CHORAL ACTIVITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHATTANOOGA FROM 1886-1969

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ABSTRACT

Group singing has served as a valued recreational, religious, and educational activity in communities and institutions throughout the United States. A historical case study of the University of Chattanooga, a small Methodist-Episcopal college founded in 1886, indicates ideological factors, historical events, and technological advancements that shaped the existence and function of choral curriculum and song traditions on campus. A timeline of choral traditions emerged which mirrored those of private liberal arts colleges nationwide. Singing on the University of Chattanooga campus established time honored traditions, cultivated a sense of community among students, and provided important services for University affairs. The larger implication of this study highlights the important role and function of institutional music ensembles. The remembrance and preservation of these past traditions ensures the continuance of their vital contribution to the structure and culture of the American college campus.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving and supportive family. I want to thank my husband, Skip, for his support and sacrifice during this process. For my Mother, who cultivated and nurtured my love for the Arts and taught me to bloom where I am planted. For my Father, who taught me that hard work pays off and that any problem can be solved. And for Aedyn, Joey, and Bella, who will always be my happy thought.
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Singing stands as one of the oldest traditions in American culture. Derived from European influences and crafted through sacred and secular settings in the New World, group singing has served as a valued recreational, religious, and educational activity in communities and institutions throughout the United States. From the colonial singing schools of Boston to the songs and yells of the college football stadium, choral music has served both entertainment and enlightenment purposes throughout American history, adapting to a multitude of settings and contexts. Choral traditions in American schools, specifically colleges and universities, have evolved through the years, and reflect social, political, and ideological trends. Major historical events and technological advancements have shaped the existence and function of these traditions, redefining the role of the American music ensemble throughout the 20th century. The pragmatic and utilitarian benefits of group music making on college campuses served an important role in the post-war, Progressive universities of the South.

A case study of the University of Chattanooga (UC)¹, a small Methodist-Episcopal college founded in 1886, exemplifies an adaptation and evolution in choral and song traditions. Song traditions became embedded in campus culture through literary societies, student-led glee clubs, chapel services, athletic events, and recreational activities. These traditions cultivated

¹ The University has undergone four name changes. It was known as Chattanooga University from its conception through 1889, U.S. Grant University from 1889-1904, the University of Chattanooga from 1904-1969, and The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga from 1969 through the present. References to the University in the historical narrative will use these specifications.
community spirit and patriotism, served the University at formal events, and assisted with recruitment and publicity. A linear study of social context and specific events on campus from 1886-1969 indicates how choral music was shaped by the conditions of a growing southern city.

Primarily a center of agriculture, Chattanooga struggled to recover from the social, economic, and structural destruction of the Civil War. In pioneering for a new South, local leaders sought to cultivate community spirit and revive the fledgling local industries. A group composed of community and industrial leaders, as well as leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, agreed that a well-developed educational program was vital to recovery in the South and specifically Chattanooga. In 1872 a meeting was held at the old Pine Street Methodist Church of Chattanooga to discuss plans for “One Central University for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South.” A regional Educational Convention was called, location committee appointed, and three cities were chosen as potential sites for the University: Knoxville, Athens, and Chattanooga. The location committee met with leading citizens in Chattanooga and collectively determined that the school could aid in the progress, development, and growth of the community. Fueled by the civic consciousness and financial support of local leaders, Chattanooga was chosen as the site for the university.²

When Chattanooga University opened in the fall of 1886, the college included a “Musical Department” led by Frank R. Adams. The University Bulletin stated, “In this Department, the University aims to furnish musical instruction of high order; and so to systemize and diversify the work, that not only rapid progress will be made by the student, but also that his musical culture may be well-founded, broad, and thorough.”³ Courses offered included private

³ The University Bulletin was an annual catalog which listed available courses, course descriptions, and general university information. This publication will be referred to as The Bulletin.
instruction on pianoforte, pipe organ, and voice, and classes in music theory and harmony. The Bulletin indicated that a chorus class, dependant on applicants and interest, could be organized for the practice of English glee, ovations, operatic choruses, and church music. Funded and championed by the Methodist-Episcopal Church, the University embedded mandatory chapel exercises into student and campus life. It is assumed that students participated in services by singing hymns, but there is no evidence of a formal chapel choir during this time.

Affectionately referred to as “Old Main,” University Hall was the primary building on the Chattanooga University campus. The building was the central location for all University activity. In addition to classrooms and dormitories, Old Main housed a chapel in which students attended daily, mandatory services.

Figure 1. Exterior of University Hall, "Old Main." University Archives, Lupton Library.

5 The University Lookout, 1888.
The University Lookout, a student publication launched in October of 1888, indicated that a glee club existed from 1888 through 1889. The most active period was in 1888 when the faculty sponsor was Miss Fannie Bachman, an instructor of modern languages. Variations included quartets and trios in which faculty members frequently participated, solos were sung. A November 21, 1888 editorial in The University Lookout praised a small ensemble of singers, urging the Director of the Music Department to organize special music for chapel services. Reports of this elusive glee club evolved into talk of a permanent chapel choir. Efforts to establish an official chapel choir were also evident in University Lookout editorials which indicated weekly rehearsals of a chorus class, led by Miss D.G. Woodworth, in which students were encouraged to participate. “An effort is being made to have a permanent choir for the morning devotional services. Every one who can sing, be it ever so little, should assist all he can
in this work.” Another notice stated that the chapel choir aimed to learn the Lord’s Prayer, to be sung at the close of the morning prayer.⁶

Evidence of congregational singing in the early days of the University was indicated by the following statement in an 1888 *University Lookout* editorial: “One afternoon at chapel a critical survey of the students was made during singing. It may seem an incredible [sic] statement, but the enormous number of fifteen students [sic] were actually seen singing. This is a deplorable state of affairs. Everyone can sing some and it is their duty to aid in carrying on this religious service.” Frequent references to chapel music appeared in *The Lookout* through the years of 1888 and 1889. One editorial stated the purchase of an “elegant upright piano . . . it is a Fischer cabinet grand. It was purchased of L.J. Omohundro & Co. of this city. Chapel singing has been greatly improved since it came.” Although evidence of formal choral activities during this time period is sparse, evidence of a student-led glee club is somewhat more evident.⁷

Glee clubs historically predated the organization of university music departments on college campuses. These mostly male groups soon became a staple of student organizations across the nation. Glee clubs were often the oldest student societies to be found. The roots of the American glee club tradition at the University of Chattanooga and across the country during this time can be traced to English and German origins. English catch and glee clubs served as social singing societies, cultivating a sense of brotherhood and fellowship among men.⁸ Early male German-American singing societies, known as the *Männerchor*, were organized by immigrants as means of encouraging camaraderie and nationalistic unity. Fellowship, socialization, and

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⁶ *The University Lookout*, 1888.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ An English Catch is a type of round or canon in which the lyrics of each voice align to create a word or phrase. The phrases were often political or risqué.
membership were the core concepts of these traditions.9

Technological advances in the publishing industry during the late 19th century resulted in the availability of college songbooks and collections based on campus life. These songs were soon adopted by campus glee clubs across the country. Music groups on college campuses in the late 19th century served predominately social and recreational purposes, fostering school loyalty, community spirit, and religious devotion. Encouraged by university officials as a means of cultivating civic pride and sociability, glee clubs were often adopted by a faculty sponsor and solicited for campus chapel and ceremonial services. Glee clubs served as a system of social support, helping students to retain a sense of community and identity. Although these groups were not formally sponsored by the university, they were utilized for campus benefit and revered for the social role they served.10

Extracurricular song traditions on college campuses were a consistent element of various student organizations, many of which were not music related. Literary societies, fraternities, and sororities participated in group singing. As college populations began to grow, editors and publishers began to capitalize on the allure of college life by publishing college songbooks. Printed sheet music of popular college songs such as The Students Polka (1855), Co-Ca-Che-Lunk: an American Student-Song (1855), and song collections like Songs of Yale (1853) became available to student groups across the country. Many of these songs became tied to specific traditions of university life. Commencement week often proceeded with the singing of parting and presentation songs. The planting of the Ivy, a tradition held at the University of Chattanooga and many colleges across the country, was often accompanied by the tune The Ivy Song and

Serenade. These early songbooks contained lyrics to be sung to a tune of choice, often the popular tunes of the day. These variations took hold on individual college campuses, contributing to a variety of traditions and customs while maintaining a common origin throughout.\(^\text{11}\)

College life began to captivate the attention of the general public in the early nineteenth century. Journalists featured campus culture and college life in periodicals such as McClure’s, Atlantic Monthly, and the North American Review. Increased media exposure at the turn of the century encouraged many college traditions, including the adoption of a school mascot and school colors, and the writing and singing of a school *alma mater*.\(^\text{12}\)

Many *alma maters* were set to the melody of “Annie Lisle,” an 1857 ballad written by composer H.S. Thompson in Boston, Massachusetts. The Yale University society of Phi Theta Psi set their Latin motto, “Amici Usque Ad Aras,” to the popular melody in 1864. Over time, “Annie Lisle” became commonly referred to as “Amici” and endured in modified form as a popular melodic vehicle for the collegiate *alma mater* anthem.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1889 Chattanooga University consolidated with Grant Memorial University in Athens, Tennessee. The campus at Chattanooga became known as U.S. Grant University. In 1892 the Liberal Arts College and all undergraduate work, including the Music Department, was moved to the Athens campus, leaving only the professional schools of Medicine and Theology in Chattanooga. It is not known if the chapel choir or glee club survived this change because the

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 81-90.  
\(^{12}\) Winstead, 116.  
student publications ceased to exist during this time. All formal music study ended on the Chattanooga campus during this period.¹⁴

In 1904 the undergraduate college reopened on the Chattanooga campus of U.S. Grant University. Professor Walter Hullihen, instructor of Latin and Greek in 1905, is the first known faculty sponsor of an official glee club and also coached the fledgling football team. Professor Hullihen was a well loved figure on campus. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia and arrived in Chattanooga in 1904 after receiving his Ph.D. from John Hopkins. At 29 years old, Dr. Hullihen was said to be humorous and to possess an interest in all phases of college life. His sister Elizabeth, a student at U.S. Grant University, wrote the text for the Alma Mater in 1904, shortly after the undergraduate school reopened. Professor Hullihen left the University in 1909 to join the faculty at the University of the South. His short time at the University, however, left behind the roots of strong traditions in both the glee club and the emerging football program. The University of Chattanooga Alma Mater survives to this day with one alteration: The original line of “where the shadows sleep” eventually evolved into “where the shadows creep.” The 1924-25 student handbook indicated “creep” as the definitive text, assumingly settling a long term disagreement on the matter.¹⁵

¹⁵ Govan, 212.
The agreement between Grant Memorial and U.S. Grant University was dissolved in the summer of 1907. The Chattanooga campus became known as the University of Chattanooga and would remain so for the next 60 years.\textsuperscript{16} Evidence of a glee club began to resurface after undergraduate life returned to the University of Chattanooga campus. A 1907 editorial in the

\textsuperscript{16} Govan, 114.
*University Echo* stated that student leader, Margaret Petty, was unable to make a report concerning the Glee Club due to illness. This serves as evidence that the Glee Club survived the disruptions of the previous era. The arrival of football as a student organization at the University of Chattanooga and the return of the undergraduate college from the Athens campus signified an important addition to singing traditions on campus. The rise of American football traditions left a prominent mark on student-led singing, further securing the role of recreational singing on college campuses. A newfound passion for team loyalty sparked a repertoire of student song aimed at displaying allegiance in collegiate team competition. Recreational singing now had a new focus: cheer on the home team.\(^{17}\)

In 1908 *The University Echo* acknowledged the hard work of the yell-master and song leader in directing the “rooting of the bleachers.” A university songbook emerged the following year and borrowed many traditional student-songs from Harvard and Yale, presumably due to the publication of these songs and their availability to colleges across the country. The first issue of the *Moccasin*, the college annual, was published in 1911. The director of the Glee Club was listed as Professor August Schmidt. Photos of a Boys’ and Girls’ Glee Club appeared in the 1915 yearbook, listing the director of the Boys’ Glee Club as McKinney. It is assumed that McKinney is a student because a search of the faculty during this time did not yield a professor by this name. The role of class song leader became an official office, according to the 1914 edition of *The Moccasin*. James B. Kenna, a member of the Boys’ Glee Club, was designated as class song leader and Miss Annie Haskew as student body pianist. The chief responsibilities of these offices were to lead the class in song.

\(^{17}\) Winstead, 120.
Figure 4. University of Chattanooga songbook, 1909. University Archives, Lupton Library.
Figure 5. University Glee Club. *The Moccasin*, 1911.

Figure 6. University of Chattanooga Girls’ Glee Club, 1915. University Archives, Lupton Library.
As the undergraduate school began to grow, University officials discontinued the professional schools of medicine and theology in order to focus full resources on accredited undergraduate work. The Methodist Church deeded all property to a Board of Trustees; the Board immediately set to work raising funds for new buildings. The financial campaign ended in November of 1912. The cornerstone for the new gym was laid on October 22, 1914. Ground was broken for the administration building and a new classroom building, later named Founders Hall and John T. Race Hall, on September 9, 1915. In June of 1917, construction began on Science Hall, now known as Wesley W. Hooper Hall, and John A. Patten Memorial Chapel. ‘Old Main’ was demolished in November 1917 and the first classes were held in the new buildings. John A. Patten Memorial Chapel was completed on May 30, 1919, providing students a designated
space in which to rehearse and perform music. The University Echo anticipated the completion of the new building in the following editorial from February, 1919:

“Our new and beautiful Chapel building, which is in process of construction on the south campus, already gives fine promise of being a magnificent structure. On either side of the main building are very comfortable little rooms, in which the Y.W. and Y.M.C.A. meetings will be held each Wednesday morning. This semester it is our intention to hold the regular chapel exercises on each Monday and the Y.M. and Y.W. on Wednesday, while the same hour on Friday will be devoted strictly to anything which the student body takes upon itself to do, provided it uses neither poison gas nor liquid fire to carry out its plans.”

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18 James Weston Livingood, Chronology, University of Chattanooga, 1872-1961 (N.p.), 5.
19 It is important to note that ground was broken on Patten chapel prior to the deconstruction of Old Main. John T. Race Hall, now known as Hooper-Race, and Patten Chapel were constructed around Old Main. The razing of University Hall created the open lot between the two buildings and explains the frame-like architecture of Hooper-Race and its connecting hallway to Patten Chapel.
In the spring of 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and entered the First World War. The citizens of Chattanooga rallied around the war effort with great enthusiasm. By June of 1918, enrollment at the University dropped about 30 percent. Young men enlisted while women joined the Red Cross, enrolled in home nursing courses, and put their efforts behind support for the troops on the home front. Athletic groups, student societies, and Greek
organizations ceased operation during this time and the summer session of classes was
cancelled.\textsuperscript{20}

The Student Army Training Corps (SATC), formed by the War Department in 1918, was
designed to train draftees at 157 colleges and universities across the country. A circular
distributed by the Committee on Education and Special Training of the War Department stated
the primary purpose of the Students Army Training Corps was “to utilize the executive and
teaching personnel and the physical equipment of the educational institutions to assist in the
training of our new armies.”\textsuperscript{21} The University welcomed a unit of the SATC on October 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1918.
The new science building was converted into barracks. Within days, however, city officials
imposed a quarantine due to the great flu epidemic of 1918. The unit has a short-lived presence
on campus and was disbanded shortly after the Armistice of November 11\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{22}

In the early 1920s, students petitioned administration for permission to hold social dances.
They lobbied for a student commons area with recreational equipment and sought permission
to organize social activities. Requests for student dances began in 1915 and were finally granted
in 1920. Conditions, however, required the three chaperoned dances to be held off-campus.
Social progress and liberalization slowly gained footing as the University found itself thrust into
the roaring 20’s.\textsuperscript{23}

The Glee Club at the University of Chattanooga maintained a sporadic existence at this time.
The March 20, 1920 issue of The University Echo, an editorial declares that “Music Life of College
to be More Prominent” with the arrival of a new Men’s Glee Club director, known only as “Mr.

\textsuperscript{20} Longwith, 82-83.
\textsuperscript{21} Committee on Education and Special Training of the War Department, "The Students Army Training
\textsuperscript{22} Govan, 130.
\textsuperscript{23} Longwith, 83-84.
Gray.” The article stated that Mr. Gray “enjoyed a great deal of fame” through an extensive career in grand opera. He was enthusiastically welcomed by the editorial staff:

“We all feel very much pleased that we have been able to secure such a competent man to lead our singing at the University, and we know that with the student body behind him Mr. Gray will make a big success. Let’s all get behind him and give him every bit of our support, and not only show him that we appreciate his coming but that we have the best singing college in the south.”

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The University Echo heralds the return of the University Male Chorus in an editorial from March, 1922. “Mr. Campbell, director in one of the city’s largest churches, and known throughout the country as a leading tenor, came to our aid. . .” A long roster of names followed. It is unknown how long Mr. Campbell assisted the group.\[25\]

The final figure in a string of short-term sponsors and directors was an English professor at the University from 1924-1968. Dr. Edwin Lindsey led the group between the years of 1924 through 1926. Lindsey was an amateur composer and musician and went on to write operas and incidental music for drama. His operas would be performed by UC students and faculty in the years to come. He was a member of the Chattanooga Opera Association and also a historian. Dr. Lindsey was a member of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, where he sang in the choir. He wrote the centennial history of the Church and was an important link between the University and the first official UC choirmaster, Mr. Blynn Owen. Mr. Owen was the choirmaster and organist at St. Paul’s beginning in 1923 and was hired by the University in 1926. It is in this year that the Music Department at the University of Chattanooga finally became established.\[26\]

\[24\] The University Echo, March 20, 1920.

\[25\] The University Echo, March 1, 1922.

\[26\] The University Echo, November 1, 1924.
CHAPTER II

BLYNN OWEN, 1926-1941

In the fall of 1926, Professor Blynn Owen was engaged as the University organist and choirmaster.\(^{27}\) Owen received his Master of Music degree in Detroit, Michigan and later joined the Weber, Fields, and Schubert Opera Company in New York.\(^ {28}\) Professor Owen gained extensive experience and skill in the field of opera production as a result of his employment with the company. Shortly after, Owen served as an accompanist and teacher at the Ellison Van Hoose Opera School in New York, where he met his wife Mabel. He was a member of the Masonic Order and the American Guild of Organists.\(^ {29}\) Owen served ten years as the Dean of Music at St. Mary’s College in Raleigh, NC. He contributed to song traditions at Saint Mary’s college during his years there, specifically during the First World War. He composed the music to a patriotic anthem, “Hail to Our Boys in France,” which became a popular student song in 1917 and 1918 at the college. A Saint Mary’s student recalled:

All through the school in the spring of 1918 you could hear those words. The Chorus Class sang them. . . they were hummed in covered ways and corridors, and when groups gathered around the piano in the evening, somebody was sure to start them. . . It was a good song and it was our very own. Mr. Owen had composed the music; the words were

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\(^{27}\) There is discrepancy in the spelling of Professor Owen’s name. He is listed as Blynn, Blinn, and R. Blinn in different references. The majority of documents spell his name as “Blynn.”

\(^{28}\) In 1908 Mr. Owen co-conducted Mendelssohn’s “St. Paul” with then nationally famous Walter Damrosch at a music festival in Greensboro, NC. (Chattanooga News Free Press, February 25, 1941).

\(^{29}\) Chattanooga News Free Press, February 25, 1941.
from Aline Hughes’ pen. Nineteen-seventeen—eighteen was our war year; its spirit is in that song.\textsuperscript{30}

Owen was employed at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (Chattanooga) in 1923 and began teaching voice and organ at the University of Chattanooga in 1926. \textit{The University Echo} announced that Mr. Owen would have a new studio in the tower of Patten Chapel. Professor Edwin Lindsey, a fellow church member at St. Paul’s and colleague at the University, described him as “a gifted musician and a warm-hearted man, he received loyal support from his singers, many of whom remained with him the entire 18 years of his service at St. Paul’s.”\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure9.png}
\caption{R. Blynn Owen. \textit{Mocassin}, 1927. University Archives, Lupton Library.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{30} Katherine Batts Salley and Katharine Drane Perry, \textit{Life at Saint Mary’s} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 149.
\textsuperscript{31} Edwin Samuel Lindsey, \textit{Centennial History of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 1853-1953} (Chattanooga: Vestry of St. Paul's Church, 1953), 143.
Owen’s arrival marked a period of structure in the Music Department at the University. He set to work establishing a course curriculum and performance ensembles for credit. The course catalog for the 1927-1928 academic years listed two course options for choral music: the University Chorus and the University Choir. The University Chorus was described as “open to all University students. Practice in sight singing; contact with the best choral works of the masters. Does not require a good solo voice.” This group met one hour per week for one hour of credit. The University Choir was “open to all the best voices from the chorus. Singing of chants, full choral service, and the best church music. Regular attendance is required at all chapel periods.” The 1929-1930 course catalog indicated a change in the name of the University Chorus to the University Glee Club, while the University Choir increased rehearsal to two hours per week. Finally, in the 1930-1931 catalog both choirs merged into The University Choir and remained as a single, for-credit group for the remainder of the UC years.32

The Choral Department thrived during the Owen years. Many traditions were started during this time, including the annual Christmas candlelight carol service, which continued for years. In a September, 1927 article, The University Echo announced “many new courses offered” and a certificate in music to be granted to students who complete a four year curriculum in piano, voice or organ and a public recital. A teacher’s certificate would be granted with additional coursework in teaching and pedagogy, in lieu of a recital.33

The new Music Department increased in popularity in the late 1920s, as quoted in a front page article of The University Echo:

> Everyone enjoys chapel when the Music Department has charge of the program. There is no telling what a treat will be in store, for it may be a selection by the choir, an organ selection by Prof. Owen, a violin or a vocal number. Whatever it is it will be worthwhile.

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33 The University Echo, September 23, 1927.
The Music Department has made more rapid strides in development than any other department of the University. Organized last year with Prof. Blinn Owen as the only instructor, it has increased its faculty to five and now occupies a suite of rooms adjoining the chapel . . . The Music Department radiates an atmosphere of culture and beauty and has proven to be a most valuable addition to the University Life.  

The Choral Department presented the Gilbert and Sullivan operas Patience in 1927 and H.M.S Pinafore in 1928. The Glee Club and Chapel Choir appeared monthly in chapel programs and presented special programs for Armistice Day, Christmas, and Easter. Members of the Music Department also provided music for campus meetings and presented monthly recitals. The article announced the addition of a violin instructor and plans to present The Mikado and The Chimes of Normandy during the upcoming 1928-29 academic year. Choir and Glee Club members received two hours of credit for participating.

Figure 10. University Choir, 1929. University Archives, Lupton Library.

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34 The University Echo, April, 1928.
35 Gilbert and Sullivan operettas gained popularity in American colleges during the 1920s and 1930s. These light and amusing productions were accessible to small music departments with limited space. Ivan Hewett, “The Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan.” The Telegraph (London), (August 2, 2009).
By the late 1920s, the Music Department at The University of Chattanooga had grown considerably. Professor Owen taught voice, pipe organ, piano, music history, elementary music education, and led the University Choir. Owen’s wife, Mabel, and Mrs. Bozenhard taught voice. Miss Elizabeth Wiley taught courses in theory and harmony, Miss Susie May Beasley instructed on pianoforte, and Miss Dorothy Wilbur “assisted Professor Owen in the chapel work.” An official major in music was established in 1928. The University Choir sang at different local churches on Sunday mornings and participated in operas written by Dr. Edwin Lindsey, UC

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36 Owen’s wife Mabel and daughter Chloe assisted in the productions of operettas, as Mabel Owen’s background was in opera performance. Chloe Owen often performed with the Orpheus Club while attending the University of Chattanooga. She later achieved international fame as a lead soprano in American and European opera. Mabel Owen took over as choirmaster at St. Paul’s after Professor Owen’s death.


38 *The University Bulletin*, 1928-1929.
English professor and orchestra director. In April, 1931 the University Choir performed their spring concert at Second Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga.

Professor Owen established an honorary music fraternity, the Orpheus Club, in 1934. As director and advisor, Owen formed the group to “promote interest in the higher type of male chorus music and further the educational attainments of the University of Chattanooga.” Membership was limited to sixteen active members and performances consisted of secular, sacred, and operatic literature. The group made an appearance at the Holston Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in October, 1936. They also performed at the Middle Tennessee Teacher’s Convention and held at least one concert through radio broadcast.

The president of the Orpheus Club in 1936 was Ira R. Summers. Summers was the first known band director at the University of Chattanooga. Although Summers had extensive experience as the leader of the Third Tennessee Regiment Band during the First World War, he did not receive his formal degree until 1936 from the University of Chattanooga. Summers studied voice and organ under Professor Blynn Owen and served as band director at Chattanooga City High School until his retirement in 1951.

In 1937 the Orpheus Club performed, planned tours, and welcomed guest male chorus clubs from other schools to perform for the UC students and faculty. They presented a light operatic skit that was “burlesque in nature” and the parts of the women were performed by the male members themselves. In 2003, current director of Choral Activities at UTC, Dr. Kevin Ford, discovered a 78 rpm recording of the Orpheus Club containing two tracks, Prelude from Cycle of

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39 The University Echo, February 21, 1930.
40 The University Echo, April, 1931.
41 The University Echo, October, 1936, November, 1937.
42 Chattanooga Times, March 24, 1958.
43 The University Echo, November 5, 1937.
Life by Landon Ronald and Thou Art Repose by Franz Schubert. The recording, dated 1938, was sent to a sound engineer to be preserved and re-mastered and is now housed in the University Archives in Lupton Library.44

The Cadek Conservatory of Music and the University of Chattanooga maintained a cooperative relationship during the early years of the University. Founded by Joseph O. Cadek in 1904, the staff at the Conservatory often assisted in musical productions at the University. Cadek offered faculty and facilities and provided students the opportunity to earn music credits for the University. The idea of offering a joint curriculum between the two institutions had been discussed as early as 1926 and became a formal arrangement in 1935. Mr. Ottokar Cadek and President Guerry agreed on a merger and the Cadek Conservatory of the University of Chattanooga was officially established. The arrangement was accepted by the National Association of Music Schools in 1935, which authorized the granting of the Bachelor of Music degree. The first class graduated with the Bachelor of Music degree in 1938.45

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44 Ford, Kevin. Interview by the author, March 7, 2014.
45 Govan, 153.
The Orpheus Club raised funds to attend and perform for a meeting of the National Federation of Music Clubs in Baltimore in 1938. The group stopped in Bristol on their return and performed a radio concert for the station WOPI.46

On February 25, 1941, Blynn Owen died from a sudden heart attack. He had suffered from failing eyesight and heart problems for the years prior. Described as having been in good spirits, Professor Owen took his usual post at the organ for chapel services and died at his home later that evening. The combined choirs of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and the University of Chattanooga performed at his funeral. Pallbearers for the service were the members of the Orpheus Club, the group which Owen had formed and nurtured over his fifteen years at the University. Students and faculty were heartbroken and shocked at the sudden loss of the man who had built the Music Department from its humble beginnings to one of the strongest

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46 The University Echo, May, 1939.
departments on campus. The University flag was flown at half-mast and all classes suspended for the day in honor of the beloved music teacher.47

Ira Summers filled Owen’s role as director of the Orpheus Club for the remainder of 1941 but it is unclear who filled in as choirmaster and organ instructor after his death. Because Blynn Owen’s wife, Mabel, filled his position as choirmaster at St. Paul’s Episcopal shortly after his death, it is possible that she assumed the same role at the University, as she was already employed as a voice instructor.

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Chapter III
1938-1969

The Chattanooga Symphony and the Chattanooga Opera Association were developed as a result of close collaboration between the University of Chattanooga, Cadek Conservatory, and local musicians. These partnerships helped to build strong community support for the University and created a visibly unified musical culture in Chattanooga during the 1930s and 1940s. Several outstanding musicians were added to the music faculty in this period, contributing to the growth and professionalization of music in the community.

Melvin Margolin, a student at Chattanooga High School, Major Ira Summers, and UC professor Edwin Lindsey organized a small ensemble of students and faculty from the University campus, alumni, and local musicians. This group formed the early Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra. Summers led the brass section, Lindsey led the strings, and Margolin conducted the larger orchestra for four years. The orchestra presented their first concert on November 5, 1933. By 1938 the group had grown considerably and sought professional leadership, hiring Juilliard professor Arthur Plettner.48

Dr. Arthur Plettner came to Chattanooga to teach at The University of Chattanooga and to conduct the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra. Plettner was the recipient of the Julliard Professorship of Music at the University after receiving his doctorate at the University of

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Toronto. Dr. Plettner conducted the Orchestra from 1937 through 1949 and continued to teach at the University of Chattanooga through the early 1970s.⁴⁹

Werner Wolff, conductor of the Hamburg Opera from 1917 through 1932, came to the United States in 1938, having fled Nazi Germany with his wife, Emmy Land Wolff. They were hired by the University of Chattanooga in 1940 and organized the Chattanooga Opera Association in 1943. Dr. and Mrs. Wolff taught voice at Cadek Conservatory and were absorbed into the UC staff upon the merger of the two institutions. The University of Chattanooga was directly involved in sponsorship for both the Chattanooga Symphony and the Chattanooga Opera Association, which also worked in close collaboration with Cadek Conservatory and the Chattanooga Music Club.⁵⁰

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⁴⁹ Ibid.
ISA MCILWRAITH

An important figure at the University of Chattanooga from 1938 through 1969 was Isa McIlwraith, wife of Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra director Dr. Arthur Plettner. An accomplished organist and music educator, McIlwraith majored in music at Barnard College, commuting four hours a day from her New Jersey home. She initially intended to study geology, but women were not allowed in the field at the time. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa at Barnard and as the first woman in the nation to win a fellowship in church music, earned an M.A from Columbia University. McIlwraith received a scholarship to Union Theology Seminary and studied sacred music and Theology, earning a Master of Sacred Music. She held a Victor Baier Fellowship at Columbia University from 1931 through 1932 and a fellowship at the Julliard Graduate School of Music from 1934 through 1937, becoming the first woman to win a three-year fellowship in symphony conducting. She continued her post as organist at New York’s Brick Church, the Society for Ethical Culture, and at Brooklyn’s Plymouth Congregational Church, famous for the pastorate of Henry Ward Beecher, throughout her studies.\(^{51}\)

After teaching for one year at Mt. Holyoke College, McIlwraith came to Chattanooga with Dr. Arthur Plettner, although evidence exists that this was not the initial plan. A search of McIlwraith’s correspondence in 1937 indicated a request for a position at Mt. Holyoke for her husband, which was denied. After they were married in the summer of 1938, McIlwraith and Plettner settled in Chattanooga. She gave organ recitals in the Chattanooga area as early as 1939. Her performances, sponsored by the Chattanooga Music Club, were held at First Baptist Church.

Church on Georgia Avenue and Oak Street and the Ochs Memorial Temple, among other venues. McIlwraith often wrote the program notes for the Chattanooga Symphony and in 1939 announced the formation of an adult music night course to be offered through the University. The class covered the basics of music form, development, and history.\(^{52}\)

Isa McIlwraith likely taught organ at the University as early as 1939. Although no choirmaster was listed during the 1941 and 1942 school years, Isa McIlwraith led the Christmas Candlelight Carol Service at Patten Chapel on December 18, 1941. The choir processed singing “Adeste Fideles” and sang a program that included, “Lo, How A Rose ‘er Blooming” and “In Dulci Jubilo.” The program concluded with a recessional of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” The Candlelight Carol Service was a tradition at the University for years and McIlwraith would maintain her own traditions within it, using the same processional and recessional annually throughout her tenure. The choir often performed one of her own arrangements, “Appalachian Christmas Carol,” during these services. Subsequent years showed an expanded repertoire including Brahms’ “Three Love Songs” and Mozart’s “Ave Verum Corpus” in 1942.\(^{53}\)

McIlwraith devoted her life to the study of sacred music. Her philosophy on both the role of music in the church and the importance of educating children in music is clear in the following statement:

Music is often considered an entertainment for the congregation instead of an offering to God. There’s a difference in approach between the two conceptions. I’d like to see a real striving in religion for the best that humanity has arrived at to give the Lord. But how much worthy material can be found? How much blatant junk are we exposed to? How much of our experience has been even below the mediocre? I believe it’s because of our distorted view of democracy. We think democracy means everybody is equal. Of course everybody should have the same rights and same opportunities but everybody isn’t equal to judge and have a voice in policy. Yet, anybody can tell an educator how to

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\(^{52}\) Concert programs and personal materials, McIlwraith-Plettner Papers, Series 1: Subseries 1.3, 1.5. Lupton Library, Special Collections: University Archives.

\(^{53}\) Concert programs and personal materials, McIlwraith-Plettner Papers, Series 1: Subseries 1.3, 1.5. Lupton Library, Special Collections: University Archives.
educate. In any department the person who has devoted his life to the study of it should be the one listened to, not the person who only ‘knows what he likes.’ People will believe a doctor and a dentist. But in every other field, everybody thinks he knows everything. That’s why mediocrity is rampant in this country. The efforts of the capable person are swamped. We need special attention given to the education of brilliant children. It’s been woefully neglected. But there are places where something is being done about the education of those who can do something for humanity if given the opportunity.  

Isa McIlwraith was first listed as University organist and choirmaster in the 1943-44 edition of *The University Bulletin*. She also replaced Blynn Owen on the chapel committee. The University began a period of struggle during the early 1940s, as the draft began in 1941 when the US officially joined the war. By 1942, few men were left on campus. Sports were suspended during the 1942 academic year, which led to the suspension of all band activity as well. In 1943 Judy Smith broke University tradition when she was elected as the first female President of the student body.  

The War Department stationed 350 Army Air Force Cadets on campus in 1943, mention of which Isa McIlwraith scribbled on a concert program for the Candlelight Carol Service on December 16, 1943: “Air cadets present.” McIlwraith took meticulous notes on concert programs, including accounts of audience members present, absentees, and comparison to previous years. Organ recital programs for her students were particularly detailed. Included in her collection was a program from a memorial service. A handwritten note on the front read “Funeral for Patten Chapel janitor. Gave him the little dog, Penny.”  

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54 *Chattanooga Times*. July 1, 1959.  
55 Govan, 201.  
56 Concert programs and personal materials, McIlwraith-Plettner Papers, Series 1: Subseries 1.3, 1.5. Lupton Library, Special Collections: University Archives.  
57 McIlwraith-Plettner Papers, Series 1: Subseries 1.3, 1.5.
Figure 14. Isa McIlwraith, UC Organist and Choirmaster. N.d. The Isa McIlwraith-Arthur Plettner Papers, MS 072, Special Collections, Lupton Library.
Figure 15. The University Choir. Isa McIlwraith pictured with Rollo A. Kilburn, Professor of Sociology and Religion and University Chaplain. *The Moccasin*, 1948.

Figure 16. Members of the University Choir, n.d. The Isa McIlwraith-Arthur Plettner Papers, MS 072, Special Collections, Lupton Library.
On Thursday October 15, 1942, a Service of Dedication of the University of Chattanooga Choir was held in Patten Chapel:

We dedicate this choir to the cultivation of a high art: to the interpretation of the message of the masters of music, to an appreciation of the great doxologies of the church, and to the development of the language of praise which belongeth both to earth and to heaven. We dedicate this University choir to the revealing of the hidden soul of music, to the humbling of the heart before the eternal mysteries, and the lifting of the soul abiding beauty and joy by the gospel of good will.\(^{58}\)

The Collegium Musicum, an honorary society for music students, was established in the fall of 1942. Arthur Plettner and Isa McIlwraith served as faculty sponsors. The members elected Laura Evelyn Goforth and Mary Ellen Greene as officers. In 1943 the group gave an award to a sophomore music major for outstanding progress. The University also offered the first Master of Music in 1943.\(^{59}\) After the war ended and young men began to return home, the freshman class of 1945 broke the standing University record with 256 students.\(^{60}\)

In the spring of 1945, the University hosted the first annual Fine Arts Festival. The festival resulted from enthusiasm generated by newly organized departments at the University. The music, art, and dramatics departments were grouped into the Fine Arts Division. The Fine Arts Festival aimed to entertain patrons, recruit new students, and to showcase the achievements of the fine arts programs.\(^{61}\)

\(^{58}\) University of Chattanooga Chapel Bulletin, Oct. 15, 1942.

\(^{59}\) Govan, 238-239.

\(^{60}\) The University Echo, September 28, 1945.

\(^{61}\) Longwith, 241.
In the 1946-1947 issue of the *The University Bulletin*, “public performances” was added to the course description for the University Choir. On April 18, 1948 the choir travelled to All Saints Chapel at the University of the South to perform Brahms’s *Requiem*. Arthur Plettner attended and accompanied the choir for this performance. In April of 1950, the University Choir performed a Cantata program commemorating the bicentennial of the death of J.S. Bach.\(^{62}\)

Although the University and Cadek Conservatory had maintained a cooperative agreement since 1935, it wasn’t until 1948 that the merger became official. Z. C. Patten donated a residence on Oak Street to be used by the Music Department, which was named in his honor. The choir also rehearsed in the theatre and speech hall, a converted assembly room in Hooper Hall made functional by Dorothy Hackett Ward, long time head of the Drama Department.\(^{63}\)

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\(^{62}\) McIlwraith-Plettner Papers, Series 1: Subseries 1.3, 1.5.

\(^{63}\) Longwith, 125.
E.D. RUSHWORTH

In 1948, Elwood D. Rushworth arrived at the University of Chattanooga and quickly became popular with students. 64 Although Rushworth was hired as the Band Director, his influence concerning singing and choral activities at the University deserves mention. By 1950 he had established the Male Chorus and the Girl’s Trio, in addition to his duties as Director of Bands. There had not been an all-male singing group on campus since the Orpheus Club disbanded shortly after Blynn Owen’s death in 1941. 65

Figure 18. The Men’s Chorus, Director E.D. Rushworth. *The Moccasin*, 1950.

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64 *The University Echo*, October 14, 1948.
65 See Chapter II, Blynn Owen.
From the very beginning, Rushworth’s primary focus was recruitment. He organized the Concert Ensemble, a group that performed catchy and jazzy selections and toured local schools, seeking the interest of music students. The repertoire for the Concert Ensemble apparently caused friction within the Music Department. Rushworth felt that lighter selections served as a selling agent for the University, while unidentified faculty members believed the University’s image would suffer from non-traditional performance literature. At the height of the tension, Rushworth decided to disband the group to avoid involving the students in controversy.\(^{66}\)

Despite what seemed to be a constant struggle to maintain enrollment in his ensembles, Rushworth thrived at the University. His duties at the University also involved teaching classroom methods, ear training, and conducting. Described in the *University Echo* as the “Public Schools Music Professor,” Rushworth supervised student teaching assignments and led the UC chapter of the Music Educators National Conference.\(^{67}\) Within two years, Rushworth had won such admiration from the student body that the 1950 yearbook, *The Moccasin*, was dedicated to him.\(^{68}\) Sarah Glenn, a graduate of the Music Department in 1962, stated that, “Mr. Rushworth loved the students. All of the other faculty members would eat their lunches in the faculty lunchroom. Mr. Rushworth would sit with us for lunch.”\(^{69}\) During his 29 year tenure at the University, Rushworth championed the public school music education program. His list of accomplishments is long and impressive, certainly worthy of mention, and his influence touched almost every aspect of the Music Department at the University of Chattanooga.\(^{70}\) His contribution to singing traditions at the University is evident in the success of the Concert

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\(^{66}\) *The University Echo*, December 6, 1957.  
\(^{67}\) *The University Echo*, October 14, 1948.  
\(^{68}\) *Moccasin*, 1950.  
\(^{69}\) Glenn, Sarah. Interview by the author, May 13, 2014.  
\(^{70}\) Leonard, 25-62.
Ensemble and his small ensembles. Up until his retirement in 1969, Rushworth successfully broke down barriers between specialties and created a unified Music Department.

Figure 19. E.D. Rushworth. Photograph obtained from Rushworth family collections. N.d.

Figure 20. E.D. Rushworth. Photograph obtained from Rushworth family collections. N.d.
In 1955 the University celebrated its seventieth anniversary. Under University President David Lockmiller, the University adapted the curriculum to include the applied arts and sciences in hopes of bolstering enrollment. Vocational, technical, and pre-professional studies targeted the post-war generation. While the liberal arts continued to thrive at UC, students in applied arts such as home economics, secretarial science, and pre-clinical nursing constituted 64% of graduates in 1954.\(^71\)

On October 19\(^{th}\), 1958 the University Choir performed an opening anthem, the *alma mater*, and a choral amen at the dedication of the newly erected George Thomas Hunter Hall. Throughout the 1960s, McIlwraith and the University Choir continued traditional concerts and programs. Daily chapel attendance became voluntary, except for freshmen. The construction of Joseph O. Cadek Hall was completed and dedicated on March 26, 1961.\(^72\)

In 1967 the University launched a fundraising drive called “Bold Venture.” The effort sought nine million for new buildings, renovations, and recruitment of staff and students. Despite consistent enrollment, the University was facing a budget deficit for the 1967-1968 school year. University Driven by the goal of developing a residential campus, President William Masterson arranged the purchase of the Fortwood Apartments in 1967 and the opening of Stagmaier Hall in 1968. Nine new faculty members were hired in 1968. In the same year the Chattanooga City Commission voted to close the section of Oak Street that ran through the heart of campus.\(^73\)

In 1957 the Educational Survey Subcommittee of the Tennessee Legislative Council issued the results of a two year study indicating that the Chattanooga-Hamilton County area lacked access to affordable higher education and would benefit from a four year state controlled

\(^71\) Ibid., 115.  
\(^72\) Ibid., 125.  
\(^73\) Longwith, 137-139.
university. The arrival of a vocational school in 1963, the Chattanooga State Technical Institute, presented strong competition for the University. Tuition rates at UC were more than double those of state-supported school and University officials were pressed to make changes to discourage the opening of a state institution. They hoped to continue to provide an alternative to state-supported instruction. Despite attempts to preserve UC as a private institution, a handful of trustees convinced the board to transfer operations over to state officials. By mid-April of 1968 officials from the University of Chattanooga and the University of Tennessee agreed on the framework for a merger. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga was officially established on July 1, 1969.74

William Masterson, the last President of the University of Chattanooga, became the first Chancellor of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The guidelines of the merger stated that “full-time employees of Chattanooga would suffer no loss in compensation, tenure, academic freedom, or retirement benefits as a result of the transfer.” A period of standardization followed, as well as a flurry of construction on campus. New faculty members were hired as enrollment increased.75 A new Director of Choral Activities, Glenn Draper, was hired by the chancellor in 1968.76

74 Ibid., 143-149.
75 Ibid., 157-162.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the University of Chattanooga grew, a timeline of choral tradition emerged that mirrored the traditions of private liberal arts colleges nationwide. The Methodist-Episcopal affiliation of the University of Chattanooga created an immediate need for a public service choir. Early choral activities, as far as the University was concerned, arose from chapel services. Whether these singers already existed in secular campus culture is a question left to history. The call for service, purpose, and function of campus music ensembles, however, was brought forward by a need for such services in University affairs. This manifestation of early Progressive philosophy, group collaboration and creation, quickly became embedded in campus life.

Southern states emerged from the Civil War in social, economic, and political devastation. Rural areas turned to universal education in an attempt to breathe new life into impoverished towns and enliven local industry. For the youth of the antebellum South, higher education was a privilege awarded exclusively to the middle and upper class. Among the handful of original colleges in the United States, Harvard University, the College of William and Mary, and Yale University catered to the needs of the business class. In contrast, the southern states, predominately agriculturally driven, were just beginning to test the waters of industrial production in the years leading up to the Civil War.\(^\text{77}\)

During the Reconstruction era, business and religious leaders began to open and rally around small college campuses across the South. The concept of universal education, implementation of compulsory attendance laws, and government mandated equality fueled a campaign for improved living conditions and economic recovery. Social, economic, and political forces at work in the Southern Reconstruction years had a profound impact on the formation of southern colleges. These colleges shaped the lives of undergraduates, not only by academic opportunities, but also by the extracurricular activities offered by campus culture.78

State universities in the new South were tied to social reform initiatives. The social and educational philosophy of Progressivism, championed by John Dewey and others, served as the framework for the development of these community-driven institutions. The structure of the Progressive education curriculum looked to the future, determined the future needs for society as a collective whole, and taught these core concepts from the ground up. With an emphasis on social, real-life activities, and community service, pragmatic goals led to outcome-driven objectives in early institutions.79

The Classical or Liberal Arts curriculum was partnered with practical, utilitarian goals which aimed to re-invigorate the South through technological advancement and socio-economic revitalization. These broader sociological trends were reflected in the development of the higher education model, visible in both curricular and extracurricular activities on college campuses. Progressive education was defined by hands-on experiences which developed social skills and the capacity for lifelong learning. Philosopher William James called for an increased focus on the human elements that make up a society, what he called “humanistic values.” James believed that education should serve to broaden an individual’s perspectives to cultivate an awareness of

the perspectives of others. James and others pragmatists suggested that learning to adapt to others, as well as the environment, should be a primary goal of the educational experience; group problem solving, creation, and collaboration are essential to the strong development of an individual.\textsuperscript{80}

It is important to note the general history of choral music in American higher education for the purpose of tracing trends in role and function. Music programs were often seen as servants to the academic community while also serving the higher esoteric purpose of religious institutions as a whole. J. Perry White and George N. Heller explored these roles in a study on the history and description of choral music in colleges. The study identified three specific types associated with choral ensembles: the Gleeful Chorus, the Chorale Esoterica, and the Public Service Choir. These designations clarify the role and function of each ensemble and give a clear sense of the development of these roles based on the needs they served.\textsuperscript{81}

White and Heller described the Gleeful Chorus as a group of singers who assemble primarily for recreational purposes to perform predominately secular, novelty, and school songs. These groups are usually led without faculty involvement but still center around university and campus life. The Gleeful Chorus, or Glee Club, often reflected the social aspects of singing on college campuses. This tradition is also a larger reflection of community singing, as described in the early German singing societies or English catch clubs. Camaraderie, group unity, patriotism, entertainment, and fellowship were the main goals of the Gleeful Chorus structure. It is only natural that these traditions would become a cornerstone of community interaction on college campuses. These groups were eventually absorbed into college music programs. At the


University of Chattanooga, the Glee Club would undoubtedly fit into this category. Although sponsored by a faculty member for supervision purposes, the group was predominately student-led.  

The Choral Esoterica, largely based on the Schola Cantorum traditions of the European Catholic Church, is described by White and Heller as “serving an academic and institutional purpose.” Adopted as ‘for-credit’ music courses, the Chorale Esoterica served the university in chapel services and at formal events. The literature performed was formal in nature with an emphasis on foreign text and complex sight reading. Diction, balance, and tonal precision drove the rehearsal of a predominately polyphonic and avant-garde repertoire. The Chorale Esoterica was the foundation upon which the *a cappella* movement of the 1920’s and 1930’s grew, first initiated by Peter Lutkin at Northwestern University in 1906 and later strengthened by F. Melius Christiansen at St. Olaf College. It wasn’t until the rise of the collegiate *a cappella* movement that the University chorus paradigm shifted from a recreational or functional activity to a structured academic subject. The Owen and McIlwraith years at the University of Chattanooga mirrored these national trends.

White and Heller describe the Public Service Choir as “loved by administrators and despised by academics.” These choirs focused on broad popular appeal and were often used for fund-raising and recruitment. This tradition personified the belief that the value of music is to be found in terms of the benefits it brings to society. Music as entertainment versus music as enlightenment is at the heart of these distinctions. Frequent performance at music conventions, extravagant productions, and extensive touring were the responsibilities of the Public Service Choir.

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82 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
Choir. Showmanship and monetary benefit was at the heart of this tradition. As demonstrated by Owen’s Orpheus Club and E.D. Rushworth’s Concert Ensemble, the Public Service Choir served the function of recruitment.

Choral singing served a variety of functions in early American colleges. Secular or recreational singing was often the earliest, and most visible, to develop at early colleges. Sacred singing, particularly in the case of religious institutions, was often embedded or assumed. Hymn singing in a congregational setting was an inherent early American activity, as indicated by early colonial schools and churches. The social and educational benefits of group singing emerged later as a result of the integration of the music education curriculum into liberal arts colleges, specifically during the Progressive movement. The progressive education movement sought to use the school system as an agent of change, essentially a revolt against formalism. Thomas Miller states, in regard to the movement’s influence on music education:

“The academic aspects of music were subordinated to provide meaningful experience for every child. The social nature of the art came to the fore in an attempt to establish a relationship not only with other areas of a child’s education but with the actual life experiences of the child. To the progressive, education was life.”

Dewey emphasized the social meaning of the arts and the importance of art in the development of children. The child-centered school, similar to the philosophy of expressionism, emphasized the development of individuality through creative self expression. According to this philosophy, a child must experience the actual process of creation. Although music education inherited both

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85 Ibid.
expressionist and progressive tendencies, the emphasis on music reading, drill, and symbolic learning continued to reign in public schools and colleges.  

Patriotism, civic pride, and social service were important goals during the period between the two World Wars. Music education during this time aimed to create students who would grow to contribute to the musical life of American culture. Although origins were in recreation and social interaction, music performance on the college campus soon became absorbed by universities, first with the appointment of faculty sponsors and later the hiring of trained music specialists. Music ensembles served a dual function, providing students a sense of social support while also serving the business aspects of the University. Music ensembles in public performance provided a visible indicator of the outcome-driven, product-based goals of the progressive education movement.  

The University of Chattanooga Choral Department arose from humble beginnings. Originating from early glee clubs and the singing of Methodist hymns in the historic Patten Chapel, voices in song have echoed across the campus for 128 years. Conductors come and go, curriculum and facilities change, and every new academic year brings a fresh set of voices. The popular student pastime of choral singing has grown and evolved, securing a place in the modern college curriculum of today. The history of singing at the University of Chattanooga, shaped by the cultural characteristics of each generation, provides a rich insight into the development of American higher education nationwide. The customs and traditions of early student song at the University of Chattanooga formed a music tradition that survives today. The singing of the *alma mater* at graduation ceremonies, the University fight song echoing through the football stands, and the University *a cappella* choir performing a spring concert are campus

87 Miller, 9-10.
88 Winstead, 204.
traditions that have endured through time. These traditions have become, and will continue to
be, time-honored campus treasures and the source of fond memories for years to come.
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*The University Lookout*, 1888-1889.

*The University Echo*, 1906-1970.
VITA

Ashley Nolan Cisto was born in Brevard, NC to John and Kathryn Nolan. She attended a rural school in Happy Valley, NC, receiving musical training in the Kodaly and Orff traditions. She played trumpet in the band, sang in the choir at school and church, and took private piano lessons. After moving to Chattanooga, TN in 1998, Ashley participated in the All East Tennessee and All State Tennessee Choruses for her 10th through 12th grade years and sang in the choir at Red Bank High School. After graduation, she attended The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, earning the Bachelor of Music: Music Education in 2006. In 2008, Ashley accepted a position as Choral Director at Hixson High School, where she continues to teach. She is also certified in K-12 Theatre Arts Education. Ashley received her Master of Music: Music Education in August, 2014.