 and 1911, many private teachers gave private and group music lessons in all parts of the city. Some of these teachers rented "studios" - usually vacant rooms of suitable size and location - and other teachers taught in their homes. Unmarried teachers generally boarded with an Abilene family and used the parlor of that home as a teaching studio.

These teachers advertised that they taught one or another of the "famous" or "popular" methods of instruction, and that they had studied with various "celebrated" teachers or virtuosi. Their courses of study revealed a small amount of literature which could be classified as "serious," and a plethora of music which would fall in the household music or popular music category.

Religious music was found to be of the same type and level that was performed in other Southwestern cities similar to Abilene. There were few church choirs in the early history of the city and the ones that existed were comprised of only three or four singers. Until 1910, the organs used in worship were either the small parlor organs pumped with the feet, or the slightly larger organs pumped with a handle from the back of the organ.

Until late in the first decade of the twentieth century, the church choirs and church members generally sang simple hymns. An occasional cantata was performed, but it was usually a recent composition with a missionary theme by an American composer, and written in the style of the simple revival hymn. The Ladies Aid Societies of many of the churches performed mostly secular music to raise money for special needs of the churches. Young ladies and young men also belonged to church societies that performed secular music in benefit concerts.

Vernacular music was indeed the most popular style of music in Abilene from 1881 to 1911. Music of a more serious nature was also performed in the city, but audiences did not attend this type of performance in large numbers as they did the less serious music. Minstrel shows were very popular with Abilene audiences. The minstrel format was familiar to them and both local amateurs and professional traveling shows drew large crowds when minstrelsy was performed by either white or black groups.

Operettas were also popular in the city. These were generally performed by local dramatic groups in fund raising efforts. Traveling groups favored the drama or comedy with the performers singing solos and duets between acts. A combination of these forms gradually merged into the vaudeville form of entertainment. The many vaudeville

theatres in Abilene also showed movies and advertised performances six days a week with two or more performances per day.

Tented shows such as circuses and wild west shows made Abilene a regular stop on their annual tours through the Southwest. These shows traveled by rail and Abilene was on one of the main rail lines of Texas. These tented shows carried bands, orchestras, singers, chorus girls, and dancers. A wide variety of vernacular music could be heard in a tent show performance.

In spite of the constant resistance to the practice of dancing by religious groups in Abilene, dancing was one of the most popular pastimes in the city. Regular dances were given by dance clubs, and special groups gave formal balls, especially during holidays or fair days in the city. Simple dance forms such as the waltz, the quadrille, the polka, the schottische, and the reel were popular in Abilene. Toward the end of the century, the two-step became popular.

There was a demand for music merchandise in Abilene quite early in the city's history. Abilene's first citizens were forced to shop by mail, either from the big mail-order houses in the East and Midwest, or from music specialty houses in Texas. There were many attempts to have a music store in Abilene, but most failed. The music dealers that were successful sold music merchandise in addition to their main

line of goods, usually jewelry or sewing machines. Abilene's first full-fledged music house was not established in the city until late in 1906.

### Conclusions

From an investigation of the findings it can be concluded that music occupied much of the time of early Abilenians. There was considerable music activity in the community, and music was a viable part of the cultural life of the city.

The majority of musicians in early Abilene were of the casual, recreational type. However, Abilene was not a cultural wasteland, because a number of serious, proficient musicians lived in the city from 1881 to 1911. These players and singers that were interested in serious music enjoyed their music and performed regularly in the city at various occasions.

The task of promoting the European and American composers of serious music generally fell into the hands of a few private teachers in the city. There were also occasional traveling musicians who played serious music to small crowds.

The general public of Abilene showed that they preferred vernacular music to serious music, and they demonstrated this fact at the box office of the theatres in the city.

Much of the support which was enjoyed by musicians of early Abilene stemmed from the competitive spirit of the city rather than genuine concern for the musical well being of

the city. For example, many of the citizens of Abilene wanted a town band because other cities had town bands.

It can also be concluded that most of the musical performances in the city from 1881 to 1911 were for commercial or fund raising purposes. Even some of the recitals of the private teachers raised money for a particular cause. Most of these benefit concerts, however, were for the good of the community, such as the public school library or educational fund, church funds, or benefits for someone in need.

#### Recommendations

The lives of several individual musicians that have been mentioned in this study deserve further investigation. These persons had an impact on the cultural level of the city and their methods or activities altered the direction of musical life in Abilene. Much more can be learned about Abilene's early musical life by studying the lives of these people whose musical influence was felt throughout the city.

1. Ione Kinsolving Bass, wife of Henry J. Bass, was one of the most loved musicians in Abilene from 1903 to about 1945. She founded one of the first music study clubs in the city in 1905, and opened the first four-teacher music studio in Abilene in 1907.

2. Lou Hart taught privately in Abilene from 1884 to 1926. During these forty-two years she instructed many students who later became leading citizens of the city.



3. Peter S. Kauffman was a cornet player in Abilene's first town band. He and his brother, Dave Kauffman, had a great influence on the early bands. Peter Kauffman served briefly as director of the band, and at times served as the band's president and secretary. He was active in the Presbyterian Church and served as director of the church choir for several years. He sang in many of the men's and mixed quartets in Abilene on many occasions.

4. J. H. Lucas was a cornet and violin player who moved to Abilene in 1888 to direct a town band. He directed the band for two years, and took over the band again from 1895 to 1900. He taught privately in the city and also had a dance orchestra which was called "Professor Lucas and his Quadrille Band."

5. E. H. Boone was a tuba player who was active in the town band after the turn of the century. He served as president of the organization and also briefly as director. He was a versatile musician, singing solos and in quartets on many occasions, and serving as a choir member of the First Methodist Church for many years. When St. Paul Methodist Church was built in 1911, he was its first choir director.

6. William F. D. Batjer managed the Lyceum Opera House on two different occasions. He had considerable theatre experience and had an impact on the cultural life of the city.

7. While not mentioned in this study, Raymond T. Bynum of Abilene organized the first school band in Texas which met during the school day. He was very innovative in his approach to the band program, establishing many other firsts in his career with the Abilene Public Schools.

Other topics that deserve further investigation are:

1. The community bands of Abilene from 1883 to the present.
2. Music and music education in Abilene from 1911 to the present.
3. A history of the music department of Abilene Christian University.

APPENDIX A

REPRESENTATIVE ABILENE PUBLIC SCHOOL

OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES

1887-1910

School Closing Exercises, May 5, 1887

MORNING

- 7 8 & 9 N Chorus-Hunter's Horn-Judge Savage's Class  
3 & 4 S Recitation-Willis Small-Miss Anderson's Class  
5 & 6 S Dialogue-The Census Taker-Mrs. Roach's Class  
5 & 6 N Recitation-The Window's Light-Nellie Parker-Miss  
Miller's Class  
1 & 2 N Calisthenics-Free Hand-Mrs. Savage's Class  
7 8 & 9 S Dialogue-1776 and 1886-Prof. Roach's Class  
3 & 4 S Recitation-by Isabel Porter-Miss Anderson's Class  
1 & 2 N Song-Funny Little Boy-Mrs. Savage's Class  
5 & 6 S Recitation-by W. J. Young-Mrs. Roach's Room  
3 & 4 N Instrumental Duett [sic]-Sack Waltz-by Hinda Barry  
and Irene Tolar-Miss Cole's Class  
3 & 4 S Recitation-Charge of the Light Brigade-Miss  
Anderson's Class  
1 & 2 S Chorus-How the Merry Wind Blows-Miss Estill's Class  
1 & 2 N Recitation-by Mable Page-Mrs. Savage's Class  
3 & 4 S Recitation-Break, Break-Miss Anderson's Class  
7 8 & 9 S Instrumental Music-Bettie Reavis-Prof. Roach's  
Class  
7 8 & 9 N Song-Merrily Row-Judge Savage's Class  
3 & 4 N Calisthenics-Dumb Bells-Miss Cole's Class  
7 8 & 9 N Dialogue-Advertising for Help-Judge Savage's  
Class  
1 & 2 S Recitation-by Fleta Hill-Miss Estill's Room  
7 8 & 9 N Instrumental Music-Miss Eunice Parramore-Judge  
Savage's Room  
7 8 & 9 S Dialogue-How the Colonel Proposed-Prof. Roach's  
Room  
7 8 & 9 N Quartette [sic]-Harvest Moon-Judge Savage's Class

AFTERNOON

- 7 8 & 9 S Chorus-Prof. Roach's Class  
5 & 6 S Recitation-by Carl Patton-Mrs. Roach's Room

Recitation-The Ruins of Time-by Thomas Bledsoe  
 Recitation-The School Girl's Soliloquy at Church-by  
 Florence Stapp  
 Recitation-by Minnie Quisenbery  
 7 8 & 9 N Song-My Mountain Home-Judge Savage's Class  
 Recitation-Patriotism-by Jimmie Cole  
 Recitation-Woman's Rights-Laura Ingham  
 Recitation-Josiah Allen's Wife-by Nina Young  
 7 8 & 9 S Song-Murmuring Sea-Prof. Roach's Class  
 Recitation-Painter of Seville-by Susie McLemore  
 3 & 4 N Cantata-School Festival-Mrs. Roach's Class  
 Recitation-The Modern Cain-Ella Cole  
 Recitation-David and Goliath-by Ed Harris  
 Recitation-The Sioux Chief's Daughter-by Lillie Porter  
 Instrumental Duett [sic]-Boston School Regimental Quick-  
 step-by Misses May Cole and Gertie Bell  
 Recitation-Tommies Prayer-by Ella Porter  
 Recitation-The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire-by  
 Natalie Taylor  
 Recitation-The Sergeant's [sic] Story-by Annie Miller  
 Instrumental Trio-Caliph of Bagdad-by Miss Miller and the  
 Misses Cole  
 Recitation-Time's Silent Lesson-by Florence Montgomery  
 Recitation-The Fireman-by Fannie Archer  
 7 8 & 9 N Song-Come Where the Wild Flowers Bloom-by  
 Judge Savage's Class  
 5 & 6 N Calisthenics-Rings-Miss Miller's Class

## NIGHT

7 8 & 9 N Welcome Song-Judge Savage's Class  
 5 & 6 S Recitation-by Mannie Henderson-Mrs. Roach's Room  
 Song-Supposing-by Mattie Pierce-Miss Anderson's Room  
 1 & 2 S Free Hand Calisthenics-Miss Estill's Class  
 7 8 & 9 S Chiming Bells-Prof. Roach's Class  
 5 & 6 N Recitation-Death Bridge of the Tay-by Mollie  
 Butler-Miss Miller's Room  
 7 8 & 9 N Dialogue-Doctor and Patient-Judge Savage's Class  
 3 & 4 S Song-Grandpa Bless Your Little Nell-by Annie Wood-  
 Miss Anderson's Room  
 7 8 & 9 N Dialogue-Aunt Betsy's Beaux-Judge Savage's Class  
 3 & 4 S Song-Oh, You Little Darling-by Nannie Bledsoe-Miss  
 Anderson's Room  
 1 & 2 N Recitation-Monte Spoons--Mrs. Savage's Class  
 Song-Bird of Beauty-Miss Laura Ingham  
 7 8 & 9 S Dialogue-Trapped-by Prof. Roach's Class  
 7 8 & 9 N Song-The Shaking Quakers-Judge Savage's Class  
 3 & 4 N Calisthenics-Fan Drill-Miss Cole's Class  
 7 8 & 9 N Dialogue-The Old and the New-Judge Savage's  
 Class

- 5 & 6 N Calisthenics-Tambourine Drill-by Miss Miller's Class  
 7 8 & 9 S Song-Come Where the Lillies Bloom-by Prof. Roach's Class  
 7 8 & 9 N Song-The Morning Light is Breaking-by Judge Savage's Class  
 5 & 6 S Calisthenics-Dumb Bells and May Pole-by Mrs. Roach's Class  
 7 8 & 9 S Song-We'll Have to Mortgage the Farm-by Prof. Roach's Class  
 7 8 & 9 N Dialogue-Jacob, or Another Arrangement-by Judge Savage's Class  
 7 8 & 9 N Song-Good Night-by Judge Savage's Class  
 Award of medals and prizes  
 7 8 & 9 S Song-Good Night-by Prof. Roach's Class

School Closing Exercises, May 4, 1888

MORNING

- Song-"Hunter's Call"  
 Recitation-by Leila Northington-subject, "The Music Stool"  
 Instrumental Duett [sic]-"Blue Alsatian Mountains"-Misses Brumley and Barry  
 Recitation-"Absence makes the Heart Grow Fonder"-Master Lum Cole  
 Calisthenics-Dumb Bells-Mrs. Roach's Class  
 Dialogue-"Enrolling Officers"  
 Recitation-"Searching for the Slain"-Miss Annie Miller  
 Song-"Johnny Smoker"-by the Little Boys  
 Dialogue-"Getting a Photograph"  
 Recitation-"The Maniac"-by Miss Susie McLemore  
 "Songs of Seven" [no performer mentioned]  
 Recitation-by Miss Jennie Briscoe  
 Dialogue-"The Tax Assessor"  
 Recitation-by Earl Harrison  
 Calisthenics-Japanese Parasol and Handkerchief Drill-by Miss Anderson's Class  
 Recitation-"The Blacksmith's Story"-by Miss Grace Irvine  
 Recitation-"The Old Woman in a Shoe"-by little Miss Hattie Stinchcomb  
 Song-"Moonlight on the Rhine"

AFTERNOON

- Song-"Music and Her Sister Song"  
 Recitation-"Miss Perkins"-by Miss Nellie Parker  
 Dialogue-"The Debate"  
 Calisthenics-"Fan Drill"-Miss Annie Young's Class

Song-"Not Before Pa"-Miss Mattie Pierce  
 Essay-"How to Be a Man"-Mr. Tarleton Middleton  
 Song-"Come Where Murmuring Brooklets Flow"  
 Essay-"The Bridge of Sighs"-Miss Ella Cole  
 Recitation-"How Sir Athol Came to His Kingdom"-Miss Helen  
 Kerr  
 Song-"Orange Blossoms"-by Miss Laura Ingham  
 Calisthenics-"Little Bells"-by Misses Miller and Cole's  
 Class  
 Essay-"The Influence of Music"-Miss Neva Taylor  
 Dialogue-"An Arkansas Wedding"-Mr. Tarleton Middleton, Miss  
 Sallie King, and Judge Cole  
 Essay-"The Feebleness of Fortune"-Miss Ella Porter  
 Song-"The Swallow's Farewell"  
 Essay-"Strikes"-Miss Quay Minter  
 Recitation-"The Angels of Buena Vista"-Miss Mollie Butler  
 Essay-"The Future and Responsibilities of the Youth of  
 Today"-Miss Minnie Kershaw  
 Song-"The Fire Bells"  
 Delivery of Diplomas  
 Song-"God be With You 'Til We Meet Again"

School Closing Exercises, May 15, 1891

1. Chorus "Greeting Glee" Simplican
2. Recitation "Eagle Point" Miss Mable Montgomery
3. Song and Chorus "Fly Away Birdie," Skelly-Miss Janie  
Chilton
4. Piano duetts [sic] Polka Mazourka and Robin Redbreast,  
Streaborg-Misses Susie McLemore and Elsie Buell
5. Vocal Solo, "Angels Ever Bright and Fair," Handel-  
Miss Neva Parker
6. Violin Trio, "Dancia," Miss Myrta Cooke, Messrs.  
Kavanaugh and Lippman
7. Recitation, "Dissertation on Matrimony," Miss Nellie  
Parker
8. Song and Chorus, "Have You Seen My Little Sweetheart?"  
Skelly-Miss Elsie Buell
9. Recitation, "Mary Queen of Scotts" [sic], Miss  
Florence Montgomery
10. Piano, "Home Sweet Home," Miss Yeiser
11. Valedictory, "Plus Ultra," Ellsworth Faris
12. Vocal Quartette, "Listen to My Tale of Woe"
13. Presentation of Diplomas
14. Chorus, "Joy and Delight"

## School Closing Exercises, May 10, 1895

Quartette [sic]-"Merry Birds of Spring" Misses Cook, Hyder,  
 Meyers and Garrison  
 Essay-"All Passes; Art Alone Enduring, Stays With Us"-  
 Isabell Porter  
 Piano Solo-Nettie Ingle  
 Essay Erma Hyder-"The Lord of Pretty Soon"  
 Duet-"Beautiful Rain"-Misses Allie Johnson, Hettie Cook  
 Essay-"What We Owe to the Orient"-Harry Wise  
 Songs-"You Can't Play in Our Yard," "I Don't Want to Play  
 in Your Yard"-Minnie Steffens, Faye Young  
 Essay-"The Ideal and the Real"-Myrtle Card  
 Piano Duet-Misses Yeiser and Magee  
 Essay-"Harmony of Nature"-Hattie Garrison  
 Song-"Under the Mistletoe"-Alene Swan  
 Essay-"The Beautiful"-Miss Minnie Myers  
 Song Duet-"Under the Old Umbrella"-Miss Maud Morrow and  
 Seth Garrison  
 Essay-"What We Are Here For"-Walter Green  
 Song-"The Heart That's True"-Miss Bessie King  
 Character Chorus-"The Brownie Little Brownies"  
 Salutatorian (10th Grade)-Annie Grady  
 Valedictorian-Miss Ida May Cook  
 Chorus-"My Maid of the Mountains"

## School Opening Exercises, September 12, 1898

1. Chorus-"Star Spangled Banner"
2. Invocation
3. Address
4. Vocal Solo
5. Address
6. Address
7. Address
8. Instrumental Music-Mrs. J. M. Radford
9. Male Quartette [sic]-"I Heard the Bells in Distance  
 Chiming"-Messrs. Boone, Rollins, Mackechney and King
10. Address
11. Address
12. Address
13. Trio-"Meadow Song"-Miss Parker, Mrs. James and  
 Hardwicke
14. Address
15. Finale-"Magnify, Glorify"-Mesdames Boaz, James, Lowden,  
 Hardwicke, Miss Parker, Messrs. Boone, King,  
 Mackechney, and Rollins, Mrs. Van Ness Lewis, Piano

## School Closing Exercises, May 15, 1908

Piano Solo-Bertie Blaine  
"Great Talkers and Little Doers"-Maebelle Fawcett  
Vocal Trio-Ada Kirk, Bertie Blaine, Maebelle Fawcett  
"Possibilities of the Human Intellect"-Charles Clark  
Class Prophecy-Elby Lathrop  
Vocal Duet-T. O. Steffens, Bertie Blaine  
"What are the Waves Saying"-Maude Cunningham  
Song-Class Ode-Class  
Address-Hon. H. H. Kirby  
Presentation of Diplomas-Superintendent C. E. Evans

## School Closing Exercises, May 27, 1910

Chorus-"At the Balmy Breath of Spring"-E. Edward Marzo-  
Senior Class  
Vocal Solos-(a) "Nightingale Serenade"-Nevins (b) "Diletto  
Waltz Song"-Isadore Luckstone, Miss Curry  
Address-Rev. J. W. Fort, Awarding of Diplomas, School  
Honors Announced  
Chorus-"Our High School"-W. Otto Meissinger-Senior Class



## APPENDIX B

### REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES IN THE MALTBIE OPERA HOUSE

AUGUST, 1885 - NOVEMBER, 1888

Formal Opening, Abilene Amateur Dramatic Company, August 19, 1885.

Presbyterian Church Ladies Aid Society Entertainment, September 29, 1885.

"My Brother's Keeper," Abilene Amateur Dramatic Company, October 6, 1885.

The Golden Troupe, April 5, 6, 7, 1885.

Whitmore's Kindergarten School Entertainment, May 3, 1886.

School Closing Exercises, May 6, 1886.

Rescue Hose Company Minstrel Show, Week of July 19, 1886.

Cedar Creek Mission Church Concert, March 25, 1887.

School Closing Exercises, May 5, 1887.

"Little Red Riding Hood," Episcopal Church, June 2, 1887.

Mexican Troupe, October 20, 1887.

Reunion Festival, Sponsored by Abilene Churches, January 2, 1888.

Will Smith "Bell Ringers," February 13, 1888.

Cemetery Benefit Concert, March 23, 1888.

"Dollars and Cents," Abilene Dramatic Company, August 24, 1888.

Irene Worrell Comedy Troupe, September 10-15, 1888.

"Musical Melange," Local Talent, October 4, 1888.

Final Performance in Maltbie, Lillian Lewis Troupe, Early  
November, 1888.

APPENDIX C

REPRESENTATIVE PERFORMANCES IN THE  
CHESTNUT STREET OPERA HOUSE

1892-1911

Formal Opening, Griswold's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," February  
13, 1892.

Knights of Pythias Grand Masque Ball, February 26, 1892.

"My Neighbor's Wife" and Minstrel Show, Local Talent,  
April 29, 1892.

Eckert Heck Troubadors, May 5, 1892.

Military Company Benefit Concert, July 4, 1892.

"Mirth Immortal," Original Opera by Abilenian Natalie  
Taylor, August 2, 1892.

Abilene Dance Club Dance, October 7, 1892.

Jennie Holman Troupe, February 27-January 3, 1893.

Recital, Pupils of Lou Hart, February 16, 1893.

Firemen's Ball, April 21, 1893.

Summer Normal Concert, July 25, 1893.

Episcopal Church Entertainment, October 13, 1893.

Schubert Quartet, December 5, 1893.

Mandoline Merli Troupe, January 25, 1894.

Baptist Church Ladies Aid Society Entertainment,  
February 2, 1894.

Governor Richard B. Hubbard Lecture, February 24, 1894.

Ovide Munsin Concert Company, March 3, 1894.

Hewett Musettes, April 6, 7, 1894.  
School Closing Exercises, May 18, 1894.  
Prize Fight, June 16, 1894.  
Dance Club Dance, September 21, 1894.  
Mrs. General Tom Thumb and Midget Company, October 24, 1894.  
Grand Ball, January 1, 1895.  
Little Mascot Company, January 14, 1895.  
Catholic Church Entertainment, August 20, 1895.  
Spooner Dramatic Company, November 15, 1895.  
Heywood Celebrities, January 10, 1896.  
Beach and Bowers Minstrel Company, January 25, 1896.  
Morrison's Company, "Faust," February 22, 1896.  
Mexican Concert, March 4, 1896.  
Fire Department Benefit Concert, September 18, 1896.  
Stereopticon Exhibition, January 15, 1897.  
School Closing Exercises, May 4, 5, 1897.  
Recital, Pupils of Mrs. Cora Young, June 4, 1897.  
Concert by Abilene Town Band, October 23, 1897.  
"Down By the Sea," Pupils and Teachers of Buffalo Gap  
College, January 6, 1898.  
Acme Comedy Company, February 6-12, 1898.  
Play to Benefit Cemetery Association, May 27, 1898.  
Fancy Dress Ball, October 28, 1898.  
Louise Brehany Ballad and Opera Concert Company, December  
10, 1898.  
Rose Stillman Company, January 30-February 4, 1899.

New York Dramatic Company, March 31, 1899.

School Closing Exercises, April 30, 1899.

Heywood Company, November 24, 1899.

Krause-Taylor Company, November 27-December 2, 1899.

Lyceum Stock Company, Local Talent, December 14, 1899.

Marie Fountain Theatre Company, May 2-7, 1904.

A. J. Showalter Singing School Concert, May 31, 1904.

Hypnotist Mary Hall, November 4-16, 1904.

Stuttz Comedy Company, December 3, 1904.

W. B. Patton Company, January 2, 1905.

Tom Franklin Nye and the Merry Players, February 27-March 4, 1905.

Abilene Civic Association Benefit Concert, April 1, 1905.

Debate, Simmons College and Howard Payne, April 28, 1905.

Confederate Widows and Orphans Benefit Concert, June 1, 1905.

Peterson's High Class Entertainers, October 16-21, 1905.

Waxworks Show, November 3, 1905.

Spooner Dramatic Company, April 1-6, 1907.

Announcement of Refurbishing of Opera House, May, 1907.

Opening of Refurbished Opera House, Columbia Comic Opera Company, September 4, 1907.

Miss May Stewart Company, October 9, 1907.

"The Clansman," November 1, 1907.

W. B. Patton in "The Slow Poke," December 11, 1907.

Hal Reid's "The Cow Puncher," January 14, 1908.

Gertrude Ewing Company, "The Pearl of the South," February 10, 1908.

Whyte Dramatic Company, April 13-18, 1908.

Recital, Pupils of J. H. Crabb, June 8, 1908.

Harrison Russell in "The Silver Dagger," July 15, 1908.

D'Ormond Fuller Company, September 21-26, 1908.

Emery Musical Comedy Company, November 23, 24, 1908.

Prohibition Meeting, January 17, 1909.

Black Patti Troubadors, February 8, 1909.

Simmons College Fine Arts Faculty Concert, April 30, 1909.

William Jennings Bryan Lecture, September 15, 1909.

Liberati and His Grand Military Band and Opera Singers,  
November 8, 1909.

Johnny and Elli Galvin and the Bell Boy Company, January  
24-29, 1910.

"Uncle Barnaby's Nephew," Benefit Play for Methodist Church,  
April 1, 1910.

Wrestling Match, Savini and Pons, April 19, 1910.

Political Rally, June 24, 1910.

Temperance Rally, August 14, 1910.

Albert Taylor Company, November 14, 15, 1910.

Schubert Symphony Club and Lady Quartet, December 29, 1910.

Hans Hanson Company, January 5, 1911.

United Commercial Travelers Minstrel Show, February 18, 1911.

Knights of Pythias Convention, April 25-26, 1911.

James P. Lee's Musical Comedy Company, September 21, 1911.

Frank Richardson Company, "The Commercial Traveler,"  
October 9, 10, 1911.

United Play Company, "The Lion and the Mouse," November 14,  
1911.

## APPENDIX D

### CHRONOLOGY OF ABILENE TOWN BAND ACTIVITIES, 1883-1911

- Organization of Band for County Seat Election, 1883.
- Twelve Band Members Organize Band, March, 1886.
- Benefit Concert for Christian Church Ladies Aid Society,  
June, 1887.
- Rumors of Band Reorganized, May, 1888.
- Announcement of J. H. Lucas as Band Instructor, February,  
1889.
- Lucas Moved to Abilene, June, 1889.
- Announcement of Regular Band Practices, June, 1889.
- Regular Band Concerts on the Streets of City, June, 1889.
- Called Abilene Light Infantry Band, June, 1889.
- July 4 Concert, 1889.
- New Bandwagon Purchased, August, 1889.
- New Uniforms and Instruments Purchased, September, 1889.
- Performance for Abilene District Fair, October, 1889.
- Abilene Progressive Committee Donation of \$100 to Band,  
October, 1889.
- Plea for Funds to Help Pay for the Uniforms and Instruments,  
November, 1889.
- Traveled to Fort Worth to Accept Medal for Best County  
Exhibit at State Fair, May, 1890.
- July 4 Concert, 1890.
- Plea for Funds, August, 1890.
- Plea for Funds, September, 1890.

Attended Dallas Fair, October, 1890.

Arbor Day Parade, February, 1891.

M. P. Kavanaugh Announced as Instructor of Band, March, 1891.

Plea for Funds, March, 1891.

Concert for First Electric Lights in City, April, 1891.

Received Appointment as Fourth Regiment Band of Texas, May, 1891.

Parade and Concerts at Simmons College Cornerstone Ceremony, July 4, 1891.

Traveled to Austin for Fourth Regiment of Texas Military Encampment, July, 1891.

Performance at Baird Fair, September, 1891.

Newspaper Article Inquiring About Band, January, 1892.

Newspaper Article Promoting Band Reorganization, March, 1892.

Military Company Banquet Performance, August, 1892.

Newspaper Article Promoting Band Reorganization, January, 1893.

Band Reorganized, July, 1893.

Band Reorganized, May, 1894.

Rumor of Band Reorganization, October, 1895.

J. H. Lucas Returned to Abilene to Instruct Band, November, 1895.

Band Reorganized, December, 1895.

Band Benefit Concert, December, 1895.

Called Firemen's Silver Cornet Band, January, 1896.

Military Company Parade, February, 1896.

New Uniforms, July, 1896.

July 4 Concert, 1896.



- Newspaper Article Promoting Construction of Bandstand,  
August, 1896.
- Newspaper Article Promoting Band Reorganization, April, 1897.
- Band Practices Resumed, May, 1897.
- Performance at Abilene Fair, October, 1897.
- Concert in Opera House, October, 1897.
- Performance at Depot for Soldiers Enroute to Cuba, April,  
1898.
- Performance at Abilene Fair, October, 1898.
- July 4 Performance at Merkel, 1899.
- Performed at Abilene West Texas Fair and Competed Against  
Band from Colorado City, and Won First Place Medal,  
October, 1899.
- Called Citizen's Band, H. N. Holderness, Director, June,  
1904.
- Performances in Bandstand at Passenger Depot, Each Friday,  
Summer, 1904.
- Band Reorganized, April, 1905.
- First Concert of the Season, Passenger Depot Bandstand,  
June, 1905.
- Joint Meeting of City and Simmons College Band, November,  
1905.
- Newspaper Article Promoting Band Reorganization, April, 1907.
- Band Reorganized as 25,000 Club Band, E. H. Boone, Director,  
April, 1907.
- Performance at Mid-Summer Carnival, June, 1907
- Labor Day Parade, September, 1907.
- New Blue Uniforms, October, 1907.
- Performance at Abilene West Texas Fair, October, 1907.
- Newspaper Article Promoting Band Reorganization, April, 1908.

Band Reorganization, September, 1908.

Band Performance at Vaudeville Theatre Opening, November, 1908.

Band Organizational Meeting, February, 1909.

Band Organizational Meeting, March, 1909.

Band Organizational Meeting, March, 1910.

Band Reorganized, Luther Lane, Director, Performance at Baseball Game, April, 1910.

July 4 Concert, 1910.

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