HISTORY OF BARBERSHOP

By David Krause and David Wright

Definition of barbershop harmony. Read: Definition of Barbershop Harmony, from the Forward of the Contest and Judging Handbook.

The Purpose Of This Course. We will attempt to trace the roots and the evolution of barbershop harmony from well before its actual beginnings up to the present. We will try to answer these questions: What were the tides of history which spawned the birth of the barbershop quartet, and what environment allowed this style of music to flourish? What were its musical forerunners? What are its defining characteristics? What other types of music were fostered contemporaneously, and how did they influence the growth of quartet singing? Which styles are similar, and how are they similar? How did the term "barbershop" arise? How long did the historical era of the barbershop quartet last? What other kinds of music sprang forth from it? Why did the style eventually need preservation? How was SPEBSQSA formed, and how did it become a national movement? What other organizations have joined the cause? How have they coped with the task of preservation? Are current day efforts still on course in preserving the style? How has the style changed since the Society was formed? We will spend the next few hours contemplating and attempting to answer these questions.

Overtones. As barbershoppers, we are very conscious of the "ringing" effect which complements our singing. We consider it our reward for singing well- defined pitches in tune. The fact that a tone produced by a voice or an instrument is accompanied by a whole series of pitches in addition to the fundamental one which our ear most easily detects has been known for centuries. It is the relative strength of these pitches, called overtones (also harmonics- also partials), which determines to our ear the characteristic sound of the voice or instrument producing the tone. These overtones allow us to distinguish between a trumpet and a violin, between your voice and mine, between the vowel "ee" and the vowel "oh". Generally we don't hear these overtones as actual pitches. They are mixed into the total sound in a more subtle fashion. But sometimes, when we ring a chord, their presence is detected by a buzz in the air, or even (the ultimate joy) as an actual audible high toned pitch.

Early traces of polyphonic music; the Gregorian chant. This ringing effect was most certainly known and observed in the resonant monasteries of the 11th and 12th centuries, where the monks chanted Latin praises to God in unison.

Example: Unison chants.

Consonance. Barbershop harmony (and all other kinds of harmony) is based upon the principle of consonance -the fact that some tones sound pleasing to the ear when sounded together. The reason for this was known by the Greek mathematician Pythagoras 2500 years ago, namely that tones sound pleasing when the ratio of their frequencies can be expressed with small integers - the smaller the intervals the more consonant the sound. The most consonant interval is the

octave, with ratio 2: I. This is also the first overtone. and the first harmony (polyphony) the Gregorians began to sing. They probably decided to sing it because they heard it anyway. The next most consonant interval is the perfect fifth, which is the ratio 3:2. It was the next interval they sang, appearing in the 12th century.

Example: Chants with solo, unison, octave, and perfect fifth.

These monks were in some sense early barbershoppers -they depended on their ear to tune and they appreciated the consonance arising from the intervals they sang. Since their singing was a capella and they were all singing the same word sounds, there was no obstruction to tuning the intervals as accurately as possible -to "ringing the chords." It is likely, then, that the ringing of chords (albeit simple chords), is an element of our style which must have been experienced by mankind many centuries ago. What was lacking was harmonic variety, a vocabulary of chords and progressions large enough to maintain interest.

More harmony becomes accepted. By the fourteenth century the octave and the fifth were accepted. and the third (ratio 5:4) was on its way in. At first the third was considered dissonant and even irreverent, and was banned from church music by one of the popes. By the 16th century, however, church music used a variety of triads (three note chords).

Example: "If Ye Love Me." by Thomas Tallis -l6th century English anthem.

You may have detected in this example the presence of both major and minor triads. If we denote the notes of the scale by the Roman numerals I through VIII. we heard major chords rooted on I, IV, and V. and minor chords rooted on II and VI. Major and minor triads appear frequently in our barbershop music. but they are not what gives it its distinctive sound. The anthem which you just heard was devoid of chords containing four notes without octave doublings. except for some quick passing tones. In particular. it is devoid of the seventh chord which characterizes our music.

The dominant seventh chord and its implied progression. The chord that is sometimes called the "barbarshop seventh" actually is what most musicians refer to as the dominant seventh chord. Somewhere in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century , European composers began to complement the major triad with a flatted seventh, a tone whose interval from the root has the frequency ratio 7:4. (It is purely a coincidence of nature that the interval uses the integer seven and it is also the seventh note in the scale, flatted.) It probably slipped in as a dissonant tone in a chord preceding a root movement which went up the interval of a fourth -a standard progression. Meanwhile. keyboard instruments had developed and the tempered scale, which had been proposed by the French Mathematician Mersenne in 1636, had become accepted beginning in the late seventeenth century , on the urging of J. S. Bach, since it allowed him to write in all key. Equal temperament gives reasonably good approximations for the intervals of a fifth and a third, but it furnishes a dominant seventh which is noticeably sharp. In spite of this obstacle, this interval gained acceptance as a consonance, so that by the time of the great composers of the 18th and 19th centuries, the chord containing the root, third, fifth, and flatted seventh was commonplace, especially rooted on V of the scale, since all four notes of this seventh chord lie in the scale. The seventh was used primarily to cue the listener that a root movement going up a

fourth was about to occur. The great composers used this expectation to toy with the listener, to hold him in suspense, or to deceive him. In the following excerpts. note how a melodic strain often implies and actually provides the dominant seventh. (This is one of the hallmarks that characterizes a melody as being suitable for barbarshop harmonization.)

Example: Beginning of Beethoven's First Symphony; excerpt from Strauss's "Beautiful Blue Danube;" excerpt from Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik."

This chord and its implied progression are two of the cornerstones of barbershop harmony. By the nineteenth all the chords and progressions which we now use in barbershop. with just a few exceptions, were common, so that the harmonic basis on which our style rests was already essentially intact.

"Barbers music" in Elizabethan England. Now we shift our attention to another front: the early development of spontaneous singing and the term "barbershop." There are scattered references in English literature which associate music with the barber and his shop in 16th, 17th, and early 18th century England. According to Samuel Pepys (pronounced ".Peeps") (1633-1703), a noted diarist, the English poet John Milton (1608-1674; author of the epic poem "Paradise Lost") wrote that a lute or cittern (forerunner of the guitar), hung on the wall for use by waiting customers, and that the barber himself was adept with it, entertaining himself and others during his free moments. In fact, some barbers became quite reputable as musicians. It seems as if a certain type of music came to be associated with the barber, although we can't be sure quite what it was, for Pepys also writes:

"My Lord called for the Lieutenant's cittern and with our candle sticks with money for cymbols we made barber's music with which my Lord was well pleased."

Transfer to America. It seems that this tradition, as well as the term, ceased in England, as the barbers' profession became more sophisticated, concerning itself with tooth-pulling, blood-letting, and surgery. But before it died, it was transplanted, like many "Old World" customs, to American shores, where barbers took up the tradition of improvised singing. The early American barber's music was probably sung or strummed in the South, where life was less stodgy and "proper" than in Puritanical, psalm-singing New England, where barber's music would surely have seemed profane. In historical Williamsburg, Virginia, there are the Raleigh Tavern pictures of colonial gentlemen gathering about the bar, leisurely discussing the affairs of the day -a custom inherited from Mother England.

Early beginnings of four part harmony. The American tradition of four voices harmonizing, and making at least some attempt to avoid unnecessary doubling in the parts has its beginnings in the murky depths of the past. As with any folk art, it is impossible to pinpoint an exact year, or even an exact decade, when the practice began.

The Hutchinson Family, Dearborn Quartet, and the Continental Vocalists. We can say for a fact that such quartet singing was in existence before the mid-1800's. As an example we know of the existence of a family quartet, called the Hutchinson Family, consisting of three brothers: Judson, John, and Asa; and their sister, Abby, who sang an alto above the melody. equivalent to

a tenor part, if it were sung by a male. In 1843 this popular New England quartet was singing to crowded antislavery and temperance enthusiasts in New York and Philadelphia. A generation later, the sons of one of the Hutchinson sons sang in another concert quartet -this on all male - called the Dearborn Quartet. In the mid-1800's there was another popular quartet -all male - called the Continental Vocalists which did variety shows and published a song book in 1855 called "The Continental Vocalists Glee Book." All the indications are that there was substantial interest in quartet singing as early as the 1850's.

Early contribution by African-Americans. Over the years, the African-American has an immense influence on American music, especially those aspects that relate to the development of barbershop harmony. He gave us the spiritual, and later he gave us ragtime and jazz. They were among the early improvisers of harmony, thereby inspiring the writing of popular songs which are the direct forerunners of barbershop. In the Old South the enchanting music of black slaves came floating in the window on a warm evening; their innate ability for harmonizing and improvising was noticed and mimicked. In the early 1800's it was the singing and dancing of these involuntary immigrants which inspired an art form called the minstrel show which helped give birth to, among other things, Vaudeville, Broadway, and the barbershop quartet. Moreover, we will see that what may have been the very first actual quartet of singing barbers consisted of four African-American men.

Minstrel shows. The art form called the minstrel show arose somewhere in the 1840's. The minstrel shows further developed the art of improvisation, and male quartet singing began to appear in the format somewhere along the line well before 1900. The word "minstrel" prior to the 19th century referred to a professional entertainer of any kind: musician, juggler, acrobat, storyteller, etc. In the 1800's this indigenous American theatrical art form called the "minstrel show" evolved. The father of the minstrel show was a man named Thomas Dartmouth Rose, popularly known as "Jim Crow". He was an early African-American impersonator who pioneered the style. It consisted of blackface performers caricaturing the singing and dancing of African-American slaves. As the minstrel show developed in the mid-1800's, a two part, sometimes three part, format evolved. In the first part, the performers were arranged in a semi-circle, with the "interlocutor" in the center. On the ends were "Mr. Tambo", the tambourine man and "Mr. Bones", who rattled the bones. The interlocutor wore whiteface and formal attire. The rest of the (all male) cast wore blackface and colorful apparel. The program frequently opened with a big opening chorus number, following which the interlocutor gave the command, "Gentlemen, be seated." The program then went into a series of jokes and gags between the interlocutor and the end men, interspersed with performances of ballads, comic songs, and instrumental numbers, chiefly on the banjo or violin. Here it was customary for a male quartet to step forward during the course of the show and serenade the audience with a popular ballad. The minstrel show had its hey day between 1850 and 1870. After that it gradually declined, although it continued to appear in professional theaters into the 20th century, and certainly continued as a vehicle for amateurs. Its influence was felt later in vaudeville, radio, television, and motion pictures of the 20th century. But it's chief impact was probably it's influences on, and contributions to, American popular music. As such it is one of the keystones in the development of the barbershop style.

Improvisation. The minstrel singers, with their woodshedded arrangements, helped to develop a long American tradition of improvisation. This has turned out to be immensely popular in this country over the years, and probably goes back to the Jeffersonian ideal of freedom and independence. For decades, before the development of such styles as jazz, ragtime, and barbershop, America's musical traditions were based on the traditional and strict European conservatory methods. The printed page, with the composer's intentions, was paramount. Occasionally a bit of freedom was allowed at the cadenza section of a concerto, but by and large, there was the old world stiffness and stuffiness of powdered wigs and court manners in our 19th century music. As the 1800's progressed Americans broke away from this European rigidity. This musical emancipation, which was helped along greatly by the gradual emancipation of blacks, revealed itself in various modes of musical improvisation, such as the Negro spiritual, ragtime, Barbershop, and later in jazz, country , and gospel music.

Influence of Popular Music. The history of our nation is reflected in its popular songs, going all the way back to the first popular song, "Yankee Doodle," 1792. Songs reflected war and peace, good times, bad times, carefree times, hard times, exciting times, confusing times. As our discussion leads us through history, we will discuss some of the songs and the songwriters of each generation. We will see that a particular turn in the evolution of popular music created an environment which allowed barbershop harmony to flourish, and another turn caused its demise. Some songs that were popular in the early 1800's: Annie Laurie (1838) and Long, Long Ago (1843) -the latter appears in the handout. These early melodies are sometimes hard to harmonize (e.g. " Annie Laurie") and when harmonization is possible the harmonies aren't interesting (e.g. "Long. Long Ago"). We will observe how through the 1800's the style of melodies changed to allow easier harmonization.

Stephen Collins Foster. Foster was the first great American song-writer and may have been the greatest melody writer of all time. He grew up in Pittsburgh listening to African-Americans singing their songs in church meetings and on the job. He heard popular songs from the minstrel shows. He was commissioned to write songs for the Christy Minstrels, the greatest of the minstrel companies. In about 1846, Christy's troupe had appeared in New York City, and they played on Broadway for nearly ten years. The success of this company was due in large part to the popularity of Foster's songs-songs like "Old Folks At Home" and "My Old Kentucky Home". Stephen Foster left us over 200 songs- among them some of the best ever written. In addition to minstrel songs, he also wrote songs in the more "respectable" sentimental style then popular. These include "Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair" (1853) and "Beautiful Dreamer" (1864).

Example: "Beautiful Dreamer.

Note the remarkable elegance and beauty of this song. Foster was beginning to break out of the mold in the latter part of his life. We are all poorer in that his life ended in 1864 at the age of 37.

First known barber's quartet. African-American male quartets are known to have existed as early as 1873. And in Jacksonville, Florida, there was a African-American quartet of singing barbers in the 1880's. These are the very first non- professional quartets of whose existence we are certain. Other earlier ones surely existed. It is likely that the repertoires of these groups consisted of spirituals, plantation songs, and popular songs.

Religious songs. The late 1860's and 70's was an era in which many of the popular songs were hymns. Examples: "Nearer My God To Thee" (1859). "Abide With Me" (1861). "Work For The Night Is Coming" (1864), "Whispering Hope" (1868), "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour" (1870), "I Love To Tell The Story" (1874), "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" (1876). In many of these melodies one can detect the influence of Stephen Foster. Hymns and spirituals have always been popular as quartet numbers and most likely were in the repertoires of the quartets of this age.

Popular songs of the later 1800's. Many of the songs written after Stephen Foster's time resembled his style. One of the first American popular songs whose implied harmony makes use of secondary dominants ("circle of fifths") was " Aura Lee", written in 1861. In 1866 James A. Butterfield wrote the music to "When You And I Were Young. Maggie", which very much resembles Foster's sentimental ballads, but introduces a few more chords than Foster's songs typically contained. In 1878, James A. Bland wrote, "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny", a minstrel song which is in the style of Foster's "My Old Kentucky Home." Two years earlier, in 1876, the well-known song "1'11 Take You Home Again. Kathleen" was written, and it is significant to us researchers of barbershop roots that this song featured some real harmonic variety. The end of the 19th century saw the rise of melodies which were especially conducive to woodshedding and harmonization. One feature possessed by many these songs is the sol to sol nature of the melody, rather than the do to do structure which predominated in the mid 1800's. Songs such as Sweet Rosie O'Grady (1896), Gypsy Love Song (1898), and My Wild Irish Rose (1899), were extremely conducive to four part ear harmonies. This basic simplicity of 1890's songs often entailed a characteristic "roominess" in the melody -lots of half notes and whole notes -allowing the harmony singer to echo the melody or make harmonic moves (later called "swipes" by barbershoppers) while the lead singer simply held his note. Another distinguishing feature was a greater variety of chords implied by their melodies. Many of the songs from the mid-1800's had chord patterns involving only three chords (I, IV, V), with occasional use of a fourth (II). But the songs of the turn-of-the-century era usually involved all these plus at least one or two more (VI, III).

Two of Thomas Edison's inventions. The same year "Kathleen" was written, Thomas Edison was perfecting two inventions that would very much affect the history of barbershop singing. One would spawn the growth of quartetting by bringing the sound of professional quartets into the homes of millions across the country .The other invention probably did as much as any other single thing to spell the end of the quartet era forty years later. The first invention was the phonograph, which recorded the voice on a cylinder made of tin foil. The second was the Kinetograph, better known as Edison's motion picture camera.

The rise of vaudeville. By 1890 the minstrel show, now on the downswing of its life span, but by no means dead, had spawned for America had another medium of popular entertainment -the vaudeville stage. It was respectable, family entertainment with high standards of professionalism. There developed large chains of theaters in towns across the country. One such had as many as 400 houses. Many of America's greatest entertainment stars began their careers on the vaudeville circuits, including W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, and Al Jolson. In format, it was nothing other than a variety show consisting of 10 to 15 acts, much the same as the minstrel shows, but it dropped the blackface and African-American impersonation. In 1896 vaudeville theaters began showing

motion pictures, which at the time were just a curiosity (This seemingly innocent novelty would spell the demise of vaudeville 30 years later, taking the barbershop quartet down with it). Quartet singing was a standard part of the program, providing the means for people across the country to see, and not just hear, professional quartets. There was a rich African-American vaudeville tradition complete with black quartets and black music critics. One such critic was a columnist called Tom the Tattler, who in 1900 wrote the following unflattering remarks about barbershop harmony:

" A noticeable advancement along the lines of the profession is the passing of the barber shop quartette with its barber shop harmony, It doesn't take much of an effort of memory to recall when all quartettes sang their own self-made harmonies, with their oft-recurring 'minors,' diminished sevenths and other embellishments, This barber shop harmony, although pleasing to the average ear, and not altogether displeasing to the cultivated ear, is nothing more or less than a musical slang, It violates-at times ruthlessly- the exacting rules and properties of music. All forms, phrases and progressions of music go down before it. What does [sic] the barber shop exponents of harmony care for such delicacies as the forbidden progressions of perfect fifths and octaves? What do they care about chord progression in its correct form'? Their chief aim is to so twist and distort a melody that it can be expressed in so-called 'minors' and diminished chords. The melody is literally made to fit their small stock of slang chords, instead of the chords being built around the melody,"

With this lambasting of the barbershop style, Tom the Tattler gave us the first known printed use of "barber shop" as a term denoting a style of harmony.

Tin Pan Alley. At this time the song publishing business was centered in New York City, and the publishing district had gravitated to West 28th Street. between Fifth and Broadway. In 1909 a journalist and named Monroe Rosenfeld wrote a series of articles on the fledgling industry entitled "Tin Pan Alley." The name arose because, as he walked through the district, the sounds floating out of open windows of pianists banging out tunes reminded him of the clatter of pots and pans. The name stuck and became synonymous with New York's song publishing industry. In the early 1900's, Tin Pan Alley cranked out songs by the thousands. and people bought them by the millions. Irving Berlin, Gus Edwards, Ernest Ball ("Mother Machree" (1910), "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" (1912), George M. Cohan. the Yon Tilzer's- Harry and Albert- were producing songs in prolific quantity. Harry Yon Tilzer wrote almost eight-thousand songs during his career, including "Wait 'Till The Sun Shines. Nellie" (1905), "I Want A Girl Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad" (1911), and "Last Night Was The End Of The World" (1912). They knew how to aim for the heart with their simple, straight- forward lyrics.

The rise of amateur quartets. The early 1900's was indeed the age of the male quartet. There were thousands of amateur quartets. Lodges, churches, granges, fraternities, service clubs, companies, corporations, police and fire departments, and even baseball teams all had foursomes singing under their sponsorship. It should be noted that this was still the practice in the early days of our Society when many of the quartets had names like Topeka's State Journal Quartet, Shell Quartet, Phillips 66 Barflies (formerly the Bartlesville Barflies), New York Police Quartet, Westinghouse Quartet, Lions Club Serenaders, Gipps-Amberline Four (Gipps-Amberline was a beer brewed in Peoria, Illinois). Family quartets were common, and the better ones became

professional, making recordings and doing concerts. There were also neighborhood and family quartets organized less formally. Young boys formed quartets on the street corner. We know for a fact that this actually happened, because one such quartet was George Bums' Peewee Quartet, in which he sang tenor when he was eight years old. In his book Living It Up he talks about singing in saloons and passing the hat on New York's Lower East Side. Such amateur groups were inspired by the vaudeville and minstrel quartets whose circuits came to through the towns and villages. They were also inspired by the famous recording studio quartets.

Quartets begin to record. The first song to be recorded had been by Thomas Edison back in 1876 when he first demonstrated his new machine. It was "Mary Had A Little Lamb." (Actually it was spoken, not sung. To our knowledge, Edison didn't have a quartet!) But in the 1880's and 1890's Edison created the recording industry which gave impetus to the male singing movement and the names of the Haydn Quartet, Peerless Quartet, and American Quartet were almost household words. In 1890 we see a male quartet listed in a catalogue, but it doesn't say what the quartet's name was, nor list its personnel. An Edison studio logbook lists twenty recordings on September 27, 1891 by the Manhannsett Quartet, but it does not say whether or not these cuts were accepted. Here are two examples of quartet recordings. One must keep in mind while listening that (1) these men were pioneers, so we can't evaluate them by our standards, and (2) the technology which recorded their voices was new, hence extremely primitive by our standards and moreover the cylinders and records from which these were taken are old and scratchy.

Example: "Beautiful Garden Of Roses" (Haydn Quartet) and "When I Carved Your Name On The Tree" (Orpheus Quartet).

Haydn Quartet. (Called the Edison Male Quartet on Edison Cylinders; later called Haydn Quartet on Victor.) This was the first great recording quartet. They were organized in 1894 to make wax cylinders for Edison. Bass William Hooley was considered by some to be the finest of the early quartet basses. In 1896 John Bieling replaced the original tenor singer and eventually became one of the great early quartet men. Shortly after 1900 they began to make disc records for Victor and an early Victor catalogue claims that this group ", ..was the first male quartet to make satisfactory talking machine records." (Columbia Studios. for example. began making discs in 1902). The following Civil War song was recorded in 1902, We have noted that religious songs and spirituals were always popular; they were often recorded. (Today's quartets still have an affinity for them.)

Example: "Tenting Tonight On The Old Camp Ground," sung by the Haydn Quartet.

Note in this song: how well they stay in tune: the lead carries certain solo passages: The use of a II7 chord on the syllable "night", This use of the seventh is an important feature of the barbershop style.

Peerless Quartet. This fabulous quartet became the most famous, perhaps for three reasons: (I) the quality of the singing: (2) longevity -their recording career ran from 1906 to 1928: and (3) the popularity of their lead singer, Henry Burr, as a singer in his own right. Burr became the manager of the group: his fine ability and personality held the group together through several personnel changes over the years.

Example: "I Love You Just The Same, Sweet Adeline", sung by the Peerless Quartet,

Henry Burr was to become probably the most recorded voice in history. Some estimates say he recorded as many as 12,000 songs, including solo, duet, trio, and quartet numbers. (Bing Crosby recorded about 1,200 songs in his career.)

American Quartet. (Called the Premier quartet on Edison cylinders) This was probably the most illustrious of the studio quartets. In 1909, two of the members from the Haydn Quartet, bass William Hooley and tenor John Bieling, teamed up with baritone Steve Porter of the Peerless and a fantastic 31 year old lead singer named Billy Murray (perhaps the first super-quartet). Note in the following example the use of echoes and bass lead-ins which help keep the forward motion of the song. Today such devices are considered an important part of the style to be preserved.

Example: Excerpt from "When You Wore A Tulip And I Wore A Big Red Rose" (1914), sung by the American Quartet.

The Haydn Quartet had sung mostly sentimental ballads, old standards, and gospel songs, but the new American Quartet was to make flash and pizzazz a trademark, specializing in ragtime, comedy, and (believe it or not) special effects, Lead Billy Murray was one of Victor's most popular artists, Early in his career he learned to nasalize certain vowels and articulate consonants with great energy, making his voice ideal for recording by the day's technology. Like Henry Burr, he did many solos. Collectors of early recordings have voted him the best of the early pop singers. His energy, diction, and personality sold millions of records. He was a commanding lead, setting tempo, dynamics, and mood.

The Avon Comedy Four. The Haydn, Peerless, and American Quartets were primarily recording groups, so they probably had no visual routines. When they appeared live, their performance was concert style, and their dress was formal, setting a real historical precedent for the modern quartet's use of formal attire. By contrast, the great vaudeville quartets depended heavily on the visual for the entertainment value of their act. Their costumes and songs were geared toward novelty and comedy, and they enhanced their performance with moves, setting an alternate precedent also followed by modern quartets. The Avon Comedy Four (1914 -1924) was perhaps the greatest of these quartets.

Example: "Way Out Yonder In The Golden West," sung by the Avon Comedy Four (1917).

Greatest Basso. Much of our information about the early quartets comes from Jim Walsh's articles in Hobbies Magazine. Walsh was a collector and authority on early recording artists. One of his articles is called "The Greatest Quartet Basso." from November, 1967, in which he poses the question of who was the greatest of the early quartet basses. In those days, as today, basses commanded much respect. Among the top contenders, in Walsh's opinion, is the bass of a quartet we haven't discussed-- the Shannon Quartet-- named Wilfred Glenn.

Example: "Asleep In The Deep," sung by Wilfred Glenn, 1912.

First song referring to "barbershop'. This came in the song "Play That Barber Shop Chord", words by Wm. Tracey, music by Lewis F. Muir, which appeared in 1910. (Wm. Tracey would later pen the lyrics to "Mammy 0' Mine" (1919) and "Them There Eyes" (1930).) The implied harmony of song features the bVI7 chord. This recording of it, by the American quartet, became the nations number two hit in 1910:

Example: "Play That Barber Shop Chord," by the American Quartet.

Note that in the ad libbing, the seventh (II7) is definitely displayed as the "barbershop" chord. Some other aspects of this recording seem significant. First of all, the interpolation from "You're The Flower Of My Heart, Sweet Adeline" indicates that the song was definitely associated with barbershop harmony at this time. Secondly, the speaking is done in black dialect.

Influence of Ragtime. While Tin Pan Alley was grinding out popular music which incorporated new harmonies and lyrics for respectable society, another indigenous art form was taking shape out in the boon docks. It too employed the full range of classical harmonies, plus a few of its own, but its main trademark was its rhythms. Like early barbershop, it was the largely music of African-American musicians, centered in New Orleans, and just as the singing of the slaves had come floating in the window 80 years before, the sound of this jubilant music inevitably came floating up the river. It sounded like this.

Example: "Maple Leaf Rag," by Scott Joplin, 1899.

This new music was at first considered crude and even vulgar, and was called "rag time" -two words then (like "barber shop") -because of its disgusting off beat syncopations. In 1901, at the annual meeting of the American Federation of Musicians (the musicians' union), a resolution was unanimously passed forbidding its members from playing it. Ministers used their pulpits to denounce rag time as the music of the devil, corrupting the young people of this country. But the people loved the sound of it and they loved to dance to it, and eventually ragtime became the rage. The invasion of ragtime into popular music began as innocent lyrical references like ". ..hello my rag time gal.", (from "Hello My Baby" (1899). But more and more songwriters were tempted to borrow from its happy rhythms. Then in 1911 a song swept the country that would legitimize and popularize this most wonderful music. That song was " Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Irving Berlin. In 1893 a Jewish family from Russia named Baline arrived amongst the hordes of immigrants, to New York City. Their village had been ransacked by Cossacks. Young Israel Baline, five years old at the time, had a talent for music, and found that he could make money as a singing waiter. To his mother's chagrin, he quit school and ran away from home to pursue his musical interests. He eventually became a song pusher, employed by publishing houses to stand up in the theater and echo the refrain of the song that had just been performed, as if the outbreak were spontaneous. This was Tin Pan Alley's way of advertising their latest songs. Competition was fierce. Soon Baline began composing, and in about 1906 his first published song appeared - "Marie From Sunny Italy", for which he wrote only the lyrics. He took the name Irving Berlin as a pseudonym. Berlin was not schooled in music and could not really play piano. He learned to play on the black keys, in the key of F-sharp, and had a piano constructed with a shifting string

board so that he could play in any key by playing in F-sharp. Irving Berlin was the first to really capitalize on the public's growing acceptance of ragtime music. He wrote " Alexander's Ragtime Band," which isn't really ragtime; it sings more like a march. But it made the word respectable and popular, and from then on he very skillfully integrated its elements into his songs, which had tremendous appeal. He was prolific! He wrote over 800 songs in his career, half of which were considered hits by the publisher. And he gave us barbershoppers some of our most interesting and challenging material, like "When I Lost You" (1912), "When The Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves For Alabam"' (1912), "Somebody's Coming To My House" (1913), When It's Night Time In Dixie Land" (1914), "Mandy" (1919), "All Alone" (1924), "Always" (1925), "Easter Parade" (1933), and "God Bless America" (1939). Many of his great songs of the twenties and after are more sophisticated: "What'll I Do" (1924), "Blue Skies" (1927), "Puttin' On The Ritz" (1928), and "White Christmas" (1942). Irving Berlin died in 1989 at the age of 101.

African-American quartets. We have already pointed out that some of the first male quartets consisted of African- American men. Their contribution to the quartet singing tradition continued into the 2Oth century, although recorded evidence, unfortunately, is rare because of their low status in society. They sang on street comers, as shoe shine boys, and as singing waiters; like most other quartets of the day, they probably woodshedded their arrangements. James Weldon Johnson, the African-American musician/author/historian, in an article entitled "The Origin Of The Barber Chord" in 1925 wrote:

"Pick up four colored boys or young men anywhere and the chances are 90 out of 100 that you have a quartet. Let one of them sing the melody and the others will naturally find the parts. Indeed. it may be said that all male Negro youth of the United States is divided into quartets. ..In the days when such a thing as a white barber was unknown in the South, every barbershop had its quartet, and the men spent their leisure time playing on the guitar. ..and harmonizing."
Here is a recording from 1921 of the Columbia Colored Quartet singing a song part of which resembles "Bill Grogan's Goat." The lead "leads out" and the others echo, a practice established by the Gregorians in the chants we heard in the last lesson. "Sweet Adeline" follows this form. Also note the rhythmic lively chant [28].

Example: "I'm Just Wild About Moonshine," by the Columbia Colored Quartet.

Gospel quartets. In addition many quartets developed solely as gospel quartets, and they sang religious songs in style very close to the barbershop style. When these male quartets sang hymns, the lead sang the soprano in the male range (an octave low) and the tenor sang the alto part. Many of the hymnals were printed in shaped notes, a system in which each note of the scale is printed as a distinctive shape. rather than a round note.

Circuit Chautauquas. In addition to vaudeville, the minstrel show, and the recording studio, there was another American institution which often highlighted quartet singing. This was the Chautauqua -a week long tent show which featured lecturers, humorists, magicians, and musical entertainers. Edgar Bergan (of Charlie McCarthy fame) performed on the circuit chautauqua and William Jennings Bryan gave lectures. The first one was in Marshalltown, Iowa in 1904, and its schedule included a quartet called the Temple Quartet. One of chautauqua's contributions was the forerunner of the modem day emcee. Each town had a "platform manager" whose responsibility

it was to provide continuity between acts, give information about the upcoming speaker or entertainer, and finally say, "Now it is my pleasure to introduce..," By contrast, vaudeville used audience cue cards to introduce the next act.

Glenn Howard and the Oriole Quartette. Glenn was born May 29. 1902, in Decatur and became avidly interested in harmony early at age seventeen when a group of harmonizers called on him to fill in the bass to "Bright Was the Night". Until his death in 1992 Glenn was the only man alive who had attended every SPEBSQSA convention. His first quartet, the Oriole Quartette, sang through the decade of the 1920's. These avid songsters attended every event in the vicinity at which a professional quartet appeared. Minstrel shows were still in existence into the 1930's and they nearly always had a quartet. Glenn recalled the interlocutor joking with the end men and the quartet men being a part of the chorus when they weren't singing as a quartet. Vaudeville shows, by then accompanied by movies, would usually feature a quartet. Glenn and his companions would sit through two or three showings to hear the quartet repeat their performance, trying to memorize the lyrics and the harmony for their own quartet to sing. These impressionable young men were also highly influenced by the studio quartets, whom they heard on 78 rpm records and on the radio. These quartets were held in high esteem, and to Glenn the Peerless quartet was the greatest. We should recognize that Glenn and his fellow harmonizers were carrying on a national tradition that was already beginning to die out. The Oriole Quartette quartet sang the popular songs of the day, working out their arrangements by ear. According to Glenn they got great pleasure out of developing their own harmonizations of the songs they learned.

"Straight", "close," and "barbershop". Glenn Howard stated that he considered the harmony sung by the studio quartets to be mostly "straight" harmony, as opposed to "close" harmony. The distinction seems to be that "close" harmony makes more attempt to avoid the major triad (root doubled on the octave), replacing it where possible with a dominant seventh chord. It is of interest that before the formation of SPEBSQSA in 1938 the Oriole Quartette and other Illinois quartets did not call themselves "barbershop" quartets. He used the term "close harmony." This indicates that the adjective "barbershop" was by no means universal to quartet men -and probably indicates that the vaudeville, minstrel, and studio quartets were not typically billed as "barbershop quartets".

Harmony men. It is hard for us to appreciate how avidly these early lovers of harmony pursued their craft. They eagerly latched on to any new moves they hadn't heard before, like a new "swipe" or a different voicing. They had the ear to pick up, memorize, and teach a quartet any and all new tricks of the trade. This art of hearing, remembering, and teaching harmony was a coveted ability, and those who possessed it were called "harmony men." It seems to have been a sort of folk art in this age. It was necessary for a good quartet to have such a person, for their arrangements were not written down and learning was by ear.

New York City's Park Contests. Somewhere around 1923 the city of New York under Park Commissioner Robert Moses began sponsoring barbershop quartet contests. These were held in Central Park and at Coney Island and frequently featured other entertainers, like W. C. Handy. Judges were local officials, often including Robert Moses and the Mayor. This tradition

continued until the 1960s. It is likely that the Society's contest format was a continuation of this tradition.

"Coney Island Baby" is written. In 1924 one of our most beloved songs came in to existence. A "barbershopper" and professional musician named Les Applegale wrote "Coney Island Baby" to be performed in Muncie, Indiana by a quartet in a production of "No, No, Nanette". It was not copyrighted, and incorporated an obscure song called "We All Fall" as a medley. There is some evidence to suggest that it existed previously as a traditional quartet song. Remarkably, the amalgamation became popularly associated with barbershop quartets, but was not written down.

Geoffrey O'Hara writes "The Old Songs. In another development, Geoffrey O'Hara, a fairly well known songwriter (He had written "K-k-k-Katy" (1918).) had composed in 1921 a medley of songs, arranged for quartet called "A Little Close Harmony " (Note the use of the word "close" instead of "barbershop"). Two things about this composition have historical significance for barbershoppers: (1) Its introduction is "The Old Songs", our current theme song: and (2) On the front page is a footnote which uses the word "swipe" to refer to a chord change achieved when quartet singers each move to a different note while sustaining the same syllable. It is the first known use of this word in this context. After the formation of in SPEBSQSA Geoffrey O'Hara became an active member.

Sigmund Spaeth. Another person who was later to be influential in the Society was Sigmund Spaeth, who was a nationally known musician, columnist, and historian. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton, and wrote some twenty-three books on the history of popular music in America. He was nick-named "the tune detective." Spaeth was very interested in barbershop harmony, and wrote several books on the subject. Spaeth used the term "barber shop" in his writings. In 1925 he wrote a book called "Barber Shop Ballads" which explains and demonstrates how close harmony should be sung, and provides four part arrangements of many old songs. The book is written as a learner's manual for quartets. On the second page Spaeth formalizes the use of the terms "tenor", "lead", baritone", and "bass" as replacements for "first tenor," "second tenor," "first bass," and " second bass." Spaeth also makes mention of barbershop quartet contests, confirming their existence at this early date. Spaeth later would serve on the Society's National Board of Directors from 1939 to 1941, was an officer in the Manhattan Chapter in its early days, and wrote a regular column, "The Old Songsters," in the Harmonizer from 1945 to 1955.

Change in rhythms and harmonies. By the early 1920's the influence of ragtime on popular music had reached a culmination and its quality reached a peak. Tunes now had somewhat more sophisticated rhythms, in contrast to the ballads of the turn of the century, which now seemed maudlin. Their melodies still (generally) implied conventional harmonies conducive to ear singing, but they utilized much greater variety. The liveliness of these songs reflected the craziness of the times in which they were written. This decade gave us the best of the great uptunes: "Ma, He's Makin Eyes At Me" (1921), "Somebody Stole My Gal" (1922), "Toot Toot Tootsie, Goodbye" (1922), "Charleston" (1923). "California. Here I Come" (1924), "Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue" (1925) -a textbook example of the "circle of fifths". "If You Knew Susie - Like I Know Susie" (1925), "Sweet Georgia Brown" (1925), "Yes Sir. That's My Baby" (1925) "Baby Face" (1926). It gave us rich ballads with interesting harmonic turns: "My Mammy" (1920). "That Old Gang Of Mine" (1923) "My Buddy" (1922). "Sonny Boy" (1928), "Wedding

Bells Are Breaking Up That Old Gang Of Mine" (1929). Many of these songs were popularized by the famous AI Jolson, who had come up through vaudeville. As the 20's progressed, some of the songs that appeared began to introduce harmonies that make ear harmonization difficult to impossible. These songs were built more around the minor seventh chord, the major sixth chord, and the major seventh chord than the dominant seventh characteristic of the previous style, and so all-important to the ear singer. One of the first such examples is the song " After You've Gone." from 1918, which utilizes the major seventh chord. Ragtime gave way to jazz and eventually to the big band sound. George Gershwin. an American genius whose popular songwriting career was launched in 1919 with the classic "Swanee." was one of the composers whose music helped to turn the tide toward the new, much more sophisticated harmonies. as well as rhythms more associated with the jazz and "swing" era of the 30's and 40's. Songs that exemplify his techniques are: "Someone To Watch Over Me" (1926), in which diminished and minor seventh chords predominate, "Fascinating Rhythm" (1924), which is an exhibition of jazz rhythmic devices, "It Aint Necessarily So" (1935), which makes extensive use of the quarter note triplet.

Change in vocal style. Simultaneously with these new harmonies and rhythms came the advent of fancy crooning. By 1926, the microphone was being used for recording. This gave greatly improved quality and helped effect the change in singing style, for it enabled the smooth, crooning voices to be recorded with good fidelity. By comparison to this music male quartets sounded rough cut and old-timey. Old style recording artists like Henry Burr and Billy Murray had bright, edgy voices necessary for recording with the horn, but as new technology like the microphone brought in better fidelity, their recorded voices sounded harsh and unpleasant. They became passé. The nation was turning to this more sophisticated music, epitomized by the smooth singing style of vocalists like Bing Crosby and groups like the Mills Brothers. The Mills Brothers' father, John, had been a quartet man. In the early part of their career the Mills Brothers were a quartet with John singing bass. In these recordings the group's quartet roots are quite apparent.

Examples: Mills Brothers singing "My Gal Sal"

Other smooth singing groups were formed, which besides singing their own songs, served as studio back up groups. Often the personnel of these groups consisted of former quartet men.

Demise of spontaneous singing. Up until this time America had been a nation of musical participants. Live music flourished. Most parlors or living rooms had a piano which mother could play, and most parents encouraged spontaneous family music-making. Many barbershops had a guitar or mandolin. We gradually became a nation of musical spectators rather than participants. Vaudeville was fatally diminished by its own motion pictures which began to have sound in 1929. The live entertainment it furnished was no match for the colorful production that was displayed on the screen. As vaudeville was dying it turned to burlesque in an unsuccessful last ditch effort to sustain itself (The movie "Gypsie" about the famous stripper Gypsie Rose Lee is set in the context of vaudeville's last gasp for survival). In accordance with the national trend, live music making at the amateur level dwindled. And, of course, so did the quartets so that by 1938 the thousands of male quartets had been reduced to a few hundred with some struggling professional groups remaining as vaudeville and radio quartets.

Maple City Four. It should be pointed out that although the professional quartet waned in the 30's, it didn't disappear completely. A few quartets continued to sing. and were probably viewed by the public largely as relics from the not too distant past, like we view the Beatles today. One such quartet was the Maple City Four from La Porte, Indiana, who sang on the Chicago radio station WLS, and appeared as singing cowboys in some Gene Autry and Roy Rodgers movies.

Example: Maple City Four.

Illinois Harmony Club. In about 1934 vaudevillian John Hanson put on a minstrel show and asked his singing buddies from the towns near Peoria to join in. After that show they decided to continue singing together and formed the "Peoria Klose Harmony Klub" which, he reports, met in various locations and became a chapter of 54 members when the Society was formed. Glenn Howard also reports sending out invitations to a meeting in Springfield at which was organized the "Illinois Harmony Club". It seems these were two separate organizations, indicating that interest in quartet singing in Illinois was on the upswing in the 1930's. Meetings were held monthly in Canton, Decatur, Peoria, and Springfield. At one time they met in a brewery, which offered them a free place to meet, as well as free drinks. The meetings consisted of several quartets singing, woodshedding, and mass singing. An effort was made to involve everyone in these activities. Guests who were known to be good singers and capable of holding their part were sure to be involved in some quartetting so they would experience the pleasure of ringing a chord and get "hooked." At the latter club's second annual meeting a busload of men from Chicago attended, and three of them, Cy Perkins, Art Bielan, and Joe Murrin first met Pete Buckley. These four men started a quartet called the Misfits, and became our seventh International Champions in 1945. This thriving community of harmony would later produce four of our early quartet champions. Also present at this meeting: a man named Maurice ("Molly") Reagan, from Canton, Illinois.

New York City Harmony Club. An early organization is known to have existed in New York City consisting of former vaudevillians. It was organized in 1933 as a social club and only later, in the late '30's, did it become a singing club which featured quartet singing. They sang "club harmony." a term that carried over in New York City even into early Society days. In the early days of the society this organization was chartered as a chapter and was called New York City Chapter #1. It is not known how many harmony organizations existed around the country prior to 1938, but it is likely that there were several.

Preservation. In these days it seems that interest in reviving the American tradition of harmonizing was brewing within the souls of men in 1938. Nobody knew it, but around the country a movement was growing in various places concurrently and independently. These were troubled times for America. The nation was still in the midst of the Great Depression. War was brewing in Europe. It's hard to say exactly why at this time there was such a longing for something as square as old fashioned harmonizing. Perhaps it provided an escape from the depressing news of the day. Perhaps people missed what used to be a part of their lives, a form of entertainment in which they could participate, and not just listen and watch. And just maybe the new slick sounding music of the entertainment industry was already beginning to sound clichéd and boring. Whatever the reason, the time was right for a dramatic sequence of events that would

bring together the Illinoisans and the New Yorkers, and men from all around this nation who loved quartet harmony. The time was right for an explosion, and in 1938 something happened that lit the fuse.

Chance meeting, 1938. Sometime in the early part of 1938 two men from Tulsa chanced to meet in the lobby of the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City. The two men, Owen C. Cash and Rupert Hall, knew each other, but were not close friends. Cash was a lawyer; Hall a businessman. Cash was returning to Tulsa from a business trip to Denver; Hall was flying to Pittsburgh. Both their flights were delayed because of bad weather. So there they were. Cash, who loved to woodshed, asked Hall if he could sing tenor. Hall replied he was the best in the United States. Cash suggested they go to the lounge and do a little harmonizing. They did, and Cash found that Hall was quite good, after testing him out on "You Tell Me Your Dream." After a while they returned to the lobby and found two more men who could sing, then went up to Hall's room to continue in four parts.

Owen C. Cash. Owen Clifton Cash, born 1892, was a man who had been profoundly influenced by the musical customs of the early 1900's, the tradition of singing popular music with woodshedded harmony. He was the son of a Baptist minister, who moved the family westward by wagon from northern Missouri (where Cash was born) to the town of Keytesville in Cherokee Indian Territory , later to become part of Oklahoma. They lived in a log cabin rented from an old Cherokee Indian. They subsequently lived in Vinita and Blue Jacket where Cash played in a band and began to learn about harmony. He graduated from Bacone College, Bacone, Oklahoma, and was admitted to the Bar in that state in 1916. He joined the army, but did not go overseas in World War I. After that he went to work for a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, and in 1930 became tax commissioner of Stanolind, a pipe line subsidiary. As a tax attorney, he fared well, and was a rather wealthy man. A most outgoing man, he was active in the Presbyterian Church and various civic organizations. Cash had a flare for humor and for public relations which was to well serve the cause of barbershop harmony.

Rupert Hall. Hall was born in 1902 (same year as Glenn Howard) in Hammond, Indiana, but he was raised in Iowa, in a small town near Council Bluffs. There the barbershop was considered a "men's club" of sorts. It was the place where the baseball team dressed to play their games. Men who gathered there would frequently harmonize, and one particular barber impressed the young Hall with his beautiful Irish tenor. He learned to play the violin, and when he was in law school at Creighton University in Omaha, he had an orchestra.

Plans for a local singing club in Tulsa. On the occasion of their encounter at the Muehlebach, Cash had expressed to Hall his idea of organizing a local singing club and Hall promised to call Cash, once they were home, to get things started. They agreed to call it "The Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States," whose initials, S.P.P.B.S.Q.S.U.S., were intended to surpass those of any of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal agencies. Back in Tulsa, they pursued their plans. Hall arranged for a first meeting at the Tulsa Club, and Cash drafted an invitation, dated (Wednesday) April 6, 1938, part of which read (see the first page of the handout):

"In this age of Dictators and Government control of everything, about the only privilege guaranteed by the Bill Of Rights, not in some way supervised or directed, is the art of Barber Shop Quartet singing. Without doubt we still have the right of 'peaceable assembly' which, I am advised by a competent legal authority, includes quartet singing. The writers have for a long time thought that something should be done to encourage the enjoyment of this last vestige of human liberty. Therefore, we have decided to hold a songfest on the Roof Garden of the Tulsa Club on Monday, April 11, at six-thirty p.m."

It was signed by Rupert Hall "Royal Keeper of the Minor Keys" and 0. C. Cash -"Third Assistant Temporary Vice Chairman" of "The Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States." They could think of only fourteen names, but they stated that guests were welcome and that food would be served. After the invitations were sent out both men immediately began receiving phone calls.

The first meeting. April 11, 1938, was a warm spring day in Tulsa. Rupert Hall had arrived early and was arranging for the food to be served. Cash and two others had arrived and were standing around when a man named "Puny" Blevens, well over six feet tall, came in and asked "What are we waiting for?" The four of them sang "Down Mobile." with Blevins singing lead and Cash singing baritone. It was the first song sung under Society auspices. Twenty-five men showed up (Cash recalled in 1948). (Mo Rector quips that over the years he's met over 500 men who were amongst those original 25.) After an hour or so of singing the suggestion to form a permanent club was made. When someone asked "When do we meet?", another enthusiast yelled "Tomorrow night!" Deac Martin's history indicates that they met a week later. However it has been discovered that the Tulsa Sunday Tribune reported on May 2 (not April 17 as Martin indicates) that the club had met and organized. The headline read: "Barber Shop Harmony a Thing of the Past?" The article seems to indicate that the second meeting was to be that evening (May 2), three weeks after the first. At this point it never occurred to Cash that anyone outside of Tulsa would be interested in joining the movement.

Repercussions. A later meeting was attended by about 150 men. Cash recalled. It was held on the second floor of the Alvin Hotel. and as the sound of gang singing, directed by "Puny" Blevens, floated out the open windows on a warm evening, a traffic jam was clogging the street below. Presently a reporter from the Tulsa World came in and said he had seen the jam asked the police about the "wreck." The police had replied' "That's no wreck. It's just some damn fools up there singing!" The reporter then wrote a story on the incident, which appeared the next Wednesday, June I. The headlines read: "No, No Folks--You're Wrong! That Was Musical History in the Making". It was such a humorous incident that the wire services picked it up and relayed it to newspapers around the country .The publicity arising from this article may have been the most important single event in the history of the Society.

Other Early Chapters. On June 18 forty members of the Tulsa group drove to Kansas City to help the fledgling chapter organize. And at the meeting described above, scene of the celebrated traffic jam incident, Cash, upon being asked by the World reporter if other chapters were being formed, said that his friend Everett Baker (Baker was Vice President of the Frisco Railroad in St. Louis.) of St. Louis was organizing a chapter there. That wasn't so: Baker's name came to Cash's mind only because they had busted chords together on occasion. But on June 2 the St. Louis Post

Dispatch reported that E. G. Baker was organizing a St. Louis chapter. Baker immediately began receiving phone calls, and agreed to set up the first meeting. Another early chapter was started in Oklahoma City. It is not clear which of these was the second chapter established.

Publicity. The new movement's rapid growth was abetted by the fact that the press around the nation seemed to enjoy reporting it. Headlines read: "Quartets Gargle Tonight" -"Harmonists to Wail" -"Harmonizers Plan Tulsa Reprisals" - "Gag Operation May Spread" -"In Tones Nasal" - "Bawl Game." These were seen in almost every city where a group had been organized. Moreover, national radio shows gave air time to the bandwagon, and a write-up even appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. Bing Crosby was invited to attend the first meeting in Kansas City; he wired his regrets but dedicated a song on the radio. The song was called "My Mother's Lullaby." 0. C. Cash, with his natural bent for publicity, helped the cause along. His statement that neither he, nor anyone else, knew the verse to "Sweet Adeline" was widely publicized. He petitioned WPA for $9,999,999.99 to conduct a survey to determine the vocal range of American males, stating that Alf Landon, James E. Parley (PDR's Postmaster General), Al Smith, and Herbert Hoover would be invited to sing as a quartet, and that the Duke of Windsor and the Archbishop of Canterbury could sing "Dear Old Girl" as a duet. (This referred to the recent controversy between Church and State in England when King Edward VII abdicated the throne in order to marry.) Cash's WPA request was carefully considered and turned down because "the movement is for public interest and the public should support it directly ". Of course, the press had a field day.

Disorganization. For the men from Tulsa, the rest of 1938 was spent in a whirlwind. "Organization" of a chapter, at the time, simply meant that one of the men from Tulsa (usually Cash or Hall) had visited and granted a "charter", a procedure which implied no further formal link. After that the local group was on its own. By late 1938 there were about eight cities around the country with well-organized chapters, but others were floundering for lack of a strong mother organization whose auspices could provide reinforcement. The hubbub and publicity had caught the pioneers totally by surprise, and the rapid growth of the rag-tag Society was creating other situations which were hard to deal with. They received a nine- page questionnaire from the U.S. Department of Commerce to determine its status, in case pending legislation licensing all corporations doing interstate business was passed. At the time there were no headquarters, no officers, no formal membership, no finance- no organization whatsoever. Confusion reigned, and there was pressure from all flanks to hold a barbershop convention -to show off the organization perhaps- but more importantly at the time, to organize the organization.

Convention and quartet contest is planned. And so it was planned for Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3. 1939. Cash's personality and humor are well reflected in the wording of this invitation entitled "Why You Should Come To Tulsa":

In the first place, you need a vacation and some relaxation. You haven't been looking so well lately.

Now, you have attended conventions before. What did you get? Listened to a mess of speeches, reports of committees and heard meaningless resolutions read; then reach your room exhausted and tried to organize a quartet.

And what a failure that always is! The only thing about a 'pick-up' convention quartet that ever 'organized' is the singers. The purpose of our Society is to organize the harmony.

Have you ever participated with 2,000 men, 500 tenors, leads, baritones and basses, in 'busting' 'I Want A Girl' wide open? No! Then you have a thrill coming. There will be few speeches, if any, at Tulsa, June 2 and 3 -just harmony- harmony until the tenors drop in their tracks.

So get three or four of you 'cronies' together -rig up this trip -come by plane, train or covered wagon- but come. Be extremely nice to the 'little woman' from now until June but if she doesn't soften up, do as I do. Just give her a good stiff punch in the jaw and come on anyway.

When you get to Tulsa I want to show you the baritone to 'Mandy Lee.' I am the only baritone in the United States who can do it correctly.

Now if you 'mugs' don't come to this party, the next time I see you. I am going to kick your britches right up between your ears.

Affectionately. 0. C. Cash

Cash wanted the major event to be a quartet contest to pick the "World's Champion Barber Shop Quartet." The invitation was sent to all the barbershoppers they knew, and a press released went out by wire.

1939 Convention, Tulsa. And so an institution was born, the barbershop convention. And the very first one seemed to have had all the zaniness of today's conventions. Nearly fifty quartets competed. Far away in Canton, Illinois, a quartet called the Capitol City Four (with baritone Glenn Howard) had heard about the convention and made the trip to Tulsa not intending to compete. As the Capitol City Four entered the hotel lobby they were overwhelmed by the singing of the Flat Foot Four of Oklahoma City, whose baritone was the chief of police. Then they met Cash, who listened to them sing and told them they not only that they were in the contest, but that they would win! It turns out they almost did- they placed second. There was a business meeting at 11:00 a.m. Friday. It seems to have been an open meeting. Cash presided. Rupert Hall got up and went to the men's room and when he returned, he learned he had been elected the society's first president. Cash kept his title of Permanent Third Assistant Temporary Vice Chairman, an office he held with pride until his death. Vice Presidents in charge of regional development included Doc Nelson and a fellow from Cleveland named C. T. Martin, better known as "Deac", and an "Advisory Board" of big wigs was selected, including New York's Sigmund Spaeth, who had corresponded with the Tulsans about the movement, Bing Crosby, and St. Louis Cardinals owner Sam Breadon. No intricate contest rules or qualified SPEBSQSA judges awaited the contestants at our first contest. The judging panel consisted of a couple of local educators. a doctor from Pittsburgh. Oklahoma's State Legion Commander, and the Lieutenant Governor of the state of Oklahoma. After hearing all the quartets the judges asked for a sing-off between the Bartlesville Barflies, of Bartlesville. Oklahoma, and Glenn Howard's Capitol City Four, of Springfield, Illinois. Upon hearing them a second time, the Barflies were

selected as our first Champions "by a sixty-fourth note". The song they used was "Far Away In The South." according to Tom Masengale.

Example: Excerpt of the Bartlesville Barflies (George McCaslin (tenor), Harry Hall (lead), Bob Durand (baritone), Hennan Kaiser (bass) singing "By The Light Of The Silvery Moon".

Notice that they are not always successful in avoiding doublings. and the woodshed nature of the arrangement manifests itself in some awkward sounding harmonies. We must be kind, however, in evaluating these first champions. They were pioneers. The seventh chord ending actually leads into another song in the medley. (It was fairly common, however, for early-Society quartets to end songs on seventh chords.) The grand prize was fifty dollars.

More repercussions. The contest in Tulsa added more impetus to an already exploding movement. It was widely publicized, and about 100 outsiders who had attended the event returned to their respective home towns as revivalists. Hall recalls they were again swamped with inquiries. Cash and Hall made promotional trips at their own expense; Hall went east, Cash went west. In January of 1940 the National Board met in St. Louis at the Mayfair Hotel, setting the precedent for what we now call the "mid-winter meeting." However it wasn't much of a business meeting, but more of an excuse to "give the boys a chance to sing," in Cash's words. Among other quartets, the champion Bartlesville Barflies were there to entertain the Board members.

Phil Embury. He grew up in Warsaw, New York, loving quartet harmony, and began singing as a youth on a street corner. He heard quartets on local shows and was enthralled. He listened to quartets singing on the radio, and in the late thirties he was listening to a radio show called "Sweet Adeline," where a quartet was singing songs from Ed Smalle's book of barbershop arrangements. The quartet was demonstrating barbershop harmony by having one man sing up close to the microphone with the others singing in the background. The MC of the show mentioned 0. C. Cash and the newly formed Society. Embury wrote to Cash, got a response and a membership card, missed the 1939 convention in Tulsa, but in the spring of '41 Phil was in Kansas City on business so he made a special trip to Tulsa just to meet Cash. He spent the weekend with Cash and the Oakie Four, Cash's quartet, and was in heaven. He determined that he would not miss the New York convention.

1940 Convention, New York City. Symbolizing the new society's growth and recognition, the second convention was held at the World's Fair in New York City in the open air of Central Park. Actually, there was no chapter in the city to sponsor the event, but quartet contests in the park were commonplace, sponsored by the Park Department. Therefore the local politicians like Mayor Laguardia and former Governor and presidential candidate Al Smith were used to the idea and helped to organize the event. Sigmund Spaeth was also involved. The whole event turned out to be an incredible public relations event for the Society. Everyone in New York City must have known that the barbershop quartets were in town. Quartets appeared around the city in colorful costumes. Groups from the Southwest paraded around in cowboy apparel to the delight of the city folks. The Flat Foot Four and their friends, the New York Police Quartet, took over traffic duties while harmonizing at the corner of 44th and Broadway, near Times Square. It was a stunning success, with over 10,000 turning out nightly to the events. Sixty quartets participated.

Sigmund Spaeth was a master of ceremonies and judges included Al Smith, Geoffrey O'Hara, and Edward Smalle, who in 1936 had written a book of twenty "Close Harmony Favorites" (this was the one we spoke of earlier in connection with Phil Embury). The rules stated that "instrumental accompaniment is permitted." It seems to have been traditional for quartets to use instruments for at least some of their repertoire. But Glenn Howard did not recall instruments ever being used in contest. The new "National Champion" was the Rat Foot Four , from Oklahoma City, with last year's champion Bartlesville Barflies finishing second, only one point behind.

"Deac" Martin. At the New York convention Claude T. ("Deac") Martin from Cleveland was elected to the Board. Deac Martin was one of the most influential leaders of the Society through the 1940's. He was born in Atlantic, Iowa, in 1890 but grew up in Missouri. In 1905 he first sang harmony in a barber shop and became a lifetime enthusiast. Deac went into advertising and merchandising and lived in various cities in the East and Midwest, but finally settled in Cleveland in 1935. where he set up his own business. His infatuation with quartet harmony led him to author the pre-Society treatise Handbook For Adeline Addicts, privately published in 1932. It listed songs which could be harmonized. Deac learned of the new Society in 1938 and was introduced. through the mail, by a mutual friend, to Cash. He immediately became involved, serving on the board, becoming our first Society historian (1941-3), and editing the Harmonizer. His 1948 book, Keep America Singing, a history of the Society's first ten years, is one of our main sources for this era. In his later years he wrote the magnum opus, Deac Martin's Book Of Musical Americana, published in 1970 a few months before his death.

Embury writes out "Bright Was The Night. " Also at the New York convention, young Phil Embury was elected to the Board. Sometime that week Phil happened to hear a quartet singing "Bright Was The Night." (Glenn Howard had introduced the Society to this song.) Phil, who possessed excellent musical skills, rode in a cab with the quartet to one of the contest rounds so that he could have them sing it while he wrote out the notes. This is how the song came to us. Here is O.C. Cash's quartet, the Okie Four, singing it.

Example: The Okie Four singing "Bright Was The Night."

Early roots of methodical judging. It was inevitable as the stakes became high and with so much preparation and travel going into the contests, there was concern for and criticism of the quality and consistency of their adjudication. In May of 1941, Joe Stern, president of the Kansas City Chapter, wrote a letter to the Board proposing eleven points to be used as guidelines for judging contests. These included characterization of the barbershop style as unaccompanied, four part, close harmony, with an emphasis on blend. This was the "first stab" at defining, in quasi-technical terms, the notion of barbershop harmony.

The Red Caps incident and the exclusion of African Americans. Many organizations practiced discrimination in those days, and so did the newly formed SPEBSQSA, for 25 years. At the 1941 convention in St. Louis, Cash's secretary presented him with a telegram from Mayor Laguardia of New York, who was asking to send an African- American quartet to the contest. Cash told her in no uncertain terms to wire back his refusal. This quartet was the Grand Central Red Caps, the winner of the annual contest sponsored by New York City's Park Department.

This incident triggered a wave of publicity and protest and prompted the resignation from the Society of AI Smith, former governor of New York and presidential candidate, and Robert Moses, NYC park commissioner. The policy of discrimination was not reversed by SPEBSQSA until 1963. This exclusion was unfortunate and most ironic, since African-Americans laid much of the musical groundwork for our style, and gave the world perhaps the first barbers' quartet.

1941 Convention, St. Louis. This was the first contest to resemble our modern conventions in certain ways. The first one had been a curiosity, the second one a public relations event. A large St. Louis delegation had attended New York. Norm Rathert had been elected our second President, and St. Louis had been chosen the site of the 1941 convention. As the Board had sat in a sweltering hotel room in New York, Rathert had promised to have all events hosted in air-conditioned comfort in St. Louis. It was a success in a sense -barbershoppers came from across the country, making this the first truly national contest. The finals took place in what is now Kiel Opera House. This was the first contest to be judged by an all society panel, with Phil Embury serving as Chairman of Judges. The others were Doc Nelson, Joe Wodicka, Molly Reagan, Hal Staab, and Joe Stern. Stern's letter had been widely discussed, and St. Louis contest scoresheets gave a breakdown of "50% Barbershop Harmony and Blending: 25% Song Selection and Originality: 25% Stage Presentation," which included costuming and showmanship. Each judge evaluated all of these aspects. The new champs were the Chord Busters from Oklahoma city, the third consecutive quartet champion from Oklahoma.

Example: Excerpt of the Chord Busters (Dr. N. T. Enmeier (tenor), Bob Holbrooke (lead), Bob Greer (baritone), Tom Masengale (bass)) singing "Bye Bye Blues."

Note (1) the use of the ever popular bell chord, and (2) the penultimate chord, a sixth chord.

“ Molly " Reagan was a man elected to the Board in St. Louis to whom we owe more the any other person for our modem day contest and judging system. He was Maurice Reagan, originally from Canton, Illinois. He grew up singing in quartets, and sang as a youth with Pete Buckley (bass of the Misfits) in the Stair Step Four, which began around 1912. He played mandolin and guitar while attending the University of Illinois. An electrical engineer, he worked for Westinghouse in Pittsburgh, and was assigned to the Hoover Dam project. Reagan had a fantastic ear and an analytical mind, and he developed what he called the "clock" system for naming chords. The chords are identified in relation to the tonic chord by the positions on a clock, with roots of adjacent chords being apart by the interval of a fourth. The tonic chord is at twelve o'clock. The system, according to Reagan, was developed as a language for the music whizzes of the day: Reagan, Embury, Frank Thorne, and a few others. Reagan was the Chairman of the Contest and Judging Committee in the forties.

The third mid-winter board meeting. In January, 1942, the Board met at the Hotel Morrison in Chicago. Among the decisions made: Geoffrey O'Hara's "The Old Songs" was made the Society's theme song, and members were urged to refrain from referring to the Society by attempting to pronounce the acronym SPEBSQSA.

Tradition of Champs not competing. In those days, past champions were not barred from competing by any Society rule. In fact, the Bartlesville Barflies (later called the Phillips 66

Barflies) had competed in every contest since their victory in 1939 and again competed in 1942. President Carroll Adams had urged the reigning champion Chord Busters to compete again in Grand Rapids. The Chord Busters declined this invitation, but said they would come to the convention to be recognized and to "sing up a storm" in the lobbies. This started a tradition which eventually became official policy.

Sigmund Spaeth's folios. Sigmund Spaeth collected arrangements from Embury, Reagan, and Frank Thorne, and others, made a few of his own, and edited folios of barbershop songs. The first was called "Barber Shop Harmony ", and contained, among others, "Bright Was The Night," "Dinah," " Aura Lee," and "The Lost Chord." These were not official Society publications, but were put together by Spaeth with the Society's blessings.

"International" Society. In 1944 we became an international organization with the chartering of Canada's first chapter. It was in Windsor, Ontario, right across the water from Detroit.

Judges judge only one category; new weightings. At the '44 contest a new system was used, which is the forerunner of the modem system. For the first time each judge scored only one category. There were eight judges, two per category. Each of the categories-- Harmony Accuracy, Voice Expression, and Song and Voice Arrangement were allotted 300 points per judge. Stage Presence was allotted 100 points per judge. This reflected a relative weighting of 10% for Stage Presence and 30% each for the other three categories.

Districts begin to develop; preliminary contests. Slowly, several states, following the lead of Michigan, were developing state organizations and regional qualifying contests. This would eventually lead to the formation of districts. By 1948 there were thirteen districts. 1945 was the first year in which preliminary contests, then called regionals, were held. There were four around the country, all judged by the same panel. The twelve highest-scoring quartets, irrespective of which regional they had entered, then advanced to the finals.

Time limits established. For 1945 contests, there was a new rule made which would not be altered until 1986. It stated "a quartet shall not sing less than four minutes nor more than six minutes." Penalties for time discretions were given by a table at the time: later it was changed to two points per second per judge (over or under).

Sweet Adelines is formed. Interest in barbershop harmony spread among women in this era. Many wives and daughters of Society members learned the craft and yearned for an organization to promote their singing. In 1945 Bill and Edna Mae Anderson had returned to Tulsa from the Detroit convention, and Edna Mae, excited about the prospect of a women's organization, contacted other barbershoppers wives and also O. C. Cash. Everyone was enthusiastic, and Cash was supportive, although he joked "It is a shame this thing had to come up just when we were getting along so peacefully." A meeting was set up at her home in Tulsa on Friday, July l3th, and there it was decided to have a kick-off meeting on July 23 at the Hotel Tulsa, where the second meeting of the Society had taken place back in 1938. Over 150 women attended and 41 became charter members of what was seen as the SPEBSQSA's auxiliary, referred to (fondly but chauvinistically) by Cash as the "SPEBSQSA Corseteers" and the "Bustle Auxiliary." On August

5, 1945, the first meeting of the Sweet Adelines took place. This organization is today the largest women's singing organization in existence.

Manhattan Chapter charters. A Manhattan chapter chartered with 191 members, a record. Geoffrey O'Hara was its first president and charter members included O'Hara, Sigmund Spaeth, and Harry Armstrong--author of "Sweet Adeline." Robert Moses actually sang and participated, and so occasionally did Mayor Laguardia and (allegedly) Irving Berlin. (Moses and Laguardia had instituted the New York City Park contests in about 1923.) The chorus performed at the Park quartet contests, sponsored by the city of New York. This chapter was a large and powerful chapter in the early years, having as many as 300 members in the early '50's. At one time there was even concern that Manhattan might break away from the Society; this never materialized.

Louisville Chapter charters; Lubbock meets every week. In 1946 the Louisville chapter chartered with 33 members, but six months later it had 158 members with a chorus of 60 and nine quartets. This chapter, years later, would give us one of our greatest choruses and several top quartets. A new chapter in Lubbock, Texas was so enthusiastic they decided to meet every week instead of the usual every other week or semi-monthly practice.

John Hanson's Corn Belt Chorus. Chapters throughout the Society were now common and the chapter show, or parade, was a familiar and sometimes spectacular event. One of the more successful was the annual show put on every year by the Central Illinois' huge Corn Belt Chorus, directed by John Hanson. Hanson was a former vaudevillian who sang in a quartet with Jim Jordan, who became the famous radio personality Fibber McGee It consisted of members from several chapters who learned music separately (often Hanson's arrangements -he was a skillful arranger), then came together for the show. A picture of the group, 325 strong, appeared in the Peoria Star on May 6, 1946, with an accompanying article about the annual show. John's leadership was the inspiration for a young man from Peoria in the chorus named Floyd Connett.

The Chicago #1 Chapter. This was undoubtedly the greatest hotbed of barbershop in the early days, probably a result of the years of pre-Society barbershop activity. Meetings were held every other week on Friday night, where all of the great Chicago early quartets would frequently be there. The Chordettes were also frequent visitors. The chapter had about 350 members and the meetings have been described as a mob scene. The chapter fielded a chorus of exactly 100 voices, directed by Frank Thorne, and there was a waiting list to get in it. If a singer missed two rehearsals he was replaced. Meetings were attended by 200 or more men. The first hour was a chorus rehearsal, followed by a business meeting and another half-hour or so of mass singing. At 10 o'clock the quartet entertainment began and lasted for hours. Several of the 1940's quartet champions were from the Chicago area.

"Keep America Singing. " Phil Embury, who was chairman of the Song Arrangements Committee, sent out a call for an original song on the theme "Keep America Singing." Two responses were received. one composed and arranged by Frank Thorne and one by Bill Diekema of Holland, Michigan, an International Board member and respected arranger. Embury gave the Thorne composition priority because of his great respect for Thorne. but it was the Diekema composition which caught on. It was performed at the 1947 convention from the grand staircase in the lobby of the Schroeder Hotel by the Milwaukee chapter chorus, and was a tremendous hit.

In the August, 1947 issue of the Harmonizer appeared the song "Keep America Singing", by Bill Diekema. It is now our Society's theme song with the lyric change, "Keep the Whole World Singing" (an alteration of which Diekema did not approve).

Growth of Society. In its tenth year (1948) there were 480 chapters in 40 states, Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam.

First (?) chorus directing class. At the '49 convention, Frank Thorne had conducted a clinic for chorus directors. His faculty included Peoria's John Hanson.

Buffalo Bills. The winners of the 1950 contest in Omaha were to become a nationally known legend in quartet history. They were the Buffalo Bills from Buffalo, New York. They were coached by Phil Embury, who also wrote many of their arrangements. Their sound was considered by many to be the best ever, at the time. It combined the rich, full voice sound of the old quartet style with the tuned ringing quality of the quartets that would follow-- a sort of bridge between the old and the new.

Example: Excerpt of the Buffalo Bills (Vern Reed (tenor), Al Shea (lead). Dick Grapes (baritone), Bill Spangenberg (bass) singing "Goodbye Old Dixie, Goodbye-Floatin' Down To Cotton Town."

As champions, they became probably the most active quartet the Society had seen up to that time, traveling to performances at chapter shows across the country.

The Buffalo Bills Sing In "The Music Man." In 1957, the Buffalo Bills, and the whole world of barbershopping got a lucky break. Meredith Wilson, who had a radio show in California, had written a musical about his hometown of Mason City, Iowa, and had incorporated a barbershop quartet into the script patterned after a quartet from his boyhood called the Rusty Hinges. When he heard one of the Buffalo Bills' record albums he knew this was what he wanted. Wilson contacted them and suggested they come to New York and interview for his new musical, "The Music Man." They did, and got the part. Baritone Dick Grapes felt he couldn't leave his job in Buffalo, so they found a replacement. "Scotty" Ward and took on the adventure. They sang several years on Broadway with this successful venture and sang in the motion picture. Over the years the Bills continued to sing in concerts and on chapter shows. Their last performance was on May 24, 1967, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. When their career finally ended they had sung 728 concerts, 216 television shows, 1.510 performances on the legitimate stage, 626 conventions 675 radio shows, 672 night club and hotel appearances, 137 state fair performances, 15 record albums, and a major motion picture. Needless to say, this has never been equaled, nor is it likely to be.

Judging categories altered. At the mid-winter of ‘51 the Board put its final approval on a change in the judging system. The new system established five judging categories: Harmony Accuracy, Balance and Blend, Voice Expression, Stage Presence, and Song Arrangement. Each of these categories was given equal weighting of 20%, with each judge scoring on the basis of 100 points. This system was to remain intact, with only minor changes, for twenty years.

Bud Arberg and barbershop craft. In 1951 the Alexandria chapter obtained as its director a gentleman named Bud Arberg, who was to be one of the Society's shining stars of the 1950's. He had received his Ed.D. in music education from Columbia University. New York City. In 1949, during one summer as a lieutenant in the Army reserve, he had met Dean Snyder, Society Historian for many years until his death in 1999, who was working for the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, when Dean gave a lecture at Fort Knox on barbershop harmony. Snyder recognized his talent and encouraged his interest in barbershop harmony. Arberg became an avid barbershopper. Over the years Bud Arberg became a prolific arranger, providing at least 250 barbershop arrangements. Perhaps his most significant contribution was to music education in the Society. Up to this time there was very little attempt to teach fundamentals of barbershop harmony. In fact there had been early resistance to the idea of education. Bud Arberg, however, was able to make the learning fun. He quickly latched on to Reagan's clock system and began devoting meeting time at the Alexandria Chapter to teaching barbershop "craft", a word he first used. He taught the men about chord structures, intervals, singing techniques -"the ABC's and 2 plus 2's of barbershop" as he put it. Dean Snyder, a member of the Washington D.C. Chapter, was so impressed by Arberg's presentation that he recommended him to the MAD District leaders, who invited him to give a presentation at a District Board meeting in November of 1952. His demonstration, using the piano keyboard and a blackboard, was a resounding success. His skills as a teacher became known to others, largely due to Snyder's promotion. At the Mid-Winter Meeting of 1953, Arberg gave a similar demonstration, which greatly impressed Frank Thorne and others. His ideas gave birth to our Society's fledgling education program. This was the forerunner of the Harmony Education Program (HEP) schools which were to develop in the late 50's, and eventually led to Harmony College in the 1970s.

Chorus contests begin. By 1952 that facet of barbershopping introduced by Norm Rathert in 1940, and helped along by John Hanson and his Corn Belt Chorus, was thriving. It was the barbershop chorus. In 1948 the Society had issued training materials for chapter choruses, and in 1950 published a folio of arrangements suitable for chorus use. By 1952 several of the fourteen districts were having chorus contests, and they had discovered that these events drew large crowds because they involved far more barbershoppers than quartet contests. In the summer of 1952 both the Land 0' Lakes and the Johnny Appleseed Districts held chorus contests which drew over 1000 registrants. In 1953 each District President was invited to select two choruses from his district to compete at the upcoming Detroit International Contest. Sixteen choruses entered this contest (Not all districts were represented: six districts sent two choruses, four sent two.), and the winner was called the International Convention Championship Chorus. Entrants were limited to two per district and were required to have at least twenty singers. The winner of the novel chorus contest was the Great Lakes Chorus, Grand Rapids, Michigan. They sang with 36 men.

Floyd Connett. Inspired and motivated by John Hanson, who had died in 1954, Floyd Connett, a barber from Peoria, became one of the greatest barbershoppers of his day. He had broken away from the Corn Belt Chorus in the late forties and was directing several chapters in the area. He also directed Sweet Adelines choruses, including the Belles of Harmony of Peoria, which had been formed in 1948. He was active with Sweet Adelines early on, and coached at least five women's quartets to championships. Floyd certified as a judge in all five categories (this kind of "multiple certification" was allowed then). By 1957 he was Assistant Chairman of the

International Contest and Judging Committee, and Category Specialist of the Voice Expression Category. Remarkably, Floyd was able to sustain himself as a full time barbershopper from 1951 through 1958, when he went to work for the Society. At the Mid-Winter meeting of 1958 Floyd Connett was hired as our society's first "field man". Floyd did much to development the quality of barbershop music education. He traveled around the country visiting chapter meetings and holding workshops. Floyd worked for the Society about three years, after which time he went to work full time for the Sweet Adelines, a job he maintained until his death in 1967. He was instrumental in the design of the four Sweet Adelines judging categories, which were put in place in 1962 and remain intact today.

First International Chorus Champion. In the fall of 1953 all districts had held contests to qualify up to two representatives per district to the first International Chorus Contest. Twenty-three choruses competed at the International Contest in Washington D. C. in 1954. The winner (the first to be called International Chorus Champions) was the hometown Washington. D.C. chorus.

Lyle Pilcher. He was one of the first bona fide "coaches" and he came to be one of the greatest quartet coaches. He attended his first Convention in Milwaukee in 1947. His interest in barbershopping increased and he became adept at woodshedding and arranging (by ear). His only condition for coaching was that if he was going to take time to coach a quartet, they had to do it his way, right or wrong -a position he maintained to his death in 1997. He went on to coach the Four Renegades (1965 Champs), the Imposters (medalists in 1964 and 1965), the Auto Towners (1966 Champs), Sundowners (medalists from 1966 to 1971), Avant Garde, medalists in 1968 and 1969), the Gentlemen's Agreement (1971 Champs), the Vagabonds (medalists from 1975 to 1977), Grandma's Boys (1979 Champs), the Boston Common (1980 Champs), Chicago News (1981 Champs), and Center Stage (medalists from 1981 to 1984).

Octavo size publications. Up to this time, the Society was getting arrangements to its members in folios which were published by commercial publishers, like Spaeth's books. By 1955 publishers had lost interest, and the Society had begun putting out its own annual collection. "Songs For Men", which consisted largely of songs composed by barbershoppers to avoid copyright problems, and was printed in folios 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size. It was not attracting the interest of quartets. In 1955 Jean Boardman, a past Vice-President, proposed that the Society begin publishing a series of arrangements of public domain songs, issued separately, and published in "octavo" dimensions –6 7/8 by 10 1/4 inches - which was traditional for choruses and choirs. The plans were approved in 1956.

Confederates. Winners of the 1956 International Contest in Minneapolis, they were probably the greatest and most popular Champs since the Buffalo Bills of six years earlier. They were organized in Memphis, Tennessee in 1953 and coached by Floyd Connett. This quartet had a big, ringing sound and sang some very interesting and somewhat audacious material. Here they are, singing a song they made famous in the barbershop world:

Example: Excerpt of the Confederates (George Evans (tenor), Dave Labonte (lead), Bill "Buzz" Busby (baritone), Wally Singleton (bass), singing "The Sunshine Of Your Smile," arranged by Bill Diekema.

Note the degree of dynamic variation. Baritone Bill ("Buzz") Busby was musically knowledgeable and did some of their arranging. Their songs became favorites, copied by other quartets. The Confederates continued to sing for many years and were always a favorite. Crowds loved their colorful southern costumes and Dixie songs.

S. K. Grundy. Many of the Confederates' most memorable songs were arranged by the man from Springfield, Missouri, S. K. Grundy, one of our all time greats. He directed the orchestra of a Baptist College in Springfield, Missouri. He wrote lots of barbershop arrangements, many of which were considered daring, audacious, and unstylistic. They contained many unusual twists. Here is one of Grundy's masterpieces, " A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square," which he arranged for the Confederates. We play the front end as sung some twenty five years later by the Dallas Vocal Majority.

Example: Excerpt of the Vocal Majority singing" A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square"

In hindsight, many feel that Grundy was ahead of his time. Those who heard his work didn't understand it and Grundy was written off as a "wild man." But he was a superb musician, and in the sixties he went to California to do vocal and instrumental arrangements for Lawrence Welk. Many recall quartets appearing on the show, usually featuring bass Larry Hooper and tenor Joe Feeny singing songs undoubtedly arranged by S. K. It seems that alcoholism cost him his job with Welk, at which time he returned to Springfield, where he continued to deteriorate from alcoholism until his death.

Walter Latzko. During this period, the Buffalo Bills had many professional opportunities. They sang on Arthur Godfrey's radio and television show, where they met a talented CBS staff arranger named Walter Latzko, who was to provide them with musical arrangements for their records and performances over the years. He also arranged for the Chordettes, who also sang on the Godfrey show. Latzko became a barbershopper and certified Arrangement judge, and provided those audacious arrangements sung by the Sun Tones (e.g. "West Side Story Medley"), and later, the Blue Grass Student Union (e.g. "The Music Man" songs).

Example: Excerpt of the Sun Tones singing "West Side Story Medley"

Society's headquarters moved to Kenosha. Ever since 1943 the organization's headquarters had been in rented offices in Detroit. In the late forties President O.H. (King) Cole had advanced the idea of a permanent home. A fund was established and over the years several plans were proposed. In 1955 a new campaign was developed and a search was initiated to find a location in the Chicago area. Eventually a mansion in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Lake Michigan was purchased at a cost of $75.000. On June 3, 1957, the Society moved its headquarters to this location. It was named Harmony Hall and remains the headquarters of our Society today.

The Pekin Chorus. The 1959 International Chorus Contest was won by a fantastic little chorus from Pekin, Illinois. This remarkable group, under the direction of Jim Moses, would win again in 1963 and 1968, making them one of the few choruses ever to win three or more times. In addition, they placed second in 1958 and 1962. Incredibly, this chapter no longer exists.

Suntones. The winners of the 1961 International Quartet contest in Philadelphia displayed a whole new level of class. They were young; they were handsome; they were smooth; they were tuned; they were fantastic.

Example: Excerpt of the Suntones singing "Just A Little Street Where Old Friends Meet."

In subsequent years the Sun Tones would make about ten record albums, astounding the barbershop world with their smoothness and vocal agility. These records are now considered to be classics. Their exotic arrangements were done by Walter Latzko, who had done many arrangements for the Buffalo Bills. Many barbershoppers cut their teeth on the Sun Tones' music. Most agree they were the greatest quartet up to that time and for years to follow. Some would say the greatest till this day. The Suntones continued to sing into the 1980's, with Dray ton Justus (lead of the '71 champs. Gentlemen's Agreement) replacing lead Bob Franklin in the later years.

The first HEP school. In August of 1961, at Winona, Minnesota. the first HEP (Harmony Education Program) school was conducted, by Rudy Hart, from Michigan City, Indiana, who was head of the Musical Activities Program and had conceived the idea of HEP. Registration at this school was approximately five hundred, to everyone's surprise. Courses were conducted in arranging, quartet coaching, chorus directing, stage craft, lighting, and barbershop craft. On the faculty was Bob Johnson. This eventually developed into Harmony College.

Bob Johnson. He became well-known by directing the chorus from Dundalk Maryland, which won in 1961 with 164 men on stage. To this day this is the largest chorus ever to compete in the International Chorus Contest. In the late fifties Dean Snyder had recommended Bob Johnson to be on the Society's Music Committee, and in January of 1962 he was offered, and accepted, the job of Director of Musical Activities. This was a position he was to occupy until 1982, Under this dedicated and strong-willed person, our Society's music programs and Harmony Education Program would improve drastically. Although the first annual HEP schools had already commenced, he developed the concept into what today is Harmony College. Bob Johnson's forceful, sometimes overbearing personality is an unforgettable memory for anyone who knew him, or to anyone who attended Harmony College in the 70's. He was an outspoken advocate of the "keep-it-barbershop" ideology which sprung up in the sixties in reaction to the musical diversity which was spreading through the Society at the time, most notably epitomized by the repertoire and recordings of the Suntones. To his credit, he forged a strong, competent, and active music staff in Kenosha, a tradition of excellence which remains today.

Val Hicks brings the Osmonds. Back in 1959, on February 6, arranger Val Hicks, who was directing a Sweet Adelines chorus in Salt Lake City, took his chorus north to nearby Brigham City, Utah to sing at a church fund-raising event. (Val is a devout Mormon.) One of the other acts at this event was four little boys from Ogden, Utah, four, six, eight, and ten years old, singing in harmony. They were singing three-part harmony, with two of them singing melody. Val, who was an elementary school music teacher at the time, was very impressed with the quality of their voices and their ability to stay in tune. The parents of the boys asked Val if he felt her boys could sing four-part harmony, and Val said it depended on whether the four year old could hold his part. Val agreed to work with her boys, and found that indeed the littlest was able

to sing the melody by himself. Val taught them their very first four-part arrangement, "I Want A Girl." These boys were the Osmond Brothers. Val became their arranger, coach, and local booking agent, and proudly introduced them to the barbershop world.

Example: Osmonds singing "If You Knew Susie"

The Four Renegades. 1965 provided us with one of our most exciting quartets ever- the Four Renegades, from Skokie and Oak Park, Illinois, and Gary, Indiana. This was the first of several championship quartets to be coached by the great Lyle Pilcher. Tenor was Buzz Haeger, a well-known arranger and "harmony man" in the old style.

Example: Excerpt of the Four Renegades (Warren "Buzz" Haeger (tenor), Ben Williams (lead), Jim Foley (baritone), Tom Felgen (bass) singing "That's A-Plenty."

This quartet became one of the busiest and most popular of all time. They sang 40-42 weekends a year and had two to three times that many inquiries. They sang the circuit of chapter shows for six years after their victory, and would have continued, had not Buzz Haeger begun losing his tenor voice.

Lou Perry. A man who was doing a lot of arranging in those days was Lou Perry, a trumpet player and jazz musician of the forties who developed an interest in barbershop harmony. Lou had helped the Four Statesmen to organize and later was coach and mentor to the Boston Common. He served with distinction as an Arrangement judge from the Arrangement Category reformation of 1972 until 1990 and was a most influential musical spokesman and philosopher through the 70's and 80's. Lou developed an elegantly simple arranging style and strongly urged other arrangers to "respect the song." Examples of his arrangements include "That Old Quartet Of Mine", "I'm Alone Because I Love You", and "From The First Hello To The Last Goodbye". Even today his arrangements are frequently sung in contest.

Dave Stevens. In 1969 the International music staff acquired a valuable addition. He was Dave Stevens, who had directed the Berkeley Californians to the International Chorus Championship in 1957. He was a great arranger and did more than anyone else to develop our society's music publications program. Dave was one of the most entertaining teachers our Society has known. His famous presentation "What Are We Trying To Preserve" is preserved on video tape and widely viewed by barbershoppers today.

The first Harmony College. The first week long HEP school was held in the summer of 1970 at Dominican College in Racine, Wisconsin. It was headed by Bob Johnson and called "Harmony College." This has become a hallowed institution, conducted every summer since that time.

Categories revised. Immediately after the 1971 International Contest an overhauled Arrangement Category took effect. The aim was to make the category the "guardian of the style", leaving to the other categories the task of evaluating how well the music is performed. Previously the category scored on the basis of 100 points like the other categories, but now it used a range of -20 to +20. These revisions were made under the leadership of then Arrangement Category Specialist Burt Szabo, who wrote the new category description. Concurrent with this

change, the Interpretation Category was created to replace the Voice Expression Category and to assume the aspects of presentation previously adjudicated by Arrangement. At the mid-winter meeting of 1974 the write-up for a new judging category, Sound, was adopted. This category was put in place in 1975, replacing the existing Harmony Accuracy and Balance and Blend Categories. Don Clause, a successful coach, was dynamic in getting this change instituted. He became the first Category Specialist for the new category. The term "expanded sound" began to be heard. With the existing Stage Presence category remaining, there were now four judging categories. This system remained intact until 1993 when the current three-category system was created.

Dealer's Choice. The quartet champs of 1973 were the Dealer's Choice. This was the first quartet since the forties to win International in their first attempt. This landmark quartet sang with technical perfection previously unheard- to a fault, some would say. Their coach was Don Clause, who came to be identified with the "technique-oriented" approach to barbershop singing. The Dealer's choice was the first in a long series of "Clause" International Championship quartets. In the sixties, Lyle Pilcher was the dominating coach, but this marked a temporary end to this era, and Clause became the super- coach of the day. Baritone Brian Beck is well-known as an arranger, coach, and expert on vocal technique and vowel matching. He has a remarkable range.

Example: Excerpts of the Dealer's Choice (Alan Kvanli (tenor). Bill Thornton (lead), Brian Beck (baritone). Gary Parker (bass) singing "You Can Have Every Light On Broadway"

BABS is formed. In 1965 a harmony club had been formed in Crawley, England by a man named Harry Danser who had heard a barbershop quartet singing at one of the world's fairs in America. He also started a quartet called the Barbershop Four. Interest in barbershop harmony spread around the British Isles, so that by 1971 other clubs had formed. Late in 1973 five charter chapters formed the British Association of Barbershoppers (BABS). This was the first of several affiliate organizations which now exist in Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1986, BABS and the Swedish society SNOBS were represented for the first time at our International Quartet Contest.

Dallas Vocal Majority. Considered by many to be the Society's greatest chorus, the Vocal Majority began as a non-Society chorus, and only later chartered as an SPEBSQSA chapter. It began in 1971 when about a dozen singers got together to form a singing organization whose foremost goal would be quality in singing and performance. Rigid adherence to musical excellence has been its trademark from the very beginning. Membership requirements are stringent; prospective members are carefully tested for voice quality and (even leads!) ability to harmonize. The Vocal Majority's charismatic director, Jim Clancy, is certainly a candidate for the greatest chorus director in the history of the Society, and one of the greatest motivators. A studio singer by profession, Jim is largely credited for the Vocal Majority's superior singing quality. This chorus won an unprecedented eighth gold medal in 1997.

Joe Liles. In 1975 Joe Liles joined the International Staff. He had directed the San Antonio Chorus to fourth place in 1971 and 1972, and was a certified Arrangement judge. Joe would later

become Director of Musical Services and then Executive Director. He is one of the most influential Society men of modern times.

The Louisville Thoroughbreds. In a monumental confrontation between Louisville and Dallas at the 1978 International Chorus contest in Cincinnati, the Thoroughbreds took their fifth Chorus Championship. This chorus went on to win the International Contest several more times. Under the direction of Jim Miller, the chorus exhibited a style characterized by high energy, typified by their electrifying 1981 championship performance of "Mardi Gras Medley".

Bluegrass Student Union. Also in 1978. a young quartet called the Bluegrass Student Union from Louisville won the Quartet Contest. The quartet was coached by Don Clause.

Example: Excerpts of the Bluegrass Student Union (Allen Hatton (tenor), Ken Hatton (lead), Dan Burgess (baritone), Rick Staab (bass)) singing "Whippoorwill-I Love You Medley"

The Bluegrass Student Union sang for many years and became one of the most admired quartet champions, mastering difficult and innovative material, including many memorable arrangements by Ed Waesche and Walter Latzko.

Ed Waesche. He is perhaps our most prolific and creative arranger, the source of such striking contest arrangements as "Three Girls Medley", "I Found My Sweetheart Sally," "Mardi Gras Medley," and the controversial "Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair." Waesche established his credentials in the seventies, became a leader in the eighties, and today is perhaps our finest and most respected arranger and musician.

Boston Common. They had earned a medal every year since 1972, except for 1976, when they didn't compete. This quartet's sound reminded many old timers (like Glenn Howard) of the great early-Society quartets. Tenor Kent Martin sang a full voice tenor: bass Terry Clarke had incredible resonance: lead Rich Knapp and baritone Larry Tully both had full sounding voices, giving the quartet a full, rich sound. They were also remarkable by virtue of the naturalness of their delivery, which contrasted sharply with the technique-oriented approach typical of the 1970s. Their mentor in this approach was Lou Perry, who also arranged many of their songs. Some of their songs, including the following example, were composed by Bob Godfrey, brother of the famous Arthur Godfrey.

Example: Excerpt of the Boston Common (Kent Martin (tenor), Rich Knapp (lead), Larry Tully (baritone), Terry Clarke (bass) singing "That Old Quartet Of Mine."