

1987

## **Lena Milam, 1884-1984: Music Educator and Pioneer in the Development of Community Music in Beaumont, Texas.**

Louis Randolph Babin

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

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**Lena Milam, 1884–1984: Music educator and pioneer in the  
development of community music in Beaumont, Texas**

Babin, Louis Randolph, Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1987

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**LENA MILAM, 1884-1984: MUSIC EDUCATOR  
AND PIONEER IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF COMMUNITY MUSIC IN  
BEAUMONT, TEXAS**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The School of Music**

**by**

**Louis Randolph Babin  
B.M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1965  
M.M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1968  
December 1987**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to show the influence that Lena Milam had on the development of music education and community music in Beaumont, Texas, from 1919 to 1955, the period during which she served as Supervisor of Music for the Beaumont Schools. It further shows that it was largely through her efforts that Beaumont developed a music education program, a civic involvement in music, and an awareness and appreciation of music that surpassed other Texas cities of comparable size during this period.

Although the study was delimited to include only the developments in music education and community music as influenced by Dr. Milam, those organizations in which she was not involved are included, but in a summarized manner. Furthermore, due to Dr. Milam's extensive participation in community music activities, the report is rather comprehensive in its treatment of Beaumont's music development.

It should be noted that music education in Beaumont's black schools, although under the administration of Dr. Milam, is not included in this study due to a lack of

sufficient documentation.

The primary source of data used in the formulation of the study was a comprehensive collection of scrapbooks which were kept by Dr. Milam and donated to Beaumont's Tyrrell Historical Library following her death in 1984. These scrapbooks contain numerous newspaper articles, programs, personal letters, and other types of memorabilia.

The findings of this study substantiate Lena Milam's influence as paramount in the development of music education and community music in Beaumont. Dr. Milam's state, national, and international influence is shown through her membership in numerous professional and music organizations, and her many appearances as lecturer, teacher and clinician. Considerable attention is given to the effects of the "Great Depression" and World War II on music education and community music in Beaumont.



**Lena Milam**

## INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Beaumont, Texas, had evolved from a small frontier town into a bustling little city of wooden structures, brick buildings, a few elegant Victorian homes, muddy streets with plank walks, and buzzing sawmills. Much of the downtown area had electric power and communication was made possible by use of the telephone. The lumber industry was fueled by the tall stands of cypress trees that were found in the river-bottoms of the nearby Neches and Sabine rivers. In addition, the forests of East Texas provided an abundance of pine. These products along with cotton, cattle, and rice were exported by river and more increasingly by rail to markets throughout the United States.

In the late nineteenth century Beaumonters built opera houses and imported traveling stock companies for their entertainment. In 1895 the Woman's Club was organized and sponsored many outside artists and entertainers. Local entertainment was also provided in the form of dances, picnics, and other community gatherings. Beaumont was enjoying a period of prosperity and growth. But no one could predict the sudden and drastic changes that were about to occur.

In June of 1899, Anthony F. Lucas, an Austrian-born mining engineer, arrived in Beaumont to continue the oil drilling operations that were begun in the early 1890's by a young Beaumonter named Pattillo Higgins. The drilling sight was a salt dome just outside of the city, known as Spindletop. On January 10, 1901, the Lucas gusher spouted oil over 150 feet high. In a few months six more gushers were producing oil at a rate exceeding the total output of the rest of the world. Beaumont suddenly became a boomtown with its population increasing from approximately 9000 to over 50,000. Entrepreneurs and investors rushed to Beaumont in search of their fortunes. Likewise, many native Beaumonters gave up their current occupations to enter the oil business. Such was the case with the superintendent of schools.

In 1901, H. F. Triplett, formerly of Ennis, Texas, was hired as school superintendent. The Triplettts had four children--Lena (born October 19, 1884), Olive, Mason, and Nita. The oldest of the children, Lena, moved to Beaumont in 1903 after having received her teaching certificate from North Texas Normal School and teaching two years at Baptist College in Lexington, Mississippi. After two years of elementary school teaching she married Allen Barnes Milam of Beaumont, resigned her teaching position, and moved to Sulphur, Louisiana. In 1911, following an unhappy marriage, Lena and her three children, Hugh Henry, Allena Elizabeth, and Mason Thomas returned to Beaumont. She resumed her elementary teaching activities in 1911 and was appointed

Supervisor of Art and Music in 1917. Two years later, she became fulltime Music Supervisor of the Beaumont schools, a position she held until 1955.

In Beaumont during the 1920s, a significant development began in both music education and community music. Much credit can be attributed to the tireless efforts of Lena Milam. In addition to her role as music educator, she was extremely active as both organizer and participant in many community organizations, performing groups, and music clubs. It will be the purpose of this report to show the influence that this remarkable woman had on the development of music education and community music in Beaumont, Texas. Furthermore, it will be shown that it was largely through her efforts that Beaumont developed a music education program, a civic involvement in music, and an awareness and appreciation of music that surpassed other cities of comparable size throughout the state of Texas.

#### Significance of the Study

Studies concerning the contributions of significant educators have long been an important topic for historical research. As Phelps states, "a desire to learn more about the life of a significant music educator . . . presents many opportunities for a researcher."<sup>1</sup> In his discussion of possible topics for historical research, Mouly suggests "the

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<sup>1</sup>Roger P. Phelps, A Guide to Research in Music Education, (Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), 122.

contributions of leading educators and their influence on current educational practice and thought" as an area to be considered.<sup>2</sup> Previous studies in this area include Malone's William Dawson: American Music Educator, and Remsen's Thomas Tapper: His Contributions to Music Education.

Such studies can be most beneficial to music educators in that they give much insight into the motivational forces behind the development of music education and community music and therefore present researchers with a pattern by which they may predict future developments. Factors such as world events, economic trends, and sociological changes have greatly influenced educational trends. Similarly, certain individuals have had a profound impact on the development of music education and community music. It is this writer's opinion that Lena Milam was such an individual.

On October 14, 1984, a one hundredth birthday celebration was held in Lena Milam's honor by many of her former students and friends. Just three weeks later, on November 8, she passed away. During her long and fruitful life, she was a tireless and aggressive crusader for music education and music in her community. As a former pupil notes, "Aunt Lena brought culture with a capital C to the town of

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<sup>2</sup>George J. Mouly, The Science of Educational Research, (New York: American Book Co., 1963), 222.



Beaumont, Texas, after the Lucas Gusher blew oil, money, and the possibilities for a good life into it in 1901."<sup>3</sup>

Lena Milam's contributions to the development of the local music activities were significant. She was a charter member and first vice president of the Music Study Club (organized in 1921) and served as president of that organization for two years. It was through her efforts, and those of Gladys Har'ned Quilliam, that the first Music Week in Beaumont was organized (1922), an annual event that became a high point of musical activities. She was also an organizer and charter member of the Beaumont Music Commission (1923), member of the First Methodist Church Choir, and director of the First Methodist Orchestra and the Schubert Ensemble. From 1943 to 1945 she served as organizing president of the Beaumont Music Teachers Association. She was charter member of the Beaumont Symphony Society and a life member of the Music Department of the Woman's Club.

Music education in Beaumont virtually had its beginnings with Lena Milam. It was through her efforts that music became an integral part of the curriculum rather than a luxury to be limited to extracurricular hours. The Beaumont High School orchestra and band became well known throughout the state for their excellence, as is noted by their many awards, achievements, and appearances. Orchestras were formed in the elementary and junior high schools

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<sup>3</sup>Amalese Gough Kerr, "Aunt Lena's Culture," 14 October 1984, Testimonial to Lena Milam on One Hundredth Birthday, Beaumont, Texas.

as early as the 1920s. Glee clubs, choruses, bands and string ensembles performed frequently for PTA meetings, radio programs, festivals, annual Music Week programs, civic organizations, and churches. Federated music clubs were established in all schools and music memory contests were held annually. Students were encouraged to participate in state and national contests, and many received top recognition for their talents.

Lena Milam was the author of a series of music workbooks for public schools, "A Handbook for Junior Clubs Counselors," published by the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1954, and a manual for the University of Texas, entitled "Music Is Yours." In addition, she authored many articles appearing in magazines and musical journals, and composed two songs and numerous selections for strings.

Her participation in state and national organizations is noteworthy. She served as chairman of the music division of the Texas State Teachers Association (1925 to 1929 and 1933 to 1938). She was vice president of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs (1928 to 1932), and president of that organization from 1932 to 1934. As a national officer in the National Federation of Music Clubs, she served as member of the board (1932 to 1955), the Presidents' Council (1932 to 1934), the Educational Committee of the Junior Division (1937 to 1939), and was chairman of the National Band and Orchestra, Junior Division (1937 to 1941).

Lena Milam was the recipient of many outstanding awards and achievements. In 1935, the Rotary Club conferred on her the title of "Beaumont's Most Distinguished Public Servant." In June of 1937, she received the honorary degree, Doctor of Music, from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Dr. Milam was named "Woman of the Year" by the Colonel George Moffett Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (1940), and was presented the "Golden Deeds Award" by the Exchange Club of Beaumont (1944). Mayor Elmo Beard proclaimed May 26, 1955, "Lena Milam Day" on her retirement from public school service.

Lena Milam is listed in the following reference books:

Who's Who Today in the Music World (1937)

Notable Women of the Southwest (1939)

Pierre Key's Musical Who's Who (1940)

Who's Who in Music (1940 and 1951)

Biographical Encyclopedia of the World,  
"Who's Important in Music" (1946)

Who's Who of American Women (1959, 1962)

Women of Distinction (1962)

As an active musician in the city of Beaumont for over eighteen years, this writer has had the opportunity to witness the lasting effects of Lena Milam's efforts. Many stories still circulate concerning her activities, charm, and relentless determination that the enjoyment of music be paramount in the cultural life of Beaumont. Her influence will continue to be felt for many years. As one of her former pupils states,

Aunt Lena has had a powerful influence on my life. Along with my continuing love of and appreciation for music, I absorbed from her examples of public responsibility, good manners, and good taste. So did generations of young Beaumonters. Aunt Lena simply was the spirit of music in this community for more than fifty years. We shall probably not see her equal again, for so many facets come together in her: musicianship, leadership, eclecticism, charm, graciousness, dignity, beauty, and indomitability. She loved us all equally no matter which side of the track we came from, but she firmly insisted that we come as near her level as possible!<sup>4</sup>

### Delimitations

This report is delimited to include only the developments in music education and community music as influenced by Lena Milam. Organizations in which she was not active are not treated in detail but are summarized for the sake of continuity. Furthermore, the report is delimited to include Lena Milam's activities from 1919-1955, the period during which she served as Supervisor of Music for the Beaumont Schools. Dr. Milam's influence on music education in the black schools is not treated, due to a lack of sufficient documentation. It should also be noted that the activities of the city's South Park and French School Districts are not included, since Dr. Milam was not affiliated with them. The inclusion of Lena Milam's involvement in state and national music organizations is significant in that it illustrates her prominence as a national figure as well as her expanding role as music educator.

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<sup>4</sup>Mildred Yates, "Birthday Greetings and Messages," 14 October 1984, Testimonial to Lena Milam on One Hundredth Birthday, Beaumont, Texas.

### Method of Investigation

While serving as Supervisor of Music of the Beaumont Schools, Lena Milam kept extensive scrapbooks of her activities. Following her death in 1984, the Milam family donated these scrapbooks to the Tyrrell Historical Library in Beaumont. The contents include numerous newspaper articles, programs, letters, and other pertinent memorabilia. These books were the primary source of data in the formulation of this study. Additional and supportive information was obtained from newspaper articles, related books, and theses. After recording the facts from these various sources, this writer interviewed a number of individuals to obtain further information that was beneficial in the development of continuity and clarity.

## CHAPTER I

### THE FORMATIVE PERIOD, 1919 - 1930

The city of Beaumont enjoyed a period of considerable growth during the 1920s. As a result of a healthy post war economy, the city began to expand its economic base. Although the petroleum industry continued to be the primary resource, lumber and agriculture maintained an important position in the overall economy. With an increase in railway connections, many products became more marketable. The shipping industry and deep-water port made possible the exportation of many commodities and resulted in developments in the sulphur, iron, and steel industries.

On November 13, 1925, the city's economy was greatly strengthened when the Yount-Lee Oil Company struck a large pocket of oil on the edge of the original Spindletop salt dome. The oil field, which many thought was nearly depleted, once again began producing at a high rate. In the next five years it netted nearly fifty-nine million barrels of oil.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Judith Walker Linsley and Ellen W. Rienstra, Beaumont, A Chronicle of Promise, with a Foreword by Rosine McFaddin Wilson (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1982), 93.

Beaumont began to feel the effects of its new-found fortune almost immediately. By 1927 construction projects increased by over three hundred per cent.<sup>2</sup> The Edson and LaSalle hotels and the St. Therese Hospital were notable additions to the city's skyline. Bond issues were passed to finance city improvements, and to construct a combined city auditorium and city hall, and an airport. The Beaumont, South Park, and French school districts all experienced new construction and South Park Junior College (founded in 1923) showed significant development. In 1927 the Jefferson Amusement Company opened its newly constructed Jefferson Theatre, built at a cost of \$800,000.

Community music also underwent a period of substantial growth during the 1920s. It was during this time that several important developments occurred that resulted in an increased interest in community music. The city's first annual Music Week celebration in 1922 was so successful that it quickly became the most significant musical event of the year. In 1923 the city established a Music Commission to fund and organize Music Week and other community music programs. The commission sponsored many concerts by local artists during the 1920s and provided strong leadership for the development of Beaumont's musical culture.

The development of the music department of the Woman's Club and the founding of the Music Study Club did much to stimulate interest in music and music education. In

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

addition to holding regular meetings and programs, these organizations sponsored many music programs in which various community groups participated.

Band concerts in the park were a popular family outing for many Beaumonters. In the early 1920s, the Beaumont City Band, directed by J. Ricci, gave outdoor concerts twice a week and the Grotto Band performed weekly at Wiess Park. The Magnolia Refinery Band, directed by Harry Cloud and later by R. A. Dhossche, became well known in the mid 1920s for its radio programs over KFDM, a station owned and operated by the Magnolia Petroleum Company.

Following the Yount-Lee Company oil strike in 1925, the musical arts experienced further growth. Jeannette Heard Robinson refers to the years 1925 to 1931 as "Beaumont's Golden Era For the Performing Arts."<sup>3</sup> The construction of the city auditorium and the Jefferson Theatre provided the necessary and long-needed facilities to present touring plays, variety shows, vaudeville acts, and concerts. Edna W. Saunders of Houston and Ione Towns Locke of Beaumont regularly booked entertainment for Beaumont, providing the city with a full concert season for many years. The Kyle Theatre and the city auditorium were the sights of numerous performances by such notable performers as Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink (contralto), Fritz Kreisler (violinist), Phillip Gordon (pianist), Mischa Elman (violinist), Rudolph

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<sup>3</sup>Jeanette Heard Robinson, "Beaumont's Golden Era for the Performing Arts: 1925 - 1931" (Masters Thesis, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, 1976).



Ganz (pianist), John Phillip Sousa and his band, Paul Whiteman and his orchestra, John McCormack (tenor) and Ignace Paderewski (pianist).

By the late 1920s, Beaumont had obtained a reputation throughout the state as a particularly musical city. In her column entitled "Art's Listening Post," Ina Gillespie, entertainment editor of the Houston Chronicle wrote, "Beaumonters are so cordial and their city is so really and unaffectedly interested in music that a visit there is a real treat."<sup>4</sup> After attending a performance by the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra in 1929, she stated, "Sometimes we get real outdone with Beaumont--they're so very musically alive over there. They just simply put it all over our own fair city when it comes to encouraging their own music or anybody else's for that matter."<sup>5</sup>

When Lena Milam returned to Beaumont in 1911, she resumed her teaching activities, dividing her time between art and music. In 1917 she organized Beaumont High School's first orchestra and in 1919 became fulltime music supervisor. As Gladys Quilliam writes, "that was the beginning of a new era for music in Beaumont, the start of a wonderful new experience for thousands of youngsters."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Newspaper clipping, Houston Chronicle, 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>5</sup>Newspaper clipping, Houston Chronicle, 27 January 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>6</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Spring 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The development of the music program in the Beaumont schools between 1920 and 1930 was remarkable. By 1921, students were receiving instruction on orchestral instruments in all grades. Music appreciation courses for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades were established to "familiarize the children with the music they should know and understand so as to acquire a taste for the very best."<sup>7</sup> These classes also helped students to prepare for the annual Music Memory Contests held during music week. The high school boasted of a forty piece orchestra directed by Lena Milam, a Girls Glee Club, a Boys Glee Club, and a band (organized in 1926).

In the fall of 1929 the high school was moved from its College Street location to a new building on Pecos Street. The new facilities included an ensemble rehearsal room, a room for music appreciation and theory classes, a well equipped library, and a sixteen hundred seat auditorium with a grand piano. The high school maintained a good music reference library containing such periodicals as Musical America, Music Courier, The Etude, and "The Musicale."<sup>8</sup>

The school music groups were particularly active during the 1920s performing at school functions, Music Week programs, community events, civic clubs, and music club conventions. Of special interest were the many school music

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<sup>7</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1921, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>8</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

programs heard live over local radio station KFDM. Music came to be recognized as an important part of the child's education and an integral part of community life.

### Music Education in the Schools

"It is so natural for children to love the beautiful. All they need is a little help, a key to the door."--Lena Milam<sup>9</sup>

### The Elementary Schools

By 1925, almost every child in each of the seven ward (elementary) schools received daily twenty-minute classes in singing and music appreciation. Vocal training consisted of "unison singing, part singing, written and oral ear training, and sight reading."<sup>10</sup> Each school offered study on the orchestral instruments and the schools regularly combined for special performances during Music Week, the South Texas State Fair, and other occasions. Specialized music teachers were first hired for the 1929-30 school year. Prior to that time, music activities in the elementary schools were the responsibility of the classroom teachers. Each music teacher gave lessons in voice and instrumental music, including piano and violin, and was in charge of music appreciation, the juvenile orchestra, and the juvenile music study club. In the same year, the schools initiated the "Meissner Melody Way" classes. These piano and violin

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<sup>9</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>10</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

classes were held at Averill, Ogden, Fletcher, Magnolia, Millard, and Pennsylvania Schools and included ten students in each piano class and five in the violin classes.<sup>11</sup>

Lena Milam was responsible for the formation of "baby bands" in all of the elementary schools. These young students played gazoobas, triangles, and other simple instruments. The primary purpose of these bands was to stress rhythmic development.<sup>12</sup> Although trained by grade school teachers, the baby bands were under the general direction of Lena Milam, and whenever they performed, they drew large audiences. The ninth annual School Music Festival was held during the 1929 Music Week and was opened with three numbers by the combined baby bands. The selections performed were "Rock-a-bye Baby," "Pirouette" by Fink, and "Rendezvous" by Komsak.

In the fall of 1928, Marian Pangle, vocal music teacher at Beaumont High School, and Lena Milam organized harmonica bands in five of the elementary schools. These groups, limited to boys in the fifth grade, performed four-part arrangements of such well-liked tunes as "America," "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Good Night, Ladies," and "My Old Kentucky Home." Harmonica bands were regular participants in a variety of school programs.

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<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>12</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Spring 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Lena Milam effectively coordinated her groups at all times, frequently combining them for special performances. In doing so, she made use of her more experienced students to motivate the younger ones. On several occasions throughout the year, she brought the grade school students to the Beaumont High School campus to hear performances by the high school groups. Annually, the fourth and fifth graders heard performances by the high school orchestra of the music they were studying on the music memory list.

Each of the grade schools had its own library of books, publications, records, and a Victrola. Most of these materials were gifts of the parent-teacher organizations.

#### The Junior High Schools

Music education in the junior high schools consisted of regular music classes, glee clubs, and orchestras. Music appreciation classes adopted early in the decade took the format of forum classes by 1928. Pictorial slides were often used in connection with the daily one hour lessons. As the year progressed, the course content was structured to include the study of the selections listed on the music memory contest held during Music Week.

The first music memory contest took place in the schools of Westfield, New Jersey, in 1916. During the 1918 meeting of the Music Supervisors National Conference, C. M. Tremaine, director of the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, brought the contest and its benefits

to the attention of music educators. In the years that followed the movement spread rapidly over the entire nation.<sup>13</sup>

The annual music memory contest in Beaumont became an important source of motivation in the development of music education in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Students were required to memorize a lengthy list of folk songs, art songs, oratorio choruses, opera excerpts, dance rhythms, overtures, symphonic movements, selections from suites, chamber music, and other miscellaneous selections. In addition to identifying the piece when played, the students were tested on its history and the composer's life.

The 1930 music memory test was divided into two sections. The first part tested the students on their ability to recognize familiar melodies (music memory); the second part assessed their music understanding. Students were graded on unfamiliar selections in three areas: recurring themes, tone quality of instruments, and distinguished dance forms.<sup>14</sup>

The contests were highly competitive with each school team competing feverishly for the first place banner and the right to represent Beaumont at the district inter-scholastic meet. In the spring of 1925, one student,

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<sup>13</sup>Edward B. Birge, History of Public School Music in the United States, (Washington, D. C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1928), 210.

<sup>14</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Chester Weber, fell off his bicycle and broke his arm on the way to the contest and phoned his teacher to explain his tardiness. After his arm was set in the cast, he mounted his bike once again and hurried to take part in the contest. Chester ended up scoring 100%, and his school won the contest.<sup>15</sup> By 1926, some thirteen hundred Beaumont students were participating in the local music memory contest.

Through the efforts of Lena Milam, local radio station KFDM and the Music Study Club supported these Music Memory contests by sponsoring programs that included selections on the music memory list. On February 15, 1929, KFDM, broadcasting from the Magnolia Refinery, featured the Magnolia Refinery Band in such a program. R. A. Dhossche, also director of the Beaumont High School Band, directed the Magnolia Band in the two hour concert that was aired simultaneously over WRR radio station in Dallas, Texas. (See Appendix, p. 215 for a copy of this program.)

The music memory contests contributed significantly to the music education program in the Beaumont schools and in the development of the whole child. In referring to the merits of the contest, Birge indicated it "vitalizes music study, increases ability to work, promotes concentration, observation and memory, and brings to the acquaintance of practically every child a wide range of good music."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Spring 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>16</sup>Birge, History of Public School Music in the United States, 211.

In the fall of 1928, KFDM began airing radio broadcasts of Walter Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic. These programs were heard every Friday morning at 10:30 and were structured as music appreciation courses. Radios were installed in the classrooms of all of the grade schools, junior high schools, and the high school. Following the programs the students often held group discussions of the material and music presented. These broadcasts aided in further stimulating the students' interest in orchestral music.<sup>17</sup>

In the early 1920s, the junior and senior high school curricula were expanded by offering school credit for private music study outside of school if done with an accredited teacher. This policy recognized private study in piano or violin with the provision that the student take two thirty-minute lessons per week, practice six hours per week, complete eight studies and eight compositions during the year, and score seventy-five or above on a final examination in music theory.<sup>18</sup>

The two junior high school orchestras rehearsed a full hour daily with each having an enrollment of approximately forty students. The South Junior Orchestra, directed by Mrs. A. C. Cameron, and the North Junior Orchestra, directed by Ruth D. Tennin, Carrie Pierce, and then Penelope Foster,

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<sup>17</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>18</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1923, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



rehearsed the same music and combined regularly for special programs. The repertoire included marches, novelty numbers, and simplified arrangements of classical compositions.

In 1928 the South and North Junior High Schools were renamed Dick Dowling and David Crockett Junior High. Mrs. A. C. Cameron became the director of both junior high orchestras, a position she held for many years. A graduate of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Mrs. Cameron did "remarkable preparatory work" for Lena Milam and the Beaumont High School Orchestra.<sup>19</sup>

It was around 1930 that Mrs. Cameron sent the following message to Lena Milam. "Come over to Dowling. We've got a new boy who plays trumpet like you've never heard before."<sup>20</sup>

This "new boy," Harry James, was born under a circus tent in Albany, Georgia, in 1916. As a youth he often watched his mother perform on the trapeze while sitting with his dad, who played trumpet and conducted the circus band. The James family toured with the Christy Brothers Circus during the 1920s, which regularly made Beaumont its winter home.

When James was eight years old, he began studying trumpet with his father. A year later he played well enough to join the circus band and soon began playing all the solo parts. By the time he was twelve, he was leading one

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<sup>19</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>20</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 22 April 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

of the two Christy bands. After the circus disbanded around 1930, the family decided to remain in Beaumont and James's father began teaching trumpet privately. He continued in this capacity for many years, teaching a full load of students and directing the St. Anthony School's drum and bugle corps.

Harry James left Beaumont to join the Joe Gill Orchestra in Galveston in 1932. After playing with several different bands in the mid-1930s, he made his debut with Benny Goodman on Christmas Day, 1936. In 1939 James formed his own band and soon became known as "swingdom's new hero."<sup>21</sup>

During the three years that Harry James attended Dick Dowling School, he was frequently recruited to play in the Magnolia Refinery Band and the Beaumont High School Band, although he never attended high school. Lena Milam spoke of his performance at the state music contest in Mexia in 1931. "Harry suddenly came out with a very clear 'high C' which would have been the envy of many professionals, and launched into a difficult cadenza. The audience was electrified with his playing."<sup>22</sup> Harry James's unusual talent was enjoyed by many Beaumonters and they were quick to show their pride in his accomplishments.

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<sup>21</sup>Screen and Radio Weekly, September 1939, quoted in newspaper clipping, n.p., 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>22</sup>Beaumont Journal, newspaper clipping, 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Glee clubs in the junior high schools were very active during the 1920s. In addition to their normal activities (community programs, civic club appearances, radio programs, etc.), these groups frequently performed musical skits and children's operettas. As a teacher at Dick Dowling Junior High School, Louise Goldstein was responsible for organizing that school's first Boys' Glee Club. She began her work in the junior high schools in 1927 and in 1930 was moved to Beaumont High School to teach music and choral work. Goldstein was a graduate of the University of Cincinnati and studied voice with Yeatman Griffith of New York.

#### Beaumont High School

In addition to serving as music supervisor of the Beaumont school system, Lena Milam was directly in charge of the music at Beaumont High School. She was responsible for beginning boys and girls glee clubs at the high school and was instrumental in establishing a general music class in 1923 and a course in music appreciation in 1924. Both courses offered full credit toward graduation.

The Beaumont High School Orchestra experienced a significant period of growth during the 1920s. Under Dr. Milam's direction the orchestra grew from approximately forty five players in 1925 to eighty-eight in 1929, becoming the largest high school orchestra in the state.<sup>23</sup> Rehear-

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<sup>23</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 17 September 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

sals were held daily for forty-five minute periods, an improvement over the weekly meetings before and after school in the early 1920s. An examination of the orchestra personnel as listed in its 1930 Music Week program indicates the balance of this group to have been somewhat questionable (See Appendix, p. 216). Nevertheless, the unusual instrumentation supports Lena Milam's philosophy of involving every child in the music program. Of particular interest is the unusually large number of string instruments, particularly the violins. This is not surprising however, when one considers the fact that Dr. Milam was a violinist and violist. In addition to Dr. Milam, Beaumont was fortunate to have several other fine string teachers, among them Alice Kent and Gladys Harned.

The repertoire performed by the orchestra was impressive. In 1922 the orchestra performed "March Militaire" (Schubert), Minuet from "E<sup>b</sup> Symphony" (Mozart), and "Nocturne" (Chopin) for a Class Night Program at the high school.<sup>24</sup> The orchestra performed the following selections on its 1930 Music Week program, referred to earlier:

Unfinished Symphony (First Movement).....	Schubert
Melodie.....	Tschaikowsky
Turkish March from the Ruins of Athens.....	Beethoven
Cappriccio Brilliant.....	Mendelssohn
(Eight Pianos and Orchestra)	
Ruby Reed, Violette Molliere, Margaret	
Atwood, Margaret Thomas, Selma Tiedemann,	
Emma Dinkins, Allie Mae Huitt, Virginia	
Mae Richey	

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<sup>24</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 30 May 1922, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Radio was a popular source of home entertainment for Beaumonters in the 1920s. Local station KFDM was owned and operated by the Magnolia Petroleum Refinery and regularly provided local entertainment by community and school groups. The orchestra, band, and vocal groups of Beaumont High School often gave combined programs, many of which were simultaneously broadcast over station WRR in Dallas.

On October 19, 1928, the Beaumont High School Orchestra performed on "Music Day" at the Texas State Fair in Dallas. This performance, sponsored by the Texas Federation of Music Clubs, was one of many out of town guest appearances made by the orchestra.

Lena Milam's orchestra was the recipient of many honors and awards. Following its performance at the Third Annual Interscholastic Music meet, held at Baylor College for women in April of 1924, musical authorities referred to the orchestra as "the most complete symphony orchestra in the state of Texas."<sup>25</sup> This marked the second consecutive year that the group had won first prize. In March, 1929, the orchestra won first place and a loving cup at the College of Industrial Arts meet in Denton, Texas. Other competing high schools were from Marshall, Central, Fort Worth, and Dallas. The selections performed were "Overture" from Così Fan Tutte (Mozart) and Andante Cantabile from "Symphony

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<sup>25</sup>Beaumont High School News, May 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

No. 5" (Tschaikowsky).<sup>26</sup> A first place award was also earned in 1930.

Individual honors were awarded to many orchestra members. Students regularly participated in interscholastic and music club contests sponsored by the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. In addition, they represented Beaumont on numerous occasions in honor orchestras throughout the country. Gerald Thomas (flautist) and Edgar Ezell (trumpeter) were selected for the National High School Orchestra, which performed at the 1927 Convention of the National Education Association in Dallas.<sup>27</sup> Four students, Ruby Reed and Dundee Sheeks (violinists), and Marjorie Gough and Margaret Ludgate (violists), were elected to the 1930 orchestra which performed in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Elizabeth Rothwell, with her \$20,000 Lord Nelson Stradivarius violin, appeared in another section of the orchestra which performed at the Music Supervisors' National Conference in Chicago.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Lena Milam was a strong advocate of chamber music and frequently organized members of her orchestra into smaller ensembles. Such was the case in 1924 when she formed the Schubert Quintet. This group consisted of two

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<sup>26</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>27</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 21 December 1926, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>28</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

violins (Erline Elkins and Edna Brooks), viola (Anita White), cello (Kathleen Ashley), and bass (Ethel White). On occasion, "Aunt Lena," as her students called her, joined the group on piano. The quintet rehearsed one evening each week and was in constant demand for musicales in neighboring towns as well as at home. The Schubert Quintet is particularly significant in that it became the nucleus of the Schubert Ensemble, a community group directed by Dr. Milam, that gained statewide popularity throughout the 1930s.

The first attempt to organize a band at the high school was in the fall of 1925. Max Montgomery, a music instructor who had recently settled in Beaumont, was hired by the Board of Education to teach band students for three dollars a student per month, paid by the students themselves. Practice was held after school hours and Lena Milam saw to it that the rehearsals "in no way interfered with other music organizations."<sup>29</sup> This was due to the fact that a large number of the thirty-five boys that came to the first rehearsal were also members of the orchestra. It appears, however, that this group had very little success in that no reference to any performances could be found.

In the fall of 1926 Rouan A. Dhossche, assistant director of the Magnolia Refinery Band and piccolo and flute soloist over KFDM, was hired to direct the Beaumont High School Band. A native of Brittany, France, Dhossche came

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<sup>29</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

from a musical family. His father, Victor Dhossche, his mother, and his brother sang with the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. His father performed with the company for seventeen years. Dhossche studied flute at the conservatory of music in Ghent, Belgium, with August Strauwen and Van der Meulen, a successful composer of operas. He moved to the United States in 1914 as flautist with the San Carlo Opera Company. In 1915 he entered the army where he served as band leader of the 12th cavalry until 1920. For a period of six months he was flautist with the Los Angeles symphony under Oberhoffer.<sup>30</sup>

Dhossche came to Beaumont in 1925 to direct the Magnolia Refinery Band. The company placed great emphasis on developing and maintaining the band's excellence by hiring excellent musicians who were also given a position in the refinery.

Under Dhossche's direction, the Beaumont High School Band rehearsed once or twice a week at night, performed at football games, and gave several programs during the 1926-27 school year. In the fall of 1926, the first public concert was given at Wiess Park. Selections included "Washington Post" (Sousa), "Bohemian Girl" (Balfe), "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," and "Comin' Thru the Rye."<sup>31</sup> In the years that followed, Dhossche developed a fine band, winning

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<sup>30</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 29 May 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>31</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1926, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



many honors and awards. In May 1929, the band paraded the downtown area in celebration of being declared "the state's best high school band" at the state contest in Bryan.<sup>32</sup>

Vocal music at Beaumont High School consisted of the Girls Glee Club, the Boys Glee Club, and the Mixed Chorus. The Girls Glee Club was organized by Lena Milam around 1917.<sup>33</sup> In 1924 she formed a Boys Glee Club. This group also met from time to time with the girls forming a mixed chorus. Dr. Milam directed these groups until the late 1920s when she acquired part-time help from Marion Pangle, vocal teacher at David Crockett Junior High School.

In the fall of 1929, a full-time vocal position was established and Mary Byrd Bouleware was hired. In addition to her responsibilities in the vocal area, Bouleware assisted Lena Milam with the high school orchestra. She taught only one year, however, being replaced by Louise Goldstein in the fall of 1930.

By the end of the decade, these organizations had achieved a comparatively high level of performance quality. As Mrs. E. C. Godard, Houston resident and former junior chairman of the State Federation of Music Clubs, stated,

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<sup>32</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>33</sup>The Purple Pennant (Beaumont High School newspaper), n.p., 1922, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

"This city [Beaumont] is far ahead of Houston in the excellence of its school orchestras and glee clubs."<sup>34</sup>

#### School Music Clubs

Lena Milam wrote, "We feel justly proud of the eighteen music clubs in our schools. Every child has the privilege of, and is encouraged to, enter into this type of work."<sup>35</sup> This quotation by Dr. Milam is from an article titled "Music--the Joy in Education" which appeared in the April 1929 issue of "Carter's Musicale," a publication of the Carter Music Store, Beaumont, Texas. It supports her philosophy, "music for every child--every child for music," as stated in the same article.

In 1924 Lena Milam began her crusade for the development of music clubs in the city schools. By the end of the year, each of the seven ward schools and the two junior high schools had a music study club while the high school had three. These clubs met to discuss current music news and to present a short musical program.

The high school's three clubs were the Junior Harmony Club, the Euterpean Club, and the High School Orchestra Club. The Junior Harmony Club was comprised of the students enrolled in Dr. Milam's general music class, whereas the students in her music appreciation class joined the Euter-

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<sup>34</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, May 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>35</sup>Lena Milam, "Music - the Joy in Education," Carter's Musicale, April 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

pean Club. All of the music clubs elected new officers each fall, held regular meetings twice a month, and were federated with the Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs.

In 1926 the official bulletin of the National Federation of Music Clubs listed Beaumont as having more federated school music clubs than any other city in the United States.<sup>36</sup> This distinction lasted for several years as the number of organizations continued to grow. By 1929 Beaumont listed twenty-eight school and community music clubs available to its youth. The most active of the community clubs were the Student Chapter, the Junior Music Study Club, and the Juvenile Music Study Club, all sponsored by the Music Study Club.

Membership in the school music clubs afforded Beaumont's youth the opportunity to expand their knowledge and stimulate interest in music, perform more frequently, and participate in the many festivals and contests sponsored by the Texas Federation of Music Clubs.

#### Community Involvement

##### The Music Study Club

On August 31, 1921, several professional musicians of Beaumont, led by Mrs. W. Frank Wilson, met for the purpose of organizing a Music Study Club that would "devote its interests to the serious study of music and to participate

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<sup>36</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 10 October 1926, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

in musical performance."<sup>37</sup> Lena Milam was one of the charter members of this club as were Mrs. Frank T. Higgins, Ethel Rowzee, Anne Whitaker, Ethel Penman, Cora Lee Goldstein, Mrs. Oswald Parker, Margaret Kriechbaum, Mrs. John Newton, and Jewell and Hazel Harned. Mrs. W. Frank Wilson was elected president and Lena Milam vice-president. The purpose of this group as stated in the club's constitution was to provide "mutual instruction, improvement and amusement; also the fostering and encouraging of a more lively interest in the art of music, with a view of placing Beaumont in the front rank of musical culture."<sup>38</sup>

Membership in the club was open to both active and associate members. Active members regularly participated in the club's meetings, discussions, and programs, whereas the associate members were involved in a more passive manner, supporting it financially and socially.

In the early years of the Music Study Club, meetings were held from October through May, twice a month, on Monday nights at 8:00 p.m. in the YWCA parlors. They generally consisted of lectures and discussions of composers, musical styles, periods, forms, etc., followed by musical programs in which members performed selections representative of the topics being discussed. The great composers, such as Greig, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann and Mozart, were studied. At

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<sup>37</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 12 November 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, Texas.

<sup>38</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 9 October 1921, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

times, composers were grouped by style and/or nationalities. Italian opera composers were studied, as were the Russian composers.<sup>39</sup> Other topics dealt with British folk songs, Scandinavian music,<sup>40</sup> and American folk music,<sup>41</sup> to name but a few. These women were very serious about broadening their knowledge of music and utilized each other's talents to do so. In a period of one year, the club's enrollment grew from twenty-five to nearly one hundred fifty members (active and associate).

Lena Milam was a very active member of the Music Study Club. On many occasions she hosted meetings, served as the chairman of musical programs, and performed at meetings both as soloist and as a member of various ensembles. In the spring of 1928, she was elected president of the club and was reelected the following year. During her two year stint as president, the club enjoyed considerable activity. In the 1929-30 year, the organization sponsored a Christmas musicale; the music memory contest in the public schools; a Texas and Beaumont composers program; a combined program of the juvenile, junior, and student organizations; a MacDowell evening; an organ and oratorio program; a piano ensemble program; and the annual Music Week program. The last named

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<sup>39</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>40</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>41</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

program, which traditionally closed Music Week, was a colonial luncheon in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont. The entertainers wore colonial costumes in keeping with the motif. The guest speaker for the event was Louis Victor Saar, internationally known American composer-pianist whose music was featured on a Wednesday evening Music Week program given by the Mozart Violin Choir, a group conducted by one of Beaumont's most important musicians, Gladys Harned.<sup>42</sup>

The Music Study Club also sponsored a wide variety of community programs. In the fall of 1924 the organization and the Beaumont Music Commission co-sponsored an Armistice Day program at the First Methodist Church. The event consisted of sacred and patriotic music presented by musicians from church choirs and local music organizations. A review of the program attests that "the outstanding musical number of the evening was 'America Defend' composed by William A. Kirkpatrick," then choir director at St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Beaumont, and composer of many sacred choral works.<sup>43</sup>

The club also sponsored an annual Beaumont and Texas composers program. On March 14, 1927, the program was held at the Carter Music Store and included performances of works by many Beaumont musicians. Eleanor Gilbert, Gladys and Jewell Harned, Mrs. Walton L. Multer, Mrs. Alice Bergin

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<sup>42</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 10 May 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>43</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Blanchette, R. A. Dhossche, Mrs. Refuge Raye Loving, William A. Kirkpatrick, and Lena Milam had works performed. Mrs. Milam's composition, "A Reverie," was performed by her Schubert Ensemble.<sup>44</sup>

In the spring of 1930 while Lena Milam was serving as president, the club sponsored a half-hour radio broadcast every Sunday afternoon from 3:30 to 4:00 over KFDM, a local station broadcasting live from the Magnolia Oil Refinery.<sup>45</sup>

These programs provided Beaumonters the opportunity to hear many of Beaumont's fine musicians and ensembles.

The Music Study Club was host to the state convention of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs in the spring of 1925.<sup>46</sup> Club membership at that time listed seventy active, twenty-six associate, and two honorary members.<sup>47</sup>

In the fall of 1923 the organization made a significant contribution to the youth of Beaumont by sponsoring the formation of two junior branches of the Music Study Club. Originally, the Junior Music Study Club was comprised of high school students and the Juvenile Music Study Club of elementary and junior high students. In 1928 a third club, the Student Chapter, was added and the membership was

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<sup>44</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 13 March 1927, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>45</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Spring 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>46</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>47</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

restructured. The Student Chapter consisted of the college and high school students, the Junior Music Study Club was open to students in junior high school, and the elementary students were eligible for membership in the Juvenile Music Study Club. These groups functioned much like their "big sister" club in that they held meetings on a regular basis, twice a month, and included in their meetings musical programs in which members participated.

#### The Woman's Club

On January 18, 1895, Mrs. Hal W. Greer invited four women (Mrs. T. A. Lamb, Mrs. E. C. Wiess, Harriet Farrand, and Mary Lamb) to her home for sandwiches and cake, and to discuss an idea that she had regarding the formation of a reading club. As a result of this meeting, the Woman's Reading Club was established and Harriet Farrand was elected president.<sup>48</sup> For fourteen years the club met in the homes of members and in many different places throughout the city before building a permanent clubhouse on Magnolia Avenue in 1909. In 1925 the Woman's Reading Club departmentalized following a merger with two other study clubs, the Shakespeare Club and the Matinee Musical Club.

The Matinee Musical Club was organized in 1902, shortly after the Spindletop oil strike. Under the leadership of Mrs. Lipscomb Norvell, a young musician trained at the

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<sup>48</sup>Newspaper clipping, Houston Post, 12 September 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



Boston Conservatory, the club became very influential in the town's musical development. Members regularly presented music programs and the club took a hand in initiating civic music by sponsoring the city's first free band concerts.<sup>49</sup>

The All-Italian Beaumont City Band, directed by Professor Joseph (Joe) Ricci, gave weekly concerts in Keith Park. "The park sidewalks [were] lined with fringe-topped vehicles . . . as children played and older persons sat smiling and happy, talking with friends."<sup>50</sup> To finance the concerts, the ladies of the Matinee Musical Club solicited subscriptions to the band concert fund from local businessmen. In addition, they served punch to the public, frequently receiving five and ten dollar donations from Beaumont's wealthy oil investors.

Following its merger with the Woman's Reading Club in 1925, the Matinee Musical Club became the music department of the newly named Woman's Club. This organization was an important social activity for the women of Beaumont and a strong force in the development of community music.

The music department of the Woman's Club met twice a month (October through May) to hold business meetings, discuss musical topics, and have musical programs. The department often sponsored public programs such as student recitals and performances by local school and civic

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<sup>49</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 12 November 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>50</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 14 April 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

groups. At times, the Woman's Club held general meetings, anniversary socials, and flower shows in which all departments of the club were involved. The music department regularly provided entertainment on these occasions.

The club's Music Week programs contributed significantly to the week's activities. These programs often featured performances by out-of-town artists. David Guion, Texas pianist-composer, presented a recital during the 1926 event and Mischa Jassel, Russian pianist, appeared in 1930.

One of the most important contributions of the music department of the Woman's Club was its policy of sponsoring public performances by prominent artists. In the late 1920s the club brought Lenora Sparks (Metropolitan Opera soprano), Rudolph Ganz (pianist), and Albert Spalding (violinist) to Beaumont. Guest performances by several less prominent artists were also noted.

The music department further expanded its community involvement on December 23, 1929, when the Woman's Club Chorus gave its premiere performance in the city auditorium. This program of Christmas carols and readings was a "quiet and uneventful occasion," attended by a handful of listeners.<sup>51</sup> The chorus was directed by E. Orlo Bangs. Bangs had been hired to replace Lena Milam as director of the First Methodist Church Choir in September of 1929. She had held the job on a temporary basis following the resigna-

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<sup>51</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., December 1951, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

tion of Mrs. J. L. (Lena) Kershner in March, 1929. Bangs had been an instructor of music at the State University of Idaho before moving to Tallahassee, Florida, to become director of the music department at the State College for Women.

After arriving in Beaumont, Bangs immediately approached Mrs. E. Middleton, president of the Woman's Club, on the possibility of establishing a women's chorus. His idea met with favorable reaction and the Woman's Club Chorus was formed.

As time passed, the chorus expanded its Christmas concert by inviting school and community groups to participate. The Community Christmas Concert became a popular event in the 1930s, regularly attracting capacity audiences in the city auditorium.

Lena Milam was an extremely active member of the Woman's Club. She regularly participated in club meetings and frequently provided entertainment for the musical programs. Her Schubert Ensemble, high school orchestra, and other school groups made many appearances at club functions. One of several performances by the Beaumont High School Orchestra was at the club's twenty-seventh anniversary reception in January 1922. A newspaper account of this event commended Dr. Milam on the "splendid manner in which she has trained her pupils."<sup>52</sup> Lena Milam also performed on

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<sup>52</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 15 January 1922, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

many programs both as violinist and as a member of a chamber ensemble.

In April of 1929, the Woman's Club honored Lena Milam with life membership "in appreciation of her untiring participation in club activities, and in recognition of her high attainments not only locally, but in the state and national music circles."<sup>53</sup>

#### Other Clubs and Organizations

In addition to her activities in the Music Study Club and the Woman's Club, Lena Milam was a member of several other community organizations. She was associate member of the Business and Professional Woman's Club, and often arranged music programs for the group's functions. Her Schubert Ensemble appeared on several of the club's musical programs and was sponsored by the club on occasion. The Schubert Ensemble's 1928 Music Week concert was presented under the auspices of the Business and Professional Woman's Club. Among the selections performed were "Soldier's March" from Faust (Gounod), "In a Gypsy Camp" (Titl), "To a Wild Rose" (MacDowell), "Lotus Flower" (Schumann), "Serenade" (Victor Herbert), and "Memories" (Huerter).<sup>54</sup>

The Schubert Ensemble and Beaumont High School groups also provided entertainment for the Colonel George Moffett

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<sup>53</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>54</sup>Program, 9 May 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (organized in 1905). As a member of the organization, Dr. Milam's groups performed for many of the club's musical teas. The Beaumont High School Orchestra made a special appearance for the delegates to the organization's annual state conference held in Beaumont in 1929.<sup>55</sup>

In February of 1929, the Beaumont Lion's Club granted Lena Milam honorary membership in recognition of her many musical contributions to the activities of the club. Dr. Milam, was the only woman ever to receive this honor. A quotation from "The Lion's Roar," (club program) dated March 7, 1929 reads:

We may well commend and congratulate ourselves for having elected Mrs. Lena Milam Honorary Member of the Club at our last meeting. Our club has no better asset than our accomplished Mrs. Milam.<sup>56</sup>

#### The Schubert Ensemble

The Schubert Ensemble was founded and directed by Lena Milam in 1924. As pointed out above, the group originally consisted of Beaumont High School students who were organized into smaller ensembles to perform for various community events. A string quintet provided the nucleus of the group with Dr. Milam occasionally assisting on piano. Many members continued to remain active in the group

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<sup>55</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., November 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>56</sup>Program, "The Lion's Roar," 7 March 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

following their high school graduation. Eventually, the ensemble developed into a community group having no affiliation with the Beaumont Schools. Members of the group represented many different occupations and consisted of amateur and professional musicians, private teachers, refinery workers, businessmen, and high school and college students.

A review of the personnel listed in different programs indicates that the instrumentation was quite flexible. Generally, the ensemble was composed of several strings, supplemented with piano, flute, clarinet and trumpet. Sometimes a saxophone, trombone, horn, oboe, and timpani were added. One would assume that the availability of players was a key factor in this inconsistency of instrumentation.

The Schubert Ensemble performed throughout the Beaumont area for civic and music club meetings, church functions, and parties. The group also performed at annual events, such as Music Week and the South Texas State Fair. Radio broadcasts and out-of-town appearances were common. One of the most prominent activities of the ensemble was performing for Beaumont Little Theatre productions.

The Beaumont Little Theatre, founded in 1925, was quite active in the late 1920s and 1930s. Initially, performances were given in the home of Mrs. J. Frank Keith. A stage was built on the third floor, costumes and sets were constructed, and production began. Some time later, the

performances were held in the Woman's Club. In 1930 the company moved to its own building on the South Texas State Fair grounds.

The Little Theatre enjoyed several prosperous years. Tryouts drew up to one hundred would-be actors at times, and seasons were sold out well in advance. However, in the mid-1930s the company fell on hard economic times. The last paid director of the organization was Roland Wilkerson (1935-36 season). The Little Theatre's final performance was given in 1938.

In October of 1927, the Schubert Ensemble made its first of many appearances with the Beaumont Little Theatre. The play presented was "Mr. Pim Passes By," by A. A. Milne. The ensemble presented the following program before the play and between acts. It is representative of the type of selections that the group performed.

(Before the play)

Overture to Così fan tutte.....Mozart

(Between Acts I and II)

Valse Nannette.....Friml  
Sleepy Hollow Tune.....Kountz

(Between Acts II and III)

Mexican Serenade.....Ponce  
Finale: Russian Dance.....Bortkiewicz<sup>57</sup>

The personnel for this particular performance included eight violins, two violas, cello, bass, flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and piano. Eloise Rush was vocalist. Miss Rush later became Lena Milam's daughter-in-law, marrying Mason

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<sup>57</sup>Program, "Mr. Pim Passes By," Beaumont Little Theatre, 1 October 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Milam on June 1, 1933. During World War II, she organized and directed the Melody Maids, a group that brought much recognition to the city of Beaumont.

#### Music Week

"Music is the language of the soul breathing out its hope of heaven."--Lena Milam<sup>58</sup>

The idea of setting apart a week to be dedicated to the cause of music began in New York City in February, 1920.<sup>59</sup> From this first observance, Music Week spread throughout the nation, becoming an important event in the development of community music. In 1921 the Beaumont Schools presented their first annual School Music Festival. This event, organized by Lena Milam, received such favorable response that she, and others, began to see a need to develop a music celebration in which the entire community could participate. A short time later, Dr. Milam and Gladys Harned were on a return train trip from Houston to Beaumont when Lena Milam noticed a newspaper article on Music Week and its development in the Eastern United States. After some discussion the two women decided that Beaumont was ready to undertake such a project.<sup>60</sup> They enthusiastically approached the city's officials with the idea and Mayor

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<sup>58</sup>Lena Milam, "The Why of Music Week," 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>59</sup>"Beaumont's Fifth Annual Music Week," program of Music Week activities, Beaumont, Texas, May 1926, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>60</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



B. A. Steinhagen proclaimed April 22 to the 29, 1922, as Beaumont's first Music Week. Only one Texas city had arranged an earlier observance.<sup>61</sup>

Beaumont's first celebration met with complete success, exceeding the expectations of its organizers. Amelita Galli-Curci, noted coloratura soprano, opened the week's activities with a concert at the Kyle Theater. On Sunday, the preachers of the Beaumont churches spoke on the importance of music in worship and in community life, and church choirs sang their favorite anthems. Theaters held community sings and civic clubs devoted their meetings to musical programs. Beaumonters enthusiastically lived up to the slogan "Give More Thought to Music."<sup>62</sup>

The Music Study Club sponsored a MacDowell program and a chamber music concert. The music department of the Woman's Reading Club also presented a program at the clubhouse. Several of Beaumont's church choirs and its two civic choral organizations, the Beaumont Musical Society and the Community Chorus gave "outstanding" concerts.<sup>63</sup> The private teachers of the city cooperated by presenting studio recitals and the Beaumont School District schools presented their second School Music Festival. The climax of the first Music Week was a program presented on the final night, in

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<sup>61</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 2 May 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

which musicians from over the state were featured in an "Out-Of-Town Artists' Night." This program became a regular feature of Music Week.<sup>64</sup>

The expense of conducting the first Music Week was met by soliciting ads for the elaborate forty-two page program that was issued at all concerts. Businesses and individuals contributed \$421.75 to promote the event. The total expenditures for the week were \$415.45, leaving a balance of \$6.30, which was applied to the following year's event.<sup>65</sup>

As a result of the first Music Week celebration, Beaumont began to receive state and national recognition for its musical activities, and many individuals saw a need to continue and expand the event. Lena Milam, Gladys Harned, and several Music Week committee members approached George Roark, city manager, requesting that a commission be appointed to sponsor further Music Week celebrations and to "foster all efforts pertaining to the musical growth of the community."<sup>66</sup> Subsequently, Roark appointed a Music Commission as an official body of the city government. The commission was composed of the presidents or heads of all of the city's music organizations and others who were working for the development of the musical life of the city.<sup>67</sup> Lena

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 20 February 1923, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>66</sup>Program for Beaumont's Fifth Annual Music Week, 2-8 May 1926, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

Milam served as a member of the Beaumont Music Commission and co-chairman of Music Week for the remainder of her active musical life.

Music Week flourished throughout the 1920s. Members of the entire community supported the event both financially and actively. After the oil strike of 1925, Beaumont's wealthy oil barons were generous in donating to the cause. Consequently, many outstanding programs and developments took place in the Music Week Activities during the 1920s. In 1923 and 1924, the St. Louis Symphony, conducted by Rudolph Ganz, gave two performances.<sup>68</sup> Amelita Galli-Curci performed again in 1924 through arrangement with Edna Saunders, a Houston agent who booked many outstanding artists for performances in Beaumont.<sup>69</sup> Other features of the 1924 activities included the addition of a cooperative teachers recital and musical radio programs broadcast simultaneously over KFDM and by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Dallas Morning News in their respective cities. In 1925, Beaumont hosted the tenth annual convention of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs during Music Week. Convention delegates attended numerous programs by church, community, and school groups as Beaumont presented its most successful Music Week to date. The short-lived Beaumont Symphony Orchestra gave its premier performance during the

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<sup>68</sup>Periodical clipping, Musical Courier, May 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

1927 Music Week. The orchestra made repeat performances in succeeding years until it disbanded following its 1930 performance. Another feature of the 1930 event was an appearance by Louis Victor Saar, pianist and "musical authority of international fame."<sup>70</sup>

Many community groups made regular appearances during Music Week. Among those were the Schubert Ensemble, directed by Lena Milam, and the Mozart Violin Choir, directed by Gladys Harned.

#### The Beaumont Music Commission

As previously noted on page 46, the impetus for forming a city music commission came from Lena Milam, Gladys Harned, and other local musicians who sought aid from the city government in planning and financing Music Week and other musical activities. At their request, George Roark, Beaumont's city manager, organized the commission in 1923. Roark was a strong supporter of the arts and was eager to show his support. Speaking of music at a Music Commission meeting he remarked, "It is necessary to teach the child, while he is in school, to have an intelligent appreciation of this, perhaps, the most beautiful of all the arts."<sup>71</sup>

The aims established by the commission were as follows:

To promote Music Week; to encourage individuals and groups of individuals who are willing to bring to

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<sup>70</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>71</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1923, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Beaumont artists of national and international repute; to support all worthy musical organizations, such as choral clubs and music study clubs, and to foster public school music, both instrumental and vocal; to bring the people of the city together regularly by means of community concerts or other music meetings; to encourage a Beaumont symphony orchestra; to keep music as a civic function well in the public mind.<sup>72</sup>

M. E. Moore, superintendent of schools, was the commission's first president. In addition to being charter members of the commission, Lena Milam and Gladys Harned were appointed co-chairmen of Music Week activities, a task they shared for many years.

The Beaumont Music Commission became an important influence stimulating community music during the 1920s. Music Week was but one of its activities. It encouraged music in the schools by sponsoring annual hymn contests and music memory contests. It also sponsored free community concerts by various local groups once a month. In doing so, Beaumonters were given a regular diet of musical performances in addition to the concentrated activities during Music Week. Often these community concerts were presented on special occasions such as Armistice Day and St. Patrick's Day. Community Christmas concerts were common.

Many local school and community groups participated in the community concerts. Among these were the Beaumont High School music department, the Magnolia Refinery Band, the Music Study Club, the Mendelssohn Club, the Mozart Violin Choir, and the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra.

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<sup>72</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

As noted above, one of the primary goals of the Beaumont Music Commission was to establish a local symphony orchestra. The first serious attempt to realize this goal met with very little success. In the spring of 1926, Ione Towns Locke, sponsor of many music attractions in Beaumont, and Lena Milam initiated a plan to form a community orchestra consisting of students, teachers, and professional musicians. Although it appears that some rehearsals may have occurred as early as the spring of 1926, the first public performance took place on May 5, 1927, during Music Week. The director of the orchestra was Rouan A. Dhossche, director of the Magnolia Refinery Band and the Beaumont High School Band. With the exception of a community concert given in January of 1929, the orchestra performed only once a year, during Music Week. The group's final performance took place on May 8, 1930, at the First Methodist Church. The concert featured Gaetanina Piazza, mezzo soprano. Piazza was a Metropolitan Opera star who was touring Texas at the time. The orchestra's selections included the Overture to the Barber of Seville (Rossini), "Surprise" Symphony (Haydn), and "Finlandia" (Sibelius). A review of this concert mentions that the orchestra "displayed splendid ability, bringing to their numbers fine understanding."<sup>73</sup>

It appears that the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra ceased operations primarily due to financial reasons brought on by

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<sup>73</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1930, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

the Depression. With the Beaumont Music Commission unable to sustain such a venture, the group had no visible means of support. Although the orchestra members did not receive compensation, the cost of music, the director's fee, and the many incidental expenses incurred were considerable. In 1929, Ione Towns Locke, the orchestra's business manager, attempted to organize a "symphony association." The plan called for patrons and subscribers to donate funds necessary to support the orchestra's activities. Initially, the plan met with some success. But as Beaumonters began to feel the effects of the Depression, money became scarce and support dwindled. In addition, the Magnolia Refinery terminated its band in 1930, and many fine performers who had also played in the Beaumont Symphony had to look for work elsewhere.

The Beaumont Music Commission sponsored Music Week performances and community concerts by many community music groups during the 1920s. As previously noted, Lena Milam was extremely active in several of these organizations. There were some, however, in which she had little or no involvement. In order to have a complete picture of the city's music activities it is important to examine these groups.

The Beaumont Musical Society was organized by William A. Kirkpatrick in 1904. The purpose of the society was to provide "mutual instruction, improvement and amusement, and to encourage and foster in [the] city [of Beaumont] a more

lively interest in the art of music."<sup>74</sup> For three seasons the organization played a significant role in the life of the community. After a ten-year period of inactivity, it re-formed in 1917 and grew into a chorus of over 100 voices. However, with the outbreak of World War I it was again disbanded. In 1921, William A. Kirkpatrick, its original founder and director, once again reorganized the chorus for the purpose of encouraging good choral music and to bring great artists to the city.

The Beaumont Musical Society's first performance following its most recent reorganization was presented during Beaumont's first Music Week in April of 1922. This concert featured a performance of the cantata "Ruth" by Gaul, and was given at the First Methodist Church.<sup>75</sup> The society presented approximately three concerts a year, one being an annual presentation of Handel's "Messiah" during the Christmas season. Evidence indicates that the organization performed mostly cantatas and oratorios. It also appears that Lena Milam was a member of the society and on at least one occasion, performed with her Beaumont High School Orchestra.

In addition to directing the Beaumont Musical Society, Kirkpatrick was organist and choirmaster at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. He retired from this position in 1945 to

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<sup>74</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1923, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>75</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 22 April 1922, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



work full time in his music store on Pearl Street. The Texas Music Supply was a place where many young music students frequently gathered for ensemble rehearsals and performances. Kirkpatrick also taught piano, organ, and voice and composed several short sacred works for chorus.

For some unexplained reason the Beaumont Musical Society and the Mendelssohn Club, the city's other choral organization, ceased operation after 1925.

The Mendelssohn Club was organized in 1922, its purpose being "to further and develop choral singing to the greatest artistic perfection and to present to the public musical compositions of the highest excellence."<sup>76</sup> The chorus was directed by Ellison Van Hoose, former Metropolitan tenor, who came to Beaumont from Houston weekly to teach voice, direct the chorus, and conduct the First Methodist Church Choir.

The Mendelssohn Club performed a wide variety of choral literature, often including spirituals, Strauss waltzes, operatic excerpts, folk songs, art songs, and instrumental solos. On February 5, 1924, the chorus presented a program of operatic numbers at the First Methodist Church. This was one of several club performances that the Beaumont Music Commission sponsored. On this program, Lena Milam performed a violin solo, "Song Celestial" by Severn. A review of this performance described Dr. Milam's tone as "pure, rich, and

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<sup>76</sup>Newspaper clipping, Houston Chronicle, 1923, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

clear, sparkling if the need be, melancholy if required, simply placid at quiet moments--always responsive."<sup>77</sup>

The Mozart Violin Choir was organized in 1923 by Gladys Harned, Beaumont violinist and close friend of Lena Milam. Harned graduated from Beaumont High School and continued her education at Chicago Musical College and in New York. She studied violin with Max Fischel in Chicago and with Victor Kuzdo and Alexander Block in New York. During the 1920s Harned and her sisters, Hazel and Jewell, taught many young Beaumont students at the Harned Studios, located in their home. Jewell Harned taught piano and Hazel taught organ, piano, and music theory. Gladys Harned moved to Hebbronville, Texas, in 1934 following her marriage to William Reed Quilliam. She returned to Beaumont in 1942 at which time she joined the staff of the Beaumont Journal, eventually becoming amusements editor and fine arts critic.

Quilliam's music activities were numerous. As previously mentioned, she and Lena Milam organized Beaumont's first Music Week and served as co-chairmen of the event until Quilliam left Beaumont in 1934. They were also largely responsible for the formation of the Beaumont Music Commission in 1923. In addition, Quilliam was an active member and officer of the Music Study Club, director of the music department at Lamar Junior College for seven years (1927-34), director of the First Baptist Church Choir,

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<sup>77</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1924, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

director of the Westminster Presbyterian Church Choir (1944-65), and founder and director of the Mozart Violin Choir (1923-32).

The Mozart Violin Choir was comprised of advanced violin students of the Harned Studios. Its members ranged in age from junior high to college age and older. The purpose of the organization was "to study seriously the works of the great masters and to develop correct and effective ensemble playing."<sup>78</sup> During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the group shared the spotlight with Lena Milam's Schubert Ensemble as one of Beaumont's most popular musical organizations.

The ensemble generally gave three major programs a year in Beaumont, one always presented during Music Week. It also made many appearances at various community events throughout the year and was frequently heard over radio station KFDM. Out-of town appearances were common. The choir, like the Schubert Ensemble, gained widespread popularity throughout southeast Texas and made frequent appearances at music club meetings and conventions, Music Week celebrations, benefits, and many other functions. Performances were given in Lake Charles, Louisiana; Port Arthur, Jasper, Abilene, and Houston, Texas.

In 1928, the Mozart Violin Choir shared a Music Week program in Beaumont with the Kiwanis Glee Club of Houston,

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<sup>78</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

directed by Ellison Van Hoose. The violin choir, assisted by a group of the Sproule Dancers of Beaumont, depicted a scene in Mozart's home and performed in costume, presenting a "delightful atmosphere."<sup>79</sup> With some 1500 in attendance, the ensemble was "heard as one grand instrument, speaking softly of mysterious, thrilling things, bringing the crowd to forgetfulness of everything except the ethereal music."<sup>80</sup>

It appears that the Mozart Violin Choir disbanded following a December 16, 1932, Christmas concert as no further references to the group are to be found.

#### Private Teaching

The influence of Beaumont's music teachers in the community was far-reaching. The private studios provided a steady stream of young talent that was molded by Lena Milam and other public school teachers into the various school orchestras, bands, ensembles, and choruses. Through private teaching many students acquired an advanced technical knowledge and, therefore, became the nucleus of the city's musical activity. It was the private teacher that "built the talent that created the musical atmosphere that made the city one of the recognized musical centers of Texas."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Newspaper clipping, Musical Courier, Spring 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>80</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1928, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>81</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Beaumont was fortunate to have a large number of dedicated private music teachers. Many had outstanding credentials, holding undergraduate and graduate degrees in music, and several had studied with eminent, nationally known teachers. Furthermore, these teachers regularly traveled long distances during the summer months to study privately, thereby increasing their skills.

In the summer of 1923, for example, Ethel Penman studied pipe organ with Professor Middelschults in Chicago, Margaret Kreichbaum and Rae Kent (pianists) studied with Mrs. A. M. Virgil of the Virgil Conservatory in New York, Alice Kent took violin lessons from Ostaker Seveik in Chicago, Anne Whitaker studied piano in New York, Mrs. Oswald Parker studied violin and piano in Madison, Wisconsin, and Jewell Harned traveled to New York to study accompanying with Frank LaForge. Other active music teachers included Gladys Harned, violin; Ione Towns Locke, piano and voice; Ethel Penman, piano and organ; Nellie Howland, piano and violin; Velma Pittman, piano and saxophone; Selma Tiedemann, piano; Allie Mae Huitt, piano; Mrs. J. L. Kershner, voice; and Lena Milam, violin and viola.

Although Lena Milam maintained a rigorous schedule of activities, she always managed to find time for private teaching. In the early 1920s, she taught as many as thirty-eight students and presented them in two different spring recitals--the junior students on one night and the

senior students on another. In time, the total number seems to have reduced to approximately twenty students which were presented on one annual concert in May or June. Dr. Milam's studio recitals were generally given at the YWCA club room, and, on occasion, at the First Methodist Church Auditorium. A typical program of the recitals that Dr. Milam's students presented can be found in the Appendix, page 217.

Lena Milam did not teach privately during the summer due to her many teaching engagements outside of the city, and her attendance at workshops and conventions.

#### State and National Influence

##### The Texas Federation of Music Clubs

The Texas Federation of Music Clubs was organized in Waco, Texas, in 1915. By the mid 1920s the federation had grown from its original nineteen clubs to a large network of school and community groups with Beaumont leading the state and nation in the number of local clubs. The state federation was organized under three broad objectives:

1. To make music an integral part of the civic, industrial, educational, and social life of the nation.
2. To encourage and advance American creative musical art and to promote American artists.
3. To uphold high standards and through organization and education to make America the music center of the world.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Lena Milam began her association with the Texas Federation of Music Clubs around 1925 when she was appointed chairman of the public school music committee. Mrs. R. T. Skiles, state president, commended Dr. Milam for her splendid work in this capacity. "If we had a few more 'Mrs. Milams and Harned sisters' over the state, Texas would soon be a musical state."<sup>83</sup>

Dr. Milam was appointed state chairman of the state contests and scholarships in 1928. It was her responsibility to coordinate the state senior contests sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs. Participants in the senior division competed statewide and then nationally for cash rewards. Competitors ranged in age from sixteen to thirty and included students, amateur, and professional musicians. Beaumont was often represented at these contests with several of its musicians receiving outstanding recognition.

As a member of the fourth district, Beaumont and its many music clubs assumed a leadership role and annually hosted the junior competitive festivals. These festivals, begun in 1925, were sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs, and provided the opportunity for elementary, junior high, and high school students to have their talents appraised. Competition was held in instrumental music (including string, horn, and piano ensemble), voice, chorus,

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<sup>83</sup>Mrs. R. T. Skiles to Lena Milam, 17 May 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

and composition. Each performing area was separated into different classifications according to age. As a result of these festivals, many students were encouraged and inspired to a greater effort toward artistic development.

In spite of her busy schedule, Lena Milam seldom missed the district and state conventions of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. In 1925 the city of Beaumont had the honor of hosting the state convention. Mrs. John Lyons, president of the state federation, recognized Dr. Milam's part in the convention as being "splendidly, capably, and cheerfully done."<sup>84</sup>

#### Membership in Professional Organizations

Lena Milam maintained a close affiliation with several state and national music organizations. Her involvement with the Texas State Teachers' Association (TSTA) prior to 1920 brought statewide attention. This growing respect was justly recognized in 1921 when she was elected chairman of the music division, a position that she often held throughout her long and active career. She attended many TSTA district and state conventions, often sharing her ideas with fellow music educators.

Dr. Milam was also a member of the National Education Association (NEA) and attended its conventions as well. In the spring of 1927, she accompanied two Beaumont High School students, Gerald Thomas and Edgar Ezell, to the NEA confer-

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<sup>84</sup>Mrs. John Lyons to Lena Milam, 15 May 1925, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



ence in Dallas where they performed with the National High School Orchestra. Dr. Milam served on the registration committee and aided in preparing the orchestra. In a letter from Joseph E. Maddy, director of the orchestra, to Lena Milam he expressed his "heartfelt gratitude" for her "splendid assistance and cooperation without which such a task could never have been accomplished."<sup>85</sup> It was during this conference that the school superintendents of the country adopted a resolution regarding the arts as "fundamental in the education of American children." They further recommended that these subjects be given "equal consideration and support with other basic subjects."<sup>86</sup>

#### Summer Teaching and Study

Music activities in the city of Beaumont decreased somewhat during the summer months. With the closing of schools in May, many Beaumonters began making plans for summer camps, vacations, and other types of recreational activities. Most of the city's civic, social, and music clubs either held occasional, informal gatherings in lieu of their regular meetings, or dispensed with their activities altogether. Similarly, the number of music students studying privately was significantly reduced, resulting in the closure of most studios. Many of the private teachers

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<sup>85</sup>Joseph E. Maddy to Lena Milam, 6 April 1927, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>86</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1927, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

used this opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills by traveling great distances to attend workshops, study with well-known teachers, or work on advanced degrees. Others used this interim to supplement their income by teaching at summer camps, colleges, and universities.

Lena Milam herself remained quite active during the summer months. In addition to attending board meetings and conventions, she occasionally took time for private study and frequently taught classes at various institutions. In the summer of 1923 and 1925, Dr. Milam taught music education classes at the College of Industrial Arts (presently Texas Women's University) in Denton, Texas. In 1923 she also attended the Chicago Musical College where she performed in the orchestra and completed a course in public school music and art. During the summers of 1927 and 1928, Dr. Milam was an instructor at Lake Forest College in Chicago and in 1929 she remained in Beaumont to teach music courses for primary and elementary grade teachers at South Park Junior College.

## CHAPTER II

### DEPRESSION AND RECOVERY, 1931 - 1941

Due to the strong economy that existed in the late 1920s, the city of Beaumont did not begin to significantly feel the effects of the Depression until around 1931. Eventually, the cash flow dwindled and economic times became increasingly difficult. Even the city's greatest resource, its petroleum industry, was unable to stave off the effects of the Depression. On November 13, 1933, the city grieved the loss of Frank Yount, founder of the Yount-Lee Oil Company and one of the city's most respected citizens. Shortly thereafter, the Yount-Lee Oil Company was sold to Stanolind Oil for \$41.6 million and its stock liquidated.<sup>1</sup> These events had a direct effect on Beaumont's economic stability, contributing to further insecurity.

Many residents became severely affected by the Depression and were forced to apply for federal relief programs. Others found it necessary to sell property. Several of the city's beautiful homes were put on the market to avoid total bankruptcy. Those who were able to keep their homes often cut expenses by turning off the electricity, natural gas,

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<sup>1</sup>Linsley, Beaumont, A Chronicle of Promise, 102.

and telephone service. City residents planted home gardens to save on food costs and to provide a means of bartering for other commodities and services. Economic times were extremely difficult, and only the city's wealthiest citizens survived the period with little hardship.

The city government also experienced financial difficulties. The bond issues, initiated in the 1920s and due for completion in the 1930s, suffered the loss of financial backing. As a result, many city projects and improvements were delayed, employees laid off, and expenditures reduced. The city's schools were among the many areas to experience cut-backs in appropriations. By 1935, however, the economy was once again on an upward trend and by the end of the decade full recovery from the Depression was evident.

Music in Beaumont likewise suffered the effects of the Depression. Individuals were no longer able to pay the high prices to attend musical and theatrical events. As a result, very few prominent artists appeared during the early 1930s, and Beaumonters turned to their local groups for entertainment. In 1935, however, the Beaumont Music Commission began sponsoring an Artist Series that made it possible for citizens to hear well-known artists at reasonable prices. By the late 1930's this series was well established and extremely well attended.

The Music Commission continued to sponsor the city's annual Music Week activities. After a noticeable decline in

both its scope and community involvement during the Depression years, Music Week gained some momentum by mid decade. It did not, however, measure up to the events prior to the Depression, and never would. Yet, by comparison, Beaumont's Music Week observances were significant. Writing in the Houston Chronicle, Ina Gillespie Grotte compared Beaumont's Music Week activities with those of Houston. "Beaumont far outdistances Houston in its annual observations of Music Week. Many and varied are the programs planned for the week in that city, one of the most musical in Texas."<sup>2</sup>

The Music Study Club and the music department of the Woman's Club continued to exert much influence on Beaumont's music scene during the 1930s. Besides their regular meetings and club programs, these groups frequently sponsored community music events. In doing so, they encouraged many young musicians to develop their talents.

By the end of the decade, music activities in Beaumont were abundant. Lena Milam's Schubert Ensemble and First Methodist Orchestra, the Woman's Club Chorus and Piano Ensemble, the Beaumont Light Opera Company, the Esquires (mens' chorus), the city's church choirs, and the Beaumont Music Commission all worked together to provide a full season of entertainment.

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<sup>2</sup>Newspaper clipping, Houston Chronicle, 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The development of music education in the schools was retarded somewhat by the Depression years and its effects were felt well into the 1940s. As O. G. Parks observed, "It [the Depression] caught so many youngsters who were just beginning to learn to play. Then they had to stop because the family budget wouldn't allow the luxury of music lessons."<sup>3</sup> With the decrease in the number of school-age children studying privately and in the schools, the number of young adults with music training in the early 1940s was diminished. Consequently, a decline in the participation of these young people in community groups was noticed.

In 1934, the city school payroll was cut \$10,000. Lena Milam also suffered a salary cut from \$2118 to \$1900. In addition, the school board passed an order prohibiting teachers from receiving pay for any outside employment.<sup>4</sup> This rule was passed because many Beaumont underwriters had complained of teachers selling insurance on the side, a practice "not in the spirit" of Roosevelt's "New Deal" policy. Beaumont's music teachers, faced with the reality of lost income, emphatically voiced their opinion. As a

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<sup>3</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>4</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Summer 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

result, Beaumont strongly supported its teachers and the rule was rescinded.<sup>5</sup>

Recovery from the Depression could be detected in the schools by the fall of 1935. Enrollment in the combined elementary orchestra, which had fallen to twenty-five in the height of the Depression, numbered forty. Lena Milam indicated that more money was being spent for private instruction than there had been in a number of years and that there was a "definite indication" that the worst of the Depression was over.<sup>6</sup>

The following excerpt from a talk on "Music in Beaumont City Schools" was aired over KFDM on Friday, October 7, 1938. The text, believed to be written by Lena Milam, may well serve as a summary of the status and developments of music education in the Beaumont schools during the 1930s:

. . . the Beaumont City schools are striving to provide well-planned music experiences from the first grade through high school in vocal, instrumental and directed listening.

In the first seven grades every child in our schools receives daily music instruction which stresses singing, music reading and appreciation. Children studying outside music are given special orchestral training in the elementary, junior and high schools.

The Junior high music classes fall on the unit plan--integrating the listening lessons, singing, theory and creative work. Large glee clubs are formed in the eighth grades--boys glee clubs, girls glees and mixed choruses.

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<sup>5</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>6</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The High School offers fully accredited music courses in instrumental music, band and orchestra, history and appreciation, theory and solfeggio, and glee clubs. All of these classes are elective and have capacity enrollments. Two full time special teachers direct these groups. This year there are fifty six members in the high school orchestra and forty five in the Royal Purple Band [Beaumont High School]. Both organizations are in constant demand for community affairs.

A large glee club which you have heard on this program is another very popular unit of the high school music department.

Every child in school is privileged and encouraged to become a member of a music club. There are fourteen junior and juvenile music clubs in our schools, all of which are affiliated with the National and State Federation of Music clubs.

Music for every child, and every child for music, is the slogan which voices the obligations that we as music teachers have shouldered. Since music in some degree touches the lives of every one, we are endeavoring to open the door to the understanding of this universal language and to make the lives of our children more complete, intellectually and emotionally.<sup>7</sup>

### Music Education in the Schools

#### The Elementary and Junior High Schools

All elementary students continued to receive thirty minute music classes during the 1930s. The fourth and fifth grades were taught by the special music teachers who were added in 1929. These teachers met monthly with Lena Milam to discuss progressive teaching methods, new ideas for programs, and other problems. Elementary students received classes in appreciation and participated in rhythm bands, harmonica bands, choral groups, and orchestras. As previously mentioned, the elementary school orchestras, which had

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<sup>7</sup>KFDM, "Music in Beaumont City Schools," 7 October 1938.



declined in enrollment in the early 1930s, began to recover from the effects of the Depression by 1935. In 1936 Dr. Milam writes, "We have reason to be proud of our combined elementary orchestra this year and the work of these groups in each school is acting as an inspiration and incentive to others to take up the study of some instrument. All of this means improvement in our elementary orchestras and develops our junior orchestras which of course is our aim."<sup>8</sup>

On April 14, 1939, the combined elementary school orchestra and chorus, under the direction of Dr. Milam, performed at the Southwestern Music Educators Conference in San Antonio. The forty-five piece orchestra performed "Hymn to Diana" from Iphigenia in Tauris (Gluck), Theme from "Invitation to the Dance" (von Weber), "Mosquito Dance" (Mendelssohn), and was joined by the chorus for the "Paul Revere Suite" (Grant).<sup>9</sup> The elementary orchestra is credited with many other significant performances in the 1930s and early 1940s.

The most important development in the junior high school curriculum during this period was the organization of school bands in 1940. The bands at David Crockett and Dick

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<sup>8</sup>Lena Milam, Music Department Bulletin #XV to Departmental Music Teachers, 18 May 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>9</sup>Program, 12 April 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Dowling were both directed by Myron Guither, who at that time also directed the high school band.

Each junior high school continued to have one full time music teacher who taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade music and boys and girls glee clubs. The junior high school glee clubs were very active in the 1930s giving many programs for civic clubs, school functions, community events and various other performances.

The junior high school orchestras also felt the effects of the Depression. The orchestra at Dick Dowling numbered forty students in 1932, while fifty students were enrolled in the David Crockett orchestra. Following a noticeable decline in enrollment in the mid 1930s, the combined Junior High School Orchestra listed ninety-six students by 1940. Both groups were directed by Mrs. A. C. Cameron through the spring of 1936. She was followed by R. A. Dhossche, who divided his time between the junior high schools and the high school. In 1938 Louise Goldstein Littman, then director of the choral groups at Beaumont High School, became director.

#### Beaumont High School

The effect of the Depression on instrumental music in the high schools was naturally felt later than in the junior high schools. The high school students of the late 1930s were the same elementary students who had experienced the hardest years of the Depression. Consequently, the Beaumont

High School Orchestra, which numbered nearly one hundred students in the fall of 1933 dwindled to just forty students by 1940. This decline might also be attributed to the increased interest in bands that took place throughout the state during the 1930s. The most significant drop in orchestra students seemed to have occurred in the 1936-37 school year. It was at this time that R. A. Dhossche was appointed director of the group by Dr. Milam. Dhossche directed the orchestra and the band in collaboration with Dr. Milam until his resignation in 1938. Prior to this time Louise Goldstein, choral director of the high school, assisted Lena Milam with the orchestra. Goldstein retained this responsibility following Dhossche's appointment. Dr. Milam continued to appear during orchestra class assisting in sectional rehearsals and working with special ensembles.<sup>10</sup>

During the 1930s the Beaumont High School Orchestra continued to receive many awards and honors for its excellence, obtaining first place ratings at contests and festivals on a regular basis. Articles concerning its development and activities appeared frequently in newspapers and magazines. A picture of the orchestra along with an announcement of its Music Week activities appeared in a 1933 issue of Spotlight, the official publication of the Interna-

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<sup>10</sup>Newspaper clipping, n. p., 25 February 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

tional High School Artists Society.<sup>11</sup> The October 1940 issue of the Texas Music Educator magazine contained a picture and article on the history of the orchestra growth in the public schools of Beaumont.<sup>12</sup>

On April 10, 1935, the Beaumont High School Orchestra made a guest appearance at the Southern Conference for Music Education meeting in New Orleans. Following the orchestra's performance of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, the ovation was " . . . nothing less than thunderous . . . Mrs. Milam and Miss [Margaret] Bailey [violin soloist] were called back repeatedly for more bows and finally acceded to the audience's demand for an encore, repeating part of one of the numbers."<sup>13</sup> S. T. Burns, Supervisor of Music for the state of Louisiana expressed his views concerning this performance in a letter to Lena Milam:

I feel that your contribution to the cause of Music to the south in general and to this State in particular has been very great. Many of the supervisors who heard your orchestra were amazed that high-school students could be trained to produce a program of such excellence. I feel that your circular on the organization of your orchestra was also of very great value, giving our school people an idea of what could be done . . . . If you have any more copies of this program, I should like to have a few on hand to show to some of our principals

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<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>12</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>13</sup>Beaumont Journal, 12 April 1935

and superintendents from schools and parishes where the development of a similar orchestra would be possible.<sup>14</sup>

This performance is one of several guest appearances made by the orchestra in the 1930s.

Many talented members of the orchestra received individual recognition by being selected to honor orchestras throughout the state and nation. Of the six Texans selected to the 1932 National High School Orchestra, four were from Beaumont.<sup>15</sup> In 1939, a particularly active year, thirteen students were named to the All-State Orchestra which met in Houston in February.<sup>16</sup> In April of the same year, six members participated in the All Southwestern Orchestra at the southwestern sectional meeting of the Music Educators National Conference in San Antonio.<sup>17</sup> Five Beaumont High School students then accompanied Lena Milam to Baltimore where they performed in the National Junior Orchestra at the national convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs. The orchestra was directed by Dr. Milam, national chairman of the Junior Orchestra and Band division. The

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<sup>14</sup>S. T. Burns to Lena Milam, 20 April 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>15</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 8 April 1932, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>16</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>17</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

orchestra then went to New York for two performances at the World's Fair. These performances, also directed by Dr. Milam, were given at the Great Northern Hotel and at the foot of the Washington Monument on the fair grounds. They were "enthusiastically received by a large audience and by critics of leading newspapers."<sup>18</sup>

Beginning in December of 1935, the Fehr Baking Company of Beaumont, in cooperation with the East Texas Electric Company, sponsored annual Christmas parties for underprivileged children in the city auditorium. This program consisted of entertainment followed by the distribution of candy, fruit, and toys to the children by Santa Claus. Lena Milam was in charge of the entertainment for this program for eighteen years. During this time the Beaumont High School Orchestra and other school groups, along with dancers from the Widman and Sproule schools of dance, made annual appearances. By 1953 the party had grown so large that it became necessary to abandon it in favor of smaller parties at the individual schools.

In the high schools, Lena Milam placed much emphasis on the performance of chamber music. She regularly encouraged her orchestra students to form small ensembles, primarily to participate in the Texas Federation of Music Clubs junior contests. Chamber music ensembles also performed frequently

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<sup>18</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 26 May 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

at teas, banquets, and other occasions where small groups were desired. The Colonial Sextet was organized each year to play for civic organizations in and around Beaumont.

Initially, the Beaumont High School Band was directed by R. A. Dhossche (see page 27) on a part-time basis; his primary job was to direct the Magnolia Band. The high school band met at nights, once or twice a week, maintaining a flexible schedule. As the organization came to demand more of Dhossche's time, daytime practices were set. When the Depression forced the Magnolia Band to disband (around 1930), Dhossche went into the city school system as a full time employee. Beginning in 1937, the band went from a two-day-a-week schedule to daily rehearsals during first period. This change was necessitated by the excessive number of wind instrument players at the high school.

From 1928 to 1938, Dhossche led the Beaumont High School Band to eight consecutive first place finishes at the state band contest, omitting 1935 and 1936 when the band chose to participate in the "Battle of Flowers" festival in San Antonio. In March 1937, over one hundred students from the high school and the junior highs traveled by Southern Pacific train to San Antonio for the Texas Federation of Music Clubs annual convention and contests. Beaumont's delegation, the largest represented, received twenty-one first place finishes with the band winning the Class A division and the orchestra placing first in the Class C

division. Beaumont's nearest competitor was Waco with nine first place ratings.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the depressed economy, the band scheduled a number of out of town trips during the 1930s. In addition to its regular appearance at contests, it made guest appearances on several of these occasions. In February of 1937, the band performed at the State Band Masters Association meeting in Waco, and in October of the same year the band and the orchestra performed at the Pan-American Exposition in Dallas. To help finance the trips, the Band Parents Club, established in 1935, sponsored special projects, and the band gave concerts or sponsored programs at which donations were received. In order to raise funds to send the band to Waco for the state contest in 1933, the group sponsored a "Depression program" in December of 1932. A percentage of the funds was turned over to the Beaumont Journal Empty Stocking Fund that annually furnished Christmas baskets to the poor.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to performing for school assemblies, football games, parades, civic clubs, and various community events, the Beaumont High School Band also gave an annual concert in the spring. This program usually included performances by guest groups and individuals, thus providing

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<sup>19</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>20</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., December 1932, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



a variety of entertainment. The 1937 program featured vocal solos, dancers, and an accordion group. The selections played by the band were the overture "Queen of Hearts" (Gagnier); a baritone solo "West of the Great Divide" (Ball), featuring Jack Walder; and the marches "The Italian Rifleman" (Boccalari) and "The Fairest of the Fair" (Sousa).

In August of 1938 Dhossche resigned his position at Beaumont High School and accepted a position as director of the San Antonio Tech Band and Orchestra. A farewell concert was given in his honor on August 24. As director of the Beaumont High School Band, he had led the group to numerous state championships and a rather distinguished reputation. Dhossche returned to Beaumont on February 9, 1947, to guest conduct a performance by the Beaumont Civic Band.<sup>21</sup>

In the fall of 1938, Myron Guither was hired to replace Dhossche as band and orchestra director at Beaumont High School. Guither was a graduate of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and had served as high school band director in Paducah, Texas, and director of band and orchestra at South Junior High School in Waco, Texas. Lena Milam relieved Guither of his responsibilities involving the high school orchestra in September of 1940 at which time he began his work with the junior high school bands and continued directing the high school band. Dr. Milam once again assumed the position as director of the Beaumont High School

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<sup>21</sup>Sunday Enterprise (Beaumont), 9 February 1947.

Orchestra. Guither directed the Beaumont High School Band until 1946.

Louise Goldstein Littman served as choral director and head of the music department from the fall of 1930 through the spring of 1942. During her tenure, she formed many small ensembles (duets, trios, quartets, etc.) which, along with the chorus, frequently provided entertainment for civic clubs and community functions. In addition, her groups gave yearly cantatas, school minstrels, performed at assembly programs, and participated in school "sing-songs" (sing alongs).

Littman was a native Beaumonter who grew up surrounded by music. She regularly attended St. Anthony's Cathedral where her mother, Cora Lee Goldstein, directed the church choir for many years. It was during this time that Littman began to develop a great love for choral music. Following her graduation from Beaumont High School, she attended Goucher College in Baltimore. Unhappy with her studies and realizing her musical calling, she attended the University of Cincinnati where she received her music degree. She returned to Beaumont as a junior high school teacher in 1927 and was transferred to Beaumont High School in 1930. A "comedienne with all the slap-happy joie de vivre of a Fanny Brice,"<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Littman was very popular with her students

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<sup>22</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

and in the community. She performed comic roles with the Beaumont Light Opera (founded in 1936), and often presented her hilarious grand opera burlesques and skits for luncheon clubs. Her duties at the high school included teaching classes in theory, elementary harmony, and appreciation, and assisting Lena Milam with the orchestra.

One of the important musical events of Music Week was the annual Spring Choral Festival presented by the Beaumont High School Chorus. This event, which began in 1938, was similar to the spring band concert, in that guest artists were presented as well. The 1940 program featured the "Esquires," a local mens' singing group; Betty Freeland, visiting soprano from New York; the Beaumont High School Girls' Quartet; and the Girls' Chorus. The chorus performed the cantata "The Lady of Shalott" (Tennyson-Bendall). A review of this program observed that "the young singers, looking fresh and lovely in pastel gowns, responded closely to their director, giving the Bendall work a careful clear interpretation."<sup>23</sup>

The Spring Choral Festival ceased to exist after 1941. One would assume that the program no longer bore this title following the resignation of Louise Goldstein in 1942. However, activity by the high school choral groups continued

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<sup>23</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

to be much a part of Music Week during the years that followed.

Another aspect of musical life at Beaumont High School was its music library. It was considered "one of the most extensive and complete" school music libraries in the state.<sup>24</sup> Begun by Lena Milam in 1919, it contained an impressive list of symphonies, overtures, concertos, chamber music, hymns, anthems and technique books.

#### Participation in Annual School and Community Events

In April of 1936, Dr. Joseph E. Maddy, head of the University of Michigan music department and newly elected president of the Music Educators National Conference, stopped in Beaumont to recruit students for his National High School Band and Orchestra Camp at Interlochen, Michigan. After conducting the Beaumont High School Orchestra, Dr. Maddy addressed the music students and teachers. The following is an excerpt from that speech:

It is most evident that music plays an important part in the civic life of this community. I think the fact may be attributed largely to the splendid organization of the school music departments. These young people are engaged in not one but several musical enterprises. Each time they play, they interest a new group.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Newspaper clipping, Fall 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>25</sup>Beaumont Journal, April 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Lena Milam had a powerful influence on her music students and strongly felt that their talents should be shared with the community. It was her belief that "individual brilliance, while admirable, is for the talented, but musical culture and participation is for the many and should reach out into the whole community. Her whole system of teaching [was] geared on this theory."<sup>26</sup>

School music students were active in a number of annual school and community events during the 1930s. In addition to the Fehr Christmas Party, the High School Band Concert, and the Spring Choral Festival previously mentioned, the following events are noted.

#### The School Music Festival

The School Music Festival, which began in 1921, was the forerunner of Music Week activities in Beaumont, and became an integral part of Music Week following its beginning in 1922. These programs involved the participation of music students in all levels of the Beaumont Schools. Often the programs were divided, with the elementary and junior high groups performing on one night, and the high school groups on another. This festival lost its identity in the late 1930s following the establishment of the Jefferson County Music Festival.

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<sup>26</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

### The Jefferson County Music Festival

This event began in the spring of 1936 and continued through the spring of 1941. The festival started as a Music Week celebration commemorating the Texas centennial. Elementary, junior high, and high school music groups from all over Jefferson County met at Beaumont High School Stadium to review marching units, bands, drum and bugle corps, and to hear various school choral and orchestral groups. Oscar J. Fox, Texas composer, was the special guest and sang several of his own songs. The finale was the singing of "America" by the audience and choruses, which were accompanied by the instrumental groups.<sup>27</sup> During the six years that this event was held, Lena Milam served as chairman of the orchestral and choral groups.

In 1938, the festival was expanded to include students from all over southeast Texas. The 1940 event featured downtown parades and concerts by bands, orchestras, choruses and rhythm bands throughout the city. Radio stations KFDM and KRIC carried full radio broadcasts of the festival.

The Music Festival was hosted by Port Arthur in 1939, and in 1941 it was held in Orange under the general direction of Lena Milam. One would assume that the outbreak of World War II was responsible for the festival's termination.

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<sup>27</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

### Community Christmas Program

The Christmas season was always a busy one for the school music groups. Civic clubs, hospitals, and business establishments frequently sought entertainment and Dr. Milam and her students were eager to oblige them.

The Community Christmas Program, sponsored by the Woman's Club Chorus and begun in 1928, was an event in which the children of all Beaumont's schools participated. As an active member of the Woman's Club, Lena Milam was regularly involved in this program, often conducting the Young People's Civic Orchestra. This orchestra, organized in 1933, was composed principally of Beaumont High School students and students from the South Park schools and Lamar College. In addition to performing for the Community Christmas Program, the orchestra made appearances at the South Texas State Fair, Armistice Day programs, and Easter services. Only occasional references to the group could be found after 1941.

The Community Christmas Program frequently involved skits and pageants in which students from the various schools, church choirs, and community groups, sang sacred and secular Christmas selections. The traditional finale of this popular event came to be the singing of Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus, performed by massed choirs and orchestra.

### South Texas State Fair

Community and school groups were much a part of the South Texas State Fair during the 1920s and 1930s. School groups frequently provided entertainment and set up booths to demonstrate their activities and achievements. Lena Milam made good use of this opportunity by advertising her school music program and showing its benefits to the community.

In 1936 the Beaumont Music Commission sponsored a "Music Day" at the fair. Lena Milam was general chairman of the program committee and organized the following program:

#### MUSIC DAY, Oct. 22, 1936

- 12:00 Beaumont High School Band  
R. A. Dhossche, director
- 12:45 Beaumont High School Orchestra  
assisted by Averill Rhythm boys, L. Milam,  
director
- 1:30 Lamar College Orchestra and Soloists  
H. L. Kanaday, director
- 2:30 South Park High School Orchestra,  
assisted by double quartet, Dundee Sheeks,  
director
- 3:30 Crockett and Dowling Junior Glee Clubs  
Mrs. Mary Powell and Marjorie Gough, directors
- 4:00 Crockett and Dowling Combined Orchestras  
R. A. Dhossche, director
- 4:30 Woman's Club Chorus  
E. O. Bangs, director; Mrs. Geo. Kach, accompa-  
nist
- 5:00 Beaumont High School Chorus  
Louise Goldstein, director; Evelyn Lyle,  
accompanist
- 5:30 Larry Fisher's Accordionaires
- 6:00 Vic Insirillo and band
- 8:00 Edward Kane, tenor  
accompanied by Elizabeth Causey<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Document, 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



Participation in State Organizations  
and Contests

Performing at state meetings and participating in district and state contests was a common occurrence for music students of the Beaumont School District. As contests neared, private teachers assisted students in polishing their contest selections and school teachers put in extra hours in the preparation of ensembles. Evidence indicates that both teachers and students were justly rewarded for their efforts.

In keeping with their record of past years for producing the most number of winners in state competition, Beaumont's young musicians won seventeen first places at the state contests in 1934.<sup>29</sup> Again in 1936 a large contingent of Beaumont students traveled to Fort Worth to take part in the state contests. This group walked away with nineteen first places, while Waco finished second with six.<sup>30</sup> Waco was runner-up again in 1937, as Beaumont students received twenty-one first places, with both the Beaumont High School Band and Orchestra winning top honors. Once again Beaumont had the largest group represented.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Newspaper clipping, April 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>30</sup>Newspaper clipping, April 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>31</sup>Newspaper clipping, April 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Beaumont students also took part in the annual conventions of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) and the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). In February of 1939, Beaumont High School placed nineteen students in the orchestra, four in the band, and twelve in all-state groups that performed at the state convention of TMEA in Houston.<sup>32</sup> Both the Beaumont High School Band, directed by R. A. Dhossche, and a string ensemble, directed by Lena Milam, were featured on programs during the 1934 TSTA convention in Galveston.<sup>33</sup> Similar participation was noted in 1938 and 1941.

#### Special Projects and Curriculum Development

In the fall of 1935, Lena Milam initiated a course of study designed to nurture the development of her students' creativity. For the first ten weeks of the school year, students in all levels of the Beaumont schools were guided in writing melodies to original lyrics that were then harmonized, orchestrated, and performed by the high school orchestra. (One assumes that the more advanced students were involved in the actual part writing and orchestration.) The students then created art works that illustrated each composition. In November, a "Circus-Review" was

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<sup>32</sup>Newspaper clipping, January 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>33</sup>Newspaper clipping, 24 November 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

held at David Crockett Junior High School and the results of this program were displayed.<sup>34</sup> This creative project paralleled the current developments in music education in the mid 1930s as discussed by Fox and Hopkins in their book entitled Creative School Music.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, the NBC Music Appreciation Hour featuring Walter Damrosch continued to be an important learning resource for students of the Beaumont School District. The purpose of these radio programs was "to supplement . . . local instruction in the appreciation of music by presenting . . . a type of program not otherwise available in the average school."<sup>36</sup> Student notebooks were provided by NBC to schools at a cost of ten cents each. Each contained complete programs for that particular series, thematic illustrations of the compositions to be played, multiple-choice tests, leading questions designed to stimulate independent thought, and pictures of composers and instruments.

Beaumont was among the first cities in the nation to receive a series of movies made available to school districts for the purpose of enhancing music education. The

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<sup>34</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>35</sup>Lillian M. Fox and L. Thomas Hopkins, Creative School Music (New York: Silver Burdett Co., 1936)

<sup>36</sup>Instructor's Manual for the NBC Music Appreciation Hour, 1938, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

series, shown in the fall of 1941, was prefaced with an introduction by John Erskine, noted poet, and consisted of seven, thirty minute concerts by such famous musical artists as Mildred Dilling, Jose Iturbi, John McCormack, Albert Spalding, and Kirsten Flagstad. Mrs. Beeman Strong, chairman of the Beaumont Music Commission, made arrangements to acquire these films for the Beaumont schools.<sup>37</sup>

In 1938, the Steck Publishing Company of Austin, Texas, published the first of a set of music worktexts by Lena Milam. This graded series was subsequently adopted as the music text in all schools of the Beaumont School District. Further discussion of this series appears on page 199.

### Community Involvement

#### The Music Study Club

Although a high point of activity seems to have occurred just prior to the Depression, the Music Study Club continued to function as "Beaumont's leading independent musical organization" during the 1930s.<sup>38</sup> The club met bi-monthly until 1938 when meetings were scheduled once a month. As was the case during the 1920s, the club did not meet during the summer months. It was during this time that members attended workshops, studied privately through-

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<sup>37</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., November 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>38</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1934, Lena Milam Archives Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, Texas.

out the country or simply took vacations. The Music Study Club still sponsored the Juvenile Music Study Club, the Junior Music Study Club, and the Student Chapter. In addition to regular meetings and programs, the organization also sponsored special musical events that were open to all Beaumonters. One of many such events was a community concert sponsored jointly by the Music Study Club and the Beaumont Music Commission in March of 1936. This program featured Mrs. Guy Stowell, a contralto from Houston, accompanied by Mrs. Julius Gordon, a local pianist, and was held in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont.<sup>39</sup> The big social event of music week continued to be the Music Study Club luncheon given on the last day of Music Week. As was customary, out of town guests were invited and music programs were held.

Meetings during the 1930s were similar to those of the 20s. Members discussed the history and performed the music of various periods, styles, and countries. In the 1932-33 season, the organization presented a series of programs on American music. The first in this series was entitled "The Early Development of American Music." This program, organized by Bernice Wilkerson, illustrates a rather well planned and interesting program. (See Appendix, page 218).

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<sup>39</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Musical appreciation highlighted the 1934-35 year. Topics for discussion included programs on "Motets and Madrigals of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries;"<sup>40</sup> "The Symphonic Poem" and "Nationality in Early and Modern Symphonic Music;"<sup>41</sup> "Sonata Form;"<sup>42</sup> and "Classic and Modern Suites,"<sup>43</sup> a program which was arranged by Lena Milam.

In the fall of 1936, the Music Study Club inaugurated a series of monthly concerts in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont. These programs, given on Monday evenings, were open to the public. The first concert in this series was on December 23, 1936, and featured Edwin Knapp, baritone from Lake Charles, Louisiana, and his wife, Laura.<sup>44</sup> Many out of town artists were featured as recovery from the Depression years steadily progressed.

Two rather significant changes in the format of the Music Study Club's meetings occurred toward the end of the decade. In October of 1937, the club began meeting twice a month on Fridays for lunch. These meetings coincided with

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<sup>40</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p. November 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>41</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>42</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 10 February 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>43</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., Fall 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>44</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

the Walter Damrosch radio broadcasts being carried over KFDM radio station. The usual night meetings were abandoned as all of the programs were associated with the broadcasts. Membership in the organization was then limited to thirty members. At the first meeting of the 1938-39 season, Mrs. Oswald Parker, president of the club, announced the purpose of the club as being "more social than studious, and for the pure enjoyment of music by music lovers than for a study of technicalities."<sup>45</sup> As a result, the custom of formal programs was discarded in favor of spontaneous ones where members played their own preferences.

Lena Milam remained actively involved in the Music Study Club during the 1930s. She hosted many programs, held several offices and provided musical entertainment on numerous occasions. At the luncheon which closed the 1936 music week activities, she directed an ensemble of four violins and piano as accompaniment to a flag pageant commemorating the centennial anniversary of Texas independence.

#### The Woman's Club

The Woman's Club continued to be the cultural and civic center for the women of Beaumont during the 1930s. Many of the club's representatives served on various civic organizations such as the Beaumont Music Commission and the

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<sup>45</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1938, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Civic Assembly. Members frequently assisted in Red Cross relief work, anti-tuberculosis drives, and many other civic and welfare projects. By 1937, some three hundred members belonged to one or more of the club's eleven departments.<sup>46</sup> Club-sponsored musical organizations included the music department chorus, piano ensemble, Junior Study, and the La Petite Piano and String Ensemble. Other club departments were literature, history, writers, art, Shakespeare, and home and civic.

The music department also continued to hold regular meetings at which musical discussions were given and programs presented. The members discussed a wide variety of musical topics. The life and works of Schubert<sup>47</sup>, women composers and the influence of women in the world of music<sup>48</sup>, seventeenth century music<sup>49</sup>, American music<sup>50</sup>, and

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<sup>46</sup>Newspaper clipping, The Houston Post, 12 September 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>47</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1932, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>48</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>49</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>50</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



the instruments of the orchestra<sup>51</sup> were but a few of the topics featured.

The department's policy of sponsoring concerts by local artists was also continued during the 1930s. However, it sponsored very few performances by prominent artists. This task was taken over by the Beaumont Music Commission when it began its artist series in 1934. The music department also participated in the club's weekly radio broadcasts that aired in 1937.

The Community Christmas Concert, sponsored by the Woman's Club Chorus, became one of the most popular annual musical events for Beaumonters in the 1930's. The concert was traditionally given on a Sunday afternoon in December and frequently attracted near capacity crowds in the city auditorium. Choirs and glee clubs from the city schools, members of local church choirs, the Port Arthur Symphony Club Chorus, and the Woman's Club Chorus joined forces in presenting this concert of sacred and secular music. School children often dramatized Christmas scenes as the massed choirs sang traditional Christmas carols. The choirs were under the direction of E. Orlo Bangs, director of both the Woman's Club Chorus and the Port Arthur Symphony Club Chorus. The Young People's Civic Orchestra, conducted by

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<sup>51</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Sunday Enterprise, 27 November 1932, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Lena Milam, provided selections during the program and accompanied the chorus in the finale.

The Woman's Club Piano Ensemble was formed, to a great extent, by a twist of fate. Mrs. Beeman Strong was a fine Beaumont pianist who maintained a busy schedule performing throughout the city. In 1932, she accidentally broke her arm and was unable to honor her many commitments. After attending a Houston performance by the piano team Maier and Patterson, she realized that her dilemma might be alleviated by forming a piano ensemble. She contributed a grand piano to the Women's Club which provided--together with the three grand pianos already in use--the necessary instrumentation for a quartet. Mrs. Strong was elected president of the ensemble which gave its first performance in May, 1932, under the direction of Jewell Harned.<sup>52</sup>

The Piano Ensemble performed works by Bach, Mozart, Tschaikowsky, Ravel, Debussy, and others. Eight hand playing was common with performances on occasion involving as many as sixteen hands. The ensemble gave semiannual public concerts in addition to its many appearances at club functions, Music Week programs, and Texas Federation of Music Clubs conventions. On many occasions, the club's string ensemble and chorus either assisted the Piano Ensemble or shared programs. The ensemble's 1933 Music Week

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<sup>52</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 19 April 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

program featured Charlotte Strong, violinist, and the club's string ensemble. A newspaper account of this performance describes the event as "immeasurably successful, encompassing in length, musical territory and authority of performance the requisites of a well-balanced evening musicale."<sup>53</sup>

In the fall of 1937, Josef Evans, organist and choir director at the First Baptist Church, began directing the Woman's Club Piano Ensemble. In 1940, he accepted a position at the Second Baptist Church of Houston but returned to Beaumont twice a week to teach privately and lead the ensemble. He directed the group until the fall of 1942.

The La Petite Club, established in 1933, consisted of young junior members who were being groomed for senior membership in the Woman's Club. In the fall of 1936, Lena Milam organized the La Petite Piano and String Ensemble. This group consisted of four pianos, strings, and harp and was in demand for programs of all kinds in the city and in neighboring towns.<sup>54</sup>

Lena Milam contributed significantly to the activities of the Woman's Club in the 1930s. In addition to her involvement in the Community Christmas Concert and La Petite

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<sup>53</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 8 May 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>54</sup>Newspaper clipping, The Houston Post, 12 September 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Club, she provided entertainment for numerous club functions and took an active part in music department meetings, often as discussion leader or speaker. The Woman's Club honored Dr. Milam by presenting a concert in her honor on April 27, 1938, the opening night of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs' state convention in Beaumont.<sup>55</sup>

#### Other Clubs and Organizations

Lena Milam was one of the founders of the Beaumont Altrusa Club. This club was formed in 1930 and received its charter as a member of the Altrusa national organization in the fall of 1932. This club's most fundamental purpose was to advance the position of women in business and society. Referred to as a "builder of women," the organization operated around three ideals--"patriotism, service, and efficiency."<sup>56</sup> The club met semi-monthly, October through May, for a luncheon, musical program, and meeting. In 1935, the Altrusa Club became international in scope, establishing chapters throughout the world.

Lena Milam was well suited to membership in the Altrusa Club. Since returning to Beaumont in 1911, she had established an outstanding career and had become recognized throughout the community as a strong civic leader. Her

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<sup>55</sup>Newspaper clipping, The Beaumont Journal, 21 April 1938, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>56</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1932, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

assertiveness and determination were qualities that became assets in promoting the club's ideals.

Dr. Milam provided many musical programs for the Altrusa Club during her long and active association with the group. The club recognized her as one of its outstanding members. Prior to Dr. Milam's departure for Mondsee, Austria, in the summer of 1933, the club members hosted a surprise shower in her honor. This event was in recognition of her being selected to teach at the Austro-American Conservatory. In the spring of 1934, she was elected president for the 1934-35 club year and served a second term during the 1935-36 season. Dr. Milam was one of three Beaumont women to be elected as local entries in the International Altrusa's "Who's Who."<sup>57</sup>

Lena Milam was also a member of the local chapter of the American Association of University Women (organized in 1937) and organized several musical programs for the club's functions. She remained active in the Business and Professional Woman's Club and was honored by the Col. George Moffett chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution as its "woman of music of the year" for 1940.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>58</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1 December 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

### The Schubert Ensemble

The Schubert Ensemble, directed by Lena Milam, became one of the most active performing groups in the city of Beaumont during the 1930s. By mid-decade the ensemble was performing almost weekly at civic gatherings, club meetings, theater performances, and many other functions. The group became well known in the southeast Texas area and made numerous out-of-town appearances.

Performing for Little Theatre audiences became a regular activity of the Schubert Ensemble. This tradition, begun in 1927, was one of the primary functions of the ensemble in the 1930s. Often the costumes worn by the ensemble and the music performed reflected the theme, period, or nationality of the play. The following program, given for the 1937 production of "Elizabeth The Queen," by Maxwell Anderson, demonstrates this point:

(Before the play)	
Suite in C.....	Purcell
(Between Acts I and II)	
Hark, Hark the Lark.....	Schubert
Nymphs and Shepherds.....	Purcell
(Between Acts II and III)	
In Elizabethan Days.....	Kramer
Minuet from "Sixth Suite".....	Rameau
(After the play)	
Gavotte from "Ighigenia in Aulis".....	Gluck <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Program, "Elizabeth The Queen," Beaumont Little Theatre, March 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The Schubert Ensemble contributed significantly to the success of the Little Theatre during the 1930s. Lena Milam viewed the dramatic arts as an important part of community life and enthusiastically offered her support. Furthermore, the Little Theatre presented another opportunity to perform --an enticement Dr. Milam could not resist. The Schubert Ensemble's association with the Little Theatre ceased in 1938 when the company disbanded due to economic difficulties.

The Woman's Club and the Music Study Club both recognized the talents and popularity of Dr. Milam's group and frequently featured them on programs. In addition to appearances at club meetings, the ensemble performed on several evening programs open to the public. One of the earliest community opera productions in Beaumont was "Iolanthe" by Gilbert and Sullivan. This production, presented on January 30 and 31, 1933, was sponsored by the Woman's Club Chorus and directed by E. Orlo Bangs, director of the chorus. The Schubert Ensemble provided music for the production which was conducted by Lena Milam.<sup>60</sup>

The civic clubs of Beaumont often solicited the services of the Schubert Ensemble for meetings, banquets, and conventions. The ensemble presented programs for the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Altrusa Club,

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<sup>60</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Pilot International, and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Moreover, the group made regular appearances at Christmas parties, Easter sunrise services, Fourth of July celebrations, Music Week programs, and musicales sponsored by the Beaumont Music Commission.

During the 1930s, the Schubert Ensemble acquired a reputation throughout east Texas. The group gave special concerts at Ennis (March 9, 1934) and Nacogdoches (March 10, 1934).<sup>61</sup> In February, 1935, the ensemble presented an evening concert at the invitation of the Senior and Junior Federated Music Clubs of Tyler, Texas. The ensemble's services were free and the proceeds went toward the purchase of orchestra instruments for the Tyler High School Orchestra.<sup>62</sup> It also gave performances during the Music Week observances in Lufkin (May, 1936) and for the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas (June 15, 1936).

The Centennial Exposition was held throughout the summer and fall of 1936 and featured performances by school and community groups across the state. The Schubert Ensemble was one of several Beaumont groups to perform. The Beaumont High School Band appeared on June 27 and the First Methodist Orchestra under the direction of Lena Milam, on

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<sup>61</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 3 March 1934, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>62</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



November 1.<sup>63</sup> The concert given by the Schubert Ensemble included "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" (allegro) by Mozart, "Valse Triste" by Sibelius, "Malaguena" by Lecuona, and a medley of Victor Herbert favorites. Featured on the program were Eloise Milam, soprano (Lena Milam's daughter-in-law); O. G. Parks, Jr., pianist; and a vocal trio consisting of Eloise Milam, Margaret Thomas, and Dundee Sheeks.<sup>64</sup>

With Lena Milam teaching in Denton for the summer, Dundee Sheeks was given the responsibility of making travel arrangements for the Dallas trip. In a letter from Sheeks to Lena Milam, she expressed her frustration over the many problems she encountered, such as transportation, performers unable to go, etc. She wrote, "I sympathized before--now I have a feeling of reverence for however you have done it all these years."<sup>65</sup>

Music and performing practically dominated Lena Milam's life. She was constantly arranging programs, performing, going to concerts, attending music club meetings, and teaching. Much of the time she provided transportation for others. A 1935 newspaper article mentions an instance in which Dr. Milam's car stalled on the way to pick up members

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<sup>63</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>64</sup>Program from the Texas Centennial Exposition, 15 June 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>65</sup>Dundee Sheeks to Lena Milam, 8 June 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

of her Schubert Ensemble. After being told that repair work would take two hours, she purchased a new car to save time. Her remark was, "The people, the dear people, come first."<sup>66</sup> It is doubtful that this rather humorous scenario actually occurred. Nevertheless, it clearly demonstrates Lena Milam's consideration for others and determination that "the show must go on."

With the outbreak of World War II, members of the Schubert Ensemble, as other Beaumonters, began devoting their energies to the war effort. Following a gradual decrease in membership, the ensemble disbanded in 1942.

#### The First Methodist Choir and Orchestra

The churches of Beaumont maintained active music programs throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In addition to their usual function of providing music for worship, Beaumont church choirs frequently participated in annual community events such as Music Week and community Christmas concerts. The Westminster Presbyterian, First Baptist, First Christian, St. Anthony's Catholic, St. Mark's Episcopal, and the First Methodist choirs were among the more active in Beaumont.

The First Methodist Church played an important role in the development of community music in Beaumont. This church was the site of countless musical programs by many different

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<sup>66</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

groups. Guest choirs and artists gave Music Week concerts and recitals at the church, and community musicales were common.

Under the leadership of Mrs. J. L. (Lena) Kershner and E. Orlo Bangs, the First Methodist Choir developed into one of the city's most prominent church choirs. It gave annual musicales and cantatas at Christmas and Easter, and regularly participated in Music Week activities and other community music functions. Lena Milam was a member of the First Methodist Church and sang alto in the church choir.

In December of 1929, Dr. Milam organized the First Methodist Orchestra. This group was a regular part of the Sunday night worship services until the late 1930s. It rehearsed at 5:00 on Sunday evenings, after which some members remained for church meetings. The orchestra then presented a fifteen minute program immediately preceding the 7:30 service.

The First Methodist Orchestra was composed of high school and college students, teachers, and professional and non-professional community musicians. Many of its members were actively involved in the Schubert Ensemble, Mozart Violin Choir, and the Beaumont High School Orchestra. Several players, although not members of the First Methodist Church, saw the orchestra as a means of broadening their musical experiences. The orchestra seems to have attained a

peak in its development in the mid-1930s. During this time its personnel consisted of over fifty players.

Although the programs presented by the orchestra were light in nature, the selection of music was of generally good quality. Its repertoire largely consisted of symphonic movements, opera excerpts, and other orchestral works. Lighter selections included waltzes, folk song settings and short contemporary descriptive pieces. On January 13, 1935, the First Methodist Orchestra, under the direction of Lena Milam, presented the following concert. This program is representative of the type performances that the orchestra gave:

Melodie, Op. 42, No. 3.....	Tschaikowsky
Berceuse.....	Iljinsky
Cappriccio Brilliant.....	Mendelssohn
Evening Star from Tannhäuser.....	Wagner <sup>67</sup>

Occasionally, the regular worship hour was used to present special musical programs by both the First Methodist Choir and Orchestra. This practice became an annual custom during Music Week. The orchestra also appeared at civic functions and at several conventions, namely those associated with the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. On November 1, 1936, the First Methodist Orchestra performed at the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas. This program was

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<sup>67</sup>Program of the First Methodist Orchestra, 13 January 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

one of a series of musicales presented at the exposition that was sponsored by the Texas Federation of Music Clubs.<sup>68</sup>

On December 19, 1937, the First Methodist Choir and Orchestra presented the Christmas cantata, The Story of Christmas, by H. Alexander Matthews. This may have been the orchestra's final performance as no further references to the group were encountered.

#### The Beaumont Music Commission

The Beaumont Music Commission continued to play a leading role in developing community music in the 1930's. The commission's activities primarily consisted of sponsoring Music Week, community concerts, and Artists Series concerts by prominent artists.

The Depression affected the operations of the Music Commission considerably. In the early years the commission was financed through proceeds collected from advertisements in the Music Week booklet. For five years (1925-31) an annual appropriation was given by the city. However, the Depression crippled Beaumont's economy in 1931 and city support was withdrawn. Consequently, the commission experienced a period of partial inactivity. In 1932, the commission established an associate membership status to expand interest in and support for the commission. Although this move appeared to be somewhat successful, it was not

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<sup>68</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1936, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

until Mrs. Beeman (Nancy) Strong was elected chairman of the commission in 1933 that recovery became eminent.

When Judge and Mrs. Beeman Strong moved to Beaumont from Houston in 1925, the Beaumont Music Commission was actively supporting community concerts and Music Week performances by local artists and occasionally importing artists from nearby cities. The commission was not active in bringing prominent artists to the city. This service had been provided by two concert managers, Ione Towns Locke of Beaumont, and Edna Saunders of Houston. Mrs. Strong presented a plan to the commission to provide regular performances by renowned artists at reasonable prices. The idea was enthusiastically received and the Artist Series was adopted.

The plan called for selling season tickets at a cost of \$1.00 each. The ticket guaranteed the holder admission to all concerts on the series for the season. The first season was offered during the winter of 1935. Three performances were booked: The Don Cossack Russian Chorus, Maier and Pattison (two-piano team), and Mildred Dilling (nationally famous harpist). An overflow crowd of over sixteen hundred people packed the Beaumont High School auditorium for the first concert, and were treated to "the most amazing exhibition of ensemble singing ever heard in Beaumont."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 15 January 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Concerts during the second season were held in the city auditorium to accommodate larger crowds and ticket prices were increased to \$1.50. By 1938, ticket prices had escalated to \$3.00 (balcony) and \$5.00 (downstairs) as subscribers insisted on more prominent and expensive artists.

During the 1930s and early 1940s, an impressive list of guest artists performed on the Artist Series. Among these were Albert Spalding (American violinist, 1936), the Vienna Boys Choir (1936), Henlen Jepson (Metropolitan soprano, 1936), Ruth Slenczynski (child pianist, 1937), Gladys Swarthout (soprano, 1937), the Houston Symphony Orchestra (1938), Nathan Milstein (violinist, 1938), Lily Pons (coloratura soprano, 1938), Grace Moore (soprano, 1939), Nelson Eddy (baritone, 1941), and Jose Iturbi (pianist, 1941).<sup>70</sup>

Mrs. Beeman Strong guided the Music Commission so effectively that she was repeatedly re-elected chairman. The city of Beaumont showed its appreciation to her on November 4, 1954, when Mayor Elmo Beard proclaimed that day "Mrs. Beeman Strong Appreciation Day." Mrs. Strong served as chairman of the Music Commission until her death in 1964.

The Beaumont Music Commission continued to sponsor community concerts by local and out-of-town artists during

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<sup>70</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 29 October 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

the 1930s. In 1933, the commission began sponsoring a series of monthly Sunday afternoon concerts. These programs were held at the city auditorium, Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont, First Methodist Church, Woman's Club auditorium, and various other locations around the city. Many artists from area cities (Lake Charles, Port Arthur, Houston, etc.) and college groups from both the University of Texas and Baylor University made appearances. In 1932, the commission also began co-sponsoring the Community Christmas Concert with the Woman's Club Chorus.

During the 1930s, Lena Milam served on the Music Commission with distinction. She was a regular member of the committees on community concerts and Music Week, and when the two committees were combined in 1940, she was appointed chairman of the joint committee. The success of the community concert program and the Music Week activities can in no small way be attributed to her efforts. Writing in the Beaumont Journal, Merita Mills paid tribute to Lena Milam for the prominent role she played in Music Week.

Music weeks do not just happen . . . They are the products of inspired industry [and] cooperative achievements brought about by the magnetic leadership of a central medium--in this case Lena Milam.<sup>71</sup>

Although Music Week remained an important event during the 1930s, it did not measure up to the observances of the late 1920s. With economic times being hard, the Music

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<sup>71</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 10 May 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



Commission could no longer rely on the generous \$400 or \$500 donations from Beaumont's wealthy businessmen and oil executives. Subsequently, it was unable to import artists, publish printed souvenir programs, and sponsor as many worthwhile events. As years went on, the program dwindled. The annual choir festival given by selected singers from the local church choirs was the only major community event that managed to stay on the schedule. By 1940, it had also vanished. Ultimately, it was Beaumont's younger generation of musicians, its school children, that made the greatest contribution to this event. Under the direction of Lena Milam, the primary and elementary schools presented music festivals, the junior high school orchestras gave programs, and all of the Beaumont High School groups participated. The Woman's Club Piano Ensemble and chorus continued their support and the Music Study Club still presented its annual musical luncheon.

A special feature of the 1941 Music Week observance was a performance of Ballad for Americans, a cantata by John LaTouche and Earl Robinson. This work gained national acclaim in the late 1930s when presented on the CBS program "Pursuit of Happiness." The Beaumont performance was presented by two of the city's more popular performing groups, the Beaumont Light Opera Company and the Esquires.

The Beaumont Light Opera Company was organized in February of 1936 with Jewell Harned as director. This

organization was an outgrowth of a light opera group associated with Lamar College that was active from 1929 to 1934. During its brief history, the Beaumont Light Opera Company produced Gilbert and Sullivan's Ruddigore, The Gondoliers, The Mikado, H. M. S. Pinafore, and Sigmund Romberg's Blossom Time. The organization disbanded when World War II took so many of its male singers away.

The Esquires was a men's chorus that often performed at Music Week programs, Community Christmas Concerts, and other community events during the late 1930s. The group was founded and directed by O. G. Parks in 1938 and remained active until 1942, when it also became a casualty of the war. Parks was an extremely gifted pianist and composer. He graduated from South Park High School, attended Lamar College, received his bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University, and his master's degree from North Texas State Teachers' College. In addition to appearing on programs and recitals all over the city and state, he served as pianist at the Roberts Avenue Methodist Church and the Westminster Presbyterian Church. He was also a member of Lena Milam's Schubert Ensemble for many years and was very active in the Beaumont Light Opera Company.<sup>72</sup> The Beaumont Music Commission established a memorial scholarship fund in his honor following his untimely death in 1943.

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<sup>72</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 27 May 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

### Private Teaching

Although the Depression had somewhat of an effect on the amount of Beaumont students studying privately, it seemed to have very little consequence on the number taught by Lena Milam. An examination of her recital programs during the 1930s shows that she taught approximately twenty students yearly, with little or no change noted during the Depression years. This observation might well be explained by the fact that she generously taught many students without remuneration.<sup>73</sup>

### State, National, and International Influence

#### The Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs.

In 1932, Lena Milam was elected president of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs at its annual convention in Dallas. During her two year term, she attended numerous district conventions and board meetings. She was the honored guest at parties, luncheons, and teas throughout the state as she carried out her executive duties.

Beaumont musicians were enthusiastic in their support of Dr. Milam as is evidenced by their attendance at conventions. Some one hundred fifty students, teachers, and club representatives traveled to Galveston for the state convention in 1934. The Woman's Club Chorus and the Beaumont High

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<sup>73</sup>Eloise Milam, telephone interview, Beaumont, Texas, 18 August 1987.

School Chorus gave special performances at the convention, and baby bands, harmonica bands, and chamber music groups from Beaumont's senior and junior high schools also participated.

Following her two year term as president, Lena Milam assumed the position as chairman of both the past president's association and the senior contests committee. She remained extremely active in the Texas Federation of Music Clubs throughout the 1930s and gained state-wide respect for her abilities and accomplishments.

The city of Beaumont hosted the 1938 convention of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. On Wednesday, April 27, the Piano Ensemble of the Woman's Club sponsored an opening night concert honoring Lena Milam. The dedication to Dr. Milam in the official program read:

To our beloved Dr. Lena Milam, we extend this expression of appreciation and esteem for her zeal and devotion to the development of music in Beaumont and the state. With unequalled patience she has shared unselfishly her time and talents. She has given counsel reflecting the rewards of all efforts toward things worthwhile.

Dr. Milam's musical activities, accomplishments, and honors of local, state and national scope are many and her friends legion. Beaumont is proud to honor her most worthy citizen who has so finely touched and enriched the lives of others.<sup>74</sup>

The National Federation of Music Clubs was formed as a result of an assembly of music clubs that attended the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. The first biennial meeting of

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<sup>74</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1938, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

the organization was held just before the turn of the century and was chaired by Mrs. Theodore Thomas. In the twentieth century the federation became a "powerful, well-knit, and important musical organization" that made "invaluable contributions to the cause of music."<sup>75</sup>

Lena Milam became a board member of the National Federation of Music Clubs as a result of her election as state president in 1932. During her presidency she served on the National Presidents' Council which was composed of state federation presidents. In 1937, she was appointed as a member of the educational committee and chairman of the National Band and Orchestra, Junior Division. The latter position involved organizing the National Junior Orchestras and Bands that performed at the biennial national conventions. In addition, Dr. Milam served as director of the National Junior Orchestra in 1939 (Baltimore) and in 1941 (Los Angeles). As chairman of the Junior Orchestra and Band Division, Lena Milam "brought considerable recognition to Beaumont."<sup>76</sup>

The decade of the 1930s was an extremely busy time for Dr. Milam. In addition to her activities in Beaumont, she frequently traveled by car or train to board meetings and

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<sup>75</sup>John T. Howard and George K. Bellows, A Short History of Music in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1957), p. 178.

<sup>76</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

conventions of the Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs. As a member of the national board, Dr. Milam attended meetings and conventions in New Orleans (1932), St. Louis (1933), Dallas (1936), Chattanooga (1937), Chicago (1938), Baltimore (1939), Los Angeles (1941), and Cincinnati (1941).

On November 7, 1941, Lena Milam was presented with a life membership in the National Federation of Music Clubs. This honor was given during the fine arts program that highlighted the Fourth District Texas Federation of Music Clubs convention held in Beaumont. Writing in the Sunday Enterprise, Merita Mills indicated uncertainty as to the origin of the idea but stated, "I know personally a couple of hundred folk who'd mortgage the homestead to help get 'Lena' a platinum baton if she wanted one."<sup>77</sup>

#### Membership in Professional Organizations

In November 1933, Lena Milam chaired the music section of the Texas State Teachers' Association at its state convention in Austin. The theme of the convention was "Music and the New Deal" and the central issue was the slight recognition given music and the arts by the National Recovery Act. At this convention the TSTA heartily endorsed the resolution adopted by its sponsor organization, the National Education Association (NEA). This resolution

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<sup>77</sup>Newspaper clipping, Sunday Enterprise, 2 November 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

stated that education "must concern itself with physical and mental health and with emotional, social, and spiritual responses as well as with reasoning powers." It further maintained that "curtailments in educational budgets must not be permitted to affect vitally the cultural subjects, especially music."<sup>78</sup>

Dr. Milam was again elected chairman of the music section of TSTA in 1940 and attended the state convention in Fort Worth. She was also in charge of the instrumental section for which she gave a demonstration of teaching methods. In the intervening years, she served on the state committee on curriculum changes and the state advisory committee.

In 1939, Lena Milam was invited to serve on the committee on music in motion pictures, which was organized by the NEA to discover and develop ways and means to use the motion picture as an aid to better understand and appreciate music.<sup>79</sup> The same year Dr. William E. Jones, head of the music department at Texas State College for Women; Dr. William Doty of the University of Texas; and Dr. Milam were appointed to the state advisory board by L. A. Woods, of the state department of education. The primary purpose

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<sup>78</sup>Program for TSTA Convention, Austin, Texas, 1 December 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>79</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

of this committee was to establish requirements for music teachers in the state of Texas.

Dr. Milam was also a prominent figure in the Texas Music Educators' Association (TMEA). In 1940, she addressed the college and university music section at the TMEA convention in Mineral Wells. The title of her talk was "A Balanced Program in Public School Music for Texas Schools." As organizing chairman of the all-state orchestra, she spoke at the orchestra banquet on "Orchestra Training in Beaumont City Schools." The Beaumont High School Colonial Sextet (string ensemble) provided entertainment for the occasion.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Milam also served as state vice president of the orchestra division and chairman of the Region V orchestra division of TMEA.

As a member of the instrumental committee of the Music Educators' National Conference, Lena Milam chaired the Texas delegation at the 1936 national convention in New York. A program of the 1940 MENC convention in Los Angeles lists Dr. Milam as a member of the committee on instrumental music in the elementary school. During her association with MENC, she regularly attended conventions and placed many Beaumont High School orchestra students in the organization's regional and national orchestras.

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<sup>80</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1940, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



Dr. Milam was an active member in the Texas Music Teachers' Association and the Music Teachers' National Association during the 1930s.

#### Summer Teaching and Study

During the 1930s, Lena Milam maintained a rigorous schedule of summer activities that included numerous convention appearances and teaching responsibilities. In 1933, she was invited to teach at the Austro-American International Institute in Mondsee, Austria. This school, operated by the Austrian government, afforded American girls the opportunity to study with European teachers. Because of her expertise in the field of public school music, Dr. Milam received the distinct honor of being the only American on the staff.<sup>81</sup> Five Beaumont girls, Elizabeth Rothwell, Jane Clark, Charlotte Strong, and Mary and Fay Wilson accompanied Lena Milam as students of the institute. During their two month stay, they attended concerts by the artist members of the institute faculty, and made several trips to nearby Salzburg for performances of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at the Festspielhaus. Programs found in Dr. Milam's collection of memorabilia suggest that while in Salzburg, she attended a performance of Fidelio (Beethoven), with Richard Strauss conducting, and Orpheus and Eurydice (Gluck), conducted by Bruno Walter. Her attendance at many

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<sup>81</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 23 January 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

other concerts are noted as well. Prior to their return to Beaumont, Lena Milam and her students also visited Paris, Geneva, and London.<sup>82</sup>

In the summer of 1935, Dr. Milam once again taught at the College of Industrial Arts in Denton. From 1936 through 1941, she returned to Denton to teach summer classes at North Texas State Teachers College (later, North Texas State University) except for 1938, when she joined the staff at Sam Houston State Teachers College in Huntsville. During her tenure in Denton, Lena Milam earned the Bachelor's degree in public school music from North Texas State Teachers College (1936) and in 1942 received the Master of Music degree.

The summer of 1941 was a particularly busy time for Lena Milam. During the first six weeks, she taught in the music education department at the University of Texas in Austin. In addition to teaching elementary music methods at the university, Dr. Milam was a faculty member at the university's high school music clinic. This four week clinic, sponsored by the College of Fine Arts, provided lessons, classes, and laboratories in choral and instrumental music, and offered one unit of high school credit. Dr. Milam was a member of the distinguished faculty which included: Dr. Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, associate conductor

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<sup>82</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1933, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

of the Pittsburgh Symphony; Dr. Archie N. Jones, professor of music education and director of the clinic chorus; Dr. Jacob Kwalwasser, professor of education, Syracuse University; Dr. James Mursell, professor of music education, Columbia University; and William D. Revelli, director of the University of Michigan bands.<sup>83</sup> At the conclusion of the clinic, Dr. Milam traveled to Denton, Texas, to join the summer faculty at North Texas State Teachers College.

#### Honors and Awards

Lena Milam was the recipient of many outstanding awards and honors. In addition to those previously discussed, several others deserve mention.

In 1929, the Atwater Kent Foundation of Philadelphia named Lena Milam Southeast Texas Chairman of its annual voice auditions. The foundation presented cash awards from one thousand dollars to five thousand dollars, plus two years tuition to a music conservatory for each of the top five competitors in the national auditions. Dr. Milam was extended the honor again in 1930.

The Rotary Club of Beaumont honored Lena Milam in 1935 by conferring upon her the title of "Beaumont's most distinguished public servant."<sup>84</sup> As Dr. Milam received her

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<sup>83</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>84</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 5 June 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

award, "each member stood with reverent awe to pay tribute to one who so ennobled the lives of youth."<sup>85</sup> Excerpts from the resolution read as follows:

Lena Milam has instilled a love for music in the tender hearts of hosts of children. She opened up to them the magic world created by the music masters of the ages, a world in which we may find enjoyment, solace and inspiration for everything that is noble and beautiful. She has been most gracious and liberal in giving of her services to every religious, cultural and civic organization. Through the laurels which her orchestra won in numerous state contests, she put Beaumont on the musical map of Texas . . . . The Rotary club . . . feels that Lena Milam has richly earned the gratitude of the whole community by the ennobling influence which she has exerted upon the childhood and the youth of our city, and that her distinguished career should receive public recognition, and held up as a model for others to imitate and emulate.<sup>86</sup>

The Houston Post and the Campus Chat (school paper of the College of Industrial Arts) were among the many publications to run large articles pertaining to this event.

The Society of Arts and Sciences (New York) accorded Dr. Milam national recognition in 1935 for her "outstanding ability to bring together the various musical interests of the community and build up through the public schools of Beaumont a musical consciousness in her community."<sup>87</sup> The

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<sup>85</sup>"Rotarygrams" newsletter, 12 June 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>86</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 5 June 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>87</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1935, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

society was founded in 1883 and played an important role in the achievement of the arts and sciences in America.<sup>88</sup>

On Tuesday, June 8, 1937, Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas, bestowed on Lena Milam the degree Honorary Doctor of Music. This was the first time that a woman was given such an honor by any Texas institute of higher education and marked only the second such honor bestowed by Southwestern University.<sup>89</sup> This honor is particularly noteworthy when one considers the fact that Dr. Milam had received her bachelor's degree in public school music from North Texas State Teachers College the preceding year. Of the many congratulatory letters and telegrams from students, friends, clubs, and organizations, was a letter from Dr. H. W. Stopher, director of the school of music at Louisiana State University. "News has just reached me only yesterday of your recent honor. I extend my heartiest congratulations!"<sup>90</sup>

Lena Milam was one of ten Texans to be included in the 1941 edition of Who's Who in Music in America, issued in April 1941, by L. Stern Press of New York and Chicago. She was also listed in Who's Who Today in the Music World

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., June 1937, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>90</sup>H. W. Stopher, director of School of Music, Louisiana State University, to Lena Milam, n.d., Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

(1937), Notable Women of the Southwest (1939), and Pierre Key's Musical Who's Who (1940).

### CHAPTER III

#### THE WAR YEARS, 1942 - 1945

By 1940 Beaumont was well on its way to economic recovery from the Depression. Many residents once again enjoyed the luxuries of a strong economy and an easier way of life. Along with a more leisurely lifestyle came an increase in recreational activities and entertainment.

With the outbreak of war in Europe, however, Beaumonters began to sense a certain apprehension as to the country's involvement in yet another global conflict. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, this involvement became a certainty.

Beaumont was quick to rally to the nation's defense. The city's petroleum industry stepped up production in order to fuel the war machine. Government contracts were awarded to Beaumont's Pennsylvania Shipyards for the construction of cargo and naval vessels, and many war related industries increased their production of war materials.

In order to accommodate this boost in production, the city's work force was also increased. Many previously unemployed women took jobs in support of the war effort. Other residents resigned their current occupations to work

in the higher paying industries. This fact was most clearly illustrated in 1942 and 1943, when an unusually large number of the city's experienced teachers resigned their positions. Overcrowding resulted as thousands moved into the city. Others, unable to find accommodations, commuted from outlying areas, often traveling great distances. As a result of this sudden increase in the job market, the city's population grew from 59,000 in 1940 to approximately 80,000 by mid 1943.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to industrial output, Beaumonters joined the rest of the nation in sponsoring bond drives to raise funds to help finance the war effort. Business establishments, industries, organizations, and schools frequently held drives that netted large sums of money. The city's first bond drive was oversubscribed within five hours by \$278,000. For its accomplishment, the city was afforded the honor of having a bomber named after it.<sup>2</sup> Many Beaumont citizens also aided the cause by volunteering their services in civil defense and Red Cross work.

Community music activities in Beaumont were directly affected by the war. The Schubert Ensemble, Beaumont Light Opera Company, and the Esquires (men's chorus) all disbanded as the city's men enlisted in the armed forces or went to work in war-related industries. Beaumonters became preoccu-

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<sup>1</sup>Linsley, Beaumont, A Chronicle of Promise, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 107.



pied with the war effort and, as a result, were somewhat less involved in community music activities. Support for the Beaumont Music Commission's Artist Series declined considerably. Except for the annual Music Week activities, the commission ceased to sponsor community music events with any regularity. Music Week activities were on a noticeably smaller scale and became increasingly dependent on school groups and music club ensembles.

The war also had an effect on the activities of the city's music clubs. To boost the morale of the area's servicemen, the Music Study Club provided entertainment at service centers, promoted concerts by military personnel, and distributed musical instruments, phonographs, radios, and other musical items to military installations. The music clubs frequently sponsored the sale of stamps and war bonds, and encouraged their members to become involved in some form of activity in support of the war effort.

Beaumont's Melody Maids was one of several local organizations to make significant contributions to the cause. This group received state and national attention for its "exceptional service in promotion of the war effort."<sup>3</sup> The Melody Maids was founded and directed by Eloise Milam in 1942. The group provided an opportunity for young girls of junior high and high school age to develop their talents

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<sup>3</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

and share them with their community. Performing in costume and often utilizing elaborate sets and props, the girls sang their way into the hearts of many soldiers during and after the war. They presented their show "Serenade in Blue" repeatedly at service centers, veterans hospitals, war bond rallies, civic club meetings, and various other functions. The Melody Maids were "enormously popular" with the GI's and were called back for repeat performances time after time.<sup>4</sup>

The war was also a major factor in the activities of the school music organizations in the early 1940s. At a time when the entire nation was faced with rationing and other inconveniences, the schools maintained their active role in the community and did much toward contributing to the effort. The sale of defense stamps and war bonds was an ongoing project. Week long bond drives brought in large sums of money and "victory concerts" were presented by school groups to help finance the war.

School music groups also did their part in boosting the morale of both Beaumonters and servicemen. Concerts were given at local service centers and military bases, and patriotic music was heard throughout Beaumont as school music groups rallied to the country's support.

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<sup>4</sup>Newspaper clipping, school paper of Texas A and M University, January 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

## Music Education in the Schools

### The War Effort

In the fall of 1942 the Texas Department of Education sponsored a series of "victory concerts" by school children throughout the state to help promote the sale of war bonds and stamps. Governor Coke Stevenson officially set eight dates on which the concerts were to be given. To be admitted to the concerts, individuals were required to purchase either national defense stamps or war bonds. In addition to raising funds for the war effort, these programs did much to maintain the morale of those serving on the home front. Beaumont residents attended stirring patriotic pageants and concerts by their school organizations.

The first victory concert in Beaumont was given by the Beaumont High School Orchestra and chorus on October 15, 1942 in the city auditorium. This concert, directed by Lena Milam, was received by a very small audience and netted only \$54.95.<sup>5</sup> However, as the program developed, Beaumonters became increasingly involved, giving generously to support the cause. The second concert was given by the Beaumont High School Band and climaxed a week long bond sale that

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<sup>5</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 16 October 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

netted \$8,900.<sup>6</sup> Other schools sponsoring bond drives throughout the year included Ogden Elementary (\$6,335.55),<sup>7</sup> Fletcher Elementary (\$32,000),<sup>8</sup> and Averill Elementary (\$74,924.60).<sup>9</sup>

During the 1942-43 school year, Texas schools raised \$3,600,000 in proceeds from the defense stamps and war bond drives associated with the victory concerts. This amount was sufficient to purchase 4,000 jeeps at a cost of \$900 per jeep. The Texas quota was only 354 jeeps.<sup>10</sup>

Another important project undertaken by school music groups was to perform at area service centers and military bases. Encouraged, aided, and often sponsored by local music clubs, these groups did much to lift the spirits of many young servicemen. On February 26, 1944, a septet consisting of flute, trumpet, piano, three violins, and cello traveled to Camp Polk. The ensemble performed such favorites as "Holiday for Strings" (David Rose), "Sophisti-

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<sup>6</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 18 December 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>7</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>8</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 13 March 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>9</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>10</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

cated Lady" (Duke Ellington), and "Deep Purple" (Peter DeRose).<sup>11</sup>

Ensembles from the Beaumont High School Orchestra also made frequent Sunday afternoon appearances at the hospital-ity service center on Main Street and at the USO center in Orange. Lena Milam's Solo and Ensemble Club was one of several Beaumont groups that received citations from the Texas Federation of Music Clubs for outstanding accomplishments in the war effort.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Elementary and Junior High Schools

Music education in the elementary schools continued to revolve around the activities of the baby bands, harmonica bands, glee clubs and orchestras. The combined Elementary School Orchestra performed under Lena Milam's direction for many school and community functions. This group, numbering sixty-five pieces in 1942, included marches, folk songs, novelty tunes and dance tunes as a regular part of its repertoire.

On May 1, 1945, the music and art departments of Fletcher Elementary School presented two performances of an original operetta "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (composer unknown) in the school auditorium. This creative project

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<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clipping from the Beaumont High School newspaper, February 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>12</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

involved the participation of students in the second through sixth grades. The operetta in three acts, had rather elaborate sets and costumes and was accompanied by an ensemble from the Beaumont High School Orchestra, directed by Lena Milam.<sup>13</sup> This program is one of many similar projects in which teachers and students of all grades combined their talents to produce operettas and pageants.

The junior high school orchestras and choruses maintained a high level of activity during the war years. In December of 1943, the David Crockett Orchestra, conducted by Mildred Shaddix, presented one of its many victory concerts at Magnolia Elementary School. This program consisted of selections with such titles as "Trince and Juster Overture," "In Days of Yore," "The Huskin Bee," and "Blue Waters." The concert ended with a medley of Christmas songs.<sup>14</sup>

Music at Dick Dowling Junior High School was under the direction of Mrs. J. Neal Robertson, who was followed by Ruth Howell in 1942 and Geraldine Vaughn in 1943.

#### Beaumont High School

Ruth Howell was appointed choral director at Beaumont High School in the fall of 1943, replacing Dorothy Gayle

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<sup>13</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 30 April 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>14</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., December 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Robb. Under her direction and that of Myron Guither and Lena Milam, the chorus, band, and orchestra of Beaumont High School continued to display considerable activity. In addition to the war related activities previously mentioned, these groups performed for school assemblies, gave special Christmas and Easter concerts, and frequently appeared at Rotary and Lions' Club luncheons and other community events. In March of 1942, students from the drama and music departments and members of the Student Council sponsored a "Dimes for Defense" program for a school assembly in the school auditorium. The admission fee was two ten-cent stamps or one twenty-five cent defense stamp. This program consisted of patriotic music, vocal solos, dancing, and a one-act play. Lena Milam conducted the high school orchestra in the opening number, "Patriotic Fantasia" (composer unknown).<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that this performance predated the series of victory concerts established by the State Department of Education the following fall.

#### Participation in Community Events

The school music groups continued their involvement in annual community events during the war. The Community Christmas Concert, sponsored by the Woman's Club, the Fehr Christmas Party, and Music Week were events in which school groups actively participated.

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<sup>15</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Although the war had an effect on the scope of the 1942 Music Week event, several school programs of merit are noted:

Wednesday, May 6

David Crockett Glee Club, directed by Mildred Shaddix, presented the cantata "Priscilla and John Alden."

Dick Dowling Orchestra, directed by Mrs. J. Neal Robertson, performed the "Paul Bunyan" suite.

Thursday, May 7

Beaumont High School Orchestra, directed by Lena Milam, presented a concert featuring Dorothy Lois Wallace and Louise Crow (pianists) in Rubenstein's D Minor Concerto.

Musicale by the Solo and Ensemble Club

Friday, May 8

"Pan American" program by the rhythm bands and choruses of Junker, Averill, and Millard Schools.

Program by the rhythm bands and choruses of Fletcher, Pennsylvania, Ogden, and Magnolia schools.<sup>16</sup>

A special feature of the 1945 Music Week observance was a concert by the Beaumont High School Orchestra. This concert, presented on Tuesday, May 5, at First Methodist Church, was sponsored by the Music Study Club as part of its war activities program. Cpl. Raphael N. Fliegel, from Ellington Field was guest soloist, performing "Jamaican Rhumba" (Primrose) with the orchestra, and Hora Staccato

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<sup>16</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



(Dinicu-Heifetz). The orchestra also performed works by Mozart, Tschaikowsky and Mendelssohn.<sup>17</sup>

#### Participation in State Organizations and Contests

Beaumont's involvement in music contests and music club conventions was significantly effected by the war. Gasoline rationing made long distance travel difficult or impossible. Consequently, most activities were localized in and around the Beaumont area. Beaumont played a major role, however, in several functions.

In March of 1944, the southeast Texas division of the Texas State Teachers' Association met in Beaumont. The Beaumont High School Orchestra, directed by Dr. Milam provided a musical program as a prelude to one of the night sessions. The following selections were presented:

"Prelude in E Minor".....	Bach
"Impresario Overture".....	Mozart
Selections from <u>Carmen</u> .....	Bizet
"Victory".....	Yoder
"Hungarian Dance".....	Brahms
"Holiday for Strings".....	Rose
"Field Artillery March".....	Sousa <sup>18</sup>

Beaumont hosted the fourth district convention of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs in November of 1945. As was customary, the final day of the convention was designated as "junior day." On this day students throughout the district

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<sup>17</sup>Newspaper clipping, Sunday Enterprise (Beaumont), 6 May 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>18</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

met for business and club reports and a musical program. The day's activities were under the general direction of Lena Milam, junior counselor. The program included performances by the Solo and Ensemble Club from Beaumont High School, the combined Junior High Orchestra, the combined Elementary School Orchestra, and the Juvenile Chorus (five singers from each elementary school).<sup>19</sup>

School music groups also participated in the fourth district convention of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs in Galveston (1944), and the Junior Competitive Festival of the fourth district in 1945. The Beaumont High School Orchestra, two violin duets, and nine soloists received "superior" ratings at the 1945 competition.<sup>20</sup>

#### Other Activities

During the war years, several school and community sponsored events were presented for Beaumont's school children. Among these were:

Houston Symphony concert sponsored by the Beaumont city schools and the USO (Beaumont High School Auditorium, February 23, 1943).<sup>21</sup>

Houston Symphony concert featuring Percy Grainger

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<sup>19</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., November 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>20</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>21</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

(pianist) sponsored by the Beaumont Music Commission (City Auditorium, November 29, 1944).<sup>22</sup>

Lecture by Sigmund Spaeth, noted speaker and writer on musical topics, sponsored by the Junior Welfare League (City Auditorium, November, 1944).<sup>23</sup>

Houston Symphony Society production of Verdi's Il Trovatore, sponsored by the Beaumont Music Commission (City Auditorium, January, 1945).<sup>24</sup>

### Community Involvement

#### The Music Study Club

The contributions of the Music Study Club to the war effort were significant. In February of 1944, the club adopted a rather varied and intensive program of war activities. A committee, chaired by Lena Milam, was appointed to organize musical programs at local service men's centers. The first of these programs was held on March 20, 1944, at the hospitality service center on Main Street. A septet from Beaumont High School, directed by Lena Milam, performed for a large crowd of army regulars and paratroopers.<sup>25</sup> Similar programs were given at Camp Polk, Louisiana, by many Beaumont groups both during and after the war. Students from Beaumont High School and the Melody

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<sup>22</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 30 November 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>23</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., November 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>24</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>25</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Maids made many appearances. To show their appreciation to the people of Beaumont, the soldiers from the camp presented an entertainment variety revue on March 25, 1944, at 8:00 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom of Hotel Beaumont. This performance of G.I. burlesque was under the auspices of the Music Study Club and was enthusiastically received by an overflow audience.<sup>26</sup>

The club also organized concerts by musicians in the service who were visiting the Beaumont area. Sgt. Wilson Moffet of Camp Polk gave a performance of light opera excerpts at the annual Music Week luncheon on May 13, 1944.<sup>27</sup> The club sponsored a performance by Cpl. James P. Crone, also of Camp Polk in December of 1944. Crone was a tenor of "professional reputation," having appeared on NBC and CBS radio programs in his home city, Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>28</sup> The public debut of Beaumont's Men of Note took place on April 15, 1945, in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont. The group shared this concert with Tech. Sgt. Morton Freid, a tenor from the air base in Lake Charles, Louisiana.<sup>29</sup> The Men of Note was an all-city boys chorus,

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<sup>26</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>27</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>28</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., December 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>29</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

designed to be a brother organization to the Melody Maids. Apparently the group was not prolifically "noteworthy" since there is no further evidence of subsequent performances.

Other wartime projects included collecting records, sheet music, and magazines for distribution to local service men's centers, conducting the sale of stamps and war bonds at monthly meetings, and encouraging members to spend as many hours as possible at one of the home front fields. The Music Study Club was cited by both the Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs for its "exceptional service in promotion of the war effort."<sup>30</sup> Col. H. Rubin, of the Veterans Administration in Waco, Texas, expressed his appreciation to Lena Milam for the two violins donated to the hospital by the club.<sup>31</sup>

Club meetings were held on the second Monday of the month, usually in the home of a member. A social hour followed the regular business session and program. On the recommendation of the National Federation of Music Clubs, the club adopted the text Discovering Music by McKinney and Anderson as a course of study in 1942. A different chapter was discussed each month, supplemented with musical performances representative of the material discussed.

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<sup>30</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 11 April 1944, Leman Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>31</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 19 May 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

In 1945, the Music Study Club initiated a series of four salon musicales that were offered to active and associate members. By opening the concerts to associate members, the club expanded its roster, thus acquiring the funds necessary to finance the musicales. The initial program in this series featured Melba Welch, a mezzo-soprano from Denison, Texas.<sup>32</sup> Informal receptions preceded these musicales.

Music Week luncheons continued to be the final event of the week's activities. The 1943 luncheon featured entertainment by local pianist Louis Gordon; harpist Joyce Ann Terry; Billy Triggs, baritone from Port Arthur, Texas; the Music Study Club ensemble; and harpist Lillian Phillips.

In the fall of 1945 the past presidents of the Music Study Club met at the home of Mrs. Howard Gardner for the purpose of organizing a Past Presidents Association. One of the primary goals of the organization was "to present one program each year for the Music Study Club with an outstanding artist appearing as a feature of the program."<sup>33</sup> For many years this group functioned effectively under the presidency of Mrs. Gardner and provided interesting programs for active and associate club members. Lena Milam enthusias-

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<sup>32</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>33</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

tically supported the organization, often serving as program chairman.

#### The Woman's Club

It appears that there were few developments in the activities of the Woman's Club during the war, as many members concentrated their efforts on aiding in the war effort. Besides staging consistent and successful sales of bonds and stamps, club members volunteered in all home-front efforts. Some worked in civil defense while others became nurses aids or worked in factories. Lena Milam was one of many women to volunteer her services. In November of 1943, W. W. Pat Kent, Jefferson County Defense Coordinator expressed his appreciation to Dr. Milam for the work she did for many months at the Control Center for Civilian Defense.<sup>34</sup>

The war also had an effect on the internal workings of the club. The music department for instance, concentrated its studies on American music during both the 1942-43 year and the 1945-46 year. Meetings were held on the second Thursday of the month, and members discussed American religious, folk, and operatic music. As in the past, Texas music maintained its popularity. Patriotism became utmost in the minds of Beaumonters.

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<sup>34</sup>W. W. Pat Kent to Lena Milam, 15 November 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The Woman's Club Chorus remained active during the war, singing for Music Week programs, Texas Federation of Music Clubs conventions, and other local events. The chorus and the Beaumont Music Commission co-hosted the Community Christmas Concert which remained popular, although attended by somewhat smaller audiences.

Josef Evans resigned as director of the Piano Ensemble in the fall of 1942, and Mrs. Thomas Sappington of Port Arthur became director. The following year William Lawrence Meteyarde began directing the ensemble following his employment as head of the music department at Lamar College. A native of Wales and graduate of the Royal College of Music in London, Meteyarde came to the United States in 1924 and was involved in musical activities in Birmingham, Memphis, and Dallas before moving to Beaumont.<sup>35</sup> The Piano Ensemble continued to give two major concerts a year. One was given in February and the other during Music Week in May.

The music department of the Woman's Club contributed significantly to the activities of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs during the war. In the spring and fall of 1943, the Woman's Club, Music Study Club, and Beaumont Music Commission co-hosted fourth district conventions in Beaumont. The events were shortened to two days due to the

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<sup>35</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., December 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



difficulties in travel and housing. Except for the fine arts programs, given on opening night and arranged by Lena Milam, the meetings were devoid of formal social entertainment and were confined strictly to business. The main objective of these conventions was to formulate plans for continuation of the war program and to discuss women's responsibility for post-war peace.<sup>36</sup>

#### Other Clubs and Organizations

During the war, Lena Milam also played an important role in the activities of the Altrusa Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Business and Professional Woman's Club, and the Pan American Round Table Club.

As a member of the Altrusa Club, Dr. Milam served on the program committee and the vocational scholarship committee, and chaired the educational committee. In the spring of 1944, the club honored her and Mrs. J. F. Keith for their "contributions to the community welfare."<sup>37</sup>

In 1942, the Colonel George Moffett chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution began presenting patriotic radio programs over KRIC as part of its wartime activities program. These fifteen-minute programs were aired weekly and featured performances of American music and

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<sup>36</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>37</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

dramatic presentations. One such program occurred on February 5, 1943, when Beaumont's Melody Maids honored the late Victor Herbert by performing a number of his best known works. Lena Milam served as chairman of the radio committee throughout the war and was responsible for arranging many of these programs.

Dr. Milam was also an associate member of the Pan American Round Table Club and often furnished entertainment for the club's musical programs. The organization was formed at the beginning of the war for the purpose of fostering good will with Pan American countries. This was done through round table discussions of Pan American affairs and programs on Pan American music and customs. Also included were special projects, such as sponsoring essay contests by high school students on Pan American subjects.<sup>38</sup> The club held a meeting and a program each month but dispensed with regular meetings during the summer in favor of informal gatherings in private homes.

#### The Beaumont Music Commission

The war had a temporary effect on the workings of the Beaumont Music Commission. This fact is most clearly evident in the noticeable decline in support of the Artist Series concerts. After experiencing its most successful season in 1940-41 with the appearances of Nelson Eddy, Erica

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<sup>38</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., May 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Morini, and Jose Iturbi, the commission's season ticket sales declined considerably the following year. Although the economy prospered, travel was difficult and Beaumonters were preoccupied in war work of one kind or another. Many of the twenty-five dollar patrons that the commission had been able to count on in previous years withdrew their support, using the war as an excuse. Others who had always purchased five dollar memberships opted for the cheaper balcony seats.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the commission presented an outstanding season in 1941-42, featuring such renowned artists as Rise Stevens (mezzo soprano), Lawrence Tibbett (baritone), Jascha Heifetz (violinist), and Vronsky and Babin (piano duo). In September of 1942, Mrs. Beeman Strong, chairman of the commission, squelched all rumors that the Artist Series was being discontinued because of the war, declaring, "We need the relaxation musical entertainment brings more than ever before . . . . Furthermore, with less means of transportation plus the fact that we have thousands of new citizens, we need a program to entertain the folks at home here this season."<sup>40</sup>

The Artist Series continued throughout the war years despite experiencing some hard times. Among those to appear were Yehudi Menuhin (violinist, 1942), the Trapp Family

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<sup>39</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p. January 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>40</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Singers (1943), and Oscar Levant (pianist, 1944). Coupled with the problems brought on by the war was the commission's inability to please many Beaumonters in its selection of artists. Although many of the city's citizens were educated musicians who appreciated the more artistic performances of learned musicians, a significant number preferred the more popular stars of screen and stage. "The commission . . . heard criticism against sopranos, against violinists, against quartets, against long-haired music."<sup>41</sup> Speaking of this dilemma, Mrs. Beeman Strong explained the commission's policy of selecting "attractions which have a general appeal without sacrificing our standard of presenting only outstanding artists of national or international reputation."<sup>42</sup> For the first time in eleven years of presenting the Artist Series, the Music Commission sold single tickets to the last two concerts of the 1944-45 season, amending its previous policy of limiting admission to season ticket holders exclusively. The season featured "Footlight Favorites" (a quartet of singers from the Metropolitan Opera), Patricia Travers (violinist), The First Piano Quartet, and Bida Sayao (Brazilian singer).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>42</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>43</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

It should be pointed out, however, that the commission was not satisfied with anything less than a full house and, although attendance was down, audiences of one thousand or more were common.

The Beaumont Music Commission also sponsored special concerts by prominent artists in addition to the Artist Series. On April 18, 1944, Jeannette MacDonald presented a two hour concert of classics and semi-classics to an audience of over two thousand five hundred. The concert was sold out by the first of April, and an estimated second full house was turned away.<sup>44</sup> This concert set an all time record for a Beaumont concert and affirmed the public's preference for stars of screen and stage. The proceeds of the performance were used to purchase an upright piano for the city auditorium.<sup>45</sup> Other special added attractions included an appearance by Percy Grainger as piano soloist with the Houston Symphony (November 29, 1944) and a performance of Carmen by the Columbia Concerts Opera Company (April 20, 1945).

The Music Commission no longer regularly sponsored community concerts during the war. With so many Beaumonters involved in war-related activities, it became increasingly difficult to organize and carry out such events. Groups

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<sup>44</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 19 April 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>45</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

such as the Beaumont Light Opera Company, the Esquires, and the Schubert Ensemble disbanded as their male members went off to war or to work in industry. As a result, Beaumont was left with only its female groups, that is, the Melody Maids and the ensembles of the Music Study Club and the Woman's Club. One of the few community concerts that the Music Commission sponsored during the war was a 1942 appearance by a soldiers' chorus from Camp Polk. An appreciative audience donated \$136.50 to the chorus which went toward the purchase of infantry blue vestments.<sup>46</sup>

Lena Milam continued to serve as chairman of the Music Commission's joint committee on community concerts and Music Week. Though not on such a lavish scale as some of the celebration of the past, the Music Week observances during the war contained some programs of merit. School programs by students from both the Beaumont and South Park School Districts dominated the event more than ever. The Woman's Club Chorus and Piano Ensemble remained actively involved as did the Music Study Club. Of particular interest was the participation of Beaumont's newest group, the Melody Maids.

#### Private Teaching

In spite of her many activities, Lena Milam taught an increased number of private students during the war. Recital programs indicate that she taught violin and viola to

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<sup>46</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

twenty-three students in 1943, twenty-five in 1944, and twenty-seven in 1945. This fact can possibly be attributed to the prosperous wartime economy and the sudden increase in Beaumont's population, as many individuals moved into the city to work in industry. Dr. Milam's students still gave annual spring recitals at the Woman's Club.

In October of 1943, Beaumont's private and public school teachers formed the Beaumont Music Teachers' Association. This organization became affiliated with the Texas Music Teachers' Association, and met once every two months for business meetings, musical programs, and social gatherings. The association's Music Week recital was one of the week's more popular events in the late 1940s. This program featured performances by the city's most outstanding young musicians.

Lena Milam was the founder and first president of the Beaumont Music Teachers' Association. In 1944, she was elected vice president of the Texas Music Teachers' Association.

#### State and National Influence

##### The Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs

In June of 1941, the National Federation of Music Clubs addressed the problems brought on by the war and devised a plan of activities to assist in bringing about a quick end to the conflict. Mrs. Guy Patterson Gannett, president of

the organization, originated a program whereby music was used by club members to boost morale in hospitals and other military institutions throughout the country. The federation also sponsored the delivery of various types of musical equipment to supply camps and naval bases. By September of 1942, the organization had been responsible for the delivery of 200,000 records, 464 pianos, 833 radios, 1000 band and orchestra instruments, and more than 16,000 pieces of sheet music.<sup>47</sup>

The Texas Federation of Music Clubs also took definite steps to aid in the war effort. During the 1942-43 club year, the organization carried out a half million dollar war service program. The war service department received \$400,000 in war bonds.<sup>48</sup>

As state contest chairman and member of both the state and national boards, Lena Milam contributed significantly to these projects. She personally arranged many programs by school and community groups at service centers, hospitals, and military camps. She also attended board meetings and conventions of the district, state, and national federations and continued to receive much recognition for her achievements. The February 1944 issue of the Texas Music

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<sup>47</sup>Newspaper clipping, The Providence Journal, 1 September 1942, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>48</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1943, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



News, publication of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs, carried a picture of Dr. Milam on the front cover.<sup>49</sup>

#### Membership in Professional Organizations

Lena Milam assumed a more prominent role in the Texas Music Teachers' Association during the war. It is assumed that this fact was due, in part, to her leadership in the formation of the Beaumont Music Teachers' Association in 1943, and her subsequent tenure as president of that organization. In 1944, she was elected a vice president of TMTA at its annual convention in Dallas. She addressed the convention on "The Personality of a Fully Developed High School Music Program."<sup>50</sup> She also attended state conventions in 1942 and 1943.

Dr. Milam's activities in the Texas State Teachers' Association involved serving as program chairman and chairman of the music section at the organization's 1942 district convention in Beaumont. No references as to her participation at the association's state conventions could be found.

Although Dr. Milam did attend conventions within the state, evidence suggests that her out-of-state activities were somewhat reduced during the war. It appears that she

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<sup>49</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 13 March 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>50</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 25 June 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

attended only one national convention, that being the 1944 MENC convention in St. Louis.

#### Honors and Awards

On April 25, 1944, Lena Milam became the fifth recipient of Beaumont's most prestigious civic recognition--the Golden Deeds award. This honor was presented annually by the Exchange Club to an outstanding citizen "for work in behalf of the city and mankind."<sup>51</sup> Approximately three hundred persons attended a reception in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont for the presentation which was broadcast by radio station KRIC. During the ceremony, Dr. Milam was presented the Golden Deeds certificate which read as follows:

In recognition of her outstanding service to her community, to the unselfish contribution of her time and talents to our citizenship, to the nurturing of a true appreciation of the finer things of life in the youth of our city, and to the noble example of her fine Christian character; on behalf of the citizenship of Beaumont, the Exchange Club of Beaumont, on this 25th day of April, 1944, inscribes in the Book of Golden Deeds the name of Lena Milam.<sup>52</sup>

As guest speaker for the occasion, E. W. Jackson, superintendent of the city schools, paid Dr. Milam the following tribute:

To enumerate Mrs. Milam's many musical activities and affiliations causes one to wonder how one person can do

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<sup>51</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 25 April 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>52</sup>Golden Deeds Certificate, Exchange Club of Beaumont, 25 April 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

so many things--and do them so unusually well. No person in the history of our city has contributed so greatly to the enrichment of life through music as has our honor guest. Under her capable leadership, through her tireless efforts, thousands of boys and girls of our city have been inspired to embrace those things that make for a nobler life.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

## CHAPTER IV

### POSTWAR TO RETIREMENT, 1946 - 1955

The impact of the war on Beaumont's economy had been tremendous. The increase in industrial output resulted in more job opportunities and phenomenal growth in population. As the war ended, however, the city's growth slowed somewhat. This fact was primarily due to a noticeable decrease in industrial output that resulted in subsequent employee layoffs. The problem was further compounded by the return of the city's fighting men to an already saturated work force.

Fortunately, the city's officials had the foresight to anticipate this quandary and took certain steps to minimize its effect. The Chamber of Commerce established a Postwar Planning Committee that initiated an extensive program that included improvements in drainage, city planning, water supply, public service, transportation, recreational facilities, highways, aviation service, and housing. The committee also planned for the development of veterans agencies and hospitals.<sup>1</sup> Such an ambitious undertaking

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<sup>1</sup>Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report for 1945, January 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

meant increased job opportunities, a stronger economy, and city growth.

During the late 1940s, several new industries and businesses moved into the area, most notably Bethlehem Steel Corporation; Southern States Steel; Goodrich and Firestone synthetic rubber plants; and Sears, Roebuck and Company.<sup>2</sup> The city's petrochemical industry continued to experience considerable expansion.

Another important resource to undergo expansion after the war was Lamar Junior College. This institution, formerly named South Park Junior College, experienced growth in both enrollment and curriculum development. As a result, it was expanded to a four year college in 1949.

The most significant development in community musical life during this period occurred in the area of orchestral music. Through the efforts of the Beaumont Music Commission and the Beaumont Symphony Society (organized in 1950), an increased interest in orchestral music became evident. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, these organizations brought several major symphony orchestras to perform in the city. The performances were so well received that residents soon began to see a need to develop their own orchestra. Although Beaumont had always supported its school orchestras, an earlier attempt to develop a local symphony orchestra had met with very little success. The Beaumont

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<sup>2</sup>Linsley, Beaumont, A Chronicle of Promise, 109.

Symphony Society took the lead in this matter and on May 12, 1953, the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert.

The Music Study Club and the Woman's Club continued active programs during this time and the Beaumont Music Commission's Artist Series received strong support. With the formation of the Beaumont Chamber Music Society in 1950, came a heightened interest in chamber music.

There was also a renewal of interest in community opera. In the spring of 1954, Joseph Truncale (choral director at South Park High School), his wife Ruth, George L. Parks (head of the Lamar Music Department), Mrs. Vivian Stansbury, Mrs. Genie Balliew Browning, and Lee Hartman met to discuss the organization of an opera company which became known as the Beaumont Opera Workshop (BOW). This venture was a joint one, combining the efforts of Lamar College and the Beaumont community. The company's first production, Rigoletto, was presented in the spring of 1955. In 1962, the company was reorganized, resulting in the formation of the Beaumont Civic Opera.

The most active local performing group during the period following the war was the Melody Maids, directed by Eloise Milam. Locally, the group performed frequently for civic clubs, regularly participated on the Community Christmas Program and during Music Week, and gave special fund raising concerts to help finance its many tours. The

group also continued its wartime policy of entertaining at military installations and hospitals throughout Texas and Louisiana.

The Melody Maids became well known across the country, as is evidenced by its many national and international tours. In July of 1947, the girls made their first extended tour to sing at the Lions' International Convention and at veterans' hospitals in San Francisco. Between 1948 and 1954, the group made several eastern tours, including four trips to New York City. During this period, they also traveled to San Francisco, Mexico City, England, France, and Hawaii.

In June of 1954, the Melody Maids departed on what appears to have been their most extensive tour. Following a week of appearances at naval bases in San Juan, Puerto Rico, they flew to the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and Cuba for more of the same. On returning to the states, they continued their tour up the east coast to New York. The group then flew to Newfoundland, Greenland, and Labrador for a tour of the Air Force's Arctic bases.

In 1954, a two-page story and picture of the Melody Maids appeared in an Eastern Air Lines magazine entitled "News." An excerpt from the article reads: "Wherever the Melody Maids go, they bring a sudden breath of freshness and

vitality to airmen on our far-flung Air Force bases."<sup>3</sup>  
Needless to say, the Melody Maids were good will ambassadors for the city of Beaumont and consequently brought the city considerable distinction.

Music education in the Beaumont School District enjoyed a period of continual growth during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Following its consolidation with the French School District in 1949, the Beaumont District was expanded to include French High School, French Junior High, and French, Edwards, and Voth-Rosedale elementary schools. In the early 1950s, the district added James Bowie Junior High and Longfellow and Eugene Fields Elementary schools. Music education in the French District schools was somewhat inferior to the Beaumont schools and therefore benefited considerably from the merger as their music programs began to develop under Lena Milam's leadership.

When Dr. Milam retired in the spring of 1955, she left the Beaumont School District with a music program that was highly respected by music authorities statewide and nationally. In a letter from Dr. E. W. Doty, head of the music department at the University of Texas, to E. W. Jackson, superintendent of the Beaumont School District, he expressed

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<sup>3</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



his "admiration for the excellent [music] program" being maintained in the district.<sup>4</sup>

With the inclusion of band classes in the elementary schools in 1953, the music program was complete, offering instruction in vocal and instrumental music (band and orchestra) at all levels.

Musical training in the primary grades involved rote singing, dramatization of songs, folk games and rhythm-band instruments, often referred to as toy symphonies. The intermediate grades offered instruction in the band and orchestra instruments, and participation in glee clubs. Junior high school students studied music appreciation and theory in addition to classes in band, orchestra, and chorus. Both girls and boys glee clubs made frequent appearances at school and community functions, often performing little operettas. The high schools also provided classes in theory, harmony, and music appreciation and offered students the opportunity to broaden their experiences by participating in band, orchestra, and chorus. The district owned a rather large collection of instruments that were loaned to band and orchestra students. Among these were flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, baritones, trombones, sousaphones, violas, cellos and basses. Music club activities in the schools also continued to flourish. In 1950,

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<sup>4</sup>E. W. Doty to E. W. Jackson, 14 April 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Dr. Archie N. Jones of the University of Texas and Mrs. Leta H. Spearman, director of music education in the Waco schools, evaluated the Beaumont School District's music program. They described the work done as "outstanding."<sup>5</sup>

### Music Education in the Schools

#### The Elementary and Junior High Schools

Instruction on the string instruments had been a part of the elementary school curriculum since the early 1920s. It wasn't until 1953, however, that regular band classes were offered to the elementary school students of the Beaumont School District. Most of these classes were taught by the junior and senior high band teachers of the district who traveled to the elementary schools during the school day. Others were taught by resident music teachers at the local schools. This new program was initiated by Arnold Whedbee, Beaumont High School Band Director. By the spring of 1954, some four hundred children were receiving instruction on the wind and percussion instruments.<sup>6</sup>

In the primary grades, instrumental music still centered around the activities of the rhythm bands (toy symphonies). These young musicians played metalaphones (similar to a xylophone), cymbals, tambourines, castanets,

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<sup>5</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 3 November 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>6</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 19 February 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

triangles, bell trees, Swiss bells, and accordions. Toy whistles, sounding much like bird sounds, were also commonly employed. Violin, cello, bass, trumpet, piano, and drums were but a few of the standard instruments that were often added to provide a strong melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic base for the ensembles.

The upper elementary schools took pride in their orchestras. The combined Elementary School Orchestra was still conducted by Lena Milam and numbered seventy-five students in 1949. As in the past, these students were taught by the individual music teachers (assistant directors) of the different schools and were regularly combined for performances. Many of the young players owned quarter-size violins and cellos that were often handed down by an older brother or sister who had advanced to the junior orchestra.

Participation in instrumental ensembles reached considerable proportions during the post-war years. By 1949, over seven hundred students played in organized instrumental groups in the elementary, junior, and senior high schools.<sup>7</sup>

The junior high schools continued to offer string classes to beginning students as preparation for membership in the orchestras. In addition, many students studied

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<sup>7</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

privately. The David Crockett Orchestra, directed by Margaret Ridley, consisted of forty-five students in 1949, while thirty were enrolled in beginning string classes. Ridley was also in charge of the band and chorus. The orchestra at Dick Dowling numbered fifty-one pieces, and seventeen students at that school were preparing for the orchestra. Mildred Shaddix, who taught at David Crockett during the early forties, was in charge of the orchestra and chorus at Dick Dowling as of the late 1940s. Band classes at Dick Dowling were taught by Philip Schwartz, who was replaced by Wilbur McCullar following Schwartz's transfer to Bowie Junior High in the early 1950s.

By comparison, the number of students involved in the band programs in the junior high schools in 1949 totaled sixty-six at Dick Dowling and fifty-nine at David Crockett. These figures indicate a healthy balance between the band and orchestra programs, with orchestra having approximately fourteen percent more students. This preponderance of orchestral students was somewhat inconsistent with a state and national trend concerning the relative popularity of bands and orchestras in the 1940s. This subject was one of several discussed at a conference on "Postwar Music Education," held at the University of Texas in August, 1944. The panel, which included Lena Milam, was told that "the school and college orchestra is doomed unless public schools restore string instrument classes to their former pres-

tige."<sup>8</sup> It was further pointed out that "as a result of the band popularity wave of the past ten years, violin students are falling out by the thousands . . . . There is [sic] not more than a dozen school orchestras in Texas outside the large cities."<sup>9</sup> As guest conductor of the Beaumont Youth Symphony in April of 1947, Dr. Joseph Maddy had occasion to comment on this subject. "Orchestras, not having the outside contact such as parades and athletic events, are often 'played down.' Not so in your own school system," he said. "In schools where there are 'Mrs. Milams,' you will find both orchestra and band. There is a place--and a need--for both."<sup>10</sup>

#### Beaumont High School

The Beaumont High School music program sustained considerable growth in the years preceding Lena Milam's retirement. Through her leadership, and that of Ruth Howell and Arnold Whedbee, the performing ensembles developed an impressive level in the quality of their performances and a growing appreciation of fine literature.

Arnold F. Whedbee received the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Wichita (Kansas) and the Master of

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<sup>8</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., August 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 8 April 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Music degree from Colorado State University in Greeley. Prior to joining the navy in 1943, he directed school and community bands in Gypsum and Council Grove, Kansas. After being discharged from the Navy in 1946, he joined the staff at Beaumont High School as band director replacing Myron Guither. Whedbee taught at the high school for twenty years, resigning in 1966 to become the district's supervisor of music.

Whedbee placed much emphasis on the development of a strong concert band. Furthermore, he shunned the belief that the school band was to be primarily the advertising medium of the school, appearing on programs, at athletic events, and at commencement and other school events. In 1947 he explained, "We realize the importance of pleasing the football fans and of having a good marching band, but we believe that when that part of the band's season is over the players should be given much more in the line of musical training."<sup>11</sup>

In the fall of 1948, Lena Milam stepped down as director of the Beaumont High School Orchestra and placed the group under the capable leadership of Arnold Whedbee. In the years that followed, the band and orchestra attained a level of proficiency that can be substantiated by their many achievements.

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<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

The Beaumont High School Band was one of five Texas bands to be invited to participate in the 1954 Cotton Bowl Fete.<sup>12</sup> Later that spring the band received its eleventh straight first division rating at the Interscholastic League Contest and its third straight sweepstakes trophy (first division in marching, concert, and sightreading). The orchestra was also awarded a first division rating in concert and sightreading, and placed nine students in the All-State Orchestra. Bucky Milam, Lena Milam's grandson, was one of the students selected.<sup>13</sup> These references are but a sampling of many similar honors encountered by this writer.

The success of the instrumental music program at Beaumont High School in the 1950s can be attributed, in no small way, to the efforts of Arnold Whedbee. Although it is apparent that he inherited a strong and growing program, he clearly established innovations that deserve comment.

Whedbee's role in the development of band classes in the elementary schools was pointed out on page 158. In addition, he established summer classes for those elementary and junior high students who would eventually be going to Beaumont High School. These classes, begun in 1954, lasted for two months and were designed to give the students an

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<sup>12</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>13</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

opportunity to have "organized and adequately supervised activity." They also provided an opportunity to "iron out the bugs" as stated by Whedbee.<sup>14</sup>

The vocal music program at Beaumont High School also flourished in the 1940s and 1950s. Under the direction of Ruth Howell, the choruses were extremely active, giving Easter and Christmas programs, producing operettas, and performing for civic clubs and other community functions. Vocal students consistently attended district and state music conventions, and many represented the school in honor choruses. The chorus, like the band and orchestra, repeatedly won first division ratings at contests, as did many individual students.

Quite often, the chorus and orchestra performed together. Combined Christmas and Easter programs were common during the late 1940s. The groups also gave special programs on occasion. On January 31, 1949, the chorus and orchestra presented approximately ten selections from the opera "Tannhäuser" in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont. This program, sponsored by the Music Study Club, was presented in concert version. Ruth Howell selected a forty-voice chorus to perform the arrangements, especially adapted for high school voices. In a review of the concert that appeared in the Beaumont Journal, Gladys Harned Quilliam writes, "Here

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<sup>14</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 16 July 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



was no mere brave but amateurish high school effort, but definitely a musical event."<sup>15</sup>

The Beaumont High School music department continued to contribute significantly to the annual Music Week activities. The "Say It With Music Program," first presented in 1947, became a tradition and continued through Dr. Milam's retirement in 1955. This program involved performances by the band, chorus, and orchestra and was held in the school auditorium. The Program presented for the 1952 event typically illustrates the outstanding literature that these groups performed. (See Appendix, p. 219.)

The 1955 "Say It With Music" program featured Jerry Smith, Beaumont High School graduate, in a performance of the "Adagio for Clarinet and Strings," composed by John Barnes Chance.<sup>16</sup>

John Barnes "Barney" Chance was a product of the Beaumont High School music program and the piano teaching of Jewell Harned. During his high school years, he played timpani in the school orchestra. In the tenth grade he became interested in composing, and began leaving signed manuscripts on Arnold Whedbee's desk to be scrutinized. Chance spent countless hours in the city library, reading all the material he could find on composition. By the time

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<sup>15</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, May 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>16</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1 May 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

he had graduated in 1951, he had written three symphonies, a piano sonata, and a number of small pieces and sketches.

Chance continued his musical training at the University of Texas, studying with Clifton Williams. It was during this time that he wrote "Triptych," a short orchestral piece that was chosen for performance at the third annual Southwestern Symposium of Contemporary American Music in Austin in 1954.

During the 1960s Chance gained considerable popularity for his band works and many individuals predicted a successful career for the talented young composer. Many years earlier Arnold Whedbee had recognized Chance's talents. Following a 1951 performance of Chance's "Third Symphony" by the Beaumont High School Orchestra, Whedbee told the audience, "It's too early to predict the future of Barney, but I advise you to remember the name of John Barnes Chance. I think you'll hear a great deal more about it."<sup>17</sup> John Barnes Chance's career came to an abrupt and tragic end as the result of his accidental death in 1972.

Music education in the Beaumont School District had a profound effect on numerous individuals. Whereas many, like Barney Chance, went on to make music their life's work, others developed an appreciation of fine music that enriched their lives, and consequently the lives of many succeeding

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<sup>17</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

generations of Beaumonters. Lena Milam and her staff considered music to be a key factor in the "development and control of attitudes, feelings and emotions."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, they stressed its importance in cultivating the complete individual. As Margaret Broussard Saunders writes, "I cherish the times and the years I had with Aunt Lena. She inspired all of us to do what we could and to conduct ourselves as ladies (or as gentlemen) as we did it. Because of her I continued my education in music and received a degree in music at L.S.U . . . . One cannot put into words what 'Aunt Lena' instilled in our hearts and lives."<sup>19</sup>

#### Retirement

In August of 1948, the Beaumont School Board adopted a "permanent" policy of mandatory retirement at age sixty-five. The policy was recommended by a group of laymen, teachers, and administrators who had not acted hastily, but had studied the question for some time. However, one important consideration was apparently overlooked--Lena Milam. At age sixty-three Dr. Milam was not ready to retire and challenged the policy. Realizing its dilemma, the school board granted her a special dispensation allowing her to work for the Beaumont schools until age seventy. In

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<sup>18</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 29 September 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>19</sup>Margaret Broussard Saunders, "Birthday Greetings and Messages," 14 October 1984, Testimonial to Lena Milam on One Hundredth Birthday, Beaumont, Texas.

April of 1955, she wrote Mrs. R. Jack Orrick, president of the Board of Education, informing her of her impending retirement. Mrs. Orrick's reply is a suitable testimony to Dr. Milam's work as a music educator and leader of Beaumont's musical culture.

The Board of Education, with sincere regret, received your letter informing us of the fact that you have reached the retirement age.

You have developed in this community a cultural atmosphere that has been a challenge to the state and to the nation. You have brought prestige and honor to our school system through your leadership and participation in the musical life of our community as well as the musical organizations of our area and country.

You have used the opportunities of your profession to develop in the lives of thousands of our young people in such a splendid way, not only musical ability but spirituality and a general appreciation of the finer things of life. You have taught your students to live gracious and full lives which will be reflected in our community life for generations to come.

For this and a host of other services which you have launched in our community, we express the deep appreciation of the school district and the citizenry of our community.<sup>20</sup>

The Texas House of Representatives adopted a resolution commending Lena Milam for her "many contributions to the cultural life of the people of Texas."<sup>21</sup> Dr. Milam expressed her appreciation to State Representative

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<sup>20</sup>Mrs. R. Jack Orrick, President of the Board of Education of the Beaumont City Schools, to Lena Milam, 5 May 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>21</sup>Newspaper clipping, May 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Will L. Smith for his part in the resolutions awarded her.

She states:

Naturally I was very proud of the generous praise for my efforts in the community, but also felt very humble when I remembered all of my loyal friends and co-workers who have helped along the way.

I count it a genuine privilege as well as a joy to have had a part in the cultural development in our splendid city . . . ."22

When word of Dr. Milam's retirement reached Beaumonters, many responded that "Aunt Lena" was an institution that should go on and on. They sent numerous notes expressing their fond farewells and best wishes to Beaumont's "first lady of music."<sup>23</sup> Gladys Harned Quilliam, lifelong friend, teacher, and fellow musician wrote of Dr. Milam's contribution as a music educator in a newspaper article entitled "Lena to Retire? Fiddlesticks!" She credited Dr. Milam with having inspired so many Beaumont students "to love it [music], to live it."<sup>24</sup> She went on to say that "there are hundreds of children . . . who . . . will enjoy the fruits of the years she [Lena Milam] has devoted to building their music program in the schools"--a program that has become "a model for the state, recognized in the nation."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Lena Milam to State Representative Will L. Smith, 4 June 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>23</sup>Beaumont Enterprise, 10 November 1984.

<sup>24</sup>Gladys Harned Quilliam, Beaumont Journal, 14 October 1984, newspaper clipping included in Testimonial to Lena Milam on One Hundredth Birthday, Beaumont, Tx.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

### Community Involvement

#### The Music Study Club

Following the war, the Music Study Club remained an important influence in the advancement of community music with Lena Milam as a central figure. Although no involvement as a club officer is documented, Dr. Milam was extremely active in the clubs' workings and represented it as an officer in the National Federation of Music Clubs. This involvement continued long after her retirement in 1955.

Lena Milam continued to host programs and on many occasions served as program leader. At the January meeting in 1946, she utilized her resources as a music educator by showing the film "Sound Symphony" which she borrowed from the Beaumont School system library.<sup>26</sup> Additional commentaries on the string instruments was given by Ruth Howell, choral director at Beaumont High School, with Margaret Ridley commenting on the woodwinds, Mildred Shaddix on the brasses, and Margaret Saunders discussing the percussion instruments. Dr. Milam often made use of school materials to enhance the programs of the Music Study Club. "Major American Symphonies and Conductors" was the topic of discussion at the 1948 February meeting of which Dr. Milam

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<sup>26</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

was in charge.<sup>27</sup> In March of the same year she was the leader of a program for active and associate members, which featured Mary Louise Baker, cellist, and Kenneth Nixon, pianist, both members of the music faculty of Texas Christian University.<sup>28</sup>

Meetings continued to be held monthly and generally in the home of a club member. The organization still adopted texts by the National Federation as a course of study. The opening meeting of the 1949-50 season featured a program on Spanish music as discussed by McKinney and Anderson in Music in History.<sup>29</sup> "Spanish Dance" (Moskowsky) and "Tango" (Albeniz) were performed by Mrs. C.H. Hendry and Mrs. W.O. Bowers, Jr. (Pianists). Mrs. Timothy Hennessy sang "Cavlatitas" (Valverde) and "Estralita" (Ponce). Mrs. Oswald Parker played "Malaguena" (Lecuona) and cellist Ralph Begnan performed "Spanish Dance" by Granados. Other selected program topics noted during this period were:

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<sup>27</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1948, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>28</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1948, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>29</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., September 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

"Early Romanticism in Music,"<sup>30</sup> "The Contemporary American Scene,"<sup>31</sup> and "The Classic Era."<sup>32</sup>

The Music Study Club still sponsored special concerts by school and community groups during this period. The club's Music Week luncheons and Texas composers recitals remained important events in the organization's annual calendar.

The group continued its close affiliation with the National Federation of Music Clubs. Fourth District conventions were often held in Beaumont and many members attended state and national conventions.

The Past Presidents Association of the Music Study Club (organized in the fall of 1945) presented many outstanding programs for active and associate members. Oscar J. Fox, well known Texas song composer, appeared in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont on October 14, 1946.<sup>33</sup> Other concerts featured university students and young professional artists seeking exposure and experience.

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<sup>30</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., January 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>31</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., February 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>32</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 6 November 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>33</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



### The Woman's Club

Lena Milam's participation in the Woman's Club following the war was noteworthy. As in the past she frequently hosted social gatherings, attended meetings, led discussions, and arranged musical programs. As a member of the program committee she was often called on to schedule appearances by school groups at club functions.

School organizations were an integral part of the Community Christmas Concert, which continued its popularity in the 1940s and 1950s. The event truly became a community affair with the inclusion of such groups as the South Park High School Chorus, the Lamar College Chorus, the French High School Choraleens, the Cecilians (chorus) of St. Anthony High School, the Magnolia Men, and the Melody Maids. The Beaumont High School Brass Choir, Orchestra and Chorus were regular participants. The Woman's Club Chorus, directed by E. Orlo Bangs, still sponsored the concert. Lena Milam regularly shared her talents by directing or participating in the string ensemble which accompanied the massed choirs in the traditional finale, Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus. The 1949 program is representative of the format of the concert and the selections presented. (See Appendix, p. 220.)

The Woman's Club Chorus and Piano Ensemble both continued to experience active seasons, performing at club

programs and socials, and presenting free semi-annual concerts to the public.

In January of 1953, Jay Dietzer moved to Beaumont to become the musical director of the newly formed Beaumont Symphony Orchestra. Later that spring he became director of the Woman's Club Piano Ensemble, replacing William Lawrence Meteyarde who had recently resigned. Mrs. Beeman Strong, organizer of the group, remained chairman.

#### Other Clubs and Organizations

Lena Milam remained active in several other organizations during the late 1940s and early 1950s. She regularly attended meetings of the Altrusa Club and continued to serve as chairman of the club's scholarship committee. This committee sponsored four girls with scholarships to Lamar State College of Technology in the 1940s. Dr. Milam frequently attended district conventions and was present at the international convention in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, in 1951.<sup>34</sup> As in the past she often served as program chairman for club functions.

One of the main projects of the Altrusa Club was sponsoring the Town Hall Lecture Series. This series brought many prominent lecturers to Beaumont, enabling its citizens to be better informed in current affairs. The 1954-55 series included appearances by Trygve Lie, former

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<sup>34</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., July 1951, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

secretary-general of the United Nations; Herbert Philbrick, counterspy; Hanson Baldwin, New York Times military expert; and Robert Shaw, writer for radio and television.<sup>35</sup>

In the spring of 1954, the Altrusa Club elected Lena Milam as its president for the 1954-55 season. She had held the same office from 1934 to 1936. On June 16, 1955, Lena Milam, at age seventy, gave her final report as president of the club. The last paragraph of her report illustrates her deep sense of service and loyalty--values that she shared with the entire community:

In closing may I express my deep appreciation to you for the privilege of serving as your president, and to those who have made possible the fine spirit that is found in our club. I also want to pledge to you my sincere loyalty and service through the years ahead. May each of us look ahead to a better way of life because of our deep and abiding faith in the values of Altrusa.<sup>36</sup>

Lena Milam also remained loyal to the Daughters of the American Revolution, serving as chairman of its radio committee and as program chairman on numerous occasions. In May of 1948, she was elected as a vice-regent of the local chapter.

In 1953, Dr. Milam was elected to the Board of Directors of the Beaumont Art Museum. She was a member of the local chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (teachers sorority) and

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<sup>35</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 27 August 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>36</sup>Lena Milam, "Report of the President--Beaumont Altrusa Club, 16 June 1955, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

was appointed state music chairman of that organization in 1954.

#### The Beaumont Music Commission

The Beaumont Music Commission enjoyed a period of continued growth following the war as Beaumonters returned to a more leisurely lifestyle. Individuals now had more time to devote to entertainment and other activities that had been restricted by the war. Consequently, support for the arts increased significantly.

The primary activity of the Music Commission during this period was sponsoring concerts by prominent artists. In addition to the Artist Series, the commission continued to sponsor special performances by well known artists throughout the year. It no longer presented regular community concerts by local groups, but did on occasion, promote performances by young accomplished Texas musicians. Music Week also experienced an increase in activity and community support during this period.

By the end of the war the Music Commission had built up a reserve fund through profits from its special attractions. These proceeds were used to fund special projects such as renovating the city auditorium stage, purchasing equipment, and providing free concerts to its regular patrons. The commission also showed its gratitude to its supporters by hosting "appreciation dinners" in the Rose Room of Hotel Beaumont. Lena Milam regularly served on the

program committee that organized entertainment for these functions.

In 1947-48 the Music Commission experienced one of its most successful seasons. With a budget of \$28,000, the Commission's Artist Series featured Rise Stevens, mezzo soprano of the Metropolitan Opera; the Bel Canto Trio (Frances Yeend, soprano; George London, bass-baritone; Mario Lanza, tenor); the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Arthur Rodzinski, conducting; and Carroll Glenn, violinist. Veloz and Yolanda (dancing team), The First Piano Quartet, Jeanette MacDonald, and Nelson Eddy also appeared as special attractions.<sup>37</sup> Other well known artists to perform during the late 1940's and early 1950's were Sigmund Romberg (1946), Issac Stern (violinist-1947), Gladys Swarthout (mezzo-soprano, 1947), Patrice Munsel (soprano, 1948), Lauritz Melchior (tenor, 1948), the Cincinnati Symphony (Thor Johnson conducting, 1949 and 1952), Helen Traubel (soprano, 1949), Vladimir Horowitz (pianist, 1949), Robert Shaw Chorale (1949), Roberta Peters (soprano, 1952), Robert Merrill (baritone, 1952), The Boston Pops (Arthur Fiedler conducting, 1953), Milton Cross and his Piano Playhouse (1953), Jascha Heifetz (violinist, 1954), Boris Goldovsky's Opera Theater (1954), and Arthur Rubenstein (pianist, 1955).

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<sup>37</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Although Music Week did not compare to the observances of the 1920s in terms of financial backing and community support, its development following the war was significant. With Lena Milam and Gladys Harned Quilliam as chairmen, the event provided the people of Beaumont with many fine programs by school and community groups. The Piano Ensemble and Woman's Club Chorus gave annual concerts, often featuring out-of-town guests. The Music Study Club continued its policy of sponsoring the final event, its annual dinner concert. The Beaumont Music Teachers' Association sponsored an annual concert by representative pupils of the city's music teachers and the Beaumont Chamber Music Society (organized in 1950) gave annual programs. School music groups from both the Beaumont and South Park districts participated. The elementary students of the Beaumont School District gave their own music festival at which the Elementary School Orchestra, band students, combined chorus, string students, and folk dancing classes all performed. One of the most popular events was always the "Say It With Music" concert, presented by the band, orchestra, and chorus of Beaumont High School. Churches, civic clubs, and private music studios also participated in making Music Week an important contribution to Beaumont's musical calendar.

In a letter from C. M. Tremaine, secretary of the National and Inter-American Music Week committee, to Lena Milam, he advised her that the 1946 Music Week scrapbook

that she had submitted was being used as "a model of what can be accomplished under such auspices in fostering the cooperative spirit among organizations in the city, and in using the occasion as a stimulus to greater year-round interest in an appreciation of music and music education."<sup>38</sup> Tremaine was appointed to the instrumental committee of the Music Supervisors National Conference in 1926<sup>39</sup> and had served as the executive director of the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, established in 1916.<sup>40</sup>

V. J. Kennedy, state consultant in music education with the Texas Education Association, referred to Beaumont's 1953 Music Week as, "without question, . . . the finest example of citywide co-operation for the observance of the important occasion that I have ever seen."<sup>41</sup>

Lena Milam served as co-chairman of Music Week throughout her active musical life. In May of 1949 Gladys Harned Quilliam paid tribute to Dr. Milam's contribution to Music Week in her newspaper column "Sounding the High C's."

It was Lena Milam who never gave up when others were almost ready to let the celebration die . . . in those depression years when it was hard to keep interest alive

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<sup>38</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 26 June 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>39</sup>Edward Bailey Birge, History of Public School Music in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1928), 193.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>41</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Enterprise, 30 May 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

. . . and it is Lena Milam who sits up around the clock assembling the programs, making the phone calls to get others to working, giving a shove here and a shove there to all the jillion music groups in schools and out . . . all in the name of Music Week.<sup>42</sup>

The motivation for Dr. Milam's untiring dedication to the promotion of community music may well have gone beyond the love of music. She, no doubt, recognized music as being a means of establishing a closer relationship with God. As she wrote, "Those who promote music bring men one step nearer that eternal freedom for which the soul is ever longing--one step nearer God."<sup>43</sup>

#### The Beaumont Symphony Society and Orchestra

The Beaumont Symphony Society was organized in early 1950 by a group of individuals who sought to bring orchestral music on a regular basis to the city. In preceding years, the Beaumont Music Commission had sponsored occasional orchestra concerts (Chicago Symphony, 1948 and Cincinnati Symphony, 1949) that were enthusiastically received. The idea of forming a society to provide a full orchestral season originated with Veazy Rainwater, Jr. and K. C. Withers, Jr. Rainwater was elected president of the original board which consisted of twenty-five local and

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<sup>42</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, May 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>43</sup>Lena Milam, "The Why of Music Week," 1929, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.



fifteen regional directors, the latter representing neighboring areas outside the city of Beaumont.<sup>44</sup>

The purpose of the Beaumont Symphony Society was to sponsor five orchestral performances a season at a cost of six dollars per season ticket. The society also provided children's concerts on the afternoons of the scheduled night performances. These concerts were funded by local industries, namely Gulf States Utilities, Weingarten's, and the Magnolia Petroleum Company.<sup>45</sup>

The Beaumont Symphony Society's first season (1950-51) featured two appearances by the Houston Symphony and performances by the Longines Symphonette and the Dallas Symphony. The season was quite successful, enabling the organization to make plans for a second. During the 1951-52 season the society sponsored two performances by the Houston and San Antonio symphonies and one by the Dallas Symphony. The society continued to gain support and along with the Beaumont Music Commission provided a complete musical season for the people of Beaumont.

The Beaumont Music Commission and the Symphony Society cooperated with each other, although occasional differences over programming were noted. These differences concerned criticism that the Music Commission sponsored orchestral

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<sup>44</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>45</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, May 1951, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

performances, thereby infringing on the policies of the Symphony Society. However, members of the commission pointed out that orchestras were always a part of its season and that the popularity of orchestras was critical to its financial success. Gladys Harned Quilliam addressed this subject in her newspaper column "Sounding the High C's." She urged that it was time to "forget what organization is bringing what music" and for the people of Beaumont to help each group to assure a full and varied season.<sup>46</sup>

The Beaumont Music Commission strongly supported the organization and programs of the Symphony Society. Many members became actively involved in the society. Mrs. Beeman Strong, president of the Music Commission, was the first person to take a sustaining membership, and she and several other of the longtime commission workers accepted directorships. Lena Milam served as chairman of the youth concerts committee for many seasons and in 1951 was elected third vice president of the society. She also served on the orchestra board of the Beaumont Symphony Society, which was instrumental in developing and carrying out plans for the formation of the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra.

As mentioned above, in the 1920s Lena Milam and Ione Towns Locke attempted to organize a civic orchestra under the direction of R. A. Dhossche. Although this organization

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<sup>46</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, March 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

experienced some temporary success, it soon became a victim of financial difficulties brought on by the Depression. Furthermore, Beaumont did not have the necessary players to adequately perform the standard orchestral literature. Since its members were not paid, the orchestra had no means of recruiting key players from outside the community.

With the increased involvement in the arts that occurred after the war came an increased awareness of the need to develop a local symphony orchestra. Much of this awareness can be attributed to the many newspaper articles on this subject that appeared in the late 1940s, especially those written by Gladys Harned Quilliam. She frequently drew comparisons between Beaumont and other Texas cities that were having considerable success in supporting local orchestras. She was also quick to point out the city's main problem in supporting an orchestra, "money...and plenty of it."<sup>47</sup>

As in the past, Beaumont lacked the ability to furnish enough players needed to make an orchestra truly symphonic. Although Lamar College was experiencing significant growth in its music department, it was limited in its ability to provide instrumental support. Consequently, many out-of-town players would be needed, at considerable expense.

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<sup>47</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 26 November 1948, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Conductor's fees and salaries would also be required. In general, such an undertaking would be expensive.

In the spring of 1952 the Beaumont Symphony Society appointed an orchestra board to start plans for the creation of a symphony orchestra. Members of the board were Chester Weber, Lena Milam, Mrs. Talbot Williams, Edna Brooks, Philip Swartz, and Gladys Harned Quilliam, chairman.<sup>48</sup>

The orchestra board contacted Jay Dietzer, a young American conductor who had organized and for several years served as musical director and conductor of the Abilene Symphony Orchestra. He had also served on the faculties of the University of Texas School of Music and the Cincinnati Conservatory. Dietzer presented a starting budget of \$12,000 for a three-concert season and proposed a test rehearsal be scheduled to determine the feasibility of forming a symphony in Beaumont. The orchestra board mailed approximately seventy-five letters to area musicians, inviting them to participate in the rehearsal. On November 9, 1952, the first test rehearsal was held in the Lamar State College of Technology gymnasium. Approximately sixty-five professional and non-professional musicians and several college students reported.<sup>49</sup> Gladys Harned Quilliam recalls the event:

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<sup>48</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 17 October 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>49</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 10 November 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Auditors in the balcony . . . were rather tense when Jay Dietzer stepped on the podium . . . .

Looking over the orchestra one saw several teachers of private studios, a half dozen or more public school music teachers and directors, housewives, mothers, grandmothers, business men and women, a new doctor in town, college students. Just what was going to come out of that collective body of instruments . . . was anybody's guess . . . .

We held our breath . . . . The music started, was cut short while the conductor firmly, pleasantly pointed out how he wanted it . . . . Then it started over again, and the balcony suddenly realized that if this wasn't music like we hear from Dallas or San Antonio or Houston orchestras, it was music, nevertheless, and not half bad music, at that . . . .

But it was the feeling in the air rather than the music floating upstairs that made us want to get up and shout a hooray . . . . You saw it on the faces of these players . . . . They'd been waiting for just such an afternoon and just such an experience under such a conductor . . . .

We remembered then what Jay Dietzer had said--that community culture doesn't trickle down from the big symphonies and artists who come to our city but starts with the people. Symphonies, like all real culture, are grass roots."<sup>50</sup>

After a second rehearsal held the following week, Dietzer expressed the opinion that material "is of considerably higher calibre here [in Beaumont] than in most cities launching their first orchestra of symphonic proportions."<sup>51</sup>

The creation of a Beaumont Symphony Orchestra moved a step closer in December of 1952 when John Gray, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce civic affairs committee appointed a subcommittee to work with the Beaumont Symphony Society's orchestra board in furthering the project. The main purpose

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<sup>50</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, November 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>51</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., November 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

of this subcommittee was to raise \$5000 to help finance the orchestra. Letters were sent to many businesses and industries asking financial support for the symphony. Support was considerable.

The opening concert of the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra was on Tuesday, May 12, 1953, at 8:15 in the city auditorium. Admission was free, with souvenir tickets distributed at many business establishments, banks, and hotels. Every seat in the 2300-plus-capacity house was taken and another three hundred were turned away. The program consisted of "Egmont Overture" (Beethoven), "Symphony No. 8," in B Minor (Schubert), "Polka" from the Opera Schwanda, the Bagpiper (Weinberger), "Prelude" to Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck), and "Capriccio Espagnol" (Rimsky-Korsakoff). In her review of the concert, Gladys Harned Quilliam writes.

Like Spindletop, . . . this new treasure of the Sabine area is in the rough . . . . But like the miracle on the hill at the turn of the century, the potent, glorious force is there. It needs only to be tapped, brought to the surface, and refined to become a driving force in the life of the area."<sup>52</sup>

The Beaumont Symphony Society's 1953-54 season included three performances by the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra (Jay Dietzer, conducting) and performances by the Houston

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<sup>52</sup>Gladys Harned Quilliam, newspaper clipping, n.p., 13 May 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Symphony (Efrum Kurtz, conducting) and the St. Louis Symphony (Vladmir Golschmann, conducting). On Sunday, May 9, 1954, the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra and a chorus consisting of singers from area church choirs presented a performance of the Verdi "Requiem" in memory of William A. Kirkpatrick, "the dean of Beaumont musicians."<sup>53</sup>

In addition to serving on the orchestra board of the Beaumont Symphony Society, Lena Milam was a charter member of the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra's viola section.

#### The Beaumont Chamber Music Society

Lena Milam was a central figure in the organization of the Beaumont Chamber Music Society. This group, like the Beaumont Symphony Society, was established in early 1950, a time of considerable musical activity. The Chamber Music Society was formed to promote performances by visiting chamber groups and to encourage chamber music playing among its members.<sup>54</sup> The society established a series of artist concerts that were open only to members. These concerts were presented in the Rice Room of the Crosby Hotel. Yearly membership dues of five dollars allowed each member and a guest to attend the artist concerts. Due to the nature of

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<sup>53</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., March 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>54</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 19 January 1951, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

chamber music, membership in the society was kept small (approximately eighty) and by invitation only.

The Chamber Music Society presented its first season in the spring of 1950. The Mary Hardin-Baylor Faculty String Trio and the Texas Christian University Faculty String Quartet performed. In 1951 the society experienced financial difficulties and nearly cancelled its season which included performances by the Britt String Quartet (resident quartet from the University of Texas) and the Cadek String Quartet (resident quartet from the University of Alabama). During its third season, the society reduced expenses by presenting a series of three concerts by local groups and only one guest concert to which tickets were sold. Other guest artists to appear during the early 1950s included the String Trio from the University of Houston and the String Trio from Temple School of Music.

Jewell Harned served as president of the society during the early 1950s. Lena Milam and Mrs. Elizabeth Halliday were elected vice presidents in charge of membership and Alice Kent was vice president in charge of playing groups.

Besides presenting performances by outside artists, the Beaumont Chamber Music Society encouraged its members to promote chamber music playing by forming ensembles to play for local programs. Frequently, members met in various homes for musical programs and social gatherings. Ensembles of the society also made guest appearances in and around the



city of Beaumont. On February 1, 1953, Lena Milam directed and played viola in an ensemble that performed in a recital sponsored by the Chamber Musicians of Orange, Texas. The group performed "Sinfonietta in D Major," by Mozart, and "Trio in C Minor, " by Mendelssohn.<sup>55</sup>

#### Private Teaching

As Lena Milam neared retirement, she reduced her private teaching activities. After reaching a peak of nearly thirty students in the mid-1940s, her studio diminished to just eight students by 1948. She maintained this level of activity until her retirement in 1955.

Dr. Milam remained active in the Beaumont Music Teachers' Association during the late 1940s and early 1950s. She was a member of the program committee and the yearbook committee. She occasionally served as program leader and toastmaster. As a vice-president of the Texas Music Teachers' Association, she regularly attended both state and national conventions and reported on these activities to the local association.

On June 13 and 14, 1946, the Texas Music Teachers' Association held its thirty-second annual conference in Beaumont. Approximately one hundred delegates attended the two-day session of speeches, dinners, and concerts. The opening concert was presented by pianist Jacques Abram,

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<sup>55</sup>Program, 1 February 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

native Texan and 1937 winner of the National Federation of Music Clubs' Schubert Memorial Award.<sup>56</sup> As a state officer, Lena Milam assumed an active role in this and many other activities of both the state and local association.

### State and National Influence

#### The Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs

Lena Milam's involvement in the Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs was a major part of her post-war activities. In 1947, she was appointed to the position of state junior counselor. Serving in this capacity, Dr. Milam was responsible for coordinating over two hundred junior clubs throughout the state. She also organized the junior day activities held in conjunction with the state conventions.

Lena Milam was a key figure in the 1947 state convention which was hosted by the city of Beaumont. Through her efforts a Beaumont Youth Symphony was organized to give the opening night performance on April 9 in the city auditorium. The orchestra was directed by Dr. Joseph Maddy who introduced Lena Milam as "the one responsible for it all."<sup>57</sup> Dr. Milam and the city of Beaumont also received plaudits from Mrs. John F. Lyons, the first president of the Texas

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<sup>56</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 14 June 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>57</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 10 April 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Federation of Music Clubs. In her address, given at the past presidents' association dinner, she remarked, "I know of no city in Texas where greater progress in music appreciation has been made in the last generation. It is built from the lower classrooms and carried on through to become integrated into family life."<sup>58</sup>

On the student division concert presented on April 11, 1947, convention delegates had an opportunity to hear several young Texas musicians. Among them was an extremely talented pianist from Kilgore, Texas, named Van Cliburn.

Lena Milam was also very involved in the district meetings of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. She was program chairman for the 1948 meeting in Beaumont and the 1949 event in Center, Texas. In 1952 she and another Beaumont, Elizabeth Halliday, were co-chairmen of the district convention which was again held in Beaumont.

Dr. Milam remained a member of the board of the National Federation of Music Clubs during the post-war years, serving in several capacities. As chairman of the senior contests, she coordinated the state, regional and national auditions in piano, organ, violin, and voice. These auditions were open to citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central and South American countries who were between the ages of twenty and thirty years (originally

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<sup>58</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1947, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

sixteen to thirty years). A one thousand dollar winner was selected in each classification.

In 1947, Lena Milam was renamed chairman of bands and orchestras in the junior division and in 1951 was appointed national junior counselor. This position involved coordinating the activities of over five thousand junior music clubs throughout the United States. As junior counselor Dr. Milam was also in charge of the junior division activities associated with the national conventions. In April 1953, she addressed the morning session of the junior division assembly that convened at the national convention in New York. The title of her speech was "Musical Avenues for the Junior Division."<sup>59</sup> Others appearing on the program were Robert Lawrence, distinguished music critic, and the young violinist, Michael Rabin. Dr. Milam wrote a "Handbook for Junior Clubs Counselors" that was published by the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1954.

In addition to sponsoring the artist contests and the junior competitive festivals, the National Federation of Music Clubs promoted American music by sponsoring composition contests to encourage creative talent. The organization also conducted music therapy programs in various hospitals to aid in rehabilitating many veterans.

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<sup>59</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., April 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Lena Milam continued her involvement with both the Texas and National Federation of Music Clubs well into the 1960s.

#### Membership in Professional Organizations

During the ten year period that preceded Lena Milam's retirement, she remained actively involved in several professional organizations. She continued a strong relationship with the Texas State Teachers' Association, as is evidenced by her frequent appearances at district and state conventions. Dr. Milam proudly escorted the Beaumont High School Orchestra to the 1946 district convention in Houston, where it presented a special concert for the association's members. In 1947 she was again named chairman of the music section, and in 1948 she headed the music program at the state convention in Dallas.

In 1946, the Texas Music Teachers' Association met in Beaumont for a two-day session of speeches, dinners, and concerts. E. Clyde Whitlock, state president, later expressed his gratitude to Dr. Milam for the part she played in helping to make the state convention a success. He stated, "From the standpoint of program material and musical attractions, I am sure we never have had a finer convention."<sup>60</sup> Lena Milam served as a vice president of the Texas Music Teachers' Association from 1944 to 1948.

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<sup>60</sup>E. Clyde Whitlock to Lena Milam, 21 June 1946, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

As founder of the Beaumont Music Teachers' Association, Lena Milam was naturally interested in the policies and programs of the Music Teachers' National Association. This fact is supported by her appearances at national conventions in St. Louis (1947), Boston (1948), and Dallas (1952).

Dr. Milam also attended conventions of the Texas Music Educators' Association and the Music Educators' National Conference. In 1952 she attended the biennial national convention of the MENC as a member of the national committee on elementary school music.<sup>61</sup>

#### Summer Teaching, Conferences, and Workshops

During the seven consecutive years that preceded the war, Lena Milam's summer activities were dominated by college teaching and clinics outside the city of Beaumont. With the advent of the war, however, these activities became somewhat curtailed and her summer work was restricted to the Beaumont area. As the war neared its end and eventual victory appeared evident, tension eased and Americans became more mobile. There was a noticeable increase in attendance at music club conventions and meetings of the state and national professional music organizations. Americans began to plan for the postwar period.

Lena Milam was one of a prestigious list of educators who met in August of 1944 at the University of Texas in

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<sup>61</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1952, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

Austin for a conference on "Postwar Music Education."<sup>62</sup> The panel addressed such topics as "Better Music in the Church," "Instrumental Music in the Elementary Schools," "Vocal Music in the Elementary Schools," "The Postwar Contest and Festival," "Trends in High School Choral Music," "Band in Postwar Music Education," and "Orchestra in Postwar Music Education."<sup>63</sup> Included among the ten-member panel were Dr. Archie N. Jones, professor of music education at the University of Texas; D. O. Wiley, director of bands at Texas Tech University; and L. Bruce Jones, director of instrumental music at Little Rock High School in Arkansas.<sup>64</sup>

At the opening conference Dr. Milam addressed the panel on "Music Education in the Postwar World." Excerpts from her speech appear below.

In the last 25 years America's standards of art, music and drama have greatly improved. There is every reason to believe that the next 20 years will show an even greater development in American music, but it will mean that music and other arts must be included in the postwar planning of every community along with the plans for economic development.<sup>65</sup>

Dr. Milam also stressed the value of music as a means of promoting international relations and emphasized the importance of music in the home, in churches, and in

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<sup>62</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Newspaper clipping, The Austin American, 10 August 1944, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

community life. She went on to recommend the following principles in planning a postwar music education program: (1) philosophy and understanding in teaching, (2) a continuation of training that develops discrimination and good taste, (3) provision for individual needs of all students, (4) emphasis for music as a means of expression, and (5) integration with the program of life interests.<sup>66</sup> In her concluding remarks Dr. Milam suggested that such a program should result in "a finer appreciation of all arts and life values, enriched human lives, happy citizens [sic], and hence better citizens."<sup>67</sup>

In the summer of 1945, Lena Milam participated in a second conference on music education, again held at the University of Texas. The theme of this conference was "Music Education and Community Living."<sup>68</sup> As a panel member Dr. Milam addressed the conference on "The Value of Ensembles in the Community."<sup>69</sup> Among the notable music educators on this panel were E. Clyde Whitlock, president of the Texas Music Educators Association; Dr. Jacob Kwalwasser, Syracuse University; Noble Cain; and John Kendel, president of the

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1945, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.



Music Educators' National Conference.<sup>70</sup> Evidence suggests that Lena Milam attended a third conference in 1946, but no mention of her participation was found. In 1946 Lena Milam was one of three educators to address the music division at a three-day conference on elementary education held at the University of Texas.

From 1946 through 1950 Lena Milam was a member of the summer faculty at the American Institute of Normal Methods (Lassell Junior College) in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Established in 1884, the year of Lena Milam's birth, this was the oldest music institute and the first summer school for the training of teachers of public school music in America. During Dr. Milam's stay in Auburndale, she regularly attended concerts and recitals associated with the Berkshire festival at Tanglewood and usually enjoyed a brief stay in New York City before returning to Beaumont.

In early June of 1950, Lena Milam conducted a three-week workshop in Waco, Texas, on elementary music education. This workshop was jointly sponsored by the University of Texas and Baylor University. Fifty-six school principals and teachers attended morning classes and then returned after lunch for an afternoon of committee meetings, lectures, demonstrations, and group discussions on problems confronting music education in the Waco schools. In a letter dated July 6, 1950, E. N. Dennard, superintendent of

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

the Waco public schools, expressed his views concerning the workshop to Dr. W. E. Doty, dean of the college of fine arts at the University of Texas:

I had the occasion to drop in on this group several times, and I do not think I have ever seen people more interested or more thoroughly engrossed in what they are doing. The casual observation impressed me, but of much greater significance are the comments which I have heard from the Waco teaching personnel . . . . Dr. Milam deserves the highest commendation for the dynamic, yet democratic, manner in which she provided leadership for the program.<sup>71</sup>

#### Publications and Writings

Throughout her career, Lena Milam made many appearances as guest speaker, lecturer, and clinician. She also shared her expertise by contributing several articles in magazines and musical journals. One such contribution appeared in the December 1939 issue of the Texas Music Educator. In this full page article entitled "Elementary Orchestra Work in Beaumont Schools," Dr. Milam supported the dictum of the Music Educators' National Conference that "the music curriculum should give every child the opportunity to play the instrument of his choice to the point that is fixed by his individual interest and talent."<sup>72</sup> She also stated her views concerning the importance of early vocal training as a prerequisite for instrumental study. "Some vocal experience

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<sup>71</sup>E. N. Dennard to W. E. Doty, 6 July 1950, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>72</sup>Newspaper clipping, December 1939, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

is essential for the child before he begins the study of an instrument since singing is the natural means of emotional expression."<sup>73</sup>

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Steck Publishing Company of Austin, Texas, published a music textbook series authored by Lena Milam. The Steck Music Series was a set of graded workbooks designed to be used in grade two through high school. An examination of the series found the books to include illustrated songs and numerous writing, singing, and movement exercises. The books focused on the teaching of symbolism (notation, rests, key signatures, etc.), meter, rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and interpretation. The use of solfège was stressed as a method of developing sightsinging skills. Dances, marches, and other types of movement activities were included in the elementary books to aid in the teaching of rhythms and meter. Each book contained information on topics such as composers, instruments, the orchestra, and music history. Two-part notation was introduced in book five and three-part notation appeared in book six.

Also noted in book six were sections dealing with the band, the orchestra (including instrumentation, seating arrangement, sections, etc.), poetry and music, hymnology, and playing the harmonica. A section on creative work presented incomplete melodies to be completed by the

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

student. The student was also encouraged to write original melodies and lyrics. Dotted notes, triplets, chromaticism, major and minor scales, and key signatures (through five sharps and five flats) were addressed.

In 1951 the Steck-Vaughn Company published the first five books of a revised edition of the series. The two remaining books (junior high school and high school) were published in 1957. The revised edition was completely rewritten and enlarged. Frances Malone Henderson, Supervisor of Elementary Music and Student Teaching at Rufus Putnam Laboratory School in Athens, Ohio, co-authored the series with Dr. Milam. Mrs. Henderson also taught music education at Ohio University School of Music and had conducted workshops and research throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.<sup>74</sup>

The Steck-Vaughn Music Series incorporated the inductive or discovery method of learning in a spiral approach. Topics were introduced in one or more songs without comment. Students were then challenged to discover the musical facts presented. A thorough explanation of the material followed, and practice exercises and activities were included to reinforce learning. A teacher's manual and a set of tests were published separately as an addendum to each book.

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<sup>74</sup>Lena Milam and Frances Malone Henderson, Discovering Music, Steck-Vaughn Music Series, Book II (Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1966), 2.

The Steck Vaughn Music Series was used in schools from Florida to Ohio, as far west as California, and in several eastern and midwestern states.<sup>75</sup>

In 1953 B. J. Kennedy, consultant in music education for the Texas Education Agency, selected Lena Milam to write the first bulletin published by the agency for music education in junior high schools. The book covered the aims and objectives of music education, described equipment and materials needed by music teachers, recommended types of music organizations and classes to be offered, and included a course of study for each junior high grade.<sup>76</sup>

As previously mentioned, Dr. Milam was the author of a "Handbook for Junior Clubs Counselors" that was published by the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1954.

#### Honors and Awards

In the years preceding her retirement, Lena Milam garnered many honors and awards. While many of her achievements have appeared earlier, the following also merit discussion.

In October of 1949, Lena Milam was made a patron member of Delta Omicron, national music sorority, by the Delta Nu chapter at Southwestern University, Georgetown. This was

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<sup>75</sup>Newspaper clipping, Beaumont Journal, 4 December 1954, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>76</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., July 1953, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

the only chapter of the sorority in the state of Texas. The patron membership was reserved for those persons who had attained a degree of distinction in the field of music.<sup>77</sup>

The Beaumont Lions Club continued to hold Dr. Milam in much esteem as is indicated by the many luncheons given in her honor. As the only woman member (honorary) of the club (and believed to be the only one nationally), she was recognized in June of 1944 and 1948, and in August of 1955.

In 1946, Lena Milam was listed in Biographical Encyclopedia of the World, "Who's Important in Music."

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<sup>77</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., 1949, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study demonstrated the influence that Lena Milam had on the development of music education and community music in Beaumont, Texas, from 1919 to 1955, the period during which she served as Supervisor of Music for the Beaumont Schools. It further showed that it was largely through her efforts that Beaumont developed a music education program, a civic involvement in music, and an awareness and appreciation of music that surpassed other Texas cities of comparable size during this period.

The study was delimited to include only the developments in music education and community music as influenced by Dr. Milam. For continuity, those organizations in which she was not involved were included in the report, but in a summarized manner.

The primary source of data used in the formulation of the study was a comprehensive and invaluable collection of scrapbooks which were kept by Dr. Milam. Following her death in 1984, the Milam family donated these scrapbooks to the Tyrrell Historical Library in Beaumont. For nearly two

years, this writer has had the rather formidable task of gathering data from numerous newspaper articles, programs, personal letters, and other types of memorabilia found in these scrapbooks (The Lena Milam Archives).

Similar studies concerning the contributions of significant educators have long been an important genre for historical research. Such studies have provided insight into the causes for developments in music education and/or community music, and consequently have been useful in explaining current trends and predicting future developments. It is hoped that this study will contribute, with its glimpse back into the past, to an even brighter future for music education and community music.

### Conclusions

#### Music Education in the Schools

Lena Milam's contribution to music education in the city of Beaumont and the state of Texas was truly remarkable. Through her progressive administration, the Beaumont School District became well known throughout the state and neighboring states for its outstanding music program.

The elementary schools offered classes in singing and music appreciation as early as 1925. Specialized music teachers were added in the late 1920s. Baby bands, harmonica bands, glee clubs, and orchestras were extremely active in all of the district's elementary schools. These groups performed for a variety of school and community



functions, frequently under Lena Milam's direction. Band classes became an integral part of the curriculum in the 1950s.

Music activities in the junior high schools consisted of regular music classes, glee clubs, and orchestras, with band programs added in 1940. During the 1920s, these students annually participated in the music memory contests held during Music Week. This event played an important role in the development of music appreciation.

Through Lena Milam's influence, juvenile and junior music clubs were established in all of the city's schools. Beaumont led the nation in the number of federated music clubs for several years.

In addition to administering the music program for the Beaumont School District, Lena Milam was an outstanding teacher at Beaumont High School, and was highly regarded by her colleagues. She was responsible for beginning boys and girls glee clubs, a general music class, and a music appreciation course. Under her direction, the Beaumont High School Orchestra became well known throughout the state for its excellence, as is noted by its numerous awards and achievements. Many students received individual recognition for their talents by being selected to state and national honor orchestras. Although orchestral music seems to have been her primary interest, Lena Milam enthusiastically encouraged and supported the formation of school bands,

which occurred in the late 1920s. She was also a strong advocate of choral music and played a significant role in its development.

Whereas the performing ensembles at Beaumont High School attained high levels of ability, the less gifted student was not neglected. Lena Milam felt strongly that every child should experience the gift of music. In referring to the awards that music afforded less talented children, she remarked, "It gave them a new spiritual uplift, a discovery of a hidden storehouse of emotions. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

High school students were also exposed to music appreciation, theory, orchestration, history and literature. It was Dr. Milam's belief that the purpose of music education was "to correlate and integrate the study of music with the rest of a child's normal education, to enrich his life by increasing the scope of his appreciation of good music."<sup>2</sup>

Lena Milam continuously sought to increase her effectiveness as both administrator and teacher. As an active member of professional and music educator organizations, she regularly attended conventions and workshops, adopting new

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<sup>1</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

<sup>2</sup>Newspaper clipping, n.p., October 1941, Lena Milam Archives, Tyrrell Historical Library.

ideas and concepts, and sharing her knowledge and experience.

#### Community Involvement

Lena Milam placed much emphasis on community involvement as is evident by her membership in local clubs and organizations. She was a charter member and president of the Music Study Club and an active member of the music department of the Woman's Club. Dr. Milam frequently hosted club meetings, led music discussions, and arranged programs for these groups throughout her career. She also participated in the activities of the Altrusa Club, the American Association of University Women, the Business and Professional Woman's Club, and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Lena Milam frequently called on school groups to provide entertainment for club meetings and various other community activities. It was her belief that performing for community groups "impresses upon young school musicians valuable lessons of social importance" and provides experiences that "broaden the social outline of the students."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Milam served as co-chairman of the city's first Music Week celebration (1922) and had a profound influence on the development of the Beaumont Music Commission (1923) and the Beaumont Symphony Orchestra (1953). She also

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<sup>3</sup>Kerr, "Aunt Lena's Culture."

founded and directed the Schubert Ensemble, a group that gained considerable distinction for its community and Beaumont Little Theatre performances in the 1930s. In 1929, Lena Milam organized the First Methodist Orchestra. This orchestra was a regular part of the church's Sunday night worship services until the late 1930s.

The Beaumont community recognized Lena Milam's contributions on many occasions. In 1935, the Rotary Club honored her as "Beaumont's Most Distinguished Public Servant." She was recipient of the "Golden Deeds Award" conferred by the Exchange Club of Beaumont in 1944. Mayor Elmo Beard proclaimed May 26, 1955, "Lena Milam Day" in honor of her contributions to her community and her retirement from public school work.

#### State, National and International Influence

Lena Milam's influence as a music educator and community musician was widespread. Her work became a model for educators throughout the nation, as is documented in this study. This writer has previously referred to the distinction attained by music groups of the Beaumont School District. This recognition was largely due to their frequent appearances at district, state, and national conventions associated with the many music and professional organizations to which Dr. Milam belonged.

Lena Milam held several state offices in the Texas Federation of Music Clubs. The most prominent of these was

her tenure as president from 1932 to 1934. By virtue of this position she became a board member of the National Federation of Music Clubs. She served on the national board with distinction until her retirement in 1955.

Dr. Milam's membership in professional organizations was also noteworthy. She often served as chairman of the music division of the Texas State Teachers' Association. In addition, she was on committees associated with the Texas Music Educators' Association, the National Education Association, and the Texas Music Teachers Association.

During the summer months Lena Milam participated in workshops, attended conventions, and taught summer classes at various institutions. She frequently taught at the College of Industrial Arts (later Texas Women's University) in Denton, the University of Texas in Austin, North Texas State Teachers College (later North Texas State University) in Denton, and the American Institute of Normal Methods (Lassell Junior College) in Auburndale, Massachusetts.

Lena Milam was the author of a graded music workbook series published by the Steck-Vaughn Company of Austin. This series was adopted by many school districts throughout the nation. She wrote a "Handbook for Junior Clubs Counselors," published by the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1954, and a manual for the University of Texas, "Music Is Yours."

### Recommendations

Although the focus of this study was Lena Milam's personal involvement in music education and community music, it deals rather comprehensively with the developments in all areas of community music in Beaumont, Texas. This fact is due primarily to Dr. Milam's extensive involvement. Therefore, the writer strongly feels that this study may well serve as an excellent resource for a research report tracing the development of music in Beaumont. Furthermore, it was observed during the course of the study that sufficient data appears to be available for a study of Beaumont's musical development prior to 1900.

This report also provides much insight into the effects of the Great Depression and World War II on music education and community music. Consequently, it may provide pertinent information for studies related to these areas.

It is regrettable that more information on black music and music education was not available. Due to the scarcity of data, research in this area would be difficult at best and would rely greatly on oral history. Nevertheless, such a study would be most beneficial in obtaining a comprehensive picture of the musical life of the community.

Finally, it is this writer's opinion that community music involvement, as was the case in Beaumont from 1919 to 1955, is very often the product of a relatively small, highly-interested group led by a person of unusual commit-

ment, tenacity, and stamina. Studies such as this lend support to this belief. Through the efforts of Lena Milam, countless individuals have had the opportunity to perform, understand, and enjoy music. As a former pupil notes:

You [Lena Milam] have had such a great influence on my life, both professionally and personally. I took violin lessons from you during my junior high and high school days; I was in the Beaumont High School orchestra for three years; I majored in Public School Music in my college years; then I taught music in elementary schools in Beaumont for many years. During all this time, you were my mentor, my friend, my supervisor, and in all of these capacities, I knew that you were there. It meant a great deal to me, and still does.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>[Elizabeth Moyer], "Birthday Greetings and Messages," 14 October 1984, Testimonial to Lena Milam on One Hundredth Birthday, Beaumont, Tx.

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**APPENDIX**  
**SELECTED PROGRAMS**

Music Memory Selections  
performed by  
The Magnolia Refinery Band  
R. A. Dhossche, director  
February 15, 1929

March Militaire.....	Schubert
Overture-Midsummer' Night's Dream.....	Mendelssohn
Narcissus.....	Nevin
Morning-Peer Gynt Suite.....	Greig
Ase's Death-Peer Gynt Suite.....	Greig
Tales from the Vienna Woods.....	Strauss
Dance of the Hours -La Gioconda.....	Ponchielli
At Dawning.....	Cadman
Goin' Home.....	Dvorak
Dr. Ralph Fuller, Baritone	
Kammenoi Ostrow.....	Rubinstein
Mrs. C.H. Hendry, Pianist	
Spanish Dance.....	Moskowski
Song of India.....	Rimsky-Korsakov
Anitra's Dance.....	Greig
In the Hall of the Mountain King.....	Greig
Wedding March from Lohengrin.....	Wagner
Spring Song.....	Mendelssohn
Serenade.....	Schubert
Vladimir Stroikoff, Cellist	
Dream of Love.....	Liszt
Waltzing Doll.....	Poldini
The Cuckoo.....	Daquin
Allie Mae Huitt, Pianist	
Sunrise Call.....	Traditional Zuni Song
Serenade.....	Tosseli
Who Is Sylvia.....	Schubert
Louise Goldstein, Soprano	
Finlandia.....	Sibelius
Gavotte.....	Thomas
Venetian Love Song.....	Nevin
Stars and Stripes.....	Sousa

Beaumont High School Orchestra  
Music Week Program - 1930

PIANISTS IN ENSEMBLE NUMBERS

Virginia Lefler	Fannie Marie McWhorter
Sadie Sharfstein	Margaret Thomas
Edwina Holland	Irene Mabry
Violette Molliere	Margaret Atwood
Margaret Stripling	

MEMBERS OF ORCHESTRA

**Violins:**

Ruby Reed  
Elizabeth Rothwell  
Dundee Sheeks  
Olivia Oxford  
Marjorie Gough  
Bernice Beckwith  
Celia Horwitz  
Myrtle Altman  
Carol Toplitz  
Thelma LaBin  
Eppie Quicksall  
Mattie Zoller  
Frank Gioviale  
Frederick Blanchette  
Mary Hickey  
Mary Edith Rupp  
Nathan Waldman  
David Dorfman  
Anna Yianitaa  
Edith Maude Vanriper  
Mary Treca Logan  
Mary Louise Shepherd  
Ruth Wier  
Carrie Chazen  
Izora Cole  
Ganel Stuart  
Edith Huitt  
Dorothy Berry  
Helen Wolf  
Anna Marie Brant  
Zelma Fay Meech  
LoDee Crow  
Gracie Adecock  
Lloyd Sekaly  
Rauel Paupice

**Violas:**

Margaret Ludgate  
Eli Vinok

**Cellos:**

Ruth Taylor  
Margaret Ridley  
Maxine Friar

**Basses:**

Mary Jo Shannon  
Lorraine Kelly  
Mary Virginia Richey  
Nannie Lee

**Flutes:**

Willard Peterman  
Paul Wallace

**Oboe:**

John Joachimi

**Alto Clarinet:**

Wilber Balmer

**Clarinets:**

Roy McDaniel  
J. L. Garrison  
Louis Kojak  
Jesse Weed Stuart  
Morris White  
H. L. Kelly  
Bobby Wolf  
Gabrio Brandes  
Lyle Bohrer

**Trumpets:**

James White  
Jack Fitch  
William Vickers  
Toy Swearingen  
Drurey Love

**Trombones:**

Poyntz Dunn  
Godfrey Kuhler

**Tympani:**

Ralph Huitt

**E Flat Saxophones:**

Guy Gardini  
Willis Jones  
Henry Giglio  
Sellers Andrews  
Hermann Waldman

**Piano:**

Jewel Gaddy  
Emma Marie Dinkins  
Clara West

**Xylophone:**

Jirou Prutzman

**Director**

Mrs. Lena Milam

**Assistant Director:**

Mary Byrd Boulware

# VIOLIN RECITAL

## Pupils of Mrs. Lena Milam

### First Methodist Church Auditorium

Friday, June 7th, 1929  
8:00 P. M.

#### PROGRAM

Trio—Valse \_\_\_\_\_ Arr. by Roberts  
MILDRED YOUNT GLORIA EARGLE VIRGINIA FRANKS

Robin's Lullaby \_\_\_\_\_ Krogman  
GLORIA EARGLE

Nita (Spanish Serenade) \_\_\_\_\_ Ducelle  
VIRGINIA FRANKS

Lilacs \_\_\_\_\_ Kern  
MILDRED YOUNT

Duet—Musical Moments \_\_\_\_\_ Emil Held  
ROBERT ROBINSON ANABEL HORNBERGER

Song of Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Robert Brown  
ANABEL HORNBERGER

Spanish Dance \_\_\_\_\_ Moskowski  
RUTH WIER

Sextet—Waltz \_\_\_\_\_ Ascher  
The Happy Wanderer \_\_\_\_\_ Jensen  
FREDERICK BLANCHETTE, ANABEL HORNBERGER, RUTH WIER,  
ROBERT ROBINSON, LLOYD SEKALY, Violins; AMALESE GOUGH, Cello

Concerto in A Minor (1st Movement) \_\_\_\_\_ Accolay  
FREDERICK BLANCHETTE  
Mrs. Alice Blanchette, Accompanist

Gipsy Love Song \_\_\_\_\_ Victor Herbert  
MARY HICKEY

Polish Dance \_\_\_\_\_ Severn  
AUDREY PROCTOR

Minuet from E Flat Symphony \_\_\_\_\_ Mozart  
MARGARET LUDGATE

Valse, Op. 131 \_\_\_\_\_ Saenger

Dance of Happy Spirits \_\_\_\_\_ Gluck  
ANITA WHITE MARGARET LUDGATE MARJORIE GOUGH  
EPPIE QUICKSALL AUDREY PROCTOR MARY HICKEY WILDA WELLS

Hungarian Dance, No. 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Brahms  
WILDA WELLS

Spanish Dance \_\_\_\_\_ Rehfield  
MARJORIE GOUGH

Concerto in G Minor (1st Movement) \_\_\_\_\_ Bruch  
ANITA WHITE  
Mrs. Alice Blanchette, Accompanist

Reverie, Op. 104 \_\_\_\_\_ Arthur  
ENSEMBLE

October 10, 1932

Sponsor - Bernice Wilkerson

## THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN MUSIC

Prologue - Bernice Wilkerson

## I. A Forecast from our Original Americans

Indian Songs

Mary Helen Brown, Soprano

## II. Music in Colonial America

## III. The New England Singing Schools. . . . Mrs. H. K. Rupp

## IV. Progress in Psalmody. . . . Mrs. H. K. Rupp

Old Hundred . . . . . Genevan Psalter

Coronation. . . . . Holden

Chester . . . . . William Billings

Quartet -- Mary Edith Rupp, Kathryn

Keener, Ray Hucker, Frederick Blanchette

## V. Early Concert Music. . . . Ena Everton

My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free. Francis Hopkinson

Mrs. Ione Townes Locke, Soprano

Margaret Thomas, accompanist

A Toast (To George Washington). . . Hopkinson

Mrs. Ione Townes Locke, soprano

String accompaniment by Audry Proctor,

violin, Lucile Wiley, cello

Federal March . . . . . Alexander Reinagle

Miss Ena Everton, pianist

March and Monody. . . . . Benjamin Carr

Mrs. G. E. Nevill, soprano

## VI. The Spiritual was equally significant in expressing the emotions of the negro life of the old South.

O Lord Look Down

Deep River

Swing Low Sweet Chariot

Mrs. Ray Lighthall, Mrs. W.W. Prather,

Mrs. JNC. O. Banks, Mrs. Mark Magerak

Mrs. C. B. Trotter, accompanist

## VII. Marshalling the Forces

Operas and Choral Societies . . . . Mrs. J. J. Vincent

Conventions and Festivals . . . . Ruth Sims

Orchestras . . . . . Anita Van Meter

Pastoral Symphony. . . . . Handel

Minuet from Serenade in Eb. . . Mozart

Mozart Violin Players

Directed by Mrs. G. E. Quillian

The Beaumont High School Music Department  
presents  
Say It With Music  
March 21, 1952

The School Symphony

March from Carmen.....Georges Bizet  
Symphonie Militaire, first movement.....Josef Haydn  
An Outdoor Overture.....Aaron Copland  
Blue Tango.....Leroy Anderson  
Le Petit Jar Brun.....Clive Richardson

The Choir

O Rejoice, Ye Christians, Loudly.....Johann  
Sebastian Bach  
Adoramus Te.....G. P. da Palestrina  
Laudamus Te.....Carl F. Mueller  
Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho.....Ed. by John  
Finley Williamson  
Cindy.....Arr. Harry Robert Wilson  
Almighty God of Our Fathers.....Will James

The Concert Band

National Victors Concert March.....Joseph Olivadoti  
Symphony in B-flat, first movement.....Paul Fauchet  
March, Op. 99.....Serge Prokofieff  
Divertimento for Band.....Vincent Persichetti  
Corcoran Cadets.....John Phillip Sousa

The Combined Band and Choir

O' Life With Splendor.....Edvard Grieg

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# *Christmas Community Concert*

Sponsored By  
**WOMAN'S CLUB CHORUS**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1949**  
**CITY AUDITORIUM**  
**2:30 O'CLOCK**

## **PROGRAM**

CHRISTMAS CAROLS	BRASS CHOIR	TRADITIONAL
	ARNOLD F. WHEDBEE, Director	
SILENT NIGHT		TRADITIONAL
CAROL OF THE BELLS		LEONTOVICH
		Arr. WILHOUSKY
THE MORNING STAR		NICOLAI
		Arr. by LUVAAS
	WOMAN'S CLUB CHORUS	
	EDWIN ORLO BANGS, Director	
	MRS. O. N. CLOUD, Accompanist	
GLORY TO GOD		BORTNIANSKY
TO THEE WE SING		PETER TKACH
	PORT ARTHUR TEXACO MALE CHORUS	
	EDWIN ORLO BANGS, Director	
	MISS LELLA COPPOC, Accompanist	
PANIS ANGELICUS		FRANK
THE ANGEL		RUBENSTEIN
	MELODY MAIDS	
	ELOISE MILAM, Director	
	KATHERINE SMARTT, Accompanist	
CATHEDRAL SCENES from CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA		MASCAGNI
	BRASS CHOIR	
	ARNOLD F. WHEDBEE, Director	
LULLABY FOR MARY'S SON		SHACKEL-ANDERSEN
NOEL		HARRY WILSON
RING CHRISTMAS BELLS		LEONTOVICH
	FRENCH HIGH SCHOOL CHORALEENS	
	MARJORIE CUNNINGHAM, Director	
	MILDRED SMITH, Accompanist	
LOVELY LADY DRESSED IN BLUE		d'INVILLIERS-RIEGGER
JESU! THOU DEAR BABE DIVINE		Arr. by DICKINSON
	THE CECILIANS	
	Directed by DOMINICAN SISTERS	
THE TWELVE GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS		TRADITIONAL
	Arr. by GEORGE L. PARKS	
NOW LET ALL THE HEAVEN'S ADORE THEE		BACH
MEDLEY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS		TRADITIONAL
	LAMAR COLLEGE CHOIR	
	GEORGE L. PARKS, Director	
	CHARLENE MCKENZIE, Accompanist	
MY SHEEP WERE GRAZING		M. L. HOHMAN
		Arr. by HUGO JUNGST
"HARK NOW OH SHEPHERDS"		FENNOR
		Arr. by MORTEN J. LUVAAS
	SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS	
	GEORGE L. PARKS, Director	
	CHARLENE MCKENZIE, Accompanist	
ALMIGHTY GOD OF OUR FATHERS		WILL JAMES
COME THOU, HOLY SPIRIT		PETER TKACH
"TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS		Arr. by FRED WARING
	BEAUMONT HIGH SCHOOL MIXED CHORUS	
	MRS. JOHN W. HOWELL, Director	
	MRS. R. H. MONROE, Accompanist	
"HALLELUJAH" from "MESSIAH"		HANDEL
	BEAUMONT and SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL CHORUSES	
	MRS. JOHN W. HOWELL, Director	
	MRS. R. H. MONROE, Accompanist	
	MRS. ED HEBERT, Program Chairman	
	MISS LORENE DAVID, Decoration Chairman	
	MRS. GUY AIREY, Chairman Woman's Club Chorus	



## VITA

Louis Randolph Babin, the son of Joan and Willard E. Babin, was born on June 7, 1943, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He received his private school education in Baton Rouge, graduating from Redemptorist High School in 1961. He then attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where he received both his Bachelor of Music Education (1965) and Master of Music Education (1968) degrees. In 1982, he began advanced studies at Louisiana State University and received the Ph.D. in Music Education degree in December, 1987.

The writer was band director at Port Allen High School, Port Allen, Louisiana, during the 1966-67 school year. In 1968, he was hired as Instructor of Music at Lamar State College of Technology (currently Lamar University) in Beaumont, Texas. Mr. Babin was promoted to his present position as Director of Choral Activities at Lamar University in 1982. He currently holds the rank of Assistant Professor of Music.

The author has served as Music Director of the Beaumont Civic Opera since 1976 and is Choir Director at St. Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church in Beaumont, Texas. He has appeared as guest conductor of the Lake Charles Symphony

Orchestra in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and is an active guest conductor and clinician in the state of Texas.

Mr. Babin is married to Janie Anne Couvillion, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and has two sons, David and Brent.

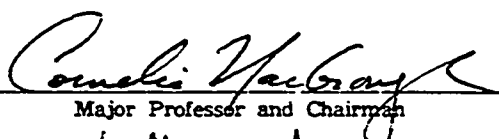
## DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

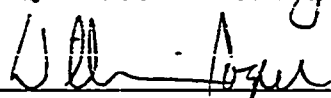
Candidate: Louis Randolph Babin

Major Field: Music

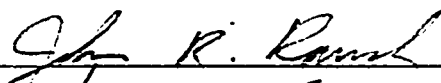
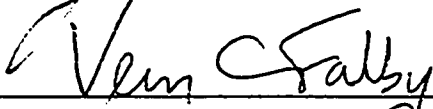
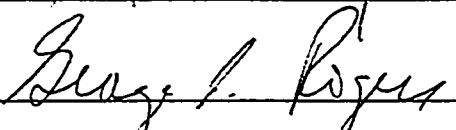
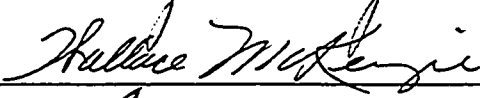
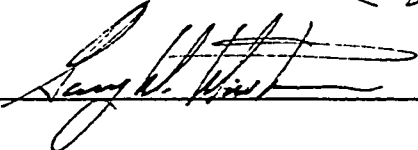
Title of Dissertation: Lena Milam, 1884-1984: Music Educator and Pioneer in the Development of Community Music in Beaumont, Texas.

Approved:

  
Major Professor and Chairman

  
Dean of the Graduate School

### EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

November 20, 1987