



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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Helen May Butler Collection
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0261
Date:	1899-1937 (bulk 1902-1902)
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (3 boxes, one oversize folder)
Creator:	Young, Helen May Butler Musical Instruments, Division of (NMAH, SI)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collections donated by Helen May Butler Young, June 1962.

Provenance

Transferred from the Division of Musical Instruments 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.

Conditions Governing Use

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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.
Musical Instruments, Division of (NMAH, SI)
United States. Congress. Senate -- 1930-1940

Geographic Names:

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
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 4 To the Helen May Butler girls ... [letter], Circa 1905
1 Item (Ink on paper.; 9.4" x 6.1")
[Image\(s\)](#)
Young, Helen May Butler, Collector
English.
Stationary from New Hotel McKenzie in McKenzie, Tennessee.
- Local Numbers
AC0261-0000001 (AC scan no.)
- Topic: Bands (Music)
Fan mail
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")
[Image\(s\)](#)
Young, Helen May Butler, Collector
English.
Helen May Butler with her Greatest American Ladies Band stationary
- Local Numbers
AC0261-0000002 (AC scan no.)
- Topic: Bands (Music)
Music -- Performance -- 1890-1920
- Genre/
Form: Correspondence
Letterheads
- 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")

[Image\(s\): One of the early ladies ... \[orchestras\] \[photoprint\].](#)

Young, Helen May Butler, Collector

English.

"... from Providence, Rhode Island. The fore-runner of the brass band."

Local Numbers

AC0261-0000003.tif (AC scan no.)

Topic: Orchestra
Women musicians -- 1890-1920

Place: Providence (RI)
Rhode Island

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")

[Image\(s\)](#)

Young, Helen May Butler, Collector

English.

First all woman band with a woman leader.

Local Numbers

AC0261-0000004 (AC scan no.)

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")

[Image\(s\)](#)

Young, Helen May Butler, Collector

English.

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

Local Numbers

AC0261-0000005 (AC scan no.)

Topic: Bands (Music)
Fan mail
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.)

Butler, Helen May, Collector

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

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

Local Numbers

242392 (NMAH Acc.)

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

Oversize, located in map case.

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

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")