

HISTORY OF BARBERSHOP

compiled by David Wright

Lesson 4: REVIVAL

Music of the thirties. By the late thirties, the kinds of songs that were woodshed had become a thing of the past. Harmonies had become even more sophisticated with the advent of the big band sound, in which avoidance of "obvious" chording prevailed. The major chord was replaced by the sixth, major seventh, or even more obscure substitutes; the dominant was replaced by minor seventh, diminished, or tritone substitute.

We should note that the old style didn't vanish altogether. In certain haunts one could still hear the happy sound of the old ragtime style of earlier times, which characterized the "barbershop" era. One musician who thrived on this music into the forties was the great Thomas E. ("Fats") Waller, who composed, sang, and played stride piano in the old style. Although the songs he wrote himself show some of the "swing" influences of the thirties ("Honeysuckle Rose" (1929), "Ain't Misbehavin'" (1929)), many of the songs he popularized were of the style of the twenties, like "It's A Sin To Tell A Lie" (1936) and "(Oh Susanna) Dust Off That Old Piano" (1934). One of his best recordings was "Dinah," recorded in 1935. (In 1978 the musical revue "Ain't Misbehavin'" appeared on Broadway, featuring the music of Fats Waller.)

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

Jim Wiley and the bung-bung system. The area of Oklahoma in which the Cash's settled was rather wild country. Mr. Cash came to be a leading citizen, and was President of the Board of Education, whose first goal was to hire a schoolmaster and set up a school. One day two hobos who had been kicked off the train by a railroad detective wandered into the general store where they heard Mr. Cash remark that the community needed a schoolteacher. One of the hobos said "I can teach." Cash, incredulous, asked him if the world is round or flat. He replied, "I can teach it either way." Cash said, "You've got a job." This man, Jim Wiley, became the local schoolmaster, and also organized a night school where he taught math one evening and music another, primarily for adults. Young Owen Cash attended these music classes, and later recalled being taught to harmonize by singing arpeggio the chords of familiar songs on the syllable "bung." Jim Wiley called this the "bung-bung" system, and it made a permanent impression on the young Cash. One day the feds came to school and told the children to go home, that Mr. Wiley had to go away for a while. He never returned. Forty years later, after O. C. had become a lawyer, he decided to try to uncover what had happened to this man. He found that Jim Wiley had died in an Illinois penitentiary, convicted of forgery. Cash always believed that he was framed.

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

Plans for a local singing club in Tulsa. It was in the year 1938 that the two men from Tulsa Oklahoma, Owen C. Cash and Rupert Hall, had their now famous meeting at the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City, which we have discussed. On

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

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

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

The first meeting. April 11, 1938, was a warm spring day in Tulsa. Rupert Hall had arrived early and was arranging for the food to be served. Cash and two others had arrived and were standing around when a man named "Puny" Blevens, well over six feet tall, came in and asked "What are we waiting for?" The four of them sang "Down Mobile," with Blevens singing lead and Cash singing baritone. It was the first song sung under Society auspices.

Twenty-five men showed up (Cash recalled in 1948). (Mo Rector quips that over the years he's met over 500 men who were amongst those original 25.) After an hour or so of singing, the suggestion to form a permanent club was made. When someone asked "When do we meet?", another enthusiast yelled "Tomorrow night!" Deac Martin's history indicates that they met a week later, however Grady Kerr points out that Tulsa Sunday Tribune reported on May 2 (not April 17 as Martin indicates) that the club had met and organized. The headline read: "Barber Shop Harmony a Thing of the Past?" The article seems to indicate that the second meeting was to be that evening (May 2), three weeks after the first. At this point it never occurred to Cash that anyone outside of Tulsa would be interested in joining the movement.

The news spreads after second meeting. The second meeting, held at the Hotel Tulsa, was attended by over seventy. At this point news began to spread somehow, and Cash and Hall began to get inquiries from interested people around the country. Hall recalls that both men were spending entirely too much of their time and money with phone calls, visits, and correspondence. Their stenographers threatened to quit if they didn't cut down on the letters, so they chipped in and had some printing done. Invitations to visit and explain the new movement came from all over the United States; Cash and Hall found it possible to accommodate some of these requests on their business trips.

Third meeting and more repercussions. The third meeting (according to Deac Martin) was attended by about 150 men, Cash recalled. It was held on the second floor of the Alvin Hotel, and as the sound of gang singing, directed by "Puny" Blevens, floated out the open windows on a warm evening, a traffic jam was clogging the street below. Presently a reporter from the Tulsa World came in and said he had seen the jam asked the police about the "wreck." The police had replied "That's no wreck. It's just some damn fools up there singing!" The reporter then wrote a story on the incident, which appeared the next Wednesday, June 1.

(Note: Grady Kerr points out that the reporter says the above meeting was the sixth meeting and that only 63 attended.) It was such a humorous incident that the wire services picked it up and relayed it to newspapers around the country. The publicity arising from this article may have been the most important single event in the history of the Society.

On June 18, forty members of the Tulsa group drove to Kansas City to help the fledgling chapter organize.

St. Louis Chapter is formed. (The following story was related by Deac Martin.) At the third Tulsa meeting, scene of the celebrated traffic jam incident, upon being asked by the World reporter if other chapters were being formed, Cash had said that his friend Everett Baker of St. Louis was organizing a chapter there. That wasn't so; Baker's name came to Cash's mind only because they had busted chords together on occasion. But on June 2 the St. Louis Post Dispatch reported that E. G. Baker was organizing a St. Louis chapter. (Baker was Vice President of the Frisco Railroad in St. Louis.) Baker immediately began receiving phone calls, and called Cash and exclaimed, "What have you done?" Nevertheless, he authorized his

secretary to take the names of interested callers, and set up the first meeting. This group soon had over 100 members. (Note: the Post article mentioned above, which was unearthed by Grady Kerr, quotes Baker, so there must be some inaccuracy in this story.)

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

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

Convention and quartet contest is planned. And so it was planned for Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3, 1939. Cash's personality and humor are well reflected in the wording of this invitation to the first convention. Cash wanted the major event to be a quartet contest, to pick the "World's Champion Barber Shop Quartet." The invitation was sent to all the barbershoppers they knew, and a press released went out by wire. Far away, in Canton, Illinois, Doc Nelson picked up the news and convinced the Capitol City Four to attend with him. He had a new car and offered to drive. Glenn Howard was excited by the whole thing. The quartet drove to Tulsa not intending to compete. They didn't bring their costumes.

1939 Convention, Tulsa. And so an institution was born, the barbershop convention. And the very first one seemed to have had many of the characteristics of today's conventions. Hall recalls nearly fifty quartets competing. As the Capitol City Four entered the hotel lobby, Glenn recalls being overwhelmed by the singing of the Flat Foot Four of Oklahoma City, whose baritone was the chief of police. (This was the first of a series of 54 consecutive conventions attended by Glenn, who attended every one until his death in 1993.) Then they met Cash, who listened to them sing and told them they not only that they were in the contest, but that they would win! A reporter overheard the comment and wired the information to the Springfield newspaper, which printed in a headline saying the Capitol City Four were "expected to win" the barbershop quartet contest in Tulsa.

The program for this convention is full of humor and shows us Cash's personality at its best. He was always in rare form. The quartet contest had a qualifying round in two sessions and a finals round. There was a short list of contest rules. There was a business meeting at 11:00 a.m. Friday. It seems to have been an open meeting. Cash presided. Rupert Hall got up and went to the men's room and when he returned, he learned he had been elected the society's first president. Cash kept his title of Permanent Third Assistant Temporary Vice Chairman, an office he held with pride until his death. Vice Presidents in charge of regional development included Doc Nelson and a fellow from Cleveland named C. T. Martin, better known as "Deac." And an "Advisory Board" of big wigs was selected, including New York's Sigmund Spaeth, who had corresponded with the Tulsans about the movement, Bing Crosby, and St. Louis Cardinals owner Sam Breadon.

No intricate contest rules or certified judges awaited the contestants at our first contest. The judging panel consisted of a couple of local educators, a doctor from Pittsburgh, Oklahoma's State Legion Commander, and the Lieutenant Governor of the state of Oklahoma. After hearing all the quartets, the judges asked for a sing-off between the Bartlesville Barflies, of

Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and Glenn Howard's Capitol City Four, of Springfield, Illinois. Upon hearing them a second time, the Barflies were selected as our first Champions "by a sixty fourth note". The song they used was "Far Away In The South," according to Tom Masengale. Quartets of this era not always successful in avoiding doublings, and the woodshed nature of the arrangements manifested itself in some awkward harmonies. We must be kind, however, in evaluating these first champions. They were pioneers. It was fairly common, however, for early-Society quartets to end songs on seventh chords.

The grand prize was fifty dollars.

The Gold Medal. This event started a great tradition amongst barbershoppers. To this day it is the most sought after goal, the most coveted prize, and greatest honor to receive. We revere our champions more than any members of our community — more than our officers, more than our musicians, more than our judges. The excitement must have been the same for the Bartlesville Barflies as it was for the Interstate Rivals forty nine years later. The disappointment for the Capitol City Four was real, too, especially since they were "expected to win." The author detected in Glenn Howard's recounting of the experience a faint trace of frustration. He stated that Doc Nelson, sort of a cocky fellow, was questioning one of the judges after the contest about their decision. The judge said he thought it was the Barflies' neckties that did it.

A complete listing of all known competitors and their scores at Society conventions from 1939 to the present can be downloaded at <http://barbershop.org/collegiate-quartet-champions.html>.

First "Society" Recording. After the contest the Society contracted with RCA Victor, Chicago, to make a record album, which then meant a collection of 78 rpm's packaged together in a folder. For one reason or another, it was not the Bartlesville Barflies who were asked by Cash to do the honors, but rather the Capitol City Four. The situation was complicated by the sudden death of their bass singer, Fred Raney. The others were so eager to do the job that they switched Glenn to bass, and tenor Dwight Drago's son Gene sang baritone. The recording was a success; we now play an excerpt. Glenn and the quartet woodshedded the arrangements, as usual. Note how well the arrangements are done, with none of the colliding parts or poor harmonies heard in the Bartlesville Barflies sample. This is a testimonial to Glenn's keen ear and fine ability as a "harmony man." Years later, Floyd Connett would say that Glenn was one of the finest of the early quartet men in this respect. The composer of "Down By The Old Mill Stream," Tell Taylor (1910), after hearing this recording, wrote to Glenn Howard and told him that was the way his song should be sung.

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

Lyle Pilcher is introduced to barbershopping. Sometime prior to the 1939 meeting in Tulsa, Doc Nelson invited some friends to the Elks Club in Canton, Illinois. Among those present was Glen Howard's Capitol City Four, up from Springfield (they must have come up often, since Doc served as sort of manager and financier for the group). He had also invited along a musically talented high school youngster who was interested in harmony. He had sung duets and trios in school. This young man was enthralled as four-part harmony was sung to him for the first time by the Capitol City Four. It made a lasting impression him. His name was Lyle Pilcher. He would later become one of the Society's foremost quartet coaches. (Both Glen and Lyle recalled this occasion.)

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

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

It was a stunning success, with over 10,000 turning out nightly to the events. Sixty quartets participated (according to historian Bill Watson). Here is a program for one of five qualifying rounds, showing Spaeth to be master of ceremonies, and judges Al Smith, Geoffrey O'Hara, and Edward Smalle, who in 1936 had written a book of twenty "Close Harmony Favorites" (this was the one we spoke of earlier in connection with Phil Embury).

Appearing on the list of competitors was the Plow City Four, from Canton, Illinois. After Fred Raney's death, the Capitol City Four had become inactive, and Doc Nelson had organized and financed this quartet, from Canton, Illinois; Glenn Howard sang in it. They went to New York with high hopes, but alas, they placed 13th. Glenn recalls overhearing Al Smith saying to Spaeth in the judges pit something to the effect: "Gee, Sig, I don't know who to give points to. They all sound good to me." The top twelve quartets sang on Major Bows radio program.

The 1940 contest rules stated: "instrumental accompaniment is permitted." It seems to have been traditional for quartets to use instruments for at least some of their repertoire. Glenn Howard confirms this. But Glenn does not recall instruments ever being used in contest.

The new "National Champion" was the Flat Foot Four, from Oklahoma City, with last year's champion Bartlesville Barflies finishing second, only one point behind. One of their songs was "Annie Laurie", a ballad written in 1838.

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

Embury writes out "Bright Was The Night." Also at the New York convention, young Phil Embury was elected to the Board, Sometime that week Phil happened to hear the Plow City Four singing "Bright Was The Night." It was a song Glenn's quartets had been singing for years, and Glenn has no idea where it originated. Phil, who possessed excellent musical skills, rode in a cab with the Plow City Four to one of the contest rounds so that he could have them sing it while he wrote out the notes. This is how the song came to us. Many quartets, including O.C. Cash's quartet, the Okie Four, adopted it.

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

The Red Caps incident and the exclusion of African Americans. Many organizations practiced discrimination in those days, and so did the newly formed SPEBSQSA, for 25 years. Glenn Howard recalls being with Cash when his secretary presented him with a telegram from Mayor LaGuardia of New York, who was asking to send a black quartet to the 1941 convention in St. Louis. Cash told her in no uncertain terms to wire back his refusal. In fact, that quartet was the Grand Central Red Caps, the winner of the 7th Annual Barbershop Quartet Contest, sponsored by New York City's Park Department. This incident triggered a wave of publicity and protest, and prompted the resignation from the Society of Al Smith, former

governor of New York and presidential candidate, and Robert Moses, NYC park commissioner. The policy of discrimination was formally reversed by SPEBSQSA in 1963. This exclusion was unfortunate, and most ironic, since blacks laid much of the musical groundwork for our style, and gave the world perhaps the first barbers' quartet. According to Hank Wurthman of St. Louis, the New York Harmony club, which had chartered with the Society, gave up its membership because the Society refused to allow a black member.

1941 Convention, St. Louis. This was the first contest to resemble our modern conventions in certain ways. The first one had been a curiosity, the second one a public relations event. A large St. Louis delegation had attended New York, Norm Rathert had been elected our second President, and St. Louis had been chosen the site of the 1941 convention. As the Board had sat in a sweltering hotel room in New York, Rathert had promised to have all events hosted in air-conditioned comfort in St. Louis. He and Secretary-Treasurer Wodica worked tirelessly to promote the event, largely at their own expense, since the treasury hadn't a dime. It was a success in a sense—barbershoppers came from across the country, making this the first truly national contest, according to Deac Martin. Registrants got a tour of the brewery and a night at the outdoor "Muni" Opera. The preliminary rounds were held in the Jefferson and Coronado Hotels; the finals took place in what is now Kiel Opera House.

Glenn Howard had reorganized the Capitol City Four, with the great John Hanson of Peoria singing bass, but the quartet didn't sing too well and placed fifth. Glenn claims John was out with the "sweet adelines" the night before, and lost his voice. (Interestingly, the organization Sweet Adelines wasn't then in existence, but there were, no doubt, women who showed up at these events to sing with the men. We suspect that they were referred to as "sweet adelines" before the formation of the organization.) The Barflies, now called the Phillips 66 Barflies, competed again and placed third. The new champs were the Chord Busters, from Oklahoma City, the third consecutive quartet champion from Oklahoma. Bass Tom Masengale and tenor Doc Enmeier were given an emotional recognition at the 1991 convention in Louisville. Masengale appeared on stage, and Enmeier addressed conventioners by phone.

The Chord Busters sang "Bye Bye Blues", debuting the famous bell chords. The bell chord chorus was worked out by Lem Childers, a blind pianist who served as coach to the Chord Busters. He taught it to them by playing it on the piano. This bell chord version of "Bye Bye Blues" has been recycled several times over the years. Childers was an extremely talented man who coached many early quartets, including the Chord Busters, and helped them work out their arrangements. He was a "harmony man" in the old time sense.

This was the first contest to be judged by an all society panel, with Phil Embury serving as Chairman of Judges. The others were Doc Nelson, Joe Wodicka, Molly Reagan, Hal Staab, and Joe Stern. Stern's letter had been widely discussed, and St. Louis contest scoresheets gave a breakdown of "50% Barbershop Harmony and Blending; 25% Song Selection and Originality; 25% Stage Presentation," which included costuming and showmanship. Each judge evaluated all of these aspects. One contest rule was widely ignored, according to Deac Martin in *Keep America Singing*. It stated that all competitors should furnish a copy of each their arrangements. Some quartets had no written arrangements, and the singers couldn't read notes. Many early barbershoppers felt that what they sang could not be written down. However, it should be stated that many quartets *did* use written arrangements, the Chord Busters being one example. There were books of arrangements available (e.g. Ed Smalle's 1936 book, *Close Harmony*), and some quartets had glee club arrangements as part of their repertoire.

Carroll Adams of Detroit was elected the new President. He would be instrumental in getting the Society on its feet financially and administratively.

Cash's voice. We mentioned earlier that at the winter meeting in St. Louis in '40, Rathert conducted his group for the Board. The following, which was likely recorded at this meeting, is the voice of Cash himself, followed by the Flat Foot Four. Before the discovery of this recording, the only recorded words by Cash known to exist were from an early Society meeting, where he is heard to utter the immortal words "Shut up you bastards! I came here to sing." This recording is in the archives at Society headquarters.

Embury records notes for "Sweet Roses of Morn" and "Coney Island Baby". One person who was working to write down the early arrangements was Phil Embury, of Warsaw, New York. At the St. Louis convention he heard a local quartet called the Mound City Four singing "Sweet Roses Of Morn", and had them sing it slowly while he wrote the notes on the back of an envelope. This transpired at 2 a.m. Also, sometime in the early forties, the blind piano player Lem Childers, of Tulsa, gave Phil Embury the standard version of "Coney Island Baby", and Embury wrote it down. This happened in Tulsa. The Society copyrighted the "Coney Island Baby" arrangement in 1945. This was illegal, since it contained the copyrighted song "We All Fall", but apparently nobody realized at the time that the piece was actually a medley.

Early Society arrangements; Harmonizer begins. As we said before, some (but not all) early Society members opposed written arrangements, saying "It ain't barbershop." Nevertheless, in November of 1941 a newsletter called the "Barber Shop Re-Chordings" had gone out which contained on its back page Phil Embury's arrangement of "Sweet Roses of Morn." Later Embury, Frank Thorne, and Molly Reagan would be on Hal Staab's Song Arrangements Committee that produced on July 23, 1942, the first "official" Society arrangements and sent them to all members. The first two songs were "When The Maple Leaves Are Falling" and "Down Our Way". In March of '43 the Re-Chordings became "The Harmonizer." In May of '43 the first arrangements appeared in the Harmonizer. They were "Aura Lee" and "You're As Welcome As The Flowers in May." Typical of the content of the early issues was a pro-con discussion between Deac Martin (pro) and Frank Thorne (con) on whether the Society was becoming too contest oriented. Also, Molly Reagan wrote a series of articles called "The Mechanics of Barbershop Harmony," which was the Society's first attempt at music education, a matter later to be developed by Alexandria's Harold "Bud" Arburg.

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

Further developments in judging. Board member Hal Staab, of Northampton, Massachusetts, recommended for '42 the following category weighting: Harmony Accuracy 25%, Song Arrangement 25%, Voice Expression 30%, Song Selection 10%, and Stage Presence 10%. He added a very profound remark, which the late Val Hicks emphasized to me several times. Staab said: "The basis of grading is not so important as the selection of competent judges." The weightings he proposed were used in 1942, according to Deac Martin.

A third mid-winter board meeting. In January, 1942, the Board met at the Hotel Morrison in Chicago. This meeting was less fun and more business. Decisions made: Geoffrey O'Hara's "The Old Songs" was made the Society's theme song, and members were urged to refrain from referring to their organization as "spebsqua."

Concluding remarks. By now the Society had been successfully launched and organized. The national convention was intact and a culture of avid practitioners was quickly emerging. In the next lesson we will recount the further growth and development that occurred in that first decade.