



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Helen May Butler Collection

NMAH.AC.0261

Erma Jean Loveland and Robert S. Harding

May 26, 1987



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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Helen May Butler Collection
Date:	1899-1937 (bulk 1902-1902)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0261
Creator:	Young, Helen May Butler
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Musical Instruments
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (3 boxes, one oversize folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection covers the career a female bandmaster with an all women's traveling military band from 1898-1913.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collections donated by Helen May Butler Young, June 1962.

Provenance

Collection transferred from the Division of Musical Instruments (Now Cultural and Community Life) to the Archives Center on May 26, 1987.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Erma Jean Loveland and Robert S. Harding, May 26, 1987

Preferred Citation

Helen May Butler Collection, 1899-1937, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Biographical / Historical

Helen May Butler, woman bandmaster, directed an all-women traveling military band from 1898 to 1913. "Music for the American people, by American composers, played by American girls" was one of the band's mottoes. Born in New Hampshire in 1873, she pursued a variety of musical studies and became an accomplished performer in both violin and cornet. She announced candidacy for a U.S. Senate seat in 1936.

Scope and Contents

The materials cover the career of a woman bandmaster with an all women's traveling military band from 1898-1913, with the bulk of the material ca. 1902. Contents include clippings, photographs, programs, sheet music, hand noted music, posters, post cards, advertising fliers, letters, telegram, biographical article announcing candidacy for U.S. Senate seat in 1936, and "The Flood of 1937" section of the *Cincinnati Post*, February 13, 1937. Bands included Helen May Butler's Ladies Military Band, Talma Ladies Orchestra, U.S. Talma Ladies Military Band.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Bandmasters -- 1890-1920
- Bands (Music) -- 1890-1920
- Brass bands -- 1890-1920
- Floods
- Music -- Performance -- 1890-1920
- Musicians -- 1890-1920
- Women musicians -- 1890-1920
- advertising

Types of Materials:

- Advertising fliers -- 1890-1920
- Clippings -- 1890-1920
- Correspondence -- 1930-1950
- Photographs -- 1900-1950
- Postcards
- Posters -- 1880-1900
- Programs
- Scrapbooks
- Sheet music

Names:

- Butler, Helen May

Helen May Butler's Ladies Military Band.
National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Musical Instruments
United States. Congress. Senate -- 1930-1940

Places:

Boston (Mass.)
Buffalo (N.Y.)
Charleston (S.C.)
Saint Louis (Mo.) -- 1890-1920

Container Listing

Box 1	Scrapbook with photographs, newspaper clippings, programs, sheet music, post cards, and advertising fliers. 1 Scrapbook (18" x 11.5")
Box 2, Folder 1	Photoprints and photomech portraits, unmounted
Box 2, Folder 2	Photoprints, portraits, mounted, including portraits of Helen May Butler
Box 2, Folder 4	To the Helen May Butler girls ... [letter], Circa 1905 1 Item (Ink on paper.; 9.4" x 6.1") Collector: Young, Helen May Butler Language: English. Notes: AC0261-0000001 (AC scan no.) Stationary from New Hotel McKenzie in McKenzie, Tennessee. Topic: Fan mail Bands (Music) Music -- Performance -- 1890-1920 Genre/Form: Correspondence
Box 2, Folder 4	Presented to the Smithsonian ... [letter], June 1962 1 Item (Ink on paper.; 11.0" x 8.7") Collector: Young, Helen May Butler Language: English. Notes: AC0261-0000002 (AC scan no.) Helen May Butler with her Greatest American Ladies Band stationary Topic: Bands (Music) Music -- Performance -- 1890-1920 Genre/Form: Letterheads Correspondence
Box 2, Folder 2	One of the early ladies ... [orchestras] [photoprint], Circa 1900 1 Item (mounted on black paper; Silver gelatin on paper.; 9.7" x 11.6") Collector: Young, Helen May Butler Language: English. Notes: AC0261-0000003.tif (AC scan no.) "... from Providence, Rhode Island. The fore-runner of the brass band." Topic: Orchestra Women musicians -- 1890-1920 Place: Rhode Island Providence (RI) Genre/Form: Photographs -- 1900-1910 -- Black-and-white photoprints
Box 2, Folder 2	Helen May Butler's Military Band ... [photoprint], Circa 1900 1 Item (mounted on black paper; Silver gelatin on paper.; 9.9" x 11.9")

Collector: Young, Helen May Butler
Language: English.
Notes: AC0261-0000004 (AC scan no.)
First all woman band with a woman leader.
Topic: Brass bands -- 1890-1920
Women musicians -- 1890-1920
Genre/Form: Photographs -- 1900-1910 -- Black-and-white photoprints

Box 2, Folder 4

[To the Ladies Band ... \[letter\], Circa 1910](#)

1 Item (Ink on paper.; 10.9" x 8.3")

Collector: Young, Helen May Butler

Language: English.

Notes: AC0261-0000005 (AC scan no.)

... from a number of us at the old soldiers home. Written on Taschetta & Meyers Cigar Company, Leavenworth, Kansas letterhead.

Topic: Fan mail

Bands (Music)

Music -- Performance -- 1890-1920

Genre/Form: Correspondence

Box 2, Folder 3

Music, hand written manuscripts by "Smith"

Box 3, Folder 1

Sheet music for "Cosmopolitan America," by Helen May Butler,, circa 1904

Box 2, Folder 4

Correspondence, including letter from John Philip Sousa and telegram from C.G. Conn., plus 1962 presentation statement on Butler band stationery

Box 2, Folder 5

Newsclippings, including U.S. Senate candidacy announcement, 1904 - 1936

Box 2, Folder 6

Miscellaneous printed items, including The Billboard, May 1, 1915, clipped advertisement, undated clipping about Cleveland concerts, and patriotic leaflet with satirical anti-German poems (circa 1914?), 1914-1915; undated

Map-folder 1;

Box 3, Folder 1

Copy of poster with march, "Cosmopolitan America", by Helen May Butler
1 Poster (42" x 28 1/8")

Cosmopolitan America [poster for song], ca. 1890

1 Item (Ink on paper.)

Collector: Butler, Helen May

Publisher: Ingram, Tolbert R., Music Co. (Denver, Colo.)

Language: English.

Notes: 242392 (NMAH Acc.)

87-14087 (OPPS Neg. #, slides available).

Oversize, located in map case.

Poster showing Butler in uniform, conducting; with first line of march music at bottom of page, Tolbert R. Ingram Music Co., Denver, publisher.

Topic: Bandmasters -- 1890-1920
Women musicians -- 1890-1920
Musicians -- 1880-1900
Bands (Music) -- 1880-1900
Military uniforms
Genre/Form: Posters -- 1880-1900

Box 3, Folder 2-3 Programs, circa 1902 1904

Map-folder 1 Broadside for HMB's Ladies Military Band

Map-folder 1 Broadside for U.S. Talma Ladies Military Band

Map-folder 1 Cincinnati Post souvenir magazine "The Flood of 1937"

Box 3, Folder 4 Newsclippings and program, circa 1910 1916

Box 3, Folder 5 Scrapbook, circa 1904-1911
1 Scrapbook (4.5" x 11")