

Mrs. Wille's Story

The Houston Post, February 9, 1914

by Joanne Seale Wilson

Houston Pioneer, Cultural Leader, Dies at Home Here, Mrs. Wille Hutcheson, Long Resident Leaves Scores of Friends.¹

The death of Mrs. Wille Hutcheson Sunday night, at her apartment in the Rossonian, brought to a close a life devoted to the cultural developments of Houston for the past 45 years. She was 67 years old and had lived in Houston practically all of her adult life. During childhood she spent much time with relatives in Virginia and went to school there, although she was born on a plantation in Texas. In 1876 she was graduated from the Sorbonne in Paris, and on her return to Houston immediately became one of the belles of Houston's social life.

Mrs. Hutcheson was the daughter of a pioneer family. Her father lost his life as captain in the army of the Confederacy while leading a gallant charge. She was a niece of Captain J. C. Hutcheson, and has many relatives in addition to the scores of friends who admired and loved her for her fine intellect and her goodness of heart. She met life and its joys and tragedies with a high courage and she met suffering and death with the same fortitude and cheerfulness, according to those who shared her confidence.

As contributor, literary editor, music critic and writer of her travels abroad, Mrs. Hutcheson was connected with *The Houston Post* for about 25 years. She taught in the public schools, she lectured on literature and music, she wrote for newspapers and magazines and after her public work became more restricted she taught private classes in the languages, literature, history and musical diction. Indomitable will power, loyalty to her convictions, generosity, and an inimitable sense of humor were among the characteristics that won admiration from all who knew her.

She had a hand in organizing practically all the cultural, civic and educational clubs and societies of her career in Houston, and was the first president of the Woman's Choral Club. Her acquaintance with musicians extended throughout the United States. She was the author of a compendium of music that is the most complete so far as is known, of its kind. Her musical charts for illustrating the subjects are not like anything else in the way of musical references, and are considered very valuable.

Her writings scintillated with brilliant anecdotes, metaphor and humor. There was a chuckle underneath much that she wrote and her wit and fit of repartee made her a brilliant conversationalist.

Mrs. Hutcheson was a member of the Episcopal church. Her independence of thought and action did not extend to the renunciation of her faith which was a very sincere one in the goodness of God and after her health forbade attendance at church she frequently

spoke to her friends of the satisfactions of having a belief in God. During her public activities she was a member of the music committee of Christ Church, one of the oldest in the city and had much to do with building up its tradition for good music.

She was an insatiable reader and the librarians of Houston were wont to remark that "Mrs. Hutcheson had read every book in the libraries." At the time of her passing she was reading regularly, with some of her pupils, the leading foreign periodicals and the newest books on political problems, scientific discoveries, and historical research.

So far as is known she was the first woman in the South to become an accredited music critic for a daily newspaper. Her writings were so full of verve and wit that Texas scrapbooks are full of them to this day. Her literary reviews were original and attracted attention throughout the country. Few persons could read and grasp the contents of a book as readily and soundly as Mrs. Hutcheson.

Mrs. Hutcheson is survived by her husband, Wille Hutcheson, of Eastland, who died in Houston Monday morning. She became serious so suddenly that she summoned him before her passing.

The funeral arrangements are being made for the arrival of Mrs. Hutcheson.

Wille Hutcheson, music editor of The Houston Post, 1903-1920, was the first female music critic in the South.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joanne Hutcheson Seale Wilson is a native Houstonian. She has a BA in History from Rice University and a Master's in Architectural History and Preservation from the University of Virginia. She is the author of a recent article in the Montgomery Herald about John William Hutcheson, the father of Wille Hutcheson.

Descended of a distinguished family on both sides of her heritage, Laura Baker Hutcheson was born on a plantation in Grimes County, Texas, in 1856 and died in downtown Houston, Texas, in 1924. From the 1870s to the mid-1920s, she lived in Houston, watching the city grow from a regional center of about 10,000 people to a booming city of more than 200,000. In the last 25 years of her life she enjoyed a successful and highly visible career as a music critic, writer, and educator. In the process, she fostered the spread of a rich cultural life in a region still far removed from the national centers of culture.

A newspaper article written after her death suggests that she did this with her own special style:

One of the most remarkable of Houston socialites of an earlier era was Mrs. Wille Hutcheson, who was known as Mrs. Wille....Mrs. Wille carried two sets of false teeth with her at all times, one for eating and one for talking, and she had a special nail file that she used to sharpen the eating teeth....Her interests were music (she was once a critic), reading (she often read till dawn) and eating, and to prove the latter she once ate four Thanksgiving dinners the same day. She may have been the first Houston woman to get a divorce and the first to tour Europe alone. Far ahead of her times in many ways, Mrs. Wille was truly one of the grand old ladies of Houston.²

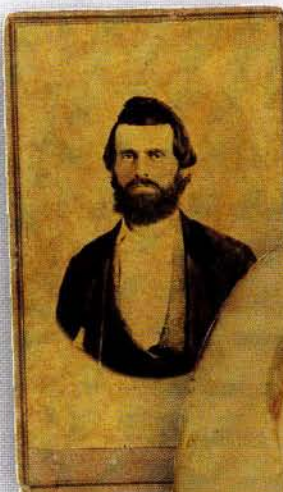
Tragedy in her early life helped shape her independent nature and forceful personality. Her father, Captain William Hutcheson, was killed in battle early in the Civil War. She had been named Laura, for her mother, but in memory of her father her name was changed to Wille while she was still a very small child.³ She loved the name and revered her father's memory.⁴

When her mother remarried in 1867 and moved to Galveston, Wille moved to Virginia to live with her paternal Hutcheson grandparents.⁵ She went to school at Staunton, Virginia, at the Wesleyan Female Institute, where she studied vocal music, moral philosophy, Greek natural philosophy, French, German, chemistry, history, English literature. She graduated in 1875 with the highest honors.⁶ She then attended the Sorbonne which exposed her to European culture.

In 1876, Wille moved back to Houston to live with her uncle, Captain Joseph Chappell Hutcheson, who had become her legal guardian at her mother's remarriage, and his wife, Mildred Carrington Hutcheson, and their growing family of six children.⁷

She married in 1879 and began the next, and most conventional, phase of her life.

She and her husband, R. E. C. Wilson, had five living children in addition to a prematurely born first child in 1880. Tragically, only one of these five children, James, survived to adulthood. The other children all died within the two years from 1888 to 1890.⁸ Such death and sadness, plus the deaths of her stepfather (1881) and mother (1884) in less than a 10-year period, must have taken a terrible toll on the marriage. Wille and her husband divorced in 1896 when she was 39 years old. At that point, she resumed her maiden name.⁹ Divorce was practically unheard of in this era, and it must have been very awkward for her and for the family. Her one surviving child, James, gave up the name Wilson and thereafter was known as James Hutcheson. As far as it is known, he never saw his father again nor was he mentioned in his father's obituary.¹⁰



John William Hutcheson (1829-1862), father of Wille Hutcheson, at the time of his enlistment in the Confederate Army, in August, 1861. He was elected Captain of the Grimes County Greys, later the 4th Texas Regiment, and served under John B. Hood in Virginia. He was injured on the 27th June of 1862 at the Battle of Cold Harbor, outside Richmond and died two days later. He is buried at Mt. Airy, in the Hutcheson family cemetery in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.



Laura Baker (Wille) Hutcheson at the time of her wedding to R. E. C. Wilson in Houston, on June 25, 1879. Wille was a descendant of three Texas pioneer families; the Hutchesons, the Bakers and the Womacks, and lived in Houston for 45 years, all of which time she was intimately connected with the cultural growth of the city.



Baby photo is of James Hutcheson (Wilson), 1883-1934, son of Wille Hutcheson and Robert Wilson and the only surviving child of five born to the couple. James Hutcheson, who left school at 13 to go to work as a clerk at the time of his parents' divorce, became a successful executive with Rio Bravo Oil Company, an avid tennis player and president of the Houston branch of the American Kennel Club.

A Music Critic in a City Reaching Out for Culture

Wille never remarried. Instead she began another remarkable chapter of her already unusual life, this time as a professional woman. She went to work to pay the bills, to use her trained mind, and to promote causes in which she believed. She worked initially as a teacher of languages and music, and as assistant to the principal at the Houston Academy, an early high school in Houston.¹¹ By 1903, she worked as both a German teacher and as a musical reporter for *The Houston Post*. Within a few years, she had become quite prominent as an intellectual and social leader; she was, for example, the founding president of the Woman's Choral Club in 1901, a musician of note, a music critic and by 1904, and the music editor for *The Houston Post* newspaper.¹²

At least twice a week for 20 years, she wrote for the *Post* an article entitled "Tête-à-Tête with The Musicians, Some Points About Music in Houston and Elsewhere."¹³ In the early years of her work at the *Post*, she also wrote the literary and drama columns.

In addition, she was the Houston correspondent for *Musical America*, a weekly publication in New York City with a national reputation and circulation.¹⁴ Through its pages, she introduced

Houston to the wider world, and the wider world to Houston.

After 1914, Wille contributed at least two articles a month in *Musical America*. She was one of eight critics on the masthead in 1914 and the only female music critic writing for *Musical America* until after World War I. Her reviews for both publications described the local Houston music scene, including the various organizations and the local talent. She also critiqued the traveling celebrity performers who came through Houston on national tours, sponsored by one or the other of the local cultural institutions. She was a versatile advocate for culture in all forms; music, theatre, literature. She wanted in particular to help build an audience in Houston for the performing arts. This made her a very important component of Houston's intellectual growth.¹⁵

According to historian Kate Kirkland, "Culture at this period implied immersion in the European tradition of music and the other fine arts as studied in universities and heard in concert halls, and viewed in public and private collections. Like other well-traveled Americans, Houston's elite came to believe that music first heard by dukes and princes and paintings commissioned by kings and tsars could be understood by all citizens of a democratic republic and appreciated in concert halls or museum palaces erected by the people for the use of the people."¹⁶ Hutcheson's reviews sought to build and educate a literate and cultivated audience. Improved travel opportunities by rail and ship allowed her to travel to Europe and the British Isles, where she enjoyed the rich cultural life, and she sought to bring back to Houston a sense of European culture.¹⁷

The Houston cultural community was extremely active after the turn of the century when Hutcheson began her columns. Clubs and organizations were an integral part of the new social structure. Choral and musical societies provided music. Drama societies provided the local theatre. Reading societies furthered the library. Social clubs determined the elite and set the pace for society.¹⁸ As Houston prospered and grew in these years, a larger audience for high culture developed, and voluntary "clubs" and "societies" grew to foster the arts. Wille Hutcheson was there to help organize these groups and to comment on their activities in her own inimitable style.¹⁹

In her regular Sunday column for the *Post*, she gave a rundown of the church music for the day, including the name of the piece to

Tête-à-Tête *Some Hints About Music* With The *In HOUSTON AND ELSEWHERE* **MUSICIANS**

Cadman, American Composer, and the Indian Songstress Come Here This Week

By Wille Hutcheson.

Charles Wakefield Cadman, under the auspices of the Art League, is to be heard, along with the wonderfully singing full-blooded Indian princess, Tatiana Redfeather, in the city auditorium here on the evening of this week.

PART ONE

And Him on the Mesa Cadman
In a Rose Tree Cadman
A Thrush at Eve Cadman

Piano music: Tatiana
Melody in G flat Cadman
The Pompadour's Fan Cadman
Mr. Cadman.

Songs:
Incantation Over a Sleeping Infant
(Zuni) Troyer-Cadman
At Dawning Cadman
Princess Tatiana.
PART TWO.

Songs:
The Place of Breaking Light
(Ojibwa) Cadman
The Moon Drops Low (Ojibwa) Cadman

Tickets for this uniquely interesting concert will be on sale in the lobby of the Rice Hotel by the Texas Avenue entrance, from early Wednesday morning until the time of the concert.

A banquet, given at the Rice hotel, in Mr. Cadman's honor is to follow the concert on Friday night and those who desire to reserve seats for that event should call up Hadley 332.

The wide platform extension from the stage front in the city auditorium from which the Cadman-Redfeather program is to be given, will bring both the speaker and the singer almost intimately near to the great body of their audience and will make the view and the sound effects almost as good for those occupying seats on the sides as for those holding positions anywhere else in the house.



woman said to me, "Just think, I am the only little thing here from New York." "Oh," I said, "that's nothing. I am the only little thing here from Texas." Well," she replied, "of course you

January 8, 1916

WEEK OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC IN ST. PAUL

Community Spirit Ruling Factor in Impressive Succession of Ceremonies

ST. PAUL, MINN., Dec. 31.—The effort to "unify St. Paul" launched by the St. Paul Institute found expression in a series of festivities for Christmas week in which music was an essential feature. The outline of the plan presented by Charles W. Ames, president of the institute, and Mrs. Robert J. Seymour, manager, was indicated in a printed program distributed to the number of 20,000 in different sections of the city. Three Christmas carols were chosen by a committee appointed to superintend the music. The words of these ("Adeste Fideles," "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!" and "Holy Night, Silent Night"), were twice printed in the local papers with the request that they be committed to memory, that they be rehearsed in the public schools and sung at "assemblies" by way of "preparation" for the great week.

The general program began Thursday afternoon with a municipal Christmas tree in the Auditorium. The singing of carols was led by the Girls' Glee Club of the Central High School, conducted by Florence Dickinson. A program of orchestral music was played under the direction of W. W. Nelson. Jessica De Wolf, with Katherine Hoffman at the piano, sang Adams' "Cantique de Noël" with fine feeling. The performers were grouped around the huge and brilliantly lighted tree, with Santa Claus appearing for a brief but ecstatic moment. Children predominated in the audience. They came singly and in families, rich and poor, sick and well, well-clad and ill. J. Claire Stone was in charge of the entertainment, which was designated "The Children's Christmas" in the general program.

To Friday evening was assigned "Christmas in the Home." Householders were requested to put candles in the

SUCCESS of FRANCIS MACLENNAN

in "GOTTESDAEMERUNG"

with the Chicago Grand Opera Company

Herman Devries, Chicago Evening American, December 20, 1915.

"Mr. MacleNNan was equal to his task and singing test and a satisfactory result."

James Whitaker, Chicago Examiner, December 20, 1915.

Mr. MacleNNan's great talent but slight raven when he sang resplendently of Mine-stra and the program and all the Bobby Mak-son of the program.

Eric De Lamarier, Chicago Trib-

MUSICAL AMERICA

Basso and Pianist in Notable Texas Tour of Joint Recitals



Harry Evans, Basso-Cantante, and Otto L. Fischer, Pianist, on Their Tour of Texas. From Left to Right: Mr. Evans, Miss Lawson of Waco, Tex.; Mrs. Stella P. Wren, President of Euterpean Club of Waco, and Mr. Fischer

HOUSTON, TEX., Dec. 31.—Among the best concerts heard in Houston was that given recently by Harry Evans, the English basso-cantante, and Otto L. Fischer, American pianist, in the City Auditorium. Most of the seats in the immense theater were occupied by an audience which applauded with fervor. Memorable features were Mr. Evans' singing of "It Is Enough," from

windows, a request very generally heeded. Many bands of singers went about the streets singing carols. Saturday was given over to "Christmas in the Church."

"Christmas in the City" was made significant by a mammoth gathering in the Auditorium for the Municipal Festival. The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra had been engaged for a program of orchestral music and to lead the audience in the singing of the three carols previously mentioned. The orchestral numbers were Mr. Oberholfer's "March of Homage," the Overture to "William Tell," and the "March of the Minne-

Lied," for which he was heartily applauded by the large audience, which was composed almost entirely of Jews, by whom he was highly complimented on his pronunciation in a language unfamiliar to him.

AID CLOTHING WORKERS

Jacobs Orchestra, Macmillan and Mrs. Axman in Anniversary Concert

Music and consideration of industrial problems were the strange companions

be performed, its composer, and the performing artist. She also reviewed the upcoming programs of the major singing societies, the Treble Clef (originally the Ladies Singing Society at its founding in 1896) and the Woman's Choral Club, the Houston Quartette, the Diehl Conservatory programs, the Houston Harmonic Society, and detailed the schedules of currently performing or upcoming local artists. She followed with specific reviews of visiting celebrity artists of national reputation, private amateur musical events, concerts, recitals, school events, and concluded with a news and notes and personals column.

Hutcheson encouraged the public to attend the musical offerings by giving the schedule, by taking a box and going herself, and by being a member of the organizations that sponsored the programs.

In addition to being a music critic, Hutcheson was also an emerging musicologist, that is, one who pursues an analytical study of the history of music in addition to judging its quality. In 1914, Wille published the "Synchronized Musico-Historical Charts."²⁰ In it, she combines her musical and critical abilities with her academic knowledge of the historical development of music over many centuries.²¹

On June 21, 1913, Wille wrote about the initial performance of what would become the Houston Symphony Society. The day was "intensely warm" but "the concert was in many ways a revelation to Houstonians, who, while realizing in a sort of offhand way that there is much musical talent in Houston, were yet unaware of the intensity of music study and the breadth of understanding and artistic conception of the majority of Houston's musicians. If any want to criticize, the criticism must at least have become tempered with sympathy and appreciation; for while no one would claim an afternoon of perfected offerings, there was far more to enjoy and admire than to condemn or sharply criticize."²²

The scheme for the first season was for a series of "twilight" concerts in the Majestic Theatre. The series was underwritten by 138 guarantors who pledged \$25 each. Julian Paul Blitz, a Dutch cellist, was the conductor. The first concert of the season was on December 19, 1913, with a simple program.²³ This was symbolic of a burgeoning interest among Houstonians in live artistic performances. Wille noted that "Touring companies recorded their most successful year nationwide in 1912-1913 but even so, visiting performers, local chamber groups, and club recitals taxed Houston's limited theatre space."²⁴

Culture, Religion, and Race

The lack of adequate venues was not the only challenge faced by those who worked to foster cultural events in Houston. For a time in 1913, the advocates of culture and those of religion clashed over the staging of secular entertainment on the Sabbath. The Houston Pastors' Association led the protests against such events on Sunday afternoons in the City Auditorium. The pastors wanted to substitute religious programs in their place as they felt that the programs were too secular.²⁵ The city erupted in protest against the cancellation of the public entertainments which had become very popular and well attended. Representatives of all religions and the newspapers joined in the controversy.²⁶

Wille defended the Sunday performances, noting "the established popularity of the Sunday afternoon entertainments in the City Auditorium." Her article on an event held in May 1913

reported the fact that "the big civic building was filled to overflowing by an audience representative of Houston's citizenship." She reported that "Negro citizens occupied every available seat in the upper gallery, the place reserved for them; while the lower galleries and the orchestra and boxes were occupied to the last seat by white citizens." She concluded that "the proof that the municipal entertainments on Sunday afternoon are popular with all classes of citizenry was never more thoroughly brought home than it was by the presence of yesterday's gathering."

According to Hutcheson, "The piece de resistance of the program was the appearance of the massed chorus of students from Prairie View Normal, the institution maintained by the state for the education and training of young Negro men and women. Their efforts met with deserved applause." Perhaps this was particularly true of the older citizens, who, with the memories of antebellum days alive in their reflections, heard again the songs so dear to the Southland, the old plantation melodies and "camp meeting" songs. The entire assembly stood and sang "The Sweet Bye and Bye."²⁷

Letters to the editor flew fast and furiously debating the Sunday concerts. At the heart of the dispute was a growing tension between religious values and secular values in a society being transformed by rapid growth. Just under the surface were also tensions about race relations in a society in the process of putting in place Jim Crow laws to enforce legalized segregation of the races in public accommodations. Events such as those described by Hutcheson raised questions about religion and race that brought a mixed response from Houstonians.

The next step in this municipal quarrel was detailed in an article by Hutcheson that sought to justify the concerts not as mere entertainment or cultural enrichment, but rather as fund raising opportunities providing needed charitable money for the poor and out of work men. Hutcheson reported, "A free will offering of \$500.01 for the Social Service Federation was taken up at the municipal concert at the city auditorium on Sunday afternoon. There were about 2,000 persons in the attendance in spite of the cool weather....Dr. Lockhart (the director of the event)...told of the unusual condition which made it necessary to depart from the custom of not taking up collections of any character at the municipal entertainments. He said that an impartial investigation shows that there are 10,000 idle men in the city at present, embracing every conceivable trade and calling, and that in consequence the amount of suffering is so great as to demand that every man bear his part of the burden. He urged that all give what they could afford." Hutcheson went on to give the concert high marks and concludes with the information that unfortunately, all the program was not given on account of the time consumed in taking up the collection.²⁸ Clearly she disapproved of the fuss.

Eventually Mayor Ben Campbell (1913-1917) and other ministerial groups and city educational and sociological leaders overruled the Pastor's Association and the shows went on because the citizens of Houston were entertainment minded.²⁹

World War I and the Music of Patriotism

The 1913 season had been a huge success. Houston was booming and growing up. But the beginning of World War I in June 1914 changed everything. Though America was not yet in the war, and since the 1914-15 season was already planned, Houstonians decided

Continued to page 65

to carry on and to try to preserve, in their homeland, the culture so threatened abroad. But by mid-season of 1914-15, the mounting emotional tensions of the war were being felt in American concert halls. Programs had to be chosen with care. The playing of German music was becoming a problem.³⁰

Gradually, visiting concert artists ceased to play German music and it disappeared entirely from concert programs. It was replaced by compositions by American musicians and for the first time, by American folk music. Negro spirituals had a sudden growth and popular favor as did the work of Native Americans. A spirit of nationalism and a pride in local accomplishment were reflected in Wille's reviews: "Patriotism is to be a dominant idea in many musical events planned for the season. The Houston Symphony Orchestra's biggest number on Thanksgiving Day program will be 'America's Festival Overture,' the 'Star-Spangled Banner' being of course, its leading theme; and Hu Huffmaster, of the Women's Choral Club, is outlining a program for his club's closing concert consisting altogether of songs celebrating our love and loyalty as Americans."³¹

Cultural events flourished in Houston during the war. Hutcheson's articles recorded varied performances by local artists and visitors. The Houston Symphony Orchestra grew in quality and popularity, with the continuation of a popular series of twilight concerts. Prominent visitors, ranging from individual violinists and singers to the Minneapolis Symphony, regularly attracted audiences of 1,000 to 4,000 people.

As the war continued, the most interesting national phenomenon was the establishment of local "community sings." Such gatherings took place in cities and towns throughout America. Hutcheson wrote: "Community sings not only teach the people to love music and to sing, but not to fear the sound of their own voices.... This gathering together under the same roof of all races and classes uplifting the voice and pouring out the heart in song, does more to sweep away all prejudices and misunderstandings, to develop a broad, tolerant spirit toward each other than any other one agency."³²

In March 1918, the headline for Hutcheson's article in the *Post* read: "Big Camp Concert Thrills Houston." A reported 20,000 people took part in a "mammoth festival" on the newly constructed grounds of Camp Logan. According to Hutcheson, "the object of the festival was primarily to provide 'Smilage Books' for the soldiers...."³³ What resulted was one of the most interesting concerts yet given by military musicians. First, the nine regimental bands of the camp were combined into one huge organization of 275 pieces... "then a motor truck was conveniently placed so as to be used as an improvised stage for soloists and for members of the Choral Club of Houston, who volunteered their services, and finally the 'pep squads,' numbering 1000, were

grouped around the truck and the monster band.... The musical numbers were for the most part soldier songs and patriotic melodies... sung by the 1000 soldiers and those who joined in, many of them involuntarily, and accompanied by the huge band, the effect was so impressive as to be almost indescribable."³⁴

More patriotic community sings followed. Hutcheson described one in May 1918 as follows: "On the anniversary of the battle of San Jacinto, April 21, the chief patriotic holiday of Texas as a State, the children of this city held a special concert in the People's Auditorium for our country's soldiers stationed at Camp Logan. A mixed chorus of 1000 children sang enthusiastically.... Of course, the children's voices lustily joined with the whole audience in 'America,' 'Old Folks at Home,' 'There's a Long, Long Trail,' and the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic.'"

Despite this outpouring of community singing, the war also had negative effects on Houston's cultural life. On the following Wednesday afternoon, the Houston Symphony Orchestra gave what Hutcheson considered one of the most artistically finished programs in its history. But at the close of the season, April 3, 1918, Houston was at war and so many men were leaving the orchestra to be trained that the symphony organizers voted not to attempt a sixth season and disbanded the orchestra.³⁵ And so it passed as an institution from the musical scene for many years.

All in all, the patriotic fervor of World War I provided a strong impetus for public concerts in Houston. In the October 1918 issue of *Musical America*, Hutcheson discussed Houston's problems, hopes and achievements in music.³⁶ The article, headlined "Houston, Texas, strikes a strong patriotic note," contained

January 4, 1919

MUSICAL AMERICA

Houston Citizens and Camp Logan Men Join in Song Demon-



A Glimpse of the Great Crowd That Gathered for Houston's "Victory Sing"

HOUSTON, TEX., Dec. 19.—Houston's "Victory Sing," which took place on Tuesday night of this week, was a wonderful outpouring of patriotic enthusiasm. One thousand trained chorus singers were massed on the second story gal-

"God Save the King." The French tricolor went up for the "Marseillaise," which was sung in French by Di Pasquale, who is known as the "Caruso of Camp Logan." The entire chorus of trained voices came out strong in the refrain of the French hymn.

standard of Italy was raised, creating quite a demonstration. The Belgian national air was played by the military bands and sung by the Italian Club. Military bands from Camp Logan contributed largely to the effect, and the voices of specially-trained quartets and "con-

"Over There." "The Keep the Home" "Good Morning, Mr. Mrs. Katherine Houston Post staff, Sing" movement of emotions met with a

HOUSTON TEACHER CITES IMPORTANCE OF "MUSICAL AMERICA" TO STUDENTS

"It Should Be on the Library Table in Every Young Musician's Home," Declares Katherine Allan Lively, Whose Weekly Letters to Mothers, on Musical Topics, Are an Interesting Feature of the Houston "Chronicle"

HOUSTON, TEX., Dec. 16. KATHERINE ALLAN LIVELY, the prominent Houston teacher of piano, is contributing a weekly letter to mothers in the *Houston Chronicle*, the letter in the issue of Dec. 12 being devoted to "Musical Suggestions to Mothers." In this article Mrs. Lively pays a tribute to the value of *MUSICAL AMERICA* in supplementing the musical education of the young as follows:

"Now, if our daily papers are a part of our modern growth, to become specialists we must, along with study, as I stated above, do special reading. We have in New York to-day a weekly musical magazine that without doubt should be on the library table of every young musician's home who can possibly afford it—*MUSICAL AMERICA*. This paper has grown in a few years to a startling magnitude, not only in circulation, but in excellence.

"Moreover, it stands for America, our country, and is slowly changing our national mind into thinking 'Made in America'—a song, a singer, a violinist, a pianist—is a very desirable mark indeed. A few years ago it was little known, but with broad policies, a progressiveness unsurpassed, a wide heralding of America's new belief in music of

America, a reasonableness in subscription fee, an excellent staff of correspondents from every important center of Europe, Canada, South America, Australia and wherever else music is important, Texas included, which means our local interest, *MUSICAL AMERICA*, edited by John C. Freund, should be included in every student's weekly schedule of what makes up study.

"In the first place, mothers, as well as girls and boys, can read of the tremendous growth of music throughout the country in our public schools; they can become conversant on the subject of America's annual musical festivals, which might hasten the much-needed organization of music in our own city; they can soon know who the artists are who are before the world to-day. "Our Houston papers are now devoting a good deal of space to the achievements of soloists in their various engagements, and that, too, is another avenue to encourage your boy and girl to cultivate. In the weekly magazine of which I speak there are very valuable articles given by the greatest musicians in the world to-day, and each young musician of Houston should be encouraged to read them, as many ideas can be gained and ambition roused that teaching does not inspire. It is a view of the work of artistry from a different angle. The pictures of the artists form

a most important feature for the. For instance, delightful pictures, found of every artist who visits He "By keeping up with *MUSICAL AMERICA* columns, you, mothers your family, can read of artist nounced here and of their appeara other sections of the country, a hear them from that vantage which asking you to think of—the want personal reading—not what some o says, who may not be a good judge You will find yourself much more eated, much more ready to talk different musical subjects with than you were before. You will too, almost weekly, a column deve Houston and Houston interests a by our local correspondent."

PEABODY ORCHESTRA HE

Mr. Strube's Players Show Adv. Composers' Night

BALTIMORE, Dec. 17.—The first cert by the Students' Orchestra, Peabody Conservatory of Music place this afternoon. Gustave E the conductor, has brought this b players to a fine degree of skill as training was made evident in each ber performed. The Mozart G Symphony, the "William Tell" ov and pieces by MacDowell and S were included in the program. E Shaffer, soprano, and Eugene Ma baritone, were the soloists.

Harry Patterson Hopkins, the more composer, gave an evening o inal compositions at the Florestan Dec. 14. The program compri group of piano solos, played by the poser, four songs for baritone, su Arthur Dobson, with the composer piano, and a trio for violin, cell Hemberger, soprano, and Eugene Ma Hopkins. The compositions all bei stamp of character in th... show that th...

101

two oversized pages of text and about 20 photographs of "some prominent figures in Houston Musical Circles."

In another article, Hutcheson returned to the theme of patriotism: 'Win the War' is the one idea that inspires and sustains all our energies these days and in Houston's local life this is particularly evinced through our vastly multiplied musical activities, which all attune themselves to the keynote of purest patriotic ardor." She continued by discussing activities at the training centers at Camp Logan and in Ellington Field before concluding that the song leaders "in the camps located around Houston and the thousands of soldiers in training every day are qualifying to contribute a highly credible quote and providing to General Pershing what he asked for when he said, 'Give me a SINGING army and I will win the war.'"

When the war was won and officially ended on November 11, 1918, Houston celebrated with a "Victory Sing." In an article featuring a large photograph of the Rice Hotel and surrounding downtown streets filled as far as the eye can see with people of all ages, Wille wrote: "Houston's Victory Sing which took place on Tuesday night of this week was a wonderful outpouring of patriotic enthusiasm. One thousand trained chorus singers were massed on the second story gallery of the Rice Hotel...and the immense concourse of people...packed the streets below. At least 15,000 voices joined lustily in singing the national hymns of American and the Allies.... Military bands from Camp Logan contributed largely to the effect, and the voices of specially-trained quartets and 'pep squads' of soldiers were prominent in every number."³⁷

CLARENCE

MUSICAL AMERICA

OPERA SEASON IN VIEW FOR HOUSTON

Oratorium of Houston, Containing Movable Platform Stage (Seating Capacity 600). In Center: Officers of the Women's Choral. M. C. Culpepper, First Vice-President; Hu T. Hoffmaster, Director; Mrs. Edna W. Saunders, President; Mrs. Frank Johnson, Recording Secretary. On the right: Inside View of the Large Hall of the City Auditorium (Seating Capacity 3000).

Permanent Enterprise Sponsored by City's Three Largest Musical Organizations—Boston-National Company Engaged as Initial Attraction—Famous Artists to Appear in Course of Free Municipal Entertainments—Individual Public Spirit Makes Possible Appearance of Important Ballet and Orchestral Attractions—Local Symphony Orchestra Faces Brightest Outlook of Its History—Clubs Vital Factor in Houston Musical Life

cluding symphony orchestra of forty pieces, Feb. 20. Giovanni Martinelli, famous tenor of the Metropolitan Opera Company, April 30.

Spring Season of Opera

The biggest ensemble attraction Houston is to have this year is the Boston-National Opera Company, which is to give three operas here in March. This enterprise is undertaken by the three largest local musical organizations in combination—the Houston Symphony Association, the Treble Clef Club and the Women's Choral Club. These will all work together under a Grand Opera Committee of twenty representative citi-

cert, March 29, May Peterson, soprano, is to be the assisting artist. The Choral Club's body of seventy-five active singing members is officered this

year as follows: President, Mrs. Edna W. Saunders; first vice-president, Mrs. C. Culpepper; second vice-president, Mrs. E. L. Flowers; recording secretary, Mrs. Herbert Gates; treasurer, Mrs. Frank M. Johnson; librarian, Mrs. H. L. Ellwood; advisory board, Mmes. Hoffmaster, J. W. Maxcy, H. M. Wille Hutcheson, J. W. Maxcy, H. M. Garwood, Jesse Andrews, Stuart Lewis, and Hu T. Hoffmaster.

The Girls' Musical Club continues this season its study of French music, and will familiarize its members with the scores of the operas to be heard here in the spring. "L'Amore dei Tre Re,"

(Continued on page 102)



The Impact of Private Clubs on Houston's Cultural Life

If Wille Hutcheson had become the city's most visible reporter on cultural events, the city's many cultural clubs remained the solid core of support of the arts. The individuals, including Hutcheson, who voluntarily gave their time in support of music and art and the theater, provided the critical energy and interest that steadily built a richer cultural life in a rapidly growing city.

Hutcheson's reports on the activities of these clubs served as advertisements of sorts and no doubt helped them prosper. In a variety of columns during and after the war, she provided a convincing summary of their vitality and their impact on Houston.

During the war, for example, Hutcheson reported on the activities of the Woman's Choral Club, whose 100 members met every Thursday afternoon through the hottest months of summer for industrious Red Cross work instead of singing rehearsals. They are now beginning "with whole-hearted zeal their musical work. The club is planning to memorize the leading national songs of the allies as well as our own and the singers will be ready to participate in any patriotic entertainment or demonstration." She noted that the Girls Musical club with 100 members continued their study...of "Musical Form." Wille was announced as the dean of this group. Further, she wrote that the music study branch of the Heights Woman's Club was working well in all of its divisions: "the Seniors of whom there are 25, the junior division has 125 children and the violin choir which is doing extraordinarily high class work, has 15 members."

Her articles report on the efforts of The Houston Symphony Orchestra Association, which listed Ima Hogg as its president. The Italian Choral Club, with 52 members, had "a well defined plan for its quote of three concert entertainments. The fall and mid-winter affairs are to be entirely musical, and the spring entertainments is to be musico-dramatic, the incidents and songs being vividly illustrative of the present war conditions of the Italian front." In addition, the YWCA had formed its own choral club of 25 members. In October 1919, she reported that Rice Institute students had organized a new musical group. "A new local musical organization, which, it is expected, will have a wide influence, is the Students Band of the Rice Institute. It is composed of students living in the Institute's dormitories and is at present under the conductorship of ...a member of the student body."³⁸

In a column published in October 1918, Hutcheson presented an overview of the growing educational opportunities for those interested in music in Houston. She reported that the Houston public schools offered orchestra, chorus, glee club, harmony work, musical history and appreciation classes in which a student could earn two credits toward graduation. In the 1917-18 school year, 475 pupils took these classes. Two credits are also allowed by the school for outside piano study. In addition, she noted that the Houston Conservatory of Music was full and had a well-balanced faculty that stressed the practical standardization of music teaching and credits for music study. According to Hutcheson, there were 235 private teachers of piano and organ, 27 teachers of stringed instruments, and 35 voice teachers in Houston as the war came to a close.³⁹ Such statistics indicate a groundswell of interest in learning to play music as well as attending performances by others.

The various clubs continued to work to bring professional

performers to the city. Hutcheson reported that the inaugural date of Houston's 1918-1919 season is to be given by Paul Althouse, Metropolitan Opera tenor, recital artist. This affair is one of four under the management of Harry T. Warner. The design is to give good music a small cost through cooperation of other Texas cities with Houston. The biggest musical feature on the horizon was the coming of the Chicago Opera Association, which performed *The Barber of Seville*. The financial success of this grand opera venture was entirely assured by the committee of 100 leading citizens who guaranteed it before the contract was signed.

An article in the *Houston Gargoyle* reminisced that "both singing societies, The Treble Clef and the Woman's Choral Club, brought an imposing list of artists to Houston during their existence, which continued, by the way until after the war....⁴⁰ Most of the big international musical names became during this time household words in Houston. In 1918, the Treble Clef was announcing in the newspapers that it had "made every effort to secure Caruso, but he doesn't like to travel." There was also, no doubt, the small matter of \$7500 per concert that he charged.⁴¹

Encouraged by the reporting of Wille Hutcheson, these clubs provided a vital spark for Houston's cultural growth. They and Wille worked together after the turn of the twentieth century, and their efforts found a ready response in a growing city eager to build the cultural institutions that characterized more mature metropolises. This early generation of patrons of the arts, including Wille, inevitably gave way to subsequent generations that built on the foundation laid in the years through World War I.

Wille Hutcheson did not live long after the end of the war. Plagued by ill health, Wille retired in 1920 from her jobs at both the *Post* and *Musical America* but continued her teaching of languages and music to private students until her death.⁴² She died suddenly in 1924 at the age of 67 and was interred in the Hutcheson family plot at Glenwood Cemetery. Her tombstone reads very simply: "Wille L. Baker Hutcheson, daughter of William Hutcheson, 1858-1924."⁴³

To that line, the historian would add that she had led a singularly interesting life, filled with personal tragedies but also with the triumphs of her career as a purveyor of culture in Houston. She was an important part of the city's cultural life during its emergence as a major metropolis, and her writings and her work with various clubs helped lay the foundation for the emergence of the cultural institutions and attitudes so central to urban life. She left her mark on Houston, and though few remember her name 80 years after her death, her influence can still be seen in the vitality of the city's cultural life. 